

Paper D1

Recruitment of a Principal, Westminster College, Cambridge

Education and Learning Committee

Basic information

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Action required	Decision on proposed resolution.
Draft resolution(s)	Resolution 20 Assembly resolves to alter the guidance given in Resolution 17 of 2014 so that the post of Principal of Westminster College shall be open to members of the United Reformed Church and to members of those Churches which belong to one or more of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council, Council for World Mission, World Council of Churches.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Recruitment of a Principal at Westminster College, Cambridge and amending the current restrictions.
Main points	The General Assembly sets the parameters within which the appointment of a Principal can be made, but the responsibility for recruiting and appointing a Principal has been delegated to the Governing Body. The Governing Body would like to broaden the pool from which a Principal can be appointed and propose changes to enable this.
Previous relevant documents	Resolution 17 [2(d)] of General Assembly 2014 (see Assembly Record (2014), pp. 13-14) Resolution 43 of General Assembly 2018 (see Assembly Record (2018), p. 14).
Consultation has taken place with...	The Governors of Westminster College, Cambridge Education and Learning Committee The Secretary for Ministries The General Secretary Andy Middleton, Legal Adviser.

Summary of impact

Financial	Any financial impact would be on the budget of Westminster College.
External (eg ecumenical)	The breadth of potential applicants would be greater.

1. The Principal of Westminster College, Cambridge, is one of a number of General Assembly appointments. General Assembly has set the parameters within which an appointment can be made, but the responsibility for recruiting and appointing a Principal has been delegated to the College's Governors.
2. General Assembly in 2014 resolved that the recruitment to the post of Principal should be restricted to a Minister of Word and Sacraments of the United Reformed Church or the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC), or the Council for World Mission (CWM). This currently forms the pool from which a Principal should be recruited.
3. In recent times, the role of Principal of a theological college has changed. Whereas in the past the Principal modelled the Christian ethos of the College, represented ordained Ministry of Word and Sacraments and led the College community academically, there is now more emphasis in sister institutions on the Principal acting as an advocate for the College (within and beyond the denomination), formulating strategy, taking a lead on innovation and diversifying College activity, and even fund-raising. The gifts and skills now required of a College Principal are such that they may no longer easily be found among the traditional recruitment pools as defined in the 2014 resolution.
4. Given that the pool of ministers in the URC from which the College can draw is shrinking, and that (at least) the previous two attempts to recruit drew limited interest from the other possible sources, the Governors agreed at their meeting on 2 December 2022 that the time has come to seek relief from some of these restrictions as has happened with other General Assembly appointments.
5. It is the Governors' view that, considering the challenges faced by the College, it would be prudent to broaden the pool from which a Principal can be recruited. The College would then be in a stronger position to recruit a Principal who is fully equipped to enable Westminster to flourish.
6. General Assembly in 2018 resolved that all Assembly appointments, apart from the General Secretary, the Secretary for Ministries, Synod Moderators and Principal of Westminster College, should be open to members of the United Reformed Church and to members of those Churches which belong to one or more of the WCRC, DECC, CWM, Action of Churches Together in Scotland, Churches Together in England, Cytûn (Churches Together in Wales), the Free Churches Group and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.
7. In the spirit of resolution 43 of General Assembly 2018, the Governors of Westminster College, with support of the Education and Learning Committee, ask General Assembly to extend the pool for recruitment to the role of Principal to include members of the URC and members of churches belonging to one or more of WCRC, DECC, CWM and the World Council of Churches. This should open

recruitment to a sufficiently wide pool of candidates from which an excellent appointment can be made.

8. Should General Assembly be willing to widen the pool from which a Principal might be recruited, then the Governors are mindful of the following points:

- Among the College's teaching staff, only the Principal's role is currently restricted to an ordained Minister of Word and Sacraments and removing that restriction, potentially, could lead to Westminster having a teaching staff team none of whom might be an ordained Minister. The Governors would therefore see it as their responsibility to ensure that, if the Principal were not an ordained Minister, then the Vice-Principal would be.
- The Principal's job description and person specification will be written with the role of Bursar and General Manager in mind in order that the two roles, and those occupying them, complement each other.
- In future, the role of Vice-Principal will be more clearly defined and more prescriptive, with the expectation that the Vice-Principal would complement the gifts and strengths of the Principal and ensuring that, between the posts, Westminster's Christian and specifically URC ethos is maintained and emphasised in the teaching staff and in the whole life of the College.