

Joint Nominating Committee – role and responsibilities of Chair and members

Purpose

To describe the role, responsibility and membership of a Joint Nominating Committee, including role of Chairperson. For a vacancy to be filled a Joint Nominating Committee is required to be appointed.

Scope

This process applies to all Joint Nominating Committees created in relation to approved vacancies within the bounds of the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Membership

For a placement to be filled by call of a Congregation (regulation 2.6.6 (c)):

- a. at least two persons appointed by the Presbytery, one of whom is to be appointed by the Presbytery as Chairperson, and preferably at least one of whom is a member of the Pastoral Relations Committee; and
- b. two to six persons appointed by the Congregation(s) or other body. In special circumstances the Presbytery may authorise up to ten persons being appointed.
Special circumstances may include:
 - i a large number of congregations comprising the placement
 - ii the size and complexity of the placement
 - iii other factors considered important to the Presbytery.

Meetings of the JNC must have at least one of the Presbytery representatives and one of the congregational representatives in attendance. At least half the members of the committee must be present to form a quorum.

For a placement to be filled by call of a Presbytery (regulation 2.6.6 (e)):

- a. Up to eight members,
- b. Other persons, with involvement or interest in the particular ministry;
- c. The majority of members must be members of the Presbytery.

For a placement known as Presbytery Minister/Officer (Regulation 2.6.6 (f)):

- a. Up to eight members appointed by the Presbytery;
- b. Two persons appointed by the Placements Committee, one of whom is not a serving Presbytery Minister.

For a placement within an Agency (Regulation 2.6.7):

- a. should include representatives of the Presbytery, the agency in which the placement is situated and at least one serving chaplain if it is a chaplaincy position.

For a placement to be filled by call of the Synod (Regulation 2.6.7 (c)):

- a. A number of people determined by the Synod including several people from the area in which the person will perform their ministry and including representatives of the Presbytery.



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For a placement as a candidate educator within Trinity College Queensland (By law Q3.5.3):

- a. a person who is to be the committee's chairperson.
- b. the General Secretary, or his or her nominee.
- c. a member of the Placements Committee.
- d. the Principal of Trinity College Queensland, or his or her nominee.
- e. a candidate educator of the college.
- f. if the BCF's chairperson deems it necessary, the chairperson may appoint another person to be a member of the joint nominating committee who has relevant expertise in the context of the vacant position.

For a placement as a Principal of Trinity College Queensland (By law Q3.2.4)

- a. a person who is to be the committee's chairperson.
- b. the General Secretary, or his or her nominee.
- c. a member of the Placements Committee.
- d. a person with tertiary level teaching experience in theological education.

Choice of Chairperson of Joint Nominating Committee

Each Joint Nominating Committee (JNC) is to have a Chairperson. In addition to their role as a member of the JNC, the Chairperson must ensure that the JNC functions properly, that there is full participation from all members and that all relevant matters are discussed and that proper procedures are followed. The role of the Chairperson is about:

- a. guiding the process not determining the outcome
- b. ensuring that the correct process is followed
- c. taking adequate care without slowing the process
- d. ensuring the ministry agent/s who are in conversation with the JNC are aware of what is happening at all times
- e. representing the wider church/agency and its interests in this particular placement.

Joint Nominee Committee Membership

The choice of members for the JNC is highly important. In considering who should be appointed, consideration should be given to ensuring a complementary mix of the Committee that includes:

- a. spiritual, emotional and relational maturity;
- b. understanding of the nature, ministry, and mission of the placement;
- c. knowledge of the problems and possibilities of the placement;
- d. strategic, logical and creative thinking;
- e. strong communication skills, including listening to what is said and unsaid and to express own opinion.

Members of the JNC **should not** be chosen for reasons such as:

- a. a reward for loyalty to the church or because they expect to be chosen
- b. their status in the church or community
- c. to ensure representatives from interest groups within the placement
- d. to convert them and cultivate their interest in the church.

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Potential Colleagues as members

- a. Consideration should be given to the appropriateness as to whether potential colleagues will be members of a Joint Nominating Committee.
- b. Ordinarily, it would not be appropriate for potential colleagues in a congregation to be part of a Joint Nominating Committee.
- c. Where a potential colleague will be under the particular authority of the minister, they must not be part of the Joint Nominating Committee.
- d. However, where a potential colleague will have particular authority over a minister, it might be considered appropriate.
- e. The JNC should consider whether a minister should meet with other potential colleagues at some stage prior to the JNC making a recommendation.

Once a JNC has been formed, consideration should be given to some form of public commissioning by prayer.

Activity of Joint Nominating Committee

Confidentiality

The deliberations of the Joint Nominating Committee are to be kept strictly confidential. This means that discussions and documents relating to the work of the Joint Nominating Committee are not discussed with any person outside the Joint Nominating Committee or the Placements Committee. Discussions relating to the work of the JNC are only discussed with other Joint Nominating Committee members during properly convened meetings of the JNC.

The Joint Nominating Committee may agree to release general information about the progress of the process. Only the person designated by the Joint Nominating Committee should share this information. This should never include any information that may allow others to identify the minister/s who have been, or will be, engaged in conversation.

Process

The process is **not a job interview** but a **focussed and directed conversation**. The intent of the Regulations is to enable both the Placement and the Minister/s in question to fully explore the strengths, weaknesses and possibilities of each other. In order to achieve this, open honesty and confidentiality is absolutely necessary. To further emphasise the conversation process is **not** a formal interview. All parties involved must be given sufficient time to discuss all issues which arise.

Joint Nominating Committees are not free to approach Ministers directly. In the same way, Ministers are not free to approach Joint Nominating Committees directly. Conversations may only occur where the Placements Committee have given approval. Where the Placements Committee have given approval, contact between the Minister and the JNC should only occur through the Chair, unless the JNC agrees otherwise.

While there is no obligation on either the Joint Nominating Committee or a Minister to proceed to call, each is to take into account that the recommendations emerge from the collective wisdom of the Church, and at least an initial conversation is expected to take place with the minister/s.



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First meeting of the Joint Nominating Committee

The Placements Committee through the Placements Officer forwards recommended names to the Chairperson of the JNC. Once names have been received, proceed to conversation/s as soon as practicable.

The Chairperson will convene an initial meeting of the JNC. This meeting may occur before any names are provided from the Placements Committee. Items on the agenda of the preliminary meeting will include the following:

- a. stress confidentiality
- b. clarify expectations and roles of the JNC Chair and members.
- c. review and clarify your understanding of the placement profile and the priorities for ministry identified within it;
- d. explain that this is a process of shared discernment and therefore the framework will be one of focussed conversation and not interview
- e. set dates for future meetings to ensure there are no unnecessary delays in the process
- f. if a congregational placement, review the profile and priorities – clarify thinking e.g. “what do we mean by ‘Leadership of Worship’?”
- g. if any other placement, review the Position Description and clarify aspects of the role.
- h. review the profile (and any letter of introduction) of the minister/s recommended to the JNC
- i. discuss giftings and priorities held in common and those where there are differences.
- j. identify what areas you would like to explore in conversation with the minister/s and how you might do this
- k. plan to provide a generous, safe and hospitable space for conversation with the minister/s.
- l. Discuss how you will meet with the minister: where, when, hospitality, how you will ensure it is a conversation and not an interview.
- m. Identify what questions you might ask to open up the conversation and what questions you will need to ask to ‘fill in the gaps’ in the minister’s profile.
- n. Use questions which invite the minister to share their past experiences as well as their hopes and dreams.
- o. Consider sending the questions to the minister prior to your conversation together. This will provide them with additional time to consider how they might respond. You are more likely to gain additional and more helpful information this way.
- p. Plan to provide a tour of the area and the facilities, if that is appropriate.
- q. Choose a member of the JNC to keep a record of attendance and decisions made, giving due regard to issues of confidentiality.
- r. Offer to cover the costs of the visit. Where distance is an issue it may be appropriate to have a first conversation using teleconferencing or video-conferencing facilities. However, experience tells us that a telephone/video conference is never as helpful as a face-to-face conversation.
- s. While there is no expectation that the Minister’s spouse (where appropriate) will attend, mutual consideration should be given to whether and to what degree the Minister’s spouse may be involved in these conversations.

First meeting between JNC and Minister

When meeting with the minister

1. Provide hospitality and model God’s welcoming grace. You may like to think about sharing a meal before you share in a more formal conversation. This is a great way to get to know one another.



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2. Make sure the setting ensures confidentiality: meet in a place where others will not wander in unexpectedly. Choose a place which is safe, welcoming and private.
3. Introduce each other, sharing something of each person's involvement in the ministry setting.
4. Outline the proposed shape of the conversation (recognising that it is a conversation, and God may well take it in another direction). During the time together, the minister should share his/her faith story, ministry strengths, weaknesses, and expectations of/in ministry. The Joint Nominating Committee should also provide a brief outline of the history of the life, witness, service, mission priorities and hopes of the ministry context.
5. Ensure there is space and time for the minister to ask questions during the conversation rather than leaving it to the end. Remember this is a mutual process of discernment.
6. Ask other questions, or explore areas of interest, that the JNC have prepared in advance. An important point should be the similarities and differences highlighted in the congregational profile/position description and personal profiles.
7. Some helpful probing questions when the minister shares an experience of ministry:
 - "What did you do in that situation?"
 - "Can you take us through the steps you followed?"
 - "What feedback did you get?"
 - "What was the outcome?"
 - "What did you learn?"
 - "What would you do differently next time?"
 - "How did you feel about that?"
8. Set a time limit for your time together.
9. At the end of the conversation be clear about the next steps for you and the minister.
Good communication and common courtesy require that a Joint Nominating Committee keep each recommended Minister informed about their progress at all stages of their deliberations. While names are not revealed, it is important to indicate if other conversations are underway.

After the conversation

After the meeting the JNC and the Minister reflect on what happened, clarifying memories of the experience.

The Joint Nominating Committee discuss their reactions, impressions and attitudes, seeking God's will for a decision. Ensure that important issues are not overlooked.

It may be appropriate for either the Joint Nominating Committee or the minister to request a second conversation.

Without breaking the confidentiality of the JNC process, the JNC should also discuss the ways and means by which they will provide updates to the placement, congregation or another body who will issue a call.

The Joint Nominating Committee makes its decision and, if the minister concerned and the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee agree to proceed to call, forwards a recommendation to the Congregation(s)' Meeting which shall meet as soon as practical.

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Subsequent Meeting

Following initial conversations, at the point where it appears a call is emerging, the following include issues need to be explored:

- a. expectations about travel and car allowance
- b. resource allowance
- c. whether there is office support, how much and what type
- d. whether there is an office provided for the ministry agent
- e. whether there will be assistance/provision of phone, computer and internet access
- f. if appropriate to the placement, how wedding and funeral fees are handled, and the provision of the relevant stationary
- g. housing arrangements if appropriate
- h. expectations about timing of annual or study leave
- i. who will pay for supervision – presbytery, congregation, agency, Synod or ministry agent
- j. Whether the ministry agent has roles in the wider church and how these will be integrated into the workload. This may include involvement as chaplain to groups such as Defence, Police, SES etc.

At any subsequent time after the initial contact a Minister or a Joint Nominating Committee may decline to proceed with a conversation and advise the Placements Committee through the Presbytery/Agency/Synod Placements Committee representative of their reasons for doing so. This is to assist the Placements Committee in any further consideration of the needs of the minister or placement.

Joint Nominating Committees should not discriminate on grounds such as gender, marital status, ethnic background, age, disability. Churches are not necessarily exempt from Commonwealth and State Anti-Discrimination legislation.

Members of the Joint Nominating Committee have invested a great deal of time and energy in the search for a new minister. It will be important that the JNC take time together to debrief after the process ends.

References & Related Documents

[The Uniting Church in Australia Constitution and Regulations](#)

[The Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod By-Laws](#)

Placement - Ministers and ADF Chaplaincy Service Policy

Placement - Steps to filling placement

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Definitions

Term	Meaning
UCAQld (also called we or us or the Church)	Means the functions and activities of the Uniting Church in Australia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • within and in relation to the bounds of the Queensland Synod; and • outside the bounds of the Queensland Synod (where managed by parts of the organisation located within the bounds of the Queensland Synod), under the <i>Uniting Church in Australia Act 1977 (Qld)</i> .
Agency	Includes Uniting Care Queensland and Wesley Mission Queensland
Call	Call to a placement gives effect to the perceived will of God as expressed by a decision of a council or councils of the church and by the response of the minister concerned. After careful consideration and prayer, the minister discerns therein an expression of the will of God in relation to ministry at that time.
Congregation	A congregation or cluster of congregations or other grouping approved by the Presbytery.
Conversation	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.
Joint Nominating Committee	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.
Placements Committee	The body which oversees the list of placements within the Queensland Synod and works together with presbyteries and other bodies within the life of the Synod to ensure that ministry agents are deployed in placements which match their skills and gifts and which meet the particular needs of the ministry agent.
Minister	Includes Minister of the Word, Deacon and Deaconess
Ministry agent	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.
Placement	An approved placement (Regulation 2.6.3(a)(i)) in a congregation or other body wherein ministry is exercised



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Position Description	An approved document outlining the nature of the placement
Profile	The Synod-approved profile (minister and placement) available from the Synod or Presbytery office

Revisions

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Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
1.1	10.01.25	Placements Committee	10.01.25	L Hanson Secretary, Placements Committee	L Hanson Secretary, Placements Committee
Next scheduled review		10.01.27			