

Office of Vocation Update

May 2018

Remit 3: Office of Vocation was passed by a majority of pastoral charges and presbyteries in 2017. In July 2018, the 43rd General Council will determine whether to enact the remit. Here's a progress report on the Office of Vocation's design.

How has the design of the Office of Vocation been determined?

The structure and responsibilities of the Office of Vocation are laid out in the decisions of the 42nd General Council (motion CR 6, *Record of Proceedings 2015*, pp. 146–147). These have guided the design of the Office of Vocation. Since then the other remits, like Remit 7: Candidacy Pathway and Remit 1: Three Council Model, have had to be incorporated into the design.

How will the Office of Vocation be staffed?

The staff of the Ministry and Employment Unit who currently work in ministry vocations and ministry personnel policy—the LEAD team (Leaders: Equip, Accredite, Discipline)—will support the work of the Office of Vocation. Seven Office of Vocation ministers will work in the regional councils. One of these will be a half-time position filled by someone from the Indigenous Church supporting ministry personnel who are serving Indigenous communities and their Council on Learning (candidacy board).

What committees will be part of the Office of Vocation?

The Standards Committee will implement policy decisions of the Denominational Council by setting the standards—for example, determining what is part of the mandatory racial justice training for ministry personnel.

The Response Committee will work with conflict resolution facilitators and be familiar with all the possibilities to respond to complaints against ministry personnel.

The Remedial Committee will ensure appropriate support for any directed programs ordered from reviews of ministry personnel (*The Manual* J.9).

If the 43rd General Council approves the proposal recommended by the General Council Executive, the candidacy boards will be commissions of the Board of Vocation. This ensures the decisions are made by the people with the information about the pathway for a particular candidate.

How will the members of the Board of Vocation—the body that will oversee the Office of Vocation—be selected?

Each Conference has been asked to nominate five people, by August 15, to a pool of nominees from which the Board of Vocation and its committees will be formed.

- The General Council nominations process will select a slate for the Board of Vocation for appointment by the General Council.
- The Indigenous Church will name a person to the Board of Vocation.
- The remaining names from the pool of nominees will be given to the Board of Vocation for appointment to the committees of the Board and to the candidacy boards.

The Board and its committees will be served well by nominees who have experience with the education and students system, in setting standards or making decisions about reviews, or in serving on a formal hearing panel.

Will the Board of Vocation have any direct contact with regional councils and their staff?

Collaboration between the Office of Vocation and the regional councils is essential. Depending on what decisions the Board of Vocation is making, there will be contact with regional councils. For example, if there is a complaint

under the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy, a small group from the Board and the regional council will determine administrative leave. The regional council will work with the pastoral charge/community of faith to communicate this and facilitate covering for the ministry personnel. Candidacy boards will work with regional councils around learning sites.

Is there a plan for how shared oversight will work?

The regional council has oversight of the communities of faith; the Office of Vocation has oversight for the purposes of discipline of ministry personnel. In practice the regional council takes the lead on early intervention around matters to do with the pastoral relationship. Formal complaints against individual ministry personnel go to the Office of Vocation. Throughout, cooperation between regional council staff and Office of Vocation ministers will be essential.

Who will support Ministry and Personnel Committees in the new structure?

This is a regional council responsibility. We are not seeing much change in the role of Ministry and Personnel Committees in the new structure.

Will I have a role in the new structure?

Those with a passion for ministry formation can offer their gifts through the candidacy boards, be part of circles of accompaniment, or support a learning site by serving on a Lay Supervision Team. The Office of Vocation will include reviewers, investigators, conflict resolution facilitators, and those willing to serve on formal hearing panels. Currently much of that work is done by Conferences, and the Office of Vocation will be enriched by those experienced people.

If the 43rd General Council decides to enact remit 3, is there a timeline for concluding the work and having people in place to do the work?

Members of the Board of Vocation and its committees, including candidacy boards, along with the Office of Vocation ministers will be trained in November 2018 so the Office of Vocation is ready to go on January 1, 2019.

What resources are planned?

Should remits 1, 3, and 7 be enacted. new resources related to the Office of Vocation, along with updated handbooks on candidacy, will be available on www.united-church.ca by the end of September 2018.

Office of Vocation Progress Report: This YouTube Live session on Monday, May 14, 1:00 p.m. ET/10:00 a.m. PT, will present a progress report on and overview of the Office of Vocation. The changes won't be final until they're enacted by General Council this July, so this will give you a chance to hear about what we're working on and the directions we anticipate. Click here to view the live event. After it's over, the same link will connect you to the recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6nUMeG5z2o>.

What about the Association of Ministers?

The task group looking at this possibility will be reporting in fall 2018. An interim report was received by the Executive of the General Council in March 2018. A survey of ministry personnel is also in development.

Contact Us at the General Council Office

If you have more questions or comments, please e-mail remits@united-church.ca.

You can also subscribe to the Remit Implementation Update e-newsletter at www.united-church.ca/leadership/church-administration/remit-implementation.

