



PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING FOR A GRADUATING STUDENT AS A PASTORAL ASSISTANT

This document has been prepared by the Ministry & Mission Committee to outline the steps to be followed by a congregation when seeking the appointment of a graduating student as a pastoral assistant. *It's important to read this document in parallel to the M&M 'Graduating Student Placement Procedure' document on our website.*

Definitions and Conditions

Pastoral assistants are persons (male or female) who are engaged by congregations to perform pastoral functions within the congregation. Graduating students, whether trained as ministers or deaconesses, may be appointed as pastoral assistants.

Pastoral assistants may be appointed to work within the congregation served by the supervising minister (hence called "supervised" appointments). Alternatively, if they are men who meet the relevant requirements, they may be appointed to work in a congregation not normally served by the supervising minister (hence these are called "unsupervised" appointments).

Constraints

The appointment of pastoral assistants is governed, among other things, by The Code II 5.39:

5.39 Pastoral Assistance. *All action to initiate the provision of pastoral assistance by personnel engaged to perform primarily pastoral functions in a pastoral charge or home mission station shall be made in accordance with the financial arrangements approved by the congregation and the presbytery, and shall also be made in accordance with the schedule for pastoral assistance maintained by the committee on Ministry and Mission. In the case of the appointment of a Candidate for the Ministry, the approval of the committee on the Presbyterian Theological Centre is also required.*

The Schedule for Pastoral Assistance is available on the website of the Ministry and Mission Committee at <http://mmpcns.org.au/document/schedule-for-pastoral-assistance/>.

Initiative

Action to initiate the appointment of a pastoral assistant usually begins with either the minister or the Session. Until it has been agreed by the Session, no further action may be taken. This statement of procedure therefore begins with the Session.

1. When a Session desires to engage a pastoral assistant, it will:
 - a. Develop a position description for the appointee; and
 - b. Request the Committee of Management to consider the financial capacity of the congregation to sustain the new position; and
 - c. Convene a meeting of the congregation so that the members may approve or disapprove the proposed expenditure. (Requires notice on two clear Sundays prior to the meeting.)

2. If the congregation approves the expenditure, the Session should seek, from the Presbytery, approval of the position description and the financial arrangements.
3. Session will take action to find a person who might suit the proposed appointment. Where it is desired that the pastoral assistant be a graduating student, the Session will complete a congregational profile – available at <http://mmpcnsw.org.au/document/congregational-profile-template/>. That profile will then be forwarded to the Ministry and Mission Committee with the request that it appoint a graduating student to the vacant position.
4. Session should also seek support from the Presbytery for the appointment of a graduating student.
5. If possible, the Ministry and Mission Committee will ask one of the graduating students to dialogue with the Session concerning his suitability for the vacant position.
6. When the Session and the graduating student have completed their dialogue, both should report to the Ministry and Mission Committee concerning their desire that the appointment should proceed, or otherwise.
7. If both parties agree to an appointment, that appointment will be made by the Committee at the first available opportunity. (If the parties do not agree, the student will be asked to dialogue with a different church as necessary in the hope that a suitable appointment might be made.) A letter of appointment will be issued by the Ministry and Mission Committee consistent with the Terms of Appointment determined by the congregation at 1(c) above.

PLEASE NOTE

1. The Ministry and Mission Committee will want to ensure that the congregation has the capacity to meet the remuneration and other costs of the graduating student. Evidence of this can be provided by way of a projected budget (income & expenditure) for the following calendar year.
2. There is no need for a selection committee when a graduating student is being sought as a pastoral assistant.

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