

This information is provided for people who have expressed interest in exploring ordination by the Baptist Union of Victoria.

There are several key documents that are important for you to have:

1. ***Are You Thinking about Ordination?*** which provides a clear outline of the process of application to become an ordination candidate, as well as other relevant general information. Make sure that this document includes the statement: Ordination is not a guarantee of employment with the BUV
2. ***Guidelines to Assist a Church Establish and Conduct a “Discernment and Support Group”.***
3. ***Ordination Candidature Application Form***, which must be submitted by August 31<sup>st</sup> in the year of application.
4. ***Ordination Candidature Applicant Referee Information and Form***, which is to be provided to three referees as per instructions below.

Because there are many steps in the process that need to take place before the formal application is complete, the potential applicant needs to begin the work required by the beginning of the year of application. The Discernment and Support Group must meet for at least 6 months.

Please read through this document carefully. If you have any questions, please contact the office of the Director of Ministries (**DoM**) on 9880 6188.

The DoM’s Executive Assistant will be able to answer your questions and / or book an appointment.

The Pastoral Leadership Selection Committee (**PLSC**) is responsible for the initial or ‘provisional’ selection of candidates for training as Pastoral Leaders with the Baptist Union of Victoria (**BUV**).

The Ordination Pathways Group (**OPG**) will oversee training once a provisional candidate is confirmed by the PLSC. The OPG is the body that makes the final decision about whether and when a candidate is ordained.

Applicants need to be aware of the following documents, policies and information:

**A. The Baptist Union of Victoria Doctrinal Basis:**

The application asks whether the applicant assents to the following, which is the Baptist Union of Victoria’s Doctrinal Basis:

1. The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.
2. The existence of one God in three persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
3. The deity and incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity.
4. The fallen, sinful and lost estate of all people.

5. The salvation of men and women from the penal consequences and power of sin through the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, His atoning death, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His unchanging priesthood.
6. The immediate work of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration of men and women, in their sanctification, and in their preservation to the heavenly Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.
7. The necessity, in order to know salvation, of repentance towards God and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
8. The resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment of all people by the Lord Jesus Christ.
9. The two ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which are of perpetual obligation: Baptism being the immersion of believers upon the profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a symbol of the fellowship of the regenerate in His death, burial and resurrection; the Lord's Supper being a memorial, until He comes, of the sacrifice of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**B. *Policies of the Baptist Union of Victoria:***

1. BUV has adopted a "*Code of Ethics For Pastoral Leaders*". All pastoral leaders are required to sign a statement of compliance with the Code. Applicants should be aware of the contents of this document.
2. BUV is committed to every church being a safe place for all who attend its activities. For this reason we have in place a Duty of Care policy document which outlines clearly the requirements for all who exercise leadership in a church. Potential applicants should familiarize themselves with this document.
3. Any candidate for ordination who has been divorced, or is married to a person who has been divorced, must discuss the circumstances related to the marriage breakdown with the DoM. If the DoM is satisfied that there has been no moral impropriety on the part of the candidate the application may proceed.
4. Persons who engage in homosexual practice will not be ordained.

## It's About Discernment

The primary objective of the BUV's ordination application process is captured in the biblical statement, "so that you might discern what the will of God is, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12: 2)

The "you" in this verse is a plural "you", meaning that the pursuit of the will of God is something that we will explore and discover together. The 'you' in our process involves not only the applicant (and their spouse - if applicable), but the church (through the DSG) and BUV (through the members of the PLSC).

The most important thing is for us to work together to discern the call and gifting with which God has blessed the person involved.

There is openness to this process. We do not assume or guarantee any particular outcome. For a process to be genuine discernment there must be a level of uncertainty about the outcome.

At some stage in the discernment process the applicant may, through prayer, ministry involvement or reflection, develop a sense of unease about becoming ordained. Acknowledging this should not be seen as a statement of failure. On the contrary, it reveals that the discernment process is working and the process needs to be trusted.

Similarly, the church, through the DSG, may not consider that pastoral leadership is the calling for the person involved. That recognition is not to be a statement that the person is deficient or disadvantaged. There are many vocations apart from pastoral leadership.

The interview with the PLSC is also a vital step.

Sometimes a 'red light' is given by the PLSC, which indicates that while the person has gifts for Christian ministry the calling and giftedness for pastoral leadership has not been discerned.

Occasionally an amber light is beamed to the applicant, indicating that the interview group is not sure and more time in ministry with the help of a DSG might be needed to give clarity and certainty to the process of discernment.

Often a green light is given, confirming both the person's calling and the affirmation by the local church.

When an applicant believes he/she has been called to pastoral leadership but such a call is not affirmed by the DSG or the PLSC, there are often feelings of disappointment, rejection and anger.

We recognize that it is possible for people in each of the three phases in this discernment process to get it wrong. Discernment, however, is ultimately an act of surrender, not only to God but to those involved in discovering God's will for our lives.

If you are not prepared for a DSG to say, 'Wait' or the PLSC to say 'No' then you are not ready to enter into this discernment process. Even initially unwelcome decisions can be part of a process of ultimately discerning the 'good, acceptable and perfect will of God'

The steps to ordination will include the following:

### **All Applicants - Exploring Ordination**

1. The interested person contacts the DoM's office to request an interview with the DoM and the Principal of Whitley College. A copy of the ordination documents is sent to the interested person.
2. The person speaks with their Senior Pastor (or, if this is the person themselves, an appropriate member of the church leadership) and supplies them with a copy of the ordination documents.
3. The person meets with the DoM and Whitley Principal to walk through the process together. The potential applicant is accompanied by their spouse (if applicable) and a representative from their church (e.g. Senior Pastor) to ensure everyone is clear on the level of commitment required.
4. The potential applicant will be reminded of the study requirements associated with the ordination pathway and will be asked about their availability for study if they are accepted as a provisional candidate
5. For interested parties whose second language is English, the BUV Multicultural Minister may also attend the interview.

***Note:** Due to the schedules of the DoM & Whitley Principal, times for such meetings are set aside in May/June and September/October. Therefore, it is best for a potential applicant to contact the DoM's office once they think they would like to talk further about the possibility of ordination. Attending this meeting does not mean the person has to apply for ordination; it is purely for exploration and clarification.*

### **If the potential applicant has done prior theological studies:**

As part of the application for an interview to discuss the ordination process, the potential applicant is to provide the DoM with all relevant study documentation. Please do not assume that study can be cross-credited.

### **If the potential applicant is currently studying at Whitley:**

It is recommended to speak with the Principal of Whitley College in order to discuss the impact on their study plan if they are accepted as an ordination candidate.

Theological training is no guarantee of acceptance as an ordination candidate.

## Application Categories for Ordination – Pathways

(Please see diagrams attached)

The time to discern the ordination path comes at very different stages in peoples' lives and the 'one size fits all' approach to the process is not the most helpful. For this reason it was deemed necessary to improve the system and applicants should fit into one of five categories:

1. **Standard Pathway** – for all applicants except those included in the list below
2. **Multicultural** - *where English is a second language and/or from a community with a non-English speaking background*
3. **Experienced** – *senior/sole pastor with minimum 5 years in sole charge or senior pastor.*
4. **Special Circumstances** – *as deemed by the DoM and Whitley Principal and supported by the PLSC*
5. **Recognition of ordination by another Body**
  - (a) *A Baptist Union or Convention in another state or country who work under the auspice of the Baptist World Alliance.*
  - (b) *Another denomination.*

## Category 1: Standard Pathway to Ordination

### Once the interview with the DoM and Whitley Principal has taken place:

1. The applicant indicates to the DoM’s assistant their willingness to engage in the Category 1 Ordination Application process.
2. Applicants are allocated a “PLSC Contact” who will be a reference point for him/her throughout the application process; to answer questions, hear him/her preach, provide guidance about the process as needed, etc.
3. The local church plays an important role in the application process in reflecting with the applicant upon their call and providing opportunities to test their gifts for ministry. Therefore, the Discernment and Support Group (DSG) is an integral part of the application process.

<b>The Discernment and Support Group</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Although the applicant is responsible for initiating the formation of the DSG in sufficient time for the work to be carried out, the group is appointed by the church. The applicant may make suggestions to the senior pastor / church leaders regarding the composition of the DSG but the final choice lies with the church.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Group needs to be established and have commenced meeting by the end of February in the year the person will be applying (see DSG guidelines).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The PLSC Contact should be invited to at least one DSG meeting (preferably early in the process) to answer questions and explain thoroughly the role and responsibilities of the DSG, and is available as a resource for the ongoing DSG process.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The process is designed for the DSG to <i>meet at least six times</i> with the applicant <i>over at least six months</i> in order to enable the DSG to work through most effectively. This will allow ample time for the applicant to receive feedback about their ministry and to actually implement changes. The DSG needs time to observe the applicant’s willingness/ability to grow in their ministry as a result of direct constructive instruction and feedback. <i>Where the DSG is not established by February, the applicant will need to look towards the following year as the year of application.</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The DSG group must meet its responsibilities as outlined in the DSG Guidelines.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>The DSG report must be submitted to the PLSC before August 31<sup>st</sup>.</b></li> </ul>

*\_(Refer also to the “Checklist for the Application Process to Become a Provisional Candidate for Ordination” at the end of this document.)*

4. Applicants need to contact the BUV appointed psychologist before the end of March to arrange a time for their psychological assessment.

○ The applicant has a half-day appointment with the psychologist.
○ Based on the time spent together as well as the tests that the applicant completes, the psychologist develops the applicant’s assessment. The completed assessment is posted to the applicant for him/her to read.
○ Where necessary, the applicant meets with the psychologist to discuss the assessment. The psychologist will submit the assessment to the PLSC by August 31 <sup>st</sup> . This report does not contain material that the candidate has requested remain confidential unless, in the psychologist’s view, it may have a bearing on the applicant’s suitability.

5. Applicants have two different preaching assignments.

1. The applicant and their PLSC Contact arrange a suitable time for the Contact to hear the applicant preach. Since most Contacts are pastors, this will need to be arranged through consultation with them as soon as possible. The Contact may provide the applicant with feedback and (is encouraged to do so if requested) and will submit a report to the PLSC by August 31 <sup>st</sup> .
2. From a different service during the year of application, the applicant is to provide the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ An order of service.</li> <li>□ A typed manuscript / notes of the sermon they preached.</li> <li>□ A Digital Video Recording (clearly labelled with applicant’s name) of the whole service (not just the sermon) in a widely accessible format. This should be submitted on a DVD. Applicants should check that the DVD is playable before sending it to the DOM’s office.</li> </ul>

6. The applicant requests three people to be referees and provides each referee with the “Applicant Referee Information” and “Applicant Referee Form” documents, via email. The referees are to complete and submit their forms directly to the Director of Ministries by August 31<sup>st</sup>. **The applicant is not to see the completed referee form nor ask about what the referee wrote. References are returned to the DoM office.**

<b>The requirements for the three referees are:</b>
○ No referee can be related to the applicant.
○ One referee is to be the Senior Pastor of the church unless the applicant is the Senior Pastor, or the Senior Pastor is involved in the DSG. If this is the case, then this referee is to be another recognized leader within the church.
○ One referee is to be from outside the church. Perhaps a former employer, supervisor or work colleague.
○ The final referee can be from inside or outside the church. Anyone who knows the applicant well.

**Note:** Although the applicant is not to see the completed referee form or include it in their personal application submission, they are responsible for ensuring their referees submit the forms by August 31<sup>st</sup>. For an application to be complete there must be three referee reports and they must be submitted on time.

- Applicants must ensure **all aspects of the application process** (the application form, DVD of sermon, PLSC Contact reviewing a different sermon from the DVD, psychological evaluation, DSG report etc) are completed on time and **submitted by August 31<sup>st</sup>**.
- The applicant and their spouse (if applicable) will meet with the PLSC for a full Interview Day from 8.45am-5pm (approx). At the conclusion of this meeting, the PLSC will normally decide whether or not to accept the applicant as a provisional candidate for the ordained Baptist ministry and commend the applicant to Whitley College for training.
- The decision will be communicated to the applicant by phone within 24 hours of the interview
- All applicants will receive a letter indicating the outcome of the interview including a copy of the minute relating to their application. Their Senior Pastor and the DSG Chair will receive similar letters.
- Whilst applicants may possess various pastoral skills, they may not be deemed suitable for the wider ordained ministry. If the applicant is unsuccessful, representatives from the PLSC will be available to visit with them to explain the PLSC's decision.

## Provisional Candidature

If the applicant is accepted as a provisional candidate, the PLSC may suggest areas for development during their provisional candidature. The suggestions will be based on the DSG report, comments from referees, and the observations of the PLSC.

### 1. Goal Setting:

The provisional candidate is to set specific goals for the year in light of the suggestions for development from the PLSC. Guidelines will be supplied by Whitley College's Director of Field Education at the February Candidates' Retreat. Goals are to be submitted to the Director of Field Education before the commencement of the academic year. A supervisor will be appointed by the College.

### 2. Referees:

The PLSC will seek references from the candidate's Senior Pastor, Chaplaincy Supervisor and Regional Minister or other person to whom the candidate is accountable.

The provisional candidate is to nominate a further two referees (who are not relatives) who are in a position to comment on their progress during their provisional candidature. Possible categories for these referees are:

- Church Secretary
- Member of the DSG from the application process
- Elder / Deacon
- Other significant leader in the church
- Any other person, not necessarily a part of the candidate's church but who knows her/him very well.

The candidate should provide their referees with a copy of their goals.

### 3. Personal Reflection:

By **30<sup>th</sup> September**, provisional candidates are to provide a personal reflection on their year as a provisional candidate and how they have progressed with their goals. The goals should be attached. The reflection should be no more than two sides of an A4 sheet and should indicate whether all PLSC requirements have been fulfilled, and what the candidate has learnt from their study, ministry situation and personal life.

### 4. Whitley Feedback:

The PLSC will also seek reports regarding the provisional candidate from the staff at Whitley. Feedback is provided regarding the provisional candidates' self-awareness; ability to work on issues; academic progress; how well they relate to and care for other students; their ability to articulate ideas; punctuality; attendance; completion of assignments; diligence in the study process; and anything that has been a hindrance to them during the year.

### 5. Interview with PLSC:

The provisional candidates will meet again with the PLSC for a about an hour to discuss their progress and whether all PLSC recommendations have been fulfilled. (Candidates may be accompanied by their spouse.) The PLSC will determine whether it is appropriate for them to continue as candidates for ordination. The decision will be communicated to the candidate by phone within 24 hours of the interview. All candidates will receive a letter indicating the outcome of the interview including a copy of the PLSC's resolution.

Where applicable, the candidate's Senior Pastor will receive a letter of notification.

**Possible Outcomes:**

1. The PLSC confirms the provisional candidate as a full candidate and commends the candidate to the ongoing supervision of the OPG
2. The PLSC extends the provisional candidature and requests to see the candidate at a later time (eg in 12 months time).
3. The PLSC does not confirm the candidate.

If the PLSC does not confirm the candidature or invite the candidate back at a later date, the candidature will normally cease. If the candidate is not confirmed, representatives from the PLSC will be available to visit with them.

*Please NOTE: In certain circumstances, a person whose candidature has not been confirmed may, at the discretion of the DoM and the College Principal, reapply to the PLSC for confirmation at a later time.*

## Candidature for Ordination

The candidate will usually have another two years of training under the supervision of the OPG. Factors such as age, study that has already been or needs to be completed, and the experience level of the candidate, will be taken into account in determining the appropriate length of time for candidature.

At some stage during candidature, the candidate may be asked to gain experience in a church or ministry situation other than the one in which he or she currently serves.

**Confirmation of candidature is no guarantee that a person will be ordained. Ordination also depends on:**

a) The satisfactory testing of the call to ministry and the practical evidence of the gifts and graces appropriate to the pastoral ministry.
b) The satisfactory completion of training.
c) The receiving of a call to ministerial service related to, and approved by, the Baptist Union of Victoria (this includes acceptance for service with Global Interaction).
d) The recommendation of the OPG.

Each step of the process allows time and opportunity for ongoing discernment by both the applicant and those who are journeying with them.

## Application Process Checklists

TASK	✓
Initial Exploration - Contact the DoM's assistant to request information about ordination.	
Provide Senior Pastor (or key leader in your church if you are the Senior Pastor) with a copy of the documentation.	
Contact the DoM's assistant to organise an exploratory meeting with the DoM and Whitley Principal to go over what the process entails. (Ideally contact the DoM's office anytime between March and September in the year prior to application.)	
If applicable, ensure spouse and Senior Pastor can attend the meeting.	
If you have previously done theological studies, provide the DoM with documentation of all relevant previous study.	
If a current Whitley student, speak with the Principal to discuss the impact on study plan if accepted as an ordination candidate.	
Attend exploratory meeting with spouse (if applicable), Senior Pastor/Church Representative, DoM and Whitley Principal).	
Indicate to the DoM's office willingness to engage in the Ordination Application process. (This can be done at the exploratory meeting or soon afterwards.)	

### DSG

Ensure the Senior Pastor & church leadership are aware of their need to see a DSG established and operating by end of February at the latest.	
If appropriate, provide suggestions regarding potential DSG members.	
Ensure the appointment of the DSG takes place. See DSG Guidelines.	
Organise for the PLSC Contact to visit the DSG. (Ideally the first meeting would be the best time for the PLSC Contact to attend.)	
Commence DSG. (Ideally this is done by January, but must commence by the end of February. <i>If the DSG does not commence meeting by the end of February the applicant will need to delay their application submission until the following year.</i> )	
Meet with the DSG at least six times over at least a six-month period.	
Receive final report from DSG <i>before the end of August.</i>	
Ensure the DSG Chair submits the final report <i>by August 31<sup>st</sup>.</i>	

### Psychological Assessment

<i>By the end of March,</i> contact the Psychologist to organise a time for the psychological assessment.	
Attend psychological evaluation.	
Consult with the psychologist to discuss the assessment and be aware of the content of the final report being submitted to the PLSC.	

### Preaching

<b>One:</b>	
By the end of March, determine when and where the PLSC Contact will hear you preach	
Preach	
<b>Two:</b>	
Video (DVD) the <i>whole service</i> for a <i>different</i> time you preach	
Keep manuscript/notes and an order of service	

**Referees**

Approach the three people who will be your referees (no relations; one is the Senior Pastor or Church Representative; one is from outside the Church; one is anyone close) and provide them with the “Applicant Referee Info” and “Applicant Referee Form”	
--	--

**The Application – all aspects are due by August 31<sup>st</sup>!!****Ensure the following are organised in time to be submitted by others:**

The psychological assessment	
The PLSC Contact’s sermon evaluation	

**Ensure the following people complete and submit their work:**

Feedback from three referees	
The DSG final report	

**Submit the application, including:**

An application form with every question answered	
An accurately completed “Consent to Check and Release National Police Record” form. (Be sure to read the instructions!)	

**From a single service you preached at in the preceding 6 months:**

The order of service.	
Your manuscript / notes for your sermon	
A DVD of the whole service	

**Interview Day**

Advise the DoM’s assistant regarding availability for the pre-set Interview Days	
Ensure spouse (if applicable) is able to attend the Interview Day. <i>(If single, the applicant may invite a friend or church member / leader / pastor to accompany them. This person would not normally be present at the interview but would be a companion during times of waiting, coffee breaks and lunch.)</i>	
Make suitable arrangements for children (if applicable).	
Attend the Interview Day – being sure to arrive on time	

**Note:** *The necessity to have all parts of the application submitted by August 31<sup>st</sup> cannot be overstated. Applicants who have submitted all their material to the DoM’s office by August 31<sup>st</sup> will be interviewed later that same year.*

*Late applications will not be able to be considered. Those who have not submitted all their material by August 31<sup>st</sup> will have to wait 12 months to be interviewed.*

## Category 2: Standard Multicultural Pathway

Question raised about the pathway to Ordination through the TransFormation process

1. The applicant indicates to the DoM's assistant their willingness to engage in the Ordination Application process.
2. Applicants are allocated a "PLSC Contact" who will be a reference point for him/her throughout the application process; to answer questions, hear him/her preach, provide guidance about the process as needed, etc.
3. The local church plays an important role in the application process in reflecting with the applicant upon their call and providing opportunities to test their gifts for ministry. Therefore, the Discernment and Support Group (DSG) is an integral part of the application process.
4. **The BUV Multicultural Minister is a resource person for the entire process (including the PLSC interview day) and may be contacted or invited in to assist. Interpreters may be called in to assist in all stages of the process if required.**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Although the applicant is responsible for initiating the formation of the DSG in sufficient time for the work to be carried out, the group is appointed by the church. The applicant may make suggestions to the senior pastor / church leaders regarding the composition of the DSG but the final choice lies with the church.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The Group needs to be established and have commenced meeting by February in the year the person will be applying (see DSG guidelines).</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The PLSC Contact should be invited to at least one DSG meeting (preferably early in the process) to answer questions and explain thoroughly the role and responsibilities of the DSG, and is available as a resource for the ongoing DSG process.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The process is designed for the DSG to <i>meet at least six times</i> with the applicant <i>over at least six months</i> in order to enable the DSG to work through most effectively. This will allow ample time for the applicant to receive feedback about their ministry and to actually implement changes. The DSG needs time to observe the applicant's willingness/ability to grow in their ministry as a result of direct constructive instruction and feedback. <i>Where the DSG is not established by February, the applicant will need to look towards the following year as the year of application.</i></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The DSG group must meet their responsibilities as outlined in the DSG Guidelines.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>The DSG report must be submitted to the PLSC before August 31<sup>st</sup>.</b></li></ul>

4. All applicants need to contact the BUV psychologist before the end of March to arrange a time for their psychological assessment.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The applicant has a half-day appointment with the psychologist.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Based on the time spent together as well as the tests that the applicant completes, the psychologist develops the applicant's assessment. The completed assessment is posted to the applicant for them to read.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Where necessary, the applicant meets with the psychologist to discuss the assessment. The psychologist will submit the assessment to the PLSC by August 31<sup>st</sup>. This report does not contain material that the candidate has requested remain confidential unless, in the psychologist's view, it may have a bearing on the applicant's suitability.</li></ul>

5. Applicants have two different preaching assignments:

The applicant and their PLSC Contact arrange a suitable time for the Contact to hear the applicant preach. Since most Contacts are pastors, this will need to be arranged through consultation with them as soon as possible. The Contact will provide the applicant with feedback and will also submit a report to the PLSC by August 31<sup>st</sup>.

**The sermon may be preached in the applicant's first language but an English summary or translation needs to be available for the PLSC Contact.**

From a different service during the year of application, the applicant is to provide the following information:

- An order of service.
- A typed one page English summary of the sermon they preached.
- A Digital Video Recording (clearly labelled with applicant's name) of the whole service (not just the sermon) in a widely accessible format. This should be submitted on a DVD. Applicants should check that the DVD is playable before sending it to the DOM's office.

6. The applicant requests three people to be referees and provides each referee with the "Applicant Referee Information" and "Applicant Referee Form" documents, via email. The referees are to complete and submit their forms directly to the Director of Ministries by August 31<sup>st</sup>. **The applicant is not to see the completed referee form nor ask about what the referee wrote. References are returned to the DoM office.**

<b>The requirements for the three referees are:</b>
o No referee can be related to the applicant.
o One referee is to be the Senior Pastor of the church unless the applicant is the Senior Pastor, or the Senior Pastor is involved in the DSG. If this is the case, then this referee is to be another recognized leader within the church.
o One referee is to be from outside the church. Perhaps a former employer, supervisor or work colleague.
o The final referee can be from inside or outside the church. Anyone who knows the applicant well.

**Note:** Although the applicant is not to see the completed referee form or include it in their personal application submission, they are responsible for ensuring their referees submit the forms by August 31<sup>st</sup>. For an application to be complete there must be three referee reports and they must be submitted on time.

- Applicants must ensure **all aspects of the application process** (the application form, DVD of sermon, PLSC Contact reviewing a different sermon from the DVD, psychological evaluation, DSG report etc) are completed on time and **submitted by August 31<sup>st</sup>**.
- The applicant and their spouse (if applicable) and, if necessary, an interpreter will meet with the PLSC for a full Interview Day from 8.45am-5pm. On the basis of such a meeting, the PLSC will decide whether or not to accept the applicant as a provisional candidate for the ordained Baptist ministry and commend the applicant to Whitley College for training.

- All applicants will receive a letter indicating the outcome of the interview, a copy of the minute relating to their application and, where applicable, a statement about areas for attention. Their Senior Pastor and the DSG Chair will receive similar letters.
- Whilst applicants may possess various pastoral skills, they may not be deemed suitable for the wider ordained ministry. If the applicant is unsuccessful, representatives from the PLSC are available to visit with them to explain the PLSC's decision.

## Provisional Candidature

If the applicant is accepted as a provisional candidate, the PLSC will suggest areas for development during their provisional candidature. The suggestions will be based on the DSG report, comments from referees, and the observations of the PLSC.

### **1. Goal Setting:**

The provisional candidate is to set specific goals for the year in light of the suggestions for development from the PLSC. Guidelines will be supplied by Whitley College's Director of Field Education at the February Candidates' Retreat. Goals are to be submitted to the Director of Field Education before the commencement of the academic year. A supervisor will be appointed by the College.

### **2. Referees:**

We will seek references from the candidate's Senior Pastor, Chaplaincy Supervisor, Regional Minister, Multicultural Minister or other person to whom the candidate is accountable. The provisional candidate is to nominate a further two referees (who are not relatives) who are in a position to comment on their progress during their provisional candidature. Possible categories for these referees are:

- Church Secretary
- Member of the DSG from the application process
- Elder / Deacon
- Other significant leader in the church
- Any other person, not necessarily a part of the candidate's church but who knows her/him very well.

### **3. Personal Reflection:**

By **30<sup>th</sup> September** the provisional candidate is to provide a personal reflection on their year as a provisional candidate and how they have progressed with their goals. The reflection should be no more than two sides of an A4 sheet and should also include what they have learnt from their study, ministry situation, and personal life. The candidate should provide their referees with a copy of their goals.

### **4. Whitley Feedback:**

PLSC will also seek reports regarding the provisional candidate from the staff at Whitley. Feedback is provided regarding the provisional candidates: self-awareness; ability to work on issues; progress; how well they relate to and care for other students; their ability to articulate ideas; punctuality; attendance; completion of assignments; diligence to the study process; and anything that has been a hindrance to them during the year.

### **5. Interview with PLSC:**

The provisional candidate will meet with the PLSC to discuss how they are travelling with their candidature and whether it is appropriate for them to continue as candidates for ordination.

On the basis of this meeting the PLSC *may* then confirm the provisional candidate as a full candidate and commend the candidate to the ongoing supervision of the OPG.

### **Possible Outcomes:**

1. The PLSC confirms the provisional candidate as a full candidate and commends the candidate to the ongoing supervision of the OPG

2. The PLSC extends the provisional candidature and requests to see the candidate at a later time (eg in 12 months time).
3. The PLSC does not confirm the candidate.

If the PLSC does not confirm the candidature or invite the candidate back at a later date, the candidature will normally cease. If the candidate is not confirmed, representatives from the PLSC will be available to visit with them.

*Please NOTE: In certain circumstances, a person whose candidature has not been confirmed may, at the discretion of the DoM and the College Principal, reapply to the PLSC for confirmation at a later time.*

## Candidature for Ordination

The candidate will usually have another two years of training under the supervision of the OPG. Factors such as age, study that has already been or needs to be completed, and the experience level of the candidate, will be taken into account in determining the appropriate length of time for candidature.

At some stage during candidature every effort will be made to associate each candidate with a church or ministry situation other than the one in which he or she has been nurtured. This will usually be part of a supervised field experience.

Confirmation of candidature is no guarantee that a person will be ordained. Ordination also depends on:

a) The satisfactory testing of the call to ministry and the practical evidence of the gifts and graces appropriate to the pastoral ministry.
b) The satisfactory completion of training
c) The receiving of a call to ministerial service related to, and approved by, the Baptist Union of Victoria (this includes acceptance for service with the Global Interaction).
d) The recommendation of the Ordination Pathways Group.

Each step of the process allows time and opportunity for ongoing discernment by both the applicant and those who are journeying with them.

## Application Process Checklists

TASK	✓
Initial Exploration - Contact the DoM's assistant to request information about ordination.	
Provide Senior Pastor (or key leader in your church if you are the Senior Pastor) with a copy of the documentation.	
Contact the DoM's assistant to organise an exploratory meeting with the DoM and Whitley Principal to go over what the process entails. (Ideally contact the DoM's office anytime between March and September in the year prior to application.)	
If applicable, ensure spouse and Senior Pastor can attend the meeting.	
If you have previously done theological studies, provide the DoM with documentation of all relevant previous study.	
If a current Whitley student, speak with the Principal to discuss the impact on study plan if accepted as an ordination candidate.	
Attend exploratory meeting with spouse (if applicable), Senior Pastor/Church Representative, DoM and Whitley Principal.	
Indicate to the DoM's office willingness to engage in the Ordination Application process. (This can be done at the exploratory meeting or soon afterwards.)	
Receive a PLSC Contact.	

### DSG

Ensure the Senior Pastor & church leadership are aware of their need to see a DSG established and operating by end of February at the latest.	
If appropriate, provide suggestions regarding potential DSG members.	
Ensure the appointment of the DSG takes place. [See DSG Guidelines.]	
Organise for the PLSC Contact to visit the DSG. (Ideally the first meeting would be the best time for the PLSC Contact to attend.)	
Commence DSG. (Ideally this is done by January, but must commence by the end of February. <i>If the DSG does not commence meeting by the end of February the applicant will need to delay their application submission until the following year.</i> )	
Meet with the DSG at least six times over at least a six-month period.	
Receive final report from DSG <i>before the end of August.</i>	
Ensure the DSG Chair submits the final report <i>by August 31<sup>st</sup>.</i>	

### Psychological Assessment

<i>By the end of March</i> , contact the Psychologist to organise a time for the psychological assessment.	
Attend psychological evaluation.	
Consult with the psychologist concerning the final profile being submitted to the PLSC.	

### Preaching

<b>One:</b>	
By the end of March, determine when and where the PLSC Contact will hear you preach	
Preach	
Receive the PLSC Contact's feedback (optional)	
<b>Two:</b>	
Video tape (DVD) the <i>whole service</i> for a <i>different</i> time you preach	

Keep manuscript/notes and an order of service	
---	--

**Referees**

Approach the three people who will be your referees (no relations; one is the Senior Pastor or Church Representative; one is from outside the Church; one is anyone close) and provide them with the “Applicant Referee Info” and “Applicant Referee Form”	
--	--

**The Application – all aspects are due by August 31<sup>st</sup>!!**

**Ensure the following are organised in time to be submitted by others:**

The psychological assessment	
The PLSC Contact’s sermon evaluation	

**Ensure the following people complete and submit their work:**

Feedback from three referees	
The DSG final report	

**Submit the application, including:**

An application form with every question answered	
An accurately completed “Consent to Check and Release National Police Record” form. (Be sure to read the instructions!)	

**From a single service you preached at in the preceding 6 months:**

The order of service.	
Your manuscript / notes for your sermon	
A DVD of the whole service	

**Interview Day**

Advise the DoM’s assistant regarding availability for the pre-set Interview Days	
Ensure spouse (if applicable) is able to attend the Interview Day. <i>(If single, the applicant may invite a friend or church member / leader / pastor to accompany them. This person would not be present at the interview but would be a companion during times of waiting, coffee breaks and lunch.)</i>	
Make suitable arrangements for children (if applicable).	
Attend the Interview Day – being sure to arrive on time	

**Note:**

*Late applications will not be able to be considered. Those who have not submitted all their material by August 31<sup>st</sup> will have to wait 12 months to be interviewed.*

### Category 3: Experienced– Senior or Sole Pastor

*(Minimum 5 years in sole charge)*

Whether a person is assigned to this category may be determined by the Director of Ministries and the Principal of Whitley College.

The circumstances under which a person may be included under this category include:

1. A sole or senior pastor with a minimum of 5 years experience.
2. A pastor who, in the immediate past, has participated in a discernment process that has led to appointment to a sole or senior pastor position
3. A pastor from a non-English speaking background who has met the requirements of ordination in the cultural setting to which he/she belongs. (This person must currently hold a sole pastor/senior pastor position). The BUV Multicultural Minister is a resource person for the entire process for pastors from a non-English-speaking background and may be contacted or invited to assist. Interpreters may be called in to assist in all stages of the process if required.

#### **Once the interview with the DoM and Whitley Principal has taken place:**

- a. The applicant indicates to the DoM’s assistant their willingness to engage in the Category 3 Ordination Application process.
- b. Applicants are allocated a “PLSC Contact” who will be a reference point for him/her throughout the application process; to answer questions, hear him/her preach, provide guidance about the process as needed, etc.
- c. Applicants contact the BUV psychologist before the end of March to arrange a time for their psychological assessment.

The applicant has a half-day appointment with the psychologist.

Based on the time spent together as well as the tests that the applicant completes, the psychologist develops the applicant’s assessment. The completed assessment is posted to the applicant for them to read.

The applicant provides the psychologist with feedback about the assessment’s accuracy. Where necessary, the applicant meets with the psychologist to discuss the assessment. The psychologist will submit the assessment to the PLSC by August 31<sup>st</sup>. This report does not contain material that the candidate has requested remain confidential unless, in the psychologist’s view, it may have a bearing on the applicant’s suitability.

4. The PLSC requests a written report from the leadership of the church that describes the applicant’s:

- Relationship with God
- General attitude to work around the church
- Gifts
- Pastoral skills

- Approach to Leadership
- Involvement in mission
- Other matters that may be important

If more guidance is required, a more detailed list is provided in the DSG Guidelines.

#### 4. Applicants have two different preaching assignments:

1. The applicant and their PLSC Contact arrange a suitable time for the Contact to hear the applicant preach. Since most Contacts are pastors, this will need to be arranged through consultation with them as soon as possible. The Contact may provide the applicant with feedback and (is encouraged to do so if requested) and will submit a report to the PLSC by August 31 <sup>st</sup> .
2. From a different service during the year of application, the applicant is to provide the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ An order of service.</li> <li>❑ A typed manuscript / notes of the sermon they preached.</li> <li>❑ A Digital Video Recording (clearly labelled with applicant’s name) of the whole service (not just the sermon) in a widely accessible format. This should be submitted on a DVD. Applicants should check that the DVD is playable before sending it to the DOM’s office.</li> </ul>

#### 5. References Required:

The applicant requests three people to be referees and provides each referee with the “Applicant Referee Information” and “Applicant Referee Form” documents, via email. The referees are to complete and submit their forms directly to the Director of Ministries by August 31<sup>st</sup>. **The applicant is not to see the completed referee form nor ask about what the referee wrote.**

References are returned to the DoM office.

<b>The requirements for the three referees are:</b>
o No referee can be related to the applicant.
o One referee is to be a recognized leader within the church, or a Regional Minister or the Multicultural Minister
o One referee is to be from outside the local church. Perhaps a former employer, supervisor, work colleague.
o The final referee can be from inside or outside the church. Anyone who knows the applicant well.

**Note:** *Although the applicant is not to see the referee form or include it in their personal application submission, they are responsible for ensuring their referees submit the forms by August 31<sup>st</sup>. For an application to be complete there must be three referee reports and they must be submitted on time.*

- Applicants must ensure **all aspects of the application process** (the application form, DVD of sermon, PLSC Contact reviewing a different sermon than the DVD, psychological evaluation, are completed on time and **submitted by August 31<sup>st</sup>**.

**The applicant and their spouse (if applicable) will meet with the PLSC for a full Interview Day from 8.45am-5pm.** If accepted by the PLSC, the applicant will normally become a “confirmed candidate” and be referred directly to the Ordination Pathways Group (OPG) for training as appropriate.

- 
- All applicants will receive a letter indicating the outcome of the interview, a copy of the minute relating to their application and, where applicable, a statement about areas for attention.

## **Checklist for the Application Process to Become a Confirmed Candidate for Ordination**

- Initial Exploration - Contact the DoM's assistant to request information about ordination.
- Provide Leadership (Elders/Deacons/Church Council) with a copy of the documentation.
- Contact the DoM's assistant to organize an exploratory meeting with the DoM and Whitley Principal to go over what the process entails. (Ideally contact the DoM's office anytime between March and September in the year prior to application.)
- Ensure a member of church Leadership Team and spouse (if applicable) can attend the meeting.
- Provide the DoM with documentation of all relevant previous theological study.
- If a current Whitley student, speak with the Principal to discuss the impact on study plan if accepted as an ordination candidate.
- Attend exploratory meeting with spouse (if applicable), Church Leadership Representative, DoM and Whitley Principal).
- Indicate to the DoM's office willingness to engage in the Ordination Application process. (This can be done at the exploratory meeting or soon afterwards.)
- Receive a PLSC Contact.

### **Psychological Assessment**

- By the end of March*, contact the Psychologist to organise a time for the psychological assessment.
- Attend psychological evaluation.
- Consult with the psychologist to jointly agree to what will go in the final profile being submitted to the PLSC.

### **Preaching**

One:

- By the end of March*, determine when and where the PLSC Contact will hear you preach.
- Preach.
- Receive the PLSC Contact's feedback.

Two:

- Tape (DVD) the *whole service* for a *different* time you preach.
- Keep manuscript/notes and an order of service.

### **Referees**

- Approach the three people who will be your referees (no relations; one is the Church Representative; one is from outside the Church; one is anyone close) and provide them with the "Applicant Referee Info" and "Applicant Referee Form".

### **The Application – all aspects are due by August 31<sup>st</sup>!!**

**Ensure the following are organised in time to be submitted by others:**

- The psychological assessment.
- The PLSC Contact's sermon evaluation.

**Ensure the following people complete and submit their work:**

- Feedback from three referees.

**Submit the application, including:**

- An application form with every question answered.
- An accurately completed "Consent to Check and Release National Police Record" form.  
(Be sure to read the instructions!)

From a single service you preached at in the preceding 6 months:

- The order of service.
- Your manuscript / notes for your sermon.
- A DVD of the whole service.

**Interview Day**

- Advise the DoM's assistant regarding availability for the pre-set Interview Days.
- Ensure spouse (if applicable) is able to attend the Interview Day. (If single, the applicant may invite a friend or church member / leader / pastor/Multicultural Minister where applicable to accompany them. This person would not be present at the interview but would be a companion during times of waiting, coffee breaks and lunch.)
- Make suitable arrangements for children (if applicable).
- Attend the Interview Day – being sure to arrive on time.

***Late applications will not be able to be considered. Those who have not submitted all their material by August 31<sup>st</sup> will have to wait 12 months to be interviewed.***

## Category 4: Special Circumstances

*(As deemed by the DoM and Whitley Principal supported by the Ordination Pathways Group)*

In the constitution of the Baptist Union of Victoria, provision was made for Assembly to decide to ordain a person who had not undertaken the regular procedures through candidature, training and ordination. While very few people were ever ordained in this way, nonetheless it seems wise to maintain and define this pathway.

In light of many changes in procedure and the changing nature of 'ministry', the Leadership Training Reference Group proposed and, in December 2004, Assembly adopted procedures for Ordination in Special Circumstances.

1. In special circumstances, it may be decided to ordain a person who has not completed the normal application, selection and training processes determined by the BUV.
2. Such special cases may be identified and nominated by a variety of people, including the Director of Ministries, the Ordination Pathways Group, the Advisory Board, Baptcare, a Baptist church or a member of a Baptist Church.
3. Nominees must meet the following criteria:
  - Has undergone substantial theological training
  - Shows evidence of spiritual depth and growth
  - Is of good standing and character
  - Demonstrates a commitment to Baptist life, and
  - Has proven aptitude for ministry, normally for a period of at least ten years.
4. Nominations under this category must be sent to the Director of Ministries. The decision to proceed in each instance will be made jointly by the Director of Ministries and the Principal of Whitley College.
5. Nominations must be supported by documents that address the criteria for special cases, including academic transcripts, statements of call and ministry experience, references from nominated referees and a written letter of support from the nominee's local church.
6. The Ordination Pathways Group will interview the nominee and decide upon the nomination. The OPG will present the ordinand to Assembly, along with other ordinands in that year.
7. A pro forma for the nomination process, together with advisory notes, is to be prepared.

## **Category 5: Transfer of Ordination from another denomination**

*(As deemed by the DoM and Whitley Principal supported by the Advisory Board)*

Advisory Board may determine to add the name of a Pastor who has been ordained in another denomination to the Official List.

1. Applications for Transfer of Ordination must be made to the Director of Ministries, furnishing supportive documents from the applicant including academic transcripts, a certificate or proof of ordination, statements of ministry experience and a written letter of support from the applicant's local church.
2. The Director of Ministries will seek confirmation of the applicant's good standing with the denomination from which they are transferring.
3. The Director of Ministries will consult with the Principal of Whitley College regarding the training undertaken by the applicant. The Principal of Whitley College may recommend appropriate further training, particularly relating to Baptist History and Theology, as a condition of transfer.
4. During or following such study, as determined by the Director of Ministries, the Director will recommend to Advisory Board that the Pastoral Leader's ordination be recognized by the BUV.
5. Recognition of ordination will take place during the BUV's annual service of ordination.