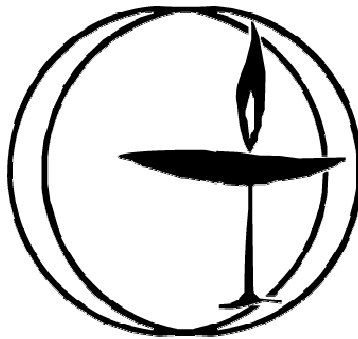


Religious Education Credentialing Program Plan

*Strengthening Lifespan Religious Education and
Faith Development in
Unitarian Universalist Congregations*



Version 6 - Revised August 2007

UUA Religious Education Credentialing Committee

Religious Education Credentialing Program Plan

Strengthening Lifespan Religious Education

and Faith Development

in Unitarian Universalist Congregations

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Unitarian Universalist Association

Version 6 – Revised August 2007

I. Overview – Introduction

This document describes the plan for the Religious Education Credentialing Program administered by the Office of Religious Education Credentialing of the Unitarian Universalist Association Ministry and Professional Leadership staff group. Information about the program can also be found on the UUA website at

www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/religiouseducation/20677.shtml.

The Religious Education Credentialing Program is a three-level program for religious education professionals intended to nurture the call to religious education as a profession, provide a comprehensive path for professional development, articulate and uphold professional standards and guidelines in religious education leadership, and provide meaningful recognition of professional achievement in religious education.

The three levels acknowledge the preparation, achievements, and competencies of individual educators serving Unitarian Universalist congregations and organizations. The three levels are designed to include professional religious educators with diverse life experiences, education, resources, and goals who assume a variety of roles within or beyond the congregational setting. Each level calls forth the talents and aspirations of religious educators and addresses the leadership needs of Unitarian Universalist communities and organizations.

This program of credentialing for professional religious educators is intended to serve the needs of both congregations and religious education leaders. We believe a stronger, clearer program will provide the following benefits:

- **Recognized Standards for Congregations**
We are often asked by congregations, "We are hiring a new Religious Educator. What qualifications should we be looking for?" The credentialing plan offers three levels of professional competencies that will make sense to congregations.
- **Longevity**
The LREDA Grant Program (from the generosity of the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock) and the UUA's fair compensation efforts have led to significant changes in the vision and commitment of congregations to develop and maintain long-term professional leadership. Despite this progress, Religious Education staff turnover continues to occur within three years of hire for many religious educators. We believe institutionalizing professional standards, credentialing, and support will lengthen the tenure of Religious Educators serving in our congregations.
- **Larger Pool of Professionals**
Congregations are seeking capable, committed leaders, and struggling to identify qualified Candidates. This situation may be exacerbated in the next decade with the significant retirement of "baby-boomers." We need more recognizably trained leaders now.
- **A Professional Calling**
It is well known that some of our youth are drawn to the ordained ministry as a result of their Unitarian Universalist experiences. Not as well known is the interest of some of our youth in a religious education career. This program makes religious education leadership a more viable option for both aspiring and experienced religious educators by providing clear professional development standards and recognition.
- **Modeling Shared Ministry**

Our religious communities are built on the collaborative leadership of ordained and lay ministries. Congregations are increasingly aware of the benefits of successful clergy/Religious Educator teams for church growth and vitality. The re-visioning and restructuring of the UUA's Ministry and Professional Leadership staff group, coupled with new professional standards for religious education credentialing, not only strengthen the religious education leadership we offer our congregations, but also model the collaboration that most effectively serves those congregations.

Who Should Participate in this Program

The Religious Education Credentialing Program is designed for professional religious educators who are committed to Unitarian Universalist religious education as a career, whether they are long established in a career, or just beginning to seriously explore one. It is for professional religious educators who desire professional development, recognition and adherence to standards, but do not feel called to the professional ministry. Participants can achieve a credential in the program at three different levels, based on professional training and academic achievement, integration of knowledge of lifespan religious education, and length of professional experience. A participant may enter the program at any level. Although a religious educator may seek a credential at successive levels, this is not necessarily the expectation of the program. Each credential is a significant achievement in its own right.

Credentialed Religious Educator, Associate Level status will be appropriate for those in the beginning stages of a career in religious education having at least 2 years experience in a paid position of at least ¼ time (or equivalent) with a basic knowledge of and training in religious education, or for those with little or no formal academic background.

Credentialed Religious Educator status will be appropriate for those in the beginning stages of a career in religious education having at least 2 years experience in a paid position of at least ½ time (or equivalent) with a working knowledge of religious education, and with at least a Bachelor's degree or equivalent.

Credentialed Religious Educator, Masters Level status will be appropriate for those in a more advanced stage of a career in religious education having at least 3 years experience in a paid position of at least ½ time (or equivalent) with a comprehensive knowledge of religious education, and with at least a Master's degree or equivalent, and graduate-level academic credit in specific subject areas pertinent to UU religious education leadership.

Who We Are and How We Got Here

This document is the result of a long process involving the Liberal Religious Educators' Association (LREDA), the staff of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Joint Task Force on Professional Standards for Lay Religious Education Professionals, the Religious Education Credentialing Interim Advisory Committee, and the UUA Religious Education Credentialing Committee. An early version of some of this information has previously been published in the Joint Task Force's June 2002 Report for the Unitarian Universalist Association.

The Liberal Religious Educators' Association (LREDA) and representatives of the Unitarian Universalist Association Department of Religious Education and Department of Ministry had

been working since June 2001 to articulate professional standards for professional religious educators and to clarify and strengthen our programs for the credentialing of lay professionals. Since the early 1990s, the Leadership Landscape Options Plan had been our Association's program for recognizing the myriad training paths for congregational leadership in programs of religious education. It included the now widely recognized Renaissance recognition program, certificates of continuing education and the Credentialed Religious Education Option.

Since its founding in 1949, LREDA had worked to clarify professional standards for its members, and the UUA Religious Education Department had worked to provide leadership training for religious educators. Over the years these efforts resulted in the Religious Education Certification program, the Independent Study Program (now the Modified Residency Program at Meadville Lombard), and the Ministry of Religious Education.

While the UUA Religious Education Department was managing a multi-level leadership education program (the Leadership Landscape Options Plan), LREDA was developing a three-tiered Professional Standards plan for education and recognition. It became clear that it was in the interests of our congregations and religious educators to define, maintain, and implement one clear, effective system of professional leadership development for religious educators in our Association. For this purpose, the Joint Task Force on Professional Standards was formed, including representatives of LREDA and the UUA Department of Religious Education and Department of Ministry.

This Joint Task Force further developed and refined the three-tiered program of professional recognition developed by the LREDA Professional Standards Task Force. The proposed program plan was affirmed in principle by the LREDA membership in June 2001.

In July 2002 the structure of the staff of the Unitarian Universalist Association was reorganized into a mission-driven design that would serve to make its work more transparent, flexible, and collaborative between staff groupings. The Religious Education Department became the Lifespan Faith Development staff group, headed by Judith Frediani, focusing on the development and identification of curricula and other resources that inspire faith development, educate for religious identity, connect ethical and spiritual practices, and empower all religious leaders. The Ministry Department became the Ministry and Professional Leadership (MPL) staff group, headed by David Hubner, with responsibilities for professional development, credentialing, and settlement not only for ordained ministers, but also for professional religious educators.

With the shift of responsibility for development and credentialing of professional religious educators to the MPL staff group, the responsibility for the further refinement and administration of the Religious Education Credentialing Program was now located there as well. Beth Williams was hired as the first Religious Education Credentialing Director in September 2002. The first part-time Religious Education Credentialing Assistant was hired in December 2002.

As the process of refining the Religious Education Credentialing Program plan continued, it became clear that continued consultation on the development of the program was needed to refine program details, set preliminary program policy and design preliminary program supports until a permanent committee could be created by the UUA Board of Trustees. The LREDA/UUA Joint Task Force was reorganized to become the Religious Education Credentialing Interim

Advisory Committee. Members of this committee include Pat Ellenwood, Makaanah E. Morriss, Judith A. Frediani, Laurel Amabile, Betty Jo Middleton, and Ellen Brandenburg. During this period, twelve religious educators were transitioned from Credentialed Religious Educator status in the former UUA RE Landscape Options Plan to Credentialed Religious Educator, Masters Level in the Religious Education Credentialing program.

In June 2003 the UUA Board appointed a seven-member Religious Education Credentialing Committee (RECC) to create and uphold rules, policies, and procedures of the Religious Education Credentialing program and the UUA, and to evaluate and award program equivalencies and credentials. The first credentials were awarded by the RECC in February 2004. In June 2004 the Bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association were modified to establish the RECC as a standing Committee of the UUA Board. In October 2005 a liaison to the UUA Board was added as an eighth member of the RECC.

II. The Three Levels: Requirements

The three levels of professional competency and recognition are identified as:

Credentialed Religious Educator, Associate Level

Credentialed Religious Educator

Credentialed Religious Educator, Masters Level.

An individual may apply for recognition at any level by demonstrating the appropriate competencies and meeting the appropriate requirements. An applicant does not have to enter at Associate Level if his/her experiences and education prepare her/him for application at the Credentialed or Masters Level. Applicants are encouraged to apply to the program whether they have completed none, some, or most of the requirements. Most individuals will complete most requirements while in the program, and some requirements, such as mentoring and final recommendations, can only be completed while in the program. The program is intended to be accessible to individuals from many backgrounds and applicants are encouraged to be in communication with the Religious Education Credentialing Director at any point in a career path.

The next section of this document contains an outline of portfolio requirements for each of the three levels. It is acknowledged that in addition to the portfolio, each Candidate in the program will work with a LREDA Mentor to plan their professional development, serve in a professional capacity in a congregation (or other vocational setting), articulate their personal theology and preferred pedagogy, complete a course of study (including a reading list) that may last several years, be recommended for the credential by a variety of individuals, reflect on their professional competencies as well as the context in which they serve their profession, and be evaluated by the RECC or a representative of that body. These requirements, as well as application requirements, are also described in the next section.

Please note that the RECC places emphasis on Anti-Oppression/Anti-Racism (AO/AR) and “safe congregations” competencies, and that these competencies are expected to be thoroughly demonstrated in portfolios, completion materials and interviews at all credentialing levels. The RECC believes this emphasis to be an extension of our UU Principles and UUA policy.

III. The Portfolio

A portfolio of life and learning experiences that demonstrates competencies in, and commitments to, religious education leadership is required of applicants at all levels. This portfolio must be submitted to the UUA Office of Religious Education Credentialing in preparation for program completion. Candidates intending to see the RECC at its October meeting must submit the portfolio no later than the first day of August before the meeting; those that will see the RECC at its April meeting must submit the portfolio no later than the first day of February before the meeting.

The portfolio method of assessment fits well with the pedagogy of liberal religious education. Portfolios show progress over time, reflect the unique learning of the individual, and demonstrate competencies in context. A portfolio is not only an assessment tool, it is an opportunity for the learner to reflect on goals and achievements in a way that tests and transcripts are not.

The portfolio should include documentation of and reflection on structured learning experiences, leadership experiences, and samples of and reflection on an individual's work. These materials should correspond to the particular requirements of the RE Credentialing program at the level of the credential sought. They should demonstrate professional knowledge and competency in settings both within the congregation and beyond. The RE Credentialing Portfolio will help the RECC evaluate the Candidate's competencies as a whole and in practice.

More detailed information about the required format of the portfolio can be found in the document "Creating Your RE Credentialing Portfolio" available from the UUA website at www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/religiouseducation/20677.shtml.

Please note that all required forms described in the detailed requirements must be printed. The RECC is not accepting hand-written forms. Any such forms received will be returned. All forms and documents mentioned in this and other sections can be found on the UUA website at www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/religiouseducation/20677.shtml except where noted.

Credentialed Religious Educator, Associate Level

An individual completing these requirements is granted Credentialed Religious Educator, Associate Level status in the Religious Education Credentialing Program.

Requirements:

To apply to the program:

1. File the Statement of Intent form with the UUA's Religious Education Credentialing Office in the Ministry and Professional Leadership staff group. The Statement of Intent should include attachments of a resume and a brief statement of goals and aspirations for the Religious Education Credentialing Program.
2. Submit a total of three Endorsement Forms (printed, with signature) from: 1. a congregational lay leader (or organizational representative in the case of a non-congregation based applicant) familiar with the work of the applicant; 2. a supervisor or minister who can reflect on the basic competencies of the applicant; and 3. the applicant, who must complete a "self-endorsement." The Endorsement Form should indicate the individual's potential and suitability for participation in the Religious Education Credentialing Program and include areas for further development while in the program. Substantial responses to Endorsement Form questions are required. Inadequately completed forms may be returned. These forms must be shared with the applicant.

At the beginning of the program:

3. Complete a Profile Review conversation with the Religious Education Credentialing Office. The Profile Review is an opportunity to collect further information about the Candidate and to clarify issues about the program.
4. Begin a relationship with a LREDA Mentor who has been matched by the LREDA Committee on Mentoring. (This relationship or others like it must continue throughout the program.)

To complete the program:

5. Be able to articulate one's personal theology or religious philosophy and one's understanding of the meaning of faith (use form).
6. Complete the Associate Level reading list.
7. Complete at least 75 hours of training (i.e. Renaissance Recognition, or other relevant training). These hours of training must be documented on an updated resume, in addition to being included in the portfolio. The elapsed "seat" time of training also must be indicated as part of the documentation.
8. Complete at least two years paid religious education leadership (at least ¼ time) or equivalent.
9. Submit a portfolio that demonstrates your abilities in the following areas:
 - Unitarian Universalist History;
 - Unitarian Universalist Polity;
 - Anti-oppression/Anti-racism/Multiculturalism;
 - Right Relations and Professional Ethics;
 - History and Philosophy of Religious Education – Unitarian Universalist;

- Religious Education Resources;
 - Worship for All Ages;
 - Administration;
 - Volunteer Management;
 - Stewardship;
 - Jewish and Christian Heritages;
 - Spiritual life, Self-care and Renewal.
10. Submit a total of three Recommendation Forms (printed, with signature) from: 1. a congregational lay leader (or organizational representative in the case of a non-congregation based Candidate) familiar with the work of the Candidate; 2. a supervisor or minister who can reflect on the basic competencies of the Candidate; and 3. a representative of the board of a congregation (or organizational in the case of a non-congregation based Candidate) that the Candidate has served. The Recommendation Form should indicate the individual's accomplishment as a professional religious educator, and qualifications and readiness for achieving Credentialed Religious Educator, Associate Level status in the Religious Education Credentialing program. Substantial responses to Recommendation Form questions are required. Inadequately completed forms may be returned. The Recommendation Forms must come directly from the author to the Office of Religious Education Credentialing. A copy may be sent by the author to the Candidate.
 11. Complete and submit the RE Credentialing Portfolio Information Cover Sheet. This form gives the RE Credentialing Director "at-a-glance" information about the Candidate as the portfolio is being reviewed by the Director.
 12. Complete and submit the Professional Context form. This is a form which will allow a Candidate to describe the professional context in which s/he works, and will allow the RE Credentialing Director to understand any special circumstances that may need to be considered as s/he is evaluating a Candidate.
 13. Complete and submit the Self-Assessment of Competencies form. This form is a tool that will require Candidates to self-assess their competency level in the various competency areas of the program, in addition to demonstrating their competency through the portfolio. Skills that will be emphasized by the RE Credentialing Director are the ability of Candidates to identify and reflect on areas of needed professional growth for themselves and a potential developmental path to achieving this growth, as well as the ability to see their professional selves as others see them. The Self-Assessment of Competencies form will help the RE Credentialing Director determine at what level these skills have been developed.
 14. Complete and submit the LREDA Mentor Form, which must be signed by both Mentor and Candidate and include a record of all meeting dates. This form is available on the LREDA website at www.uua.org/lreda/content/mentorreport.htm.
 15. Submit a copy of the Candidate's Covenant with their congregation, if one exists.

Please note that the RECC places emphasis on Anti-Oppression/Anti-Racism (AO/AR) and Right Relations and Professional Ethics competencies, and that these competencies are expected to be thoroughly demonstrated in portfolios, completion materials and interviews at all credentialing levels. The RECC believes this emphasis to be an extension of our UU Principles and UUA policy.

Throughout the Program:

16. *Comply with the UUA Bylaws (www.uua.org/aboutus/bylaws/index.shtml), the Religious Education Credentialing Committee Rules and Policies, and refrain from conduct unbecoming a professional religious educator as described in the LREDA Code of Professional Practices (www.uua.org/lreda/content/code.html.)*

Credentialed Religious Educator

An individual completing these requirements is granted Credentialed Religious Educator status in the Religious Education Credentialing Program.

Requirements:

To apply to the program:

1. File the Statement of Intent form with the UUA's Religious Education Credentialing Office in the Ministry and Professional Leadership staff group. The Statement of Intent should include attachments of a resume and a brief statement of goals and aspirations for the Religious Education Credentialing Program.
2. Submit a total of four Endorsement Forms (printed, with signature) from: 1. a congregational lay leader (or organizational representative in the case of a non-congregation based applicant) familiar with the work of the applicant; 2. a supervisor or minister who can reflect on the basic competencies of the applicant; 3. a representative of a UUA district who can address the applicant's competence in an extra-congregational setting; and 4. the applicant, who must complete a "self-endorsement." The Endorsement Form should indicate the individual's potential and suitability for participation in the Religious Education Credentialing Program and include areas for further development while in the program. Substantial responses to Endorsement Form questions are required. Inadequately completed forms may be returned. These forms must be shared with the applicant.

At the beginning of the program:

3. Complete a Profile Review conversation with the Religious Education Credentialing Office. The Profile Review is an opportunity to collect further information about the Candidate and to clarify issues about the program.
4. Begin a relationship with a LREDA Mentor who has been matched by the LREDA Committee on Mentoring. (This relationship or others like it must continue throughout the program.)

To complete the program:

5. Be able to articulate one's pedagogy, personal theology or religious philosophy and one's understanding of the meaning of faith (use form).
6. Complete the Credentialed reading list.
7. Attain an undergraduate (B.A./B.S.) degree or equivalent, documented through a transcript (original or copy.)
8. Complete 75 hours of training (i.e. Renaissance Recognition, or other relevant training) and at least an additional seven structured learning experiences. These hours of training and structured learning experiences must be documented on an updated resume, in addition to being included in the portfolio. The elapsed "seat" time of the training and structured learning experiences must also be indicated as part of the documentation.
9. Complete at least two years of paid religious education leadership (at least ½ time) or equivalent.

10. Submit a portfolio that demonstrates the ability to integrate your knowledge of the competency areas in your work in:
- Unitarian Universalist History;
 - Unitarian Universalist Polity;
 - Anti-oppression/Anti-racism/Multiculturalism;
 - Right Relations and Professional Ethics;
 - History & Philosophy of Unitarian Universalist Religious Education - General;
 - History & Philosophy of Unitarian Universalist Religious Education – Unitarian Universalist;
 - Religious Education Resources;
 - Worship for All Ages;
 - Family Ministry;
 - Human Development - General;
 - Faith Development;
 - Learning Theories;
 - Teaching Methods;
 - Administration;
 - Volunteer Management;
 - Conflict Management;
 - Group Leadership Skills & Small Group Ministry;
 - Stewardship;
 - Jewish and Christian Heritages;
 - World Religions;
 - Spiritual life, self-care and renewal;
11. Submit a total of four Recommendation Forms (printed, with signature) from: 1. a congregational lay leader (or organizational representative in the case of a non-congregation based Candidate) familiar with the work of the Candidate; 2. a supervisor or minister who can reflect on the basic competencies of the Candidate; 3. a representative of the board of a congregation (or organizational in the case of a non-congregation based Candidate) that the Candidate has served; and 4. a representative of a UUA district who can address the Candidate’s competence in an extra-congregational setting. The Recommendation Form should indicate the Candidate’s accomplishment as a professional religious educator, and qualifications and readiness for achieving a Credentialed Religious Educator status in the Religious Education Credentialing program. Substantial responses to Recommendation Form questions are required. Inadequately completed forms may be returned. The Recommendation Forms must come directly from the author to the RECC through the Office of Religious Education Credentialing. A copy may be sent by the author to the Candidate.
12. Complete and submit the RE Credentialing Portfolio Information Cover Sheet. This form gives the RECC members “at-a-glance” information about the Candidate as they are reviewing the Candidate’s portfolio.
13. Complete and submit the Professional Context form. This is a form which will allow a Candidate to describe the professional context in which s/he works, and will allow the RECC to understand any special circumstances that may need to be considered as it is evaluating a Candidate.

14. Complete and submit the Self-Assessment of Competencies form. This form is a tool that will require Candidates to self-assess their competency level in the various competency areas of the program, in addition to demonstrating their competency through the portfolio. Skills that will be emphasized by the RECC are the ability of Candidates to identify and reflect on areas of needed professional growth for themselves and a potential developmental path to achieving this growth, as well as the ability to see their professional selves as others see them. The Self-Assessment of Competencies form will help the RECC determine at what level these skills have been developed.
15. Complete and submit the LREDA Mentor Form, which must be signed by both Mentor and Candidate and include a record of all meeting dates. This form is available on the LREDA website at www.uua.org/lreda/content/mentorreport.htm.
16. Submit a copy of the Candidate's Covenant with their congregation, if one exists.
17. Meet with the Religious Education Credentialing Committee for an evaluative interview.

Please note that the RECC places emphasis on Anti-Oppression/Anti-Racism (AO/AR) and Right Relations and Professional Ethics competencies, and that these competencies are expected to be thoroughly demonstrated in portfolios, completion materials and interviews at all credentialing levels. The RECC believes this emphasis to be an extension of our UU Principles and UUA policy.

Throughout the Program:

16. Comply with the UUA Bylaws (www.uua.org/aboutus/bylaws/index.shtml), the Religious Education Credentialing Committee Rules and Policies, and refrain from conduct unbecoming a professional religious educator as described in the LREDA Code of Professional Practices (www.uua.org/lreda/content/code.html.)

Credentialed Religious Educator, Masters Level

An individual completing these requirements is granted Credentialed Religious Educator, Masters Level status in the Religious Education Credentialing Program.

Requirements:

To apply to the program:

1. File a Statement of Intent Form with the UUA's Religious Education Credentialing Office in the Ministry and Professional Leadership staff group. The Statement of Intent should include attachments of a resume and a brief statement of goals and aspirations for the Religious Education Credentialing Program.
2. Submit a total of five Endorsement Forms (printed, with signature) from: 1. a congregational (or organizational in the case of a non-congregation based applicant) representative familiar with the work of the applicant; 2. a supervisor or minister who can reflect on the basic competencies of the applicant; 3. a representative of a UUA district who can address the applicant's competence in an extra-congregational setting; 4. a peer (a Religious Educator who can address the applicant's competence in an extra-congregational setting); and 5. the applicant, who must complete a "self-endorsement." The Endorsement Form should indicate the individual's potential and suitability for participation in the Religious Education Credentialing Program and include areas for further development while in the program. Substantial responses to Endorsement Form questions are required. Inadequately completed forms may be returned. These forms must be shared with the applicant.

At the beginning of the program:

3. Complete a Profile Review conversation with the Religious Education Credentialing Office. The Profile Review is an opportunity to collect further information about the participant and to clarify issues about the program.
4. Begin a relationship with a LREDA Mentor who has been matched by the LREDA Committee on Mentoring. (This relationship or others like it must continue throughout the program.)

To Complete the Program:

5. Be able to articulate one's pedagogy, personal theology or religious philosophy and one's understanding of the meaning of faith (use form).
6. Complete the Masters Level reading list.
7. Attain a graduate degree (Master's level in any field) or equivalent, documented through a transcript (original or copy.)
8. Complete graduate courses (or equivalent) in
 - Unitarian Universalist History;
 - Unitarian Universalist Polity;
 - History and Philosophy of UU Religious Education;
 - Learning Theories;
 - Teaching Methods.

These graduate courses must be documented through transcripts (originals or copies) and also on an updated resume, in addition to being included in the portfolio.

Complete at least three years of paid religious education leadership (at least ½ time), unless waived by the Religious Education Credentialing Committee.

8. Submit a portfolio that:
 - a. Demonstrates your mastery of theories and concepts in the following subject areas and how you put them into practice:
 - UU History;
 - UU Polity;
 - Anti-oppression/Anti-racism/Multiculturalism;
 - Right Relations and Professional Ethics;
 - History and Philosophy of Religious Education – General;
 - History and Philosophy of Religious Education – Unitarian Universalist;
 - Religious Education Resources;
 - Worship for All ages;
 - Family Ministry;
 - Human Development - General;
 - Human Development – Young Adult;
 - Faith Development;
 - Learning Theories;
 - Teaching Methods;
 - Designing learning experiences;
 - Administration;
 - Volunteer Management;
 - Conflict Management;
 - Group Leadership Skills & Small Group Ministry;
 - Systems Theory and organizational development;
 - Stewardship;
 - Liberal Theologies;
 - Jewish and Christian Heritages;
 - Social Justice Theory and Practice;
 - World Religions;
 - Sacred Texts;
 - Spiritual life, self-care and renewal;

10. Submit a total of five Recommendation Forms from: 1. a congregational (or organizational in the case of a non-congregation based Candidate) representative familiar with the work of the Candidate; 2. a supervisor or minister who can reflect on the basic competencies of the Candidate; 3. a representative of the board of a congregation (or organizational in the case of a non-congregation based Candidate) that the Candidate has served; 4. a representative of a UUA district who can address the Candidate's competence in an extra-congregational setting; and 5. a peer. The Recommendation Form should indicate the Candidate's accomplishment as a professional religious educator, and qualifications and readiness for achieving the Credentialed Religious Educator, Masters Level status in the Religious Education Credentialing program. Substantial responses to Recommendation Form questions are required. Inadequately completed forms may be

returned. The Recommendation Forms must come directly from the author to the RECC through the Office of Religious Education Credentialing. A copy may be sent by the author to the Candidate.

11. Complete and submit the RE Credentialing Portfolio Information Cover Sheet. This form gives the RECC members “at-a-glance” information about the Candidate as they are reviewing the Candidate’s portfolio.
12. Complete and submit the Professional Context form. This is a form which will allow a Candidate to describe the professional context in which s/he works, and will allow the RECC to understand any special circumstances that may need to be considered as it is evaluating a Candidate.
13. Complete and submit the Self-Assessment of Competencies form. This form is a tool that will require Candidates to self-assess their competency level in the various competency areas of the program, in addition to demonstrating their competency through the portfolio. Skills that will be emphasized by the RECC are the ability of Candidates to identify and reflect on areas of needed professional growth for themselves and a potential developmental path to achieving this growth, as well as the ability to see their professional selves as others see them. The Self-Assessment of Competencies form will help the RECC determine at what level these skills have been developed.
14. Complete and submit the LREDA Mentor Form, which must be signed by both Mentor and Candidate and include a record of all meeting dates. This form is available on the LREDA website at www.uua.org/lreda/content/mentorreport.htm.
15. Submit a copy of the Candidate’s Covenant with their congregation, if one exists.
16. Meet with the Religious Education Credentialing Committee for an evaluative interview.

Please note that the RECC places emphasis on Anti-Oppression/Anti-Racism (AO/AR) and “safe congregations” competencies, and that these competencies are expected to be thoroughly demonstrated in portfolios, completion materials and interviews at all credentialing levels. The RECC believes this emphasis to be an extension of our UU Principles and UUA policy.

Throughout the Program:

17. Comply with the UUA Bylaws (www.uua.org/aboutus/bylaws/index.shtml), the Religious Education Credentialing Committee Rules and Policies, and refrain from conduct unbecoming a professional religious educator as described in the LREDA *Code of Professional Practices* (www.uua.org/lreda/content/code.html.)

IV. LREDA: Mentoring

Mentoring relationships are important to a person's professional development, and are a key component of the Religious Education Program at all three levels. Mentors will be resources for reflection, support and encouragement, conversant in all aspects of the Religious Education Credentialing program, self-assessment and the development of a learning plan, goal setting, and portfolio development. The Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) will be responsible for administering the mentoring program, including the recruitment, selection, training, matching, and evaluation of Mentors.

Mentors are required for all Candidates in the Religious Education Credentialing program. Candidates are expected to have a Mentor for as long as they are in the program, and to be in contact with the Mentor for at least one hour per month for no less than ten months per year. Those religious educators who apply to the Religious Education Credentialing program in order to complete the program in less than a year are asked to have a Mentor with the ideal being approximately one hour a month for as many months it takes for the Candidate to complete the program. A program participant may have one or more mentor relationships while s/he is in the Religious Education Credentialing program.

A program Candidate is not required to be a member of LREDA to be mentored by a LREDA Mentor. However, LREDA will charge a per session mentoring fee to Candidates who are not LREDA members. Because of its importance in setting standards for professionalism in Unitarian Universalist religious education, in advocacy and vision for religious education and professional religious educators, and in creating opportunities for professional development and development of collegial relationships, the RECC strongly recommends that all Candidates in the Religious Education Credentialing program be active members of LREDA.

The process for being matched with a Mentor begins with the information collected for mentor matching during the Profile Review, once the applicant has been accepted into the Religious Education Credentialing program. This information (in addition to the participant's resume, application essay, target program completion date, and Endorsement Forms) will be passed by the RE Credentialing Director to the LREDA Committee on Mentoring which will use it to match the participant with a Mentor during its next mentor matching process. The mentor matching process occurs 3 or 4 times a year.

The LREDA Committee on Mentoring bases its decisions on matching on the needs of the Religious Education Credentialing program Candidates, the Mentors, and the Mentoring and Religious Education Credentialing programs. However, it reserves the right to make all final decisions on mentor matching. Specific requests from program participants may be taken into consideration by the LREDA Committee on Mentoring at its discretion, but may not necessarily be acted upon. In no case may a Mentor be from the participant's congregation.

The Mentor/Candidate relationship is conceived as being supportive rather than evaluative in nature. If there is a problem with the mentoring relationship, the grievance process for the Candidate is that the Religious Education Credentialing Director should be contacted. If the problem cannot be resolved between the Director, Candidate, and Mentor, the Director may contact the LREDA Committee on Mentoring to intervene.

The Mentor will contact the Candidate once the matching has taken place and the match accepted by the Mentor. After that, it is the Candidate's responsibility to contact the Mentor. The mentor relationship is conceived as primarily long-distance in nature, with most contact occurring by phone and logistical details worked out by e-mail, although face to face contact is encouraged when possible. Once the relationship has been established, if a Mentor has not heard from the Candidate in more than a two-month time frame, the Mentor is requested to notify either the Chair of the LREDA Committee on Mentoring or the Religious Education Credentialing Director.

At the end of each mentoring relationship, a Mentoring Form with documentation of all contacts must be signed by the Mentor and Candidate and submitted to the Office of Religious Education Credentialing. This form is available on the LREDA website at www.uua.org/lreda/content/mentorreport.htm.

V. Achievement and Maintenance of a Credential

The Review and Approval Process

In order to achieve a credential in the Religious Education Credentialing Program, Candidates must have their portfolio and application materials evaluated and approved. The Religious Education Credentialing Director will conduct the evaluation and approval process for those seeking Credentialed Religious Educator, Associate Level status. The Religious Education Credentialing Committee of the UUA and the Religious Education Credentialing Director will conduct the evaluation and approval process for those seeking to be credentialed at the Credentialed Religious Educator status and Credentialed Religious Educator, Masters Level status, as well as meet with these participants for an evaluative interview.

The Religious Education Credentialing Director and other staff of the Office of Religious Education Credentialing will have a relationship with the participant, and if appropriate with the participant's Mentor throughout the process. They will provide information, guidance, and support, making clear what a participant needs to do to succeed, and to assist participants in achieving their goals. The Religious Education Credentialing Committee will receive portfolios and other application materials for review only when they are complete and in the appropriate format.

Requirement Equivalencies

It may be possible to fulfill certain Religious Education Credentialing program requirements through an equivalency. Because many religious educators already are deep into their careers, equivalencies are an important part of the program. Religious educators may be coming into the program with many years of work experience, and with diverse training that does not always strictly correspond to stated program requirements. The Religious Education Credentialing program was conceived with the understanding that this prior experience and training would be accounted for, when possible, through requirement equivalencies. However, the Religious Education Credentialing Committee must take care to avoid compromising the professional standards it has set, as well as honor the achievements of those who have fulfilled the requirements in the traditional manner.

An equivalency may be requested for the following requirements: paid professional experience for a specified period of time, a Bachelor's degree, a Master's degree, a graduate course in the subject of: UU History, UU Polity, History and Philosophy of UU Religious Education, Teaching Methods, and Learning Theories. More detailed information about the required format and policies related to equivalencies can be found in the document "Equivalency Guidelines for the Religious Education Credentialing Program," available from the UUA website at www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/religiouseducation/20677.shtml.

Waiver

Any proposed deviation from any requirement of any equivalency must first be approved through the waiver process. In addition, a waiver can be requested for any RECC rule, policy, or RE Credentialing Program requirement. More detailed information about Waivers can be found in the document "Equivalency Guidelines for the Religious Education Credentialing Program," available from the UUA website.

The Religious Education Credentialing Committee

The Religious Education Credentialing Committee (RECC) is a Committee of the Board of the Unitarian Universalist Association. It is responsible for all aspects of the Religious Education Credentialing program. As such, it sets requirements, rules, policies, and procedures of the program; on request of the Religious Education Credentialing Director, it evaluates applicants for admittance into the program; it evaluates Candidates for Credentialed Religious Educator and Credentialed Religious Educator – Masters Level status, and awards this status on successful program completion and evaluation, and sets contingencies in unsuccessful evaluations; it delegates this same authority to the Religious Education Credentialing Director for Candidates for Credentialed Religious Educator – Associate Level; it approves plans for program equivalencies and evaluates success in fulfillment of equivalency requirements; it evaluates adherence to program rules by participants and those persons who have been credentialed; it removes and reinstates participants from the program, and removes and reinstates credentials; it publicly represents the program in and beyond the Unitarian Universalist Association. The RECC is a eight-member UUA Board appointed volunteer committee, comprised of one member nominated by the LREDA Board, three members who are lay congregational leaders, one member who is a parish minister, one member who is a minister of religious education, one member who is a credentialed religious educator, Masters Level, and one member who is a UUA Board Liaison. A summarization or précis of each meeting beginning with October 2004 can be found on the UUA website at www.uua.org/aboutus/governance/board-appointedcommittee/religiouseducation/minutes/index.shtml.

More detailed information about the RECC and about the evaluative interview can be found in the document “What to Expect from the RECC Interview Meeting,” available from the UUA website at www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/religiouseducation/20677.shtml .

All persons who are participants in, or have a credential from, the UUA Religious Education Credentialing program are required to abide by the rules and procedures as set forth in the “Religious Education Credentialing Program Rules and Procedures” and the Unitarian Universalist Association Bylaws (www.uua.org/aboutus/bylaws/index.shtml), and to refrain from conduct unbecoming a professional religious educator as described in the LREDA *Code of Professional Practices* (www.uua.org/lreda/content/code.html.)