

FINAL PREACHING ASSESSMENT (FPA) – Assessor Guidance

Background

With support from the Ministries Support Officer (MSO) the Ministries Council Assessor takes a leading role in making sure that the Final Preaching Assessment (FPA) runs smoothly. As a general rule the Assessor will be contacted by the MSO once those locally involved in the FPA (Reader in training/Candidate, Supervising minister from the second placement and the Presbytery representative) have come to an agreement about possible dates for the FPA and sent them (& confirmation of the location) to the MSO. The following list details the practicalities of the task, in a roughly chronological order, from the point at which the MSO has been provided with the proposed dates of the FPA:

Tasks Required of the Assessor

- The MSO will supply the pertinent details (name and contact details of the Reader in training; proposed date(s) and time of FPA service; address of the FPA church; and copies of available placement reports) so that the Assessor can make contact with the Candidate. At this point the Assessor can confirm with the Candidate the arrangements for the service and assessment meeting afterwards, as well as satisfying them-self that the appropriate representatives will be present.
- The Assessor may wish to meet before the service to brief the assessment team. It is helpful to have the assessment team members spread around the congregation so as to carry out evaluations of audibility etc. from varied locations. To encourage consistency the assessment team should make use of the 'FPA - Areas for Evaluation', 'FPA Report – Completion Guide' and 'FPA Report' template contained in the appendices of the Readership Handbook.
- After the service the assessment team will gather to consider their recommendation to the Presbytery. The Assessor chairs and guides the team through discussions. The meeting should proceed broadly along the following lines:
 - As a general rule the assessment team should wait until they have had their discussion with the candidate before individuals express their judgement.
 - The Candidate is asked to join the team and the Assessor leads the questioning, covering such areas as:
 - ~ their judgement of how the service had gone and if there was anything they would liked to have done differently;
 - ~ whether they use the Lectionary;
 - ~ whether they use full script, headings and prompts, headings or other strategies for their sermon notes;
 - ~ discuss experience in anything relevant that was not included (or carried out by the Candidate) in the service (Scripture reading, children's talk etc.);
 - ~ discuss experience in other areas such as funerals, pastoral work, worship in other settings etc.
 - Other members of the assessment team should be given an opportunity to ask any other pertinent questions.
 - The Candidate is asked temporarily to leave the meeting.
 - Members of the Candidate's placement support group might also be asked into the meeting for a period to gather further background information.
 - The Assessor asks each member of the team to provide comments on the suitability of the Candidate to the Readership ministry. All comments should be evidence based arising out of the member's involvement with the Candidate's training, whether from the placement, FPA or post FPA.
 - Once the Assessor judges that they have sufficient information to write their FPA report and feel that team has 'come to a mind' each member of the team is asked to express which of the three recommendations they believe to be appropriate. The team must endeavour to reach a unanimous or majority decision.
 - The Candidate is asked to re-join the meeting and is advised of the recommendation. Having expressed appreciation for the input of the team the Assessor is in a position to close the meeting.

- The Assessor endeavours to complete the FPA report in a timeous fashion so as not to hold back any Presbytery arrangements for setting apart the Reader. An initial draft of the report should be completed and emailed to the other members of the assessment team for comment. The final draft of the FPA report should be emailed to the Presbytery Clerk and MSO within 5 working days if possible.