The following was agreed by the Southern Synod Ministries Committee on 27 June 2012

TLS Lite Courses – Requirements for Course Organisers and Tutors in Southern Synod

Introduction
TLS Lite courses are for everyone. They are designed to be run cheaply and locally. They offer an excellent opportunity for anyone who wants to dip a toe in the water of theological learning and are an excellent introduction to 'classic' TLS, a more demanding programme involving at least two years' study.

Courses can be run either

a) For general interest
or
b) As training for Local Recognition as Lay Preachers subject to the fulfilment of certain conditions

Because of b) there is a need to ensure consistency both in approach and standards on courses which include students hoping to gain such recognition.
The procedures to be followed in relation to all courses (section A) and in relation to courses which include students hoping to progress to local recognition (section B) are set out below. **If there is any possibility that even one student on a proposed TLS Lite course may subsequently want to work towards local recognition as a Lay Preacher, it is strongly advised that the Guidelines in section B be followed** in order to ensure that a student does not need to repeat a course.

These requirements will come into effect on 1 September 2012 and will apply to all TLS Lite courses commenced on or after that date. (N.B. A "TLS Lite course" means an individual course such as "Getting to grips with the Bible" rather than the whole suite of courses.)

The Synod Lay Preaching Commissioner ("SLPC") may on occasion delegate his/her responsibilities to the Synod Development Officer for Education, in which case these Guidelines will be interpreted accordingly.

A. All TLS Lite courses

1. Organisers of TLS Lite courses shall notify the Synod Lay Preaching Commissioner ("SLPC") **in advance** of any forthcoming courses. Information required includes dates, times and venues (to enable publicity to be made available to others) and name of tutor. All publicity material relating to the course shall make clear whether or not it is intended that the course be suitable for students seeking Local Recognition as Lay Preachers (i.e. will comply with the guidelines in Section B).
2. When the course begins the tutor shall notify the SLPC of the number of students taking part in the course and of the likely number of assignments to be assessed at the end of the course. The SLPC will arrange for assessors to be appointed.

B. Courses including students seeking local recognition

1. **Tutors:** Tutors on courses including students who are seeking or propose to seek Local Recognition as Lay Preachers are accountable to the SLPC.
2. Proposed tutors must be notified by course organisers to, and agreed by, the SLPC **in advance of the start of the course.**
3. All tutors so agreed must adhere to the published course material in terms both of content and style of delivery so that the essential character of the course is preserved and consistency maintained across courses. If, during a course, a tutor considers that departures from the published course material are needed, s/he shall consult with and accept the advice of the SLPC before implementing any material change. The SLPC will keep guidance notes on departures

from published course material considered necessary or desirable in the light of tutors' past experience.

4. Unless a proposed tutor is a minister of Word and Sacraments or an Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher, the proposed tutor shall prior to his/her appointment
    a. submit to the SLPC evidence of suitability for the role (e.g. details of theological qualifications/experience relevant to such role) and answer any questions the SLPC may raise;
    b. confirm in writing acceptance of The Statement of Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church (*Rejoice & Sing* 761).

5. **Assessment** (For all courses other than Leading Worship): The assessor for the written work will be appointed in advance by SLPC. Tutors should, however, make themselves available to assist and advise students by reading and commenting on their assignments in draft form prior to submission to assessors. Assessors will normally be Ministers of Word and Sacraments. Assessors may (where appropriate) require a student to re-submit a written assignment rather than fail it. Students should keep copies of their written work and the assessment in case there is need to refer to it in the future.

6. **Assessed service** (for Leading Worship course): There should be at least two assessors, including one course tutor and one who has not been a course tutor.

7. **A further assessed service** will be required after the student has completed all relevant TLS Lite modules ("Getting to grips with the Bible", "Theology: Talking about God", "Leading Worship", "Preaching: God's Word for Today") in order to assess a student's suitability for Local Recognition as a Lay Preacher. That service will be assessed by at least two representatives of the Synod Area, including (where possible) the Synod Area Lay Preaching Co-ordinator. One of the assessors should be an experienced Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher or a Minister of Word and Sacraments. If a course tutor attends such a service s/he will not take part in the formal assessment but will be available to the student for reflection on the service.