

# Interim Ministry

## Policy and Procedures Handbook

April 2012

---

*replaces 2001  
Interim Ministry  
Handbook*



The United Church of Canada  
L'Église Unie du Canada

Interim Ministry  
Policy and Procedures Handbook  
April 2012



Copyright © 2012  
The United Church of Canada  
L'Église Unie du Canada

The content of this resource is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd) Licence.



To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/ca>. Any copy must include the United Church copyright notice and the Creative Commons licence.

All biblical quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Care has been taken to trace ownership of copyright material contained in this text. The publisher will gratefully accept any information that will enable it to rectify any reference or credit in subsequent printings.

The United Church of Canada  
L'Église Unie du Canada  
3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300  
Toronto, ON  
Canada M8X 2Y4  
1-800-268-3781  
[www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca)

Design: Carina Cruz Domingues, Graphics and Print

# Contents

---

- I. Introduction..... 4
  - About This Handbook..... 4
  - Interim Ministry in the United Church Today..... 4
- II. Policies and Procedures for Interim Ministry..... 6
  - A. Deciding on an Interim Ministry ..... 6
  - B. Starting an Interim Ministry ..... 7
  - C. During an Interim Ministry ..... 9
  - D. At the End of an Interim Ministry ..... 10
- III. Policies Related to Designation of Interim Ministers..... 13
  - A. General Responsibilities ..... 13
  - B. Qualifications for Designation ..... 14
  - C. The Process of Designation ..... 15
  - D. The Process of Continuing Designation..... 17
  - E. Transfer of Designation..... 18
  - F. Removal of Designation..... 18
- Appendices
  - A. Forms ..... 19
  - B. Sample Letter to Request a Reference ..... 19
  - C. Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee  
Interview of Applicant for Designation ..... 20
  - D. Conference Interim Ministry Committee  
Interview of Applicant for Designation ..... 22
  - E. Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee Exit Interview  
and/or Interview for Continuing Designation ..... 24
  - F. Conference Interim Ministry Committee  
Interview for Continuing Designation..... 26

# I. Introduction

---

## About This Handbook

When a congregation cannot continue its mission as usual, interim ministry is a way to take an intentional “time out” to seek renewal and make a significant change in its organizational structure, its mission, or its pastoral life.

The *Interim Ministry Policy and Procedures Handbook* sets out what must be done to establish and conduct interim ministries and to designate and evaluate interim ministers in The United Church of Canada. The goal of the policy is to promote an effective and consistent practice of interim ministry across the church.

This handbook outlines the specific actions and procedures required by the United Church of its Conferences, presbyteries\*, pastoral charges, Transition Teams, and interim ministers (or their variously named equivalents.) It is based on *The Manual, 2010*, and subsequent decisions by the Ministry and Employment Policies and Services Permanent Committee. It replaces the policies and procedures components of the 2001 *Interim Ministry Handbook* and policy directives that were related to it.

The *Interim Ministry Policy and Procedures Handbook* does *not* provide extensive resources for the actual practice of interim ministry, the work of the Transition Team, or the training of interim ministers. For suggested resources and best practices, please consult these documents:

- *Introducing Interim Ministry: A Process of Change for Congregations* (February 2010)
- *Guidelines for Transition Teams: Roles and Responsibilities during Interim Ministry* (February 2010)
- the two-page information sheet “Should I Consider Interim Ministry?” (2010)

These three resources are available for free download from the handbooks section of the United Church website; the first two can be ordered for a small fee from United Church Resource Distribution (UCRDstore.ca).

## Interim Ministry in the United Church Today

The United Church of Canada has been committed to the concept of interim ministry since it began to take shape in the late 1970s following the formation of the Interim Ministry Network in the United States by the Alban Institute. In Canada, Winnipeg Presbytery was one of the first jurisdictions to retain an interim minister to be deployed to congregations where the need was greatest.

In 1986, a national consultation was held in Winnipeg, resulting in the United Church’s first comprehensive interim ministry policy. Since that time, policies have been revised and refined as interim ministry has taken on a greater role in assisting congregations through times of major transition. Training for interim ministers has been provided in Canada by the Interim Ministry Network since 1990, and by the Building Skills in Transitional Ministry program since 2000; a number of United Church ministers have taken part in this training.

\*References to “presbytery” in this handbook also constitute a reference to “district.”

In 2005 in Toronto, a second national consultation of the interim ministry community resulted in the appointment of the Interim Ministry Steering Group and a complete overhaul of policies and procedures. This *Interim Ministry Policy and Procedures Handbook* is a result of the group's work.

In the United Church in 2011, all Conferences report that they are in need of more candidates for interim appointments. At this time in the United Church's life, virtually all congregations, presbyteries, and Conferences—and, indeed, the denomination itself—are in transition.

Interim ministry in its classical form is widely needed, and the skills of interim ministry are even more widely needed in all levels of our church.

## II. Policies and Procedures for Interim Ministry

---

The policies and procedures for interim ministry are detailed below. For more resources and best practices, see especially *Guidelines for Transition Teams: Roles and Responsibilities during Interim Ministry* (February 2010).

### A. Deciding on an Interim Ministry

#### 1. Circumstances That Call for Interim Ministry

Interim ministry is needed when a congregation cannot continue its mission as usual because of circumstances inside or outside the congregation.

There might be a need for interim ministry when

- major changes occur in the surrounding community—for example, closing of the main industry, dramatic population shifts
- major changes occur in the congregation—for example, declining membership or financial resources
- conflict or serious trauma arises in the congregation—for example, removal of a minister for misconduct, splitting of the congregation after a bitter fight
- the congregation is grieving the loss of a minister due to retirement, disability, or death
- the end of a long pastorate makes it difficult for another minister to bond with the congregation

#### 2. Making the Decision for Interim Ministry

The presbytery, through its Pastoral Relations Committee, is responsible for deciding whether there will be an interim ministry. The impetus for interim ministry may come from several directions:

- Leaders or other members of the congregation may recognize that special leadership is required for a time of change.
- A Joint Needs Assessment Committee or a Joint Search Committee may recommend interim ministry as the wisest choice.
- A pastoral oversight visit or a 333 Review report may recommend interim ministry.
- Presbytery may require a period of interim ministry following difficult events in the congregation.

As soon as presbytery decides there will be an interim ministry, any Joint Needs Assessment Committee or Joint Search Committee stops working and is disbanded.

### **3. Alternatives to Interim Ministry**

Interim ministry is not always possible, even when it would be the best choice. There may be no interim minister available, the congregation may not have sufficient financial resources, or the congregation may not be ready for an interim appointment. In such cases, the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee and the official board (or equivalent) have to seek creative solutions to meet as many as possible of the congregation's needs.

Some alternatives to consider:

- Appoint or call a minister who has some training in transitional ministry (or is willing to get the training) to work with the congregation on the circumstances it is struggling with.
- Identify people in the community who are willing to share their skills in organizational change with the congregation (for example, human resources professionals, union stewards).
- Consult with the Conference Interim Ministry Committee and the Conference personnel minister (or equivalent) to identify clergy or lay people in the area with skills in transitional ministry who could be available for consultation.
- Appoint a joint Presbytery-Congregation Committee (like a Transition Team during an interim period) to identify and begin to address change issues.
- Work with neighbouring congregations to engage consultants or workshop leaders, or hold training events for the presbytery as a whole using the resources of the wider church.

Various parts of this handbook can be adapted for other transitional ministries.

## **B. Starting an Interim Ministry**

Given the different circumstances that may precede the decision to initiate an interim ministry, there is considerable variation in how the start-up tasks are accomplished. An ideal process is outlined below. The aim is to begin the interim ministry with

- the key goals determined
- a well-equipped and well-trained Transition Team
- an interim minister with the appropriate skills

### **1. Setting the Key Goals**

The official board (or equivalent), in consultation with the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee and the congregation, determines the key goals of the interim ministry.

A short, general list of goals is created to express the intention to deal with the issues that gave rise to the interim ministry.

## 2. Forming a Transition Team

The official board (or equivalent), in consultation with the congregation and the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee, appoints five to seven members of the Transition Team:

- Members of the Transition Team must be members in good standing of the congregation, who are willing and able to make this major commitment.
- Members of the Ministry and Personnel Committee should not serve on the Transition Team.
- The official board (or equivalent) may present the team to the congregation for ratification. If there is widespread disapproval, the whole slate is withdrawn for reconsideration.

The presbytery appoints one or two representatives to the Transition Team (ideally one clergy and one layperson, with previous experience in transitional ministry).

The presbytery representatives call and chair the first meeting of the Transition Team to

- ensure that all members have copies of *Guidelines for Transition Teams: Roles and Responsibilities during Interim Ministry* (February 2010), and any other recommended documents
- determine how the Transition Team will be organized (for example, a presbytery representative may chair the team until the arrival of the interim minister, who then becomes the chair for part or all of his or her appointment)
- set a quorum for meetings: quorum includes at least one presbytery representative, three congregational representatives, and the interim minister (once his or her appointment takes effect)
- determine group norms and standards
- name a secretary and determine procedures for keeping minutes and other records
- plan for the Transition Team training session

The Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee (or equivalent) consults with the Conference Interim Ministry Committee to arrange for Transition Team training. This training may take place before or after the arrival of the interim minister.

## 3. Recommended Process for Selecting an Interim Minister

The Transition Team

- develops the position description, based on the initial goals and the congregation's needs
- consults with the official board (or equivalent) to determine that funds are available for the expected costs of interim ministry
- consults with the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee and the Conference personnel minister (or equivalent) to approach suitable interim ministers who are currently available
- conducts interviews and selects an applicant
- presents its choice to the official board (or equivalent) for approval

The official board (or equivalent) then asks presbytery to appoint the selected person.

## **4. Appointing an Interim Minister**

The Transition Team, in consultation with the official board (or equivalent) and the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee, negotiates terms and conditions of the appointment with the appointee and completes the required United Church documents.

Some features of an interim ministry appointment require special attention:

- The interim minister is usually paid at least 10 percent above the minimum (or the equivalent in time off) for his or her category.
- The pastoral charge must contribute to a General Council fund for interim minister sabbaticals.
- The Conference Interim Ministry Committee may require the interim minister to attend meetings and professional development training in addition to the usual periods of study leave.
- It may be necessary to pay for commuting costs or trips home in lieu of, or in addition to, moving expenses.
- The interim ministry goals form part of the terms of appointment.
- Following the period of interim ministry, the interim minister is not eligible for any ministry position in the pastoral charge.

The presbytery, in consultation with the official board (or equivalent) and the Transition Team, arranges for a covenanting service. The interim ministry goals are an important part of the covenant. The Transition Team may be commissioned to its ministry at the same time.

## **C. During an Interim Ministry**

### **1. General Responsibilities**

The Transition Team is responsible for leading the congregation through the interim ministry process.

The official board (or equivalent) retains responsibility for management and ensures that the interim ministry process is the central focus.

The Ministry and Personnel Committee retains its responsibility for overseeing relationships of staff members to each other and to the congregation.

The Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee is responsible for monitoring the interim ministry (normally through its representatives on the Transition Team).

The Conference Interim Ministry Committee is responsible for offering training, support, and resources to all parties.

## **2. Interim Ministry Transition Team**

The Transition Team

- refines or modifies the interim ministry goals as necessary, and seeks the approval of the official board (or equivalent)
- plans how to address the interim ministry goals
- oversees implementation of these plans, and monitors progress
- reports regularly and frequently to the congregation, the official board (or equivalent), and the presbytery
- engages the congregation fully in the process of self-discovery, discernment, and decisions about its future mission
- advises the presbytery immediately if it concludes that it will not be possible to meet the interim goals within the time of the interim appointment

When the congregation has made decisions about its future mission and ministry, and has done sufficient work on the other interim goals, the Transition Team recommends next steps to the official board (or equivalent) and the presbytery. It may recommend one or several of the following:

- a Joint Needs Assessment Committee, in preparation for a call or appointment
- negotiations with other pastoral charges, churches, or agencies with a view to amalgamation or other forms of partnership in mission
- discussions with the Presbytery Property Committee (or equivalent) about selling, redeveloping, or renovating property
- any other appropriate measures to prepare for the future of the congregation

At least one representative of the Transition Team participates in any such process to ensure that the mission goals developed during the interim period are carried forward.

Presbytery, in consultation with the official board (or equivalent), must approve the new mission goals and plans before authorizing such actions.

## **D. At the End of an Interim Ministry**

### **1. General Responsibilities**

Presbytery is responsible for

- conducting a review/evaluation of the interim ministry and the present state of the congregation
- conducting a review/evaluation of the interim minister's work during the appointment, including an exit interview 90 days before the end of the interim appointment; the exit interview may also function as presbytery's required interview before recommending the interim minister for continuing designation
- forwarding the exit interview report to the Conference Interim Ministry Committee 60 days before the end of the interim ministry appointment, along with the application for continuing designation, if appropriate
- ensuring that the congregation has the tools to move forward in its new mission strategy

The Transition Team is responsible for

- working through the disengagement phase
- producing a final report and review/evaluation of its own work
- gathering all files and materials for the official record

The official board (or equivalent) is responsible for

- ensuring that changes and decisions made during the interim ministry are carried forward into the new phase of mission and ministry

## **2. Planning for the Future of the Congregation**

At least five months before the expected end of the interim appointment, the Transition Team reports to the official board (or equivalent) and the presbytery with recommendations for the review/evaluation process, the disengagement period, and the immediate post-interim period.

If the congregation has *not* made decisions about its future mission and ministry five months before the end of the interim appointment, and/or has not done adequate work on the other interim goals, the presbytery, in consultation with the official board (or equivalent), takes appropriate action to ensure that the congregation will address its future needs. Such action might include

- providing additional expert support for conflict resolution or planning
- providing support to assist with selling property, or amalgamating or disbanding the congregation
- extending the interim appointment
- planning for another specialized appointment following the interim period

## **3. Conducting a Review/Evaluation**

The Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee decides how the review/evaluation of the interim ministry is to be conducted. Normally, the Transition Team conducts the review/evaluation, but if advisable, the presbytery may choose another group, such as

- a pastoral oversight visit
- a 333 Review process
- any other presbytery commission

Any review/evaluation is to be conducted in a just, participatory, and appreciative manner.

The team conducting the review/evaluation writes the final report to be submitted to the presbytery and official board (or equivalent). This report is due *60 days before the end of the interim ministry*. This deadline allows the interim minister to apply for continuing designation in time to seek another appointment.

#### **4. Distributing Reports**

The review/evaluation of the *interim ministry* is widely distributed, to

- the congregation
- the official board (or equivalent)
- the interim minister
- the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee
- the Conference Interim Ministry Committee
- the Joint Needs Assessment Committee or the Joint Search Committee (whichever is presently working)
- incoming staff

The review/evaluation of the *interim minister* is confidential and should be received by

- the interim minister
- the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee
- the Conference Interim Ministry Committee

Others may receive this report only with the interim minister's permission.

#### **5. Closure and Continuity**

At the end of the interim appointment, the Transition Team is disbanded. All files and reports are handed over to the official board (or equivalent).

The official board (or equivalent) is responsible for acting on recommendations made in the final reviews and reports and for dealing with any outstanding agendas or issues.

The official board (or equivalent) and the Ministry and Personnel Committee ensure that the new ministry personnel has all the information necessary to continue the work that has been undertaken during the interim period.

# III. Policies Related to Designation of Interim Ministers

---

## A. General Responsibilities

### 1. General Council

The General Council

- sets the national policy for interim ministers
- provides resources to ensure the policy's effectiveness
- through the Ministry and Employment Unit, maintains a national database of interim ministers with their designation history and current status

### 2. Conference

The Conference

- appoints an Interim Ministry Committee
- ensures that the Conference Interim Ministry Committee has adequate staff and financial support to do its work
- through the Conference Executive, considers the recommendations of the Interim Ministry Committee and decides to designate, not designate, or remove the designation of interim ministers; according to United Church procedures, these decisions cannot be appealed

### 3. Conference Interim Ministry Committee

The Conference Interim Ministry Committee

- administers the General Council interim ministry policy in the Conference
- keeps a confidential file for each applicant who is interviewed for designation as an interim minister:
  - The file contains copies of application forms and supporting documents, interview notes, evaluation reports, and any other relevant information.
  - The applicant is made aware of all materials in the file.
  - If an interim minister applies for appointment or designation in another Conference, the file is transferred to the receiving Conference Interim Ministry Committee.

### 4. Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee

The Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee

- determines the general suitability (as distinct from the professional qualifications) of an applicant for interim ministry
- recommends, or does not recommend, the applicant to be considered for designation or redesignation by the Conference

## **B. Qualifications for Designation**

### **1. General Personal and Professional Qualifications**

The information sheet “Should I Consider Interim Ministry?” describes the general personal and professional qualities needed for interim ministers. An interim minister

- is a member of the order of ministry or a designated lay minister who, based on appropriate training and experience, has been appointed by the presbytery to an interim ministry
- has at least five years’ experience in pastoral ministry, normally in The United Church of Canada, and is familiar with the United Church’s theology, policy, and procedures, especially concerning pastoral relations
- needs to have the following professional and personal qualities:
  - well-developed skills in all the usual areas of pastoral ministry
  - a healthy self-image and a high tolerance for stress
  - ability to cope with constant change on a personal and professional level
  - experience with planning and intentional ministry
  - flexibility in his or her leadership style
  - awareness of his or her own response to conflict and ability to help others work through conflict
  - a sense of humour and the ability to avoid getting caught up in others’ anxiety

### **2. Professional Education for Interim Ministers**

Interim ministers are required to take specialized training to acquire the knowledge and skills that are necessary for their work. They are expected to refresh their training regularly by reading current publications and attending appropriate continuing education.

Education for interim ministry must include

- instruction in theory by qualified and experienced interim ministers
- practice supervised by peers and instructors
- evaluation by self, peers, and instructors

Courses that meet these requirements are currently offered in Canada by the Interim Ministry Network and by the Building Skills in Transitional Ministry program.

Individuals seeking designation as interim ministers are required to demonstrate knowledge in the following areas:

- theories of institutional change, particularly as applied to congregations
- biblical and theological understandings of change and transformation
- the stages and processes of interim ministry
- the roles and responsibilities of the interim minister, as distinct from those of other types of ministry
- intervention tools and strategies to lead the process of change

- theories of family systems, conflict management, strategic planning, and adult education
- the ecclesiology, policies, and practices of The United Church of Canada, particularly as they pertain to interim ministry

They are also required to demonstrate skill in the following areas:

- analyzing a congregation using many different perspectives and frameworks
- selecting and using appropriate tools for various stages of the interim process
- leading a congregation in biblical and theological reflection on its history, identity, mission, and structure
- identifying their personal leadership style and adapting it as necessary
- maintaining a non-anxious presence in the midst of anxiety
- reflecting critically on their own practice of ministry in the midst of transition

## **C. The Process of Designation**

### **1. Individuals**

Individuals interested in becoming an interim minister

- study the information sheet “Should I Consider Interim Ministry?”
- consult with colleagues to discern whether they are personally qualified and suited for this ministry
- fill out Part 1 of the Application for Designation as an Interim Minister (INT100)
- arrange to be interviewed by the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee

### **2. Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee**

The Pastoral Relations Committee (or equivalent) of the presbytery in which the applicant is a member

- interviews the applicant to discuss his or her interest in becoming an interim minister using the information sheet “Should I Consider Interim Ministry?” as a basis for the discussion (see Appendix C for suggested interview process and questions)
- decides whether or not the applicant is generally suited at this time for interim ministry

If the Pastoral Relations Committee affirms that the applicant is generally suited to interim ministry, it

- encourages the applicant to undertake appropriate training, if he or she has not already done so (see “Professional Education for Interim Ministers,” above)
- completes Part 2 of the Application for Designation as an Interim Minister (INT100) requesting an interview for designation by the Conference Interim Ministry Committee, with a copy to the applicant and the pastoral relations files
- sends the complete application package to the Conference Interim Ministry Committee
- appoints a representative to accompany the recommended applicant to the interview

If the committee does *not* affirm the applicant's general suitability for interim ministry at this time,

- a record of the interview and the reasons for non-recommendation are kept in the pastoral relations files, and the applicant receives a copy of this record
- the decision cannot be appealed, but the applicant may reapply in one year

### **3. Conference Interim Ministry Committee**

The Conference Interim Ministry Committee

- reviews the application and checks the references
- may, with the applicant's written permission, request additional information related to previous pastoral relationships
- interviews the applicant:
  - The interview team includes at least three members of the Conference Interim Ministry Committee, at least one of whom must be an experienced interim minister.
  - The representative appointed by the presbytery observes.
  - The Conference personnel minister may observe the interview as a resource to both the committee members and the applicant.
  - See Appendix D for suggested interview process and questions.
- using Part 3 of the Application for Designation as an Interim Minister (INT100), prepares a written summary report of the interview including a recommendation to the Conference Executive regarding
  - whether or not the applicant is qualified to be designated as an interim minister
  - whether any further training is required and when it must be completed
  - any other conditions

With the mutual agreement of the applicant and the interview team, the process may be adjourned at any time.

If a recommendation has been made with conditions, or a decision has been made not to accept an applicant into interim ministry, the Conference Interim Ministry Committee designates a peer partner to offer consultation on any matters requiring follow-up.

### **4. Conference Executive**

The Executive of Conference

- through a motion in a duly constituted meeting, accepts, rejects, or amends the recommendations of the Conference Interim Ministry Committee
- provides written notice of its decision to the applicant, the recommending presbytery, and the Conference personnel minister who holds the applicant's personnel file
- ensures that it receives, and maintains on file, written acknowledgment from the applicant that the decision has been received

## **D. The Process of Continuing Designation**

Designation as an interim minister must be renewed after the first interim ministry appointment and every five years thereafter. The Conference Interim Ministry Committee may require renewal before the end of a five-year period.

### **1. Individuals**

Individuals interested in continuing designation

- fill out Part 1 of the Application for Continuing Designation as an Interim Minister (INT101) and attach all required documents
- submit the completed application to their presbytery's Pastoral Relations Committee

### **2. Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee**

The Pastoral Relations Committee (or equivalent) of the presbytery in which the applicant is active

- reviews
  - the application and all attached documents
  - the evaluation reports, exit interview, and recommendations from the current interim appointment
  - United Church standards for interim ministers
- interviews the applicant (this may also function as the exit interview)
- completes Part 2 of the Application for Continuing Designation as an Interim Minister (INT101), including its recommendation
- sends a copy of the completed form and any comments to the applicant, and forwards this form and any comments along with the application material to the Conference Interim Ministry Committee

### **3. Conference Interim Ministry Committee**

The Conference Interim Ministry Committee

- reviews the application and attached documents
- interviews the applicant:
  - The interview team includes at least three members of the Conference Interim Ministry Committee, at least one of whom must be an experienced interim minister.
  - The Conference personnel minister may observe the interview as a resource to both the committee members and the applicant.
- completes Part 3 of the Application for Continuing Designation as an Interim Minister (INT101), including a recommendation to the Conference Executive regarding continuing designation
- forwards the completed form to the Conference Executive
- ensures that a copy of the completed form is provided to
  - the requesting presbytery
  - the applicant
  - the applicant's personnel file (via the Conference personnel minister)

#### **4. Conference Executive**

The Executive of Conference

- through a motion in a duly constituted meeting, accepts, rejects, or amends the recommendations of the Conference Interim Ministry Committee
- provides written notice of its decision to the applicant, the recommending presbytery, and the Conference personnel minister who holds the applicant's personnel file
- ensures that it receives, and maintains on file, written acknowledgment from the applicant that the decision has been received

#### **E. Transfer of Designation**

Upon the request of the interim minister, the Interim Ministry Committee of the originating Conference transfers the interim minister's records to the destination Conference.

If continuing designation is required, the originating Conference must take care of this process before transferring the records.

#### **F. Removal of Designation**

If an interim minister does not request continuing designation, designation automatically expires after five years.

Designation may also be removed by the Executive of Conference on recommendation of the Conference Interim Ministry Committee. The minister must be notified in writing, and may appeal through normal United Church procedures.

# Appendix A

---

## Forms

Two relevant forms are available on the Forms page of the United Church website:

- Application for Designation as an Interim Minister (INT100)
- Application for Continuing Designation as an Interim Minister (INT101)

Please consult the website to be sure you are using the most up-to-date versions of these forms.

# Appendix B

---

## Sample Letter to Request a Reference

Dear sir/madam,

The Interim Ministry Committee of \_\_\_\_\_ Conference requires that reference letters be included with a minister's Application for Designation as an Interim Minister.

The information sheet "Should I Consider Interim Ministry?" (attached) describes the skills and qualities needed by an interim minister in the United Church. Please consider these criteria carefully, as they form the basis of the interview for designation.

As a person familiar with the applicant's ministry, you are asked to describe the context and length of your relationship with the applicant, and to comment on the following:

- specific skills you have observed in the applicant, with brief examples, e.g., ability to pursue goals and objectives, leadership, flexibility, ability to work with change, skills in facilitating and coping with conflict
- personal qualities of the applicant, e.g., self-image, tolerance for stress, good listener, sense of humour

The letter should describe the applicant only to the extent that you have experienced or observed these qualities and skills in his or her ministry.

Only members of the Conference Interim Ministry Committee will read the information you provide. Be assured that the committee will treat all information in strict confidence, and that it will be used only to assess the minister's suitability for interim ministry at this particular time.

Please send your reference letter to:

*(include address of the Conference Interim Committee Chair or Secretary)*

# Appendix C

---

## Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee Interview of Applicant for Designation

### Suggested Process and Questions

The interview team consists of at least three people, at least two of whom are members of the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee, and at least one of whom has experience in interim ministry.

Both the applicant and the interview team should be thoroughly familiar with the information sheet “Should I Consider Interim Ministry?”

### Before the Interview

Designate a chair to manage the time and process.

Designate a secretary to take notes—including the date, name of applicant, and names of interview team—and complete the recommendation form (Part 2 of the Application for Designation as an Interim Minister (INT100)).

Review the file for completeness and for issues or questions to be addressed in the interview.

### Conducting the Interview

*10 min:* Set a supportive atmosphere and put the applicant at ease:

Introduce interview team and chair.

The chair explains the process and possible results.

*20 min:* Assess basic suitability for interim ministry:

“Tell us something about your history in ministry and why you are considering interim ministry at this point.”

“What particular gifts and skills do you feel you would bring to interim ministry?”

“Tell us about your experience of handling change in your own life.”

“Tell us about an experience of conflict in your ministry and how you handled it.”

“Tell us about your preferred leadership style.”

*10 min:* Address any particular issues raised by the applicant’s file.

*5 min:* Solicit applicant’s questions and additional comments.

## **After the Interview**

The chair asks the applicant to wait in a separate area.

The interview team discusses the interview in light of the criteria for interim ministry and decides whether to recommend the applicant to the Conference Interim Ministry Committee.

The secretary completes Part 2 of the Application for Designation as an Interim Minister (INT100), but does not sign it.

The applicant is called back in to discuss the results of the interview and what will happen next.

The completed form is forwarded to the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee for a formal decision, to be recorded in the presbytery minutes, and a signature.

- If the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee affirms the applicant's basic suitability for interim ministry, it attaches the completed form to the applicant's application and sends the package to the Conference Interim Ministry Committee. It also sends a copy, including any comments, to the applicant.
- If the Pastoral Relations Committee does *not* affirm the applicant's basic suitability for interim ministry at this time, a record of the interview and the reasons for non-recommendation are to be communicated to the applicant and kept in the pastoral relations files. This decision cannot be appealed, but the applicant may reapply in one year.

## Appendix D

---

# Conference Interim Ministry Committee Interview of Applicant for Designation

### Suggested Process and Questions

The interview team consists of at least three members of the Interim Ministry Committee, at least one of whom is an experienced interim minister. The presbytery-appointed accompanier observes. The Conference personnel minister may observe and act as a resource.

### Before the Interview

Designate a chair to manage the time and process.

Designate a secretary to take notes—including the date, name of applicant, and names of interview team—and complete the recommendation form (Part 3 of the Application for Designation as an Interim Minister (INT100)).

Review the file for completeness and for issues or questions to be addressed in the interview.

### Conducting the Interview

- 10 min:* Set a supportive atmosphere and put the applicant at ease:
  - Introduce interview team and chair.
  - The chair explains the process and possible results.
- 20 min:* Focus on reasons for interest in interim ministry at this time:
  - Ask about experiences of transitional ministry.
  - Explore personal qualities and skills for transitional ministry.
- 20 min:* Focus on experience and training for interim ministry:
  - Discuss courses and programs, and important learnings.
  - Ask about interest in further skill development.
- 10 min:* Address any particular issues raised by the applicant's file.
- 5 min:* Solicit applicant's questions and additional comments.

*Note:* At any point in the interview, with the mutual agreement of the applicant and the interview team, the process may be adjourned for a definite or indefinite time without a decision being reached.

## **After the Interview**

The interview team discusses the interview, with the secretary taking notes, and prepares its report. The chair is responsible for checking references when clarification is needed.

The interview team may agree to

- recommend initial designation
- recommend initial designation, with further training or other conditions noted
- not recommend initial designation

The decision of the interview team is taken back to the full Conference Interim Ministry Committee to be voted on and recorded in the minutes.

The Interim Ministry Committee

- meets with the applicant (either on the same occasion or at a later date) to discuss its findings and advise the applicant of the recommendation
- completes Part 3 of the Application for Designation as an Interim Minister (INT100)
- forwards the form to the Conference Executive for action
- ensures that a copy of the completed form is provided to
  - the requesting presbytery
  - the applicant
  - the Conference personnel minister, for the applicant's personnel file

## Appendix E

---

# Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee Exit Interview and/or Interview for Continuing Designation

### Suggested Process and Questions

An exit interview takes place at the end of an interim ministry appointment. Often, it coincides with the need to interview a minister for continuing designation as an interim minister, and it makes sense for the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee to cover both topics at the same time.

An exit interview may also take place on its own, if the minister's designation is still valid for a period of time, or if the minister is not interested in continuing with interim ministry. An interview for continuing designation may take place on its own if the minister is seeking continuing designation in the middle of an interim appointment or is not in an appointment at the time.

The interview team can tailor the process to the circumstances, consulting the suggestions below.

The interview team consists of at least three people, at least two of whom are members of the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee, and at least one of whom has experience in interim ministry.

### Before the Interview

Designate a chair to manage the time and process.

Designate a secretary to take notes—including the date, name of applicant, and names of interview team—and complete the recommendation form (Part 2 of the Application for Continuing Designation as an Interim Minister (INT101)).

Review the file for completeness and for issues or questions to be addressed in the interview.

### Conducting the Interview

*10 min:* Set a supportive atmosphere and put the applicant at ease:

Introduce interview team and chair.

the chair explains the process and possible results.

*20–30 min:* Focus on the minister's experience and learning:

“How are you feeling at this point in the interim appointment? What were some of the high points and low points?”

“What have you learned? What new skills have you developed? What gifts have you received in this appointment which you will carry into your next ministry?”

“What has been your practice of self-care? Are there things you would like to change?”

“What are your learning goals for the next few years?”

Ask for clarification or expansion on any issues raised by the file.

20–30 min: Focus on the present (or just completed) interim ministry:

“What were the main goals for the interim ministry? Did these goals change, and if so, why?”

“How well did the congregation achieve these goals? What were the roadblocks to achieving them?”

“What did you discover about the systems in this pastoral charge, and what information about the systems needs to be included in your final report that will be transmitted to the next ministry personnel?”

“What, in your view, are the strengths of this pastoral charge?”

“What do you see as the main goal or objective for this pastoral charge as it moves ahead to the next phase of its ministry?”

“What does the presbytery need to be aware of in its support role for interim ministers and Pastoral Charge Interim Ministry Transition Teams?”

5 min: Solicit applicant’s questions and additional comments.

### **After the Interview**

The chair asks the applicant to wait in a separate area.

The interview team discusses the interview, with the secretary taking notes, and prepares the report. The secretary completes Part 2 of the Application for Continuing Designation as an Interim Minister (INT101), but does not sign it.

The applicant is called back in to discuss the results of the interview and what will happen next.

The completed form is forwarded to the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee for a formal decision, to be recorded in the presbytery minutes, and a signature.

- If the Pastoral Relations Committee affirms the applicant’s suitability for continuing designation, it attaches the completed form to the applicant’s application and sends the package to the Conference Interim Ministry Committee. It also sends a copy, including any comments, to the applicant.
- If the Pastoral Relations Committee does *not* affirm the applicant’s suitability for continuing designation, a record of the interview and the reasons for non-recommendation are to be communicated to the applicant and kept in the pastoral relations files. This decision cannot be appealed, but the applicant may apply for designation again (using form INT100) in one year.

# Appendix F

---

## Conference Interim Ministry Committee Interview for Continuing Designation

### Suggested Process and Questions

#### Before the Interview

Designate a chair to manage the time and process.

Designate a secretary to take notes—including the date, name of applicant, and names of interview team—and complete the recommendation form (Part 3 of the Application for Continuing Designation as an Interim Minister (INT101)).

Review the file for completeness and for issues or questions to be addressed in the interview. The file should include Parts 1 and 2 of the Application for Continuing Designation and all supporting documents.

#### Conducting the Interview

- 10 min:* Set a supportive atmosphere and put the applicant at ease:  
Introduce interview team and chair.  
The chair explains the process and possible results.
- 20 min:* Focus on the present (or just completed) interim ministry:  
“What were the goals and how did you facilitate the congregation’s work on them?”  
“What skills did you find particularly useful in the course of this interim period?”  
“What did you learn about the congregational systems and how did you work with them?”
- 10 min:* Address any particular issues raised by the applicant’s file.
- 20 min:* Focus on the applicant’s professional development:  
“What transitional ministry skills are you most interested in developing further?”  
“Have your practice of self-care and your support system been effective for your ministry?”  
“Have you thought about a focus for your sabbatical?”
- 5 min:* Solicit applicant’s questions and additional comments.

## **After the Interview**

The interview team discusses the interview, with the secretary taking notes, and prepares its report.

The interview team may agree to

- recommend continuing designation
- recommend continuing designation, with further training or other conditions noted
- not recommend continuing designation

The decision of the interview team is taken back to the full Conference Interim Ministry Committee to be voted on and recorded in the minutes.

The Interim Ministry Committee

- meets with the applicant (either on the same occasion or at a later date) to discuss its findings and advise the applicant of the recommendation
- completes Part 3 of the Application for Continuing Designation as an Interim Minister (INT101)
- forwards the form to the Conference Executive for action
- ensures that a copy of the completed form is provided to
  - the requesting presbytery
  - the applicant
  - the Conference personnel minister, for the applicant's personnel file

**CH10774**  
**\$3.00 or download from**  
**[www.united-church.ca/handbooks](http://www.united-church.ca/handbooks)**



**Ministry Personnel Support**  
The United Church of Canada • L'Église Unie du Canada