



FREEMASONRY VICTORIA

The United Grand Lodge of Antient, Free and Accepted Masons of Victoria

11363
1/5/2000

POLICY RE GRAND RANK

(This document supersedes the policy statement of 1st April, 1998, and takes effect on 1st May, 2000.

Please discard copies of the earlier version of the document)

WHAT IS GRAND RANK?

A brother on whom the Grand Master confers Grand Rank has demonstrated attachment to the Craft and service to his Lodge over a lengthy period. There is a clear expectation that this will continue.

A brother may be chosen to serve the Craft in an active capacity as a member of the Ceremonial Team or as a Senior Grand Officer. A brother may also be honoured by having a Past Grand Rank conferred upon him in recognition of past and present services or to enable him to carry out a specific function on behalf of the Grand Master.

By accepting Grand Rank, a brother obliges himself

- to attend his Lodge regularly and to take an active part in its affairs;
- to attend the Quarterly Communications of Grand Lodge;
- to encourage the members of his Lodge, by example and precept, to adopt standards of excellence, especially in ceremonial work;
- to make himself available, if required, to assist Grand Lodge teams in their work.

ACTIVE GRAND RANK

Each year, Lodges are invited to submit the names of Past Masters whom they consider would bring credit on Freemasonry as members of the Ceremonial Team. The correspondence to Lodges sets out the criteria for selection and certain exclusions which are applied - for example, serving Masters are not considered.

Applications, on a form obtainable from the Grand Secretary's office, must be submitted by 1st August each year. Supporting material may be attached to the form.

Note 1: The endorsement formerly provided by the Lodge's Inspector of Workings must now be obtained from the District Co-ordinator.

Note 2: All applications must be submitted by Lodges. Individuals, Masters' Groups, Lodges of Instruction and similar bodies may not submit nominations, though they may add their support to nominations submitted in the regular way.

Brethren whose names are submitted will be interviewed and asked to demonstrate their ceremonial competence. Some brethren who are not selected may be asked to present themselves again in the following year, in which case their applications will be kept on file. There is nothing to prevent unsuccessful brethren being nominated again by their Lodges but, unless such brethren have been specifically requested to present again, a new application will be required. The Grand Master reserves the right to invite any brother, whether nominated by a Lodge or not, to attend a selection interview.

Each year, Lodges are invited in rotation to nominate Grand Stewards for service with the Ceremonial Team. Brethren so nominated will be subject to the same interview and selection process as other prospective ceremonial officers.

CONFERRED GRAND RANK - PAST MASTERS

The point is strongly made that there is no right or entitlement to conferred rank. It is always the Grand Master's prerogative to confer such ranks (or not to confer them) in any given year. The ability of a Lodge to nominate a brother does not imply that such a nomination will be successful.

A table of conferred ranks applicable to Past Masters is set out in *Appendix 1*. It should be noted that the first conferred rank is that of Past Grand Standard Bearer.

Lodges may submit the name of a Past Master for consideration by the Grand Master according to the following time-scale, which is applicable to both metropolitan and country Lodges -

SIX YEARS since the last conferral of Grand Rank was made on the recommendation of the Lodge, or SIX YEARS since the consecration of a new Lodge.

(An exception is made in respect of a new Lodge formed as the result of an amalgamation - see below)

This ability to nominate is not affected by factors such as -

- the number of Grand Officers in the Lodge;
- whether or not joining members hold Grand Rank;
- the appointment of a Lodge member to a ceremonial team;
- the conferral of Grand Rank or the Grand Master's Order of Service on a Master Mason;
- the recognition of a Secretary's service with Grand Rank;
- a special conferral by the Grand Master.

Nominations, on a form obtainable from the Grand Secretary's office, must be submitted by 15th September each year. Supporting material may be attached to the form.

Note 1: The endorsement formerly provided by the Lodge's Inspector of Workings must now be obtained from the District Co-ordinator.

Note 2: All applications must be submitted by Lodges. Individuals, Masters' Groups, Lodges of Instruction and similar bodies may not submit nominations, though they may add their support to nominations submitted in the regular way.

District Co-ordinators will be expected to ensure that only valid applications for conferral are submitted to the Grand Secretary. Multiple applications (except where the claim is based on "shortage of Grand Officers") and applications made outside the stated time-frame should be returned to the originating Lodge.

NEW LODGES FORMED AS A RESULT OF AMALGAMATION

Where a new Lodge (with new name and number) has been formed as a result of the amalgamation of two or more Lodges, the new Lodge will be entitled to make a first recommendation for conferral of Grand Rank in the September which falls at least one full year after the date of Consecration. The date for the calculation of this entitlement (and the due date for submission of recommendations) shall be 15th September.

After this initial conferral, the Lodge's entitlement to submit for conferral of Grand Rank shall not differ from that of any other Lodge.

SHORTAGE OF GRAND OFFICERS

It is the view of Grand Lodge that each Lodge should have the benefit of the experience and leadership of Grand Officers. Lodges in which fewer than 10% of the subscribing members hold Grand Rank are considered to have a "shortage of Grand Officers" and may submit nominations outside the normal framework of eligibility. Such nominations must be fully documented.

In some cases, a Lodge will not satisfy the criterion for "shortage of Grand Officers", although by reasons of age, frailty or distance, several of the Grand Officers who are members of the Lodge may not be able to attend or contribute. An "effective shortage of Grand Officers" may be demonstrated if the number of Grand Officers falls below 10% of the membership when allowance is made for the following -

- Grand Officers whose permanent address is outside Victoria (by at least one hundred kilometres) and who have not attended their Victorian Lodge during the past three years;
- Grand Officers who, by virtue of age, incapacity or frailty, have not attended Lodge for three or more years.

Any applications made under these provisions must be very fully documented. Such applications will be acted upon at the Grand Master's sole discretion.

CONFERRED RANK - MASTER MASONS

The ranks of Past Grand Director of Music, Past Grand Organist, Past Grand Herald and Past Grand Tyler are accorded to Master Masons who have served as active officers in these positions. In addition, the ranks of Past Grand Organist and Past Grand Tyler are able to be conferred on deserving Master Masons, at the discretion of the Grand Master.

Conferral of Grand Rank on a Master Mason is to be seen as exceptional and nominations will need to be supported by evidence of outstanding service and commitment.

There is no time framework of eligibility with respect to nominations for Grand Rank for Master Masons.

Nominations, on a form obtainable from the Grand Secretary's office, must be submitted by 15th September each year. Supporting material may be attached to the form.

Note 1: The endorsement formerly provided by the Lodge's Inspector of Workings must now be obtained from the District Co-ordinator.

Note 2: All applications must be submitted by Lodges. Individuals, Masters' Groups, Lodges of Instruction and similar bodies may not submit nominations, though they may add their support to nominations submitted in the regular way.

CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES TO BE USED IN LODGES WHEN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONFERRED GRAND RANK

Every Lodge Secretary should have an up-to-date *Register of Grand Officers* for his Lodge. This register will clearly show the number of Grand Officers in the Lodge and when the last conferral (on the recommendation of the Lodge) was made. Please note that District Co-ordinators have been asked to return to the originating Lodge any applications made outside the eligibility framework.

When a Lodge becomes eligible to make a recommendation, a process should be followed which allows the Past Masters of the Lodge to make a judgement on merit. It is very often inappropriate simply to recommend a brother because he is "next in line" in the Lodge seniority structure. It would be appropriate, for example, for the Past Masters to identify a number of brethren who might be considered and request them to submit a brief *Curriculum Vitae*. This document would set out the brother's service to the Lodge, his involvement in other areas of Craft activity and his contribution to the wider community.

Although past services are a factor in making a recommendation for Grand Rank, consideration should be given to a brother's ability to make a significant future contribution as a Grand Officer.

LODGE SECRETARIES

A Past Master who does not already hold Grand Rank, and who has served as the Secretary of a particular Lodge for a period of **EIGHT YEARS** (not necessarily consecutively) will be considered for conferral of the rank of Past Grand Standard Bearer.

A Master Mason who has served as the Secretary of a particular Lodge for a period of **EIGHT YEARS** (not necessarily consecutively) will be considered for conferral of the rank of Past Grand Tyler.

It is recognized that some brethren serve as Secretaries of more than one Lodge, sometimes simultaneously. Special consideration of such service will be at the Grand Master's discretion.

It is further recognized that the *Code of Conduct*, published in 1997, recommends the principle of rotation in office and suggests that Secretaries should serve for a maximum period of five years. Although this is seen to be desirable, the circumstances faced by many Lodges necessitate that a competent and willing Secretary may be asked to serve for a longer period. The *Code of Conduct* and this policy are not, therefore, seen to be contradictory.

Please note that the variety of circumstances noted above makes it very difficult for Grand Lodge to determine the eligibility of Secretaries from its records. It will, therefore, be necessary for a Secretary who believes that he is eligible to be considered for promotion to submit an application to Grand Lodge. A special pro forma is available for this purpose. Secretaries completing this form will not be required to seek additional endorsement.

Promotion of Secretaries (who are Past Masters) beyond the rank of Past Grand Standard Bearer will not be automatic, but will require an application to be submitted by the Lodge in the usual way.

THE GRAND MASTER'S ORDER OF SERVICE

This distinction may be awarded to a Master Mason for exceptional service. An indication of the rarity of this distinction is that only two or three such awards, on average, are made each year. In some years, no such awards are made.

A nomination for the award of the Grand Master's Order of Service would need to document faithful and effective membership of a Lodge over a considerable period of time.

Nominations, on a form obtainable from the Grand Secretary's office, must be submitted by 15th September each year. Supporting material may be attached to the form.

Note 1: The endorsement formerly provided by the Lodge's Inspector of Workings must now be obtained from the District Co-ordinator.

Note 2: All applications must be submitted by Lodges. Individuals, Masters' Groups, Lodges of Instruction and similar bodies may not submit nominations, though they may add their support to nominations submitted in the regular way.

PROMOTION IN GRAND RANK

Promotion in Grand Rank **is not automatic**. For this reason, Lodges are required to supply evidence of a Grand Officer's continuing contribution to Freemasonry before any promotion is considered. Promotion is at the Grand Master's discretion, and no Grand Officer should assume that he is "due for promotion" simply because a period of time has expired.

A Lodge's eligibility to recommend the promotion of one of its Grand Officers is set out below -

- Holders of the ranks of Past Grand Director of Music, Past Grand Organist, Past Grand Herald or Past Grand Tyler may be recommended for the rank of **PAST GRAND STANDARD BEARER** after seven years, provided that the brother has become a Past Master during that time;
- Holders of the ranks of Past Grand Standard Bearer and Past Grand Sword Bearer may be recommended for the rank of **PAST JUNIOR GRAND DEACON** after eight years;
- Holders of the ranks of Past Junior Grand Deacon and Past Senior Grand Deacon may be recommended for the rank of **PAST GRAND INSPECTOR OF WORKINGS** after nine years;
- Holders of the rank of Past Grand Inspector of Workings may be recommended for the rank of **PAST JUNIOR GRAND WARDEN** after ten years.

Recommendations for promotion, on a form obtainable from the Grand Secretary's office, must be submitted by 15th September each year. Supporting material may be attached to the form.

Note 1: The endorsement formerly provided by the Lodge's Inspector of Workings must now be obtained from the District Co-ordinator.

Note 2: All applications must be submitted by Lodges. Individuals, Masters' Groups, Lodges of Instruction and similar bodies may not submit nominations, though they may add their support to nominations submitted in the regular way.

District Co-ordinators will be expected to ensure that only valid applications for promotion are submitted to the Grand Secretary. Applications made outside the stated time-frame should be returned to the originating Lodge.

The rank of Past Junior Grand Warden is the highest rank to which a brother can be promoted on the recommendation of his Lodge. The ranks of Past Senior Grand Warden and Past Deputy Grand Master are conferred at the discretion of the Grand Master and will imply an expectation of future service in a specific role. **Recommendations from Lodges for promotion to these ranks will not be accepted.**

CONFERRAL OR PROMOTION FOR BRETHREN WHOSE SERVICE HAS BEEN TO FREEMASONRY IN GENERAL, RATHER THAN TO A PARTICULAR LODGE

It is recognised that the standard process, whereby Lodges recommend brethren for conferral or promotion, may not always identify brethren who have served Freemasonry well or who have the potential to make a special contribution.

As has already been stated, The Grand Master always has the discretion to confer Grand Rank or to promote a Grand Officer. This discretion will be exercised on the basis of information obtained and collated by a committee consisting of the Deputy Grand Master and the Grand Secretary.

PROMOTION OF OFFICERS WHO HAVE SERVED IN ACTIVE TEAMS

A Grand Director of Ceremonies, at the end of his active year, will be accorded the rank of Past Grand Director of Ceremonies. After a further five years, he may be considered for promotion to the rank of Past Junior Grand Warden.

Other past ceremonial officers will be promoted on their retirement from active duty according to the following schedule -

- An Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies will be accorded the rank of Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies at the end of his active year. Five years thereafter he may be recommended by his Grand Director for promotion to Past Grand Inspector of Workings. Any further promotion shall be upon the recommendation of the brother's Lodge and in accordance with the normal schedule governing such promotions.
- A Grand Deacon will be accorded the rank of Past Junior/Senior Grand Deacon at the end of his active year. Six years thereafter he may be recommended by his Grand Director for promotion to Past Grand Inspector of Workings. Any further promotion shall be upon the recommendation of the brother's Lodge and in accordance with the normal schedule governing such promotions.
- Grand Sword Bearers, Grand Standard Bearers and Assistant Grand Pursuivants will be promoted to Past Junior Grand Deacon at the end of the active year. Seven years thereafter they may be recommended by their Grand Director for promotion to Past Grand Inspector of Workings. Any further promotion shall be upon the recommendation of the brother's Lodge and in accordance with the normal schedule governing such promotions.
- A Grand Pursuivant will be promoted to Past Junior Grand Deacon at the end of the active year. Six years thereafter he may be recommended by his Grand Director for promotion to Past Grand Inspector of Workings. Any further promotion shall be upon the recommendation of the brother's Lodge and in accordance with the normal schedule governing such promotions.

- A Grand Steward will be promoted to Past Grand Standard Bearer at the end of the active year. Five years thereafter he may be recommended by his Grand Director for promotion to Past Junior Grand Deacon. His Lodge would normally be expected to submit a recommendation for promotion to Past Grand Inspector of Workings five years after the promotion to PJGD. Any further promotion shall be upon the recommendation of the brother's Lodge and in accordance with the normal schedule governing such promotions.

As has been stated above, the Past Grand Director of Ceremonies has a particular role to play in recommending members of his team for the next promotion step beyond the initial promotion made at the end of the active year. The Past Grand Director has no part to play in the promotions process beyond this point.

In making recommendations, Past Grand Directors must ensure that those whom they recommend continue to be active in their own Lodges and beyond. Past members of ceremonial teams must not be recommended simply on the basis of the effluxion of time.

APPENDIX 1

CONFERRED GRAND RANKS NORMALLY AVAILABLE TO PAST MASTERS

N.B. The Book of Constitutions should be consulted for a listing of the full range of Grand Ranks which exist.

NORMAL PROGRESSION OF CONFERRED RANK	RANKS WHICH CONTINUE TO EXIST, BUT WHICH ARE NO LONGER REGULARLY CONFERRED	RANKS WHICH ARE CONFERRED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE GRAND MASTER
		Past Deputy Grand Master
		Past Senior Grand Warden
Past Junior Grand Warden		
Past Grand Inspector of Workings		
	<i>Past Senior Grand Deacon</i>	
Past Junior Grand Deacon		
	<i>Past Grand Sword Bearer</i>	
Past Grand Standard Bearer		