

Church of Ireland

The House of Bishops

**PROTOCOL FOR NOMINATING AND APPOINTING THOSE WHO
HAVE SERVED AS A DEACON IN AN INTERNSHIP TO A FULL-TIME
STIPENDIARY CURACY**

Introduction

Each year, a process will be conducted by the House of Bishops to endeavour to make appropriate appointments for those who have served one year full-time or two years part-time as a deacon serving in an internship and are now offering himself/herself for ordination as a priest in a full-time stipendiary curacy (hereinafter ‘candidate priests’).

In certain exceptional circumstances determined by the House of Bishops, persons other than deacons serving in an internship may be included in this process, as set out in HoB Protocol 2016/03.

The process is equally important for the ‘nominating incumbents’ seeking the most suitable full-time stipendiary curate assistant and for whom they will provide leadership, training and support. Those deacons serving in an internship who wish to pursue a non-stipendiary ministry are excluded from the process as their placement in a curacy, usually part-time, is solely at the discretion of a nominating bishop.

Co-ordinating Bishop

The process will be co-ordinated by a bishop, nominated by the House of Bishops, in conjunction with the Director of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (CITI) or his or her nominated and qualified representative (approved by the Bishops).

Curacy Advisory Committee

There will be a Curacy Advisory Committee (‘CAC’) whose function is to advise and facilitate matches between nominating incumbents and candidate priests. It will comprise three people: the bishop (serving as chair), and two advocates. The first advocate will be the Director of CITI (or his or her approved nominated representative). The second advocate should be a senior incumbent, who is not a nominating incumbent, but chosen by the House of Bishops.

Role of Advocates

At the appointment stage of the process (Stage 5 below) or should there be a concern raised at any earlier or later stage, the first advocate (the Director of CITI) will advocate for the candidate priests; and the second advocate (a senior incumbent) will advocate for the nominating incumbents.

Overarching Principles

Two important elements in the success of this process, will be both:

- a. the willingness of candidate priests to serve wherever they are required in the Church of Ireland; and also

- b. that at each stage of the process and when it is concluded, all involved, CITI, CAC, bishops, nominating incumbents and candidate priests, respect it as strictly confidential.

The House of Bishops underscores the importance of offering curacies in different dioceses throughout the Church of Ireland. The Bishops are also aware of, and grateful for, the financial commitment necessary in making such positions available.

The Process:

Stage 1: Allocation of curacies and exchange of profiles

1.1 A representative of CITI will, early in March each year, communicate to the House of Bishops the names of the candidate priests seeking a curacy.

1.2 The House of Bishops will agree the list of available curacies at their first meeting following receipt of the communication in paragraph 1.1 above. The aim will be to achieve enough curacies for all the candidate priests, although this cannot be guaranteed.

1.3 The list of available curacies will be conveyed to CITI and the Director will request parish profiles from each of the nominating incumbents by the date appointed under paragraph 1.5a below.

1.4 The Director will also request a *curriculum vitae* (CV) from each of the candidate priests by the date appointed under paragraph 1.5a below.

1.5 Along with the requests at paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 above, a copy of this protocol and a list of the following dates will be sent to all nominating incumbents and candidate priests:

- a) Deadline date for receipt by CITI of all parish profiles and CVs.
- b) Date when all parish profiles and CVs will be circulated.
- c) Deadline date when three preferences for interviews are to be submitted by nominating incumbents and candidate priests.
- d) Date(s) when formal interviews will take place in CITI.
- e) Deadline date when three final preferences are to be submitted by nominating incumbents and candidate priests.
- f) Date of the meeting of the CAC with the nominating incumbents.

1.6 Nominating incumbents will also be sent an agreement to sign and return with their parish profile (Schedule 1 below).

1.7 On the date fixed under paragraph 1.5b above, all candidate priests' CVs will be sent to all nominating incumbents and all parish profiles will be sent to all candidate priests.

1.8 Once circulation of parish profiles and CVs has taken place, the process

has formally commenced. After this, no additional curacies and no additional candidate priests may be added until after the meeting of the CAC (Stage 5 below).

Stage 2: Informal visits to curacy parishes

2.1 Informal visits by candidate priests may take place as soon as CVs and parish profiles have been exchanged but not beforehand. These may be initiated by either party.

2.2 At least three weekends will be included in this period in order to allow candidate priests to visit a number of parishes. They should be permitted time away from their internship parish for this purpose.

2.3 The purpose of the visits is for candidate priests to gain a better understanding of the different parishes where curates assistant will be serving. They are not formal interviews and negotiations should not take place.

2.4 A candidate priest may be accompanied by his/her spouse.

2.5 Informal visits to parishes may continue beyond formal interviews (Stage 3 below), until final choices are submitted.

Stage 3: Formal interviews

3.1 By the date fixed under paragraph 1.5c above, each nominating incumbent and each candidate priest must submit to CITI their choices for three interviews. Candidate priests may not refuse to be interviewed by a nominating incumbent who requests an interview with them and nominating incumbents may not refuse to interview a candidate priest who requests an interview with them. This ensures that each nominating incumbent will interview at least three candidate priests and each candidate priest will have a minimum of three interviews with nominating incumbents.

3.2 Nominating incumbents and candidate priests will be informed by CITI of their interview arrangements.

3.3 On the date(s) fixed under paragraph 1.5d above, in/or around the second fortnight of May each year, formal interviews will be held in CITI.

3.4 No binding 'offers' or 'acceptances' may be made at these formal interviews but expressions of interest may be given.

3.5 In order to maintain the integrity and fairness of the process, and respect for the participants, all formal interviews must be conducted and treated afterwards in the strictest confidence by all parties.

3.6 Subject to the consent of the Diocesan Bishop, communicated in writing to CITI, a nominating incumbent may withdraw his or her parish at this stage. A representative of CITI will notify candidates of any such withdrawal without delay.

3.7 A candidate priest may withdraw from the process at any stage but by so

doing, may only be included in the process the following year at the discretion of the House of Bishops.

Stage 4: Submission of preferences

4.1 By the date fixed in accordance with paragraph 1.5e above, nominating incumbents will be asked to submit to CITI their first three preferences. It greatly facilitates the process if nominating incumbents can make three preferences. No more than three are desirable.

4.2 By the date fixed in accordance with paragraph 1.5e above, candidate priests will be asked to submit to CITI their first three preferences. A candidate priest who declines to nominate three preferences will be deemed to have withdrawn from the process for the current year.

4.3 It is considered preferable that candidate priests widen their experience of ministry as a deacon serving in an internship, and subsequently as a curate assistant, in different parishes. If the option is available, a candidate priest may choose and/or be chosen to serve as a curate assistant in the same parish in which he/she is currently serving as a deacon in an internship but there should be no assumption by either a nominating incumbent or a candidate priest that a candidate priest will be appointed as a curate assistant to serve in the same parish where he/she is a deacon serving in an internship.

4.4 When all the preferences have been received, they will be collated and referred to the three members of the CAC.

Stage 5: Curacy Advisory Meeting to agree appointments

5.1 The CAC's role is to advise and facilitate matches between nominating incumbents and candidate priests.

5.2 On a date fixed in accordance with paragraph 1.5f above, the CAC will meet with the nominating incumbents. All nominating incumbents are required to be present. If, for exceptional circumstances, this is not possible, a delegate agreed with the Chairperson, prior to the meeting, may attend on behalf of an absent nominating incumbent.

5.3 The purpose of this meeting is twofold –

- a) to agree the matches on the basis of the preferences made, and
- b) to give consideration to possibilities for any candidate priests not yet placed.

5.4 The meeting should also include a review of the process from the perspective of the nominating incumbents.

5.5 Nominating incumbents will be given a sheet that indicates the preferences of all nominating incumbents and candidate priests. This is highly sensitive and confidential information and all sheets must be returned to the Chairperson of the CAC at the conclusion of the meeting.

5.6 When the meeting has concluded its work, the Director of CITI will inform each candidate priest in writing of the outcome of the meeting from the perspective of that candidate priest, after which, the nominating incumbents will verbally communicate their offers to the candidate priests.

5.7 Nominating incumbents may make their offer to a candidate priest conditional upon receipt of up to three satisfactory references from a candidate priest before the formal letter of offer at paragraph 5.10 below is issued to the candidate priest. Any reference should be sought without unnecessary delay.

5.8 Subject to receipt of any references sought, a nominating incumbent whose verbal offer to a candidate priest has been accepted by that candidate priest, will, as soon as possible, inform the diocesan bishop and request that the diocesan bishop consent to nominate the candidate priest to a title using the form provided (Schedule 2 below).

5.9 The appointment is subject to the following conditions:

- a) The diocesan bishop's consent to make the appointment and to issue a license to the candidate priest to serve as a curate assistant,
- b) Satisfactory references, when they are sought, and
- c) Successful completion of the Masters in Theology dissertation or other agreed designated course by the candidate priest.

5.10 Subject to the above conditions, the nominating incumbent will write to the candidate priest offering to appoint that individual as a curate assistant.

5.11 The candidate priest will reply, in writing, to accept (or decline) the appointment.

5.12 The appointment, subject to the successful completion of the Masters in Theology dissertation or other agreed designated course, (if the results are not yet known), may be publicised as a provisional appointment.

5.13 A candidate priest who declines to accept an appointment to a curacy in any one of the three parishes included among his/her three preferences at paragraph 4.2 above will be deemed to have withdrawn from the process for the current year.

5.14 Nominating incumbents who have not been matched with a candidate priest may, if they wish, withdraw from the process at the conclusion of this stage without requiring written consent from the diocesan bishop to the withdrawal.

Stage 6: Further possibilities

6.1 The aim of this stage is to try to secure, in the shortest possible time, the most suitable curacy parishes for any candidate priests who have not received an offer of appointment or (subject to paragraph 5.13 above) have declined to accept an offer of appointment.

6.2 Subject to the consent of the House of Bishops, other potential curacies, as nominated by the respective bishop, may be added at this stage. A parish profile will be requested by CITI from the nominating incumbent and circulated to the candidate priests who remain in the process.

6.3 Candidate priests who remain part of the process and nominating incumbents will be facilitated by CITI to explore all possibilities.

6.4 A candidate priest who refuses to meet with a nominating incumbent who requests such a meeting during this stage of the process, will be deemed to have withdrawn from the process for the current year.

6.5 Any matches facilitated during this stage of the process must be sanctioned by the CAC before the appointment is agreed and the diocesan bishop's consent is sought.

6.6 If a candidate priest remains unplaced after all possibilities have been explored, the CAC and CITI will continue to monitor such possibilities as they may (or may not) arise.

6.7 If a candidate priest remains unplaced, his/her original sponsoring bishop will provide pastoral support.

6.8 A candidate priest who participates in the process for nominating curates assistant for the first time during or after 2017 but who at the conclusion of the process has not been appointed as a curate assistant may be entitled, subject to the consent of the House of Bishops, to participate in the process in the following year. A candidate priest will not be permitted to enter the process on more than two further occasions, three in total, all of which must be in consecutive years.

6.9 No guarantee of an appointment as a curate assistant can be given to any candidate priest.

SCHEDULE ONE

Nominating incumbents will be sent the following agreement to sign and return with their parish profile.

Nominating Incumbent's Agreement

I agree to abide by the provisions of the House of Bishops' Protocol for Nomination and Appointment of those who have served as a Deacon in an internship to a full- time stipendiary curacy. I give an undertaking to remain part of the process and not to opt out, except with the permission of my diocesan bishop. I further agree to endeavour to nominate three candidates to serve as a curate assistant in the cure for which I am the incumbent.

Signed _____

Print Name: _____

Parish _____

Date _____

This form to be returned, along with the parish profile, to CITI.

SCHEDULE TWO

UNITED DIOCESES OF/DIOCESE

**NOMINATION TO THE ARCHBISHOP/BISHOP
OF A CURATE-ASSISTANT**

[COMPLETE BY PRINTING OR DELETING AS APPROPRIATE]

To the Most Reverend Father in God, *N*,
by Divine Providence, Archbishop of ...

To the Right Reverend Father in God, *N*,
by Divine Permission, Bishop of ...

I, the Reverend _____

Incumbent of the Parish of _____

do hereby nominate _____

of _____

to perform the office of curate assistant in my church/es of _____,
and do verify that s/he will be paid such stipend and allowances as required by the
Constitution of the Church of Ireland; and do promise to continue him/her in the said office
until s/he shall be otherwise provided for by some ecclesiastical preferment, unless s/he
be lawfully removed from the same.

I do hereby state that the said curate-assistant intends to reside in the said parish, in a
house situated at

and that the said curate-assistant does not intend to serve as a curate-assistant in any
other parish, nor officiate in any other church or chapel.

Signed:

Date: