

Section 333 and 363 Reviews: Writing the Report

Read the style guidelines attached as Appendix A

- The guidelines are not mandatory, but they offer helpful suggestions for writing the report in a reader-friendly and consistent style.

Establish the review committee's authority to conduct the review and make the recommendations

- *Why was the review ordered?* Identify how the matter came to the presbytery's attention.
- *When was the review ordered?* Indicate the date of the presbytery meeting, and whether it was the presbytery or its executive.
- *Who were the members of the review committee appointed by the presbytery?* Name the members and identify their status (i.e., order of ministry or lay).
- *What were the review committee's terms of reference?* Under Section 363, the review committee would have been directed to review "the effectiveness of the ministry personnel" and/or the other issues listed in Section 363(c). List the specific terms of reference.
- *Were there any other presbytery actions in relation to the review?* Mention any other presbytery motions that apply to the review committee's work, e.g., any amendments to the terms of reference, any resignations from the review committee membership.

Outline the process followed for the review

- *How did the review committee inform the participants about the review process?* Indicate how and when the review committee informed the minister, congregation, and others about opportunities to provide input to the review committee, e.g., notice in order of service, congregational meeting, telephone call to minister, letter by registered mail to the Church Board.

- *How did the review committee gather input for the review process?* Indicate the meetings that the review committee held with participants. Indicate how many people attended those meetings. If it is relevant to the issues involved, indicate the status within the congregation of those attending meetings, e.g., trustees, members of the UCW, members of the choir. Indicate whether the meetings were held on a one-to-one or group basis. Indicate whether the review committee considered any written submissions or other materials, and if so, identify them.
- *For Section 363 reviews, what input did the minister, in particular, have in the process?* Indicate specifically the opportunities that the minister had for input, e.g., a meeting at the start of the information-gathering process, another meeting at the end of the information-gathering process, any other meetings that took place.

Summarize the information gathered

- *What did the review committee hear in the meetings and read in any written material provided to it?*
- *Ensure that the summary fairly reflects all of the input heard.* Record all of the events reported to the review committee and the different views expressed to the review committee.
- *Ensure that the summary is complete and detailed.* Do not be misled by the term “summary.” This will likely be the longest part of the review committee’s report. There must be enough detailed evidence to justify the findings that the review committee makes.
- *Who said what?* For each piece of information included in the summary, specify who provided it.
- *Are there recurrent comments?* If there are recurrent comments, indicate which ones rather than repeating everything everyone said.

State the review committee’s findings: the conclusions that the committee draws from the information that it has gathered

- *Ensure that the findings specifically address the issue that the review committee was asked to consider.* For example, if the review committee was asked to review the effectiveness of the ministry personnel, the review committee should conclude whether or not the ministry personnel is effective.
- *Ensure that the findings are within the mandate of the review committee.* For example, in a Section 333 review, a review committee cannot conclude that the minister is ineffective. At the most, a 333 Review Committee could indicate that it had concerns about the minister’s effectiveness and recommend a Section 363 review.
- *State the specific information upon which the findings are based.* That information should also be recorded in the summary of information gathered. If the review committee disbelieved some of the information it heard and decided that other information was more credible, specify which information and why.
- *Ensure that there is enough evidence to support the findings that the review committee has made.* The review committee’s conclusions must flow logically from the information that the committee has gathered. Do not come to conclusions for which there is little or no evidence.

Make recommendations

- *What action does the review committee consider to be an appropriate response to the findings?*
Ensure that the recommendations made are for action that is within the jurisdiction of the review committee. If the review is held under Section 333, the review committee should limit its recommendations to the pastoral charge. If a 333 Review Committee has concerns about the effectiveness of the ministry personnel, the review committee may recommend that the presbytery conduct a review under Section 363. If the review is held under Section 363, subsection 363(d) contains a list of possible decisions that the presbytery may make. Review committees appointed under Section 363 base their recommendations on this list.
- *Ensure that the recommendations made are for action that is within the jurisdiction of the presbytery.* Since the review committee is making recommendations upon which the presbytery will make a decision, the review committee should recommend actions that are within the power of the presbytery to take. Do not recommend actions that are within the power of the other courts of the church.
- *Do the findings support no action being taken?* Do not overlook the possibility that “no action” may be the appropriate response to the findings.
- *Does the action recommended by the review committee address the findings that the review committee has made?* For example, if the review committee has found that the ministry personnel is ineffective, primarily in the area of pastoral skills, it must recommend some kind of remedial action that will correct this ineffectiveness.