

UUA Board Talking Points

MFC, Review Team, and “On Hold”

overview for board discussion

The core issue: how the UUA balances care, accountability, safety, and the integrity of ministry when serious concerns arise.

The relationships between ministers and the congregations they serve usually go well. These processes exist for more challenging situations — especially conflicted endings, misconduct concerns, or questions about a minister’s readiness to return to parish ministry.

***The Review Team
operates under
the authority of
the MFC.***

***Two bodies,
two roles:***

***care
and
credentialing***

1. Two distinct roles

The MFC and Review Team processes are connected, but not the same

Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC)

- Has authority over Fellowship status.
- Determines whether a minister remains fit to hold Fellowship.
- May initiate Fellowship Review in the most serious cases.
- Can impose the most serious sanction: removal from Fellowship.

Review Team

- Provides structured care, reflection, and developmental support.
- Often works with ministers after conflicted ministry endings.
- Does not determine or change Fellowship status.
- Focuses on healing, accountability, and readiness for future service. Can refer ministers to MFC as necessary.

**Board takeaway: one body governs credentials;
the other provides care**

2. What “On Hold” means

A protective pause with real consequences

- A minister on hold typically cannot serve a congregation in called or contracted ministry.
- They cannot participate in search or accept most congregational contracts, including sabbatical coverage.
- Limited work may still be allowed, such as guest preaching, usually no more than once per quarter in a congregation.
- Any broader congregational work requires case-by-case approval.

- The purpose of a hold is to create space for the work of healing, reflection, and discernment before a return to parish ministry.

Important board note

Hold status is intended to be restorative, but it can also carry serious professional and financial impact.

3. How the Review Team process works

Referral, reflection, coaching, and development

- Most referrals come after conflicted or negotiated resignations and are made by Ministries and Faith Development or Congregational Life (CL) staff. The MFC can also refer a case after a misconduct investigation.
- Each minister is assigned a Review Team contact and a UUMA clergy coach.
- The process moves forward when the Review Team receives exit interviews from Congregation Life, and a written reflection and Personal & Professional Development Plan (PPDP) from the minister.
- The PPDP identifies goals for healing, growth and accountability; practices; resources; and ways to measure progress.
- The Review Team meets monthly to consider written submissions from ministers. Ministers whose materials demonstrate appropriate learning and plans for accountable growth are typically released from hold.

**Common concerns:
competence, judgment, healing**

4. Outcomes and board-level takeaway

Success and other possible outcomes

- Ministers who satisfactorily complete the process are released from hold to re-enter parish search and service.
- For some ministers, returning to congregational service may include restrictions, oversight, or continued conditions.
- If the hold process is not satisfactorily completed within three years, or if there are concerns beyond the scope of the Review Team, the case may be referred to the MFC for Fellowship Review.
- Some ministers who cannot engage the hold process for health reasons or are ready to retire from ministry may be allowed to retire on hold, remaining in Fellowship but under continued restriction regarding congregational service.

**Bottom line for the board:
our system distinguishes care from credentialing, while upholding
accountability, safety, fairness, and the integrity of UU ministry.**