

Training Incumbent Role Description



Formation for Ministry in Today's Church

1. Purpose and Vision of the Training Incumbent Role

A Training Incumbent (TI) shares in the Church of England's vocation to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ afresh in each generation. In the 2020s the Church seeks to be:

- Jesus Christ centred and shaped by the Five Marks of Mission
- Simpler, humbler, bolder
- A mixed ecology Church, in which all traditions, forms and contexts of church flourish, and where every person has access to an enriching Christian community
- A Church that is becoming younger and more diverse, forming missionary disciples and growing in missional fruitfulness

A Training Curacy is an important period of formation in this vision. Our goal is that every curate receives effective, contextual, mission-shaped training for the priestly ministry into which they are being formed: ministry that is rich, multifaceted, demanding and full of hope. A Training Incumbent therefore does not 'use' a curate, nor simply 'host' one. Rather, the role is to co-create a learning partnership in which the TI actively trains the curate, while both grow in discipleship, wisdom, ministry, integrity and trust.

2. The Ministry for Which Curates Are Being Formed

'Doors Wider – Faith Deeper – Impact Greater' is not a new diocesan vision but the three priorities set by the Board for Mission and Ministry for the next triennium. They shape all Mission and Ministry work, including IME2, ensuring curates are formed to widen inclusion and welcome, deepen discipleship and leadership, and increase missional impact across the Church's mixed ecology.

2.1. **Doors Wider – Increased Diversity**

Curates are being formed to help the Church widen its welcome:

- Engaging children, young people, families
- Reflecting the diversity of the communities we serve
- Welcoming those historically underrepresented in the Church
- Enabling cultures of belonging, hospitality, equity and conscious inclusion

Training Incumbents nurture the dispositions and practices needed to support this.

2.2. **Faith Deeper – Whole-Life Discipleship & Fruitful Leadership**

Curates must be formed to help churches become places where disciples:

- Live as disciples of Christ each day
- Grow in faith, confidence and everyday witness
- Make disciples who make disciples
- Discover and use their gifts
- Become leaders who grow leaders

Training Incumbents model and cultivate these patterns of life.

2.3. **Impact Greater – Missional Transformation**

Curates need formation for mission across the Five Marks of Mission, in the context of a mixed ecology that includes parish, chaplaincy, schools, community organisations, fresh expressions / new worshipping communities and digital presence.

Training Incumbents therefore nurture:

- Missional imagination
- Courage in change
- Discernment of God's activity in context
- Engagement in community transformation
- Hope-filled, outward-looking leadership

3. The Formation Framework – Qualities to be Inhabited

In line with the national IME Formation Framework, ordained ministry is understood not as a checklist but as the lifelong inhabiting of seven Christian qualities:

- Love for God
- Call to Ministry
- Love for People
- Wisdom
- Fruitfulness
- Potential
- Trustworthiness

These qualities are explored through four domains of relationship: Christ, Church, World and Self. Training Incumbents help curates grow in these qualities over time, in the real contexts of ministry.

4. How Training Incumbents Model and Nurture These Qualities

4.1. Love for God

- Living a prayerful life, inspired by the Scriptures
- Sharing patterns of prayer and worship with the curate
- Encouraging resilient rhythms of devotion, study and rest
- Reflecting honestly on joy, struggle and grace

4.2. Call to Ministry

- Treating the curate as a fellow disciple, not an assistant or 'extra pair of hands'
- Making space for the curate's gifts, theological voice and agency
- Helping them understand Anglican priesthood across traditions
- Supporting them as their call unfolds in daily ministry

4.3. Love for People

- Modelling Christlike welcome, especially to those on the margins
- Providing compassionate, boundaried pastoral care
- Encouraging learning from the diversity of God's people
- Ensuring robust safeguarding culture and processes

4.4. Wisdom

- Offering structured, reflective, encouraging supervision
- Modelling collaborative leadership and healthy decision-making
- Encouraging theological reflection integrating scripture, tradition and context
- Demonstrating adaptability, curiosity and lifelong learning

4.5. Fruitfulness

- Creating space for preaching, teaching, pastoral ministry, leadership and pioneering
- Offering constructive, honest, timely feedback
- Modelling a culture where mistakes contribute to learning
- Helping the curate notice where God is at work and enable others' growth

4.6. Potential

- Exposing the curate to a broad range of ministry contexts
- Encouraging confidence, creativity and resilience
- Helping the curate discern their gifts, limitations and future vocation
- Supporting the transition into public ministry with realism and hope

4.7. Trustworthiness

- Modelling integrity, transparency and accountability
- Upholding boundaries, confidentiality and safe use of authority
- Prioritising safeguarding in all things
- Encouraging the curate to shape communities of safety and trust

5. Core Responsibilities of the Training Incumbent

A Training Incumbent will:

- Prioritise time, attention and energy for the curate, recognising this may require declining other commitments
- Hold weekly or fortnightly structured supervision (for reflection and support) throughout the curacy
- Shape ministry opportunities tailored to the curate's learning needs and gifts
- Provide honest, timely reports grounded in the seven qualities
- Communicate consistently with the IME2 Officer, raising concerns early
- Model healthy boundaries, sustainable rhythms of work and rest, and self-awareness
- Participate in TI training, action learning sets and ongoing development
- Encourage a culture of learning, reflection, belonging and accountable freedom

6. Creating Space for Leadership, Mission and Growth

6.1. Empowering the Curate to Lead

Training Incumbents intentionally:

- Provide real, stretching leadership opportunities appropriate to the stage of formation
- Encourage curates to shape, plan and lead projects
- Allow curates to develop their own pastoral, liturgical and leadership voice
- Give room for risk, experimentation and safe failure¹
- Share leadership and delegate ministry tasks to grow the curate's leadership

6.2. A Clear and Active Missional Vision in the Parish / Benefice

Training Incumbents:

- Demonstrate a lived, prayerful commitment to mission in the parish/benefice
- Model the practice of missional reflection, planning and discernment
- Involve the curate in missional decisions and processes
- Encourage the curate to contribute their own insights and initiatives
- Provide exposure to a range of mission contexts: parish, schools, chaplaincy, community partnerships, fresh expressions, digital outreach and ecumenical work

6.3. Formation in Community Engagement and Mixed Ecology Mission

Training Incumbents ensure the curate experiences ministry beyond liturgical and pastoral boundaries (important though they are):

- Active engagement with community groups, civic life, local needs and partnerships
- Participation in social action, justice, compassion and creation care
- Involvement in fresh expressions, pioneering, new worshipping communities and digital mission
- Reflection on the [*Five Marks of Mission*](#) and how they shape parish life
- Understanding the mixed ecology as a single, interdependent expression of the Church

¹ Safe failure means giving curates space to try new things without fear that an unsuccessful outcome will harm their curacy, while ensuring safeguarding and risk assessments are in place to prevent harm to people, reputation, or mission. For example, a curate might lead a new outreach event with all safeguarding checks and risk controls completed; if it doesn't work as intended, the experience is used for reflection and learning rather than criticism.

7. Parish / Benefice Responsibilities

The parish/benefice will:

- Welcome the curate and, where applicable, their household
- Support the incumbent's time investment in supervision and training
- Pay the curate's working expenses and meet parish share (or have an agreed plan)
- Embrace different leadership styles and learning opportunities
- Sustain a strong safeguarding culture
- Encourage spiritual and numerical growth, community engagement and a learning culture

8. Formation and Support for Training Incumbents

The diocese will provide:

- TI training and induction
- The *Transforming Conversations* course, open to curates and Training Incumbents equips both to hold empowering, non-directive learning conversations; attendance is encouraged
- Three annual learning events (including reflective practice and M&M input)
- Conscious Inclusion and safeguarding formation
- Access to supervision and peer support
- TI Action Learning Sets for reflective practice and ongoing development

9. Person Profile

9.1. Skills and Capabilities

- Sustained prayer life and engagement with Scripture
- Ability to reflect on joy, struggle, and grace in ministry
- Collaborative leadership experience
- Deep listening and empowering questioning
- Inclusive leadership and conscious inclusion
- Supporting others' growth and discernment
- Structured supervision and constructive feedback
- Missional imagination and engagement beyond parish boundaries
- Adaptability and commitment to lifelong learning
- Understanding and practice of safeguarding and boundaries
- Accountability and transparency in leadership

9.2. Dispositions

- Prayerful and grounded in Scripture
- Secure in Christ and unthreatened by others' gifts
- Excited about forming priests for a younger, more diverse, mixed ecology Church
- Committed to safety, wellbeing, and integrity
- Reflective and open to learning
- Hope-filled and outward-looking
- Courageous in change and mission
- Compassionate and hospitable toward all people