



The Church of Scotland

Appointment of

PRINCIPAL CLERK

of the General Assembly

Closing date - 12 noon on Monday, 22 November 2021



Job Description

- Title of Post:** Principal Clerk of the General Assembly
- Department:** Office of the General Assembly
- Responsible to:** The General Assembly through line management by the Convener of Assembly Business Committee.
The relevant Convener when acting as Secretary to one of the bodies serviced by the role.

As staff working in the national offices of the Church of Scotland we aim to provide excellent professional services to support the work of the wider Church and its Forums, Committees, Presbyteries and Congregations throughout Scotland, the United Kingdom and across the world.

Our six values, in equal order of importance, are:

- Grace** Acting with humility in all our endeavours
- Integrity** Acting with honesty, responsibility and accountability
- Respect** Valuing others, ensuring inclusiveness and equality
- Professionalism** Demonstrating commitment and striving for excellence
- Collaboration** Working together to connect and communicate in an open and transparent environment
- Innovation** Thinking creatively about building for the future and embracing change

We are committed to each of our six values in all that we do and this informs our attitude to working together.

 The Church of Scotland

OUR VALUES

GRACE
INTEGRITY
RESPECT
PROFESSIONALISM
COLLABORATION
INNOVATION

Scottish Charity Number: SC011353

www.churchofscotland.org.uk



Context for the Role

Rev Dr George Whyte retires from the role of Principal Clerk following the General Assembly in May 2022. We seek to recruit a successor, who will shadow him for a short period prior to formal appointment. In these times of change, challenge, reform and restructuring, the Principal Clerk has a key leadership role in supporting and enabling the traditional and emerging practices of the church within the Kirk's framework of governance and law.

Presbytery reform and restructuring, alongside Presbytery Mission Planning, is underway and these will be significant areas of work for the Principal Clerk to work alongside Presbyteries and their Clerks in new, changing and exciting ways. General Assembly itself is changing as we seek to gather in leaner, more effective ways. The Assembly Business Committee, to which the Principal Clerk is Secretary, is currently engaged in a consultation process in preparation of General Assembly Reform proposals to bring to the Assembly of 2022, at the close of which the new Principal Clerk will formally take up their post.

The Principal Clerk is one of the officials of the General Assembly and acts as Secretary to the Assembly Business Committee and the Legal Questions Committee. They also manage the staff team of the Office of the General Assembly.

The work may be broadly summed up as supporting the decision-making processes of the Church's courts. This means not only knowing the text of Church law but also how it might be helpfully applied in many settings. The advisory work of the Clerk tends to be in areas of Church life which are sensitive and/or challenging where wisdom, experience and sound judgement need to accompany knowledge. This is particularly so when matters have come or may come to issues of conflict or discipline.

The primary interface is in dealing with Presbyteries but also intersects with the review and redrafting of Acts and Regulations, supporting the work of the Faith Nurture Forum (Ministries, Mission Planning, Discipline-related issues) and ensuring that the Church's appeal systems work well.

Built on these interactions and the awareness thus gained, the Clerk is expected to speak into the national office setting, offering insights on how Church national process "lands" with Presbytery and local church life.

While based in the Church Offices, the "job" is very much outward focused - on the daily life of the Church, our relationships with other denominations and faith groups, fostering good relationships with people and agencies in the fabric of our national life, and, from time to time, speaking for the Church in media settings. The Clerk also supports the Moderator in their ambassadorial role.

Being Principal Clerk is a ministry of support, representation and leadership within and beyond the life of the Kirk. It is a vocation where faith and theology, practice and procedure are held together in service of the Church of Scotland.



Duties and Responsibilities

Clerk to the General Assembly and Commissions of Assembly

- To attend the General Assembly and provide advice to the Court and the Moderator on Church Law, practice and procedure.
- To work with the Assembly Business Committee to make all necessary arrangements (including managing all electronic publishing) for the General Assembly and any Commissions of Assembly.
- To manage the annual revision and promulgation of material (printed and electronic) containing the legislation of the General Assembly.
- To oversee the Depute Clerk's preparation of Assembly minutes, the collating of Assembly deliverances and the promulgation of Assembly decisions.
- To convene the Committee on Classifying Returns to Overtures; the Committee on Commissions, the Delegation of the General Assembly and the Committee on Overtures and Cases.
- To prepare the Reports of the Committee on Classifying Returns to Overtures and the Committee on Overtures and Cases.
- To act as custodian and legal extractor of the records of the General Assembly.
- To ensure that clerical and administrative support is provided for Special Commissions of the General Assembly.

Moderator and Moderator Designate Support

- To act as Secretary to the Moderator of the General Assembly.
- To accompany the Moderator, as required, particularly when year on year continuity is desirable.
- To prepare and brief the Moderator Designate as appropriate, including on General Assembly practice and procedure.
- To support the Moderator in the exercise of their duties throughout the year.
- To facilitate a full debrief with the immediate past Moderator to ensure that learnings and experience during the year in office are passed on.
- To ensure that pastoral support is available to the immediate past Moderator in the period after handing over to their successor
- To act as Secretary to the Committee to Nominate the Moderator.

Presbytery Support

- To support and guide Clerks and other staff of Presbyteries as they apply Church practice and procedure, in particular regarding Mission Planning and Adjustment, Vacancies, Discipline and Complaints.
- To facilitate the ongoing reform of Presbyteries (as instructed by GA2019) and work with the Assembly Business Committee on Presbytery restructuring.
- In liaison with the Assembly Business Committee and the Legal Questions Committee, to develop and introduce Presbytery Review and a process of annual reporting by Presbyteries to the General Assembly.
- To build good relationships with and between all Presbytery Clerks and to assist with the induction of those newly appointed to the role.



Secretary to Assembly Business Committee

- To attend meetings and ensure the implementation of decisions.

Secretary to Legal Questions Committee

- To attend meetings and ensure the implementation of decisions.
- Work with the Depute Clerk to provide a drafting service to assist Agencies in the revision and framing of legislation.

Judicial Proceedings

- To act as Clerk to the Commission of the General Assembly, the Appeals Committee of the Commission, the Judicial Commission and the Ministries Appeal Panel, encompassing responsibility, with the Depute Clerk, for providing advice and handling proceedings from intimation of an appeal to the holding of a hearing.
- To provide coordination, support and training for the Judicial Panel and for Conveners and Vice-Conveners of judicial bodies, ensuring such arrangements as are necessary for the fulfilment of their remits.

Advice and Teaching on Church Law, Practice and Procedure

- To advise Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, Ministers and other individuals and subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly on Church Law, practice and procedure and to encourage the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution in terms of Act VI 2014, where appropriate.
- To advise the Assembly and the Moderator on matters of Church Law, practice and procedure, including interpretation of Acts, Regulations and Standing Orders.
- To ensure provision of the teaching of Church Law to Ministries candidates and to offer seminars and courses to others within the Church.
- To provide training courses and offer advice on Church law, practice and procedure to Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, Ministers and other individuals and to Assembly Forums, Councils, Committees, Agencies and Partner Churches.

Head of the Office of the General Assembly

- To work collaboratively with the Chief Officer, as a senior member of the Leadership Team.
- To engage with the Solicitor of the Church, the Procurator to the General Assembly and the Assembly Trustees as required.
- To line manage staff who work within the Office of the General Assembly.
- To hold the budget for the Office of the General Assembly.
- To serve as a member of the Life and Work Editorial Advisory Committee.
- To serve as a non-voting member of the Safeguarding Committee.



External Liaison

- In cooperation and consultation with others, communicate with both the UK and Scottish Governments on matters regarding the interests of the Church of Scotland.
- In cooperation and consultation with others, continue to develop relationships within Scottish civic and community life.
- Through the Purse Bearer and the Queen's Private Secretary, to manage the protocols and relationships with the Royal Household.
- To act as the Church's principal liaison-contact with outside agencies for arrangements relating to the use and letting of the Assembly Hall.
- To act in ex-officio roles currently including: Trustee of the Iona Cathedral Trust, convener of Chalmers Lectureship Trust.

Ecumenical & Interfaith

- To serve as a member of ecumenical bodies as required or invited, from time to time, currently including: Scottish Faith Leaders' Forum, the Joint Commission on Doctrine with the Scottish Catholic Church, and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

Communications

- To work closely with the Communications Department providing comment in response to media enquiries and, when required, representing the Church in the media.

Other Duties

- To ensure that Fasti records are maintained.
- The responsibilities and duties described above are not exhaustive and other duties of a similar type and at a similar level should be expected from time to time, as directed by the General Assembly or the Convener of Assembly Business Committee.



Person Specification: Principal Clerk of the General Assembly

We are looking for an exceptional candidate who is able to demonstrate the following skills, experience and personal attributes at a level that would enable them to flourish in this role.

Knowledge of the Church of Scotland

An ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament of the Church of Scotland, you will bring a deep understanding of and experience in parish ministry, enabling you to be a credible and visible leader. You will have experience of working within Presbytery and exercising leadership and responsibility in that setting, alongside an understanding of Presbytery (Mission) Planning.

A broad knowledge and understanding of the history and constitution of the Church of Scotland, with a strong theological competence, will complement your knowledge of the Church's law, practice and procedure and the facilitation of their implementation.

Experience of representing the Church of Scotland effectively in ecumenical and inter-faith settings would be advantageous, as would experience in mediation and conflict resolution.

Personal Qualities

With evident integrity in leadership, you build confidence and command respect through being approachable, calm and a sympathetic listener. You will contribute to decision making using your wisdom, strong intellect and ability to offer clarity, pragmatism and transparency.

Professional Excellence

With experience of leading and collaborating in times of change, it is crucial that you have excellent communication and inter-personal skills with the ability to engage, build and sustain effective relationships both internally and with external partners.

Due to the range of those you support, the role demands that you are able to communicate effectively at all levels for a range of purposes, including knowledge transfer and training, and to a range of audiences. You will need excellent presentational skills with the ability to share vision, and engage and influence the diverse audiences encountered in this role.

This demanding role requires a high level of organisational and time management skills to meet competing demands and priorities.



Terms and Conditions: Principal Clerk of the General Assembly

- The salary scale for this post is £65,379 - £69,639 per annum (salary is subject to a pay and grading review)
- This is a permanent full-time post working 35 hours per week (1 FTE) with a system of flexi time in place.
- The post is based in the Church Offices, 121 George Street, Edinburgh. The successful applicant may have the opportunity to apply for hybrid working.
- There are 29 days annual paid leave in each full holiday year which runs from 1 January to 31 December. Entitlement is based on full weeks worked. This provision increases to 34 days after 5 years' service. There are also 6 statutory holidays.
- In order to comply with the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, the successful candidate will be asked to provide document(s) confirming their eligibility to work in the United Kingdom.
- The successful applicant will have the opportunity to join a pension scheme. Employer contribution rate is 14%, with a 2.5% employee contribution (there is also the option for an employer rate of 11.5%, with a zero contribution employee rate).

Closing date: 12 noon on Monday, 22 November 2021

How to apply

Applications should be sent by email to recruitment@churchofscotland.org.uk and must be received by noon on the closing date above.

Applications should comprise:

- A personal statement, outlining how your skills, experiences and personal qualities match the requirements of the role as outlined in the job description. If successful, references will be sought.
- A full CV, including educational and professional qualifications alongside a full employment history showing positions held, responsibilities and relevant achievements.

Applications without a CV and personal statement will not be taken forward in the process. Each document should be a maximum of two sides of A4.