The United Reformed Church

Ministries
The United Reformed Church
86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

Guidelines for Education for Ministry Phase 3

EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY 3

Who is eligible?

Financial support towards Education for Ministry (phases 2 and 3) is available for Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers who are considered active if they are on the URC Roll of Ministers and at least one of the following criteria applies if :

- they are in a pastorate or post for which they are receiving a stipend (either full or part) from the United Reformed Church (eg deployed post, SCM or pioneering post, Assembly appointment) under the Plan for Partnership;
- they are in non-stipendiary service in a recognised ministry post;
- they are exercising a ministry with another organisation within the gift of the church to the wider church to which they have been inducted by the URC where possible (eg chaplaincy, educational establishment, ecumenical body) and for which they receive a stipend, salary or serve in a voluntary capacity;

It is recognised that there may be people who are not included in the above list. Such people will receive grants at the discretion of the designated Synod Officer responsible for Education for Ministry (phases 2 and 3), in consultation with the Deputy General Secretary (Ministries).

Ministers from other denominations who are in recognised ministry with a Local Ecumenical Partnership which contains United Reformed Church members are eligible to apply for grants at 50% of the level set for United Reformed Church ministers, provided that they have exhausted similar allowances available to them through their own denomination.

What can grants be used for?

The purpose of EM3 is to develop ministry through work-related practical training, educational, spiritual, and professional development, and on very rare occasions, specialist equipment. Grants may be used, each year, for retreat style learning subject to the agreement of the designated Synod Officer responsible for EM3. Grants can only be given for these purposes.

Development serves the Church's calling, not simply the minister's enrichment. Applicants will need articulate how the learning will serve the theological, vocational, and missional rationale for the proposed professional development. It is not primarily about personal interest or academic curiosity, but about how the Church's ministry is strengthened through this learning. In other words, how does this activity

- Enhance their current or anticipated ministry

- Address an identified development need
- Support the mission and priorities of the URC

Therefore, every request will be subject to an 'application to ministry' test. Applicants must show that the learning for which they are seeking funding has a direct bearing on the ministry which they are currently exercising or which they are preparing to exercise in future.

Grants are unlikely to be authorised for attendance at church assemblies, general church conferences, network meetings or meetings of organisations unless there is a training element or unless it is a one-off to test if such an event would support future ministry. If the latter is the case, future attendance would be funded by either the place of ministry or the minister.

Grants of £350 (half the £700) can also be used for reading weeks to buy books.

Grants should not be used for the same event annually as they are given for the minister to explore a variety of learning opportunities.

Grant Funding

Requests for EM3 grant funding are considered within an application to ministry context, in order to discern whether the proposed learning or resource is appropriate to the exercise of ministerial office. In some cases, a request may more properly be understood as a cost of ministry, which should be met by the pastorate rather than through EM3 funding. Learning events and resources supported through EM3 must be authorised by the Synod Training and Development Officer, or other relevant officer.

Active ministers participating in EM3 may apply for a grant of up to £700 per year, excluding sabbatical years. In a sabbatical year, the available grant rises to £1,200 for the sabbatical period; this does not include the non-sabbatical year £700 grant which can be added to the sabbatical grant if required. EM3 funding provides financial support only; it does not confer additional study leave beyond existing entitlements.

The EM3 grant is offered annually and cannot be carried over. All those eligible for EM3 are encouraged to access the grant funding.

Where the annual £700 limit is insufficient for a significant learning event, the Rollover Funding Scheme may be used which can allow you to borrow ahead or save up to three years EM3 funding (*copied from paragraph below*) Following completion of the standard application process and authorisation by the appropriate Synod Training and Development Officer (or equivalent), funding may be paid either in arrears on receipt of a claim or, where appropriate, in advance directly to the learning provider.

Ministers of another denomination serving in an ecumenical post may apply for up to 50% of the EM3 grant, recognising their continued access to professional development support from their own denomination.

Where a minister undertakes a substantial change in the nature of their ministry, a Transitional Training Grant may be available, providing an additional two weeks' time allowance and up to £350 in grant funding.

Additional funding may be available for participation in Belonging to the World Church opportunities or for engagement in higher-degree study, including Master's and doctoral-level qualifications through the Continuing Studies Fund.
For more information contact the relevant Synod Officer who will liaise with the Deputy General Secretary (Ministries).

How are grants paid?

You may claim the full cost of courses, including travel and books up to £700 (£350 if you are in the Education for Ministry phase 2 period) in each calendar year. Your Synod EM2/3 Officer will work with you to plan your learning, funding and filling in the relevant forms. During a Sabbatical year, a separate Sabbatical Grant may be applied for: the EM3 grant of £700 can still be claimed during a Sabbatical year, for the above purposes detailed above.

Other Learning Opportunities

The United Reformed Church also offers a range of learning opportunities organised within its own structures, including:

Synod Schools	Synod Schools are organised by individual or joint Synods, usually cover a four-day period and may be offered every year offering a chance for fellowship, learning and reflection.
Sabbaticals	Sabbaticals are organised in dialogue with Synod Training and Development Officers (or equivalent), usually last three months and are offered to ministers every seven years of their ministry from the last sabbatical taken. Sabbaticals must begin before a minister reaches retirement age.
Church Leadership Programmes	The Church Leadership Programme (CLP) is offered to ministers ideally in years five to nine of their ministry. The CLP includes lay leaders and consists of two residential weeks, six months apart in separate calendar years with non-residential learning and activity between the residential weeks.
Belonging to the World Church	Belonging to the World Church visits and exchanges are organised in conjunction with the Head of Global & Intercultural Church. Funding is normally available for one visit every five years with applications being made through Synod Training and Development Officers or equivalent.

There are other opportunities

Further degrees	Further degrees are organised in dialogue with Synod Training and Development Officers and relevant learning providers.
Conferences	Conferences may be regular conferences associated with particular types of ministry or events around particular issues. If the 'application to ministry' criteria apply, these may be funded within EM3
Transitional Training	When a minister substantially changes their type of ministry (eg chaplaincy to pastorate, pastorate to leadership) then further training time and funding is offered. The first stop for discussion is the relevant Synod Training and Development Officer or equivalent.
Other events or support	Many other kinds of support or physical resource may be considered within EM3. The first stop for discussion is the relevant Synod Training and Development Officer or equivalent.

Interfaith Fund

The Interfaith Fund (originally known as the 'Jewish Fund') was established to support Jewish/Christian relations in the East End of London. Many URC ministers and members have benefitted from the fund to support visits to Israel/Palestine. During 2016, work was done by the URC Trust and with the Charity Commissioners to bring the fund up to date, recognising that the interfaith environment is now very different. As a result, the remit of the fund was expanded, with the following aim: "The promotion of contact, understanding and respect among Christians, Jews and members of other faith communities, in ways consonant with the beliefs and practices of the United Reformed Church".

Applications

Groups and individuals who may apply to the fund are:

- Individual churches seeking to promote contact, understanding and respect among Christians, Jews and members of other faith communities in their own local community
- Ministers of Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Workers, and others in leadership of local URC churches who are seeking support for personal study and reflection that will facilitate the promotion of contact, understanding and respect among Christians, Jews and members of other faith communities, particularly in their local area.
- Organisations that have links to United Reformed Churches working in their local communities to promote contact, understanding and respect among Christians, Jews and members of other faith communities, in ways consonant with the beliefs and practices of the United Reformed Church.
- National organisations where the United Reformed Church has representation and which are seeking to promote contact, understanding and respect among Christians, Jews and members of other faith communities, in ways consonant with the beliefs and practices of the United Reformed Church.

Exceptionally, consideration will be given to applications received from global or regional Christian organisations on which the United Reformed Church has representation.

Please email Suzanne.pearson@urc.org.uk for an application form.

Information on the Continuing Studies Fund

This fund enables further learning for both individual lay and ordained people, to support them financially. People can apply to do formal courses over a number of years or one-off training or learning opportunities. The fund offers up to £500 per applicant and is administered by the Education and Learning (E&L) finance sub-committee. Repeat requests are allowed, throughout the duration of study, and approval in principle for the entire duration of study is given before the study is started. Typically, these grants are a relatively small proportion of the total funding required. The funding is not part of the E&L budget agreed by Assembly Executive on behalf of General Assembly but is sourced from specific funds set aside for such purposes (Carmichael Montgomery and the Discipleship Development Fund).

The criteria for the grant includes the requirement that the study should enhance and/or support a role/ministry in a local church context, and needs to be offered through a recognised establishment. We are a learning Church and wish to encourage learning for the whole people of God. The CSF grants are for individual learning.

For further information about the Continuing Studies Fund, contact the Synod TDO+ or equivalent.

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Person Responsible for Reviewing: DGS (Ministries)