



ELECTION TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

GUIDANCE NOTE (Document A)

1. What is the Executive Committee (EC)?

The Executive Committee is the General Assembly's (GA) body of trustees and has to fulfil its legal responsibilities, in particular those associated with being a registered charity.

2. What is the composition of the EC and how many positions are available in 2025?

The EC consists of eight members plus the Honorary Treasurer who is appointed by the Annual Meeting. The EC appoints a convenor annually from amongst its members.

Clause 7 of the GA Constitution provides for four EC positions to be filled by election every two years. Due to resignations of previously elected members and the appointment of the one remaining elected member to the position of Honorary Treasurer there are currently no elected EC members who can serve after GA 2025 when the term of service of existing elected and co-opted members will end.

In view of this the Electoral Panel requested guidance from the EC regarding the number of positions to be offered for election in 2025. Following legal advice, the EC has instructed the Electoral Panel to offer **four** elected positions to be filled in 2025. The EC intends to fill the remaining positions by co-option, noting that this will require a change to the Constitution since the existing quorum for EC meetings is six (Clause 11).

3. How are the members elected?

Members of the EC are elected by individual members of congregations on behalf of whom a quota payment has been made in the financial year prior to an election and by Full, Honorary and Associate Members of the GA.

4. How long does each member serve?

Each member serves a term of four years with four of the eight members retiring or seeking re-election each two years. A member may only serve for a maximum of two successive terms. On this occasion there are four vacancies offered for election and those elected will serve a four-year term.

5. What are the responsibilities of the EC?

The EC determines the overall direction and development of the GA in line with the recommendations and policies adopted at the Annual Meetings. It is responsible for making good use of the GA's assets and for safeguarding, protecting and managing them. It supports the Chief Officer without becoming involved in operational matters and reviews his/her performance. Each member takes on responsibility for liaison with one or more district associations as an EC link person. Members may be asked to be involved in other General Assembly activities or on sub-groups e.g. the Annual Meetings Panel.

6. What is the time commitment?

The EC is currently meeting approximately 5 times a year (usually in person), potentially requiring an overnight stay, with at least one two-day meeting requiring an overnight stay. At present most meetings take place at weekends to fit in with working life. After the election, the new EC will review its meeting plan to best fit with the needs of members. It is expected that some meetings may be held by videoconferencing in the future.

Members are required to attend the Annual Meetings. Expenses, including overnight accommodation, meals and travel, are paid in line with the General Assembly's Expenses Policy.

The in-person meetings of the EC take place in different areas of the country, including various churches, Essex Hall in London and the Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow. Email access is required to ensure effective communication between meetings.

7. What are the requirements for EC membership?

Candidates must be Full, Honorary or Associate members of the GA or a quota paying member of a constituent congregation. They should not be a student in training for the Unitarian ministry, a close family member of anyone employed by the GA, or connected professionally with Popularis.

Candidates should:

- Demonstrate 3 years of active commitment to the Unitarian community
- Be in sympathy with the Objects of the General Assembly
- Be eligible to stand in accordance with legal requirements

Essential Requirements

(1) Experience in one or more of the following:

- An officer or member of a congregational/district governing body.
- An officer or member of a committee of an affiliated body.
- An officer or member of a charity trustee body or similar e.g. voluntary organisations such as a sports club or parent teacher association.
- As a Minister, Lay Pastor or Lay Person in Charge of a Unitarian congregation

(2) Good understanding of the Unitarian community

(3) Confidentiality

Desirable attributes include any or all of the following:

- Leadership
- Strategy development
- Communication skills
- Decision making
- Representation
- Financial awareness
- Team working

A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be undertaken for those elected. This should be considered a requirement to be a candidate.

8. What is the process for nomination?

Members wishing to obtain nomination information should contact Anne Hock, Popularis Ltd, Nutsey Lane, Totton, Southampton SO40 3RL Tel: 02380 867 335 Email: annehock@popularis.org from **Monday 09 December 2024** or download it from the GA website (www.unitarian.org.uk). Popularis will send appropriate documents to candidates by email or by post.

The declaration form (Document B) must be countersigned by an official(s) of the Unitarian congregation(s), comprising in total ten or more quota members, or the organisation supporting the nomination. An “organisation” is defined as an affiliated body of the General Assembly. Biographical information must be provided on Document C along with all other requested information. Fully completed forms should be returned to Popularis by the close of nominations at 5.00pm on 31 January 2025.

9. What is the timetable?

08 December 2024	Nominations open (6 weeks for nominations)
31 January 2025	Nominations close at 5pm
14 February 2025	Candidate Information Booklet and ballot papers sent out
21 February 2025	Election starts (5 week voting period)
28 March 2025	Election closes
29 March 2025	Full Result to be announced by Popularis
04 April 2025	New EC takes up office at the GA Annual Meetings

10. What about campaigning?

Candidates seeking election will be able to communicate their views, principally through the personal statements in the Candidate Information Booklet. The Electoral Panel will not tolerate negative campaigning or discriminatory remarks. No paid-for advertising or websites are permitted. In the event of a complaint, the Electoral Panel will investigate and, if it is confirmed, may disqualify the candidate and disregard any or all votes cast for them.

11. Is there an Induction?

Yes, there is an induction arranged for newly elected members with the EC Convenor and Chief Officer before the May EC meeting which will address key areas of the role.

The Electoral Panel
November 2024