

PROCESS FOR APPROVAL AND ENDORSEMENT SUPPORT FOR MILITARY CHAPLAINS AND CHAPLAIN CANDIDATES

Types of Chaplain Recognition

The UUA Official Endorser is the only officially recognized endorsing person for Unitarian Universalist applicants for Military Chaplain Candidate Programs, Active-Duty Military Chaplains, National Guard/Reserve Chaplains, Civil Air Patrol Chaplains, Merchant Marines, and other federally recognized military/government branches and agencies, such as the Veteran's Administration and Federal Bureau of Prisons.

- Ecclesiastical Endorsement for the Chaplain Candidate Program:

Ecclesiastical endorsement for the Chaplain Candidate Program may be given to persons in Aspirant status in seminary who apply during their first or second year of full-time enrollment and who qualify for the Chaplain Candidate Program. The applicant should be in the process of obtaining ministerial fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association and be working toward ordination. If the Aspirant remains in good standing with the UUA, makes normal progress, and meets all other stipulated requirements (such as ministerial experience, fitness standards etc.), they may then be considered for endorsement for Active Duty, Armed Forces Reserves, or National Guard chaplaincy after graduation and acceptance into fellowship.

- Ecclesiastical Endorsement to Accession into the Chaplaincy:

Only the Official Endorser may grant ecclesiastical endorsement for Active Duty/Reserve/National Guard and Veterans Affairs after interview with applicants who are ordained, in fellowship with the UUA, and meet all military age, educational and physical requirements. To be endorsed for Active Duty, applicants are expected to have at least two years of demonstrated pastoral ministry experience. The Official Endorser may establish other criteria.

Qualifications and Process for Approval and Endorsement

The requirements set out in this document represent the ideal qualifications and processes for Ecclesiastical Approval and Endorsements. The Official Endorser may choose to waive specific provisions, should they believe that the applicant has sufficient background, experience, education and/or training that the spirit of the requirements or a specific requirement has been met. This waiver shall be granted by the Official Endorser in their sole discretion.

Candidates for Ecclesiastical Approval as Chaplain Candidates must:

1. Be a graduate student at an Association of Theological School (ATS) accredited institution;
2. Be an Aspirant for ministerial fellowship with the UUA;
3. Be sponsored by a UU congregation;
4. Meet age and physical requirements of the Armed Forces, Active, Reserve and/or National Guard, relative to place of service;
5. Receive favorable criminal background check (costs of which to be paid for by applicant);
6. Have ability to serve in situations where rank and line of authority are valued;
7. Understand the nature of military chaplaincy and have the ability to faithfully represent Unitarian Universalism in the carrying out of their responsibilities, as well as willingness to provide ministry to non-Unitarian Universalist personnel.

Candidates for Ecclesiastical Endorsement as an Active-Duty Chaplain must:

1. Be a minister in fellowship with the UUA;
2. Either be in final fellowship or, if in preliminary fellowship, have two years of pastoral experience demonstrating effective and excellent ministry;
3. Be ordained by a UU congregation or, if transfer member, be ordained by another religious tradition;

4. Meet age and physical requirements of the Armed Forces;
5. Receive favorable criminal background check (costs of which to be paid for by the applicant);
6. Have ability to serve in situations where rank and line of authority are valued;
7. Understand the nature of military chaplaincy and have ability to faithfully represent Unitarian Universalism in the carrying out of their responsibilities, as well as ability and willingness to provide ministry to non-Unitarian Universalist personnel.

Candidates for Ecclesiastical Endorsement as National Guard and/or Reserve Chaplains must:

1. Be a minister in fellowship with the UUA;
2. Either be in final fellowship or, if in preliminary fellowship, have one/two years (depending on branch requirements) of pastoral experience demonstrating effective and excellent ministry;
3. Be ordained by a UU congregation or, if transfer member, be ordained by another religious tradition;
4. Meet age and physical requirements of the National Guard or applicable Reserve;
5. Receive favorable criminal background check (costs of which to be paid for by the applicant);
6. Have ability to serve in situations where rank and line of authority are valued;
7. Understand the nature of multi-faith chaplaincy and have ability to faithfully represent Unitarian Universalism in the carrying out of their responsibilities, as well as ability and willingness to provide ministry to non-Unitarian Universalist personnel.

Candidates for Ecclesiastical Endorsement as Veterans Affairs Chaplains must:

1. Be a minister in fellowship with the UUA;

2. Be ordained by a UU congregation or, if transfer member, be ordained by another religious tradition;
3. Have a minimum of 4 units of CPE;
4. Be willing to serve in a pluralist environment

Candidates for Ecclesiastical Endorsement as Civil Air Patrol must:

1. Be a minister in fellowship with the UUA;
2. Be ordained by a UU congregation or, if transfer member, be ordained by another religious tradition;
3. Receive favorable criminal background check (costs of which to be paid for by applicant)
4. Have ability to serve in situations where rank and line of authority are valued;
5. Understand the nature of military chaplaincy and have ability to faithfully represent Unitarian Universalism in the carrying out of their responsibilities, as well as ability and willingness to provide ministry to non-Unitarian Universalist personnel.

Endorsement and/or Approval Process

Candidates seeking either Ecclesiastical Endorsement or Approval must:

1. Complete and submit a standard application form;
2. Submit an essay (between 1000 and 2500 words) detailing the reasons for seeking position as military chaplain, and confirming their understanding of the nature of military chaplaincy;
3. Submit at least three (3) letters of reference, one of which shall be from a UU minister;
4. Be successfully interviewed by the Official Endorser and/or designate.

Ecclesiastical endorsement or approval is initially granted for three years, then subject to review and renewal for indefinite period. Should the Chaplain fail to submit required annual reports, be removed from fellowship with the UUA, renounce their ministerial fellowship, be convicted of either a felony or crime of moral turpitude, or should their military (active duty, reserve, or

National Guard) status be revoked or terminated, then endorsement and/or approval can be immediately revoked.

Responsibility of Chaplain/Chaplain Candidate:

1. Chaplain/Chaplain Candidate provides update as to duty assignments and contact information;
2. Chaplain/Chaplain Candidate maintains membership in a UU congregation. It is understood that the Church of the Larger Fellowship may be the most appropriate congregation for membership;
3. Chaplain continues to be in fellowship with the UUA;
4. Chaplain/Chaplain Candidate prepares a brief annual report **by October 15** (each year) that summarizes the service provided in their duty assignment;
5. Chaplain/Chaplain Candidate submits all their officer evaluations to the Official Endorser. These documents will only be reviewed by the Official Endorser and will be placed within their Ministerial Fellowship file at the UUA for safekeeping;
6. Chaplain/Chaplain Candidate is required to attend annual UUA Chaplain Training Events, as well as Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA) Professional Days and UUA General Assembly;
7. Chaplains/Chaplain Candidates are also expected to attend UUMA Chapter Meetings. Dispensation may be granted by the Official Endorser in exceptional circumstances. This requirement is in place so that Chaplains may retain on-going connection with the UUA.

On-Going Support by UUA:

1. The UUA funds and supports the logistics for an annual training event for UU military chaplains and chaplain candidates. Program planning is the mutual responsibility of the UUMA Military Chaplain Chapter leaders and the UUA Official Endorser;
2. The Official Endorser is available for support and counsel for all military chaplains;
3. When possible, the Official Endorser will attend important ceremonies such as retirements or graduations from the Chaplain School and visit chaplains at their duty station;

4. Official Endorser will consult with the Chief of Chaplains should issues arise in the Chaplain's/Chaplain Candidate's service to provide and ensure fair treatment;
5. The Official Endorser will be active with the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF) and adhere to the NCMAF code of ethics;
6. The UUA will hold an annual military reception at the General Assembly for chaplains, veterans, current military service members and their families.