

GUIDELINES FOR CONSULTATION WITH SYNOD MEBs, THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES

1. Source of Authority

The Assembly is responsible to set the standards (through the E4MWG) for the education and formation for the specified ministries of the Church including the ordained ministry, lay preacher and pastor.

The Consultation of the MEBs and theological colleges and educational agencies is one avenue through which the Assembly ensures and encourages the adherence to and maintenance of the standards.

2. Scope

These guidelines to be implemented in the regular consultation by the E4MWG with each of the MEBs, Theological Colleges and educational agencies of a synod.

3. PURPOSE OF CONSULTATION

The purpose of reviewing, through consultation, the life of the theological colleges¹ and educational agencies² of a synod, is primarily to ensure the strategic implementation of the vision for Education for Ministry. That vision is framed by the following purpose of the church's education for ministry:

- i. **foster** the centrality of the Scriptures in the life of the Church and the work of ministry; as described in the Basis of Union;
- ii. **inspire** the participation of the people of God in the mission of God revealed in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit;
- iii. **strengthen** resilience, passion and competence for ministry in multicultural and multifaith contexts of the 21st century;
- iv. **stimulate** lifelong learning and formation in the Christian life for all people;
- v. **celebrate** the shared ministry of the whole people of God;

4. THE CONSULTATION -

4.1 Outcomes Sought

The Consultation is:

- a) to provide an opportunity for Consultation regarding programs offered for the formation of persons for the various ministries of the Church;
- b) to recommend to the Assembly (through the E4MWG) whether the courses offered should be recognised as fulfilling the Regulations of the Uniting Church for the ministries concerned; and the Standards of formation, education and training for the specified ministries;

¹ **College/Theological College** means a college recognised by a Synod and/or the Assembly as a teaching institution for the formation and education of candidates for ministry.

² **Educational Agency:** means an organisation, committee or body charged with the responsibility of educating candidates for any ministry of the Church. The term includes a theological college where that college has responsibility for education of candidates for ministries other than Ministry of Word and Deacon. It also includes those ecumenical or other agencies educating candidates for the Specified Ministries of the Uniting Church on behalf of the Uniting Church.

- c) to provide feedback to synods, MEBs, colleges and educational agencies and to their teaching and resource staff to assist them in their tasks.

While much of the formation of Ministers for Ordination (and in some Synods for other specified ministries) is based in theological colleges, arrangements for their education may involve a number of separate educational agencies. The Consultation by an appointed panel will therefore engage with all relevant educational agencies of the synod in the one visit.

These guidelines have been prepared to assist in the Consultations; and to ensure, as far as possible, consistency in the breadth and depth of the process for each synod. They are to be adapted to suit particular cases.

4.2 Consultation Process

- 4.2.1 The E4MWG will appoint a two person Panel to undertake the Consultation.
- 4.2.2 Normally, and subject to availability of finance, one Synod will be the focus of a Consultation each year in rotation.
- 4.2.3 Each Panel will consist of two members from Synods other than the one being reviewed, and where possible will include persons from diverse experience and contexts.
- 4.2.4 The Panel will arrange with the MEB of the Synod to be on-site for consecutive days for the consultation, whilst the relevant college and educational agencies are in session. The duration of the Consultation will depend on the number of educational agencies to be reviewed, people to be consulted and other particular circumstances and normally to be approximately three full days.
- 4.2.5 The MEB of the Synod is to appoint a Designated Officer³ to be the primary liaison person with the Panel for the duration of the Consultation. This person needs to have the authority and capacity to locate any documentation required and capacity to respond to Panel questions and concerns, or identify appropriate persons to respond to such questions and concerns.
- 4.2.6 The Consultation dates are to be determined by the Panel in negotiation with the MEB and the E4MWG being informed of the dates.
- 4.2.7 The college and educational agencies must supply the Panel well in advance of the visit (at least three weeks) with a draft schedule and relevant documentation consistent with these Guidelines. The Designated Officer of the MEB or his/her nominee is to be responsible for co-ordinating all programme arrangements.
- 4.2.8 The Designated Officer is to arrange the schedule of conversations with a series of students/candidates/staff in each area being reviewed, as indicated in the following.
- 4.2.9 For the Consultation Process of the theological colleges, and where appropriate:
 - a) Consultation with faculty staff and Head of college
 - b) Persons in the Core Phase of theological education and formation for the specified ministries and other students undertaking theological studies;
 - c) The Chairperson and at least one other representative of the Synod's Ministerial Education Board or its equivalent;
 - d) The Chairperson and at least one other representative of the College Council (where applicable);
 - e) Officers of the Synod and other persons suggested by the MEB; Graduates of up to three years post-College from each of the Specified Ministries who are trained at the College and representatives from their placements;
 - f) Representatives from other denominations/institutions that are in a relationship with the Uniting Church in the provision of theological education.
 - g) Those responsible for provision of resources and oversight of phases 3 and 4.
- 4.2.10 **For visits to other educational agencies mandated by the synod** such as lay education centres, as appropriate:

³ The Designated Officer may be the paid Executive Officer of an agency or another person (staff or volunteer) identified by the MEB who is able to fulfil the role

- a) The Chairperson and at least one other representative (Designated Officer where applicable) of each education agency;
 - b) Representatives of persons who teach courses for the ministries concerned; mentors/members of Presbyteries;
 - c) Representatives of the students;
 - d) Those who have completed programs within the educational authority within the last three years and representatives from their placements;
 - e) Officers of the Synod and other relevant persons as suggested by the authority;
 - f) Representatives from other denominations/ institutions in relationship with the educational authority in the provision of courses and programs.
- 4.3 The detailed schedule is to be distributed to the Panel Members and all other persons involved, at least one week before the onsite engagement.
- 4.4 The Consultation is primarily to ascertain the delivery of education and formation as set out in the Standards for Theological Education and other appropriate regulations. It may also include:
- a) Overview of the teaching facilities and the library;
 - b) Opportunity to participate in and evaluate both face-to-face and online learning environments;
 - c) Opportunity for the Panel to meet socially with Faculty members, lecturers and other relevant staff;
 - d) Room within the program to allow the Panel to pursue matters, which may present during the course of the Consultation and to begin drafting their report, discussing aspects of this with the Designated Officer and/or MEB Chairperson where appropriate.

5. THE REPORT OF THE E4MWG CONSULTATION PANEL

5.1 The Reporting Process

- a) The report of the Consultation is to be drafted as soon as possible after the visit and copies sent through the Designated Officer who in consultation with other representatives of the MEB, theological college and other educational agencies offer corrections of factual error and comments regarding misaligned emphasis.
- a) After taking into account the comments received from the Designated Officer and the educational agencies the Panel shall complete its report and forward it to the E4MWG.
- b) The report is to be presented and received at the next meeting of the E4MWG.
- c) The E4MWG will refer the report formally to the theological college, the Synod MEB and the educational agencies concerned and they shall be asked to offer a response to the next regular meeting of the E4MWG.

5.2 Content of Report

- a) Assessment of the curriculum of each college and agency visited and of its delivery to students in relation to the Regulations and the Assembly Standards of formation, education and training for the specified ministries
- b) Comment on the facilities and resources provided for the education for ministry within the synod.
- c) Comment on any matters of concern to the teaching staffs and students of the college and educational agencies of the synod.
- d) Comment on co-operation with other educational institutions.
- e) Comment on the four-phases of formation for the ordained Ministry and any difficulties being experienced in the resourcing and delivery of education and formation across the four phases.
- f) Comment on significant developments since the last Consultation, including the implementation of any decisions of the E4MWG and Assembly.

5.3 Nature of the Report

- a) The report is to be as constructive and supportive as possible nevertheless is to freely and openly raise all issues of concern.
- b) Recommendations to the E4MWG are to be clear and achievable.
- c) Matters relevant to other colleges are to be highlighted.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

UCA Constitution Par 12, 32

Regulations 2.3 – 2.4, 3.7.4

Standards of formation, education and training for the specified ministries including Phase 3 & 4 Pastor Competencies

7. REVIEW

These Guidelines to be reviewed after the first Consultation of a College using the Guidelines; and then no later than mid-2019.

8. VERSION HISTORY

Nov '15	1 st draft reviewed by E4MWG (Melb)
Mar '16	2 nd draft reviewed by E4MWG T'conference
June '16	Revised Guidelines reviewed by full E4MWG mtg
June 30 '16	Guidelines approved by full E4MWG mtg

APPENDIX A

Documentation provided in advance to the Consultation Panel to include:

- 1 Constitutions/By-Laws of the college, the educational agencies and the MEB, together with a chart showing the place of each in the administrative structure of the Synod and the Universities wherever appropriate.
- 2 A sample of Calendars, handbooks, student journals and other material relating to the college and the educational agencies and to any other educational institutions with which they are affiliated.
- 3 Enrolment figures for the current and previous two years indicating the gender and age profile of candidates for the specified and ordained ministries. Note: for consistency, an enrolment for at least three-quarters of a full year's work is counted as full-time.
- 4 Statistics of current library holdings including journals and annual accession rates for the past three years, and where appropriate the arrangements for integrated library facilities with other institutions, whether that be ecumenical or within a university or other educational authority.
- 5 A list of teaching staff, their qualifications and teaching areas, and an indication of how they are keeping up to date by means of scholarship and/or research including publications since the previous Consultation.
- 6 Minutes, where applicable of meetings of the MEB, the theological college council, the faculty and the educational agency for the past year.
- 7 Reports of any Synod or other Consultations conducted within the past three years relating to the college or educational agency and their respective curricula, together with a copy of the report of the last visit by a Panel and the response of the College.
- 8 Statements from the MEB, the college and the educational agencies indicating how each is meeting the relevant Regulations of the Uniting Church⁴ and the Assembly Standards of formation, education and training for the specified ministries : phase 2, 3 and 4; giving particular attention to ecumenical commitment, formation for ministry, and arrangements for continuing education for ministry.
- 9 Comments by the teaching staff on the effectiveness of their college or educational agency in preparing people for ministries of the Uniting Church.
- 10 A report by the Designated Officer on the current issues and future directions facing the college, the MEB and the preparation of candidates for ministry.
- 11 A report on the quality assurance processes used by the College including mechanisms for seeking feedback on both teaching and content of courses. In particular, the methods by which the College confirms that they are achieving the goals of the Synod and Assembly.

⁴ See Regs 3.7.4.3 -3.7.4.5

APPENDIX B

UCA Reg 3.1.6j

(j) for the oversight of standards of ministerial education and for establishing policies relating to standards of formation, education and training for the specified ministries, including continuing education, professional development and training. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- (i) recognition of colleges as approved centres for training for ministry;
- (ii) determining the pre-requisites for admission to candidature and the standards of ministerial education to be required of a candidate to qualify for recognition as a Minister, including the requirements for completion of the period of discernment;
- (iii) prescribing the areas of study and the minimum requirements within each area which shall comprise an acceptable course of study for the various ministries of the Church, including the requirements for mentoring and support for newly ordained ministers during the first three years of their ministry;
- (iv) receive annually for review from the MEB of each synod a report on ways in which the prescriptions specified under (iii) are being met;
- (v) maintain a roll of candidates;
- (vi) setting standards for qualifying examinations where appropriate for applicants seeking acceptance as candidates for specified ministries and arranging for the administration of such examinations;
- (vii) prescribing the conditions under which a candidate qualifies for ordination and/or recognition and issues statements certifying that the requirements of Phase Two have been fulfilled in respect of each candidate on receipt of advice from the MEB concerned that all requirements of the course have been satisfactorily met;
- (viii) arranging regular consultations of staff of the several theological colleges as may be appropriate; and
- (ix) determining guidelines whereby Ministers and Youth Workers shall fulfil the requirement for three to five year continuing education agreement

UCA Regs 3.7.4.3

Responsibilities

(c) The responsibilities of the Ministerial Educational Board shall include the following:

- (i) in relation to theological colleges constituted by the Synod:
 - (1) providing for adequate academic and administrative staffing, accommodation and facilities for the work of the theological college and determining the terms and conditions of appointment for staff other than those specified in clause (2);
 - (2) reporting for the decision of the Synod upon all matters relating to the appointment and termination of appointment of the principal, professors and teachers in the theological college except as hereinafter provided;
 - (3) determining the conditions under which study leave shall be granted to members of the staff of the theological college and making adequate provision;
 - (4) being responsible for the income and expenditure of the theological college and preparing an annual budget for the Synod; and
 - (5) ensuring that the courses and training that the theological college offers for the formation and education of Ministers in accordance with
 - (a) prescriptions set by the Ministerial Education Board or the body authorized by it to set prescriptions; and
 - (b) standards set by the Assembly.
- (ii) in relation to candidates:
 - (1) determining, or ensuring that a body authorised by it, determines, the appropriate courses of study for ministerial education and formation and, where the candidate is not training within the same Synod, entering into negotiations through the Ministerial Education Board of the Synod concerned for the receiving of the candidate and the costs;
 - (2) making provision for scholarship aid, living allowances and accommodation for candidates;

- (3) co-operating and consulting with and reporting to Presbytery in regard to matters relating to candidates;
 - (4) receiving from the faculty or theological college council and forwarding to Presbytery any recommendations concerning termination of candidature on academic or other grounds.
- (iii) either separately or in co-operation with the Synod or agency of the Church:
- (1) making provision for the continuing education of Ministers and Youth Workers, post-graduate and other forms of advanced ministerial education, and other theological education and for relating ministerial and lay education to the overall life and mission of the Church;
 - (2) making, on the advice of the faculty or theological college council, by-laws to govern admission to courses, suspension from courses, fees, discipline and other matters relating to students who are not candidates;
 - (3) appointing members of selection panels other than the Presbytery representatives and making facilities available for the proper and professional appraisal of applicants for the ministries of the Church;
 - (4) reporting as may be requested on the qualifications of any Minister applying for recognition and acceptance on transfer from another church;
 - (5) reporting annually to the Synod and to the Assembly;
 - (6) appointing such committees as may be appropriate for the effective fulfillment of the responsibilities of the Board;
 - (7) ensuring resources are available to assist members and the Church in the period of discernment (see Regulation 2.3.1).
- (iv) appoint a community ministry committee, which shall advise the Board on the educational requirements for each candidate.
- (d) In a Synod where a theological college is recognised by the Synod as a teaching institution for training students for ministry but is not constituted by the Synod, the Ministerial Education Board shall undertake all responsibilities in Regulation 3.7.4.3(c) not otherwise legislated for in the constitution and by-laws of the theological college concerned and shall make recommendations to the Synod concerning any financial support of such theological college.

Approved by the Assembly Standing Committee, November 2016