



The Church of Scotland

Temporary Guidelines for Vacancy Process for Applicants During Coronavirus Pandemic

Preparation

- Filming a short (5 minute) introduction to yourself, to send alongside any written application could be a valuable addition to the application process.
- Ensure you have easy access to one online worship service you have led. This should not be heavily edited. It can then easily be offered to an interested Nominating Committee.

The Application Process

- If at all possible, and it is permissible to travel the distance required, visit the parish (even if not required to do so by the Nominating Committee). Take time to notice all the relevant places for both the charge and for your personal circumstances. It will be helpful to spend time praying in the area, and you may be able to meet with key personnel, outside and socially distanced.
- You should ask to see all relevant church records, Minutes, Accounts etc that will help you in identifying questions you may want to ask.
- If church building(s) are currently closed and the Kirk Session have not yet agreed to reopen them under the Covid-19 reopening process, then it is unlikely that you will be permitted to access to view the interior. You should however ask to see video footage of buildings, including the manse, and of any key personnel ahead of your interview so you can ask any and all questions during that time. If a particular piece of footage is not forthcoming, do feel able to request it. You should also feel able to ask for the 'live' video walkthrough of the relevant buildings in which you can ask to see certain areas you perhaps feel were not clear in the original footage.

Online interviews – a simple help guide.

- Take time to download and familiarise yourself with the specific online platform to be used for the interview.
- Find a quiet, private, well-lit place, free from possible interruptions.
- Ensure your internet connection is stable.
- Check that your computer's audio is working.
- Test your computer's webcam.
- Ensure your background (whether real or virtual) is not distracting.
- Close any unnecessary web browser tabs and applications.
- Dress professionally and avoid bright colours.
- Have a pen, notepad and copy of your application on your desk.
- When listening, nod and smile to show you are engaged.
- Place your phone in silent mode or outside of the room.

Preaching as Nominee

- It is important to keep in touch with the Interim Moderator of the Charge you are preaching for, and the Clerk to the Presbytery, to be guided through the appropriate notices and timeframes that will allow you to proceed to preach and be informed of arrangements.
- A Presbytery may advise you personally or through the Interim Moderator, on the specific approach/mode of delivery they have adopted under the protocols and that will allow you to plan for the conduct of the service.

- A Presbytery will work with the congregation(s) on the location and circumstances (i.e. live streamed, recorded) of the service. This may be in (one of) the buildings in the charge or a church of similar character. The Presbytery may also determine whether any members of the vacant congregation will be present to hear you lead worship, or whether a small group from another congregation should be present in order that all members of the vacant congregation have the same ‘experience’ of you leading worship.
- You should consider fully the type of service you would want to offer, as if you were able to conduct the service under normal circumstances.
- While you would want to always be true to yourself in any offering of worship, it may be particularly important to maintain a more structured form of service for the specific charge, to allow the best opportunity for voting members to respond to you.
- While personal interaction will be limited by the nature of any recorded/virtual process, you should still create a service that in all normal circumstances would invite engagement through open questions and spaces for personal response.
- A service should contain prayers, biblical readings, a sermon, a children’s talk (if appropriate) and hymn/music suggestions as a minimum.
- Should you wish to include any music in your service you should speak with the Interim Moderator to ensure appropriate copyright permission is in place.
- A service should not be edited, and if not a “live” service, should still be recorded in one take as if you were conducting the service in situ.
- You should consider, under advice, the best mode of delivery in terms of location, audio and visual, so you are able to be seen and heard in the same way that would be expected of a physical service.
- The Presbytery may work with the Interim Moderator to ensure that suitable technology is in place to allow you to lead worship in a clear and professional way to allow members of the congregation(s) to have the best experience possible of your service to be able to cast their vote.
- You should feel free to contact the Interim Moderator or Presbytery Clerk to discuss any anxieties you may have about your own technical abilities and you should not be concerned about asking for assistance.
- You should consider, under advice, conducting the service in a “sanctuary as similar as possible” to the charge, if you cannot preach in the building of the charge.

Please note: it is expected that there will be a two week delay following preaching as nominee, to allow a revised voting process to take place.

Ordination & Induction

In light of revised regulations from the Scottish Government a service of ordination is now permitted at a physical and quorate meeting of Presbytery at which, with due attention to hygiene, there may be the laying on of hands, provided that the interaction is brief, kept to a minimum, and face-to-face interaction should be avoided. At this stage the giving of the right hand of fellowship should be postponed until regulations allow this.

Presbyteries have been asked to consider the numbers able to be present at such a service and only a few members of an Ordinand’s family may be able to be in attendance, however each service will be livestreamed.

A service of Ordination and Induction will take place in the charge’s place of worship (or as the case may be, one of them) failing which in such venue as will enable the meeting to be livestreamed. A building can only be used for such a service if it has been approved to reopen under the Covid-19 reopening process.

Date	Version Number	Amendment (section)
7/7/2020	1	As originally published
16/7/2020	2	Update on Ordination and Induction in light of Ordination being permitted.