

A new Measure or Canon usually comes about after a motion is passed by the General Synod asking for legislation to be introduced.

This often happens after a review group has been commissioned by the Synod to examine a particular issue and report back its conclusions. The Synod may request that draft legislation be introduced to implement the recommendations of such a report in whole or in part. A legislative drafting group may be formed to draw up the draft legislation before its formal introduction into the Synod.

The process by which a Measure or Canon becomes law is explained below. [A diagram illustrating the various stages is also available.](#)

First Consideration

The Business Committee of the General Synod will decide when draft legislation is to be formally introduced into the Synod for its First Consideration. At this stage the Synod is asked simply to endorse the general approach and direction of the draft legislation. In advance of First Consideration, the Appointments Committee will appoint Synod members to form a Steering Committee of 'members in charge', who will have the responsibility of guiding the draft legislation (which may include an Amending Canon and/or a Measure with or without connected subordinate legislation) through the relevant Synodical stages.

Revision

As and when the draft legislation passes the First Consideration stage, a Revision Committee will be appointed to consider proposals for its amendment, with the members of the Steering Committee always being ex officio members of the Revision Committee. The Synod's Standing Orders specify that the Steering Committee must not make up a majority of the total membership of the Revision Committee, which in practice almost invariably means that they are in the minority.

Following First Consideration and the committal of draft legislation to a Revision Committee, any Synod member has the right under the Standing Orders to submit proposals for amendment to be considered by the Revision Committee as it goes through the draft legislation in detail. A Synod member may attend and speak to his or her proposals at any meeting of the Revision Committee at which they are being considered.

When the Revision Committee has completed its work, it will return the draft legislation to the Synod with a report on its discussions and specifically on any amendments it has made. Then, in what is known technically as the Revision stage but which is often referred to as 'Revision in Full Synod', the Synod itself goes through the draft legislation in detail, again clause by clause. At this stage Synod members have the right to propose amendments in any area covered by the Revision Committee's report.

Final drafting and final approval

At the end of the Revision stage, a draft Measure or Amending Canon will return to the Steering Committee, which can then propose limited amendments at the penultimate stage of Final Drafting. The end of the Synodical process is Final Approval, a general debate, when no amendments are possible, and which ends with a vote by Houses.

If the motion for Final Approval is passed, Measures then stand automatically committed to the Legislative Committee of the General Synod, which discusses their presentation to Parliament and in particular approves 'Comments and Explanations' for submission to the Ecclesiastical Committee. Canons are not subject to Parliamentary approval and but require the Licence and Assent of the Sovereign and, once obtained, they return to the Synod for enactment, a formal procedure which gives them full force and effect in the Church of England.

Subordinate legislation such as Orders and Rules is usually dealt with in one debate and in most cases, but not all, amendments are in order. If approved, such legislation may then need to be laid before Parliament as a statutory instrument, generally under what is known as the 'negative resolution' procedure. This means that if no member of either House asks for a debate within forty sitting days, the Statutory Instrument is approved.

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