

STEP 3

PNC ASSESSES CANDIDATES

The fun begins! We hope you will find suitable candidates by using the search tools above. Many of your candidates will find you and come forward on their own as they are seeking God's next call to ministry.

Although unusual, someone from within the congregation or staff might even apply. (See * below for guidance on handling these sometimes delicate situations.) You will also want to search for candidates who might not be actively looking for a new call. This is best done through networking with presbytery and synod leaders.

As you assess the applicants, make sure they have submitted everything you have requested. If they have, let them know when they can expect to hear from you. If anything is missing, let them know right away what else they need to submit.

Much of this stage will be spent listening to sermons. In order to save you time, we recommend that you immediately decide which candidates do not meet your most basic criteria. Let those candidates know promptly, and then you can begin listening to the sermons of those people who remain possibilities.

Podcasts and audio-only sermons are sufficient, but video sermons are preferred. Watching video recordings of sermons helps you stay more engaged and gives you a much better feel for the candidate's communication style. We recommend that every member of the PNC listens to at least one of the same sermons of every candidate.



[Here is a helpful tool for evaluating sermons.](#)

We suggest you also check the social media presence of your candidates (Facebook, Instagram, etc.). What you learn about the candidates can be very helpful in your discernment process.

Once you have evaluated their sermons based on style, theological depth/accuracy, and practical application, you will want each member of the PNC to rate the candidates on the following criteria (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent): qualifications, experience, gifts appropriate for your ministry context, and likeability. Your PNC will probably need to develop additional, more detailed criteria as well. Such criteria may have emerged from your prior conversations with elders and staff.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

INTERNAL CANDIDATES

Internal candidates: What should you do if you have an internal candidate? First of all, ECO's polity allows for a church to hire pastoral positions from within. While this might not always be the best option, we do not want to stifle the possibility that the Holy Spirit is beckoning your church to call one of your current staff members to this new role. Second, we have included a document [here](#) that will give you the best practices when considering an internal candidate.



OTHER TYPES OF CANDIDATES:

If you are interested in hiring a full-time or part-time Commissioned Lay Pastor (CLP), ordination candidate, or someone just out of seminary as a Head of Staff, please contact ordination@eco-pres.org for more information. ECO may have some options for your church to consider, especially if you are a smaller church and are open to an option like this for your next pastor. ECO also offers coaching support and a [First Call Cohort](#) in support of those taking on a first time Head of Staff role in our ECO churches.

