

1.2 An Overview of the Discernment Process (Continued)

Initial approach by candidate:	This would usually be through the candidate's incumbent or chaplain.
Initial interview:	This will normally be with the DDO or ADDO, though some dioceses prefer this to be with a Vocations Adviser to keep open the possibilities for different ministries. It is important to ensure that all candidates going through the discernment process are legally entitled to reside in the UK. To this end, early on in the process you should ask to see proof of a candidate's immigration status. Any questions arising from this should be directed to the Home Office.
Candidate's form:	A diocesan form should gather basic information. More detailed information will become available through interviews. A piece of written work of a more extended kind is often found to be useful.
References:	Should a diocese take up its own references early on, referees should be made aware that they may well be asked for a further reference or an update of their initial reference. References must reflect the main areas of a candidate's life and experience, the world of work, family, friends and church tradition. Normally this means references are required from the incumbent and/or chaplain, a lay member of the church, an educationalist, and someone who knows the candidate at work. Referees should not be related to the candidate, to each other, or in close personal relationships with each other. References should come from male and female referees. Sensitivity must be exercised with requesting a reference from a candidate's employer where such a request could prejudice the candidate's career prospects. If, however, the candidate sees their employment as the focus of ministry (Minister in Secular Employment), then another kind of enquiry needs to be undertaken between the diocese and the employer. Please see <i>Discerning Ministers in Secular Employment</i> . If there are any difficulties in determining suitable referees for the purpose of the BAP, please contact a National Adviser for Selection (formerly Selection Secretary) early on. DDOs will be asked to raise references and other papers for candidates, to be received by Ministry Division no later than six weeks before the candidate goes to a BAP. References for BAPs should be signed (electronically is fine) and dated and must be no more than six months old by the time of the BAP. See 2.4 below for further guidance.
Further Discernment:	The importance of careful engagement with the candidate cannot be over-emphasised. Meeting the candidate and spouse or civil partner at home by at least one member of the discernment team can be helpful. Once the DDO has made sufficient enquiry, the candidate may also be interviewed by an examining chaplain and/or a panel of diocesan assessors.
Decision to sponsor:	It is important that the diocesan procedure for a BAP is explained to the candidate early on. Bishops will have their own policy on the timing of their interview with candidates. Most wish to see candidates before a BAP. If the Bishop has not interviewed the candidate, it is particularly important that the Bishop be fully briefed by the DDO, and have all reports available to assist them in the decision to sponsor or not. If more testing of a candidate is felt necessary at any stage - further work or parochial experience or a period of study - then another interview will be necessary.
Sponsoring Papers:	Sponsoring Papers are sent to Ministry Division and should summarise the views of others (for example, a diocesan panel or Examining Chaplain) who have seen the candidate where these will be useful to Bishops' Advisers. Above all, they should reflect the views of the DDO and not just repeat what the candidate has written.

1.6 The Intended Focus of Ministry

In all cases the sponsoring papers should set out the intended focus of the candidate's ministry as an incumbent or assistant minister or ordained local minister/locally deployable minister, as well as whether any of the following are envisaged: ordained pioneer minister, minister in secular employment, or theological educator.

Other matters to be investigated (particularly for candidates looking to minister in their home parish) may include confirmation that a candidate has the support of the candidate's PCC.

In the case of ministers in secular employment, an indication of the attitude of the candidate's employer and how their ministry will be received in the secular context must be looked into and indicated in the Sponsoring Papers. Please see *Minister in Secular Employment Guidelines*.

1.7 Age (lower and upper limits)

There is a clear and strong encouragement to attract more young people to ordination. Candidates are permitted to attend a BAP once they are 18. Any upper age limit is at the discretion of the Sponsoring Bishop. If an ordinand will be under 23 at the point of ordination, they cannot be ordained without a Faculty from the Archbishop of Canterbury (see Canon C3).

1.8 Education and Theological Training

In the *Criteria for Selection for Ordained Ministry in the Church of England*, Criterion I (Quality of Mind) refers to the importance of a candidate being able to cope with and benefit from theological training. Many candidates will need to engage in preliminary study to introduce them to study at the educational standard that will be needed, or to give them a basic grounding in theology, possibly by one of the lay training courses arranged by some dioceses. Where dioceses have asked a candidate to pursue some course of study, the DDO is encouraged to include a tutor's report, or a summary of it, within the sponsoring papers to inform the work of Bishops' Advisers.

DDOs have an important role in helping candidates make an informed and appropriate choice of training pathway and TEI. It is helpful to have a preliminary discussion about pathways at an early stage. It may be useful for candidates to visit one or two TEIs (with the agreement of the diocese) before attending a BAP. It is inadvisable for a candidate to make firm arrangements for training before attending a BAP.

The timing of attendance at a BAP (early or late in the academic year) will obviously have an important bearing here. Bishops' Advisers may make suggestions about an individual's training in their report, but this would not extend to recommending specific TEIs. Please see *Supporting Ordinands through Initial Training*.

1.9 Finance

A careful assessment of the financial situation of all candidates should be made before sponsorship. The DDO's responsibilities are to work with candidates regarding personal finance issues as an integral part of the sponsorship process. All candidates are expected to complete a *Statement of Financial Position* form prior to sponsorship for a BAP.

DDOs should begin the task of working with candidates to address any debt problems as early as possible, but certainly once the decision has been made to sponsor the candidate. If a candidate has a student loan this is an acceptable form of debt. Candidates who intend to draw a stipend should be asked by their dioceses to fill in the *Statement of Financial Position* form for a second time on receipt of the interim report from the candidate's training institution.

Full details of financial arrangements for ordination training are provided in *Resourcing Ministerial Education: A Guide to the new Financial Arrangements*.

1.14 Sponsorship of Transgender Candidates

Transgender candidates are welcome to be considered for selection for ordained ministry in the Church of England. Any Bishop intending to sponsor a transgender person for a BAP will certify that they have decided that they would be prepared to ordain and offer a title to that person if during the course of training and formation they were deemed to have a vocation to ordained ministry.

It is important that the DDO handles such situations sensitively and with integrity and that both the candidate and the BAP Advisers know the mind of the Diocesan Bishop in a given situation. Any decision regarding candidates needs to bear in mind the public nature of the ordained ministry, an understanding of the human condition and the gospel imperative of holiness and integrity of life for all believers.

1.15 Safeguarding

The House of Bishops' current safeguarding policy now includes a three-stage process that is operative for everyone working with children and vulnerable adults:

1. A *Confidential Declaration – Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults* form, (see also comments under Great Crimes below);
2. A full CV, an outline of any work with children and vulnerable adults, and an explanation of any gaps;
3. An Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

An Enhanced Disclosure from the DBS should be required for all candidates at two points: before going to a Bishops' Advisory Panel and prior to ordination. These checks should be sufficient for most placement situations but occasionally a placement agency may (on its own initiative) require an ordinand to acquire a further disclosure. Initial checks should be made early in the exploration process and certainly before a candidate is sponsored to a BAP. This would allow for any sensitive issues that emerge to be dealt with much earlier in the discernment process. It is important that, even if a candidate has a DBS check for another purpose, a new DBS check needs to be carried out for the purposes of training for ordained ministry. DDOs should get candidates to show them the DBS Certificate and take up any issues as necessary. It is usual for an officer, other than the DDO, to be appointed in the diocese to deal with DBS checks, under the auspices of the Diocesan Secretary or the Diocesan Bishop. In view of the seriousness of this matter safeguarding procedures must be completed as a pre-requisite to a candidate attending a BAP (as with the Canon C4 procedure, and the completion of the *Statement of Financial Position*). If any of the three safeguarding requirements (Confidential Declaration, CV and DBS) have not been received by six weeks before their BAP, the candidate will be withdrawn from the BAP. Safeguarding is the responsibility of dioceses and not the training institutions. DDOs should inform Ministry Division in the sponsoring papers when safeguarding procedures have been satisfactorily completed.

1.16 Great Crimes

The *Ordinal* in the *Book of Common Prayer* recognises a difference between 'great crimes' (in respect of which ordination could not proceed unless the person was acquitted or pardoned (or, implicitly, dispensed by the Archbishop of Canterbury under s. 3 of the Ecclesiastical Licences Act 1533 ("ELA 1533")) and lesser crimes. The Archbishop of Canterbury still has power to dispense under s. 3 of the ELA 1533. Other bishops (including the Archbishop of York) no longer have a power to dispense following the repeal of s.15 as obsolete in 1969. If a crime is considered a 'great crime' then a person may not be ordained without the dispensation of the Archbishop of Canterbury (assuming there has not been an acquittal or pardon).