



The Anglican Church of Australia

**MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS
FOR ORDINATION**

DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION

Prepared by
The Ministry Commission of
the General Synod of
The Anglican Church of Australia

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PREAMBLE

This document is an update and revision of earlier Guidelines and Minimum Requirements for Ordination. It has been undertaken by the Ministry Commission in response to a request by General Synod. The document sets out in brief form a summary of those attributes, competencies and ecclesial sensibilities appropriate for those persons called to serve as Deacons, Priests and Bishops in the Church of God. The document sets out Guidelines to assist the process of discernment of vocation; Minimum Requirements for readiness for ordination as deacon, priest and bishop. Guidelines are not directives; rather they are meant to inform and assist. Minimum requirements represent base lines regarding expectations not upper limits. It also implicitly recognises that the development of spiritual maturity is a life's work; the vocation *within* the Vocation.

This document is a complement to and further specification of the Ordinal. The theology of Orders present in the Ordinal offers the Church a rich account of the character, functions and accountabilities associated with the three orders of ministry. In particular the Exhortation and Ordination Vows give a clear, comprehensive and powerful account of the expectations and responsibilities of those to be ordained as deacons, priests and bishops in the Church of God. Inevitably questions arise in relation to the Exhortation and Vows as to what kinds of competencies, theological understandings and ecclesial character are necessary in order for persons to fulfil the Ministerial Offices specified in the Ordinal. This is where the Guidelines and Minimum Requirements for ordination belong.

The Ordinal is a unified body of liturgical rites with theological and ecclesial weight. But it subsists within the Church in the world. The context is thus dynamic and the Church of Jesus Christ has a continuing responsibility to update its understanding of the meaning and practice of ordained ministry. This is why the Ordinal has undergone revision over the centuries and particularly from the latter period of the twentieth century. For example contemporary ordinals have a greater emphasis on collaborative ministry than earlier versions. In similar fashion and for similar reasons Guidelines and Minimum Requirements undergo change and updating from time to time. This reflects the Church's attempt to be faithful to the identity and relevance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As a result the *Ordinal of the Anglican Church of Australia* and this present document on *Guidelines and Minimum Requirements* reflects continuities with the inheritance of wisdom regarding the theology and practice of ministry, and recognition that the Church needs to respond creatively and intelligently to the contemporary world in which it is called to manifest the many varied wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:10).

Accordingly the document begins with guidelines for ordination to the permanent diaconate in recognition of the emerging significance of diaconal ministry as a distinct order within the threefold order of ministry (see Appendix 1). In Anglicanism the three orders are distinct though related, and importantly are cumulative in character. Priests and Bishops forever remain deacons. This is a matter of considerable theological significance for the character of ordained ministry. The document also recognises the growing importance of *pioneer ministry* (see Appendix 2) and the challenges of outreach and mission in our contemporary world. We also draw attention to the stronger emphasis in the Guidelines on understanding Anglican identity within the Australian context. Finally while practical skills and competencies, together with solid theological understanding receive strong endorsement in this present document the reader will hardly fail to miss the recurring focus on questions to do with ecclesial character and the Christian virtues. This latter dimension gives power and integrity to practical skills and competencies, and theological understanding. This matrix establishes the conditions for a leadership that aspires to the highest ethical standards, a ministry that is fruitful and a Church that seeks to be faithful to the Gospel.

VARIATIONS FROM THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

The Commission recognises that specialist ministries and circumstances will result in bishops ordaining people with qualities, skills and qualifications that vary from the minimum requirements as outlined in this document. However, the view of the Commission is that the minimum requirements as outlined should be taken as core requirements for parish ministry such that variations from them are made self-consciously, intentionally and with adequate justification.

The Commission believes that no variations should conflict with the following essential assumptions:

1. Ordination is within the single threefold Orders of the Church
2. Ordination is to the Church of God.
3. The issue of whether a person is stipendiary, non-stipendiary, exercising a ministry part-time or full-time is a variation with the threefold Orders of Bishop, Priest and Deacon.
4. The diocese is the relevant defining local agent for selection, training, formation and ordination.

The Commission recognises the following specialist ministries or circumstances as examples where self-conscious, intentional and justifiable variations might be made:

- Indigenous
- Ethnic and cross-cultural ministries
- Non-parish ministries - e.g., chaplaincies, workplace
- Ministries in remote and small population rural areas
- Pioneer Ministries (see Appendix 1 rationale and additional requirements)
- The candidate's prior learning and experience
- The candidate's mature age

However, in these and similar circumstances, especially in relation to spiritual and personal qualities and to theology, variations should only be made after careful reference to the minimum requirements as outlined.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR ORDINATION TO THE PERMANENT DIACONATE

(See Appendix 1)

1. SPIRITUALITY AND FAITH

1) EVIDENCE OF:

- a sense of calling to diaconal ministry
- growth in the qualities required for Diaconal ministry
- a passion for the Gospel
- a sustained and growing spiritual life
- an attitude of loving service
- a commitment to life-long learning
- discernment and wisdom
- integrated Christian faith
- an appreciation of the various Anglican traditions and their expression in the Australian context
- being able to clearly articulate their sense of vocation, specifically to ordained diaconal ministry

2) EVIDENCE OF:

- self-care
- integrity in personal, marriage and family relationships
- ability to interpret, and respond appropriately to, people and circumstances
- personal ethics
- self-control
- self-understanding
- emotional maturity
- sustained listening to God and others

INDICATORS OF:

- a successful transition from private to public self
- loyalty to the Church, the Bishop and other ministers to whom accountable.
- professional integrity within ministry
- commitment to ongoing professional development

2. THEOLOGY

A theological qualification equivalent to one year full-time study, having a core of studies or a program of studies approved by the Bishop which includes an overview of the following:

- Biblical Studies
- Theological and Ethical Studies
- Anglican Studies
- Mission, Evangelism and the Australian Context
- Diaconal Ministry Studies

taught in a way which encourages ongoing interpretative and reflective learning which relates to the ministry context.

3. MINISTRY SKILLS

EVIDENCE OF SKILLS IN:

- Pastoral Care
- Liturgical Competence
- Ethical decision-making

- Mission and Evangelism
- Preaching and Teaching
- Interpreting the needs, concerns and hopes of the world to the Church including the charge to identify local community connections and needs

4. AUSTRALIAN ANGLICAN IDENTITY

- knowledge of Anglican Church polity
- knowledge of and commitment to Anglican liturgy /Prayer Book
- knowledge of and commitment to Anglicanism as part of the wider Christian Church
- appreciation of the role of diaconal ministry
- knowledge of the history and the ethos of the Churches of the Anglican Communion

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR ORDINATION
TO THE PRIESTHOOD
PART A
AT THE POINT OF ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE

1. SPIRITUALITY AND FAITH

EVIDENCE OF:

- sense of calling to diaconal ministry
- growth in the qualities required for Diaconal ministry
- a passion for the Gospel
- a sustained and growing spiritual life
- attitude of loving service
- a commitment to life-long learning
- discernment and wisdom
- integrated Christian faith
- appreciation of the various Anglican traditions and their expression in the Australian context
- being able to clearly articulate their sense of vocation, specifically to ordained diaconal ministry

INDICATORS OF POTENTIAL FOR:

- a successful transition from private to public self
- loyalty to the Church, the Bishop and other ministers to whom accountable
- professional integrity within ministry
- commitment to ongoing professional development
- willingness to be vulnerable and to share with others

2. THEOLOGY

An approved theological degree or a program of studies approved by the Bishop which includes broad knowledge in the following disciplines:

- Biblical Studies
- Theological and Ethical Studies
- Anglican Studies
- Mission, Evangelism and the Australian Context
- Diaconal Ministry Studies

undertaken in a *Critical, Systematic* and *Reflective* manner.

3. MINISTRY SKILLS

EVIDENCE OF SKILLS IN:

- leadership
- mission and evangelism
- pastoral care
- liturgy
- preaching
- teaching
- collaborating effectively with others
- communication and group processes
- equipping others for Christian service
- people and task management

INDICATORS OF SKILLS IN:

- ethical decision-making

4. AUSTRALIAN ANGLICAN IDENTITY

- knowledge of Anglican Church polity
- knowledge of and commitment to Anglican liturgy /Prayer Book
- knowledge of and commitment to Anglicanism as part of the wider Christian Church
- appreciation of the role of diaconal ministry
- knowledge of the history and the ethos of the Churches of the Anglican Communion

**MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR ORDINATION
TO THE PRIESTHOOD**

**PART B
AT THE POINT OF ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD**

1. SPIRITUALITY AND FAITH

EVIDENCE OF:

- a sense of calling to the priesthood

EVIDENCE OF GROWTH IN:

- a passion for the gospel
- a sustained and growing spiritual life
- an attitude of loving service
- loyalty to the Bishop and other ministers to whom accountable
- self-care
- integrity in personal, marriage and family relationships
- an ability both to lead and to work in teams
- conflict resolution skills
- professional integrity within ministry
- an ability to interpret, and respond appropriately to, people and circumstances
- personal ethics
- self-control
- self-understanding
- discernment and wisdom
- a successful transition from private to public self
- commitment to ongoing professional development
- willingness to be vulnerable and to share with others

2. THEOLOGY

An approved degree or a program of studies approved by the Bishop having a core which includes broad knowledge in the following disciplines:

- Biblical Studies
- Systematic Theology
- Anglican Studies
- Ethics
- Mission and Evangelism and the Australian Context
- Church History (including Religion and the Australian Context)
- Pastoral and Liturgical Studies

undertaken in a Critical, Systematic and Reflective manner.

2. MINISTRY SKILLS

EVIDENCE OF GROWTH OF SKILLS IN:

- leadership and collaboration
- mission / evangelism
- pastoral care
- liturgy
- preaching
- teaching

- self-directed reading and learning
- communication and group processes
- equipping others for Christian service
- people and task management
- parish management
- ethical decision-making
- ability to reflect upon, and make strategic decisions in relation to issues and opportunities for Christian mission within the contemporary culture
- media, communication and technology

4. AUSTRALIAN ANGLICAN IDENTITY

- knowledge of Anglican church polity
- knowledge of and commitment to Anglican liturgy /Prayer Book
- knowledge of and commitment to Anglicanism as part of the wider Christian Church
- knowledge of the history and the ethos of the Churches of the Anglican Communion
- appreciation of diocesan traditions (one's own and others)
- appreciation of the role of an Anglican priest
- appreciation of the application of Anglican theological methods
- knowledge of the structure of church government
- appreciation of and commitment to Anglican liturgy / Prayer Book
- respect for the various Anglican traditions
- appreciation of Anglicanism and modern Australian culture

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE EPISCOPAL MINISTRY

1. SPIRITUAL AND PERSONAL MATURITY

- a sense of calling to episcopal ministry
- a passion for the gospel
- an attitude of loving service
- a wide range of ministerial experience
- a sustained and growing spiritual life
- being intentionally involved with everyday life beyond the institutional church
- ability to live with the loneliness of the office
- ability to respond creatively to criticism and to learn from mistakes
- willing to be vulnerable and to share with peers
- ability to maintain a balance between the responsibilities of office, relationships with family and friends, and recreation

2. THEOLOGY

- ability to discern, maintain, interpret and expound the historic Christian faith in the contemporary context for both church and society
- ability to engage creatively with contemporary trends in theological discussion and church life

3. MINISTRY SKILLS

- ability to serve by exercising leadership, oversight and care of the church
- ability to promote unity and to inspire and equip the church
- ability to lead liturgy creatively and effectively amongst the church and the unchurched
- ability to preach and teach creatively and effectively amongst the church and the unchurched
- ability to inspire, recognise, authorise and appoint people to the ministry of the church
- ability to administer complex human, financial and corporate resources including planning, goal-setting, decision-making, delegation, problem solving, conflict resolution and time management
- ability to exercise appropriate discipline
- ability to work with others as colleagues
- ability to communicate with community leaders and the general public on behalf of the church on a wide range of issues, including handling the media

4. AUSTRALIAN ANGLICAN IDENTITY

- knowledge of Anglican history and polity relevant to the episcopacy
- loyalty to The Anglican Church of Australia – its Constitution and processes
- respect for and co-operation with other bishops and dioceses support for the world-wide Anglican Church
- contribute as a leader to ecumenical dialogue and cooperation
- able to give a lead to contextualising Anglican theology, spirituality and worship in Australian cultural settings.

Appendix 1

The Rationale for and Purpose of a Permanent Diaconate

Rationale

Christian ministry derives its nature from the person and work of Christ. Jesus came not to be ministered to but to minister (*diakonein*) (Mark 10.45). Within the Church, therefore, any particular position, office or work is essentially a 'ministry', a 'service' to God and to people, which, like Christ's example, requires a commitment which is sacrificial. All orders of ministry are therefore diaconal. In everyday speech *diakoneia* meant 'to serve', especially in a personal capacity, and in particular 'to wait at table'. Jesus uses this word in Luke 22.25-7 to teach that greatness in the community of his disciples was to be measured by the willingness to serve. In Acts 6, we hear of the appointment of seven men, among them Stephen and Philip, whose simple task was to serve at tables and ensure just distribution of food. Stephen's life shows us that the office allowed more than this. Stephen 'did great wonders and signs among the people', and spoke with wisdom and eloquence in public debate. In time the word 'deacon' became the title of a particular office.

In the New Testament, the deacons are associated with the *episkopoi* and clearly have a distinctive ministry. The functions of the deacon in early church times remain obscure. As the Church grew it came to rely on appointed ministers and the three-fold order of bishops, priests and deacons emerged. The office of deacon was a distinctive order, always in the third position.¹ In the Patristic period, the office was normally held for life, but functions varied from place to place. Some deacons rose to positions of considerable influence, before their powers were curbed.²

From medieval times, the distinctive nature of the diaconate in the historic three-fold order of ministry became obscured as it came to be seen more as an internship for the priesthood, a transitional state.³ However, in recent decades, in the Anglican Church, the Roman Catholic Church and other churches, there has been a rediscovery and re-establishment of the diaconate as a distinctive ministry in an environment of mutuality among the people of God.

Entry to the ordained ministry is through the rite of ordination to the diaconate. Thereafter, some will be called to ordination to the priesthood and some to the episcopate. Priests and bishops know that they will always bear their ordination as deacons.

The Service for the Ordination of Deacons stresses that the office of deacon is an important calling in its own right. The role of the deacon in the service of Holy Communion and other pastoral liturgies is distinctive. The exhortation in the ordinal provides for a list of functions which includes "you are to take your place in public worship, assist in the administration of the sacraments"; the role is not secondary. The role of the deacon may be seen as representative of the Church as herald and servant.

In a time when the Church is very aware of its missional calling, diaconal leadership for ministries of proclamation and service is required.

¹ See, for example, **Ignatius to Polycarp** 6:1 in Lightfoot and Harmer 1891 translation, **Apostolic Fathers**.

² Nicaea (325; can. 18). The Council of Toledo (633) and the Tullan Synod (692) stressed hierarchical inferiority to the priesthood.

³ See the Preface of The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons according to the order of the Church of England in **The Book of Common Prayer**, "And none shall be admitted a Deacon, except he be Twenty-three yeas of age... And every man which is to be admitted a Priest shall be full Four-and twenty years old." See also **BCP**, in the first of the closing Collects, 'may [they] so well behave themselves in this inferior Office, that they may be found worthy to be called into the higher Ministries in thy Church.'

Purpose

Deacons are authorised to assist the bishop (and hence the priest in a parish) to focus the church and the world alike on these areas which include issues of justice, mercy and compassion.⁴ The deacon lives a life of loving service to God which finds its expression often in working with, for and in the wider community where the deacon conveys the good news in Jesus Christ for people today. Likewise the deacon brings the needs of the world to the Church and gives leadership to the Christian community in meeting those needs.

The deacon's role in the Holy Communion Service reveals the function of deacons as servants and heralds; as proclaimers and evangelists, messengers and bearers of good news in word and deed. In the liturgy of the Word, they may read the gospel, preach occasionally, lead the prayers of the people and oversee the practical details of the service.⁵ The deacon may give the dismissal, sending the people of God into the world for their life of witness and service.

Deacons may be called to a wide variety of work in mission, depending on the needs of the mission field in a particular place. So they may be called to work in parish ministry, in new expressions of church, in education, in chaplaincies of various kinds, in welfare, in advocacy and in any field where there is need for the Church to respond with loving service and proclamation. While the purpose of the ministry of every deacon will be the same, the job description of the deacon will be flexible according to the particular gifts of the deacon and the particular demands of the mission of the Church and the need in any place and time.

⁴ See **BCP** *ibid.*, The Bishop's exhortation

⁵ *ibid.*

Appendix 2

The Rationale for Pioneer Ministry

A pioneer minister is someone who has the necessary vision and gifts to be a missionary entrepreneur: with the capacity to form and lead fresh expressions and emerging forms of church appropriate to a particular culture.

There is increasing recognition that the traditional church misses whole sections of the Australian community, and particularly the younger generation. Pioneer ministry requires quite different training from some of the current curricula in theological colleges. The early development of new Christian communities and particularly fresh expressions of church is about contextual mission: using the gifts that are available in the people of God in the most appropriate and helpful ways to further God's mission. The development of ministry in these communities must also, therefore, be to a large degree contextual and will develop over time. Great flexibility is needed in the ways in which pioneers are trained, resourced and encouraged.

Learning for pioneer ministry needs to be rooted in the context of developing a fresh expression of church. Pioneer ministry is essentially an incarnational ministry based upon the discipline of double listening: attending to God in the local context and the Christian tradition and seeking to discern vocation in developing fresh expressions of church appropriate to that context. The basic model of learning is therefore one of continuous reflection upon the experience of forming a fresh expression. In any formal learning that is offered, the emphasis on the ministry context as the primary context for learning must be preserved.

Diocesan Bishops will need to negotiate changes in current training or develop vocational pathways for these new ministries. Training for these ministries should normally be in context with opportunities for reflection on experience as it unfolds.

This training should cover the areas of personal formation, Christian formation (evangelism and the making of disciples), missiology and ecclesiology, listening and contextual mission, beginning new Christian communities and enabling these communities to grow to maturity. Once pioneer ministries start, they call for intentional ongoing mentoring and coaching. Each Australian Diocese if it pursues fresh expressions and pioneer ministries will need to choose a style of vocational training and support and provide resources for it.

Additional Minimum Requirements Pioneer Ministry

Deacon

- Demonstrated involvement in planting fresh expressions of Church within contemporary culture
- Be demonstrating innovation in ministry
- Be demonstrating a willingness to engage in local change in the Church
- Have an understanding of the interaction between Gospel and culture
- Show the ability to work in a team and collaboratively
- Show a commitment to re-shaping the Church for mission

Priest

- Demonstrated leadership in planting fresh expressions of Church within contemporary culture;
- Demonstrate a vision for the pioneer ministry they are to be placed in
- Have well developed abilities to initiate change and enable others to face it in a flexible, balanced and creative way
- Demonstrate a well developed understanding of the interaction between Gospel and culture
- Show advanced skills in being able to work in a team and collaboratively
- Demonstrate the ability to contribute to the leadership of re-shaping the Church for mission