

Creating Your Religious Education Credentialing Portfolio

UUA Religious Education Credentialing Program

Version 5 – Revised October 2009

Purpose:

A portfolio of professional and learning experiences that demonstrates competencies in, and commitments to, religious education leadership is required of all Associate and Credentialed Level candidates in the UUA RE Credentialing Program, and those Path 2 or Path 4 (with Bachelor's degree or equivalency) Master Level candidates. For those candidates, this portfolio must be submitted to the UUA Office of Religious Education Credentialing in preparation for program completion. For Candidates intending to see the Religious Education Credentialing Committee (RECC) at its April meeting, the RE Credentialing Director must receive the portfolio by January 31 for feedback and review prior to submitting the portfolio to the RECC. Candidates who have never submitted portfolio competencies for review by the RE Credentialing Director must submit at least two by November 30. The RE Credentialing Office must receive your portfolio and completion materials for submission to the RECC by last day of February. Any loose ends related to the portfolio or completion materials must be tied up before March 31, 2009.

The portfolio method of assessment fits well with the pedagogy of liberal religious education. Portfolios show continual 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 do not.

Portfolio Presentation

Your portfolio sets the tone for your interview with the Credentialing Committee. The Committee members will assess its presentation, as well as its contents, while forming their first impression of you. Like a resume, your portfolio should be polished and professional. Here are some presentation tips that will help you create an effective portfolio:

- 1) Look at portfolio samples/models that other credentialed religious educators have created for the RECC.
- 2) Keep in mind that your portfolio will be copied in order to be distributed to RECC members for their review. So that your portfolio will copy most clearly and easily:
 - a) **If at all possible, submit your portfolio to the Office of RE Credentialing in electronic format.**
 - b) Whenever possible, use original documents and not copies.
 - c) Type/print everything, including page numbers; handwriting can look messy and be hard to decipher.
 - d) Choose font styles that are easy to read, in a size that is 12 point or larger.
 - e) Use white paper only.
 - f) Do not submit papers that are hole-punched or stapled; it is not necessary to submit the portfolio in a binder.
 - g) Submit all documents (including brochures and orders of service) as unfolded and unbound 8 ½ x 11 sheets.

3) Don't rely on Spell Check alone; it won't catch every type of error. Proofread your **own** work, and then recruit an outside reader to check it again, with a more impartial eye.

4) Include Audio/Visual samples in your portfolio ONLY after careful consideration. Is your video of professional quality? Is this format the best way to document this competence? When in doubt, choose some other form of documentation.

5) If you decide to include Audio/Visual material, provide an accompanying transcript or outline. Prepare the viewer for what s/he is about to see and what s/he should be looking for.

(Note: Audio/Visual materials are not duplicated for the entire Committee. They are previewed by one of its members, who presents a summary and assessment to the rest of the group. At most, only a portion of any Audio/Visual submission will be viewed by the whole Committee.)

6) When submitting your portfolio in hard copy format (not recommended), hold it together with a large clip. Binders and section dividers are not recommended. Since any binder and organizational supplies that you submit to the RE Credentialing Office will not be sent to individual RECC members, it is not helpful to have your portfolio reference particular locations in the binder (i.e., front sleeve, plastic insert, etc.) when identifying items in the portfolio.

7) Take advantage of offers to critique sections of your portfolio before it is submitted, especially from the RE Credentialing Director and your mentor. This will be helpful feedback in understanding the impression your portfolio might make on the RECC.

Format:

Below is the standard format for portfolios. With prior approval from RE Credentialing Director, portfolios can be structured using alternate methods of demonstration to accommodate learning styles. Without prior approval, portfolios received that are not in the standard format may be returned to the candidate. For each competency area included in the portfolio, include the following information in the format specified:

COMPETENCY _____

(Complete Part I. Provide at least one experience in Part II and at least one work sample in Part III.)

PART I

Overview:

(Provide an overview of what you know about this competency area, and how you have integrated your knowledge into your professional practice.

Suggested length (and only a suggestion) is up to one page.)

PART II (Only use the following categories that apply to you.)

List of Academic Courses (undergraduate & graduate)

(List each course and describe its relevance to this competency.) *Course:*

Relevance to competency (suggested length of reflection (and only a suggestion) is 125 – 175 words):

Structured Learning Experiences

(List experiences chronologically with the most recent first.)

Learning Experience:

Date completed:

Offered by:

Led by:

Reflection on: Provide a paragraph describing the learning experience and its value to you (suggested length of reflection (and only a suggestion) is 50 – 100 words).

Integration in Work: Provide a paragraph describing how this has or will influence your work (suggested length of reflection (and only a suggestion) is 125 – 175 words).

Independent/Group Study

(List experiences chronologically with the most recent first.)

Study Topic:

Date completed:

If group, list members:

Reflection on: Provide a paragraph describing the study topic and its value to you (suggested length of reflection (and only a suggestion) is 50 - 100 words).

Integration in Work: Provide a paragraph describing how this has or will influence your work (suggested length of reflection (and only a suggestion) is 125 – 175 words).

Personal/Life Experience

(List experiences, e.g. volunteer work, participation in organizations, hobbies, etc. that are related to this competency. List chronologically, with the most recent first.)

Brief description of experience/work (suggested length of description (and only a suggestion) is 50 – 100 words):

Date(s) :

Relevance to competency: Provide a paragraph on relevance to competency and value to you (suggested length of reflection (and only a suggestion) is 125 – 175 words).

Related Professional Experience/Work (non-religious education based)

(List non-religious education work/professional experience related to this competency. List chronologically, with the most recent first.)

Employer, City & State:

Date(s):

Brief description of work experience (suggested length of description (and only a suggestion) is 50 – 100 words):

Relevance to competency: provide a paragraph on relevance to competency and value to you (suggested length of reflection (and only a suggestion) is 125 – 175 words).

Professional Work/Leadership Experiences (religious education-based)

(List professional work/leadership experience related to this competency. List chronologically, with the most recent first.)

Brief description of work or experience (suggested length of description (and only a suggestion) is 50 – 100 words):

Date(s):

Relevance to competency: Provide a paragraph on relevance to competency and value to

you (suggested length of reflection (and only a suggestion) is 125 – 175 words).

Part III

Work Products/Portfolio Exhibits

(Please attach **one to three** examples of your work. Choose examples related to the competency that represent your **best** work, and that illustrate the **breadth** of your work in this competency.)

Brief description of each work example (suggested length of description (and only a suggestion) is 50 – 100 words):

Relevance to competency: Provide a paragraph with each work example that explains why you chose the particular piece and how the piece serves to demonstrate your competency in this area (suggested length of each reflection (and only a suggestion) is 125 – 175 words).

Content:

The portfolio should include documentation of structured learning experiences, leadership experiences, and examples of 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 to evaluate the candidate's competencies as a whole and in practice.

Please note that the RECC places particular emphasis on the Anti-oppression/Anti-Racism/Multiculturalism competency and the Safe Congregations aspect of the Right Relations and Professional Ethics competency, which are expected to be thoroughly demonstrated in portfolios, completion materials and interviews. The RECC believes this emphasis to be an extension of our UU Principles and UUA policy.

The work products/portfolio exhibits chosen for the portfolio will depend on the level of credentialing sought. Some general examples are (but are not limited to) such things as: an academic paper; a reflection paper describing how knowledge and experience gained from an event attended or structured learning experience has affected your professional practice, a copy of a religious education program prospectus or a teacher training manual; an outline of a teacher training workshop or other workshop you created; a script for a Christmas pageant; order of service from a worship service you have lead; a story or ritual that you have written; a relevant newsletter column; the text of a sermon written; a copy of a curriculum developed; your contribution to an annual report; an audio or video tape of you in an RE leadership role. Visual display materials or photographs of your work may enhance your work products.

For more specific examples of what might be chosen for work products/portfolio exhibits, and organized by credentialing level, please see the Continuum of Competencies at www.uua.org/documents/recc/continuum_competencies.pdf. Whatever you choose, it should demonstrate your knowledge and skill within the competency area, at the level of credentialing that is sought.

In general, only include samples of your most recent work. Include an earlier sample only when it demonstrates competency in an area where no recent work exists. Include only 1 - 3 examples in any one competency format area, and only include more than 1 if necessary for demonstrating the depth and breadth of your competency.

We suggest that each learning, leadership, or work sample you use in your portfolio be unique. If that is not possible you must identify any single learning or leadership experience or work product in no more than three different competency areas. If using a single learning or leadership experience or sample of professional work to satisfy multiple requirements, indicate so in the competency format with a notation of “see page XXXX” (in a different section,) instead of including multiple copies of the same documentation or work sample. Do not include flyers from professional events attended or lead. Your documentation in the required format is sufficient.

Choose work products/exhibits that you have created on your own, on which you have collaborated, or have significantly adapted. Do not include the work of others, including where you have made slight adaptations, or where you have incorporated it into a larger work product.

The Office of Religious Education Credentialing will preface your portfolio with all required forms and supporting documents submitted. These include previously submitted application materials: statement of intent with resume and statement of goals and aspirations; Endorsement Forms. They also include submitted completion materials: statement of personal theology or religious philosophy, and pedagogy of religious education (where appropriate); a completed Resource Check List and your annotations (how you have integrated the resource into your work) of the resources required and chosen; academic transcripts (sent only to Reader); any copies of academic diploma or certificate; documentation of a LREDA mentor relationship; Recommendation Forms, RE Credentialing Portfolio Information Cover Sheet, Self-Assessment of Competencies form, and personal photo. Please do not incorporate any of these documents into your portfolio.

RE Credentialing Competencies Grids:

The Religious Education Credentialing Competencies Grid, although not required, can be used as a tool to help select learning and leadership experiences and work samples for inclusion in each competency area of the portfolio. The grids are meant as guides for selection for portfolio only. They should not be used to organize the portfolio or be included in the portfolio.

Final Tips:

Adhere to the required portfolio competency format. Your portfolio will be returned to you if it is not in the required format, unless the format has been previously approved.

“Less is more”; don’t stuff your portfolio with many (and outdated) samples of your work; select carefully, choosing the 1 - 3 work samples that will best demonstrate your competency in a particular area.

Retain a copy of your Religious Education Credentialing Portfolio for safekeeping.

Work products and documentation collected for your RE Credentialing Portfolio can also be used to build your Professional Portfolio. A professional portfolio is an essential tool for a job search and other occasions.

Take a moment to review your portfolio and reflect on all that you have accomplished as a religious education professional. Share your portfolio and these reflections with your mentor and with those persons who will be writing Recommendations for you.