

Pastor is a new lay specified ministry of the Church. It means a lay person commissioned by a Presbytery, Synod or Assembly, to minister within a Congregation, community or Church based organisation for the purpose of undertaking one or more of the following tasks:

- (a) Teaching the beliefs and practices of the Church; and /or
- (b) pastoral oversight of members and/or groups operating under the auspices of the Church; and/or
- (c) leadership of worship in congregations or faith communities of the Church; and/or
- (d) evangelism or service beyond a gathered congregation but which is exercised under the auspices of the Uniting Church.

# LAY SPECIFIED MINISTRY OF PASTOR

## Guidelines for Presbyteries: *Processing applications*

date

**2010**

location

**SYNOD OF NSW AND  
THE ACT**

These guides are exactly that, guides.

They are not meant to be a set of definitive regulations or rules but working guidelines for our Synod.

They have been developed over a few months after visiting and talking with most Presbyteries in this Synod, the Synod secretariat, Boards, Synod and other Church training providers, and the Assembly.

The fact is our Synod is large and diverse which has meant that the way in which the regulations dealing with the ministry of Pastor are dealt with is not able to be applied in the exactly the same way all the time in all situations. This is indeed another way of celebrating our diversity and shows just how important it is to understand our own contexts.

These guides are not static in that they will continue to evolve as we as a Synod implement the ministry of Pastor. Therefore they will be updated from time to time and you will be alerted to this via the website, [www.ucapastor.org](http://www.ucapastor.org)



## **We do however need your help!**

In order for these guides to continue to be useful, we need people on the ground, like you, to tell us if some of the guidelines are not working in your context, and why. This way we will be able to make adjustments where appropriate so that over time we can enjoy a robust resource in these guides.



Ministry of Pastor  
Synod of NSW and the ACT



*In the following steps, when the word Presbytery is used, it can also be understood as Synod (in the case of a Synod appointment) or Assembly (in the case of an Assembly appointment)*

**The following steps are for when you have just received a Position Description (PD) from a congregation.**

**Step 1:** Decide if the PD and associated documents (which should include the hours and pay for the position) are all that you require for assessing if the ministry location is appropriate for the exercise of the Ministry of Pastor.

Ask for further information if required

**Step 2:** Direct the PD and associated documents to the designated Presbytery committee for processing (e.g. The PRC or Education Committee).

**Step 3:** the appropriate committee of the Presbytery working on behalf and for the Presbytery needs to now make an assessment under Regulation 2.14.5 as to whether or not the position description and the ministry location are to be designated as appropriate for the exercise of the ministry of Pastor. Such a location shall be designated as appropriate for the purposes of the Regulations when the position description of the role the person undertakes includes any one of the following tasks (Reg. 2.14.2):

- a. teaching the beliefs and practices of the Church; and/or
- b. pastoral oversight of members and/or groups operating under the auspices of the Church; and/or
- c. leadership of worship in congregations or faith communities of the Church; and/or
- d. evangelism or service beyond the gathered congregation but which is exercised under the auspices of the Church

**You may want to use the following questions/checklist in making the assessment:**

- Make sure you have received the Position Description and all associated documents (e.g. remuneration etc)
- You have a clear indication from the position description as to what the position requires of the incumbent
- The position is NOT fixed term for 12 months or less

**Q1.** Does the Position description identify the role as requiring any one of the following tasks (Reg. 2.14.2)? YES / NO

- a. teaching the beliefs and practices of the Church; and/or
- b. pastoral oversight of members and/or groups operating under the auspices of the Church; and/or
- c. leadership of worship in congregations or faith communities of the Church; and/or
- d. evangelism or service beyond the gathered congregation but which is exercised under the auspices of the Church

**Q2:** Is the role (as articulated in the position description) predominantly one of Pastoral or Ministry Leadership? YES / NO

**Q3:** Are the pastoral duties (which are inherent within a Pastoral Leadership role), to be exercised in the context of the Church's understanding of a Pastoral Relationship? YES / NO

**Q4:** Given the nature and function of this position, would it normally satisfy the criteria for an approved placement? YES / NO

(note: if you are assessing a location which is already an approved placement the regulations state that the ministry location is appropriate for the exercise of the ministry of pastor)

**Q5:** Is the position one which is at least 14 hours per week? (any less than this and there may be significant challenges in terms of formation and continuing education for the pastor) YES / NO

If you are honestly able to answer YES to most or all of the questions, then in the normal course of events the ministry location would be appropriate for the exercise of the ministry of Pastor and the incumbent may be considered to be a Religious Practitioner.

If you have answered NO to most or all the questions, then the ministry location is most like not appropriate for the exercise of the ministry of Pastor.

In cases where the outcome of your assessment remains uncertain, you should contact Jorge Rebolledo for guidance

([jorger@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:jorger@nsw.uca.org.au)) or the Human Resources Office ([vickir@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:vickir@nsw.uca.org.au))

**Step 4:** Examine the Position Description and determine which of the Pastor General Competencies relate to the job description.

This involves:

- possibly seeking clarification of the responsibilities and tasks from the appointing body if necessary
- matching responsibilities and tasks with the relevant units and elements of competency in the schedule of General Competencies provided by the Assembly Ministerial Education Commission (in some instances a unit of competency may apply, in other instances particular elements may apply)
- determining whether the levels of competencies described in the General Competencies match the competencies required in the job description. If these do not match (e.g. the job requires a greater or lesser level of competency in a particular area), the presbytery in consultation with the Pastor Consultant should seek to clarify this
- and, possibly needing to provide the employer with a document clearly outlining the General Competencies required

Once Presbytery has made these decisions and minuted them, then:

**Step 5:** Convey the decision to the congregation or group seeking to offer the employment.

Please note that the group seeking to employ someone should not publicly advertise until after Presbytery has made the decision.

Notification also needs to be sent to ACOMP if it is a lay person filling an already approved placement.

**Step 6:** If the decision is that the location is appropriate for the ministry of Pastor, then the Presbytery should appoint a Presbytery representative to the Nominating committee / interview group. This person should act for and on behalf of the Presbytery and should report back to the Presbytery as to progress as appropriate and in particular in reference to the things outlined in regulation 2.14.7.

If the decision of the Presbytery is that this is not appropriate for

the ministry of Pastor, then apart from notifying the employing group, Presbytery needs to do nothing further.

**Step 7:** The Presbytery should now appoint an assessor (who could be the person already representing the Presbytery) to assess the applicant against the Core Competencies.

[I am able to do the assessment and train and mentor people from your Presbytery to take on the tasks. Synod “recognised” assessors are now also available]

**Step 8:** The person to be employed is assessed for the Core Competencies. If the person to be employed is assessed as competent or as having the potential to achieve the Core competencies within the first 3 months of employment, then the OK can be given by the Presbytery to the employer for the offer of employment to be issued (please note that most of the contractual and legal paperwork was handled at the start of this process).

The Presbytery should make recommendations as to what courses are available for the person to do and be assessed for core competencies as required. This course information will be available on the [website](http://www.ucapastor.org) for you [ [www.ucapastor.org](http://www.ucapastor.org) ].

**Step 9:** The Presbytery should identify if the person is to be recognised as a Pastor.

It is only possible to commission a person into the Ministry of Pastor in that location if they have been recognised as a Pastor. Regulation 2.14.11 states that:

A person shall be recognised as a Pastor when:

- (a) the person has been a confirmed member or member in association of the Church for a period of twelve months prior to being recognised as a Pastor; and
- (b) the Presbytery is satisfied that the applicant can demonstrate the core competencies; and
- (c) when the person is appointed to a ministry location designated as appropriate for the ministry of Pastor (Regulation 2.14.5)

**Step 10:** Once the core competencies have been satisfied, and if appropriate, the Presbytery now commissions the person to the Ministry of Pastor at that location. A commissioning service is available on the [assembly website](http://assemblywebsite) or by emailing [jorger@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:jorger@nsw.uca.org.au).

There are also Commissioning Certificates (NSW/ACT Synod) available for purchase via the website [www.ucapastor.org](http://www.ucapastor.org) or email [jorger@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:jorger@nsw.uca.org.au)

Once commissioned, the Presbytery should advise the placements committee (ACOMP) of this fact.

*If the person is not eligible for commissioning, then the Presbytery technically needs to only ensure that they have appropriate continuing education [please note that the satisfying of the core competencies are still a requirement of employment].*

*However, it would be beneficial for all lay ministries in your Presbytery if, although not able to be commissioned, the employed person is able to access the pastoral care and oversight of the Presbytery.*

**Step 11:** The Presbytery should now approach the employed person and conduct a General Competency assessment (it would be prudent perhaps to also include the employer in this step). This assessment is partly a comparing of the tasks and roles outlined in the PD with the MEC general competencies and identifying areas where more training needs to be done. (I am able to help you with this assessment also and will seek to train and mentor people you identify as potential “assessors” for your Presbytery)

**Step 12:** Once these areas for further training have been identified, a Learning Agreement should be established with the employed person. This agreement needs to outline the competencies which need to be satisfied and possible courses, subjects etc. It also should include a time frame for completion.

**Step 13:** The Presbytery now needs to put in place (or connect the Pastor to what ever is already in place) a formation program which is to cover 50 hours per year as a minimum.

For more information about available programs please contact the Ministry of Pastor consultant or ELM

**Step 14:** The Presbytery should keep a record of the Pastor’s training and progress and make a yearly report to the Ministerial Education Board (MEB) concerning the progress and education of the Pastor.

### ***For Presbyteries: Current employee wanting to be recognised as a Pastor.***

In some cases a currently employed person (whose work falls within the Regulations for the ministry of Pastor) will want to seek recognition as a Pastor. In such cases, the following steps are suggested.

**Step1:** The Presbytery should make an assessment as to whether or not the ministry location is appropriate for the ministry of Pastor. If the position is an approved placement, then under regulation 2.14.5 (ii) any such position should be recognised as appropriate for the exercise of the ministry of Pastor.

Presbytery should also at this time ascertain if the person is eligible for recognition as a Pastor – that is, is the person a member of the Uniting Church or a member in Association for at least 12 months.

**Step2:** *At this time the Presbytery should contact the Consultant or a representative of Synod Human Resources in order to arrange a meeting between the Presbytery, the consultant/HR and the applicant to ensure that there is clarity and agreement as to the way forward. It is at this meeting that the additional conditions of employment will be discussed.*

**Step3:** If all is in order, the Presbytery should resolve to recognise the ministry location as appropriate for the exercise of the ministry of Pastor (Regulation 2.14.5) and convey this decision to the employer. Again, if it is a placement, the Presbytery will need to also convey the decision to ACOMP.

**Step4:** Presbytery arranges for the applicant to be assessed for Core Competencies

**Step5:** Once the core competencies have been attained (via RPL or further study etc), then the Presbytery should move to recognise the applicant as a Pastor and hold a commissioning service at an opportune time.

**Step6:** Presbytery now advises ACOMP that the applicant has been recognised as a Pastor (Regulation 2.14.11).

**Step7:** At this point, steps 11 to 14 of the guides for Presbyteries (above) should be followed.

## Check Lists (NSW/ACT) [Adapted from Assembly Checklist document]

(Please tick ✓ as each step is completed)

### For Presbyteries or Synod

- Review Position Descriptions from Congregations and Agencies and determine whether the Position Description and ministry location is appropriate for the exercise of the ministry of Pastor (2.14.5).
- Use the Ministry location Checklist for this.
- Examine the Position Description and determine which of the Pastor General Competencies relate to the job description.
- This involves seeking clarification of the responsibilities and tasks from the appointing body if necessary
- matching responsibilities and tasks with the relevant units and elements of competency in the schedule of General Competencies provided by the Assembly Ministerial Education Commission (in some instances a unit of competency may apply, in other instances particular elements may apply)
- determining whether the levels of competencies described in the General Competencies match the competencies required in the job description. If these do not match (e.g. the job requires a greater or lesser level of competency in a particular area), the presbytery in consultation with the Pastor Consultant should seek to clarify this providing the Presbytery and employer with a document clearly outlining the General Competencies required
- Approve the Position Description and terms and conditions of appointment (Seek advice from the Ministry of Pastor Consultant and/or HR if required) (2.14.3, 2.14.9)
- Participate in the appointment process (3.4.4(k))
- Assess for Core Competencies (2.14.9(a))
- Receive and address any requests for a probation period during which time the Core Competencies must be demonstrated (2.14.9(b))
- Check that the employer is following the HR advice provided by the Synod
- Conduct a Commissioning Service when all the requirements have been met (2.14.11)
- Advise ACOMP of the Commissioning of a Pastor and the nature of the ministry being exercised (2.14.11)
- Arrange for the assessment of General Competencies that are relevant for the ministry to which the person has been employed. (2.14.13) and,
- Develop a learning agreement with the Pastor to address the development of the required general competencies
- Monitor the progress of the Pastor's learning
- Advise the Synod Ministerial Education Board, annually, of the Pastor's learning agreement and progress and provide feedback concerning the assessment and supervision of the Pastor

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### Ministry of Pastor Consultant

Rev Jorge F Rebolledo  
[jorger@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:jorger@nsw.uca.org.au)  
(02)88388916  
0433 739 105

[www.ucapastor.org](http://www.ucapastor.org)

