

A GUIDE FOR PDP COMPANIONS



All people in ministry positions who are accredited by the Baptist Union of Victoria as 'Ordained and Accredited Pastoral Leaders', or 'Recognised Pastoral Leaders' are required to be involved in structures of accountability. For the purposes of the PDP process this involves having a 'PDP companion'.

All PDP Annual Reviews, Professional Development Plan, and Personal Development Plans must be signed by the PDP companion as an indication that s/he is familiar with the pastoral leader's plans and is taking a personal and continuing interest in her/his ongoing development and wellbeing.

Who can be a PDP companion?

There are no specific qualifications for those who serve as PDP companions.

Preferably the companion would be someone with whom the pastoral leader has a current relationship of trust so that the PDP becomes an extension of that relationship.

For example, one's supervisor, mentor or spiritual director would be an ideal choice; a peer support and supervision group could serve as PDP companions for each other; colleagues in ministry (preferably not on the same pastoral team) could companion one another; a mature and trusted member of the congregation would be able to observe a pastoral leader in their context and be able to offer invaluable feedback; likewise a colleague chaplain or chaplain supervisor would be an informed companion.

If possible one should avoid nominating a partner or close family member as this could potentially place unhelpful strains on the relationship.

The primary qualities to be looked for in a PDP companion include:

- A genuine commitment to the pastoral leader and to his/her development as a person and as a professional.
- A willingness to speak honestly and to ask the difficult questions about performance, self care and faithfulness to the PDP and Code of Ethics.
- An understanding and affirmation of the requirements for accountability in the PDP process.
- A preparedness to enter into a long-term (minimum twelve months and preferably three years) commitment with the pastoral leader.
- A deep personal faith and commitment to pray for the pastoral leader.
- An ability to observe absolute confidentiality.
- A strong commitment to the fellowship of the church

The PDP companion is a vital feature of the re-accreditation process and represents its most rigorous accountability requirement. Whilst the PDP coordinator reviews all PDPs before re-accreditation, accountability depends on an ongoing relationship of trust and transparency.

For this reason the choice of companion is crucial for the process to be meaningful and beneficial for the pastoral leader and for the church. This is a position of great trust. Only the PDP companion is required to oversee the completed Personal Development Plan of the pastoral leader, and may therefore be privy to sensitive and confidential information.

The basic responsibilities of the companion include:

- Familiarity with the overall objectives and procedures of the re-accreditation process by reading these Guidelines thoroughly and discussing questions with the PDP coordinator if necessary.
- Familiarity with the provisions of the Code of Ethics and the companion to the Code.
- Discuss with the pastoral leader the PDP during the preparation stage.
- Sign the completed Personal Development Plan and the Professional Development Plan.
- Pray regularly for the pastoral leader, his/her family and the church/agency.
- Discuss the First and Second Annual Reviews with the pastoral leader prior to signing.

PDP Companions should enter into this relationship for a minimum of twelve months, but with the view to be a support for the entire three-year cycle. At the end of the agreed period, either renegotiate or terminate the arrangement by mutual agreement. There is no obligation, and there should be no expectation, that the relationship will continue indefinitely.

Some helpful questions in assisting Pastoral Leaders in forming their PDP:

- Is the pastor taking seriously the need for prayer, rest, Sabbath keeping, relationship with God?
- Is there real accountability reflected in the PDP in terms of mentoring/ supervision/ spiritual direction or spiritual companionship for the next year?
- Are the study and skill development plans clear and realistic?
- Has enough attention been paid to health and lifestyle plans? Are family and personal needs given adequate priority?
- Has adequate attention been paid to financial planning?
- What resources does this pastor need to be able to fulfil his/her PDP? Are there financial or other implications for his/her church?
- Does the pastoral leader grasp and affirm the principles and practice promoted in the Code of Ethics?
- What concerns would you want to raise that do not seem to be covered in the PDP?

Regular Meetings

- As a guide, each meeting should last approximately an hour and should allow time to hear any current issues facing the pastoral leader, progress on the goals set in the various categories of both PDPs (Professional & Personal), and then time to pray for each other and for the church.
- It is the primary responsibility of the Pastoral Leader to organise regular meetings, however a gentle reminder from the companion may at times be helpful.