

Music Leadership Certification Program Plan

INTRODUCTION

The Music Leadership Certification Program (MLCP) was designed to help music leaders in our congregations develop a foundational understanding of three main areas of knowledge, Music Skills and Resources, UU Heritage and Values, and Leadership and Interpersonal Skills. The program was originally developed by the Professional Leadership Development Group, and subsequently by the Leadership Development Board, former committees of the [Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network](#). Since 2009, the MLCP has been administered by the Unitarian Universalist Association through the Music Leadership Certification Committee (MLCC) in conjunction with UUA staff.

Music Leadership Certification Committee

The MLCC is a committee appointed by and accountable to the President of the UUA. It is currently comprised of seven members: one parish minister who is an advocate for musicians, one religious educator with a background in music, one lay leader who is involved with music in their local congregation, one representative of the Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network (UUMN), and three Unitarian Universalist music leaders. One of the members serves as the chair of the committee. Members serve 2-year terms with no more than a total of four terms served. More information can be found here: <http://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/mlcc/>

UUA staff (the Professional Development Programs Manager and the Assistant to the Director of Ministries and Faith Development) support the MLCC in its work and are accountable to the UUA Director of Ministries and Faith Development. In addition, the Assistant to the Director serves as Recording Secretary to the MLCC.

Scope of Skills and Knowledge

Over the course of the program, candidates should develop skills and knowledge in these foundational areas, which are reviewed in the Spring Triad meeting each year:

I. Music Skills and Resources:

- Approaching music as ministry and service
- Recruiting and sustaining the adult choir
- Beginning and sustaining the children's choir
- Growing the program
- Programming special music service
- Leading congregational singing
- Knowledge of keyboard repertoire

- Knowledge of solo vocal and instrumental repertoire
- Knowledge of choral repertoire
- Knowledge of music outside the Western classical tradition

II. Leadership and Interpersonal Skills

- Professional boundaries in collegial relations
- Relationship with congregation members
- Knowledge of copyright law
- Knowledge of ethical employment procedures and employee rights
- Working styles, group dynamics and effective communication strategies
- Understanding staff evaluation process & purpose
- Working with a music committee and volunteers
- Budgeting and special funding
- Systems theory and group dynamics
- Self-care
- Conflict management

III. UU Heritage and Values:

- UU religious pathways (Sources of the Living Tradition)
- UU principles and purposes
- Anti-oppression & Social justice
- UU history
- UU polity
- UUA structure (association versus denomination)

Certification Program Requirements

Application Materials (due annually by March 15th) Application documents can be found on the [MLCP page](#).

1. Application—*form provided*
2. Resume
3. Signed Code of Professional Practices
4. Criminal Offense Disclosure Form—*form provided*
5. Letter of Support—Minister
6. Letter of Support—Board
7. Philosophy of Music as Ministry, Original —*form provided*
8. Annual Fee \$350.00 (upon acceptance) due by July 15 for each year in the Program

Six Courses (two per year):

1. Leadership of Congregational Singing
2. Toward Multicultural Competence
3. Leading a Successful Choral Rehearsal
4. Care and Ethics
5. Integrating Music and Worship
6. Developing and Managing a Music Program

Assignments, deadlines, and evaluation standards set by course instructors in consultation with MLCP staff.

Three Professional Development Days (one per year)

Assignments, deadlines, and evaluation standards set by course instructors in consultation with MLCP staff.

Annual Assignments

Due Early Fall

1. Fall Triad—*focused on goal-setting, instructions on form*
2. 2nd-year candidates only: Community Service Project Proposal—See *Community Service Project, below*

Due Early Spring

1. Spring Triad and Self-Evaluation—*focuses on evaluation and goal review, instructions on form*
2. Philosophy of Music as Ministry Statement revisions – *See Music as Ministry Philosophy Statement, below*

One-time Assignments

1. Community Service Project—*See Community Service Project, below*
2. Reflections on Denominational Gatherings (3)—*See Denominational Gatherings, below*

Additional Materials For Program Completion

1. Criminal Background Check—*you will receive instructions*
2. Updated Resume
3. Final Recommendation from Advisor—*form provided*
4. Final Recommendation from Sponsor—*form provided*

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Candidates

Candidates may apply to the MLCP after at least one year of service as a music leader in the sponsoring congregation. Music leadership is defined as ongoing, regular leadership with responsibility as a choir director, accompanist, song leader, or worship leader.

Applications are due annually by March 15th. Completed applications along with current resume and letter of support from the congregation are reviewed by the MLCC in order to approve (or not) the application. Applicants are notified by the first week in April of their status.

Responsibilities of the Candidates include:

- must be members of UUMN
- should have a passion for music ministry and have the potential for excellence in their work
- will have served one year as a music leader in a UU congregation or community before applying
- will have served at least 4 years as a music leader in a UU congregation or community by the time they complete the program
- will complete the certification program in 3 to 6 years.

- will show continued progress in certification requirements, as well as continue to meet the financial obligations of the program (annual fee of \$350)
- will maintain the certification paperwork throughout the program and meet program deadlines
- will work closely with their Advisor and Sponsor

Forms relevant to the candidate can be found at <http://www.uua.org/careers/music>

The Triad

Although the candidate (music leader) is the primary participant in the program, the candidate does not walk this path alone. Supporting the candidate is a Sponsor from the candidate's congregation and an Advisor assigned by the Music Leadership Certification Committee (MLCC) of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Triad Meetings are meetings (online, face to face, or via conference call) with the candidate, sponsor, and advisor, and occur twice a year. The Fall Triad Meeting should occur approximately 1-2 months after the UUMN conference and should be used as an opportunity to set goals for the candidate for the coming year. The Spring Triad Meeting should occur approximately 1-2 months before the UUMN conference and should be used as an opportunity to review the candidate's work in the congregation, progress in the program, and accomplishments in achieving the goals for the year. The Triad Meeting Form for each type of meeting is meant to help guide the conversation during the meeting and to serve as a reporting mechanism on the meeting.

Forms relevant to the Triad can be found at <http://www.uua.org/careers/music/triad>

Sponsor

The Sponsor is someone who is a witness to the candidate's work within the congregation, and works directly with the candidate in the candidate's role as music leader. The Sponsor is chosen by the candidate and the congregation; this person could be a minister, music committee chair, DRE, or another music leader. **The Sponsor should not be the candidate's supervisor.**

The sponsor should be able to serve as an advocate. The sponsor will help the candidate plan goals for the year, annually evaluate the candidate's progress on these goals, the candidate's learning process, and performance in the candidate's role as music leader in the congregation.

Responsibilities of the Sponsor include:

- Working directly with candidate in their responsibilities as music leader.
- Being a witness to candidate's work within their congregation.

- Reporting on the candidate's performance and learning process throughout the certification process at Fall and Spring Triad meetings.
- Writing a letter of recommendation upon Candidate's completion of the certification program.
- Assisting candidate with community service project if applicable.
- Recommending (or not) candidate for certification upon completion of the program.

Forms relevant to the sponsor can be found at <http://www.uua.org/careers/music/triad>

Advisor

The Advisor is an experienced music leader and member of the Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network (UUMN), and will be recruited, trained and directed by the MLCC.

Qualifications of Advisors:

- Member of UUMN for at least 3 years.
- Has served a UU congregation for at least 3 years.
- Has done significant work on the denominational level.
- Demonstrates a level of mastery in their music ministry.
- Understands the responsibilities and sensitivities of this role.
- Experience as a teacher preferred.
- Close geographic proximity to candidate preferred.

The advisor will help the candidate plan goals for the year; annually evaluate the candidate's progress on these goals, and the completion of coursework and other requirements; and recommend the candidate for Certified Music Leader status at the completion of the program. The advisor should meet at least bimonthly with the candidate.

Responsibilities of the Advisor include:

- Reporting on the candidate's performance and learning process throughout the certification process at Fall and Spring Triad meetings.
- Helping candidate shape their program work outside of course work (based on candidate's skill level, interests, talents, etc).
- Assisting candidate in discovering and fine tuning their philosophy of music ministry.
- Being in communication with the sponsor about candidate's work and progress.
- Recommending (or not) candidate for certification upon completion of the program.

Forms relevant to the advisor can be found at <http://www.uua.org/careers/music/triad>

Curriculum

Core courses and the Professional Development Days are mandatory. More information can be found [here](#).

The curriculum through which candidates develop professional skill and knowledge in Music Skills and Resources, Unitarian Universalist (UU) Heritage and Values, and Leadership and Interpersonal Skills is delivered by the program through a series of six core courses and additional professional development opportunities. The courses will be offered at the Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network (UUMN) annual summer conference or online in a rotation of two courses offered each year. In addition, preceding the conference there will be a Professional Development Day (PDD) offered.

The courses and the Professional Development Days are mandatory. Syllabi can be found here: <http://www.uua.org/careers/music/curriculum>

Instructors

Instructors for the core courses and the Professional Development Day are selected by the MLCC in conjunction with UUA staff based on their skills and experience.

Responsibilities include:

- Instructors will clearly communicate course goals, assignments, due dates and other requirements.
- Instructors will provide detailed feedback on course work assignments as they are received and by the deadlines specified in the Program Timeline.
- Instructors will complete and submit a Summary Candidate Evaluation to the MLCC by the deadlines specified in the Program Timeline.
- Instructors will turn over course materials to the MLCC by the deadlines specified in the Program Timeline.

Core Courses

These courses may be offered at the UUMN Conference or online. There will be a rotation of two offered each year. Any waivers of these courses must be approved by the MLCC. Descriptions may vary each year based on vision of instructors but will follow these general guidelines:

1. Leadership and Accompaniment of Congregational Song

Techniques of leadership of congregational singing using a wide range of musical styles Skills may include inviting and supporting the congregation in singing, giving clear upbeats, steady rhythm, basic ear training, simple improvisation, score reading, lining out a song, modeling good vocal production, leading rounds and simple harmonies, pitching a song for successful singing, hand motions, varied accompaniments, and conducting from the keyboard.

2. Best Practices in Anti-racism, Anti-oppression, and Multicultural Competencies

This course will explore how a UU music ministry and music leader can help move a congregation and other organizations forward in their efforts to be more anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and culturally competent religious communities. Will include both personal and institutional contexts.

3. Integrating Music and Worship within UU Musical Heritage

Creating music services, working with service leaders, exploring the use of instrumental and vocal music, movement, and silence in sacred space. Selecting appropriate repertoire for UU congregations, using the UU hymnal and supplement, understanding the musical culture of UU congregation. Working collaboratively with the Minister, DRE, and other service leaders, opportunity to collaborate w/ministers

4. Developing and Organizing a Music Program

Music committee, budget, staff skills, collaborative relations with professional and lay leadership, know the culture and history of music in your congregation, how to build an effective program, if you were telling your successor about the program, what would you say? How does the music program fit into the congregational structure?

5. Leading a Rehearsal

Score preparation, conducting, pacing, and teaching a new piece, finessing a learned piece, working effectively with children, youth and adults

6. Care and Ethics for the Music Leader

Detailed discussion of ethical behavior, moral decision-making, implications of UUMN Code of Professional Practice, boundaries, self-care, maintaining a personal spiritual practice, exploring case studies of ethical issues and values.

Professional Development Day

This annual course called Professional Development Day (PDD) will address some aspect of the following UU professional development topics: UU Theology and History, Congregational Structure, Interpersonal Leadership. PDD is usually offered on the day before the UUMN conference. The course is usually divided into two sessions: a plenary session for all candidates and interested conference registrants and a seminar for candidates only.

Community Service Project Requirements

The purpose of the Community Service Project requirement is to develop skills to extend the outreach of the candidate's music program into the congregation's wider geographic community or to other communities with which the congregation has established a relationship, e.g. a partner church. It is advisable for the candidate to

devise the project in consultation with the minister(s) or appropriate congregational leaders (where there is no ministerial presence) to discern both community needs and the resources of the congregation.

Each candidate will devise and carry out one community service project during the three-year period of candidacy. Such a project will employ appropriate musical resources from the candidate's congregational music program and may also employ resources from the wider community if the candidate so chooses. The project should assist and support causes of social justice, social witness, or social assistance outside of the congregation, and should not be a fund-raiser for the congregation.

The candidate will submit to the MLCC a proposal for the Community Service Project no later than the Fall Triad Meeting of the candidate's second year, and the project must receive the approval of the MLCC.

Successful completion of the project will demonstrate candidate's skills in:

- identifying community needs,
- negotiating and establishing relationships with outside organizations,
- planning and organizing resources,
- carrying out advertising and publicity,
- selecting music appropriate to project's benefactor(s).

After the project's completion, a one- page essay from the candidate should reflect on the effects of the project on the participants and recipients, as well as lessons and insights learned from the project. These documents, along with other relevant documents, e.g. programs, flyers, photos, et al. will be placed in the candidate's master file.

Examples of Community Service Projects:

- Presented community event with music and testimonials to raise awareness about a state legislative issue. Collections taken to benefit the cause.
- Established hospice choir with singers from congregation and community and sing at assisted living residences and hospices.
- Planned and presented community workshop on social justice issue. Some participants sang at Sunday service related to the workshop topic.
- Established outreach singing program for and with women in prison.
- Created working music group from nearby congregations and presented at conference.
- Held an augmented choir or multi-choir fundraiser concert or coffeehouse for charitable or social justice organizations such as food bank, homeless shelter, nursing home sing

Denominational Gatherings Requirements

The requirement is to document three denominational events in which you participated, not including UUMN conferences. It is intended to demonstrate the breadth of your engagement with Unitarian Universalism and the UUA. Types of events that would be considered for this requirement: GA, District Assembly, regional/district UUMN, UU summer institutes, UU Music camps. If event is not one of these, consult MLCC for approval beforehand.

A reflection essay (no more than one page) for each event is required and should be turned in after each event. It should include:

- helpful things learned for your music program,
- an awareness of what is happening in other congregations,
- how has your perspective been broadened from participating in this event, and
- how you have (or how might you) integrated what you've learned from participation in this event into your professional practice.

Music as Ministry Philosophy Statement Revisions

As part of your application, and for each year as a candidate in the MLCP, you are asked to submit a statement of your philosophy and vision of music ministry – not a list of responsibilities, but rather a reflection on the relationship of music to your congregation and on how you see your music ministry as an expression of our living faith tradition. You are asked to consider these Guiding Questions:

- How are you called to serve?
- Describe your passion for music ministry.
- How does your music ministry serve your congregation?
- How does your music ministry reflect our UU principles, traditions and sources?
- How is music in your congregation a ministry?
- How does music in your congregation change lives and heal persons?

In the spring of your 1st and 2nd years, you are asked to expand on your Original Statement by reflecting on the MLCC's feedback, taking into account your learnings during the year, and/or considering additional Guiding Questions.

In the spring of your final year of the program, you are asked to distill your reflections from all three prior versions of your Philosophy Statement into a briefer statement that can serve as a touchstone or compass for your day-to-day work as a music leader. Again, be sure to look at feedback from the MLCC on your most recent version.

Appendix A: Other Professional Development Opportunities (optional)

Candidates and their sponsors or advisors may identify skill or knowledge gaps that may benefit from further training. Here are some suggestions for each of the three foundational areas:

1. Music Skills and Resources

The **American Choral Directors Association (ACDA)** offers three-day conventions at the state, division, and national levels. National conventions are offered in March of odd-numbered years; the seven division conventions take place in February and March of even-numbered years. Through concert performances by accomplished choirs, educational clinics by leading experts, and exhibits by music-industry representatives, ACDA offers its members a diverse and practical forum in which to develop their skills and professional knowledge. Go to <https://www.acda.org/> to find out more about membership and upcoming conferences.

The **American Guild of Organists (AGO)** offers five-day national conventions at the state and regional level focusing on organ and choral music techniques and repertoire. National conventions are offered in July of even-numbered years, and regional conventions are offered in July of odd-numbered years. Go to <http://www.agohq.org/home.html> to find out more about membership and this year's conference.

MENC: The National Association for Music Education offers 3-day national, district, state and week-long international conferences including concerts, session, and workshops covering a wide array of musical styles and skills. Go to <http://www.menc.org/> to find out about membership and upcoming conferences.

Other Options

Music conferences through other professional music organizations such as Marcia McFee <http://marciamcfee.com/>

Music conferences through other faith-based music organizations

Music courses at accredited universities and colleges

2. Unitarian Universalist Heritage and Values

Renaissance Modules are trainings offered by regional staff or LREDA chapters, both in-person and online. Courses are designed primarily for Religious Educators, but Music Leaders are welcome to attend. A schedule of upcoming modules can be found at <http://www.uua.org/careers/re/renaissance/schedule>. Modules of particular interest to

Music Leaders include: Unitarian Universalist Identity, Unitarian Universalist History, UU Theology and Worship.

The **Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF)** offers reasonably priced online courses in the following broad categories: UU Identity, UU Theology and Faith Development, Spiritual Practice, and Ethics and Social Justice. A schedule of upcoming courses can be found at <http://www.questformeaning.org/programs/learning-center/>

Tapestry of Faith, the UUA's lifespan faith development curriculum series, offers adult programs on UU history, theology, leadership development, building beloved community, ethics, spiritual practices and more. Designed to be offered in congregations or small groups and can also be done online; all resources are available for free: <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults>

Other Options

Courses at Unitarian Universalist conference centers

Online courses offered through Unitarian Universalist and other seminaries

3. Leadership and Interpersonal Skills

Leadership Schools offer a learning experience that can be transformational. Schools range from whole weeks to long weekends to online versions. Each school has its own culture and format, some offered by regions and some offered nationally. Learn more about Leadership Schools at <http://www.uua.org/leadership>

The **Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF)** offers reasonably priced online courses in the following broad categories: UU Identity, UU Theology and Faith Development, Spiritual Practice, and Ethics and Social Justice. A schedule of upcoming courses can be found at <http://www.questformeaning.org/programs/learning-center/>

The **Wayne E. Oates Institute** <http://www.oates.org> offers four and five-week online courses for Religious Professionals. Online seminars require small discussion groups and presentations. See website for current course offerings.

The **Alban Institute at Duke Divinity School** <http://www.alban.org> offers online courses and resources for religious leaders and congregations.

Other Options

Workshops offered through other faith-based organizations

Workshops offered through other Unitarian Universalist conference centers

Appendix B: Credentialing to Certification Name Change

There is still some confusion about the difference between credentialing and certification. Below is the letter sent in December 2012 to explain the change in the program name:

Dear Credentialed Music Leaders, Music Leadership Credentialing Program candidates, and UUMN Leaders,

Over the past year, the Music Leader Credentialing Committee (MLCC) has set aside time at each of its monthly meetings to consider “Big Questions” about the Music Leadership Credentialing Program (MLCP). The time was right to do some deeper thinking about the goals of the program. It is part of our responsibility to assess how well we are achieving these goals and to determine how we can better serve candidates, congregations, and the wider Association in the future. The Big Questions included such topics as:

- *What do we know of the program’s history?*
- *What is the primary purpose of the program?*
- *What do candidates expect of the program? What do congregations expect? What does the UUMN expect? The MLCC? The UUA?*
- *What are the foundational understandings regarding our standards of completion?*
- *What is the meaning of the Music Leadership Credential?*
- *Should there be varying levels of credentialing?*
- *Looking toward the future, what could Music Leadership Credentialing become?*

In pondering these questions, we included the experience of the Committee members, as well as input we have received from Credentialed Music Leaders, MLCP instructors, current candidates, and congregational leaders. These were rich and creative conversations that helped us to better understand the current scope of the program and to envision improvements and future directions.

In exploring the history of the program, we learned that it was conceived by the UUMN as a certification program – designed to help UU music leaders develop their skills and knowledge in foundational areas. From the beginning, very intentionally, program completion neither required nor guaranteed a specified level of musical mastery: it was created as a developmental, or formative, process. Our Big Questions conversations provided confirmation that we have stayed true to the program’s original purpose and that our program does what it is designed to do! Our participants come from a wide spectrum with respect to musical training, familiarity with our faith, and congregational context. This program is quite remarkable in its ability to meet candidates where they

are and help each one grow and deepen in her role as they progress together through a common set of courses and assignments.

As we reviewed historical documents and spoke with those involved from its inception, we learned that when the UUA assumed responsibility for the program, its name became Music Leadership Credentialing – rather than Certification, as the UUMN had termed it. The purpose of this language change was to give the musicians parity with the religious educators and ministers.

In truth, there are significant differences among the three credentialing programs. Certainly, a principal distinction of our program is its purposefully formative nature. The UUA credentialing processes for ministers and religious educators promote professional formation, of course. However, in those cases, the credential itself is awarded for meeting well-defined standards in numerous competency areas. Alternatively, the Music Leadership Credential indicates the successful completion of a curriculum designed to increase the effectiveness of the participants as religious leaders and to deepen their understanding of music ministry in their Unitarian Universalist congregations. The focus is on improving and growing from one's own starting point, relative to one's own needs and goals.

After much thought and discussion, the MLCC has discerned that our program is indeed more accurately described as a certification program than as a credentialing program. Certification better captures the spirit of the program and the meaning of the award, providing greater clarity for congregations, participants, and our professional colleagues. Thus we have made the decision to restore the program to the original UUMN language.

In a related discussion about terminology, the MLCC reflected on the confusion that the term “Tenure Track” has caused for some who are involved in the portfolio-based certification path we have created for music leaders of long tenure. Because of the specific meaning that “tenure track” has for academic settings, we realized that this title could be misleading. After brainstorming many options, we realized that “Portfolio Path” would accurately describe this alternate program (and retain the elegance of the alliteration).

What does this renaming mean for Credentialed Music Leaders and for current and future candidates? These are truly semantic changes. What one earns at the end of the Music Leadership Certification Program, whether on the conventional program path or the portfolio path, will be known as a Certificate of Completion. And, in fact, this certificate is actually a credential in the generic sense. Graduates will be referred to as a Certified UU Music Leaders. Those who have earned the UU Music Leadership Certificate will continue to be recognized, along with their religious educator and clergy

colleagues, as Certified UU Music Leaders during the Service of the Living Tradition at General Assembly. From the point of view of the UUA, there is no change of status or manner of recognition associated with this new terminology.

The members of the Music Leadership Certification Committee are happy to talk with individuals who have questions or concerns about this change. Please feel free to contact us at the e-mail and/or phone numbers below.

In faith and harmony,

*Beth Norton
Chair, Music Leadership Certification Committee
elizabethhnorton@gmail.com, 978-369-9602*

*Jan Gartner
UUA Professional Development Associate for Religious Education and Music Leaders
jgartner@uua.org, 585-301-6782*