

THE MEMBERS' PATHWAY

STEP 5: PREPARING THE PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATE FOR INTERVIEW

STEP GUIDE

This Step follows an initial approach to, or from, a prospective candidate and comes before the formal applicant interview. It is normally carried out by a prospective candidate's sponsors (ie, his proposer & seconder), assisted by others if the sponsors wish. If the potential candidate was not previously known to any members, we recommend the Lodge Membership Officer be one of the sponsors.

[An Introduction to the Members' Pathway](#) explains the Pathway and how this Step fits within its framework.

GUIDANCE FOR SPONSORS

- The sponsors and the candidate are each asked to satisfy themselves that Freemasonry and the particular Lodge are right for the candidate and that he is right for them.
- When seeking information from potential candidates and applicants, brethren should show respect for the dignity and privacy of individuals and must not unfairly discriminate against them.
- Be open, honest, clear and direct about the commitment involved in becoming a Freemason.
- Draw from material held on Solomon, UGLE's online repository of learning materials, and especially the section, "Seek & learn: About Freemasonry", to help you answer any questions.
- Anything that happens outside of Lodge meetings can be described. Avoid describing the ceremonies, or practices such as Firing that are included at the festive board, and their meaning in detail, so as not to diminish the impact of Initiation.
- Meet informally with the prospective candidate on a number of occasions to explain and discuss:
 - The nature of Freemasonry, what it is and what it is not (see the [suggested reading list](#) for further guidance).
 - The expectations and duties of membership, including the commitment in time and money.
 - Features of your Lodge.
- Satisfy yourself that the prospective candidate would be suitable as member of the Craft and for your Lodge. This process is known as screening.
- The following characteristics are not grounds for refusing membership of UGLE or of any private Lodge; age (minimum of 21 years or 18 with a dispensation), disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership, race (colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sexual orientation.
- When enquiring whether a potential member believes in a Supreme Being, it is sufficient to accept the response without further enquiry.
- Screening identifies any potential risks that a prospective candidate might be unhappy as a Freemason, or as a member of the particular Lodge, and which are likely to lead to his early resignation.
- Screening includes:
 - Confirming that the prospective candidate is who he says he is and meets the qualifications for membership of the Craft, checking that there is nothing in his background that would preclude him.
 - Confirming that he understands enough about Freemasonry to make an informed choice to join.
 - Satisfying yourself that he has appropriate and sufficient motives for joining.
 - Managing his expectations so that they are realistic and compatible with Freemasonry's values.
 - Satisfying yourself that he is suited to your Lodge.
 - Confirming that he can meet the [time and cost commitments expected by the Lodge](#).
 - Explaining the significance of membership and the step he is contemplating.

- Confirming with his wife or partner that she, or he, approves of his prospective membership.
- More detailed [guidance and techniques for screening prospective candidates](#) is available.
- The table below lists the issues to discuss with the prospective candidate before inviting him to complete a Grand Lodge Registration Form.
- The information sought can be gathered from the prospective candidate over time at a number of meetings and during detailed but informal discussion.

Information sought	Reason why it is sought
Whether he is a “free man”, of mature age.	He must be a mature male, able to make his own decision to become a Freemason. <i>(If he is 18 years or over, but below the age of 21, his Initiation will have to be authorised by the MetGM / ProvGM / DistGM.)</i>
Whether his application is voluntary.	He must come willingly, without having been coerced. He must have good motives and not seek personal advantage from membership of the Craft.
Whether he believes in the Supreme Being.	A core requirement of membership is to believe in the Supreme Being. If there is any doubt on the definition of Supreme Being, sponsors should seek formal guidance via their Lodge Secretary.
Whether he is law-abiding and accepts, acknowledges and respects the legitimacy of the head of state.	Members are expected to be law-abiding citizens who live by an ethical code and the law of the land, are respectful of the head of state and who acknowledge the legitimacy of the civil authority of the country in which they reside or are visiting.
His willingness to take a serious promise, swearing on a Holy Book.	Candidates take an obligation on the VSL that confirms that they will not reveal to others the traditional modes of recognition of a Freemason.
His willingness to conform to the Rules and Customs of the Craft.	Members are expected to abide by our Rules and Customs.
His personal characteristics, qualities and values.	To get the applicant to talk about himself and his values before telling him about our values and our expectations of members.
His reasons and motives for joining and his expectations of membership.	To confirm that his motives are compatible with Freemasonry’s principles and that his expectations of membership are realistic and capable of being met.
Whether he has previously applied to join any Lodge.	To bring to light whether he has applied to join any other Lodge, whether or not he has been turned down by another Lodge, and the reasons why.
His membership of other organisations.	To identify membership of any organisation incompatible with the Craft. To identify special interests that may be relevant to the particular Lodge.
His other duties, affiliations and commitments.	To identify whether being a Freemason might conflict with his other duties, affiliations and commitments.
His existing links with Freemasons.	To identify any background in or experience of Freemasonry.
His suitability for this specific Lodge.	To determine whether the applicant meets any special requirements or characteristics defined by the Lodge. For example, affiliations with other organisations such as schools, youth organisation, university, armed services.
Whether he is available and can afford the costs of membership, in time and money.	To ensure he is available when the Lodge meets, is fully aware of the time and financial commitment involved and is able, free and willing to make that commitment.
The likely contribution he could make as a member.	To identify the strengths the applicant will bring to the Lodge and any likely future contribution he may be able to make.
His appreciation of the normal journey, via degrees & offices, to the chair.	To ensure he is aware of the normal journey through Freemasonry, including Exaltation into the Royal Arch, and what might be asked of him as a member.
Attitude of his family towards Freemasonry and his membership.	To ensure that his family are supportive of his membership and are unlikely hinder the applicant’s participation if he joins.

- Encourage the prospective candidate to ask questions. Answer, or obtain answers, to his satisfaction.
- Screening is not a formal interview, nor a tick box exercise. If issues arise that give any cause for concern, discuss them in confidence with the Lodge Membership Officer.

- If all parties are happy to proceed with an application for membership, invite the prospective candidate to complete the Grand Lodge Registration Form. Then complete the questions for Proposers and Seconders on page three of the form.
- Submit the completed Grand Lodge Registration Form to the Lodge Secretary, who will complete the administration required by the Book of Constitutions. Your prospective candidate is now an applicant.
- Report to your Lodge Membership Officer, to confirm the above steps you have taken, and the responses you have received.
- Brief the applicant on what to expect at the interview and plan to attend the interview with your applicant to support him.
- If you believe that the prospective candidate does not meet the qualifications for membership, refer the matter to the Lodge Membership Officer.

Note: For ease of reading, throughout the Members' Pathway we refer to Provinces. All references to Provinces should be taken to apply equally to Metropolitan and District Grand Lodges / Chapters.

[1,340 words]