

B9 EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY WORKING GROUP

1. HISTORY OF THE EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY WORKING GROUP

The Thirteenth Assembly determined that “the Ministerial Education Commission be replaced by an Education for Ministry Working Group, at a date to be determined by the Standing Committee, to advise the Assembly on the standards of formation, education and training for the ministry of the Word, ministry of Deacon, ministry of Pastor and ministry of Lay Preacher” (Assembly minute 12.08). This change to an advisory role differed from that of the Ministerial Education Commission which had decision-making powers. The Assembly also gave Standing Committee a series of authorisations to follow through on this decision. The Standing Committee established a Task Group to prepare for a transition from the Ministerial Education Commission to an Education for Ministry Working Group (ASC 12.32.01). It made sufficient progress for the Education for Ministry Working Group to be appointed by the Standing Committee in November 2013 (ASC minute 13.62).

2. WORK OF EFM 2015-2018

The Working Group has consisted of: Dr Gewa Au, Rev. Dr Chris Budden, Rev. Dr Jenny Byrnes, Emeritus Prof. Ross Chambers, Rev. Prof. Andrew Dutney, Rev. Bev Fabb, Rev. Sharon Hollis, Rev. Dr Amelia Koh-Butler, Rev. Dr Lee Levett-Olson, Rev. Jeff Savage, Rev. Dr Christine Sorensen, Rev. Dr John Squires, Dianne Torrens and Prof. Kaye Roberts-Thomson (Chair).

The Education for Ministry Working Group (EFM) holds one face-to-face meeting and two teleconferences annually. Specific tasks have been allotted to members of the Working Group at various times to facilitate the business of the meetings. The group then advises the Standing Committee on issues related to its mandate.

The main work of EFM in the last triennium has been the development of the new Phase 2 Standards for Ordained Ministry. These were accepted by the Standing Committee in November 2016. It is pleasing to note that these have been well-received and the Theological Colleges are progressively implementing them. The new standards emphasise the outcome of ministerial education and formation rather than requiring specific inputs.

Other major work has been the establishment of new guidelines for consultations with Ministerial Education Boards (MEB) and Theological Colleges and the recommencement of consultations. These consultations seek to ascertain whether MEBs and Colleges are meeting requirements for the recognition of an approved centre for training for ministry. The first consultation was undertaken with the Northern Synod and Nungalinya College in 2017 and the second with the Queensland Board of Christian Formation in March 2018. Consultations for other MEBs and Colleges are planned.

EFM is in the process of revising the standards for Phase 3 which require minor changes. EFM recognises that the standards for Phase 4 need substantial revision and will recommend that work to the new Standards for Ministries Committee. The Pastor competencies also require a review and a group has been appointed by EFM to commence that work.

EFM requests reports from MEBs annually and consolidates them for the Standing Committee. In recent years a cycle of questions have been asked of MEBs relating to implementation of Standards for education of ordained and specified lay ministries; numbers of candidates for the various specified ministries; how the Covenant is being incorporated into educational programs and how the Covenant is being progressed across the Church; what progress is being made in multicultural and cross cultural ministries; progress in the education in the area of ministry with families, youth and children, intergenerational ministry; involvement in the National Collaboration in Theological Education; supervision training for Phases 3 and 4; how Ministers are being educated for an increasingly pluralistic Australia; and any major changes occurring in either the MEB or

areas related to the MEB. A review of standards (formerly 'rules') for the specified ministry of Lay Preacher was undertaken in 2015-16 and in March 2016, the Standing Committee approved new Standards for Formation and Education for the specified ministry of Lay Preacher.

The Theological Educators Conference and the National Deacons Intensive are organised on a biennial basis. The focus of the Theological Educators Conference is to develop a shared vision, goals and principles for theological education in the Uniting Church, taking into account earlier work of the Assembly, including the Statement adopted by the Thirteenth Assembly, "One Body, Many Members – Living Faith and Life Cross-culturally".

3. NATIONAL COLLABORATION ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Following two national consultations on theological education EFM has played a key role in developing a sequence of projects designed to improve collaboration between the Theological Colleges of the UCA. The first project involved a review, conducted in consultation with the Colleges, of the current programs and staffing of the Colleges as they related to formation and Continuing Professional Education and the identification of opportunities for collaboration and sharing of resources.

In 2017 E4M worked with Colleges, especially through meeting with heads of Colleges on the following priorities:

- creation of a shared database of information on intensives and online/off campus offerings available through the Colleges;
- sharing information on programs which meet specified requirements of the UCA, especially Uniting Church Studies; Covenant and Indigenous studies; and Cross Cultural Ministry;
- establishing protocols and information for students on cross-enrolment (i.e. students taking modules from other Colleges);
- sharing information on current Faculty, including sessional Faculty, and their teaching and research interests;
- promoting networks amongst Faculty working in theological sub-disciplines (e.g. biblical studies; practical theology) and amongst those responsible for the formation process;
- sharing information on potential early career theological educators;
- investigating ways of enhancing cooperation between Uniting Church libraries.

Information sharing is underway and has been used in the Colleges for 2018. Protocols for cross-enrolment have been agreed on. An initial report on improving cooperation between libraries has been completed which has identified a possible project. Perhaps most importantly, the heads of Colleges have agreed to meet regularly with E4M to oversee the implementation of the collaboration initiatives.

Prof. Kaye Roberts-Thomson
Chairperson
Education for Ministry Working Group

EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY WORKING GROUP

MANDATE

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| RESPONSIBLE TO: | The Assembly |
| REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS: | The Assembly and the Assembly Standing Committee |
| VISION STATEMENT: | <p>Education for ministry in the Uniting Church will:</p> <p>Foster the centrality of the Scriptures in the life of the Church and the work of ministry; as described in the Basis of Union;</p> <p>inspire the participation of the people of God in the mission of God revealed in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit;</p> <p>strengthen resiliency, passion and competence for ministry in the 21st century;</p> <p>stimulate lifelong learning and formation in the Christian life for all people;</p> <p>celebrate the shared ministry of people of God.</p> |
| MISSION STATEMENT: | To advise the Assembly and the Assembly Standing Committee on the standards of formation, education and training for the ministry of the Word, ministry of Deacon, ministry of Pastor, and ministry of Lay Preacher in the Uniting Church. |
| KEY RESPONSIBILITIES | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Advise the Assembly on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Policies relating to standards of formation, education and training for the specified ministries in the Uniting Church, including continuing education, professional development and supervision;➤ requirements for the recognition of an approved centre for training for ministry.2. Facilitate regular national consultations of the faculties of approved centres for training for ministry and synod lay education and leadership development agencies, including maintaining awareness of federal government requirements for the higher and vocational education sector and how Synods manage the relationship for the sake of ministry3. Facilitate cooperation and the sharing of expertise and resources for education for ministry between the synods and with ecumenical partners. |

4. Encourage regular national networking of key leaders in formation, theological education, continuing education for ministry, lay education and leadership development, including MEBs and other Assembly agencies.

MEMBERSHIP

- A Chairperson appointed by the Assembly
- Ten people, appointed by the Standing Committee, who have a balance of academic and practical experience and with specific expertise in
 - Strategic, innovative thinking about the future of the church
 - Theology
 - Missiology
 - Ministry Practice
 - Formation for Discipleship and Ministry
 - Higher Education
 - Vocational Education and Training
 - Distance Education
 - Culturally contextual education
 - Practice of theological education including one person from each Synod, and reflecting the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Uniting Church.
- Two persons appointed by the UAICC
- Up to four cooptions

Approved by Assembly Standing Committee, November 2013