

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PUBLIC GOOD

Public Good Statement

Provider name and address

The Cambridge Theological Federation
2 The Bounds, Westminster College, Lady Margaret Road, Cambridge,
CB3 0BJ

Our distinctive situation

The Cambridge Theological Federation does not recruit students directly. All students admitted through the Federation are recruited by one of the member institutions of the Federation (“Houses”). Even then, the majority of students on Federation courses are sponsored by their churches and so there is a “filtering” process before students apply to study at one of the Federation Houses. Because of this the Access and Participation processes of the Church of England and the United Reformed Church have the greatest impact on the students who are admitted through the Federation.

Where students are recruited independently of sponsoring churches, the recruiting House will ensure that applicants from underrepresented groups are supported in their applications.

The majority of students admitted to degrees taught by the Federation are mature students and a large number of them already have degrees or qualifications in subjects other than theology. The designated courses taught by the Federation are vocational and so are very rarely offered to school leavers. There is no direct pathway from school to Federation degrees. The majority of students leaving the Federation go either to further studies or into ordained ministry.

Other than ensure that the Houses are not discriminating unfairly towards any potential or actual students from underrepresented groups, there is very little within the Federation’s control that can be done to support under-represented groups

Student Partnership

The Chair of the Student Forum attends meetings of the Federation board.

The Federation has three main Committees which each deal with the degree programmes offered through one of the partnership agreements we have (Anglia Ruskin University, Durham University, University of Cambridge). Student representatives sit as full members on each of those committees.

Feedback is requested from all students at the end of each module, which is shared with each Committee and with tutors. A response is provided to students on the feedback they have given.

Under-represented groups

1. Students with particular disabilities, recognising that needs will vary dependent on the type of disability;
2. Students from minority ethnic communities;
3. Students studying part-time;
4. Being the first in family to enter higher education.

Explanation for the provider's focus on under-represented groups

1. The Church of England's working group Supporting deaf and disabled ministers partners with the committee for ministry of and among deaf and disabled people (CMDDP) to help the Church fulfil its calling to be a sign of the radically inclusive kingdom of God for all people. There is currently no formal tracking of the numbers of deaf and disabled people training for ministry but, as part of the working commitment of the Church to increase representation and support of the deaf and disabled community in ministry, recruitment from these communities is imperative.
2. In similar commitments, the United Reformed Church's Equalities Committee has ensured that the following statement of intent provides an overarching framework for activity, and this includes the work of Westminster College (the URC college within the CTF): "The United Reformed Church affirms its commitment to show the same openness to all people in today's world. It intends in spirit and in deed to promote equality of opportunity and diversity in all spheres of its activity and is committed to behaving as an equal opportunity organisation. It acknowledges that people are called to be diverse and lively, inclusive and flexible through the sharing of the gospel." (<https://urc.org.uk/equal-opportunities.html>). This statement also points to the need for the URC seek to build: "inclusive communities

where all will be treated with dignity and respect and have equality of opportunity to contribute their gifts to the common life” and endeavouring to: “identify and remove barriers to participation in employment, training, promotion, leadership and representation...”

3. The Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC) is a committee of the Archbishops’ Council and is accountable to the Church of England’s highest decision-making body, the General Synod. It advocates for the reflection of BAME Anglicans at all levels within the Church, including in ordinand populations training for ministry. The latest Ministry Division statistics (2018; published 2019) show 7.9% of ordinands beginning training in 2018 identified themselves as from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, which is higher than the proportion found in the current pool of stipendiary clergy (3.9% identifying as BAME). While this bodes well for increasing BAME representation, continued recruitment of ordinands training for ministry remains imperative.
4. The URC has a network of BAME members, both ordained and lay, who provide insight and advocacy alongside our formal Equalities Committee. Their annual gathering continues to highlight the underrepresentation of BAME individuals within the structures of church and society and keeps these matters to the fore in denominational thinking and debates.
5. The shifting national patterns of training for ministry envisages a mixed economy of full-time and part-time, residential and non-residential. These evolving patterns increase the flexibility for training and thus the potential for groups identified that have previously found it more difficult to access training and formation to do so.
6. By the end of 2018, there were around 590 ordinands from the 2018/19 academic intake training for ministry in the Church of England, which continues a general increase over the 5 years and is a 24% increase from the number who began training in 2014. There were more females (54%) than males (46%) beginning training in 2018, a proportion which has increased gradually over the 5 years from 43% female in 2014. Those training with the intention of stipendiary ministry made up over two thirds (68%) of all ordinands beginning training in 2018, and have increased generally over the 5 years and by a quarter (25%) since 2014. While no data is currently taken tracking educational background, both the wider HE emphasis on widening participation and the Church of England’s emphasis on growing the number of vocations across the whole Church makes attracting and supporting students with no familial HE background essential.

Objectives, underpinning activities and targets as they relate to supporting equality of opportunity and the promotion of higher education

Equality of Opportunity

Objective

Target(s) for 2020/21

As stated above, the Federation does not recruit students directly and so is not in control of outcomes.

n/a

Activities and services being delivered to improve equality of opportunity in 2020/21

As stated above, the Federation does not recruit students directly. Some of our member institutions have said that in 2020/21 they will:

- Have termly Open Days with a special focus on attracting students from under-represented groups;
- Maintain and build upon retaining students from under-represented groups through study skills support, tutorial support, and liaison with University bodies supporting under-represented groups;
- Provide hardship funding through discretionary tutorial budgets;
- Ensure, as possible, that facilities continue to be enhanced to allow for access to teaching and learning resources for those with particular learning needs. These include such improvements as disabled access to buildings and loop systems.
- Ensure the ongoing staff development provision to equip teaching and support staff with the best advice and good practice into delivering education in ways that take account of specific learning needs such as hearing impairment and forms of dyslexia.
- Produce provision of effective information to under-represented groups, before and during their studies;
- Begin centrally to gather and track data relating to under-represented groups to produce benchmarks for admissions and staff recruitment.

Promotion of higher education

Objective

Target(s) for 2020/21

As stated above, the Federation does not recruit students directly and so is not in control of outcomes.

n/a

Activities and services being delivered to promote higher education in 2020/21

As stated above, the Federation does not recruit students directly. Some of our member institutions have said that in 2020/21 they will:

- Liaise with diocesan and other stakeholders to communicate the benefits of higher education as part of ministerial formation and training;
- Engage more intentionally with local communities by providing access to facilities at reduced costs, especially groups that represent particular civic, charitable or social responsibilities;
- Increase contextual placements in both church and community settings as part of ministerial training;
- Continue to improve the quality of learning and teaching, with reference to the quality of the student experience gathered through course feedback and student representation on curriculum development.
- Use Periodic External Reports to drive timetabled actions.

Investment to support public good

The Federation does not have a budget to support public good and investment is made in kind (time and effort) rather than cash.

Explanation for the provider's objectives, targets and activities

Our distinctive situation means that the Federation has no control over the candidates presented for admission as Federation students. Our role is simply to make a decision on whether applicants presented to us meet the admissions criteria agreed with our validating universities. It is because we have no control over the recruitment procedures that we are not suggesting taking on any objectives that relate to increasing the number of students from under-represented groups. Once students are admitted we will, of course, do everything that we can to ensure that they are supported academically.