



Handbook for Probation for Word and Service

Education for Ministry and Mission Unit
Private Bag X 11, Gardenview, 2047
Tel: 011 615 1616
Fax: 086 517 4263
e-mail: emmu@mco.org.za

Methodist Order of Deacons
Deacon Douw Grobler
P O Box 13732
Sinoville
Pretoria
0129
e-mail: douw.grobler@sinovillemethodist.org.za

THE MCSA DEACON PROBATIONERS' REQUIREMENTS AND REGULATIONS

District Internship

Probationers who have completed the seminary training will spend the remainder of the probation in a full-time circuit station. They shall participate in the District Internship Training for the duration of their probation (except Ordinands). This programme is run under the direction of the District Supervisor of Studies/Internship Convener in the District. It has a set syllabus for each year that is drawn up by EMMU.

The purpose of Internship training is:

1. To continue the process of ministerial and spiritual formation.
2. Within this process, to develop further **skills for theological reflection**, that is, the integration of knowledge, skills and values for ministry.
3. To let all of this be driven by "a vision for Mission".

The programme begins each year with a Connexional Seminar in January. The attendance is compulsory for all probationers in circuit. Up to a further 8 days but with a minimum of 5 days per year are negotiated in District groups to meet for formation, learning, fellowship, worship and accountability. **Every Probationer is expected to be in attendance for the full duration of the agreed internship meetings.** The internship assignments are distributed at the seminar.

January Seminar Outline

The seminar, among other activities, consists of:

- a session to meet with DSSs/IST conveners
- sessions for presentation of the projects (including speaker input if required). Also to include workshop on skills required for the project (e.g. how to journal for pastoral care; how to lead a workshop; how to do social needs analysis, etc.)
- sessions for specific skills development and character growth:
 1. Pastoral care practical electives (e.g. grief, bereavement, marriage prep, narrative therapy). Multiple sessions will run concurrently and probationers will elect 1 to attend each year.
 2. Spiritual / contemplative focus (e.g. retreat, guided self-reflection)

District IST Meetings

DSSs or IST Conveners will organise meetings for all probationers for a minimum of 5 days and up to 8 days. A day must comprise a minimum of 6 hours of activity.

Compulsory common IST Meeting content:

- 1 day must be designed around the contemporary issues common assignment. In the morning there should be an interactive presentation/workshop by a speaker on the issue identified for the assignment. The afternoon should consist of small group workshopping of questions/problems offered by the speaker as well as discussion of the specifics of the assignment task.
- 1 day must be devoted to visiting a mission project in the district. The visit must be arranged so that the people who began and/or operate the project engage with the

probationers. The intention is to provide an opportunity for the probationers to obtain practical information on how to start and run projects of different kinds.

- 1 day must be devoted to Spiritual Health and Personal Mastery. Probationers must be guided through a deep examination of 'how it goes with their souls'. There must also be a small group session in which probationers reflect on their journey with their Probationer Mentoring Committees.
- 1 day must be devoted to creating meaningful opportunities for Accountability Groups (see below) and the conveners to have feedback discussions on the common assignment.

Process for the marking of the Assignments:

The probationers in the districts are divided into *Accountability Groups* of five or six and are led by a coordinator (this could be the IST Convenor, DSS or an ordained minister that is involved in the training of the student ministers in the district). In cases where there are few probationers in a district, the Convenor and DSS will use a suitable process which will involve and empower probationers.

At the January Seminar probationers in each Accountability Group will be elected as *Assignment Facilitator* for the assignments (i.e. each of the assignment will have a different facilitator from the group; every probationer should serve as facilitator at least once during the course of their probation).

For every assignment, the probationers in the group will e-mail their projects to the assignment facilitator who will ensure that he/she has everyone's projects and then email all of the projects to each member of the group and the group coordinator. All probationers are required to review their colleagues' assignments and send comments for the whole group and facilitator to read. This review and engagement process forms part of the assignment assessment.

For the common assignment all assignments must reach the facilitator at least a month before the Internship meeting designated to engage with the assignment. This is to enable group members and the coordinator to assess the assignments and send feedback to the individuals prior to the meeting. (No marks or competencies are awarded in this review process, rather this feedback would include things such as parts of the projects they have not dealt with, areas they need to think a deeper about, or alternatives to try – e.g. "we cannot see that they have reflected theologically" or "maybe you should try applying another approach to social development for that a specific aspect of the assignment").

The purpose of this review process is so that probationers don't have to present their full assignments at the IST Meeting because everyone in the group has engaged with every assignment already. The meeting thus will provide an opportunity to add value to each other's ministry through reflection on how the probationer has grown through this assignment, what they learned out of their failure or out of their success, how the project has affected their ministry and those they minister to, etc. Each project would naturally lend itself to a variety of specific questions that could be asked with regards to reflections.

The feedback that was given will be checked by those who gave it (and the student has an opportunity to defend their original work, although this would have hopefully taken place at the time the feedback was given or they would show that they have received the feedback, reflected and made the required changes).

Part of the purpose for the marking of projects by the probationers is that a student who hasn't thought deeply enough about something, or had misunderstood an aspect of the project would have picked this up when they reviewed the other projects and would have some idea of what is expected or of alternatives they could try before getting to the internship meeting.

The final mark for the assignment will be determined by the Assessor at the meeting, incorporating the original submitted assignment, the revised assignment and the probationers' engagement with their peers' assignments before and during the meeting.

IST Character Assessment

Each Probationer is assigned a **Probationer Mentoring Committee** (PMC) comprising at least 5 people (plus the Superintendent as an ex-officio member), appointed by the Superintendent at the first CQM of the year. This committee is chaired by a member of the society or section in which the probationer is designated to serve (appointed by the Superintendent) and must also comprise various leaders of the society/section in which the probationer serves along with, so far as possible, an ordained minister with whom the probationer works closely.

The intention of the Probationer Mentoring Committee is to allow the probationer to be in continuous conversation with a consistent committee throughout the duration of her/his time within the circuit and not simply in the year of recommendation for ordination. This allows for a more holistic approach to the assessing of the probationer and a pastoral space to assist the probationer to develop in areas of weakness and strength.

The PMC must meet with the probationer on a quarterly basis. Before the second and fourth CQM each year, in committee (or consultation), the PMC will compile the **Circuit Probationer Report 1 (form P2A or P2B)** for submission to the Superintendent and DSS. The report assesses the holistic character, spirituality and growth of the probationer. The reports focus on three key areas of relationship – with God, Others and Self – as well as the values of Stewardship, Leadership and Moral Integrity. The Superintendent will complete the relevant additional sections.

These reports will be kept on file by the DSS as a record of the Probationer's character formation throughout IST. If a probationer moves districts during probation, the record will be transferred to the new DSS.

In the year a probationer may be recommended for ordination, and the year of potential ordination, **Circuit Probationer Report 1 (form P2B) & Circuit Probationer Report 2 (form P3)** must be completed before the April CQM.

IST Requirements for Synod

- a. **Synod Exam** (please see the yearbook for details) (**Form P1** submitted to DSS by Synod Examining Committee).
 - i. Part one: Written exegesis submitted to DSS
 - ii. Part two: Oral defense of exegesis and engagement with exegeses of peers with synod examining committee.
- b. **Circuit Assessment Report (Form P2A)** submitted by superintendent to DSS.
- c. **Trial Service (Form P4)** submitted by superintendent to DSS).
- d. **Grade for 1st IST assignment**
- e. *If in year of being recommended for Ordination – **Circuit Assessment Report 1 (Form P2B), Self-Assessment Assignment, Circuit Assessment Report 2 (Form***

P3), CQM Recommendation (Form P5), and District Screening Committee Interview Report (Form P6).

- f. **If in Ordination year – Circuit Assessment Report 1 (Form P2B), Circuit Assessment Report 2 (Form P3), CQM Recommendation (Form P5), and District Screening Committee Exit Interview Report (Form P7).**

EXIT PROCEDURE FROM PROBATION TO ORDINATION

A Probationer Deacon under FINAL WARNING may not be advanced to ordination.

Each year at the January seminar, EMMU will provide a list of probationers who may be ready to be recommended each year.

1. A Probationer Deacon shall have completed –
 - **Either** the Basic Certificate in Theology (Khovo) (*Mozambique only*); **or**
 - Higher Certificate in Theology (TEEC/SMMS) for those who candidate *before* the 2018 registration, **or**
 - The Diploma in Theology (TEEC) for those who candidates *after* January 2018, **or**
 - Bachelor Degree in Theology (TEEC); **plus**
 - Methodist Studies – Wesley, Polity and Accounting, **plus**
 - Be a Local Preacher on full plan
2. In the fourth year of Probation, having completed **ALL** the requirements (including **ALL** academic requirements in the third year) to exit from probation to ordination and having sought the approval of the Diaconal Order's Convocation in April, a Probationer may be considered for Ordination in the following year. If a Probationer has not completed all academic requirements, s/he need to complete them in the fourth year and will be considered for ordination in the fifth and final year of probation.
3. When a Probationer Deacon has **COMPLETED ALL** academic requirements in the previous year and if the Superintendent of a Probationer Minister judges the Probationer
 1. Of sound moral and religious character,
 2. As believing and teaching sound Christian doctrine as held by the Methodist Church,
 3. As observing and enforcing our doctrine,
 4. And as having competent abilities for the work of an Ordained Deacon in the MCSA,
 5. AND the Probationer having served the required minimum years on probation.
4. The PMC conducts an interview with the probationer Deacon and makes a recommendation to the April Quarterly Meeting. **The Interview questions and reporting are Form P3** (available from EMMU or can be downloaded from www.methodisttraining.co.za.)
5. The April CQM receives the P2B and P3 reports then forward them along with their recommendation to Synod and EMMU, through the DSS. **Please use Form P5 for recommendation to Synod.** It is available from EMMU or can be downloaded from www.methodisttraining.co.za.
6. The District Supervisor of Studies convenes a District Screening Committee before the District Synod, including members of the District EMMU Committee. This committee will review the Deacon Probationer's Circuit Assessment (Form P3) and CQM recommendation Form P5) and then interview the probationer to assess personal and spiritual growth of the Probationer. **Please use Form P6 for this interview.** It is available

from EMMU or can be downloaded from www.methodisttraining.co.za.

7. The Synod Listening Committee conducts an Oral Doctrine and Practice Examination of the recommended Deacon probationer in committee (not on the floor of the synod). This examination will assess the probationer's understanding of Methodist doctrine and practice and will be set by EMMU.
8. Synods receive the names of all Deacon Probationers whose advancement is recommended by the Circuit Quarterly Meetings for consideration and recommendation of advancement by the District Screening and Listening Committees.
9. **Probationer Deacons submit the required Assessment Documents (content to be determined from time to time) on next page to EMMU, by 01 June of the year in which Synod has recommended their name for advancement to Ordination.**
10. The General Committee of EMMU, having received all the reports from District Synods, shall on the basis of such reports (through its Assessment Committee) make a recommendation to the Connexional Executive pending satisfactory end of year results.
11. Based upon satisfactory reports, EMMU recommends Ordination for the following year to the Connexional Executive and Conference.

EXITING PROBATION SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS. (2019)

INSTRUCTIONS:

The following questions are to be answered openly and honestly, to assess understanding of personal growth and of acquired competence in ministerial practice during Probation. Answer all questions. The number of words given to each question is for guidance. **The total document is not to exceed 4000 words i.e. 8 typed pages.**

1. Discuss how you have grown as a disciple of Christ and in your personal spiritual discipline during your Probation. In what ways have you managed to balance keeping your spiritual disciplines with the demands of your congregation? (500 words)
2. Affirm yourself by briefly commenting on the skills/ practices of ministry that you believe you are doing very well. (250 words)
3. What have you found to be your particular gifting? Explain how this gifting fit in with the order of ministry you are called into as well as with the mission of the MCSA? (500 words)
4. What practice/ skill of ministry do you struggle with or do badly in? Why? How are you planning to continue your growth in this area? (250 words)
5. Outside of the formal Methodist training , who or what else has influenced your ministry during this time of Probation? Explain how. (300 words)
6. Describe an event/ incident of failure or hardship you have experienced during your Probation. How did you handle and process this experience and what have you learnt from it? Please include some theological reflection on the experience. (500 words)
7. What particular IST Project have you enjoyed during your in-service training and why? Which one challenged you and why? (500 words)
8. Society tends to bestow status and power upon those in the ministry. How do you as a minister relate and handle this power ? Give examples. (300 words)
9. How have you maintained a healthy and positive relationships with the members of the congregation you are serving AND with those who are your supervisors in the ministry i.e. Superintendent, District Supervisor, IST Convener etc.? (500 words)
10. As you are nearing ordination year, write a reflection on what you understand ordination to mean especially within the order in which you are called. (300 words)

ORDINATION YEAR

Having completed probation successfully, and having completed an accepted degree or diploma, and having fulfilled all requirements expected, a Probationer is advanced to Ordination.

Preparation for Ordination includes:

- Attending the **January Ordinands' Retreat**.
- Preparing **three reflective essays**, one on "The meaning of Ordination", one on the Probationer's journey through training and a further one on "Mission beyond Ordination".
- A retreat together with other Ordinands a few days before Conference and the Ordination Service.

Synod Requirements in year of Ordination

1. The PMC conducts an interview with the probationer and make a recommendation to the April Quarterly Meeting. **The Interview questions and reporting are Form P3** (available from EMMU or can be downloaded from www.methodisttraining.co.za.)
2. The April CQM receives the P2B and P3 reports then votes to recommend the probationer for ordination to synod. The CQM (Superintendent) should forward the reports along with the recommendation to Synod and EMMU, through the DSS. **Please use form P5 for recommendation to Synod.** It is available from EMMU or can be downloaded from www.methodisttraining.co.za.
3. Ordinands must conduct a Trial Service in front of at least two, but preferably three ordained ministers and one lay member of the district. This team of assessors will provide the DSS with a report of the service (Form P4) plus an attachment with a brief outline of the sermon and a general description of the service.
4. The District Supervisor of Studies convenes a District Screening Committee before the District Synod including members of the District EMMU Committee. This committee will review the Probationer's Circuit Assessment (Form P2 with Section B) and CQM recommendation and then conduct an **Exit Interview** to assess the Probationer's readiness for ordination. **Please use Form P7 for this interview.** It is available from EMMU or can be downloaded from www.methodisttraining.co.za.
5. **ATheology Oral Exam** occurs at the Convocation, assessed there and reported on to the DSS who reports the results to Synod.
6. Synods receive the names of all Probationers whose Ordination is recommended by the Circuit Quarterly Meeting and District Screening Committee for consideration and votes on recommendation of advancement – sent to the EMMU General Committee.
7. The General Committee of EMMU, having received all the reports from District Synods, shall on the basis of such reports (through its Assessment Committee) make a recommendation to the Connexional Executive pending satisfactory end of year results.

**DEACON – IN – TRAINING IN CIRCUIT (Probationers and Ordinands)
RUBRICS FOR SKILLS AND CHARACTER FORMATION**

Caution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A failed IST Assignment, Exegesis, Trial Service, Theological exam for advancing to Ordination, Self assessment, Ordinands' Theological Exam or Ordination Assignment. [see Note 1 & Note 3] 2) Evidence of Plagiarism in either 1ST Assignments, Exegesis, Trial Service or Ordination Assignment. [see Note 2] 3) Resubmission of two consecutive IST Assignments, Ordination assignments or having to resubmit a total of two pieces of the required work in the same year. 4) Late submission of assignment (IST and Ordination) beyond reasonable extension. 5) Unacceptable behaviour towards fellow probationers, guest speakers, or those in authority at the January seminar, IST meetings and Screening or Readiness committee's (this includes latecoming, disrespect, rudeness, and expressing any of the various "ism's") 6) Being under the influence of alcohol or any other substance at the January Probationer seminar, January Ordination retreat, IST meetings, Screening or Readiness committee's, Synod, Ordination retreat or any other gathering of the church. 7) Receiving Category A rating in a Probationer Mentoring Committee (PMC) Report. [See Note 4] 8) Being granted dispensation to attend convocation and/or formational training (one instance) in no way negates or displaces this process. Asking for and receiving dispensation for not attending constitutes a <i>willing submission to a caution</i>.
Warning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Accumulation of TWO cautionable offences 2) Avoidance of recommended interventions issued by EMMU when cautioned. 3) A negative Exit Formation Certificate from SMMS 4) Being granted dispensation to attend convocation and/or formational training (second instance in the same or consecutive year in no way negates or displaces this process. Asking for and receiving dispensation for not attending constitutes a <i>willing submission to a warning</i>.
Final Warning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Accumulation of THREE cautionable offences. 2) A cautionable offence while on Warning. 3) Avoidance of recommended interventions issued by EMMU when warned. 4) If a probationer received a warning in the previous year and has failed 2 or more academic courses again, or again failed to attend, or failed to complete the requirements of formational training in the current year, he or she will receive a final warning. Being granted dispensation to attend convocation and/or formational training in no way negates or displaces this process. Asking for and receiving dispensation for not attending constitutes a willing submission to a final warning.
Discontinuance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Accumulation of FOUR cautionable offences. 2) A cautionable offence while on Final Warning. 3) Failure to meet all the requirements for ordination within 5 years. 4) Being found guilty of the breach of Discipline as per Laws and Discipline.

NOTE 1 :

- In situations where the Probationer/Ordinand has failed any of the components listed in no.1 she/he will be allowed to re-submit.
- In the case of an IST Assignment, if it was to be a communally determined assessment, the probationer is to re-submit by the end of the IST meeting. If it is to be

solely assessed by the DSS or IST Convenor, the probationer will be given a week in which to re-submit from receiving knowledge of the assignment not being competent.

- In cases of other components the DSS & the District EMMU committee will determine the dates of re-submission - which should be before the July EMMU General Committee Meeting.
- If the re-submission is not successful it results in a failure of the Component and the rubrics fall into place.

NOTE 2:

If a Probationer or Ordinand has submitted a piece of work in which there is evidence of plagiarism, the Probationer or Ordinand receives an automatic fail, with no option for re-submission. This will result in one's Ordination being deferred by 1 year.

NOTE 3 :

A failure of any of the required components listed in no. 1 or being under Suspension for any reason during the year will result in one's Ordination being deferred.

NOTE 4 :

If no pastoral commission has been instituted, the Director of EMMU will request the relevant Bishop, together with the Superintendent and the DSS, to institute a Pastoral commission. The report from either of these pastoral commissions is to be submitted to the DSS for submission to the next EMMU General Committee Meeting. EMMU may then require further intervention.

NUMBER OF YEARS ON PROBATION BEFORE ORDINATION

Minimum of 4 years; **MAXIMUM OF 5 YEARS**

Should a Deacon Probationer not complete within 5 years, s/he will be discontinued