



**The United Church  
of Canada  
General Council**

# **GCE44 GS 128 Amendments to Section B.7.3.1 for March 2025**

True Document Date: March 7, 2025

## **1. What is the issue? Why is it important?**

Section B.7.3.1 of The Manual defines the criteria for membership on the governing body. Given the trend of declining membership in communities of faith, it has become necessary to broaden exceptions for individuals who do not typically meet the standard criteria. The Manual already acknowledges that non-full members may be elected in special circumstances. However, it is recommended that in the next reiteration of The Manual, non-full members receive prior permission from the regional council to access their wisdom about these types of appointments, in order to mitigate potential issues.

Currently, individuals in familial relationships with ministry personnel called or appointed to a pastoral charge are being elected to governing bodies, which, in certain instances, may contravene The United Church of Canada's Conflict of Interest Policy. While it is not encouraged to have family members of ministry personnel on the governing body, it is understood that this may be necessary in some limited circumstances. For this reason, The Manual should recognize these exceptional circumstances and ensure that such appointments are approved by the regional council, given the potential conflicts of interest that may arise.

These proposed changes are important to address these shortages and to mitigate risks that may arise from these situations.

## **2. How might the General Council Executive respond to the issue?**

**The General Secretary recommends that the Executive of the General Council approve the following editorial changes to The Manual:**

### **B.7.3 Membership of the Governing Body**

#### **B.7.3.1 General**

**The governing body has the following members:**

- a. the full members of the congregation elected by the congregation or pastoral charge;**
- b. the members of the order of ministry who have been called or appointed to the pastoral charge**
- c. the designated lay ministers who have been recognized by the regional council and appointed to the pastoral charge;**
- d. the pastoral charge supervisor, if there is no such member of the order of ministry or designated lay minister; and**
- e. any other full members that the congregation or pastoral charge includes in the membership of its governing body. This may include full members who hold specific positions in the congregation or pastoral charge.**

**Exceptions: There are two is one exceptions to the requirements in paragraphs (a) and (e) above for governing body members to be full members of the congregation:**

- i. People Persons who are not full members may be elected in special circumstances with prior approval of the regional council; and**
- ii. Persons in familial relationships with ministry personnel who have been called or appointed to the pastoral charge may not be elected except in special circumstances with prior approval of the regional council.**

**FYI: Please consult the Conflict of Interest Policy to mitigate conflicts that may arise from the above exceptions to the membership of the Governing Body, particularly as it pertains to familial relationships with paid staff.**

## **3. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

Document Type: [Proposal](#)

General Council: [GC44](#)

Originating Body: [General Secretary](#)