



PROCEDURES FOR APPOINTING A PASTORAL ASSISTANT

This document has been prepared by the Ministry & Mission Committee to outline the steps to be followed by a congregation when engaging pastoral assistance.

Definitions and Conditions

Pastoral assistants are persons (male or female) who are engaged by congregations to perform pastoral functions within the congregation.

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://mmpcnsw.org.au/procedures/appointing-pastoral-assistant/>

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;
 - 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.

4. When a suitable, willing candidate has been identified, the Session must seek from the Presbytery, either:
 - a. advice that it does not object to a particular person being appointed (if the position is to be supervised); or
 - b. advice that it approves of the appointment of a particular person (if the position is to be unsupervised).
5. When the Presbytery has approved, the associated financial arrangements, and has either not objected to, or actively approved, a particular appointee, a letter of appointment will be presented for signature by the Session Clerk and the appointee. That letter should follow the standard template available from the Ministry and Mission Committee.

Remuneration

6. The Ministry and Mission Committee is happy to provide guidance in the development of individual remuneration packages. Generally, pastoral assistants are appointed by reference to the salary prescribed for home missionaries having regard to the fractional nature of any part-time arrangements.

PLEASE NOTE

1. All pastoral assistants, however remunerated, must be engaged by the Session on terms approved by the congregation.
2. Congregational authority extends to approving the proposed terms of appointment. Congregations have no authority to approve or disapprove a particular appointee
3. Where a pastoral assistant will receive, in cash and kind, a total remuneration less than 33% of the Basic Stipend prescribed annually, the Schedule for Pastoral Assistance will not apply, unless the remuneration package is understated, in which case a package will be deemed to be in force and the Schedule for Pastoral Assistance will be applied accordingly.

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