

ROLE OF A MEMBER OF THE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY

A Practical Constitutional and Parliamentary Handbook

For students, citizens, journalists and new parliamentarians

Based on Pakistan's constitutional framework and Punjab Assembly practice

Legal sources verified through July 2026

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PREFACE

A Member of the Provincial Assembly holds a constitutional office of public trust. The role combines law-making, representation, financial control and oversight of the provincial executive. It is not limited to local recommendations, ceremonies or development requests.

This handbook explains the office in practical language. Constitutional principles apply across Pakistan's provinces, while the Rules and practices of the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab are used as the main procedural reference. It is designed for students, citizens, journalists, parliamentary staff and new members.

Core idea

An MPA is primarily a legislator and representative. The office is strongest when public problems are converted into lawful parliamentary action.

HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

- Use Parts I and II to understand formal parliamentary powers.
- Use Part III for constituency casework and development issues.
- Use Part IV as a conduct and compliance checklist.
- Use Part VI as a practical weekly operating system.

This is an educational guide, not a substitute for legal advice or an authoritative ruling by the Speaker, a court, the Election Commission or another competent institution.

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PART I: CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION AND CORE FUNCTIONS

1. What Is a Provincial Assembly?

A Provincial Assembly is the elected legislature of a province. Pakistan has four Provincial Assemblies: Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Each Assembly provides a constitutional forum through which provincial laws are made, public expenditure is authorised, the provincial executive is scrutinised and the people are represented.

The Constitution determines the composition of each Assembly, including general seats and seats reserved for women and non-Muslims. General-seat members are elected from territorial constituencies. Reserved seats are filled according to the constitutional and electoral framework.

- make provincial laws within constitutional competence
- represent citizens and communities
- authorise and scrutinise provincial spending
- hold the Chief Minister, Cabinet and departments accountable

Legal basis: Constitution of Pakistan, Articles 106-127.

2. Who Is a Member of the Provincial Assembly?

A Member of the Provincial Assembly, commonly called an MPA, is a person elected or returned to a seat in a Provincial Assembly under the Constitution and election law. A member on a general seat represents an electoral constituency. Members on reserved seats represent the province and the communities for whom those seats exist.

A candidate must satisfy the constitutional qualifications and avoid the disqualifications that apply through Articles 62, 63 and 113. The precise requirements depend on the type of seat and the law in force at the time of election.

- citizenship and the applicable minimum age
- registration as a voter as required for the relevant seat
- compliance with constitutional qualifications
- absence of constitutional or statutory disqualification

Legal basis: Constitution, Articles 62, 63 and 113; Elections Act, 2017.

3. Oath and Constitutional Commitment

A member cannot participate in the work of the Assembly until taking the prescribed oath. The oath requires allegiance to Pakistan, honest performance of parliamentary functions, fidelity to the Constitution, law and Assembly rules, and a commitment to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution.

The oath is a practical standard for public conduct. It places constitutional duty above private, family, business or partisan advantage.

Legal basis: Constitution, Articles 65 and 127, read with the Third Schedule.

4. Law-Making

Law-making is the central formal function of an MPA. Provincial legislation may address matters such as agriculture, public health, school education, local government, land

administration, irrigation, social welfare, provincial taxation, public services and provincial institutions, subject to the constitutional distribution of legislative power.

A government bill is introduced on behalf of the provincial government. A private member's bill is introduced by a member who is not acting as a minister. In either case, responsible law-making requires reading the text, understanding its effects and testing whether it can be implemented.

- study bills and supporting material
- participate in debate
- propose amendments
- identify constitutional, financial and enforcement risks
- vote for or against the proposal
- work on bills referred to a committee

Legal basis: Constitution, Articles 141-144 and 116-117; Punjab Assembly Rules of Procedure.

5. Representation of the People

An MPA carries public concerns into the Assembly. Representation is more than attending ceremonies or forwarding individual applications. It requires the member to identify patterns in public problems and convert them into questions, debates, committee work, budget proposals or legislation.

Good representation also requires honest communication. A member should explain what falls within provincial jurisdiction, what has been raised, what response was received and what remains unresolved.

- remain accessible through scheduled public meetings
- listen to citizens, local bodies and professional groups
- verify complaints before raising them
- give attention to disadvantaged and under-represented groups
- report parliamentary work and outcomes to the public

Related framework: constitutional representative government and Assembly procedure.

6. Oversight of the Provincial Government

The provincial Cabinet exercises executive authority and is collectively responsible to the Provincial Assembly. Oversight means examining whether the government acts lawfully, spends properly, implements approved policy, provides accurate information and delivers measurable results.

Government-party members also have an oversight duty. Supporting a government does not require ignoring waste, weak implementation or unlawful conduct.

- questions and supplementary questions
- calling-attention notices
- motions, resolutions and debates
- committee inquiries
- budget debate and cut motions
- examination of audit and departmental reports

Legal basis: Constitution, Article 130(6); Punjab Assembly Rules of Procedure.

7. Parliamentary Questions

Questions are a direct method of obtaining information from ministers and departments. A precise question can establish facts about expenditure, vacancies, schools, hospitals, contracts, development schemes, implementation of laws and delays in public services.

A strong question is specific, factual, within provincial jurisdiction and capable of a clear answer. Supplementary questions should expose missing facts or clarify an incomplete reply.

- research the issue before filing
- ask for dates, amounts, locations and responsible authorities
- avoid argument and unverified allegations
- compare the reply with official records and field evidence
- follow up when the answer reveals non-compliance

Legal basis: Punjab Assembly Rules of Procedure, provisions governing questions.

8. Financial and Budgetary Responsibility

The annual budget is one of the Assembly's most important control mechanisms. The provincial government presents the Annual Budget Statement, while members debate revenue, spending, demands for grants, supplementary grants and departmental priorities.

A cut motion proposes a reduction in a demand for grant and may be used, under the Rules, to challenge policy, expenditure or performance. Budget approval without serious examination weakens legislative control over public money.

- test whether revenue estimates are realistic
- compare new allocations with past utilisation
- identify delayed, revised or low-performing projects
- check fairness between regions and population groups
- question recurring waste and weak procurement
- seek measurable outputs rather than announcements

Legal basis: Constitution, Articles 118-126; Punjab Assembly Rules of Procedure.

9. Committee Work

Committees conduct detailed work that the full House cannot perform efficiently. They may examine bills, departments, budget use, audit findings, delegated legislation, public petitions, government assurances and matters referred by the Assembly or Speaker.

A committee can call for records, question officials and develop recommendations. Committee membership is a working responsibility, not a ceremonial title.

- attend meetings and read the agenda in advance
- review laws, budgets and departmental data
- ask evidence-based questions
- separate policy failure from individual error
- record clear findings and practical recommendations
- monitor whether recommendations were implemented

Legal basis: Punjab Assembly Rules of Procedure, committee chapters.

10. Electing Assembly and Government Leadership

MPAs elect the Speaker and Deputy Speaker and participate in the election of the Chief Minister. They may also vote on confidence and no-confidence proceedings in accordance with the Constitution and Rules.

These votes determine who presides over the House, who leads the provincial government and whether the Cabinet continues to command legislative confidence.

Legal basis: Constitution, Articles 108, 130 and 136.

PART II: PARLIAMENTARY INSTRUMENTS

11. Private Member's Bill

A private member may introduce legislation in accordance with notice, admissibility and procedural requirements. A useful bill should address a real provincial problem, fall within provincial competence, use clear legal language and contain a workable implementation and accountability structure.

- confirm that existing law does not already solve the problem
- consult affected groups and technical experts
- assess cost, staffing and enforcement
- prepare consequential amendments where required
- continue follow-up after introduction and committee referral

Source: Punjab Assembly Rules of Procedure and official handbook for members.

12. Resolution

A resolution enables the Assembly to express an opinion, make a recommendation or draw attention to a public issue. It may concern policy, public services, rights, an emergency or a recommendation to the government.

A resolution may have political and moral force, but it is not automatically a binding law. Its value depends on clarity, relevance and follow-up.

Source: Punjab Assembly Rules of Procedure.

13. Calling-Attention Notice

A calling-attention notice is used, subject to the Rules, to obtain a ministerial response on an urgent matter of public importance. It should relate to a provincial responsibility and should not be used merely to pursue a private dispute.

- state the event and public impact clearly
- identify the responsible department
- show why the matter is urgent
- ask what action has been taken and by when

Source: Punjab Assembly Rules of Procedure.

14. Adjournment Motion

An adjournment motion seeks to interrupt scheduled business so that the House may discuss a definite and urgent matter of public importance. Because it displaces ordinary business, strict conditions of admissibility normally apply.

Source: Punjab Assembly Rules of Procedure.

15. Motions and Debates

Motions and debates allow members to test policy, place constituency concerns on record, challenge government reasoning and propose alternatives. An effective contribution contains verified facts, a coherent argument and a practical request.

Volume, personal accusation and repetition do not strengthen a weak case. Parliamentary speech should help the House decide or hold the executive to account.

Source: Punjab Assembly Rules of Procedure.

PART III: CONSTITUENCY AND PUBLIC SERVICE

16. Constituency Work

Citizens frequently approach MPAs about roads, drainage, schools, hospitals, police, revenue administration, jobs, utilities, social protection, local services and individual grievances.

The member should first classify the matter. It may be an individual administrative case, a recurring departmental failure, a policy gap, a legal gap, a budget shortage or a matter outside provincial jurisdiction. The correct classification determines the correct response.

- refer an individual case to the competent authority
- seek official information and a written response
- raise a recurring failure through a question or debate
- refer a complex matter to a committee
- seek a budget allocation or legislative amendment
- maintain a tracking register and report the outcome

Practical principle: convert repeated complaints into policy and oversight work.

17. What an MPA Cannot Lawfully Do

An MPA is primarily a legislator, not an executive officer. Unless separately appointed as a minister or to another lawful executive office, the member does not run departments, command police, decide court cases, award contracts, appoint public servants or issue binding administrative orders.

The member may advocate, recommend, question, legislate and scrutinise. The legally authorised department or office must make the executive decision.

Legal principle: separation between legislative and executive authority.

18. Development Projects

An MPA may identify development needs, argue for fair allocations and monitor approved projects. The member should focus on need, technical feasibility, value for money, equal treatment and completion.

The member should not manipulate procurement, select contractors unlawfully, demand commission, interfere with technical evaluation or treat public funds as personal funds.

- use documented needs assessments
- check approved scope, cost and completion dates

- seek explanations for delay or variation
- protect technical and procurement processes
- publish accurate progress information

Relevant framework: provincial budget, procurement law and departmental rules.

19. Working with Government Departments

Constructive contact with departments is legitimate when it is lawful, factual and documented. Pressure for an illegal favour is not legitimate representation.

- identify the competent department and legal authority
- send a written, evidence-based communication
- request a lawful response within a reasonable period
- record commitments and responsible officers
- use parliamentary channels when failure continues

Practical principle: document, track and escalate through lawful channels.

PART IV: CONDUCT, ACCOUNTABILITY AND ETHICS

20. Attendance and Preparation

Attendance is the minimum requirement, not the full measure of performance. A member should prepare for House sittings, committees, budget sessions and public meetings by reading the agenda, bills, amendments, questions, budget papers and background evidence.

- maintain a legislative calendar
- assign research before each sitting
- prepare concise speaking notes
- record ministerial assurances
- review unfinished follow-up every week

Source: Assembly calendar, agenda and committee procedure.

21. Parliamentary Decorum

Members must follow the authority of the Chair and the Rules. Strong disagreement is legitimate, but disorder, personal abuse and unverified accusation weaken the institution.

- speak when recognised by the Chair
- remain relevant to the question before the House
- use parliamentary language
- respect rulings and time limits
- protect confidential committee material
- correct an inaccurate statement promptly

Source: Punjab Assembly Rules of Procedure.

22. Parliamentary Privilege

Parliamentary privilege protects the independence of legislative proceedings and prevents improper obstruction of members in the performance of Assembly work. It is connected with the functions of the House and its committees.

Privilege is not a general licence to break the law, interfere with public institutions or avoid personal legal responsibility.

Legal basis: Constitution, Articles 66 and 127, and applicable Assembly procedure.

23. Party Membership and Voting Discipline

Political parties organise parliamentary government. Article 63A provides a constitutional process concerning defection when a member votes or abstains contrary to a party direction in specified matters.

The specified matters include election of the Chief Minister, a vote of confidence or no-confidence, a Money Bill and a Constitution amendment bill. Members should understand both constitutional duty and lawful party discipline.

Legal basis: Constitution, Article 63A.

24. Financial Transparency

Section 137 of the Elections Act requires every member of an Assembly and the Senate to submit an annual statement of assets and liabilities, including those of the spouse and dependent children, by 31 December.

The Election Commission publishes names of non-filers on 1 January and may suspend a member on 16 January if the statement has not been filed by 15 January. A materially false statement may lead to proceedings for corrupt practice under the Act.

Legal basis: Elections Act, 2017, section 137, official ECP consolidated edition.

25. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest arises when a private, family or business interest could improperly influence public duty. The risk may exist even before actual misconduct occurs.

A responsible member should disclose a relevant interest, avoid using confidential information for gain, refrain from improper pressure and comply with applicable legal and parliamentary requirements.

- government contracts connected to the member or family
- official benefits sought for relatives or business associates
- use of inside information for financial gain
- intervention in a private commercial dispute
- participation without disclosure of a direct interest

Ethical principle: public office must not be used for private advantage.

PART V: DIFFERENT ROLES INSIDE THE ASSEMBLY

26. Government-Party Member

A government-party MPA supports the government's programme but remains responsible for reading legislation, identifying implementation failure, protecting public money and raising legitimate constituency concerns. Party loyalty does not cancel constitutional responsibility.

Constitutional principle: collective responsibility and legislative scrutiny.

27. Opposition Member

An opposition MPA should scrutinise government action, expose failure with evidence and offer workable alternatives. Obstruction without public purpose is weaker than disciplined scrutiny based on facts, law and budget data.

Parliamentary principle: responsible opposition strengthens accountability.

28. Independent Member

An independent member should assess proposals on their merits and remain transparent about political cooperation and voting arrangements. Constitutional and election-law obligations continue to apply.

Legal basis: Constitution and Elections Act.

29. Minister Who Is Also an MPA

A provincial minister has two connected roles. As an MPA, the person participates in the legislature. As a minister, the person exercises executive responsibility for an assigned department and must answer questions, defend policy and account for performance before the Assembly.

Legal basis: Constitution, Articles 130 and 132.

PART VI: PRACTICAL WORKING MODEL

30. Suggested Weekly Work System

An MPA needs a disciplined system that connects Assembly work, committee work, constituency service, research and public communication. Without a system, urgent individual requests can crowd out core legislative duties.

- Assembly: review agenda, bills, questions and ministerial replies
- Committees: prepare evidence and track recommendations
- Constituency: hold scheduled meetings and classify cases
- Research: consult experts and check official data
- Communication: report facts, decisions, limits and next steps

Practical tool: one integrated issue register for parliamentary and constituency follow-up.

31. From Public Problem to Parliamentary Solution

A repeatable process improves both accuracy and accountability.

1. Define the problem: what happened, who is affected and which authority is responsible.
2. Verify the facts through documents, official data, field evidence and departmental replies.
3. Confirm jurisdiction: provincial, federal, local government, judiciary, regulator or private body.
4. Select the correct tool: question, calling-attention notice, resolution, committee referral, budget proposal, bill, amendment or debate.
5. Record the government response, responsible officer, deadline and promised action.
6. Follow implementation and report the outcome and remaining limits to citizens.

Practical framework for issue management.

32. Common Misconceptions

An MPA is not automatically a government officer, police commander, judge, district administrator, procurement authority, appointing authority or owner of development funds. The office does not place a person above the law.

The real institutional strength of an MPA lies in legislation, representation, scrutiny, voting, committee work and public accountability.

Constitutional principle: public authority is limited by law.

33. Measuring an MPA's Performance

Performance should not be measured only by attendance at ceremonies, recommendations for individual cases or publicity. A balanced assessment should examine legislative quality, oversight, public access, ethics and results.

- attendance in House and committees
- quality of questions, speeches and amendments
- bills and resolutions moved
- budget and audit scrutiny
- follow-up on public issues
- accuracy of public communication
- financial and ethical compliance
- measurable policy or service improvement

Evaluation principle: measure outputs, conduct and public value.

34. Quick Summary

The principal duties of an MPA are to represent the people, make and improve provincial laws, scrutinise the government, examine public expenditure, participate in committees, debate policy, elect constitutional leadership, raise urgent public matters and maintain legal and ethical standards.

This summary should be read with the Constitution, law and applicable Assembly Rules.

KEY TERMS

Term	Meaning
MPA	Member of the Provincial Assembly.
Bill	A proposal for a new law or an amendment to existing law.
Act	A bill that has completed the required legislative and assent process.
Motion	A formal proposal placed before the Assembly.
Resolution	A formal expression of the Assembly's opinion or recommendation.
Question	A formal request for information from the provincial government.
Committee	A smaller body of members assigned detailed legislative or oversight work.

Term	Meaning
Cut motion	A proposal to reduce a demand for grant under the applicable Rules.
Constituency	The electoral area represented by a general-seat member.
Quorum	The minimum number of members required for the House to conduct business.
Treasury benches	Members who support the government.
Opposition	Members who do not form or support the government.
Private member	A member who is not acting in the capacity of a minister.
Parliamentary privilege	Legal protection connected with legislative proceedings and functions.

CONCLUSION

A capable MPA reads legislation, represents citizens, questions the government, examines public expenditure, participates in committees and follows issues until there is a documented result. The quality of a Provincial Assembly depends heavily on the preparation, integrity and participation of its members.

Final test

A member's work should be judged by lawful action, evidence, follow-up, public value and ethical conduct, not by visibility alone.

OFFICIAL SOURCES

The legal and procedural statements in this handbook were checked against the following official sources. Where the Constitution, law, Rules or an authoritative ruling changes, the updated official text prevails.

1. Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Fourteenth Edition, amended through the Twenty-Seventh Amendment (21 November 2025). https://na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/6926e060076ed_467.pdf
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3. Handbook for Members of the Provincial Assembly, Provincial Assembly of the Punjab. <https://www.pap.gov.pk/uploads/downloads/handbook-mpas-2017.pdf>
4. Elections Act, 2017, official ECP consolidated edition modified up to 5 August 2023. <https://ecp.gov.pk/storage/files/2/Elections%20Act%202017%20updated/Updated%20Elections%20Act%202017-231011-105435.pdf>
5. Provincial Assembly of the Punjab official website and parliamentary resources. <https://www.pap.gov.pk/>

LEGAL NOTE

This handbook is educational. Parliamentary admissibility, interpretation and procedure are determined by the Constitution, applicable law, the Rules of Procedure, rulings of the Chair and decisions of competent courts and institutions.