



The Placements Process — 2019

NOTE: The Placements Process outlined below is set out step by step.

At some points of the process it may be necessary for one or more steps to be repeated.

A presentation file which outlines this process in a format suitable for use at a meeting is available in the file "The Placements Process Summary.pptx".

As far as possible, this process should also be used in Agencies and Schools seeking a placement. However, for convenience, this document refers to congregational placements

1. The placements process most commonly commences when a minister informs the chairperson of the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) of an intention to conclude a current placement by accepting a Call elsewhere, by indicating an intention to retire on a specific date, or with the approach of the end of a placement reaching ten years.
2. The Chairperson of PRC asks the Presbytery Minister Congregations (PMC) to contact the chairperson of the Church Council to arrange for a suitable date to begin a Mission Study. Except in exceptional circumstances where the PRC considers it necessary, a Mission Study will commence no more than three months prior to the expected end date for the current placement.
3. The PMC informs the congregation of the Placement Processes to be followed, including an overview of the placement s process, anticipated timeframes, the need for a Mission Study and the need to prepare and send material to the Presbytery Minister Administration (PMA).
4. The PRC appoints two people to work with the congregation to conduct the Mission Study. These people will be from outside the congregation, and have had some training or background in the conduct of Mission Studies, and should be familiar with any relevant Presbytery decisions about strategy affecting the Congregation and its context.. One will be appointed as the Convenor for the Mission Study. Schedule C contains a guide for the Mission Study Process.
5. Appropriate information (See Schedule A) is gathered in relation to congregational statistics, property and finance matters. The Mission Study Convenor ensures that the Church Council or appropriate council provides this for consideration by the Resourcing Committee.
6. Following consideration of the Mission Study Report and the gathered resource documents by the appropriate council of the Congregation, these are forwarded to the chairperson of the PRC. The PRC considers the matter and determines if and

how the process is to proceed. The PRC Secretary provides written advice of the decision.

7. (a) If the PRC agrees that the placement should be filled, a Joint Nominating Committee (JNC) will be formed. The PRC normally appoints a chairperson and one other Presbytery representative. In most cases the chairperson may be the person who convened the Mission Study, or a different person may be more appropriate. As part of the advice to the Congregation, the PRC requests the Congregation, through its Church Council, to appoint up to further six congregational representatives to represent the diversity of the congregation, and who are able to reflect on the needs of the congregation for ministry into the future. It is expected that they will be people active in different ways in the life of the congregation, and are able to reflect objectively on the realities of the placement.
- (b) If the placement is not to be filled the PRC continues to work with the Congregation to determine ways in which the life, worship and mission of the group may be resourced and continued.
8. The names and contact details of the congregational members of the JNC should be forwarded to the Secretary of the PRC, who will advise the JNC Chairperson. One of these people should be designated as the primary contact. The chairperson of the JNC then makes arrangements with the primary contact for the first meeting of the JNC. No meeting of the JNC may take place without the presence of at least one of the Presbytery representatives.
9. It is vital that all members of the JNC understand the need for strict confidentiality of everything that happens from this time until the PRC approves the presentation of the name of a Minister to a meeting of the Congregation.
10. The JNC prepares a Placement Profile following a prescribed format provided by the Synod (*usually by the PMC*). The Church Council of the Congregation is asked to approve the Placement Profile and return it electronically to the PMC at least one week before a PRC meeting (which is held on the first Wednesday of each month). It is important to ensure that the Profile has been approved by the Church Council, and that the Terms of Placement form is signed.
11. The PMC submits the Placement Profile electronically to the PRC. Representatives of the JNC, including the Chairperson of the JNC, attend the meeting to present the profile. It is important that those attending have adequate knowledge of the congregation to respond to questions about the Congregation's life and mission. The PRC may make suggestions or raise issues that require changes to the profile. Where practical, these may be agreed by the JNC members present, but in some cases it may be necessary to refer the profile back to the JNC for further work, possibly in conjunction with the Church Council
12. If the PRC gives its approval for the profile to be submitted to the Synod Placements Committee, the PMC completes the Presbytery Section of the profile in

consultation with the PRC or a sub-group appointed for that task. This includes providing comments on such matters as the Presbytery's mission and ministry deployment priorities.

13. The PRC may delegate signing to the PMC, who submits the Placement Profile to the Synod Placements Committee for consideration. The Presbytery representatives on the Placements Committee present the case as set out in the Placement Profile. If approval to proceed is given the Placements Committee provides the names of up to three ministers to the JNC Chairperson.
14. The chairperson of the JNC arranges conversations between the JNC and these ministers, following a set of guidelines, until the JNC and a minister mutually discern it appropriate to move to a Call. If there is no agreement with any of the ministers whose names have been provided, the JNC requests additional names from the Placements Committee.
15. When agreement has been reached to proceed to a Call, the JNC advises the chairperson of the PRC. The Chairperson of the JNC and at least two other members of the JNC attend a meeting of the PRC to present the name of the Minister and reasons for the decision. The PRC considers the request and comes to a decision whether to approve of the name being presented to a meeting of the Congregation. Following the decision of the PRC, the secretary of the PRC immediately contacts the chairperson of the JNC and the secretary of the congregation and informs them of the decision.
16. A congregational meeting must be called (with a minimum of two weeks' notice) to affirm the issuing of the Call. At least two-thirds of those attending the Congregational meeting must agree through a written ballot to the issuing of a Call unless there has been a prior decision to require a larger majority (for example, 75%).
17. Following approval by the Congregation, the Congregation writes a Letter of Call to the minister. A template for this letter will be provided by the PMC. The letter must be sent to the minister within three days of the meeting of the Congregation. The minister is required to respond to the Letter of Call within fourteen days.
18. When a Congregation has received a positive response by a minister to the Letter of Call, the secretary or chairperson of the Church Council is required to inform the Chairperson of Presbytery as soon as possible so that a Service of Induction can be arranged. The Placement Acceptance Advice Form (Schedule E) should be used for this purpose. At the same time, the Church Council should ensure that the Minister countersigns the Terms of Placement form, and that a copy of this is forwarded with the Placement Acceptance Advice Form.
19. The Service of Induction is conducted by the Presbytery, and is usually led by the Chairperson of Presbytery, following consultation between the Presbytery, the minister and the Congregation concerning the date, time and place. The Service of Induction concludes the placements process.

SCHEDULE A

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED BY THE PRESBYTERY

The following documents must be prepared by the Congregation undertaking a Mission Study, particularly if there is a possibility that a new Minister will be called, and forwarded to the Presbytery Minister Administration as soon as possible after the commencement of the Mission Study.

1. Audited financial statements which include the previous year's balance.
2. The current year's budget with position to the date of last Church Council meeting.
3. A budget for the following year.
4. Budget outlines for the following four years.
5. A general appraisal of the condition of the buildings and an outline of the maintenance and/or any refurbishment program.
6. Information regarding manses. Is there a manse offered? If yes, who and what are the contact details so that a manse inspection team may carry out the required inspection.
7. Contact details so queries can be followed through.

SCHEDULE B

USEFUL RESOURCES

The following resources will be useful to all those involved in the Placements Process. Chairpersons and members of Joint Nominating Committees, in particular, are encouraged to review the listed web pages and, where appropriate, to obtain and read these documents.

Web Page or Document	Web Link
Starting point for Placements information	https://www.victas.uca.org.au/UCA%20Resources/Pages/Placements.aspx
Protocols, policies and guidelines for Placements Committee (While these documents are primarily intended for use by the Placements Committee, they provide a valuable resource about many aspects of Placements)	https://www.victas.uca.org.au/nonav/Pages/Protocols-Policies-and-Guidelines-for-Placements-Committee.aspx
National Placements Handbook	https://www.victas.uca.org.au/UCA%20Resources/Documents/Placements%20Handbook.pdf
Congregation Profile Form (including Terms of Placement)	Follow the link on the Placements page of the synod website: https://www.victas.uca.org.au/UCA%20Resources/Pages/Placements.aspx
JNC Training Resource – has some useful guidelines on JNC conversations and processes	https://www.victas.uca.org.au/UCA%20Resources/Documents/29%20JNC%20training%20resource.pdf
Ministerial Entitlements. Please ensure that you obtain the latest and current version of this document. A new version will be needed each year.	Follow the link on the Terms of Placement Committee page of the synod website: https://www.victas.uca.org.au/UCA%20Resources/Pages/Terms%20of%20Placement%20Committee.aspx
Terms of Placement Form	Follow the link on the Placements page of the synod website: https://www.victas.uca.org.au/UCA%20Resources/Pages/Placements.aspx
Placement Advice Form	Please obtain copy from Presbytery Secretary, Telephone 9857 1003 or Email: PYY.Secretary@victas.uca.org.au

SCHEDULE C

MISSION STUDY PROCESS GUIDE

The following information has been put together to assist those involved in the conduct of a Mission Study. The author is Rev Ian Brown. Refer to the Powerpoint file “Mission Study Format.pptx” for the slides referred to in the text.

1. When a vacancy becomes known, make contact with Church Council leadership to plan a date for a Mission Study discussion with the Congregation. The Mission Study provides the background for writing a profile and is a critical point for Presbytery to engage with a congregation to take the pulse or suggest relevant possibilities.
2. Mostly, Sunday after church is the preferred time, over some lunch with 1½ to 2 hours for presentation and reflection with discussion and responses.
3. The Mission Study format slideshow is a generic input to aid reflection. Add in appropriate names some pictures if possible (google maps satellite view if nothing else) for slides 1, 2, 20 and data for slide 10.
4. Slide 4 provides an opportunity for a biblical reflection. I’ve used Psalm 31 – with an emphasis on seeking refuge in God, with a New Testament reading ‘of the day’ looking for a focus on being sent out, to draw attention to the creative tension we live in as church. Opportunity to ask questions is generally appreciated, even if you can’t answer them – many questions won’t have ready answers.
5. Slide 10 reflects on local data. “A Form” weekly attendance figures from a range of years – try the Presbytery office to access data, or a local member will give often happily give estimates.
6. Slides 13–18 are based on material from Sharonne Price, PMME Sth Aust UCA and Rob McFarlane, who has a similar role in NSW. These are to give some of the wider church picture. There are background documents for these in the supporting package, and these should be used to provide the commentary.
7. Slide 24 is the place for the main discussion: table groups suggested as best, a scribe to write responses for the group, plenary to collect brief points on butcher’s paper around the walls. Members can be given 3 or 4 sticker dots of one colour to mark what they would most like to see followed up and 1 red dot, for what they see as the most important thing listed. Some possible discussion questions are included below in Schedule D.
8. Arrange to meet with the Church Council to present and discuss the report.
9. Collate the responses, draft some ideas and recommendations for ways forward coming from the study day. Discuss these and the other ideas Church Council may have. It is vital that the Mission Study addresses the question of the future ministry needs of the congregation, but it is also important not to automatically assume that these can only be met by a Minister in placement.

10. Formulate a draft report, including any appropriate recommendations, and circulate it to the Church Council for comment and response. Finalise the report and forward it to the PRC. Remember that the PRC will be looking for a recommendation about whether it is appropriate for the congregation to proceed to look for a new Minister, or whether some other form of ministry is more appropriate. The reality of this time in the life of the Church is that it may no longer be possible to assume the former option will always be available.

SCHEDULE D

MISSION STUDY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following discussion questions may assist in the congregational meeting held as part of a Mission Study. Others may be added as appropriate.

1. What are some possibilities for further being good news in this community?
2. What challenges do you see for the 3–5 years ahead?
3. What further possibilities are there for developing partnerships?
4. Where do you see possibilities for new life and new directions?
5. Are there other important ideas which need to be part of the discussion?

SCHEDULE E

PLACEMENT ACCEPTANCE ADVICE FORM

The following form should be used to advise the Presbytery that a placement has been agreed by the congregation and the new Minister. It ensures that all of the required information is available to update the Presbytery and Synod Directories, and to arrange the induction service.

An editable version of this form is available from the Presbytery Secretary.

Following acceptance of a Call by a Minister of the Word or other appointee, the chairperson of the Joint Nominating Committee or the Chairperson of the Congregation or other body should complete this form and return it as soon as possible to the Chairperson of the Presbytery.

Please note that it is the responsibility of the Chairperson of Presbytery to set the date and time of the service of induction, in consultation with the congregation or other body.

Congregation or Placement:

Minister accepting Placement:

	Current	After commencement of placement
Address:
Phone:
E-Mail:

Date of Acceptance of Call:

Date of Commencement of Placement:

Date of change of address (if appropriate):

Address of church at which induction will be conducted:

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Presbytery JNC Representatives: 1. (Chair).....

2.

Name of Chairperson of the Congregation:

Phone:

Name of person to contact
regarding induction arrangements:.....

Address:.....

Phone:..... E-Mail:.....

Details provided by:..... Phone:.....

Office use:	Induction Service Date:.....
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