

Guidelines for drawing up the Learning Agreement (SSM)

Initial Ministerial Education Phase 2 (IME2) is a partnership between the newly ordained, training benefices and the Diocese. This is explained fully in the Curate and Training Incumbent handbooks and needs to be reflected in the **Learning Agreement**. This agreement sets out the expectations and working arrangements for IME2.

The Learning Agreement must be prepared by the incumbent and curate, then agreed and signed by incumbent, curate and the Ministerial and Spiritual Development and Curate Training Officer within 3 months of ordination to the diaconate.

The Learning Agreement, Memorandum of Mutual Expectations and Statement of Particulars form the formal foundation for the curacy.

The Statement of Particulars details the curate's tenure of office, housing, finance, annual leave and grievance procedures. They are provided by the Diocesan Secretary.

The Learning Agreement spells out the formal structure of the Curacy in relation to their training and supervision and have the Memorandum of Mutual Expectations as an appendix.

The Memorandum of Mutual Expectations

The guidelines that follow form a detailed Appendix to the Learning Agreement and are part of it. They will clarify expectations and recognise and symbolise the commitment of the whole benefice to the pastoral support and ministerial formation of the curate (and family). Where there is a Local Ministry Team/Development Group, its members may also be part of the thinking. The following areas should be included in the Appendix to the Learning Agreement:

Mutual Expectations

- ❖ What is the history of the parish? How have previous curates (and their spouses) been viewed, especially voluntary ordained ministers, ministers in secular employment (MSEs) and Ordained Local Ministers (OLMs)? What role did they have?
- ❖ What does the incumbent expect of the curate?
- ❖ What does the curate expect of the incumbent?
- ❖ Where is to be the main focus of the curate's ministry: parish / workplace/community /other?

- ❖ The degree of confidentiality between incumbent and curate, and what is to be shared with the incumbent from the curate's ministry.

Use of SSM's House for Parochial Duties

- ❖ What expectations are there about the use of the curate's house for parish business?
- ❖ What other premises are available to be used in parish work?

Local Ministry Team (if appropriate)

- ❖ What is the role of the curate as a member of the Local Ministry Team?
- ❖ What attendance is expected at Team meetings and development / training?
- ❖ How is the Team to be involved in the supervision and training of the curate?

Staff Support

- ❖ What is the frequency of staff meetings for planning and feedback? Who is present at these? Where are the opportunities to discuss the 'Why' and 'How' of parish policy?
- ❖ How often will the incumbent and curate meet for one-to-one supervision sessions?
- ❖ When will the regular review of progress and the Working Agreement take place?
- ❖ What help is given with deskwork: correspondence, filing, etc? (*How to organise oneself and any available administrative / secretarial support*).
- ❖ How will others in the parish be involved in support and feedback?
- ❖ What are the expectations concerning membership of and attendance at deanery chapter meetings, deanery synod, diocesan synod and diocesan committees?

Areas of Responsibility

- ❖ How does the incumbent exercise and delegate authority?
- ❖ What particular areas are designated to be the curate's responsibility?
- ❖ What is the method for reviewing these?
- ❖ How much will the curate be encouraged / expected to be involved in the local community and the wider mission of the church? Specific expectations here.
- ❖ Have any areas been expressly left for future involvement and responsibility?

Worship

- ❖ Sunday worship – how often and which parishes?
- ❖ What is the curate's role in planning and leading different types of worship?

- ❖ Preaching: how often, what time is given for preparation and what are the processes of assessment and feedback?

Personal Growth and Development

- ❖ What space is intentionally given for personal prayer and spiritual development?
- ❖ Spiritual direction / soul friend – that the curate will be encouraged to have such a resource outside the benefice.
- ❖ What time is given for an annual retreat? *(It is hoped that all will take a retreat once per year. Time on retreat is not part of annual leave).*
- ❖ What are the objectives in and time allowed for reading and further theological study?

Professional Development

- ❖ Expectation of attendance at IME2. *(These take priority over parish events).*
- ❖ Agreement to the concept of an IME2 placement. *(Available for all curates – see IME2 handbook).* Details to be worked out nearer the time.
- ❖ What is the process for deciding on possible attendance at Diocesan Continuing Ministerial Development events and national / regional conferences? Who pays for these?
- ❖ What time is available for pursuing extra-parochial interests / responsibilities?

A reminder: your full Learning Agreement (pro forma in handbooks and available on diocesan website) and the appendix arising from these guidelines along with the Statement of Particulars form the complete documentation providing the formal basis of the curacy. They should be sent to the MSD & Curate Training Officer within three months of the commencement of the curacy.

*MSD & Curate Training Officer
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