



# **Ministerial Formation Portfolio**

**Introducing and beginning  
the process of building a  
portfolio**

# Introduction

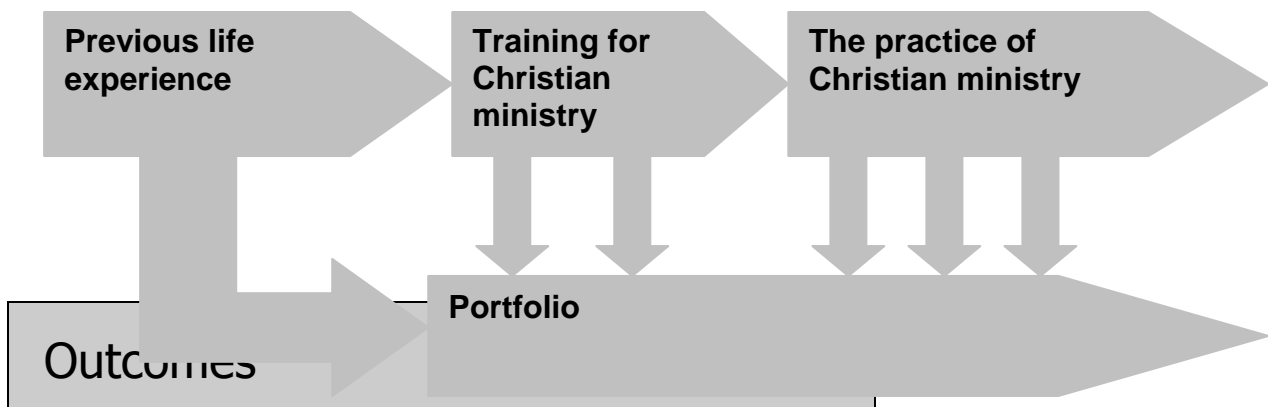
## Rationale

Ministerial formation is a rich and complex process in which many strands weave together to form you as Christian minister. That part of the process which takes place during your time in training is a small but important part of a much bigger process which began long before formal training and will continue long after. Many of the resources that will sustain you in ministry – the skills, personal qualities and knowledge required of those in the public ministry of the Church – have been gained through your previous life experience and will be developed in the course of the actual practice of ministry.

Nevertheless, the period in initial training is a very significant one, and it is important to have some way of demonstrating that the process of formation is progressing according to set criteria. The ministerial formation portfolio is designed to do just that and there are three key reasons for using this tool:

1. It is a valuable way of explicitly incorporating previous life experience into the process of formation. The 'outcomes' in the portfolio can be evidenced by references to the skills, qualities and knowledge that you have gained through this experience.
2. It enables you and the College staff responsible for reporting on your progress to see how the different elements of training are working together to prepare you for the public ministry of the Church.
3. It offers a resource for reflecting on your ongoing ministerial development in the context of the practice of ministry.

In other words, the portfolio is there to encourage a holistic evaluation of your formation as a Christian minister before, during and after a formal period of initial training. This can be illustrated diagrammatically as follows:



So, what criteria do we use to measure progress? What are the 'outcomes' that are considered necessary for exercising a public ministry of the Church?

The outcomes used in the portfolio have been developed by the Church of England in consultation with the Methodist Church. The Hind Report was a major report in the Church of England which considered the nature of theological education for ministry. As part of the process associated with this Report a set of outcomes was developed which states what stage ordinands should be at when they reach particular points: the point of selection (the selection criteria being related to these same areas) , the point of ordination, the completion of IME (Initial Ministerial Education, i.e. the end of POT or Initial Continuing Ministerial Education), and appointment to first post of responsibility (i.e. first incumbency). These outcomes are equally suitable for the Church in Wales and we are using these as a basis for providing an overall framework for the process of initial ministerial formation and extending this into ongoing ministerial development which is overseen by the College. There is a similar set of outcomes for the Methodist Church, but they are organised under slightly different headings. Both versions can be found at the back of the Formation for Ministry handbook (Appendices 2 & 3, pp.61 and 69).

## Process

During your time in College you will work with your tutor on developing a portfolio which collects together evidence that shows you are on track for meeting the relevant outcomes. You will use this as a basis for a self-reflection towards the end of each year of training, and this in turn will form the basis of your annual report. The process is illustrated in the flow chart over the page.

When you arrive you will be given a ring binder in which to keep the documentation relating to your portfolio. This document and the full portfolio document are also available electronically as you may find it easier to complete the document that way. We are also exploring a trial of an online e-portfolio system.

Experience suggests that the most straightforward way of keeping the portfolio is by numbering the documents that you refer to as evidence. These can either be kept together in one section, or included in the relevant section, or a mixture of both. Some pieces of evidence will be relevant to more than one outcome. It is important that you find an approach that you are comfortable with as well as one that is not too difficult for your tutor to make sense of.

To give you an idea of what the portfolio might look like we have included some examples later in this document.

## The portfolio process:

### Before beginning training

- Receive initial portfolio documentation in induction pack.
- Complete initial reflection and collation of evidence before beginning training.

### At start of training

- Receive full portfolio documentation during induction process.
- Discuss initial reflection with personal tutor.
- In consultation with tutor, set priorities for building the portfolio during the year.

### During the year

- Collect evidence for the portfolio from the various aspects of the training.
- Write reflections and submit to your tutor.
- Regularly update the portfolio (ideally setting aside a short time each week to do this).

### March / April

- Submit portfolio together with self-assessment form to personal tutor.
- Personal tutor writes draft report resourced by portfolio.

### May / June

- **Report sent to sponsoring Church (e.g. Bishop)**

# What to do before beginning training

People sometimes talk about feeling de-skilled when they come to College or begin training, and sometimes feel that insufficient value is placed on all that they bring with them from previous life experience. This is in no way an intentional part of the process and part of the purpose of the portfolio is precisely to facilitate the recognition of such experience. So it is important to take stock before beginning training of what you bring with you that will be of value in resourcing your ministry. This document is designed to help you do just that. It contains the outcomes for the point of selection, which follow the same categories as the fuller set of outcomes. You are asked to reflect on each of these as you prepare to enter training and begin to collect evidence that will be important as you build the portfolio. In doing this you will draw on the whole range of your previous life experience: work, education, Church & family life, hobbies etc.

## Evidence

What sort of evidence might you be able to use to evidence the outcomes? Here are some possible sources:

- References or letters of commendation from friends or colleagues
- Reports and other documentation from the selection process
- E-mail correspondence
- Certificates of courses attended and passed
- Work submitted for courses
- Journal extracts or other forms of reflection that you have written
- Notes of skills, qualities and knowledge you have gained from experience
- Entries from a blog that you write

We recognise that some of the outcomes are not easy to evidence but we think this is better than more straightforward outcomes that might encourage a 'tick-box' approach. It is not necessary to provide hard incontrovertible evidence for everything in the portfolio. In some cases all that can be shown is an element of self-awareness about your strengths and weaknesses in certain areas.

It will be easiest to explain what we are looking for by giving some examples. These follow in the next section.

## Examples

<p><b>Personality and character</b></p> <p>Candidates should be sufficiently mature and stable to show that they are able to sustain the demanding role of a minister and to face change and pressure in a flexible and balanced way. They should be seen to be people of integrity.</p>	<p><b><u>Student 1</u></b></p> <p><b>Where you are now</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>My management role in a business environment for the last 5 years required me to lead the organisation through a substantial re-organisation to meet new challenges and opportunities. This required both openness to change, understanding of processes of change and an ability to work under pressure. (See employer’s reference, Doc 1; and my reflection on the experience, Doc 5)</b></li> <li>▪ <b>My selection report commented on my integrity as seen both in my contribution to group discussions and in comments of my referees. (Doc 4)</b></li> <li>▪ <b>A reference from my parish priest comments on my maturity in approach to PCC membership. (Doc 3)</b></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Areas and opportunities for development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>The experience of change management referred to above, although handled effectively at the time, led to a period off work with stress (see Doc 5). I need to find mechanisms of addressing such pressures in future before they get too much.</b></li> </ul>
	<p><b><u>Student 2</u></b></p> <p><b>Where you are now</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>As a carer for my own 3 children and up to 3 foster children, sometimes taken on at very short notice, I cope with pressure and change on a daily basis. (See e-mail correspondence with a good friend about one particular example, Doc 1)</b></li> <li>▪ <b>The need to relate to my own children and those for whom I care for short periods requires a high degree of integrity in my approach to parenthood and foster care. This quality was noted by a recent social services inspection (Doc 3).</b></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Areas and opportunities for development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>The pressures of life at home have sometimes meant that I lack patience in other contexts. I have occasionally lost my temper with those in Church who see things differently from me. See Doc 4 for a recent journal entry I wrote about one such experience and the way I dealt with it afterwards. I hope that College may give me opportunities to learn greater patience with those of differing views.</b></li> </ul>

**NB** These examples show that the portfolio documentation itself should be confined to fairly brief overviews, with longer discussions being included as reflections in other documents.

# The portfolio

**NB If you are reading a hard copy of this, it is also available electronically, and should be on the CD you received at induction.**

<b>Vocation</b>  Be able to speak to their sense of vocation to ministry and mission, referring both to their own conviction and to the extent to which others have confirmed it. Their sense of vocation should be obedient, realistic and informed.	<b>Where you are now</b>
	<b>Areas and opportunities for development</b>

<p><b>Ministry within the Church in Wales / Church of England / Methodist Church.</b></p> <p>Be familiar with the tradition and practice of the sponsoring Church and be ready to work within them.</p>	<p><b>Where you are now</b></p>
	<p><b>Areas and opportunities for development</b></p>
<p><b>Spirituality</b></p> <p>Show evidence of a commitment to a spiritual discipline, involving individual and corporate prayer and worship. Their spiritual practice should be such as to sustain and energise them in their daily lives.</p>	<p><b>Where you are now</b></p>
	<p><b>Areas and opportunities for development</b></p>

<p><b>Personality and character</b></p> <p>Candidates should be sufficiently mature and stable to show that they are able to sustain the demanding role of a minister and to face change and pressure in a flexible and balanced way. They should be seen to be people of integrity.</p>	<p><b>Where you are now</b></p>
	<p><b>Areas and opportunities for development</b></p>
<p><b>Relationships</b></p> <p>Candidates should demonstrate self-awareness and self-acceptance as a basis for developing open and healthy professional, personal and pastoral relationships as ministers. They should respect the will of the Church on matters of sexual morality.</p>	<p><b>Where you are now</b></p>
	<p><b>Areas and opportunities for development</b></p>

<p><b>Leadership and collaboration</b> Candidates should show ability to offer leadership in the Church community and to some extent in the wider community. This ability includes the capacity to offer an example of faith and discipleship, to collaborate effectively with others, as well as to guide and shape the life of the church community in its mission to the world.</p>	<p><b>Where you are now</b></p>
	<p><b>Areas and opportunities for development</b></p>
<p><b>Mission and evangelism</b></p> <p>Demonstrate a passion for mission that is reflected in thought, prayer and action. Understand the strategic issues and opportunities within the contemporary culture. Enable others to develop their vocations as witnesses and advocates of the good news.</p>	<p><b>Where you are now</b></p>
	<p><b>Areas and opportunities for development</b></p>

<p><b>Faith</b></p> <p>Candidates should show an understanding of the Christian faith and a desire to deepen their understanding. They should demonstrate personal commitment to Christ and a capacity to communicate the Gospel.</p>	<p><b>Where you are now</b></p>
	<p><b>Areas and opportunities for development</b></p>
<p><b>Quality of mind</b></p> <p>Candidates should have the necessary intellectual capacity and quality of mind to undertake satisfactorily a course of theological study and ministerial preparation and to cope with the intellectual demands of ministry.</p>	<p><b>Where you are now</b></p>
	<p><b>Areas and opportunities for development</b></p>