

# Ottawa Presbytery Pastoral Relations Ministry Team

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## Joint Search Committee in a Multi-staff Situation

**References:** The 2007 *Handbook for Joint Search Committees* states:

22. If you are in a multiple-staff pastoral charge.

Incumbents in multi-staff situations cannot be members of the JSC, but the committee can solicit information from them. Staff members cannot attend interviews of applicants.

When you are close to offering a call or making an appointment, it is usual for the incumbents to meet with the applicants. This should be an informal meeting. Sometimes an incumbent meets with applicants and then reports to the JSC. Sometimes two members of the JSC observe the meeting and report back to the JSC. If JSC members are present, the same members should be present for all meetings and conversations.

The report of the JSC (step 26) should include references to information about these meetings/conversations.

The 2013 *Related Manual Resource – Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting* does not address the matter of multi-staff situations other than noting that ministry personnel currently settled or appointed to the pastoral charge may not serve on the Joint Search Committee. Although a number of situations are addressed in the “Best Practices” section, there is no reference to multi-staff situations.

**Background:** In Ottawa Presbytery a variety of practices have taken place, ranging from incumbent clergy meeting all candidates to direct input to the final decision. In 2008 the Pastoral Relations Committee prepared a document which was amended in 2011, to provide for consistency in the way in which Joint Search Committees (JSC) operate in Ottawa Presbytery.

**Guiding Principle:** The Pastoral Relations Ministry Team believes that incumbent ministry personnel in a multi-staff pastoral charge should be consulted as part of the decision-making process and that input from incumbent ministry personnel should be taken into account as one factor in the final decision about a name to be brought forward to the pastoral charge.

**Process:** When the Joint Search Committee has reduced the list of applicants to one or two persons and before the final decision by the JSC, the incumbent ministry personnel will have an opportunity for an informal meeting with the one or two applicants.

The purpose of this meeting will be to enable the incumbent ministry personnel (i) to meet the prospective new member of the staff team and learn about his/her background (i.e. similarity in theological perspective); (ii) to discuss the applicant’s experience of team ministry, leadership styles and conflict resolution; (iii) to discuss the culture of the pastoral charge including any protocols relating to team ministry that may have been developed; and (iv) to respond to any questions the applicant may have. This meeting will be between the incumbent ministry personnel and the applicant, in the presence of a Presbytery representative on the JSC.

Following the meeting or meetings with the one or two applicants, the JSC will meet separately with the applicant and with the incumbent ministry personnel to respond to the following questions: (i) what excites you about the opportunity to team with this person? (ii) what, if any, challenges would you identify with respect to a possible team ministry with this person?; and (iii) what support/resources would you wish the pastoral charge to provide if you and this person were to be brought together in team ministry?

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Then, the JSC alone will discuss all input (including written material, interviews, sermons, comments by references and comments by incumbent ministry personnel) and make a decision.

Exceptions: when an applicant has travelled to the initial interview by air or more than 150 kilometers by car, the incumbent ministry personnel may meet the applicant following the interview by the JSC. In this instance, the incumbent ministry personnel will not provide feedback immediately, but will report back in the latter stage of the process as noted above.

Adopted 2008; amended 2011, 2014