

How to Submit an Overture/Concurrence

Overview

The guidelines for presenting overtures are found in the Standing Rules of the General Assembly¹ and include the following key points:

- Overtures must be approved by a presbytery or a synod and shall request the General Assembly to take a particular action or approve/endorse a particular statement/resolution.
- Overtures must be submitted on time to the Office of the General Assembly.
- The originating presbytery or synod may appoint an Overture Advocate.

Research and Preparation

Before submitting an overture, there are certain steps required by the Standing Rules. These state that the Stated Clerk of a presbytery or synod considering an overture to the General Assembly shall²:

- Examine the most recently published *Minutes of the General Assembly* to determine if a similar overture has already been passed;
- Consult with the Office of the General Assembly to determine whether the desired action has been voted on by any previous General Assembly;
- Consult with the Office of the General Assembly to determine whether a similar overture has already been proposed for the current year. If so, the presbytery or synod will be encouraged to concur with that overture.

Presbyteries or synods submitting overtures with a recommendation(s) that affects the work or budget of a General Assembly entity(ies) must also:

- Consult with the affected entity(ies);
- Provide evidence that the affected entity(ies) have been consulted

Note: If evidence is not submitted, the Stated Clerk shall recommend the overture to be received and referred to a future General Assembly so that the consultation may take place.

Consultations with the Office of the General Assembly may take place by phone, e-mail, or personal conversation. Consultations with affected entity(ies) may take the same form so long as there is documented evidence to accompany the overture. To connect with the appropriate contacts, reach out to kate.duffert@pcusa.org.

¹ A.3

² A.3.b, A3.c(5)

Formatting an Overture

Recommendation

The recommendation should always be at the beginning of the overture so that those reading are made aware of the intended outcomes from the start. Recommendations should be worded with specific, concise directives so that the General Assembly can make a clear, informed decision and so that financial implications, if any, can be accurately assessed.

“The Presbytery [or Synod] of _____ overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to...”

Rationale

The rationale section should be as concise as possible and provide insight into the reasons for the recommendation. Tell the reader, in short paragraphs:

- What is the problem.
- Why is the current rule or program inadequate.
- What is needed.

Material included in the rationale is for information only and is not a part of the action of the General Assembly.

Submitting an Overture

Overtures shall be submitted directly into PC-Biz through the Portal. Stated Clerks will click the “General Assembly” tab in the menu. This will enable Stated Clerks to click through to the overture submission page. There the Stated Clerk will complete the form and attach a Word document for submittal. *Please do not attach PDFs as staff must be able to edit and format the overture.*

Once the overture has been received, the Stated Clerk will be able to see it documented in the Portal. A status bar will be visible to Stated Clerks and will be regularly updated regarding the state of the overture from editing to posting. If for any reason you have difficulty with submitting your overture or tracking its progress, contact Kate Trigger Duffert at kate.duffert@pcusa.org.

The deadline for submitting an overture addressing constitutional matters is 120 days prior to the Assembly.

The deadline for submitting an overture with financial implications is 60 days prior to the Assembly.

The deadline for submitting all other overtures is 45 days prior to the Assembly.

Overture Advocates

Each presbytery or synod submitting an overture shall name one Overture Advocate. The Overture Advocate must be able to be available at the General Assembly to provide information on the background and intent of the overture. This will occur during the convening of the assembly committee to which the overture is referred.³ Be aware that naming a commissioner as an Overture Advocate will most certainly require that the commissioner be taken away from the work of their assigned Assembly committee business. Any presbytery or synod submitting a concurrence is entitled to one Overture Advocate, as well.

When submitting an overture in PC-Biz the Stated Clerk can add the name of an Overture Advocate. *Overture Advocates must have a PC-Biz account before they can be added. Please make sure that the e-mail address and information associated with the selected advocate is correct to prevent accidental assigning of those with similar names.*

The Overture Advocate can be changed within PC-Biz until 45 days prior to the Assembly. This allows for information regarding the overture to be shared in a timely manner with the Overture Advocate. If for any reason there is a last-minute change to the Overture Advocate position, contact Kate Trigger Duffert at kate.duffert@pcusa.org.

All Overture Advocates are invited to attend a training session at the General Assembly provided by the Office of the General Assembly.

Concurrences

Concurrences may be submitted through PC-Biz when logging in through the Portal. Stated Clerks will click the “Add Concurrence” button next to the appropriate overture. To concur, the Stated Clerk must upload one or more of the following:

- Presbytery minutes which document the vote to concur
- An overture with an identical recommendation and additional rationale

Any overture submitted to the General Assembly must have a concurrence from at least one other presbytery. Overtures not receiving a timely concurrence will not be referred to the General Assembly. Overtures from synods do not require a concurrence.

The first concurrence to an overture must be received before the appropriate deadline (ie. a concurrence with an overture to amend the *Book of Order* must be submitted by the 120-day deadline). All subsequent concurrences may be submitted until the 45-day deadline.

³ A.3a; see also E.2.e “Privilege of the Floor”

Overture/Concurrence Deadlines

224th General Assembly (2020) June 20-27, 2020 | Baltimore, Maryland

120-day deadline	February 21, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overtures addressing constitutional matters (amendments to/interpretation of <i>Book of Order</i>)• First concurrence for overtures addressing constitutional matters
60-day deadline	April 21, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overtures with financial implications
45-day deadline	May 6, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All other overtures and concurrences• Submission of Overture Advocates through PC-Biz (later additions/changes may be made by contacting Kate Trigger Duffert)

Frequently Asked Questions

Must a concurrence have the same words?

For constitutional amendments, it is expected that the affected constitutional language listed in the recommendation be the same. For all other business it is encouraged that the language of the recommendation be the same or analogous enough to be judged “similar” by the Stated Clerk.

Do rationales have to be the same?

No. Many presbyteries use the rationale of a concurrence to offer additional rationale for an item of business. The rationales for all concurrences (if uploaded) are included with the overture when presented to the Assembly.

Who is responsible for ensuring that an overture has concurrences?

The Office of the General Assembly does not solicit concurrences. Presbyteries are encouraged to contact other presbyteries to consider concurring with their overtures. Regular updates on submitted overtures will be sent from the Office of the General Assembly to Stated Clerks. Stated Clerks may then pass along this information to presbyteries so that they may identify overtures for possible concurrence.

Why don't overtures from synods need a concurrence?

An overture adopted by a synod must be voted on by commissioners representing multiple presbyteries. Thus, it has support from more than one presbytery by definition.

Who brings an overture to presbytery for concurrence?

Every presbytery has a different process for bringing business before the council. Concurrences should be treated as a normal item of business for the presbytery meeting.

Note: It is strongly suggested that Stated Clerks regularly inform members of the presbytery about overture updates.

May a presbytery simply vote “to concur” with another presbytery’s overture? Must they vote on the overture itself or submit their own rationale?

A vote to concur is an acceptable way for a presbytery to offer a concurrence. The presbytery may include their own rationale or simply include the following statement in minutes to be uploaded via the Stated Clerk’s portal:

At its (date) meeting, the Presbytery of _____ voted to concur with overture (number and name of overture).

If our presbytery concurs with another presbytery’s overture, do we name an overture advocate?

A presbytery or synod that concurs with an overture from another presbytery or synod may send one overture advocate to assist in presenting the matter to the assembly committee.

For additional information or to ask further questions, contact:

Kate Trigger Duffert

Program Assistant for General Assembly Business

kate.duffert@pcusa.org

502.569.5418

Overture Submission Home Page

Stated Clerks logged in through the Portal will see the following Overture Submission page. The page will enable you to submit overtures and follow the progress of overtures that have been submitted by your presbytery/synod as well as those submitted by others.

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar with the PCUSA logo and 'Overtures' text on the left, and 'Newton Presbytery' with a dropdown arrow on the right. Below the navigation bar is a yellow banner with the following text:

Welcome to the overtures submission page for the upcoming 224th General Assembly (2020).

Standing Rules:

- (1) Overtures proposing an amendment to the Constitution or requiring an interpretation by the General Assembly of the Book of Order (see Book of Order, G-6.04a and G-6.02) must be delivered in writing to the Stated Clerk postmarked no later than 120 days prior to the convening of the General Assembly, and shall be promptly referred to the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (see Book of Order, G-6.02 and G-6.04).
- (2) All overtures that have financial implications for current or future years' budgets must be delivered in writing to the Stated Clerk postmarked no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the General Assembly. Overtures with financial implications not received within the designated time limit shall not be considered, but shall be returned to the originating council.
- (3) All other overtures intended for consideration by the General Assembly shall be forwarded to the Stated Clerk, postmarked no later than forty-five days before the convening of the General Assembly.
- (4) Overtures not received within the designated time limits shall not be considered, but shall be returned to the originating council for reconsideration.
- (5) Presbyteries or synods submitting overtures with a recommendation(s) that affects the work or budget of a General Assembly entity(ies) shall submit evidence that the affected entity(ies) has (have) been consulted. If such evidence is not submitted, the Stated Clerk shall recommend that the overture be received and referred to a future session of the General Assembly so that consultation may take place.

Please note:

Your uploaded file will only be visible to the Business Administrator.

Important Dates:

- 120-day deadline for overtures is February 21, 2020.
- 60-day deadline for overtures is April 21, 2020.
- 45-day deadline for overtures is May 6, 2020.
- Concurrences can be added up until May 6, 2020.
- Advocates can be updated up until June 20, 2020.

Please contact Kate Duffert at kate.duffert@pcusa.org if you need further assistance.

[Submit Overtures](#)

Presbytery Overtures
No overtures have been submitted.

Other Overtures
No overtures have been submitted.

Submit Overture Window

The Submit Overture window enables you to upload applicable files for your overture. In order to successfully submit your overture, you must click the appropriate boxes as a means of confirming your preparation. You may also select your Overture Advocates at this point. However, it is not required for submittal. Note: You may add/edit Overture Advocates at any time, but they must be registered as a PC-Biz user.

The screenshot shows the 'Submit Overture' modal window. The window title is 'Submit Overture'. It contains the following elements:

- Does this overture:** A list of four checkboxes with their respective deadlines:
 - Propose an amendment to the Constitution? (178 days left)
 - Require an interpretation by the General Assembly of the Book of Order? (178 days left)
 - Have financial implications for current or future years' budgets? (238 days left)
 - Have a recommendation(s) that affects the work or budget of a General Assembly entity(ies)?
- Include evidence that affected entity(ies) have been consulted?
- * Title:** A text input field.
- * Upload File:** A button next to a file selection area showing 'No file selected'.
- Overture Advocate:** A text input field with the placeholder text 'Enter first name, last name, or email'.
- OK** and **Cancel** buttons at the bottom right.

The background shows the same submission page as the previous screenshot, but dimmed.

Tracking, Concurrences, and Editing Advocates

All overtures submitted by your presbytery/synod will be visible in their own section at the top of your home page. There you can see the “Status” of the overture and add or edit Overture Advocates.

The “Other Overtures” section enables you to see business posted from other presbyteries/synods. The “Add Concurrence” button allows you to easily concur on behalf of your council.

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[Submit Overtures](#)

Presbytery Overtures

Item	Item Title	Status	Concurrences	Advocates	Actions
[OVT-076]	▶ test	Posted	Abingdon Presbytery	Kate Trigger Duffert	Update Advocates

Other Overtures

Item	Item Title	Sponsor	Concurrences	Advocates	Actions
[01-01]	▶ Test Overture	Abingdon Presbytery		Kate Trigger Duffert	Add Concurrence

Submit Concurrence

The “Submit Concurrence” window requires a file to be uploaded in order to register a concurrence. This file may be either minutes from a meeting which include a recorded vote to concur or an overture with an identical recommendation.

Submit Concurrence

Newark Presbytery attests that a meeting had been convened to vote on concurrence with this overture. Documentation is hereby attached with this concurrence.

[Upload File](#) No file selected

[OK](#) [Cancel](#)

Advocates can be updated up until June 20, 2020.

For any questions regarding submission of overtures or concurrences, contact Kate Trigger Duffert at kate.duffert@pcusa.org.