

VITAL MINISTRY

IN THE UNITING CHURCH

**POSITIVE, ENCOURAGING PERFORMANCE
APPRAISAL OF MINISTERS FOR HEALTHY
MINISTRY ENGAGEMENT**

GUIDELINES FOR MINISTRY CONSULTATIONS

Stage 2: Vital Ministry – 6 months onwards



**uniting
church**
in Australia,
Synod of NSW & ACT

Acknowledgements

These Guidelines were developed under the auspices of the Standing Committee of the Synod of NSW and the ACT. The work was overseen by the Placements Committee through a small Task Group (Rev. Chris Udy, Rev. Duncan MacLeod, Ms Roxanne Harris, Rev. Jane Fry and Rev. Graham Perry). The Task Group would like to acknowledge with appreciation the extraordinary work of Graham Perry in developing and refining this Vital Ministry consultation process in 2015.

Status

NSW/ACT Placements Committee Policy Day, 9 December 2015

Vital Ministry Paper

Note that this paper is designed to enhance ministry and to support presbyteries:
198/15PC Resolved

That the Placements Committee

endorse the Vital Ministry process and request that the Synod Associate Secretary provide it to PRCs and encourage them to adopt and apply it as a resource.

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Vital Ministry in the Uniting Church

Introduction: Positive, Encouraging Performance Appraisal

Vital Ministry is an appraisal process for UCA specified ministers based on the assumption that ‘all ministers are responsible to God for the ministry entrusted to them and accountable to the Church through the Presbytery for the way in which that ministry is exercised’ (Reg. 2.9.1).

Ministry is a gift and trust for which each individual holds account. Accountability includes a preparedness to grow and develop on the basis of experience and the learning that accompanies it. Presbytery oversight, therefore, is about affirmation and encouragement as well as challenge and, if necessary, correction.

Vital Ministry derives from the shared responsibility for ministry in which the Presbytery offers a ministry of both affirmation and accountability. It provides an opportunity for Minister, Presbytery and congregational leaders to look back and reflect on what has happened over the last period of ministry and, informed by that, to look forward to planning, anticipate and develop a vision for what lies ahead.

Vital Ministry is also concerned for the wellbeing of ministry agents. Recent research into the wellbeing of Australian clergy¹ recognises the need for positive ministry appraisal:

Occupational stress has been recognised as a critical issue among religious workers ... [However] since the early to mid-1980s, the focus has exclusively been on burnout, with no published studies to date exploring work engagement – the positive antipode of burnout. Work engagement is a state of positive work motivation characterised by vigor, dedication, and healthy absorption in work. (Bickerton, 2012 p. 1).

Rather than focusing on preventing burnout by reducing workload, Bickerton identifies the need for positive work engagement through increased motivating factors.

The ideal for Christian work is not simply avoiding burnout, but rather to be motivated and have energy for the work at hand... Our results indicate that job and spiritual resources are what drive this engaged state in ministry. (Bickerton, 2012 p. 4).

Consequently, the first practical implication of his study is:

1) The key to well-being at work is to build both job and spiritual resources; it is not simply a matter of reducing demands or symptoms of burnout. (Bickerton, 2012 p. 5).

THE AIM of this project of the Synod of NSW and the ACT is to develop an effective system of *Performance Appraisal* for Uniting Church ministers, in order to enhance work engagement and provide work and spiritual resources for the calling they follow. ‘Performance Appraisal’ is part of Human Resources jargon which may raise the eyebrows of some ministers, who associate it negatively with secular employment conditions and quantitative KPIs. However, many church members will recognise the value of the Performance Appraisal process from their own workplaces, including in industry, professions and trades. Rather than becoming anxious about ‘performance’ in a ministry placement, this project will focus on the positive affirmation of the costly, difficult calling to ministry and the opportunities for rewarding spiritual and personal growth it offers.

¹ Grant Bickerton, Doctoral Research: ‘Engagement and Burnout from Occupational Stress: A Study of Religious Workers.’ Summary document accessed: *Well-Being in Ministry Results Overview* (UWS [undated] 2012)

Previous ministry consultation process: 'Vitality of Call'

The periodic 'Vitality of Call' consultation (VOC) as commonly used in the Synod of NSW/ACT was designed to affirm at significant moments that the Christian community believes that a minister's calling to a placement remains clear and vital, resulting in the continuation of the placement.

What is a 'Call'? In lieu of a long theological discussion of the nature of vocation, the Assembly's *National Handbook of Procedures for the Placement of Ministers* offers this definition:

Call to a placement gives effect to the perceived will of God as expressed by a decision of a Council or Councils of the Church and by the response of the Minister concerned. After careful consideration and prayer, the Minister discerns therein an expression of the will of God in relation to ministry at that time. (Uniting Church Assembly: 2006, 1.2)

The Call of God to a particular ministry is neither a simple matter of direct revelation nor of good strategic planning, but of perception, consideration, discernment, decision and response, all in the context of careful (faithful) prayer. It is a matter for both individual ministers and councils of the church; and it is *temporal*, being subject to the conditions of life and to change and renewal over time. That period of time has in fact been 'discerned' by councils of the Church to be between five and ten years, with possible extensions of up to five years at a time! In other words, the call of God is mediated in space and time by the Body of Christ, faithfully seeking the guidance of the Spirit.²

However, the Vitality of Call process has been timed to check on ministry vitality at the specific moments when a minister needs to consider a move to a new placement (usually in the fourth and seventh years). This can mean the consultation is principally focused on the secondary question, 'What next? Stay or go?' rather than addressing the more important primary issue: What will enhance ministry skills, effectiveness and work satisfaction in this or any other placement?

The VOC conversation can therefore become overly subjective, asking about attitudes, feelings, experiences, but ignoring the setting and assessment of achievable and measurable goals. For practical reasons it may also be held in conjunction with a Life and Witness Consultation of the congregation itself, risking confusion of the vocation and motivation of the minister with the mission plans and direction of the placement.

To enhance work engagement and provide motivating guidance for ministry, issues such as the following need to be addressed:

- How can we adequately meet 'ministry appraisal' criteria, including the needs of clergy, congregation and the Church for accurate information and motivating affirmation?
- What forms of workplace performance appraisal could be adapted to ministry, and how can they be applied in a Presbytery environment without professional HR help?
- To what extent should ministry appraisal focus on 'subjective' and 'objective' aspects?
- What objective indicators or goals are appropriate for ministry?
- How are qualitative and quantitative indicators to be measured and interpreted?
- What things define a minister's sense of satisfaction and purpose in ministry?
- How are outcomes used to enhance work engagement, personal and professional growth and mutual ministry within a placement?
- What 'successes' do the UCA and other churches offer us from which we can learn?

² This is not however an argument for the plenary verbal inspiration of the Regulations of the UCA.

A Revised Process: Vital Ministry

The Vital Ministry program is an attempt to develop the Vitality of Call process into a more effective tool of ongoing, regular ministry appraisal and enhancement, both during a placement and when considering endings and new beginnings. Vital Ministry aims to offer:

- an affirming appraisal of the exercise of ministry with a view to developing the minister's *work engagement*: a state of positive work motivation characterised by vigor, dedication, and healthy absorption in work
- a means of discernment of a minister's gifts and skills in ministry, and where they have led to success in planned and unplanned exercise of ministry
- a positive critical analysis of the placement's signs of vitality and growth
- mission-focused answers to the questions: What ministries are most effective? How do we know? What activities waste time and energy or breed disappointment and frustration?
- a focus on spirituality: what resources, both inner and communal, does the minister have, share, or need in order to engage fully with the nature of the ministry of Jesus Christ?
- identification of ongoing educational, training and personal needs for present and future ministry
- an aid to the sustainability of ministers' vocation and ministry practice
- timely assistance when ministry is no longer vital
- a predictable and regular process that can be managed without professional HR help or excessive consultation team preparation.

Vital Ministry has two stages:

1. Stage 1 **Affirmation of Call** is made six months into a new placement. Strictly speaking, this first consultation is the only one to test the wisdom of *calling* this minister to this particular placement, and the *vitality* of that call. The Affirmation of Call marks the end of what in other workplaces might be a 'probation' period, when the appointment to a position (or 'call to this ministry') is upheld – or, perhaps, found not to be a suitable match. **See Stage 1 document- From JNC to affirmation of call**
2. Stage 2 includes all subsequent **Vital Ministry** consultations. Using the Assembly's definition:

Call to a placement gives effect to the perceived will of God as expressed by a decision of a Council or Councils of the Church and by the response of the Minister concerned...

we can accept that in the discernment and oversight of the church, God's call now can be taken as a given, until time or circumstances require a fresh discernment. Each subsequent ministry consultation will then be an appraisal, not of God's call, but of the vitality of *ministry* as it is being exercised. Human Resource departments usually assess professional workers on an annual basis; this would tax most Presbyteries' capacity. Without HR, however, it is not unreasonable to plan for a Vital Ministry consultation every two years. The focus of these consultations may change during the placement, including sometimes considering a change of ministry; but they are always focused on enhancing the quality of ministry expressed in positive work engagement. **This document-Stage 2 Vital Ministry -6 months onwards**

The Vital Ministry process

Who is involved?

Presbytery appoints the consultation team (for congregation placements), usually through the PRC, and each Presbytery/Agency /Board must determine the appropriate people to participate in the consultation. The team should include:

Congregational Placement:

- Presbytery (PRC)-appointed Team leader;
- At least one or 2 other people appointed by the PRC, who are not from the placement
- 3-4 members of the congregation appointed by the Church Council or placement board, including at least some Church Councillors or other key leaders;
- Other people in specified ministry in the placement, other staff members, especially if their work falls under the Minister's oversight, should be interviewed separately by the representatives of the Team.

Presbytery placement

- Presbytery-appointed Team leader and 1 person from Synod. (2 from Synod for Pres Min role) 3-4 people from Presbytery committees/ Standing Committee/ wider Presbytery contacts or congregation the placement is linked to .
- Other people in specified ministry in the placement, other staff members, especially if their work falls under the Minister's oversight, should be interviewed separately by the representatives of the Team.

Synod/Agency/Board Placement

- Synod/ Agency/Board appointed Team Leader.
- At least one or 2 other people appointed by the Synod/ Agency/Board, who are not from the Agency/ Board.
- Other people in specified ministry in the placement, other staff members, especially if their work falls under the Minister's oversight, should be interviewed separately by the representatives of the Team.

*If the minister has reason to challenge any of the appointed names, the PRC or Team leader will need to work with the minister and Church Council/Presbytery/Board to discern the validity of the challenge and to find a satisfactory group of representatives.

Care should be taken to include people on the team who have pastoral skills, and sensitivity to the content of the congregation's long-range mission plan/ presbytery goals and directions/Agency goals and directions. Meetings will be arranged with the Minister in placement, members of Church Council and/or other people in the placement who can give feedback on the ministry.

Where and When?

- The PRC will oversee the initiation of the process. The consultation Chairperson would make arrangements for times and dates of the consultation.
- The consultation should **not** take place in the minister's residence. The minister's home needs to be a safe place and is not the appropriate venue for ministry consultations.
- A working space with whiteboard etc, may be helpful, comfortable seating and space for note taking is important. Use discretion to divide the time and focus. Refreshments should be available in creating a comfortable environment for the conversation.

- The PRC representatives should meet with the minister first and then representatives of the congregation, after which the minister will join with the group for a combined session to share what has been heard.
- It would be appropriate for refreshments to be shared when the whole group comes together.
- Sessions should be 60 minutes but can extend as needed and be limited to no more than 90 mins at a time with any individual or group. Each session should open and close with prayer.

Role of the Placement members in the process:

- Stimulate the Process: the congregation/ agency should record the date of the Vital Ministry indicated by the Presbytery, then take the initiative to call the VM and invite the team to participate.
- Model effective, open, professional and communal processes of discernment, discussion and affirmation.
- Provide the space and equipment for effective consultation and communication.
- Extend genuine hospitality to the people in the process, including refreshments and warmth of welcome and a compassionate, pastoral attitude.

Role of the Minister in the process:

- Prepare thoroughly, including:
 - prayerfully discussing ministry issues with relevant people: Team leader, church leaders, Supervisor, spouse, etc.;
 - preparing by reflecting on and answering the suggested questions attached;
 - ensuring adequate time is set aside for the process of reflection and follow-up. The VM should not be seen as a distraction from ministry, but as part of the effective work of ministry.
- Embrace the process as an opportunity for affirmation and assistance in ministry.

Role of the Presbytery /Synod/ Agency members in the process:

- Take seriously the oversight of ministry for the wellbeing of the minister and placement and the effective mission of the church
- Provide all relevant up-to-date material to guide participants in the process
- Model effective, open, professional and communal processes of discernment, discussion and affirmation
- Provide the space and equipment for effective consultation and communication, including requests for private/confidential comments
- Report effectively and fairly to all stakeholders, with pastoral sensitivity to critical, confidential or controversial findings
- Ensure follow-up processes are clearly identified.

Reporting:

- A report is written reflecting the conversations
- Reports are endorsed by the Minister and the members of the congregation/ placement panel involved in the conversation.
- PRC receives the report and acts on any recommendations
- Copy of the final report and any recommendations is given to the Minister and Church Council. (For information and action where necessary.)

Stage 2: Vital Ministry

Ministry Appraisal for motivation and work engagement

It was noted that holding Vitality of Call consultations only in the fourth and seventh years of a ten-year placement tends to address the ‘what next – stay or go?’ question, rather than offering ways to “enhance ministry skills, effectiveness and work satisfaction in this or any other placement”. How can ministry appraisal be revised to provide ongoing broader enhancement of work engagement? The secular HR industry refers to this process (rather threateningly) as a ‘Performance Review’, usually held on an annual basis. These are often tied to a worker’s chance of promotion, bonuses or salary increases, or even ongoing employment. A more positive description is ‘Ministry Appraisal’, noting that appraisals may be both affirming and critical, but always seek constructive ways to affirm ministry strengths and grow undeveloped areas.

Implications of regular ‘ministry appraisal’ 2 years

- **Frequency:** three-year intervals are too far apart for effective oversight. In three years, an unasked question or unhelpful pattern can become a full-blown problem. On the other hand, 12-monthly reviews come around very quickly, and few Presbyteries are equipped to manage that frequency. Two yearly is probably a plausible and effective timeframe.

	Affirmation of Call	Vital Ministry	VM	VM	VM	VM	VM	VM
2-year process	0.5 yrs (foundational placement issues and directions)	2 yrs (i.e. 18 months after AOC)	4 yrs (attention to continuation of placement)	6 yrs	8 yrs (i.e. in 9 th year) (attention to continuation of placement)	10 yrs (henceforth attending to changing situation)	12 yrs (attention to continuation of placement)	14 yrs (Exit VM? / attention to continuation of placement)

Some helpful tools

- **Annual Report:** Preparing an annual report in accordance with Regulation 2.2.1 (c) which covers the necessary areas of appraisal can also be tied to the Vital Ministry process in such a way that it does not add to the workload but helps to focus the minister’s reflection on ministry and provide material for the consultants to consider.
- **Self-evaluation tools:** A great number of these exist online or in the published literature. Some may be adapted from other workplaces. Some people keep a portfolio of ministry activity with samples of work, sermons, planning, events.
- **Ministry Leadership Profile:** Ministers are responsible to keep their Profile up-to-date and a current version must be lodged with ACOMP after the fourth year in any placement, regardless of whether a move is being sought. A Vital Ministry consultation is a good opportunity to review and revise the Ministry Profile.
- **Continuing education:** Reflection on practice is vitally important and the insight of others should be sought and used appropriately. Reviewing one’s own journals and notebooks may assist in reflection. Creating a continued education profile can help Minister keep track of and reflect on their continued education.
- **Supervision:** Certificate of attendance signed by Supervisor with hours indicated for each year.
- **One size does not fit all:** Any tool will be most helpful when creatively adapted to the needs of the particular ministry placement.

Vital Ministry appraisal: key questions

In extending the sample questions below, vitality could and should be checked in such areas as:

- clarity of mission priorities held and pursued
- theological and spiritual values and practices
- quality and effectiveness of proclamation, teaching and discipling
- skills in managing change and fostering innovation
- leadership style and effectiveness
- vision casting, team building, mission planning and execution
- Accountability & Compliance: Supervision, Ethical Ministry, Refresher Safe Church
- pastoral and communication skills, relationships with others
- other areas specific to the placement

Vital Ministry will also need to engage the thoughts and experience of those with whom the minister is serving: members of the congregation, colleagues, possibly family members and other pertinent people, to ask:

- From the placement's perspective, is there a vitality in this ministry relationship which makes it viable for the future?
- How can strengths be utilised and problems addressed?
- What changes may need to be made for the health of the placement and minister, by either the placement or the minister?

Reporting and feedback

- Good reporting depends on good notes from the meeting(s)
- Reporting indicates that the minister and members have been heard clearly, and attention given to what has been said.
- Reports should first be sent to the members of the team and to the minister for checking of accuracy. The minister's comments should be considered, and alterations made if they are fair. If the minister takes exception to something in the report, steps should be taken to resolve the issue before the report is lodged with PRC. No report containing nasty surprises or bombshells should ever be submitted to PRC, congregation or minister before those issues have been identified and pastorally worked through with the appropriate people, in person.
- A factual report should be made to the PRC with Recommendations for the PRC to make to the minister and / or placement leadership.
- The PRC should immediately set dates and people for follow-up within a reasonable timeframe.
- More complex outcomes may be better dealt with personally than through the sending of letters and emails.
- The Minister may be requested, before or after the consultation, to submit an updated Profile to the PRC. A clear timeframe should be stated and kept for that line of reporting.

Part B: Should the review determine the placement no longer holds vitality, this shall be communicated in person (if possible) to all stakeholders as soon as possible. The usual processes for concluding a placement shall apply. Attention shall be paid to the provision of Pastoral Care.

A [sample Report](#) is included at the end .

Suggested questions for the Minister and Placement are listed below. The consultation should not, however, proceed as a checklist of questions, but rather as a pastoral conversation. The Vital Ministry team should of course reflect in advance on the principal issues of each consultation and use these or other questions and lines of inquiry as best fit the situation.

QUESTIONS FOR THE MINISTER

1. Reality Check

How are you feeling at this stage in your ministry?

- in this placement?
- in ministry in general?
- Are you still committed to the calling you answered in your ordination and induction/commissioning?
- What ministry do people particularly thank you for?
- What are you disappointed with or concerned about?

2. From your Annual Report

How do you feel you are going in your ministry?

Are you exercising ministry in accordance with the requirements of the Uniting Church as expressed in the Regulations and Code of Ethics and Ministerial Conduct, including professional conduct, participation in the councils of the church, self-care, Safe Church participation & continuing education and supervision?

Take some time to discuss these things with the panel. Be prepared to describe and evaluate your own effectiveness in the core roles of your ministry – preaching, teaching the gospel, pastoral care, worship leading, community engagement, missional leadership, vision casting, spiritual counsel, etc.

3. Vocation and Discipleship

Are you still 'keeping the faith'?

- How is your sense of and relationship with God growing, changing, developing?
- Is your personal faith in God – expressed through discipleship of Jesus Christ lived out in the Spirit – vital and sustaining?
- Can you express your own faith, spirituality and passions in this placement?
- How is your sense of and relationship with God growing, changing, developing?
- Are you guided by a clear vision of ministry, a sense of purpose for the people you serve? Do you have realistic, achievable and faithful goals for ministry in this place? Are you starting to feel the call to a new form of ministry?

4. *Self-Care, Connection, Enhancement*

Ministry support

- Describe your support networks and engagement in Professional Supervision.
- Can you give one or two examples of how supervision has helped you/supported you in ministry?
- Is it time to consider changing supervisors to bring a different lens to your ministry practice?

Continuing education

- Discuss your professional development/continuing education program.
What skill or knowledge gaps do you need to fill?
What will give you energy and skills?
Is your program meeting real ministry enhancement, or personal interests only?
- Consider creating continued education recording what has been studied & portfolio reflecting on what has been learned

Presbytery

- Besides attending meetings, what contribution do you make to the life and mission of the Presbytery?
- What support do you seek and receive from Presbytery?

Describe the quality of your relationships with:

- Colleagues in ministry
- Office Bearers and Church leaders
- Other people ... ?

5. *Vital Ministry Practice*

- Have there been any projects over the last two years that have enhanced the exercise of your ministry with congregation?
- Have there been any projects over the last two years that have hindered the exercise of your ministry with the congregation and what have you learnt?
- Are you offering the ministry this placement most needs? How do you know? What else could you do?
- Where are the fault lines in this place? What points of conflict or disagreement make ministry hard? How do you cope? How could the situation be improved?
- Am I willing and able to meet the legitimate expectations of my placement, as they have been formally set down and informally developed along the way?
- Describe your understanding of what Safe Church means and what is being done to ensure Church is safe for all people

6. *Personal*

- Is your ministry here taking a toll on you personally? How much are you willing and able to bear? What extra resources do you need of education, training or personal support?
- How does this placement suit or challenge the needs of you and your family? What external factors influence the continuation of your ministry here, to stay or to seek to move on?
- How strong, now, is your sense of call to ministry? – to this ministry? – to another ministry? What do you sense about your future calling? How can you prepare for that?
- What are your greatest strengths/weaknesses in ministry? How can this placement help you to grow your strengths and strengthen your weaknesses?
- How did you meet the goals you set at your last Vital ministry consultation?
- What personal goals are you working towards, and how do they affect your sense of vitality here?

7. *Resources for ministry*

- What further resources and support will you need, in order to meet the pastoral and mission objectives of this placement?

8. *Vocation:*

- Do you believe your ministry in this placement has a continuing vitality, to the benefit of your people and your own growth in Christ?
- At this point in time, do you have a sense of the future of your placement and ministry?

1. *Expectations vs. reality of placement:*

- What are the minister's greatest strengths in ministry?
- Is the congregation willingly meeting its commitment to support the minister and family? Please describe how.
- Are you aware of any areas of dissatisfaction or dispute? What is being done to resolve these?
- What things might be troubling or concerning the congregation?
What are people saying in the car park?
- How are you giving regular feedback to the minister at this time?
- Does the Church Council know, agree to and respect the minister's responsibilities in regard to:
 - Presbytery commitments
 - Supervision
 - Required training requirements (Ethical Ministry, Safe Church, Phase 3 expectations)
 - Continuing Education
 - Regular time off?
- Are there aspects of these responsibilities that are proving to be challenging to the congregation?

2. *Specific details on congregational mission / minister's 'job description' and actual workload*

- What are the congregation's mission objectives?
Where are these documented?
How long ago was mission planning last done?
- Is the minister's workload in line with the objectives?
- Does the congregation know what the minister does during the week? What activities are using most of the minister's time?
- Where do you think the minister's exercise of ministry needs to be enhanced/supported/alterd to meet the needs of the placement as you understand them?
- What further information would the Church Council/employing body need in order to draw up a reasonably accurate and achievable job description for this ministry in this place at this time?

3. *From the minister's Annual Report*

Read through the Minister's Annual Report, provided in preparation for this Vital Ministry consultation.

- What did you learn/realise?
- What surprises you?
- What concerns you?
- Where do you think the minister's exercise of ministry needs to be enhanced/supported/alterd to meet the needs of the placement as you understand them?

(Presbytery practice with Annual reports may differ here)

4. *Resources for ministry*

- What further resources and support might the minister need to help you meet your pastoral and mission objectives? Please be specific.
 - Education / training:
 - Support of the members:
 - Office and practical support:

5. *Placement's Agenda*

- What do the congregational members/leaders wish to bring to the attention of the Vital ministry panel?

6. *Relationships*

- Who works closest with the minister on a day-to-day basis to exercise the responsibilities of a congregation?
- Who is minister's elder/carer?
- What are their responsibilities and how do they carry them out?
- What is your observation of the minister's collegiate relationships with Church Council/other people in placement with whom s\he is in ministry?

7. *Vocation*

- Do you believe your minister has a **Vital Ministry** in this particular placement, to the benefit of your people and their mission?
- At this point in time, do you have a sense of the future of this ministry here?

VITAL MINISTRY – ALTERNATIVE QUESTIONS FOR NON-CONGREGATIONAL PLACEMENTS

QUESTIONS FOR THE MINISTER

1. *Personal practice*

What have been the highlights in this role so far?

What have you struggled with and see as a personal area of growth?

Are you still committed to the ministry and feel you have vitality for it?

What are you disappointed or concerned about?

2. *Reality of job description and its impact*

How have you managed to fulfil the key functions set out in your job description?

Is the workload realistic in terms of hours expected and task required? How are you balancing that? Do any adjustments need to be made?

Are there any personal costs/consequences to you and your family?

3. *Vocation and discipleship*

How are you sustaining your spiritual life and sense of vocation?

What guides you in your ministry with the people that you have been called to serve?

How are your professional goals being fulfilled in this ministry and do you see this as being effective for you at this time?

4. *Collegial relationships*

How have you worked with other colleagues in your role or team?

How have you championed new ideas within your organisation?

What are the challenges of working in your role within the structure of the organisation?

How have you managed conflict within your role?

(If responsible for a team –

How have you managed the people under your oversight as a team leader?

How have you grown and developed the team?

How well received was your oversight and leadership by team members?)

5. *Self-care, connection and enhancement*

Describe your support networks and engagement in Professional Supervision.

Can you give one or two examples of how supervision has helped you/supported you in ministry?

Discuss your professional development /continuing education program and its effectiveness.

What skill or knowledge gaps do you need to fill? What will give you energy and skills?

What is your involvement in Presbytery /wider church activities and its impact?

Describe how you contribute to ensuring Church is safe for all people including yourself & your family (of relevant)

6. *Time Management and prioritisation of tasks*

How well have you felt able to manage your time?

How effectively do you feel able to prioritise and organise your workload, ensuring timely delivery?

What strategies did you use to contain your workload?

7. *Communication and Interaction with the wider church*

How effectively have you listened to the changing needs of the church?

What are the positives/frustrations in your communication within the wider church?

8. *Vital Ministry practice*

List up to three projects over the past two years which you consider to be proceeding successfully. Be prepared to discuss one or two with the panel.

Identify one or more projects that have not worked. What prevented their implementation?

What have you learnt from this? What is helping or hindering the professional exercise of your ministry?

Are you offering the ministry this placement most needs? How do you know? What else could you do?

Where are the fault lines in this place? What points of conflict or disagreement make ministry hard? How do you cope? How could the situation be improved?

Am I willing and able to meet the legitimate expectations of my placement, as they have been formally set down and informally developed along the way?

VITAL MINISTRY- ALTERNATIVE QUESTIONS FOR NON-CONGREGATIONAL PLACEMENTS

QUESTIONS FOR THE PLACEMENT

1. *Professional practice*

How effectively is the person fulfilling their ministry role at this stage in the placement?

Are you aware of any particular areas of concern or need for support?

What do you see as their greatest strengths?

Please name any areas of concern or disappointment so far.

2. *Reality of job description and its impact*

How well are the tasks contained within the job description being managed and fulfilled?

How well is the workload being managed, and is the load realistic in terms of the hours expected, night and weekend expectations?

Is there a need to make adjustments if there are any concerns?

Is adequate support provided to the minister and family?

3. *Collegial relationships*

How well is the person working with others in their role/team?

How have you experienced working with them within the organisation?

Has the person's work brought enhancement to the ministry of the organisation?

How well are they able to introduce new ideas/ and manage conflict?

(If responsible for a team-

How did you experience their management/leadership style?

How well supported have you been in the team?

Is your role and leadership enhanced through this?

4. *Resources for Ministry*

Does the Minister have adequate resources and support to fulfil their role and are they accessing professional supervision and continuing education opportunities?

Are there any skill or knowledge gaps that need to be addressed?

5. *Time management and prioritisation*

How well managed does the person fulfil their commitments and responsibilities?

Is there a need to refocus their priorities or reassess the workload?

6. *Feedback for reporting*

Are there any issues or comments that you wish to bring to the VM panel's attention?

Vital Ministry | Sample Report to PRC

Positive, encouraging performance appraisal of ministers for healthy ministry engagement

Rev. NAME, XYZ Uniting Church

Consultation at the XYZ Uniting Church, Friday 12th Never, 2022

Placement summary and details, commencement date, projected conclusion:

Terms of Placement, changing or stable:

This Vital Ministry consultation was held on:

Team participants were N, M, O

Representing the congregation/ placement

Apologies received from:

Individual conversations were also held with colleagues D, E, F

The Panel met first with NAME for about two hours, then with the placement reps for a similar period, then with for about 20 minutes each.

Summary of Observations

- Reality Check
- Job description and workload
- Resources for ministry
- Reflections on placement
- Relationships
- Vocation

Recommendations:

That the Presbytery PRC:

1. receive this report and thank the team members for their efforts;
2. convey their thanks to God and appreciation to Rev. NAME for his/her faithful ministry in PLACEMENT XYZ;
3. Recommend to the minister...:
4. Recommend to the placement...:
5. Alert the Synod to the following anomaly...:
6. Request person NNN to follow up with the minister on the outcomes of these resolutions before the second-next meeting of the PRC and report back at that meeting.
7. Note in the PRC database that the minister's next Vital Ministry consultation will take place [in 2 years] when the following issues will need to be considered... [e.g. extension, closure.]