

UUA Religious Education Credentialing Program

What to Expect from the Religious Education Credentialing Committee (RECC)

Interview Meeting

The Religious Education Credentialing Committee (RECC) is a committee appointed by the UUA Board to evaluate Credentialed Religious Educator and Credentialed Religious Educator, Masters Level candidates who seek credentialing status in the Religious Education Credentialing Program. The current members of the Committee are: Kirk Loadman-Copeland, Committee Chair and representing a Parish Minister perspective; Russ Araujo, representing a Lay Leader perspective; Jan Devor, representing a Credentialed Religious Educator, Masters Level; Steve Lynn, representing a Lay Leader perspective; Colleen McDonald, representing a Minister of Religious Education perspective; Will Saunders, the UUA Board Liaison; Tandy Scheffler, the LREDA representative; and Kathryn Warrior, representing a Lay Leader perspective. The following UUA staff members serve as non-voting ex-officio members of the Committee: Beth Miller, Director of Ministry and Professional Leadership and Executive Secretary of the RECC; Paula Welling, Religious Education Credentialing Assistant and Recording Secretary of the RECC; and Beth Williams, Religious Education Credentialing Director. There may also be a Credentialed Religious Educator or Credentialed Religious Educator, Masters Level attending the RECC meeting as a non-voting Observer. What follows is a guide to what a Candidate can expect from an Interview Meeting with the RECC.

Process

Several weeks before the RECC meeting, the Credentialed Religious Educator or Credentialed Religious Educator Masters Level Candidate will be notified of the date, time, and the building location of the RECC Interview Meeting. An indication of the location of the Candidate waiting area will also be given. The Candidate will be asked whether s/he has any special needs to be considered during the meeting. Flowers are usually present during the meeting to help create a more worshipful space, so any allergies or sensitivities to smell should be indicated.

Also at this time, the Office of Religious Education Credentialing will send electronic copies of the Candidate's portfolio, personal photograph, and other application materials to the Committee members and Credentialed Observer. The purpose of having the personal photograph is to give the Committee an additional way in which to know the Candidate, and to give them a sense of familiarity when they meet the candidate at the time of the interview. The photograph will be retained with the Candidate's file.

One member of the Committee will be identified as the Candidate's Reader. Although all Committee members, as well as the Credentialed Observer, will review the candidate's materials, the Reader will be charged with a detailed reading and analysis of the materials, including any audio or video materials submitted, will flag any potential issues for the Committee that may arise from this analysis, and will develop a set of initial questions to be asked of the Candidate during the interview. The Reader will be the only Committee member to receive the Candidate's transcripts.

In the days before the Interview Meeting, at the suggestion of the Reader, the Committee may review any video or audio materials that were submitted by the Candidate as part of her/his portfolio.

On the day of the Interview Meeting:

About forty-five minutes to an hour before the scheduled interview, the Reader will “present” the Candidate’s portfolio to the Committee, identifying any issues that may have been raised in the Reader’s review of the materials and transcripts. The Committee will begin discussion of the Candidate, based on the portfolio and other application materials, and the Reader’s review and analysis. They will review the Reader’s suggested questions and will begin to formulate any additional questions they would like to ask the Candidate during the interview meeting.

The Candidate should plan on arriving in the Candidate waiting area at least 15 minutes before the designated meeting time. It can be helpful for the Candidate to bring a supportive friend or colleague to help ease the anxiety of waiting, and to be present at the end of the experience, especially if the outcome is other than what had been anticipated. Sometimes a “chaplain” is available for this purpose. Soon after the candidate arrives the Reader will greet the Candidate where s/he is waiting in the designated waiting area. The Candidate will give a question to the Reader that the Candidate would like the Committee to ask her/him. The question might relate to some information or knowledge that the Candidate would want the Committee to know about her/him. This will be the first question asked of the Candidate. It is meant to help put the Candidate at ease, engage the Candidate in the process, and set a positive tone for the interview. The Reader will also collect any special objects that the candidate would like to have put on the “altar”.

The Reader will return to the meeting space. The first question will be shared with the Committee and integrated into the discussion. The Committee Chair will then determine in what order their questions will be asked, and who will ask them.

A designated UUA Staff-member will greet the Candidate in the waiting area, ask who the Candidate would like to light the chalice and if there are any other needs for the worship and the interview, and lead the Candidate to the Interview Meeting.

The Interview Meeting Format

For the Credentialed Religious Educator Candidate, the RECC will meet with the Candidate for an approximately forty-five minute interview meeting; For the Credentialed Religious Educator, Masters Level Candidate, the RECC will meet with the Candidate for an approximately sixty minute interview meeting.

When the Candidate enters the meeting room, another UUA Staff-member will offer to take any coat or bundles that the Candidate may be carrying. The Committee and Credentialed Observer will be seated in a semi-circle facing a podium and a small table with a chalice and flowers and a chair for the Candidate (for the question and answer period.) The Candidate may use the podium for the element of worship and the presentation. In most cases the Reader will have added any of the Candidate’s personal worship objects to the table before the Candidate arrives. The Candidate will notice that there is a UUA Staff-member off to the side at a laptop computer. This is the Religious Education Credentialing Assistant who will be recording the questions asked of the Candidate, as well as any formal motions made by the Committee during its deliberations. **Neither the Candidate’s answers nor any discussion will be recorded.**

The Committee members and the Credentialed Observer will rise as the UUA Staff-member introduces the Candidate to them. The Candidate will be invited to greet each Committee member and the Credentialed Observer individually as she/he introduces her or himself. The Candidate will then be led to the podium.

The Candidate will open the interview meeting with a brief (2 – 3 minutes) element of worship.

The Candidate will give a presentation:

- Credentialed Religious Educator Candidates will give a 5-7 minute presentation on some aspect of their Religious Education Credentialing Portfolio. The presentation need not be exclusively verbal, but a significant portion of it must demonstrate the candidate's oral communication skills.
- Credentialed Religious Educator, Masters Level Candidates will give an 8-10 minute presentation on some aspect of religious leadership. The presentation need not be exclusively verbal, but the majority of it must demonstrate the candidate's oral communication skills.

Please keep in mind that the worship and presentation should be addressed to the Committee as the adults that they are. This is not meant to be an opportunity to simulate a children's worship, for example.

The Reader will ask the Candidate the Candidate's question. Concise, "to-the-point" answers to this and all other questions are appreciated.

The Committee members will ask the Candidate the Committee's questions, indicating who will be asking the next question.

- A question will be asked related to the Candidate's understanding of anti-racism/anti-oppression.
- Other questions asked may (or may not) include the following:
 - A particular scenario related to the Candidate's professional practice, and how the Candidate would handle it.
 - Fact-based questions (for example, on UU History or polity.)
 - A question related to the Candidate's motivation for being in the Religious Education Credentialing program, including how the Candidate has experienced the program process and putting together a portfolio.
 - A reflection on something from the reading list.
 - A question related to the Candidate's understanding of faith.
 - A question related to religious education theory and the application of theory (for example, what would be important to include in a curriculum on X subject.)
 - A question on what it means to be a religious leader.
 - A question based on the portfolio or application materials, including Letters of Endorsement and Recommendation (Candidates should be very familiar with their portfolio and their other RE Credentialing materials.)
 - A question about the Candidate's professional development.

- Essex Conversations Questions:
 - As we enter the 21st century, what is the core of our evolving Unitarian Universalist faith?
 - What is your vision of the goals for lifespan religious education?
 - What are the vital components for Unitarian Universalist curricula?
- How does religious education transform lives?

The Candidate and Committee will take a quiet moment together midway through the meeting.

After all questions are asked, the Candidate will be thanked. The UUA Staff-member will lead the Candidate back to the waiting area while the Committee deliberates on the interview meeting and its evaluation of the Candidate. The deliberation may take as long as thirty minutes to an hour, or even longer.

The UUA Staff-member will lead the Candidate back to the meeting. The Reader will inform the Candidate if s/he has been granted the Religious Education Credentialing status sought (please see Note.) The Candidate will then be excused from the meeting and lead back to the waiting area by the UUA staff-member. Time to celebrate!

Note: In the event that the status has not been granted, the Candidate may request to resubmit an amended portfolio that addresses deficiencies. The Candidate may also request a different level of credentialing. This may or may not require a return visit to the committee. The candidate may also be discouraged from requesting further consideration. In all cases, the request for further consideration may or may not be granted.

A Summary of Things to Remember About an RECC Interview Meeting:

- Arrive in the Candidate waiting area at least 15 minutes before the specified meeting time.
- You will need to wait approximately 15 minutes before the Interview Meeting begins and 45 minutes after it ends. The Interview Meeting will take approximately 45 minutes for Credentialed Religious Educator Candidates, and 60 minutes for Credentialed Religious Educator, Masters Level Candidates.
- Things to Bring:
 - A supportive friend or colleague
 - Some reading materials for “wait” time
 - A question that you would like the RECC to ask you.
 - Worship materials, like a chalice lighting or a reading, and any objects you would like to have put on the altar.
 - A prepared presentation of the appropriate length and topic (5-7 minutes on an aspect of the Candidate’s portfolio for a Credentialed Religious Educator Candidate; 8-10 minutes on some aspect of religious leadership for the Credentialed Religious Educator, Masters Level Candidate), with any visual aid materials that go with it.
 - An in-depth knowledge of your portfolio and application materials.
 - A calm, open, and centered self, confident in your professional religious education leadership abilities.