



# JNC Multicultural Guidelines

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## Purpose

To make discernment conversations culturally appropriate, Joint Nominating Committee (JNC) members should be aware of their own biases, understand that individuals may have unique cultural complexities, and create an inclusive environment where ministry agents feel safe and comfortable. This involves using inclusive language, ensuring proper communication and support, and adapting the discernment process where necessary.

## Scope

The Guidelines can be used by a Joint Nominating Committee established under Regulation 2.6.6.2, where the placement vacancy relates to a CALD community of faith, or where the minister agent is from a CALD background.

## Prior to the Discernment Conversations

### 1. Be Aware of Your Own Biases:

- Recognize that everyone, including JNC members, has unconscious biases that can affect their perceptions and decision-making.
- Actively seek out ways to challenge and mitigate these biases. This may include at least one member of the JNC completing cultural diversity training, such as Scripture Union's Cultural Hearing Asking Telling (CHAT) course offered by Trinity College Queensland (TCQ).

### 2. Understand Cultural Diversity:

- Acknowledge and understand that individuals may have unique cultural backgrounds and experiences that shape their communication styles, perspectives, and behaviours.
- Avoid making assumptions based on stereotypes or generalizations about specific cultural groups. This may be avoided through selecting a JNC member being from the same culture as the Ministry agent, or JNC members speaking with a leader from the same culture as the Ministry agent (e.g. church council member, another Ministry Agent).
- Embrace each individual's unique cultural complexities.

### 3. Ensure Cultural Competency:

- Celebrate diversity: Recognize and celebrate the cultural diversity within the Church and/or Presbytery.
- Invest in training. If you are regular JNC member, identify opportunities to learn about different cultures and perspectives.
- Encourage cross-cultural interactions. Provide opportunities for cultural leaders to participate on JNC's or potential JNC members to interact with colleagues from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Diverse Membership – The JNC should intentionally include members that represent the CALD community from presbytery.
- Commitment to the UCA Multicultural and QLD Intercultural Vision – The JNC should reflect the acceptance of this vision by:



- Value the gifts CALD Candidates/Ministry Agents bring from cross-cultural backgrounds.
- Ensure cultural equity in ministry placement.

## During the Discernment Conversation

### 1. Create an Inclusive Interview Environment:

- Start with a brief preliminary meeting. This can help the Ministry Agent feel more comfortable and build rapport.
- Use of Technology. Were the discernment conversation(s) being online, verify the technology is functional and there is good internet connectivity, and the Ministry Agent has the resources to join discernment conversation(s) virtually.
- Offer support. Consider the suitability of an interpreter or cultural support person if needed.
- Invite the Ministry Agent to share their needs. Encourage them to express what they may need to feel confident, safe, and comfortable during the discernment process.
- Acknowledge sensitivities. Recognise that the discernment process can be challenging, especially for those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Provide a safe and fair environment where a CALD Ministry Agent/Candidate can freely and openly express their selves and share their gifts/strengths.

### 2. Use Inclusive Language and Communication:

- Use plain language. Avoid jargon or technical terms that may not be familiar to all Ministry Agents.
- Be mindful of communication styles. Recognize that different cultures may have varying communication preferences, such as:
  - directness or indirectness
  - personal space
  - disrespect if criticising elders
- Adapt your language. Consider the Ministry Agent's English proficiency and adjust your communication style accordingly.

### 3. Adjust Interview Processes Where Necessary:

- Allocate sufficient time: Allow for longer discernment conversations or additional conversations if needed.
- Be prepared for different communication styles: Be patient and understanding if the Ministry Agent takes more time to respond or express themselves.
- Consider the suitability of an interpreter or cultural support person: This can help ensure that all Ministry Agents have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their competencies.

### 4. Focus on Competencies:

- Ask all Ministry Agents the same set of common questions. This helps ensure that you're only seeking relevant information about their competencies, and how they relate to the genuine requirements of the placement.



- Focus on specific examples. Encourage Ministry Agents to provide concrete examples of how they have demonstrated cultural awareness and sensitivity in past situations.

## Related documents

Adapted from:

[Cultural awareness in the workplace \(Seek\)](#)

[5 Effective Interview Questions to Measure Cultural Awareness \(Test Partnership\)](#)

[How do Cultural Difference Impact Job Interviews \(Commisceo Global\)](#)

[How to Prepare for a Panel Interview \(Tandem Partners\)](#)

[Interviewing Vulnerable Populations \(Oxford Academic\)](#)

[Effective Interviewing of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse \(Australian Public Service\)](#)

[Guide to Preventing Discrimination in Recruitment \(Australian Human Rights Commission\)](#)

[Tips for Conducting Neutral End User Interviews \(Linkedin\)](#)

[Mastering Cultural Sensitivity in Global Recruitment \(Linkedin\)](#)

[Attracting and Recruiting First Nations Employees \(Business Queensland\)](#)

[Ten Tips for a Culturally Responsive Interview \(Q Workplace Solutions\)](#)

[How to Show Cultural Competence in a Job Interview \(Linkedin\)](#)

## Definitions

| Term  | Meaning  |
|---|--|
| <b>UCA Qld</b> (also called <b>we</b> or <b>us</b> or <b>the Church</b> ) | Means the functions and activities of the Uniting Church in Australia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• within and in relation to the bounds of the Queensland Synod; and</li><li>• outside the bounds of the Queensland Synod (where managed by parts of the organisation located within the bounds of the Queensland Synod),</li></ul> under the <i>Uniting Church in Australia Act 1977 (Qld)</i> .        |
| <b>Conversation</b>   | The process of seeking the will of God. The purpose of the conversation is to identify for all involved how the gifts and graces, skills and abilities of the minister would contribute to the priorities of the placement identified in the mission study and placement profile. Given this understanding, it is important to note that such a conversation is different from a job interview in a secular setting. |
| <b>Joint Nominating Committee</b>   | A JNC consists of members who will spend time in discussion with each other and in discernment conversations with potential Ministers to bring a recommendation on the person who should be called to a placement.   |
| <b>Ministry agent</b>   | Includes Uniting Church in Australia candidates, community ministers, deacons, deaconesses, interns, lay pastors, ministers of the word, pastors, youth workers and ministers from other denominations serving in approved placements in the Queensland Synod.   |
| <b>Placement</b>  | An approved placement (Regulation 2.6.3(a)(i)) in a congregation or other body wherein ministry is exercised   |
| <b>CALD</b>   | Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (from the majority (English) culture). Often used as a general catch all phrase to encompass many of the cultural definitions including those below.   |



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| Term                  | Meaning   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Multi-cultural</b> | A group that contains several ethnic groups. People live alongside one another, but each ethnic group does not necessarily have engaging interactions with one other.   |
| <b>Cross-cultural</b> | A group that contains two or more ethnicities with a growing level of cooperation, partnership, and interaction.  |
| <b>Inter-cultural</b> | A group that contains multiple ethnicities, in which there is a deep understanding, interaction and respect for each culture that is part of the whole, which is reflected in decision making and leadership. |

### Revisions

| Version | Approval date | Approved by | Effective date | Policy owner | Policy contact |
|---------|---------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1.0     | 14.08.2025    | MCCRG       | 14.08.2025     | MCCRG        | MCCRG          |