

# **RULES OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CREDENTIALING COMMITTEE**

**Adopted by the UUA Board of Trustees on [insert date]**

## **1. THE RULES**

These Rules are promulgated, and all rules previously promulgated will be hereby rescinded and revoked, by authority of ARTICLE VII, Section 7.13 and ARTICLE XII of the Bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association as approved by the Unitarian Universalist Board of Trustees on June 26, 2003. In these Rules, the word "society" refers to a church or fellowship.

## **2. COMMITTEE'S JURISDICTION**

The Religious Education Credentialing Committee shall have jurisdiction over Religious Education Credentialing with the Unitarian Universalist Association and over the approved list of religious educators with credentialing status published in the Directory of Unitarian Universalists and elsewhere with authority to make any changes as hereinafter provided. Religious education credentialing status is granted for Credentialed Religious Educator - Associate Level, Credentialed Religious Educator, and Credentialed Religious Educator – Master Level. These Rules shall apply to all religious educators who have achieved a religious education credentialing status, or who are Applicants to or Candidates in the Religious Education Credentialing Program.

## **3. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

The Director of Ministries and Faith Development staff group shall be the Executive Secretary of the Religious Education Credentialing Committee, but shall not be a voting member of the Committee. S/he shall have charge of the correspondence and the custody of the Committee's records and files, which shall be kept confidential as provided in said Bylaws. Upon request and by prior arrangement, information about a religious educator with religious education credentialing status from the files of the Committee shall be shared with that religious educator except for any psychological evaluations and information transmitted in confidence or otherwise deemed confidential by the RECC. The Executive Secretary shall keep a complete and accurate list of religious educators who have achieved religious education credentialing status, and such other books and documents as may be necessary or convenient to maintain complete and adequate records.

## **4. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

There shall be an Executive Committee consisting of the RECC Chair, RECC members appointed by the Chair, and, as non-voting members, the RECC Executive Secretary, and the Professional Development Associate for Religious Education and Music Leaders. The Executive Committee shall consult before each full RECC meeting to review the RECC agenda, and make recommendations to the RECC concerning business items. The

Executive Committee may develop recommendations and reach decisions through face-to-face gatherings, conference calls, and exchange of electronic mail.

## **5. MEETINGS**

The Committee shall meet at such times and places as it shall determine. Special meetings may be called by the Chair or by the Executive Secretary. Five voting members shall constitute a quorum. Meetings may occur in face-to-face gatherings and through conference calls.

## **6. LEVELS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CREDENTIALING**

For the purposes of the Rules, the term “Religious Educator” applies to those persons whose work is to promote religious education that expresses Unitarian Universalist values and principles and whose self and contextual understanding are as a professional religious leader.

Religious Educators who have achieved a religious education credentialing status shall be differentiated by the type of professional and academic training and experience they bring to the profession.

*Credentialed Religious Educator – Associate Level* status may be given to those in a career of at least two years in religious education in a paid position of at least ¼ time (or equivalent) in a congregation which is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association or such a position related to the Unitarian Universalist Association or Affiliate organization with a demonstrable basic knowledge of life span religious education, and at least 75 hours of training in religious education.

*Credentialed Religious Educator* status may be given to those in a career of at least two years in religious education in a paid position of at least ½ time (or equivalent) in a congregation which is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association or such a position related to the Unitarian Universalist Association or Affiliate organization with a demonstrable working knowledge of life span religious education, and at least seven structured learning experiences beyond 75 hours of training in religious education, and with at least a Bachelor’s degree or equivalent. A Bachelor's degree is not required for those pursuing credentialing on the Tenure Track.

*Credentialed Religious Educator – Master Level* status may be given to those in a career of at least five years in religious education in a paid position of at least ½ time (or equivalent) in a congregation which is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association or such a position related to the Unitarian Universalist Association or Affiliate organization, with a demonstrable comprehensive knowledge of lifespan religious education, and with at least a Master’s degree or a Bachelor's degree or equivalent (depending upon the credentialing path chosen), and graduate-level academic credit in specific subject areas pertinent to Unitarian Universalist religious education leadership.

## **7. APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

Application for religious education credentialing status shall be submitted to the Committee in writing in such form as the Committee shall determine. Before an application is filed, the person applying shall be furnished a copy of, or with a website link to, the Rules and Policies of the Religious Education Credentialing Committee, and as part of his/her application, s/he shall agree in writing to be bound by said Rules and Policies and amendments thereof.

## **8. GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS**

Based on the particular requirements of the RE Credentialing level sought, all Candidates seeking a religious education credentialing status must have completed the program application process and program requirements as determined by the RECC. In addition a candidate is expected to have a strong motivation and good potential for our professional religious education leadership; and must have a concern for others, intellectual ability, and religious education leadership skills. The Committee will further require that the Candidate meet the competency requirements as laid out in the credentialing program plan. In examining every Candidate's qualifications, the Committee may consider any evidence which it deems relevant to assessing them.

### **MENTORSHIPS**

Every Candidate seeking a religious education credentialing status is required to have completed at least one mentor relationship with a mentor assigned by the Liberal Religious Educators Association. This requirement may be waived by the Committee at its discretion or by the Professional Development Associate for Religious Education and Music Leaders.

### **TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATION IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CREDENTIALING PROGRAM**

The Executive Secretary may, whenever s/he believes it necessary, present to the Committee the situation of any Candidate where indication exists that his/her continued participation in seeking a religious education credentialing status is not justified.

Participation in the Religious Education Credentialing program is a privilege and not a right, and the Committee's refusal to grant permission to participate in the Religious Education Credentialing program, or decision to remove from the Religious Education Credentialing program before religious education credentialing status is granted, shall not be subject to appeal.

## **9. LIST OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS AND USE OF LIST**

The Committee shall maintain lists of religious educators who have achieved a religious education credentialing status. The Committee shall determine all matters of form and content pertaining to the lists of religious educators who have achieved a religious education credentialing status and determine when and in what manner said lists or any portion of them shall be published.

**10. CRITERIA FOR TERMINATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CREDENTIALING STATUS**

The religious education credentialing status of a religious educator may be terminated when a religious educator's performance and/or behavior in a society or in any other professional position is found by the Committee to be conduct unbecoming a professional religious educator or for other specified cause.

**11. PROCEDURES FOR TERMINATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CREDENTIALING STATUS**

The Committee shall institute proceedings to determine whether a religious educator's religious education credentialing status shall be terminated upon the receipt of information from any identified source which indicates the probability that one or more of the criteria for termination exists.

**A. Rights of the Religious Educator.** The religious education credentialing status of a religious educator may be terminated by the Religious Education Credentialing Committee for unbecoming conduct or other specified cause after notice and opportunity for a hearing before the Committee at which the religious educator shall have the right to be represented by counsel, to introduce evidence, to have any relevant and material evidence in the possession of the Association produced, and to cross-examine and rebut adverse evidence.

**B. Rights of the Committee.** The Committee shall also have the right to be represented by counsel, to introduce evidence, to have any relevant and material evidence in the possession of the religious educator produced, and to cross-examine and rebut adverse evidence.

**C. Expenses.** All expenses involved in the travel, appearance, and representation of the religious educator charged and of the witnesses called in the religious educator's defense shall be borne by that religious educator.

**D. Notice of Charges and Hearing.** Upon a finding of probable cause the Committee shall notify the religious educator in writing of the charges which have been brought, the date and place when a hearing shall be held, the religious educator's rights and the procedures which will be followed. Such notification shall be sent by certified mail and shall be postmarked not less than one month prior to the scheduled date of the hearing.

**E. Response.** Within thirty (30) days of the notice, the religious educator must advise the Committee whether or not s/he intends to appear at the hearing, whether or not s/he intends to be represented by an attorney and his/her identity, and the religious educator's response to the charges.

**F. Exchange of Documents.** Prior to the hearing, the religious educator and the Committee shall arrange for the mutual exchange of documents and a list of anticipated witnesses.

**G. Criminal Proceedings.** In the event that criminal charges are pending against the religious educator, the Executive Committee may suspend all or part of the Committee's investigation until the conclusion of the criminal adjudication. A court transcript/record may be used in lieu of or in addition to an investigative committee report.

**H. Hearing Procedures.**

**1. Hearing Panel.** The hearing may be conducted by the Committee itself, with or without the assistance of counsel, or the Committee may appoint a Board of Inquiry to consist of three members, who need not be members of the Committee - for example, a member, an attorney-at-law, and one other person. When appointed, one of the three shall be designated as Chair by the Religious Education Credentialing Committee.

**2. Confidentiality.** At the beginning of the hearing, rules of confidentiality will be established and emphasized, and they will be reiterated at the end. All individuals - including Committee members, the person being heard and the support person and/or counsel - must respect all rules of confidentiality.

**3. Record.** The Board of Inquiry may determine if it wants a stenographic record at its own cost. If either party wants a stenographic record, it should notify the other three days before the hearings so that it can decide whether to (a) have its own stenographic record made, or (b) negotiate with the other party to share such. Each party shall pay the cost of the transcript. If either or both parties obtain a stenographic record, a copy shall also be obtained and paid for by the Religious Education Credentialing Committee.

**4. Procedures.** The proceedings shall be conducted in such manner as the Committee or its Board of Inquiry shall determine within the limitations set forth above. The Committee or its Board of Inquiry shall have the authority to make any rulings on the conduct of the proceedings, including any rulings deemed necessary or appropriate to ensure that the hearings are conducted in an expeditious manner with due regard for the age and circumstances of the witnesses.

**5. Recommendations of Board of Inquiry.** If the proceedings are conducted by a Board of Inquiry appointed by the Committee, any findings of the Board of Inquiry together with the stenographic records and such reports as the Board of Inquiry may file shall be submitted to the Committee with its recommendations for decision. The Chair of the Board of Inquiry shall be responsible for submitting this material and it shall be sent to the Committee not later than one calendar month from the date of the last day of the hearing.

**6. Access to Information.** All material sent to the Committee by the Board of Inquiry shall be open to inspection by the religious educator charged and/or a second person of the charged religious educator's choice.

**7. Determination.** The Committee, either at the conclusion of its own hearing, or upon receipt of the finding, etc., from a Board of Inquiry, shall determine

whether or not the religious educator's religious education credentialing status shall be terminated and shall enter in the record of the case the reasons for its decision and an order disposing of the case. Should the religious educator's religious education credentialing status not be terminated, the Committee may impose conditions and/or restrictions as it deems appropriate. Such decision shall be made at the next meeting of the Religious Education Credentialing Committee. Written notice of the decision containing the reasons thereof shall be sent by the Committee's Executive Secretary to the religious educator charged within seven days of the date of the decision.

**8. Additional Proceedings.** The Committee, at any time prior to the renderings of its decision, or prior to a final decision by the Board of Review in the event of appeal by the religious educator charged, shall have the power to reopen the proceedings to consider newly discovered evidence. In that event, the religious educator shall be notified in writing that the proceedings to terminate religious education credentialing status have been reopened.

## **12. APPEALS**

In all cases involving termination of religious education credentialing status, the religious educator charged shall have the right of appeal and the following procedures shall be followed:

Any religious educator who has achieved a religious education credentialing status whose status has been terminated may appeal to the Board of Review within thirty (30) calendar days. A religious educator who appeals as aforesaid agrees by so doing to abide by the Bylaws of the Association pertaining to the Board of Review, and agrees that the final disposition of his/her appeal by said Board shall be binding upon him/her and that neither s/he nor his/her legal representatives shall have any further recourse whatsoever in any proceeding within the Unitarian Universalist Association.

When an appeal is timely filed, the religious educator's religious education credentialing status shall be that of "suspension of religious education credentialing status" until his/her case is finally disposed of, and during such suspension the religious educator's name shall not appear on lists of those who have achieved a religious education credentialing status. However, financial rights existing at the time of suspension shall not be affected during the period of suspension.

Such an appeal shall be filed with the Secretary of the Board of Review within thirty (30) calendar days of notification of the decision of the Religious Education Credentialing Committee and in such form as said Board by its rules shall prescribe. If such an appeal is not filed in accordance with rules of the Board of Review, the religious educator whose Religious Education Credentialing Program credential has been terminated agrees that the decision of the Religious Education Credentialing Committee shall be final and binding upon him/her and that neither s/he nor his/her legal representative shall have any further recourse whatsoever in any proceeding within the Unitarian Universalist Association.

If action by the Committee is affirmed, modified, or reversed upon appeal, the Committee shall take such action and make such entries on its records as required by any decision or order entered in the appeal proceedings.

**13. RE-ADMISSION**

The Committee shall have authority to re-admit a religious educator to a religious education credentialing status. An application on such form as the Committee shall determine shall be filed, said application to include in any event a brief statement of the reasons for termination of religious education credentialing status, and the reasons for re-admission which the applicant believes should be considered. The decision on an application for re-admission shall not be subject to appeal.

**14. CONVICTION DISCLOSURE**

Religious educators with religious education credentialing status shall inform the Religious Education Credentialing Committee of all criminal convictions that occur or have occurred except for minor traffic violations and those convictions which by law they need not disclose.

Applicants to the Religious Education Credentialing Program of the Unitarian Universalist Association shall inform the Religious Education Credentialing Committee of all criminal convictions except for minor traffic violations and those convictions which by law they need not disclose. Such disclosure is required for achieving religious education credentialing religious education credentialing status.

**15. COOPERATING WITH THE COMMITTEE**

It is expected that all Applicants to and Candidates in the Religious Education Credentialing Program and all religious educators with religious education credentialing status will cooperate with the Committee at all times. This includes responses to requests for information, provision of requested documentation, and attendance at meetings with the Committee. Non-compliance may be deemed conduct unbecoming a professional religious educator.