

# Paper H10

## Process for the Nomination and Appointment of Synod Moderators and other General Assembly roles reserved for Ministers of Word and Sacraments

Ministries Committee

### Basic information

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Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	<p><b>Resolution 30</b></p> <p>1. General Assembly adopts the process for the appointment of Synod Moderators as contained in annexe two of paper H10 of General Assembly 2024, effective for processes commenced after 1 January 2025.</p> <p><b>Resolution 31</b></p> <p>2. General Assembly adopts the process for the appointment of other General Assembly roles reserved for ministers of Word and Sacraments as contained in annexe three of Paper H10 of General Assembly 2024, effective for processes commenced after 1 January 2025.</p> <p><b>Resolution 32</b></p> <p>3. General Assembly requires that the notes for nominating groups for other Assembly-appointed posts as contained in annex four of Paper H10 of General Assembly 2024 be noted and disseminated as appropriate.</p>

	<p><b>Resolution 33</b></p> <p><b>4. General Assembly resolves that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i. fixed terms be removed from all current Assembly-appointed minister posts, from the close of General Assembly 2024;</b></li> <li><b>ii. all future such appointments be untermmed;</b></li> <li><b>iii. requires that the terms of settlement of all ministers currently serving in such posts be revised to reflect this change.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Resolution 34</b></p> <p><b>5. General Assembly instructs the Clerk to update the Rules of Procedure as soon as possible to reflect the decisions taken by General Assembly, and that the Business Committee is authorised to approve these changes reflecting the will of General Assembly, and the updated Rules of Procedure be published as soon as possible.</b></p>
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## Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	To propose a revised process for the nomination of Synod Moderators and other General Assembly roles reserved for ministers of Word and Sacraments.
<b>Main points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed changes to the process for the nomination and appointment of Synod Moderators</li> <li>• Proposed changes to the process for the nomination and appointment for those posts reserved for ministers of the Word and Sacraments</li> <li>• Proposed changes to the terms of settlement of all ministers and Church-Related Community Workers in Assembly-appointed posts.</li> </ul>
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	General Assembly 2004:32 and 2004:33 – Appointment of Synod Moderators.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	<p>External HR Consultant</p> <p>Synod Moderators (including Moderators-elect)</p> <p>All other ministers in General Assembly appointed posts</p> <p>Fiona Bennett (as the General Secretary’s line manager)</p> <p>Chief Operating Officer</p> <p>Assistant Clerk / Clerk-elect</p> <p>Designated Safeguarding Lead</p> <p>Westminster College Governors.</p>

## Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	Minimal.
<b>External (eg ecumenical)</b>	

### Background

- 1.1 In the light of some specific issues which have arisen surrounding the process for nominating and appointing Synod Moderators, the Ministries Committee was asked to establish a small task group to undertake a review of the process.
- 1.2 The terms of reference agreed by Ministries Committee in October 2023 are included as annex one.
- 1.3 Ministries Committee appointed the Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship), Secretary for Ministries and Convenor of the Ministries Committee to undertake the review.
- 1.4 The task group brings the following report, to be read alongside the proposed revised processes included at annexes two (Synod Moderators) and three (other posts reserved for ministers), and the matters to be noted in annex four (posts open to both lay and ministerial applicants).

### Scope

- 2.1 There are currently 16 Assembly-appointed posts which have been reserved by General Assembly for ministers of Word and Sacraments: 13 Synod Moderators, the General Secretary, the Secretary for Ministries, and the Minister for Digital Worship.
- 2.2 Our recommendations apply to all 16 of these posts.
- 2.3 There are currently a further four Assembly-appointed posts which are filled by ministers (either ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers) which were advertised as being open to either ministers or lay applicants: the Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship), the Deputy General Secretary (Mission), the Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries and the Secretary for Education and Learning.

### Assisting the discernment of vocations to such posts

- 3.1 Synod Moderators are among those who are key to helping ministers access further training through Education for Ministry 3 which will enable them to develop. They are also among those vital in developing opportunities for ministers to be used in wider church roles that will both stretch them and equip them for further service. Through their pastoral engagement with ministers, they are in key relationships, as part of which they might encourage ministers to apply for assembly-appointed roles.
- 3.2 The use of nominations for Assembly-appointed roles is an important means for moderators and others to signpost suitable ministers to the wider church.

### Advertising

- 4.1 We are aware of important conversations elsewhere that are taking place under the banner 'making spaces', which are to be encouraged.

- 4.2 Continuing to use a twin-track process of nomination and application for garnering applications to Assembly-appointed roles is crucial.
- 4.3 Careful consideration should be given when advertising other Assembly-appointed posts (beyond the 16 reserved posts) to using the facility for declaring a genuine occupational requirement that applicants be a Christian.
- 4.4 Job descriptions and person specifications for all roles need to be bespoke for a post (rather than generic), with consideration given to using the Marks of Ministry as a benchmark for the 16 reserved posts.
- 4.5 All advertisements should be inclusive, avoid the use of any language that may directly or indirectly prevent suitable candidates from expressing an interest, and include reference to the URC's commitment to safeguarding.
- 4.6 Role descriptions, person specifications and advertisement wording shall be dual checked by the general secretariat for any inconsistencies against the URC's approach to equality and diversity.

## **Applications**

- 5.1 The review group has carefully considered the question of anonymity in the application process for reserved posts. The group reached the conclusion that, since it is impossible to achieve anonymity without removing vital information from the application form, we should remove the need for anonymity from the application process.
- 5.2 Application forms need to be bespoke rather than generic for such reserved posts, and include an assurance that reasonable adjustments will be made as appropriate throughout the process to accommodate a candidate's needs.

## **Constitution of nominating panels**

- 6.1 We recommend that the pool from which people are drawn to serve on nominating panels be significantly reduced, to a team of eight people who commit to undergoing training and making themselves available to serve on the majority of such panels for a five-year period.
- 6.2 The pool for nominating panels will continue to be recruited by the Nominations Committee using appropriate safer recruitment processes.
- 6.3 We recommend that nominating panels for Synod Moderators should consist of three representatives from the Synod, together with three representatives of the General Assembly. If the Synod Clerk is not included in the Synod's cohort, with the agreement of the nominating panel they could attend as a non-voting member.
- 6.4 We recommend that nominating panels for the other reserved Assembly-appointed posts should consist of three people, unless there is good reason for increasing that number, and recognise that this would require a change to the Rules of Procedure in the case of the General Secretary.
- 6.5 In both instances, we further recommend that an independent, non-voting, convenor be appointed by the General Assembly who will not be part of the discernment process but present solely to facilitate the discernment process.

- 6.6 A representative of the General Secretariat and an HR representative should also be present, in both instances in a non-voting capacity, to advise as necessary.
- 6.7 All members of the nominating panel should have received training in HR practices (including scoring applications, framing questions, discernment etc), safer recruitment, unconscious bias, interpreting psychological and written tests, and how they might frame questions about anti-racism prior to becoming part of the panel.

## **Convening of nominating panels**

- 7.1 See 6.5 above.
- 7.2 As well as the training listed above, the convenor should also receive training in facilitating meetings prior to the commencement of the process.

## **The shortlisting processes**

- 8.1 All panel members should be encouraged to stay locally the night before the interview day in order to facilitate an earlier start and a fuller day.
- 8.2 If more than two candidates are shortlisted, consideration should be given to scheduling interviews to take place over two days, including overnight accommodation for the middle night.
- 8.3 Only with the consent of all candidates shall the identity of each shortlisted candidate be shared in confidence with all candidates.
- 8.4 All shortlisted candidates should be asked to undertake a monitored written assessment prior to the interview day based on a scenario agreed by the nominating panel. Expected outcomes, ie 'what good looks like' or a clear benchmark as to what is expected within the written responses as a minimum, should be agreed among the panel at the same time. Such written assignments are to be circulated to the panel ahead of the interview day.
- 8.5 We recommend that the current practice of using generic psychometric tests be replaced by asking all shortlisted candidates to undertake a bespoke psychological test, similar to that currently used by the Assessment Board for ministry candidates. A written report is to be circulated to the panel before the interview day.
- 8.6 Interview questions always need to be bespoke to the post, and include candidate-specific questions.

## **Interview day(s)**

- 9.1 All interviews should take place in a neutral venue away from either the Synod Office or Church House.
- 9.2 A presentation should be compulsory for all reserved posts. Topic / expected timing should be agreed prior to the interview day and shared with applicants, normally at the point of letting a person know that they have been shortlisted.
- 9.3 Time should be allowed to meet with the professional responsible for administering the psychological testing in order that they may respond to questions from the panel.
- 9.4 Time should be allowed to discuss the written and psychological tests with the candidate separate from the interview questions.

## **The use of psychological tests**

10.1 See 8.5 and 9.3-4 above.

## **The appointment processes**

11.1 We see no reason to diverge from current practice which has the nominee telling their pastorate or post immediately prior to a communications team announcement, and appointment following, preferably at Assembly Executive or General Assembly.

## **The appropriateness of timed appointments**

12.1 As the juxtaposition of a fixed retirement age and timed appointments is difficult to manage, our recommendation is that fixed terms be removed from all current Assembly-appointed minister posts, and all future such appointments be untimed. This should apply to all such posts whether one of the 16 reserved posts or not.

## **Review and appraisal**

13.1 We recommend that all Synod Moderators should have a small support group, appointed by the Synod in consultation with the Moderator. The support group needs to consist of people who are grounded in the Synod, understand its nuances and can help the moderator reflect upon their ministry in that particular context. We see this as being complementary to pastoral supervision.

13.2 Synod Moderators are responsible to the General Assembly through the General Secretary.

13.3 Ministers in Assembly-appointed posts other than Synod Moderators already have a designated ministry support person (formerly known as a line manager).

13.4 In common with all URC ministers and CRCWs, ministers in Assembly-appointed posts are expected to adhere to programmes and training requirements mandated from time to time by the General Assembly (currently safeguarding training, safer sacred space training, anti-racism training and pastoral supervision).

13.5 All ministers in Assembly-appointed posts should undertake an annual Ministry Development Review using a form based upon the Church House Personal Development Review form but adapted to include reflection upon the Marks of Ministry (rather than expected standards). The Ministry Development Review is intended to help an individual reflect upon what has gone well, what has gone less well, what their training needs might be, and what the priorities should be for the coming 12 months. The Ministry Development Review takes the form of accompanied self-appraisal.

13.6 For Synod Moderators, the Ministry Development Review should be initiated by a designated member of the support group, and then reflected upon with the entire group.

13.7 For ministers in other Assembly-appointed posts, the Ministry Development Review should be carried out in conjunction with their ministry support person.

13.8 At the end of the Ministry Development Review process, a copy of the completed and signed form should be sent to the General Secretary, who will ensure that it is appropriately filed.

13.9 A 360° appraisal will take place in year five for all Assembly-appointed ministers, and every five years thereafter. This review is to be initiated by the general secretariat. The details of the how this review is structured needs to be worked out.

### **The provision of pastoral support for partners**

14.1 Where the partner of a Synod Moderator is a minister serving in the same Synod, formal arrangements should be made for pastoral support to be offered by another Synod Moderator.

14.2 Where the partner of a Synod Moderator is a minister, it should be recorded by the secretary(ies) of the moderators' meeting, and notified to the General Secretary, the relevant Synod Clerk and Synod Safeguarding Officer, which colleague will act should a ministerial discipline case be necessary, or a safeguarding concern raised. The minister should also be informed as to what arrangements have been put in place.

14.3 We anticipate that a partner who is a member of a local church will receive pastoral support through the arrangements made by the church.

14.4 Where a partner is not part of a local church, the Moderator's support group should offer a conversation with that person to determine what pastoral arrangements would be both feasible and welcomed.

## Annex one

### Review of Process for Appointing a Synod Moderator

#### Terms of Reference

**To be carried out under the auspices of the Ministries Committee.**

**Suggested review group membership:**

Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship)  
Secretary for Ministries, and  
Ministries Committee Convenor.

Robert Burden (HR Consultant) to be consulted throughout.

Consultation will need to take place with Synod Moderators and any other relevant stake holders.

**Review to include:**

1. Expansion of process to include all Assembly-appointed minister posts.
2. The process for appointment, including:
  - a) assisting the discernment of vocations to such posts
  - b) advertising
  - c) applications
  - d) make-up of nominating panels
  - e) chairing of nominating panels
  - f) shortlisting process
  - g) nomination process
  - h) the use of psychometric tests
  - i) appointment process.
3. The appropriateness of timed appointments.
4. The process for review and regular 'appraisal'.
5. Provision of pastoral support for spouses / partners.

## Annex two

### Process for the Nomination and Appointment of Synod Moderators

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 The United Reformed Church has 16 General Assembly Appointed posts reserved specifically for ministers of Word and Sacraments (13 Synod Moderators, the General Secretary, Secretary for Ministries and Minister for Digital Worship).
- 1.2 All recruitment processes for Assembly-appointed posts are about seeking consensus in prayerfully discerning God's will. All the elements of the process – written and verbal – contribute to that end. No single element of the process stands alone as definitive.
- 1.3 This paper sets out a process for the appointment of ministers of Word and Sacraments to these posts from the vacancy until ratification by the Council of the Church with responsibility for appointment, namely Assembly Executive or General Assembly.

#### 2. Applications

- 2.1 The United Reformed Church believes that all applications for nomination and appointment for General Assembly appointed posts should be treated as a discernment process.
- 2.2 For all Assembly Appointed posts, the twin-track process for applications is important. Ministers can either be nominated or apply directly.
- 2.3 Role Descriptions and Person Specifications for all posts need to be bespoke and not generic.
- 2.4 The application form needs to be bespoke for the post; the Marks of Ministry for ministers of Word and Sacraments shall be used as the benchmark.
- 2.5 No appointments shall be time limited.

#### 3. The Nominating Panel

- 3.1 The Nominating Panel for an appointment by General Assembly shall consist of six people, three appointed by the Nominations Committee, and three appointed by the Synod where the vacancy is to occur. If the Synod Clerk is not included in the Synod's cohort, with the agreement of the nominating panel they could attend as a non-voting member.
- 3.2 The URC Nominations Committee shall appoint two people from the URC Nominations Panel elected by General Assembly ensuring a balance of diversity across the entire panel.
- 3.3 An independent non-voting Convenor shall be appointed from the URC Nominations Panel elected by the General Assembly who shall not be part of the discernment process but present solely to facilitate it. Their role shall be to arrange dates for shortlisting and interview with the Synod Clerk and a member of the General Secretariat.

- 3.4 A member of the General Secretariat and an HR representative from Church House should also be present in a non-voting capacity. The member of the General Secretariat shall normally act as secretary to the Nominating Panel. The HR representative shall offer administrative support and procedural guidance to ensure a fair and impartial appointment process.
- 3.5 All members of the Nominating Panel should receive training in HR practices (including scoring applications, framing questions, discernment, etc), unconscious bias and anti-racism training prior to becoming part of the panel.
- 3.6 In addition, the independent Convenor shall receive training in facilitating meetings.

#### **4. The nomination process**

- 4.1 A member of the General Secretariat initiates the process as far in advance of the vacancy as possible, but no more than one year before. They shall seek a meeting with the Synod Clerk to explain the process and agree the timetable.
- 4.2 The HR facilitator shall then provide the Synod Clerk with a recruitment pack containing general information, a sample job description and person specification, instructions for the creation of a Synod profile, and a sample advert, bearing in mind that job descriptions and person specifications for all roles need to be bespoke for a post and not generic.
- 4.3 The four members of Synod shall be appointed by the Synod to form one part of the Nominating Group for the post. They shall normally be co-ordinated by the Synod Clerk or another Convenor appointed by the Synod, and shall be responsible for the creation of the Synod profile. They may wish to bring together a larger, fully representative group from across the Synod to help with consultation and the drafting of the final document. Their consultation should be as comprehensive as possible and should include the churches of the Synod and ecumenical partners. The Synod members of the Nominating Group shall also be responsible for adapting the role description, person specification and advert to reflect local and regional / national concerns and priorities.
- 4.4 When the documents are ready, the Synod Clerk shall forward them to the HR Facilitator, who shall circulate them to the entire Nominating Group for comment. The Group shall agree a final version. This shall normally happen by email. However, the Nominating Group convener may decide to call a meeting of the Group to resolve any serious disagreement.
- 4.5 The HR facilitator shall consult with the Synod Clerk on the wording of the advertisement to ensure it positively reflects the URC's approach to providing fair and equal opportunities to all. They shall ensure that it is placed in *Reform* and on the URC and Synod websites. The advertisement shall make it clear that both nominations and applications are welcome.
- 4.6 In the case of nominations, the person offering a nomination shall be asked by the HR representative whether they are happy for their name to be revealed to the nominee.

- 4.7 The Secretary (the member of the general secretariat) shall write to each person nominated, emphasising that the Church is involved in a process of discernment leading to a call, offering prayerful support, and inviting the nominee to consider whether they would be willing to explore the possibility of a call to the post. The letter shall refer the nominee to the documentation on the URC website and ask that a nominee wishing to be considered should submit an application form.
- 4.8 All nominees shall receive what is essentially the same letter, and if the person submitting the nomination has given consent, they shall be advised who has nominated them. The names of the other candidates shall be held in confidence.
- 4.9 The Secretary shall urge each candidate to make provisions for personal support. Pastoral care is appropriate to accompany the candidate in their discernment process, offer support following the interview (regardless of its outcome) and, in the case of unsuccessful candidates, continue exploring what the Spirit has said through the process.
- 4.10 The closing date for applications shall allow for copies of the application forms to be circulated to members of the Nominating Panel at least one week before the shortlisting meeting.

### **5. Shortlisting**

- 5.1 The Nominating Panel shall consider the applications, with the member of the general secretariat and the HR representative acting as independent advisers, and agree a shortlist to be interviewed.
- 5.2 Shortlisting normally happens in a video conference, but if the Panel so decides, it can be in person.
- 5.3 If, in the judgment of the Panel, there are no suitable applicants, the Panel may re-advertise the post and invite applications from people, or nominations of people, who have not yet been considered.
- 5.4 Interviews should be in person. The maximum number of candidates to be interviewed in one day is two. If more than two candidates are shortlisted, interviews should be scheduled to take place over two days, including overnight accommodation. All Panel members should be encouraged to stay locally in order to facilitate an early start on the interview day.
- 5.5 The Panel shall also identify interview questions. While the HR facilitator can provide example questions that have been previously used, questions should be tailored to both the role description and to the person's application.
- 5.6 All candidates shall be required to make a presentation and complete a written assessment based on a scenario relevant to the post. This requirement, along with the expectations and instructions, shall be stated clearly within the application pack, although the title of the presentation will not be given until a candidate is shortlisted. Similarly, if shortlisted, the written exercise shall not be given until the test is taken during the week prior to the interview. However, notice shall be given of expectations and instructions to

shortlisted candidates by HR at the point of being shortlisted. Expected outcomes from the written exercise, ie 'what good looks like' or a clear benchmark as to what is expected within the written responses as a minimum, should be agreed amongst the panel at the same time as determining the question to be asked.

- 5.7 Psychometric testing shall be arranged by HR for candidates prior to interview. All shortlisted candidates should undertake a bespoke psychometric test similar to that used by the Assessment Board. A written report is to be circulated to the panel before the interview day.
- 5.8 The HR facilitator shall take up references for the shortlisted candidate(s) prior to interviews, and circulate them to the Nominating Group

### **6. Interviews with shortlisted candidates**

- 6.1 Interviews should take place in a neutral venue away from either the Synod office or Church House.
- 6.2 Candidates coming for interview shall be offered their travelling expenses and, if necessary, reimbursement of the cost of one night's accommodation.
- 6.3 Prior to the interview with the candidates, time shall be allowed to meet with the professional responsible for administering the psychometric testing in order that they may respond to questions from the panel.
- 6.4 Time shall also be allocated by the Nominating Group to discuss the written and psychometric tests with the candidate separate from the interview questions.
- 6.5 Each candidate shall make a presentation on the title agreed previously by the Nominating Group.
- 6.6 The scoring of interviews should be considered to be one tool among several for reaching consensus.
- 6.7 In the event of the failure of the group to find consensus amongst themselves, a 5-1 majority decision would be acceptable, if it seems to the convenor and panel that this is fair and reasonable.
- 6.8 The member of the general secretariat overseeing the process shall normally be the person who telephones the candidate(s) to tell them whether or not the Call is to be extended to them. Such phone calls shall be made as soon as possible after a decision has been made by the Panel and, normally, on the same day.
- 6.9 The member of the General Secretariat shall offer to give feedback to unsuccessful candidates, either personally or through the Convenor of the Nominating Group.
- 6.10 The name of the person to be nominated for appointment should be kept confidential until the news of the nomination has been shared with the person's pastorate or post, except with the explicit consent of the nominee.

At the point that the pastorate has been informed, the member of the general secretariat shall arrange for an announcement on the website.

## **7. Appointment at Assembly Executive or General Assembly**

7.1 The appointment of Synod Moderators is a function of the General Assembly.

7.2 The Nominations Committee shall be responsible for bringing the name of the nominee to General Assembly for appointment or, if necessary, Assembly Executive.

7.3 Once a decision has been made by the General Assembly, there is no appeal against such an appointment.

7.4 Particular sensitivity should be exercised if one or more of the unsuccessful candidates are members of the appointing Council.

7.5 Once confirmed by the relevant Council of the Church, this decision will be relayed in writing to the nominee by the General Secretary.

## **8. Induction**

8.1 The Synod Clerk shall be responsible with others for the Induction Service.

8.2 The Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) shall be responsible for oversight of the denominational induction process of the minister to the role of Synod Moderator.

## Annex three

### **Process for the Nomination and Appointment of those Assembly Appointed Posts reserved for Ministers (General Secretary, Secretary for Ministries and the Minister for Digital Worship)**

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The United Reformed Church has 16 General Assembly Appointed posts reserved specifically for ministers of Word and Sacraments (13 Synod Moderators, The General Secretary, Secretary for Ministries and Minister for Digital Worship).
- 1.2 All recruitment processes for Assembly-appointed posts are about seeking consensus in prayerfully discerning God's will. All the elements of the process – written and verbal – contribute to that end. No single element of the process stands alone as definitive.
- 1.3 This paper sets out a process for the appointment of Ministers to these reserved posts from the vacancy until ratification by the Council of the Church with responsibility for appointment, namely Assembly Executive or General Assembly.

#### **2. Applications**

- 2.1 The United Reformed Church believes that all applications for nomination and appointment for General Assembly appointed posts should be treated as a discernment process.
- 2.2 For all Assembly Appointed posts, the twin-track process for applications is important. Ministers can either be nominated or apply directly.
- 2.3 Job Descriptions and Person Specifications for all roles need to be bespoke for a post and not generic. The Marks of Ministry for ministers of Word and Sacraments shall be used as the benchmark.
- 2.4 No appointments shall be time limited.

#### **3. The Nomination Panel**

- 3.1 The Nominating Panel shall consist of three people, appointed by the Nominations Committee from a panel elected by the General Assembly, ensuring a balance of diversity.
- 3.2 An independent non-voting Convenor shall be appointed from the URC Nominations Panel elected by the General Assembly who shall not be part of the discernment process, but present solely to facilitate it. Their role shall include arranging dates for shortlisting and interview with the other members of the Nominating Panel.
- 3.3 A member of the general secretariat and an HR representative from Church House should also be present in a non-voting capacity. The member of the General Secretariat shall normally act as secretary to the Nominating Panel. The HR representative shall offer administrative support.

- 3.4 All members of the Nominating Panel should receive training in HR practices (including scoring applications, framing questions, discernment, etc), unconscious bias and anti-racism training prior to becoming part of the panel.
- 3.5 In addition, the independent Convenor shall receive training in facilitating meetings.

#### 4. The nomination process

- 4.1 A member of the General Secretariat initiates the process as far in advance of the vacancy as possible.
- 4.2 A member of the General Secretariat, in consultation with others, shall be responsible for ensuring the adaptation of the role description and person specification to reflect denominational concerns and priorities. Role descriptions and person specifications should be tailored to the post with consideration given to using the Marks of Ministry as a benchmark.
- 4.3 For the avoidance of doubt, the Deputy General Secretary for Discipleship shall have responsibility for the process for appointing the Secretary for Ministries and the Minister for Digital Worship..
- 4.4 The HR facilitator shall then provide the member of the General Secretariat with a recruitment pack containing general information, a sample job description and person specification, and a sample advert, bearing in mind that job descriptions and person specifications for all roles need to be bespoke for a post and not generic.
- 4.5 When the documents are ready, the member of the General Secretariat shall forward them to the HR Facilitator who shall circulate them to the entire Nominating Panel for comment. The Group shall agree a final version. This shall normally happen by email. However, the Nominating Group convenor may decide to call a meeting of the Group to resolve any serious disagreement.
- 4.6 The HR facilitator shall consult with the member of the General Secretariat on the wording of the advertisement to ensure it positively reflects the URC's approach to providing fair and equal opportunities to all. They shall ensure that it is placed in *Reform* and on the URC and Synod websites. The advertisement shall make it clear that both nominations and applications are welcome.
- 4.7 In the case of nominations, the person offering a nomination shall be asked by the HR representative whether they are happy for their name to be revealed to the person.
- 4.8 The Secretary (the member of the General Secretariat) shall write to each person nominated, emphasising that the Church is involved in a process of discernment leading to a call, offering prayerful support, and inviting the nominee to consider whether they would be willing to explore the possibility of a call to the post. The letter shall refer the nominee to the documentation on the URC website, and ask that a nominee wishing to be considered should submit an application form.

- 4.9 All nominees shall receive what is essentially the same letter, and if the person submitting the nomination has given consent, they shall be advised who has nominated them. The names of the other candidates shall be held in confidence.
- 4.10 The Secretary shall urge each candidate to make provisions for personal support. Pastoral care is appropriate to accompany the candidate in their discernment process, offer support following the interview (regardless of its outcome), and, in the case of unsuccessful candidates, continue exploring what the Spirit has said through the process.
- 4.11 The closing date for applications shall allow for copies of the application forms to be circulated to members of the Nominating Panel at least one week before the shortlisting meeting.

### **5. Shortlisting**

- 5.1 The Nominating Panel shall consider the applications under the guidance of the member of the General Secretariat and the HR representative, and agree a shortlist to be interviewed.
- 5.2 Shortlisting normally happens in a videoconference but, if the Panel so decides, it can be in person.
- 5.3 If, in the judgment of the Panel, there are no suitable applicants, the Panel may re-advertise the post and invite applications from people, or nominations of people, who have not yet been considered.
- 5.4 Interviews should be in person. The maximum number of candidates to be interviewed in one day is two. If more than two candidates are shortlisted, interviews should be scheduled to take place over two days, including overnight accommodation. All Panel members should be encouraged to stay locally in order to facilitate an early start on the interview day.
- 5.5 The Panel shall also identify interview questions. While the HR facilitator can provide example questions that have been previously used, questions should be tailored to both the role description and to the person's application.
- 5.6 All candidates shall be required to make a presentation and complete a written assessment based on a scenario relevant to the post. Expected outcomes from the written exercise, ie 'what good looks like' or a clear benchmark as to what is expected within the written responses as a minimum, should be agreed amongst the panel at the same time. This requirement, along with the expectations and instructions, shall be stated clearly within the application pack, although the title of the presentation will not be given until a candidate is shortlisted. Similarly, if shortlisted, the written exercise shall not be given until a few days before the interview. However, notice shall be given of expectations and instructions to shortlisted candidates by HR at the point of being shortlisted.
- 5.7 Psychological testing shall be arranged by HR for candidates prior to interview. All shortlisted candidates should undertake a bespoke psychological test similar to that used by the Assessment Board.

A written report is to be circulated to the panel before the interview day.

- 5.8 The HR facilitator shall take up references for the shortlisted candidate(s) prior to interviews and circulate them to the Nominating Group

## **6. Interviews with shortlisted candidates**

- 6.1 Interviews should take place in a neutral venue away from Church House.
- 6.2 Candidates coming for interview shall be offered their travelling expenses and, if necessary, reimbursement of the cost of one night's accommodation.
- 6.3 Prior to the interview with the candidates, time shall be allowed to meet with the professional responsible for administering the psychological testing in order that they may respond to questions from the panel.
- 6.4 Time shall also be allocated by the Nominating Group to discuss the written and psychological tests with the candidate separate from the interview questions.
- 6.5 Each candidate shall make a presentation on the title agreed previously by the Nominating Group.
- 6.6 The scoring of interviews should be considered to be one tool amongst several for reaching consensus.
- 6.7 In the event of the failure of the group to find consensus among themselves, a majority decision would be acceptable, if it seems to the convenor and panel that this is fair and reasonable.
- 6.8 The member of the General Secretariat overseeing the process shall normally be the person who telephones the candidate(s) to tell them whether or not the Call is to be extended to them. Such phone calls shall be made as soon as possible after a decision has been made by the Panel and, normally, on the same day.
- 6.9 The member of the General Secretariat shall offer to give feedback to unsuccessful candidates, either personally or through the Convenor of the Nominating Group.
- 6.10 The name of the person to be nominated for appointment should be kept confidential until the news of the nomination has been shared with the person's pastorate or post, except with the explicit consent of the nominee. At the point that the pastorate or post has been informed, the member of the General Secretariat shall arrange for an announcement on the website.

## **7. Appointment at Assembly Executive or General Assembly**

- 7.1 The appointment of the General Secretary is a function of the General Assembly.
- 7.2 The Nominations Committee shall be responsible for bringing the name of the nominee to General Assembly for appointment or, if necessary, Assembly Executive.

- 7.3 Particular sensitivity should be exercised if one or more of the unsuccessful candidates are members of the appointing Council.
- 7.4 Once confirmed by the relevant Council of the Church, this decision will be relayed in writing to the nominee by the relevant member of the General Secretariat.
- 7.5 For the other two reserved posts, the Nominating Panel acts as the appointing group.
- 7.6 Once a decision has been made by, or on behalf of, the General Assembly there is no appeal against such an appointment.

### **8. Induction**

- 8.1 For all appointments, the Induction Service will take place at the next General Assembly or, if necessary, Assembly Executive.
- 8.2 A member of the General Secretariat shall be responsible for oversight of the denominational induction process of the minister to their new role.

## Annex four

### **Matters to be noted by nominating groups for other Assembly-appointed roles**

1. There are Assembly-appointed roles which are open to lay or ordained, but which are served at present by a minister of Word and Sacraments or a Church Related Community Worker.
2. All recruitment processes for Assembly-appointed posts are about seeking consensus in prayerfully discerning God's will. All the elements of the process – written and verbal – contribute to that end. No single element of the process stands alone as definitive.
3. For Assembly posts which are open to lay or ordained, careful consideration shall be given when advertising to use the facility for declaring a genuine occupational requirement that applicants be a Christian.
4. No appointments shall be time limited unless they have to be due to the issuing of a time-limited Certificate of Limited Service.
5. Job Descriptions and Person Specifications for all roles need to be bespoke for a post and not generic.
6. An independent non-voting Convenor shall be appointed from the URC Nominations Panel elected by the General Assembly who shall not be part of the discernment process, but present solely to facilitate it. Their role shall include arranging dates for shortlisting and interview with the other members of the Nominating Panel.
7. All members of the Nominating Panel should receive training in HR practices (including scoring applications, framing questions, discernment, etc), unconscious bias and anti-racism training prior to becoming part of the panel.
8. In addition, the independent Convenor shall receive training in facilitating meetings.
9. For the avoidance of doubt, the process for the appointment of Church House Assembly Appointed posts shall be overseen by the relevant member of the General Secretariat.