

Pioneer Discernment Interviews

Notes for Candidates for Pioneer Ministry

1. What is the Pioneer Panel?

The Pioneer Panel (through three discernment interviews) assesses whether you are called, and have the potential, to be a pioneer minister in the Church of England. Your DDO will decide when you are ready to go a Pioneer Panel. The Panel consists of interviewers who are experienced in the practice of pioneer ministry. You would normally meet with three members of the Panel for three separate interviews.

2. What Paperwork is required for a Pioneer Panel?

Prior to your three interviews with members of Pioneer Panel, you will need to provide the following paperwork:

- A Pioneer Panel Registration Form
- A Portfolio of evidence that you have the capacity for pioneering work (this could include any written work, DVDs etc, testimonials commending an individual piece of work; whatever you decide to include is a matter for your judgment)
- Written references from: (1) your DDO; (2) your parish priest/ minister; (3) A Christian lay person who knows you well.
- A telephone reference from someone who has benefitted from your pioneering ministry. This will involve one of your interviewers (the Vocational Assessor) telephoning the person you choose as a referee to discuss how that person has benefitted from your pioneering ministry. You will need to check carefully with person you choose whether he or she is happy to do this.

3. What is involved in the interviews?

You will be invited to three one-to-one interviews – a vocational interview, a pastoral interview and an educational interview. The interviews will take place in the home or office of your interviewer and could take place in different parts of the country. The interviews are normally between 60 and 90 minutes long.

The Vocational Interview

The Vocational Interview will focus on three Criteria: Vocation, Ministry in the Church of England and Spirituality.

A Vocation

A 1: Candidates should have a realistic and informed vocation to plant fresh expressions of church within contemporary culture

Evidence for this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Show how they have responded to God's call to be pioneering
- Understand contemporary cultures and the practice of planting fresh expressions of church within them
- Develop a vision for fresh expressions of church in a local context

B Ministry within the Church of England

B 1: Candidates should have a clear vision of the place of their envisaged ministry within the wider church's response to God's mission to the world

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Understand the relationship between the Church and the kingdom of God
- Understand and be committed to the Church of England as a 'mixed economy' Church
- Be committed to the reshaping of the Church for mission

B 2: Candidates should have an authentic and integrated understanding of the particular ministry envisaged

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Understand contextually appropriate ministry
- Shape contextually-appropriate church

C Spirituality

C 1: Candidates should have a mature and well developed devotional life

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Demonstrate an established, robust, discipline of personal prayer and study which can sustain the demands of their ministry
- Demonstrate a commitment to and an enthusiasm for Christian fellowship and corporate worship
- Develop the art of discernment
- Have the patience to wait for God's timing

In addition, as part of the interview, you will be expected to make a **Presentation** to your interviewer of 5 minutes duration on *My Experience of the Challenges of Pioneer Ministry*. After your presentation you will be expected to answer questions arising from it. The Presentation should provide your Vocational assessor with an indication of your presentation skills (both content and style) and your sense of enthusiasm for and commitment to pioneering ministry.

The Pastoral Interview

The Pastoral Interview will focus on three Criteria: Personality and Character, Relationships and Leadership and Collaboration.

D Personality and Character

D 1: Candidates should have demonstrable maturity and robustness to face the demands of pioneering mission and ministry

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Lay aside personal preference for the sake of the community being served
- Cope effectively with ambiguity and disorientation
- Cope effectively with change and stress
- Avoid personal overload
- Have a consistency of character in varied circumstances
- Live sacrificially and endure hardship
- Persevere for the long-term rather than take short cuts for quick results

D 2: Candidates should have demonstrable self-motivation

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Be a self-starter with a willingness to build from nothing
- Take risks
- Negotiate disappointment
- Learn from mistakes

E Relationships

E 1: Candidates have the potential to develop healthy professional and pastoral relationships

Evidence for this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Form, develop and maintain healthy professional and pastoral relationships
- Exercise hospitality
- Listen to others
- Form community
- Maintain boundaries and confidentiality
- Manage conflict assertively, constructively and tactfully

E 2: Candidates should be able to relate to people who are different from themselves

Evidence for this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Respect different cultural contexts and faiths and to respect people of different temperaments

F Leadership and Collaboration

F 1: Candidates should have a demonstrable track record of innovation and initiative

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Identify key opportunities for mission
- Minister in creative and non-standard ways and develop an innovative approach to problem solving and thinking
- Start a new project around perceived opportunities
- Reflect on situations, learn from them and make appropriate changes for the future

F 2: Candidates should have well developed abilities to initiate change and to enable others to face it in a flexible, balanced and creative way

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Adapt oneself to the uniqueness of a particular context
- Motivate others
- Negotiate and resolve conflict
- Shift priorities and emphasis during various stages of development of a fresh expression

F 3: Candidates should have a demonstrable ability to work collaboratively and in a team

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Develop vision with others
- Discern the spiritual gifts in others
- Release and equip others for ministry
- Identify and invest in future leaders

- Match the gifts of people with ministry needs and opportunities
- Help people to share responsibility for the growth and success of the fresh expression

The Educational Interview

The Educational Interview will focus on three Criteria: Faith, Mission and Evangelism and Quality of Mind.

G Faith

G 1: Candidates should be able to communicate their faith effectively

Evidence for this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Communicate the good news to those outside the Church naturally and effectively in ways that are balanced, appropriate, accessible and sensitive to the situation

H Mission and Evangelism

H 1: Candidates should have a well-developed understanding of the interaction between gospel and culture

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Understand the tension between relevance and syncretism
- Relate the Gospel to different contexts
- Develop discipleship within a fresh expression

H 2: Candidates should have the capacity to evangelize beyond the culture of the Church

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Communicate with and relate easily to people outside the Church.
- Understand the worldviews and mindsets of people outside the Church

I Quality of Mind

I 1: Candidates should have a lively and engaging mind

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Engage and stimulate others
- Make creative connections
- Recognise opportunities in challenging situations
- Be a reflective practitioner

In addition, as part of this interview, you will be expected to discuss a geographical context for mission. This would involve you choosing an area of a town or city you know well and being able to discuss with your interviewer the social and cultural make up of the area and how you might engage with that area in mission. This will give your educational assessor a sense of whether you can think on your feet and make imaginative connections. It will also indicate your ability to relate the gospel to different contexts and to spot opportunities for mission.

4. What Happens after your three Interviews?

After the interviews, your interviewers will write a report on your strengths and weaknesses as they perceive them. They will then meet together at the Pioneer Panel which is chaired by the Director of Fresh Expressions and the Panel will come to a judgement on your candidature. The Chairman of the Panel will then write to your Sponsoring Bishop recommending to him as to whether or not you have the potential to be a pioneer minister.

Your Sponsoring Bishop will write to you with his decision (copying in your DDO, the Chairman of the Panel and the Ministry Division).

If your vocation is to ordination, your DDO will decide upon the best time for you to go to a Bishops' Advisory Panel (normally after you have attended a Pioneer Panel) and you will be sponsored in the normal way by your Sponsoring Bishop.

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