

POLICIES OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CREDENTIALING COMMITTEE (RECC)

1. STATUS LEVELS

The designated UUA staff member will keep records of participants and potential participants in the RE Credentialing Program as follows:

A. Inquiries – The staff member will log and respond to inquiries from potential Program participants.

B. Applicants - the staff member will create a folder (electronic or otherwise) for each person who submits application materials. Anyone working in the field of religious education with the ability to meet the Religious Education Credentialing Program requirements may apply to the program. Applicants may have completed none, some, or most of the requirements prior to applying.

C. Candidates - Once an Applicant is accepted to the RE Credentialing Program, the Applicant becomes a Candidate. In order to be accepted, the Applicant must:

- Have their application materials reviewed and approved by the designated UUA staff member, and
- Have an entry interview with the designated UUA staff member.

D. Credentialed Religious Educator Status – Associate Level, Credentialed Level, and Master Level –

- Credentialed Religious Educator Status at a given level is achieved once all requirements for that level are completed. Associate Level status is granted by a designated UUA staff member on behalf of the RECC. Credentialed and Master Level status is granted by vote of the RECC.
- In the event that the candidate does not achieve the level sought:
 - A lower level may or may not be granted.
 - A plan for making up deficiencies may be presented, with or without the need to return to the RECC for another interview.
 - A Candidate may be discouraged from requesting further consideration.

E. Inactive Candidate Status

A Religious Education Credentialing Program Candidate may request to be put on Inactive Candidate status in the program up to two years. This status may also be initiated by the RECC or the designated UUA staff member. During this time, the candidate will not have access to the listserv, a LREDA mentor, nor any scholarship funds made available specifically to credentialing candidates.

F. Termination of Candidate Status

A candidate may choose to terminate participation in the RE Credentialing Program by contacting the designated UUA staff member.

2. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Application to the Religious Education Credentialing Program 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

3. INTERVIEW APPOINTMENTS WITH RECC

Only persons accepted into the Religious Education Credentialing Program and having completed all requirements for the credentialing level sought, including equivalencies that have been reviewed and accepted, will be eligible to receive appointments with the RECC.

4. SCHEDULING OF INTERVIEWS

Candidates seeking Credentialed Religious Educator and Credentialed Religious Educator – Masters Level status are required to meet with the RECC for an interview. At the time of their Religious Education Credentialing interview, Candidates will have completed all program requirements as described in the Religious Education Credentialing Program Plan. These materials must be received by the Office of Religious Education Credentialing by the deadline provided.

In order to balance the number of interviews at any one meeting, appointments will be at the final discretion of, the designated UUA staff member, in consultation with the RECC Chair. The preliminary schedule will be determined and confirmations mailed at least six weeks prior to each meeting.

When the number of candidates seeking interviews exceeds the number of available interview slots, priority for slots will be determined by the designated UUA staff member in consultation with the RECC Chair. A waiting list will be established for candidates who are ready to see the RECC but do not fit into the schedule.

5. MENTOR RELATIONSHIPS

Every Religious Education Credentialing program Candidate seeking religious education credentialing status is required to have completed at least one mentor relationship with a mentor trained and assigned by the Committee on Mentoring of the Liberal Religious Educators Association. This requirement may be waived by the RECC or by designated UUA staff member at their discretion. The specifics of the mentoring requirement are agreed upon by the RECC and the LREDA Committee on Mentoring.

With the consent of the candidate, the designated UUA staff member shall send to the Committee on Mentoring and the assigned mentor the Candidate's application packet.

The RECC will not ask for evaluative information about the Candidate from the mentor.

If a mentor does not hear from a candidate in two months, they should contact the LREDA Committee on Mentoring or the designated UUA staff member to let them know about it. It is the responsibility of the LREDA Committee on Mentoring to ensure that candidate-mentor relationships are taking place as agreed upon. Before a candidate receives their credential, the designated UUA staff member seeks confirmation from the Committee on Mentoring that the mentor requirement has been fulfilled.

6. EQUIVALENCIES AND WAIVERS

Requests from a candidate for fulfilling RE Credentialing Program requirements through equivalencies will be approved at the RECC's discretion.

Requests from a candidate to waive any requirement, rule, policy, or procedure of the program will be approved at the RECC's discretion.

7. TRAVEL EXPENSES FOR PROGRAM CANDIDATES

It will be the Candidate's responsibility to pay transportation and other expenses incurred in meeting with the RECC.

8. RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS' FILES

Religious Educators with religious education credentialing status may request a copy of their RECC file, or a portion thereof, at a cost which covers staff time and materials.

Applicant and Candidate files will be kept for at least seven years from date of most recent activity, after which they may be deleted or destroyed at the discretion of designated UUA staff

member. Credentialed Religious Educator files will be kept indefinitely.

9. NOTIFICATION OF TERMINATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CREDENTIALING STATUS

The RECC shall inform all religious educators with religious education credentialing status and congregations, by letter sent by conventional mail, of cases of termination of religious education credentialing status.

In the event that a religious educator voluntarily resigns from religious education credentialing status while a complaint is pending, the record of the RECC shall reflect the resignation with a statement describing the stage of the investigation. For example, the statement shall read: Resigned (complaint pending); Resigned (after probable cause finding on pending complaint); or Resigned (during hearing on pending complaint).

All terminations of religious education credentialing status shall be public. .

10. COMPLAINT PROCEDURES AGAINST CREDENTIALLED RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS

A. Initiating a complaint

Complaints involving alleged unprofessional/unbecoming conduct of a Credentialed Religious Educator shall be received and reviewed by the Office of Ethics and Safety Intake Person (hereafter called the Intake Person).

The UUA Office of Ethics and Safety shall have the power to initiate the early steps on their own in response to a complaint of unprofessional conduct by a religious educator with religious education credentialing status. This shall include contacting the religious educator charged and, if deemed necessary, appointing an investigative committee.

Complaints should be from a person or persons with first-hand knowledge of the circumstances; from the congregational, institutional, or agency board with whom the religious educator works; or from the UUA Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group.

The Intake Person will determine whether the complaint is a congregational matter or an ethical matter requiring further inquiry, and shall refer such ethical matters to the Consultant for Ethics in Congregational Life (hereafter called the Consultant). The Consultant will determine whether the matter should go before the Executive Committee of the RECC. Decisions to not refer a complaint to the Consultant or the RECC Executive Committee require review and unanimous agreement of the Director of Ministries and Faith Development and the Chief Operating Officer of the UUA. The Chair of the RECC may also be consulted. Except in cases involving children or dependent adults, the Intake Person will not generally advance complaints to the RECC that were filed by persons not directly involved in the circumstances covered by the complaint.

Complaints must be in writing and signed by the complainant(s) or Board and shall contain a brief statement of the facts upon which the complaint is based. If necessary, the Intake Person will assist the complainant in putting the complaint in writing. Contact information for the Intake Person is: 617-948-6462 or safecongregations@uua.org.

B. Timeliness and Stale Matters

Complaints should be received within a reasonable time period following the circumstances giving rise to the complaint. Unless the Intake Person or Director of Ministries and Faith Development determines otherwise for good cause, complaints regarding events occurring more than six years prior to the date of the complaint will not be considered. Good cause shall include, but not be limited to, complaints involving abuse of children or other particularly egregious behaviors or repetitive actionable behavior.

C. Resolutions of Complaints

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When a complaint goes to the Executive Committee of the RECC, the Religious Educator may be invited to meet with them, either in person or using secure electronic communication. The Religious Educator is expected to be accompanied by a LREDA Good Officer. The cost of meeting with the RECC will be borne by the Committee.

The Executive Committee may determine that no further action is warranted, may propose to the full Committee a mutually agreed upon course of redress, or may determine that further investigation is necessary.

Written confirmation of a resolution agreement shall be sent to the religious educator within 14 days. A copy will be placed in the credentialed religious educator's file. Additional copies may be sent to other persons or institutional representatives as deemed appropriate by the RECC.

D. Complaint Investigations

The type of investigation required by a complaint will depend upon the alleged circumstances and the type of additional information required.

When the Executive Committee calls for a review by the full RECC, it will charge the Executive Secretary to determine the type and scope of the investigation and appoint an investigation team in consultation with the RECC Chair. If interviews are required as part of an investigation, both the individual(s) bringing the complaint and the religious educator have a right to an individual interview, and to know the identity of the interviewer(s) and makeup of the investigation team before the interview.

The following guidelines are to be used by the investigators in conducting the investigation:

- In consultation with the Executive Secretary and Chair of the RECC, it is the responsibility of the investigators to develop and full and complete record of the facts and circumstances surrounding the complaint and any other relevant information which may be useful to the Committee in its deliberations.
- Each individual appointed to be an investigator is expected to maintain neutrality and an open mind throughout the investigation. All information obtained through the investigation must be held in the strictest confidence.
- In consultation with the Executive Secretary and Chair of the RECC, the investigators should determine what, if any, additional information is required to assist the Committee in its deliberations and the most efficient method for obtaining that information.
- If it is determined that personal interviews would be appropriate, the appointed investigators will interview the complainant, the religious educator against whom the complaint has been made, and as many other individuals with knowledge of the issues or circumstances raised by the complaint. Any summary of an individual's statement must be approved by that individual to be included in the report.

The appointed investigators will file a report and all information collected with the Executive Secretary promptly after the conclusion of the investigation. All notes and other information gathered by the investigators should be transmitted to the Executive Secretary for archiving as soon as possible following the completion of the investigation.

The RECC Chair and Executive Secretary should review the report. If it is determined that additional information is required, the investigators shall obtain the additional information before the report is forwarded to the Executive Committee.

12. CONDITION OF SUSPENSION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CREDENTIALING

STATUS

A religious educator who has been suspended from religious education credentialing status shall not during such suspension identify herself or himself, or hold herself or himself out, as having religious education credentialing status.

13. PROCEDURES FOR RE-ADMISSION (for those removed for Cause or by request)

- A. A religious educator seeking re-admission to religious education credentialing status shall submit a Re-admission Application on the approved form.
- B. Upon receipt of such application the RECC shall notify the appropriate officer(s) of the congregation(s) or organization(s) affected, any original complainant(s), and appropriate district staff that such application has been received. The RECC will receive their comments regarding the appropriateness of re-admission.
- C. The RECC shall review such application and determine whether or not to readmit the religious educator to religious education credentialing status, or to require further consideration of the application subject to conditions which the RECC shall prescribe.
- D. If the application is determined to require further consideration the applicant may be required to obtain a professional rehabilitation assessment at an institution designated by the RECC. Such assessment shall evaluate the applicant's potential for rehabilitation, and if rehabilitation is determined by the RECC to be a possibility, the institution shall design and submit to the RECC a proposed rehabilitation plan. The applicant shall pay the costs of such assessment and of the design of a proposed rehabilitation plan, and shall, prior to the commencement of the assessment, execute a release by which the assessment and the rehabilitation plan shall be the sole property of the RECC. The applicant shall receive a copy of the assessment and of the rehabilitation plan.
- E. The RECC shall review such assessment and the proposed rehabilitation plan, and shall determine whether or not to further consider the application for re-admission. If the RECC determines not to further consider the application, it shall so advise the applicant.
- F. If the RECC determines to review further application it shall design or approve a rehabilitation plan which may include, but not be limited to, psychotherapy, supervised field experience, making amends, or further assessment.
- G. Upon the applicant's successful completion of a rehabilitation plan the RECC shall determine whether or not to readmit the applicant to religious education credentialing status. If re-admission is granted, a re-entry plan and/or conditions shall be designated by the RECC in conjunction with the Office of Religious Education Credentialing.

14. CREDENTIALING BASED ON U.S. QUALIFICATIONS

The RECC credentials candidates based on its evaluation of a candidate's ability to serve as a religious educator in the United States.

15. POLICY ON DIVIDED OPINION

In a decision, if the full RECC wishes to reverse an Executive Committee or subcommittee recommendation, a final decision will not be made until the full RECC has reviewed all the written information that was available to the recommending group. If the information included a personal interview, the full RECC may, at its option, conduct a repeat interview.

There shall be an option of a majority and a minority report from the Executive Committee or Working Group when the Executive Committee decisions are not unanimous.

16. POLICY ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CREDENTIALING RECORDS

Candidate materials are to be used only for RECC duties unless candidate gives explicit permission.

17. PROGRAM EVALUATION

The RECC will engage in regular program evaluation, making use of feedback from participants and/or other sources.

18. POLICY ON NON-DISCRIMINATION

The RECC declares and affirms its special responsibility to value all persons and will act in accord with the non-discrimination paragraph of the UUA Bylaws Section C-2.3

19. EMPHASIS ON ANTI-OPPRESSION, ANTI-RACISM, AND SAFE CONGREGATIONS

The RECC emphasis on anti-oppression, anti-racism and safe congregations will be communicated through Religious Education Credentialing Program requirements. The RECC will hold a reflective discussion related to anti-oppression during each in-person meeting.

20. POLICY ON RECC TRANSPARENCY.

An individual who has earned Credentialed Religious Educator Level or Credentialed Religious Educator – Master Level status in the Religious Education Credentialing Program, either through the process or having been transitioned, will be invited to be an observer of the entire RECC. This started in October 2004 and will operate under confidentiality rules.

The agenda for each face-to-face meeting of the RECC will include a Time for Comments to allow interested persons to have an opportunity to share feedback and pose questions to the RECC.

Requests to speak at the Time for Comments may be received by the designated UUA staff member ahead of time.

Précis of RECC meeting minutes and Credentialed Observer reflections will be posted on the UUA website

21. DISCUSSIONS THAT EVALUATE CANDIDATES

Unless necessary for meeting preparation, prior to the granting of a candidate's credential, RECC members shall not discuss their opinions on a candidate's strengths or weaknesses other than in an official meeting of the RECC.