

The Diocese of Blackburn IME2 Programme

COURSE DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

As part of the process of implementing Vision 2026 the Diocese of Blackburn has been looking at every aspect of its common life to ensure that we are equipped to make disciples for Jesus Christ, bear witness to Jesus Christ and grow leaders for Jesus Christ.

The role played by curates in this is essential. They bring energy, vitality and enthusiasm into the Diocese. They are our future incumbents and leaders. Part of the answer to the problem of maintaining adequate clergy numbers lies in attracting and supporting calibre curates who will then feel sufficiently committed to stay in the Diocese for Incumbency posts.

The new outline for IME2 represents therefore a significant change in emphasis. We are moving away from the heavy structures for assessment and accreditation that came in with the Hind Report. Instead we are introducing a programme that focuses more on the practical and which is more tailored to the demands of Vision 2026.

THE AIMS OF IME2

The most important aspect of a curacy is the working relationship between the Curate and the Training Incumbent. The majority of training will therefore inevitably be delivered by the TI both in formal supervision sessions and in the day to day business of sharing ministry and praying together.

IME2 plays a key role in enhancing this training relationship. In particular it aims to:

- Form clergy capable of implementing Vision 2026 to build healthy churches that transform communities
- Ensure that curates have the necessary skills, experiences and characteristics for the next stage of their ministry and can provide evidence for this
- Enhance and support the work of the Training Incumbent in forming new clergy
- Provide experiences for learning and reflection that cannot be provided within the Parish
- Allow for ongoing personal and spiritual formation for curates
- Enable fellowship, friendship and mutual support amongst curates
- Instil a love for and a loyalty to Lancashire and to the Diocese of Blackburn in order to increase retention rates post-curacy from 50% to 80%

THE BROAD SHAPE

There will be two strands to the IME2 Programme.

Strand 1 will be compulsory and unaccredited. It will focus on practical training which equips curates for leadership roles and supports their priestly formation. The programme will be agreed and delivered locally.

Strand 2 will be optional. It will allow for those who would like a greater degree of academic input or who want to complete a degree to have space and funding for an accredited course such as an MA in consultation with the Director of IME2 and their TI.

THE ELEMENTS OF STRAND 1

1. An Annual Theme

Each year IME 2 will focus on one of the three themes drawn from Vision 2026.

- Year 1 Discipleship
 - The continuing development of the curate as a disciple of Jesus Christ and their own growth in holiness.
 - Growing disciples in the local church
 - Leading worship and teaching people to pray
 - Preaching and teaching
 - Spiritual Direction and Confession
 - Developing children and young people as disciples
- Year 2 Witness
 - Mission and evangelism, church planting, church growth, Fresh Expressions etc
 - Working with schools, children and young people
 - Faith sharing
 - Issues around the common good
 - Understanding the mission context
 - Occasional Offices
 - Presence and Engagement Parishes
 - Communications
- Year 3 Leadership
 - Growing as a leader and understanding leadership styles
 - Fostering lay leaders in the local church
 - Exploring the relationship between leadership and the historic three-fold order
 - Leading ministry to children and young people and fostering young leaders
 - Running a PCC, Church Administration, Finance and buildings
 - Understanding the structures and canons of the Church of England

This content will be delivered in the following ways:

1. Two residentials per year, one to take place at a weekend in the Autumn term and one midweek in the Summer term. During the year on Discipleship, the latter will take the form of a pilgrimage. Teaching will be delivered by external speakers, the Bishops and others from the Diocese.

2. Three full-day teaching events.
3. In addition there will be a fourth day which will have a more legal and administrative focus whilst also drawing out the evangelistic dimension of these aspects of Church life. These will cover the following areas:
 - a. Marriage law
 - b. Church Representation Law, APCMs, PCCs etc
 - c. Funerals, churchyards etc

The Bishop of Burnley and the Director of IME2 will work closely with a small group of curates to devise the programme for each year.

2. Three Practical Projects

In addition curates will be expected to complete three practical tasks. These do not need to be completed within any one particular year but should be fitted in as convenient across the three years of the Curacy. The tasks are as follows:

- Discipleship
 - *To lead on a project that will develop laypeople as disciples, eg a nurture course, a pilgrimage or a residential event. This will mean:*
 - *Identifying a need related to the Parish MAP or Vision 2026*
 - *Conceiving and developing a project*
 - *Building and preparing a team*
 - *Delivering the project*
 - *Reflecting on outcomes theologically and practically*
- Witness.
 - *To lead on an evangelistic initiative such as a fresh expression, messy church, a mission weekend etc. This will mean*
 - *Identifying a target group*
 - *Conceiving and developing an appropriate evangelistic response*
 - *Building and preparing a team*
 - *Delivering the project*
 - *Reflecting on outcomes theologically and practically*
- Leadership
 - *To undertake a three week placement in a different ministry context. This may be:*
 - *a parish serving a different demographic or of a different tradition*
 - *a prison or hospital chaplaincy*
 - *a school chaplaincy*
 - *another setting as agreed by the IME2 Director*

The Discipleship and Witness projects should be agreed both with the TI and with the Director of IME2. They should be challenging and intended to make a real difference.

The setting of the placement is very important and the Director of IME2 will play a key role in agreeing this with the TI and Curate. It could be done either in a block or over a period of time (for example in a prison setting it may be best to do one day a week for 21 weeks rather than a single three week block).

3. Additional Components

Additional days and activities will be put on from time to time or as requested by Curates and TIs. These may include:

- A day for new curates and TIs on the Working Agreement
- A day on priestly ministry towards the end of the Diaconal year
- Input for those preparing for first incumbency

4. Mentoring, Support and Supervision

Close supervision provided from within and without the Parish is essential. Early identification of problems is the key to speedy resolution and the avoidance of relationship breakdown. Mentoring, support and supervision will be provided as follows:

1. Supervision sessions between the TI and Curate. These should take place on at least a monthly basis. It is vital that these are not confused with weekly diary or planning meetings (or social events!)
2. An external Pastoral Tutor provided by the Director of IME2. This will be an experienced priest whom the curate should once a term to discuss progress of the Curacy.
3. The Director of IME2 who will stay in close contact with all curates and will make visits to Parishes.
4. The Bishop of Burnley who has pastoral oversight of curates.

STRAND 2

This will be arranged on a tailored basis for those curates who expressly wish it. It might comprise:

- Completing a BA which was commenced during IME1
- Completing another accredited course eg an MA offered by external providers

The Diocese would continue to fund such qualifications.

Curates wishing to take advantage of Strand 2 should contact the Director of IME2 well before Ordination.

MINISTRY AGREEMENTS

A Ministry Agreement between Curate and TI is essential. A copy of the agreement should be sent to the Director of IME2. It should be reviewed every year by the TI and Curate.

END OF CURACY ASSESSMENT

This will take place in the following way:

1. An annual end of year Assessment Interview between the Curate and the Director of IME2. This will explore progress made across the year and growing readiness for incumbency. A written record will be kept of this interview.
2. A Portfolio kept by the Curate and presented at the end of Year 3. This should include:
 - a. An 800-1000 word reflection on each of the three annual themes
 - i. An outline of how the curate's theological understanding of the theme has developed
 - ii. An indication of how this has impacted on practice
 - b. An 800-1000 word reflection on two of the three practical projects (discipleship and witness). This should include:
 - i. A brief outline of the project
 - ii. An assessment of what went well
 - iii. Learning points for the future
 - c. An 800-1000 word report on the Placement. This should include:
 - i. A brief description of the context
 - ii. A reflection on what the curate learnt about leadership during the course of the placement
 - d. A Sunday sermon
 - e. The outline of a children's or all age talk
 - f. A plan for a school assembly
 - g. A case study describing the preparation of a family for one of the occasional offices
3. A trail of reports from the TI and the Placement Supervisor

At the end of the third year, the curate will have a final assessment interview with two Examining Chaplains who will have had sight of all the above paperwork. They will make a final recommendation to the Bishop of Burnley.

CONTACTS

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