

Application and Selection Processes for Pastors and Ministers with suggested new process for Congress

People are called to follow Jesus in different ways and through different ministries. The United Church helps people find the ministry that is right for them through a 'Period of Discernment'. This is a time when people have a mentor who helps them explore what Jesus is calling them to do. All people are encouraged to complete a period of discernment.

Congress MEB believes that it needs to encourage a much wider use of PoDs, which will make it easier for people who do PoDs to say at the end that they do not feel that they have a call to a specified ministry.

The PoD process is:

- i. A person talks to their Minister or Church Council.
- ii. After conversations about the process, the person fills in an application, and that is endorsed by the Minister or Church Council, who send it to the Pastoral Relations Committee (of presbytery).
- iii. The PRC appoints a mentor to help the person work on the goals they have set for themselves for the PoD.
- iv. At the end of the PoD the person presents a portfolio of what they have done, including statement of what form of ministry they feel called to (e.g. continue to follow Jesus as a lay person, offer to become a Pastor, apply to be a candidate for ordained ministry).
- v. The presbytery issues a certificate of completion (required by those who are candidating – Regulation 2.3.2.1 (a) (iii))

The MEB believes that there are two difficulties with this process for Congress: (i) not all regional committees are presbyteries and so they do not a PRC. Applications have to be dealt with by another presbytery. (ii) Family obligations and relationships often means that regional committees find it hard to make proper decisions about either the PoD or applications for people to be accepted as candidates.

MEB is recommending that Congress request the Assembly to change UCA regulations so that the MEB and the National Executive become responsible for all decisions about the PoD and candidates. Details of what is required are set out below. (See the general responsibility of MEBs in Regulation 3.7.4.3)

Minister Regs	Congress suggestion	Pastor regs	Congress suggestion
Applicants for PoD set out above	All applications be referred to the MEB (not the presbytery)	People who wish to become Pastors are not required to complete a PoD.	Applicants for Pastor should complete a PoD.
APPLICANT FOR CANDIDATURE			
i. Written application to presbytery through the Minister of their congregation (2.3.2.2)	i. Written application to Congress MEB through their regional committee	i. (a) Apply for a designation position, or (b) offer more generally to be a Pastor in an approved placement (written application). (2.3.3 (a))	i. As per regulations.
ii. The presbytery shall carry out various things in order to prepare a report and recommendation to the	ii. Congress MEB shall do these things, in order to also do iii.	ii. (a) The appointing body considers the application (2.3.3 (b)) (b) A synod appointed body considers and	ii. (a) as per regulations (2.3.3 (b)). (b) The Congress MEB considers and determines

selection panel (2.3.2.3).		determines the application (2.3.3 (c))	the application (2.3.3.(c))
iii. The synod selection panel, appointed by MEB, will determine the application, and if accepting the application shall specify the Ministry and refer to MEB (2.3.2.4)	iii. Congress MEB shall carry the duties in 2.3.2.4 (a), (b) and (c). It shall make recommendations regarding matters in (d) and (e) to the National Executive who shall determine the matter		
iv. Appeals (2/3.2.5)	iv. An appeal shall be directed to the National President who shall establish the appeal committee, which shall carry the duties in 2.3.2.5 (c). Clauses (a) and (b) apply, noting the changes to the bodies responsible.		
	(The decisions in 2.3.2.6 shall be dealt with by the MEB, and enacted by the appropriate presbytery)		
Termination of candidature (2.3.2.7)	The MEB will carry out all the responsibilities of a presbytery in this section, acting on the advice of the regional committee, the faculty, or on their own initiative. Appeals will be dealt with in accord with the existing regulations.		
FORMATION AND EDUCATION			
Formation in accord with standards set by Assembly, and prescriptions set by the MEB (2.4.1 (a))	As per regulations	(i) Core competencies needed by all people who exercise this Ministry, and (ii) General competencies for the particular role. (2.4.3)	
Leave or deferral granted by MEB (2.4.1 (b))	As per regulations, after consultation with the regional committee.		
Who determines the course of study for any candidate? What is the role of the faculty/ college and the MEB?	Students are referred to the Formational Panel which has been established by MEB. That panel develops a personalised program to meet their needs for knowledge, skills, and	The Assembly identifies the general competencies needed for any role. The appointing body identifies the general competencies yet to be developed, and ensured	The MEB and the appointing body identifies, and MEB ensures that they are

	formation as a ministry leader, as part of a collegial learning process.	that they are (2.4.3 (a), (b), and (c).	developed. Pastors will be included in the shared learning for candidates for other ministries.
	The training unit organises extra study/ experiences to meet the Panel plan – including integration, and reports to the panel.		
	The Formation Panels reports annually to the MEB on progress of Candidates. A recommendation of 'Readiness for Ministry' is made by the Panel to the MEB, with the final decision being made by the National Executive.		

Continuing Education

The Church believes that all ministers need to keep learning and growing in faith and ministry. For this reason there is an expectation that Ministers will commit themselves to continuing education, not just in the couple of years after college but for the rest of their life.

Without undermining the responsibility of presbyteries to make sure Ministers are doing continuing education, the MEB wishes to suggest the following:

- i. When candidates complete their studies/ formation and are ordained, that they remain part of a formation panel for another three years as part of continuing education.
- ii. That Ministers and Pastors be encouraged to join the Congress specific education units provided for candidates each year.
- iii. That Congress continues to support Indigenous Theology forums as a form of continuing education.
- iv. That regional committees request Ministers and Pastors to report annually on their continuing education.

Proposal

It is proposed that the National Conference

- i. Approve the transfer of responsibilities from regional committees to the MEB and National Executive set out in this paper, and attach this paper to the Minutes of Conference.
- ii. Affirm the role of Formation Panels.
- iii. Direct the National Executive to prepare the detailed changes that need to be brought to the Assembly in July.
- iv. Affirm the following in regard to continuing education:
 - a. When candidates complete their studies/ formation and are ordained, that they remain part of a formation panel for another three years as part of continuing education.
 - b. That Ministers and Pastors be encouraged to join the Congress specific education units provided for candidates each year.
 - c. That Congress continues to support Indigenous Theology forums as a form of continuing education.
 - d. That regional committees request Ministers and Pastors to report annually on their continuing education.