

Guided Self Appraisal for Ministers

Guidance and introductory notes

This is an appraisal in which the main responsibility rests with the self-appraising minister who will ask someone to work voluntarily as a guide during the process of the appraisal.

The guided self appraisal will enable a stock take to be made by the minister of strengths and calling. Time will be spent thinking about the work and demands of ministry. The self-appraising minister will also reflect upon his or her own personal spiritual journey, where this is leading and whether there are areas that may need strengthening.

At the end of the self appraisal, the minister will be encouraged to devise strategies for meeting the needs that have been discovered during the process and will be helped to identify appropriate resources.

Throughout the process, the minister remains in control. Although the guide may want to encourage a particular course of action, it remains an option for the minister to accept or reject this guidance. Similarly, the minister may decide that s/he does not want to seek information from the local church nor share the outcome of the appraisal with the church or the Regional Minister.

The scope of the guided self appraisal

The self appraising minister and the guide negotiate the scope of the appraisal at their first meeting. The minister will have been sent the appraisal document by the Ministries Team.

The role of the appraisal guide

The guide helps the minister to reflect upon his/her ministry and tries to ensure that issues are examined thoroughly, and that the judgements made by the minister are based on reality. At the end of the Appraisal, the guide accompanies the self appraising minister as s/he defines any actions to be implemented.

How to start a guided self appraisal

Ministers are invited to request a guided self appraisal form through the Ministries Team.

The minister will need to find an appropriate person to act as their guide and decide together when the appraisal will take place.

It is envisaged that the first meeting between a minister and guide will be to establish the areas to be considered during the self appraisal. The minister and guide will consider whether the church should be involved in supplying information to the self appraising minister for the appraisal and, if so, how this might be obtained. Dates will be agreed within which the preparatory work will be done and an appointment fixed for a second meeting.

Before the second meeting, the minister should send to the guide a copy of the self appraisal form. This will enable the guide to think about issues that may need to be raised in the meeting and to prepare for a time of reflective discussion.

This meeting is at the heart of the self appraisal process. At this point the guide and minister take stock together of the minister's perception of ministry and workload. The guide will seek to affirm the minister in the positive aspects of ministry and personal life, and, potentially, bring some challenges to perceived unrealistic assumptions. This meeting may well lead to a review of priorities for the self appraising minister.

This time of reflection will enable the self appraising minister to think through issues regarding the direction in which s/he could move, personally, spiritually and professionally. It may lead to a reordering of priorities or the identification of new development opportunities to be explored.

What happens next?

The self appraisal outcome always remains the property of the minister. It is therefore his or her decision about what happens next.

This may, however, be an issue for discussion with the guide.

Options that might be considered, after writing the action plan could include discussion with deacons or other church leaders, or with the Regional Minister. The guide may know of other resources that can be considered as possible sources of help to the self appraising minister in achieving his or her aims.

The responsibility for implementing the agreed action plan remains with the minister throughout; it is helpful, if it can be agreed between the guide and the minister, that contact will take place after about six months in order to check on progress.

Prayer

The self appraising minister and guide may find that spending some time in prayer, seeking God's leading, is a good way to begin their relationship.

Who else might be involved in the self appraisal?

Some ministers meet formally with the church leadership team to review the year, and to plan for the forthcoming year. This process can be beneficial if the minister is feeling secure.

Other ministers may want to ask selected or key people in the church or local community to provide written input on selected topics that will help them to think about ministry. The choice of method may be a reflection of the culture of the local church and neighbourhood. Care needs to be taken to ensure that those asked to make a contribution understand the purpose of the exercise and the need for confidentiality.

As noted earlier, some self appraising ministers may not feel able to seek the views of the church; this view must be respected, though the guide may help the minister to reflect upon this decision, and possibly any underlying reasons for taking it.

At no time does the Ministries Team have a copy of the Appraisal Report.