



International
Presbyterian
Church

Under Care
The International Presbyterian Church

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The system of being “under care” is a process of evaluation, instruction and pastoral help given by the Presbytery to someone who is considering entering full-time paid gospel-ministry within the denomination. What does it actually involve and what might it look like in our IPC context?

1. Being taken under care ideally takes place before formal theological training. It would be appropriate for internships, and ministry trainees, for instance, and means that Presbytery should play an active role in the supervision of their training, both at this stage and later, if appropriate, the formal theological education.

2. To initiate the process informally, an interested candidate can contact the Chair of the Candidates & Credentials Committee and arrange to meet the Committee. This begins the process of learning more about what has led them to want to embark on the path of potential ministry. As well as covering the basics of biography and family, the discussion should explore the spiritual and theological influences in their life, ministry experience to date, and their long-term hopes and aims. C&C Committee decides whether to proceed with next step or not.

3. Ordinarily the candidate would be a communicant member of a local IPC church, in good standing. To initiate the process formally, the Candidates & Credentials Committee should receive a written recommendation from the Session of the local congregation of which the candidate is a member. The recommendation should be specifically with a view to the candidate’s likely suitability and potential for ordained ministry as far as can be discerned at this stage. The candidate should also submit their CV.

Some flexibility is obviously required in the IPC context. While as much contact with IPC as possible is desirable and should be the norm, it must be possible to receive into care candidates not from IPC churches and therefore whose basis of recommendation to the Presbytery will not be from the elders of Presbyterian churches. In this case, three references from people who know the candidate well (including their current Pastor) and who are also able to comment on suitability for ministry, can be an alternative to a Session recommendation.

4. If recommending a candidate to Presbytery, on the basis of written materials received, the C&C Committee present a written report to Presbytery in advance of the next Presbytery meeting as a way of introducing the candidate to Presbytery. This is followed by an informal interview at Presbytery to allow members to meet the candidate in the flesh. Presbytery votes to receive the candidate under care.

5. From here, the candidate becomes the main responsibility of the Session of the church in which he is working or attends *and* the Candidates & Credentials Committee. Ordinarily the candidate should submit a one-page written report of their work to the Committee in advance of each Presbytery meeting and preach twice a year in an IPC congregation other than their own. Ideally, they will also meet with the Committee at least twice a year to discuss their training and, if relevant, the route ahead.

6. Where the candidate enters into theological education, he should submit written reports to the C&C Committee at the end of each semester and a personal tutor will be asked to submit an annual report on the candidate's progress. Unless studying overseas, the candidate should continue to attend Presbytery if possible, and at least once a year.

7. Being taken under care is a commitment from the Presbytery (through its C&C Committee and the local Session) to seek the welfare, spiritual growth, and personal and theological development of the candidate. It provides a means of discerning whether formal theological education will be advisable and desirable, and the time-scales in which such decisions are made will vary. Some may come under care and begin theological education immediately; ordinarily that will only happen after a more lengthy process. It is also possible some may come under care after theological training as a first step towards ordination.

To make the under care arrangement effective personal contact between the candidate and the C&C Committee is essential. The C&C Committee will have one member of the Committee especially tasked with liaising with the candidate and making sure being 'under care' exists in more than name only!