



## GUIDELINES FOR NEGOTIATING THE CURACY LEARNING AND MINISTRY AGREEMENT

Each Training Incumbent and Curate are required to develop a **Learning and Ministry Agreement**. The name reflects the emphasis in IME 2 – that the curacy is explicitly seen as a training post. It does not replace the Statement of Particulars under which all curates are licensed by the Bishop but sets out key expectations beyond them to which the Curate, TI (Pioneer Mentor, where appropriate) & Head of IME 2 all agree. The TI and Curate should prepare a draft within three months of the post beginning and email it to the Head of IME 2 to review and sign (Learning Agreements are often finalised at the 1-2-2 meetings in September).

The Learning and Ministry Agreement needs to cover the issues set out below and may go beyond these if wished. It seeks to establish a shared expectation about the ministry and training of a new curate. The Learning and Ministry Agreement is to be regarded as a working document: it will change as necessary during the period of the curacy and should be reviewed and amended as needed at least once a year as part of the Annual Review process.

A template adapted from the National Ministry Team is available to download but any format may be used as long as it covers at least the following elements.

### **Areas for Discussion & Agreement:**

#### **1. Praying together**

What opportunities will there be for daily prayer and corporate prayer, not only with the congregation, but also with colleagues? When do you plan to pray together? And for how long?

#### **2. Public worship**

How will the opportunity be made for the Curate to have a regular share in the design, preparation and the leading of worship and in preaching? How often will the Curate be present at worship; robed for worship; in a leadership role; preaching? How will feedback on the leading of worship and preaching be offered?

*Diocesan guideline: Deacons should not preach more than two (new) sermons a month during their first year (this includes new sermons for funerals or other occasions).*

#### **3. Supervision, Staff Meetings and Other Meetings**

How often and in what format will there be staff meetings for sharing information, planning and review? How often will there be dedicated supervision sessions where Curate and TI meet together to reflect on experience? [Please see advice on Supervision on the website]. What opportunities will there be for having fun together or meeting socially?

*Diocesan guideline: The purpose of meetings should always be clear and supervision meetings in particular should be clearly identified as such. Supervision for full-time curates should typically be at least fortnightly for 60–90 minutes at first (possibly changing to 90–120 minutes monthly over time) and slightly less frequently (perhaps monthly, changing to every 6 to 8 weeks) for people who are offering limited hours to the curacy.*

#### **4. Professional behaviour**

How will feedback be offered in the area of national and diocesan policies on professional ministerial conduct and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults? [The diocesan website offers documents and links to helpful material elsewhere through the 'Ministry' menu.] What kind of agreement are you making about confidentiality? What have you decided about the need for loyalty to and support for the leadership of the TI? What are the parish's expectations about clerical dress, robes, presentation and punctuality? What are the expectations about social media? In agreeing standards of professional behaviour, what have you agreed about a process for review, especially when things seem to be going wrong?

#### **5. Balance of work and possible area of special responsibility**

What priorities will you set together for work and development over the coming year? [*The Ministerial tasks and skills list for curates* will help you arrange a training pattern that meets the needs of the Curate.] Where a significant training experience is not possible in the parish, how will a placement or opportunity elsewhere be organised? What are the special gifts of the Curate? What piece of work will allow the Curate to use these particular gifts? How will feedback be offered? How will you make clear to others the extent of the Curate's delegated authority?

#### **6. Mission and evangelism, and role in the wider community and Church**

What opportunities for mission and evangelism will be available for the Curate in the parish, benefice or deanery? Will there be planned training programmes in this area during the period of the curacy to which the curate can contribute?

What additional work is planned in the wider community, the Diocese of Oxford or the wider Church? How will this work enable the Curate to develop in ministry? How much time is being made available for this 'extra-parochial' experience and responsibility? What consultation is expected before the Curate commits their ministry time elsewhere?

#### **7. Communication systems in the parish**

How will communication with the parish be handled? How will information be shared in both written and spoken form? How will this be reviewed should problems arise? What can be done to minimise the possibility of a breakdown in communication?

#### **8. Time for ministry and time off**

How will both TI and Curate ensure that neither of them overworks? How will an appropriate balance be maintained between work time and time off? What mechanisms are in place for this to be reviewed? What are the normal times of work and time off? How many hours are normally worked in a single day? Is there to be a particular day off kept each week? How will alternative days off be agreed where emergencies intrude on rest time?

*Diocesan guideline: the normal expectation for 'full-time' clergy is that there shall be six weeks' holiday a year and an uninterrupted period of at least 24 hours' rest each week (where possible, ministers are encouraged to take part of the previous evening or following morning off as well and this will be particularly important for single curates whose family and friendship network may be far away). 38 hours' work per week may seem a reasonable lower limit and it is likely to be unhealthy to work more than 48 hours per week. The nature of ministry will often require some flexibility but Curates and TIs should track time off regularly and build good habits from early on. The diocesan booklets 'Flourishing in Ministry' and 'Flourishing Together' offer material to review working and refreshment patterns.*

## **9. Spiritual Development**

What plans are both the TI and Curate making to develop their own personal prayer life? To whom will the Curate be accountable in spiritual matters? (All curates are expected to have a spiritual director/soul friend/mentor outside their ministerial context). What space will be set aside for annual retreats or quiet days? (Such prayer and spiritual development is part of the 'work' of all ordained ministers so should not be taken from 'holiday' time. The diocesan deaconing and priesting retreats may be reasonably considered together as the Curate's first year retreat but all curates should arrange some form of retreat or time apart in years 2, 3 and beyond. PCCs are encouraged to fund such an annual retreat where possible but this is a matter for local decision).

## **10. Ministerial Development**

What plans do the TI and Curate have for ensuring that each takes appropriate opportunities for Ministerial Development? Which IME 2 pathway will the Curate follow – standard, BA, PGDip, self-directed or other? How will the material from the various ministerial development activities be shared between the Training Minister and the Curate so that both may learn from the experience? The IME 2 programme will typically require 10–12 days' attendance at training events (spread unevenly through the year with a concentration in October-November, January-March & May-July) but other opportunities, especially for online study or connecting to wider networks may well be appropriate. Curates are also expected to prioritise their Ministerial Development Group meetings and the annual review and MDF submission process. TIs should ensure they attend TI training days, link up with their TI triad and make the most of CMD, their MDR and options for Ministry Accompaniment. TIs are always welcome to attend Hard Skills days or other IME 2 training which interests them.

Where specific learning or access adjustments are needed, please note them clearly.

*Diocesan guideline: all curates are expected to give 'no less than 15% of ministerial time each week' to their IME 2 study, ie. the equivalent of one day per week for full-time ministry (though there will need to be flexibility in how this is allocated). Special care is needed in working out how this scales for SSMS, especially those only able to offer limited hours to ministry or hoping to complete an incumbent-focus SSM curacy. IME 2 study days do form part of this 15% (along with reading, thinking and preparing assignments) but normal ministry preparation (eg. writing or preparing sermons) does not.*

## **11. Expenses**

Arrangements for reimbursing reasonable expenses will normally be included on the Curate's Statement of Particulars but are often usefully included in the Learning and Ministry Agreement for clarity's sake. Where the PCC provides housing, it is vital that processes for reporting problems or damage are clear and fair.

April 2021