



Placements Committee

Purpose

To outline the steps in filling a vacant placement in a congregation of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod.

Scope

The process applies to the filling of approved placements within the bounds of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod.

Process

1. A Presbytery may request the Placements Committee to designate an Approved Placement within the Presbytery for:
 - a. A placement designated solely to the Presbytery eg Presbytery Minister/Officer; Youth Worker; Project Officer;
 - b. A combined placement with the Presbytery and in a congregation;
 - c. Establishing new initiatives in ministry and mission where there is no existing Congregation;
 - d. A faith community established by the Presbytery;
 - e. Any other initiative for ministry approved by the Presbytery.
2. The Presbytery and the Congregation/s jointly decide whether or not to fill the vacancy. This decision will recommend if the placement should be filled, and if so:
 - a. whether the placement will be a Presbytery, Congregation or other body placement
 - b. if the placement is to be filled by call of the Congregation, other body, the Presbytery or the Placements Committee
 - c. which specified ministry may best suit the ministry and mission emphases of the congregation, i.e. Minister of the Word, Deacon, Pastor;
 - d. if the placement is to be full time or a fractional time component. (Regulation 2.6.6 (a))
3. As soon as the decision is made to fill the vacancy, the Presbytery notifies the Secretary of the Placements Committee. The Secretary will include a notification in Uniting News of the existence of the vacancy. Eligible ministry agents wishing to express an interest in the vacancy will be directed to the Presbytery Minister.
4. A placement profile is prepared by representatives of the congregation. The placement profile template approved by the Placements Committee is to be used.



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5. The Profile is approved by the Church Council and Presbytery and forwarded to the Placements Committee (Reg 2.6.6 (b)).
6. A Joint Nominating Committee is established (Reg 2.6.6 (c)). The Congregation shall appoint two to six members to the JNC¹. The Presbytery shall appoint at least two members.
7. The JNC meets for the first meeting. At this meeting it participates in the training module for JNCs, allowing the members of the JNC to familiarise itself with its responsibilities and processes. The JNC also decides whether to utilise the optional decentralised process. Note, unless a JNC chooses to utilise this process, they will automatically utilise the centralised process.
8. The Secretary of the Placements Committee presents the completed profile to the Placements Committee and publishes the profile to the Placements Committee database.
9. Decentralised process
 - 9.1 The Chair of the JNC advises the Secretary of the Placements Committee (placements@ucaqld.com.au) that the JNC will use the decentralised process.
 - 9.2 At this stage or at any point in the decentralised placements process, the JNC may seek approval from the Secretary of the Placements Committee (placements@ucaqld.com.au) to advertise the vacancy. The application to advertise will be dealt with according to the process for Advertising Placements.
 - 9.3 The Secretary of the Placements will provide password access to the Ministerial profile database.
 - 9.4 At any stage after receiving access to the database, the JNC may request a conversation with up to three potential matches.
 - 9.5 Acting on the delegated power of the Placements Committee, the Secretary of the Placements Committee will give approval to conversations being initiated with the potential matches, provided that for each ministry agent:
 - 9.5.1 The ministry agent is not currently involved in conversations with another placement;
 - 9.5.2 The Minister is at least in the 3rd year of their first placement, or the 5th year of any subsequent placement;
 - 9.5.3 The JNC is not currently involved in conversations with other ministry agents;
 - 9.5.3 The ministry agent has not served in a placement in that congregation at any time, nor have they had significant participation in that congregation during the past ten years. Where these criteria are not satisfied, the Secretary will refer the request to a meeting of the Placements Committee for discernment about recommending a name.

¹ The Congregation is responsible for appointing the members. This may be done at a duly convened meeting of the Congregation (Reg 3.5.1). Alternatively, the Congregation may delegate this responsibility to the Church Council, or the Church Council may bring a recommendation of names to a meeting of the Congregation.



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- 9.6 Where the ministry agent has provided a recent profile, the Secretary will notify the ministry agent that their name has been forwarded to the JNC.
- 9.7 Where the ministry agent does not have a recent profile, the Secretary will arrange for the ministry agent to complete one. When received this will be forwarded to the JNC.
- 9.8 A Minister available for placement (reg 2.6.2 (b)) may request access, through the Secretary of the Placements Committee (placements@ucaqld.com.au), to the database of congregations seeking a ministry agent. When doing so, the Minister will be required to provide a current profile, submitted through the Presbytery. After accessing the database the Minister may request to have a discernment conversation with up to two JNCs (2.6.6 (g)(iv)).
- 9.9 Acting on the delegated power of the Placements Committee, the Secretary of the Placements Committee will give approval to conversations being initiated with the potential matches, provided that for each Minister:
- 9.9.1 The Minister is not currently involved in conversations with another placement;
 - 9.9.2 The JNC is not currently involved in conversations with other Ministers;
 - 9.9.3 The Minister is at least in the 3rd year of their first placement, or the 5th year of any subsequent placement;
 - 9.9.4 The Minister has not served in a placement in that congregation at any time, nor have they had significant participation in that congregation during the past ten years. Where these criteria are not satisfied, the Secretary will refer the request to a meeting of the Placements Committee for discernment about recommending a name.
- 9.10 If the Secretary of the Placements Committee receives requests from more than three Ministers to enter into discernment conversations with a JNC, and all Ministers are eligible, the Secretary will forward all expressions of interest to the Chair of the JNC with a request that two members of the JNC, one from the Presbytery and one from the congregation, develop a short list of no more than three names to engage in conversation. If these conversations do not result in a call, the JNC may engage in discernment conversations with other Ministers who were not shortlisted.
- 9.11 At each meeting of the Placements Committee, the Secretary will provide a report regarding those JNCs and ministry agents who are in conversation through the use of the decentralised process.
- 9.12 The Chair of the JNC will call a meeting of the JNC. Copies of profiles of the proposed ministry agent(s) should be circulated to all members of JNC but not copied further. Electronic files must be deleted at the conclusion of the call process and hard copies must be collected by the JNC Chair and shredded.
- 9.13 Prior to the first meeting of the JNC with the ministry agent, the ministry agent and JNC will exchange written statements that outline how each discerns the connecting points between the profiles.



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- 9.14 The process continues at step 11 below.
10. Centralised process
- 10.1 If a JNC chooses not to proceed with the decentralised process, the centralised process will apply.
- 10.2 The Placements Committee will consider the Congregational profile and the list of ministry agents available for placement. The Committee may recommend up to three Ministers with whom the JNC will enter into a discernment conversation (reg 2.6.6 (g)). In considering names, the Placements Committee will consider any names requested by a JNC or Presbytery, but will not be obliged to act on that recommendation.
- 10.3 No ministry agent will be invited to converse with more than two JNCs at the one time (Reg 2.6.6 (g)(iv)).
- 10.4 Within 48 hours of a meeting of the Placements Committee the Secretary will write to the ministry agent and Chair of the JNC advising them of the discernment of the Placements Committee. Letters from the Placements Secretary will convey the reasons for the proposed names and will include copies of the relevant profiles.
- 10.5 The Chair of the JNC will call a meeting of the JNC. Copies of profiles of the proposed ministry agent(s) should be circulated to all members of JNC but not copied further. Electronic files must be deleted at the conclusion of the call process and hard copies must be collected by the JNC Chair and shredded.
- 10.6 The process continues from step 11.
11. The church expects that, unless there are exceptional reasons that make the match inappropriate, a proposed conversation between the ministry agent and JNC, initiated through the centralised, will take place. Where a conversation is initiated through the decentralised process, the ministry agent or JNC is encouraged to discern the appropriateness of entering into a conversation. In making their discernment, a JNC may have conversations with each recommended ministry agent before making a decision on any; similarly if the ministry agent is proposed for more than one placement he/she may have conversation with both JNCs before making a decision on either.
12. At any time a ministry agent or JNC may decline to proceed with a conversation and must advise the Placements Committee in writing of the reason for doing so. A decision about whether to proceed to Call shall be made within two months.
13. When conversations lead to discernment that a Call is appropriate, the JNC and the ministry agent will negotiate any points of concern, and also the date the new placement will become effective. While it is not normal practice, the ministry agent and the JNC may agree that it would be appropriate for the ministry agent to meet the Church Council, or a wider group of members, prior to a decision to proceed to Call (2.6.6 (m)).
14. The chair of the JNC notifies the Presbytery, through the Presbytery Minister, of the decision of the JNC and seeks the approval of the Presbytery, or its Pastoral Relations Committee, to proceed to recommend to the Congregation that a call be issued.



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15. Following approval by the Presbytery and with the agreement of the ministry agent, the JNC recommends to a meeting of the congregation/s that a Call be issued. If the vacancy has been determined by the Placements Committee to be a Priority Placement, or the person to be called is an exit student, the Call is issued by the Placements Committee. In this instance, a meeting of the Congregation is still called to allow the congregation to express its mind. In these circumstances the resolution of the congregation should be “to request the Placements Committee to issue a Call to NN”.
16. Within three days of the decision to issue a Call, a letter of Call or appointment is prepared by the congregation. This letter is to be signed by a person nominated by the placement and the Presbytery and the Secretary of the Placements Committee. The letter of call for priority placements and exit students is prepared by the Secretary of Placements and signed by the Secretary and representatives of the Presbytery and congregation. The Secretary is responsible for forwarding the letter of call to the ministry agent. Templates for Letters of Call and Terms of Placement are available from the Secretary of Placements Committee.
17. The letter of call or appointment is to include the date on which the placement is to commence (Reg 2.6.6 (n)). It is usual that the commencement date of the placement will be no earlier than three months. There is no maximum period in which the call needs to be taken up. In considering a commencement date in excess of six months from the letter of call, consideration should be given to the needs of the minister, the placement they are leaving and the placement that is issuing the call.
18. The ministry agent responds in writing to the placement, Presbytery and Secretary Placements Committee, within fourteen days accepting the agreed Terms of Placement.
19. If at some later time, the commencement date needs to be altered, this should be mutually agreed between the ministry agent, placement and presbytery. After the alteration has been agreed, the Secretary of the Placements Committee is to be notified.
20. The Presbytery Chairperson, in consultation with the ministry agent and the congregation, sets the date of the Induction or commissioning service.
21. The ministry agent takes up responsibilities in the new placement by the 15th day of the month (or the 21st day of the month if an inter-synod move. (NB placements normally date from the first day of a month, but removal leave is granted (Reg 2.7.2 (c)).

References & Related Documents

Uniting Church Regulations 2.6.1 – 2.8.3

Membership, roles and responsibilities Synod advisory committee on ministerial placements



Placements Committee

Congregational Profile template

Ministry Leader Profile template

Process for Advertising Approved Vacancies

Letter of Call and Terms of Placements template

Revisions & Reviews

#	Date	Reason	Author / Reviewer	Approved
1	22 Sept 2017	Optional dual track process approved	D Fender, Associate General Secretary	Placements Committee
2	29/5/201 8	Change to step 11	D Fender, Associate General Secretary	Placements Committee