



Rules and Policies of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee

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Rules of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee

1. The Rules

These Rules are promulgated by authority of ARTICLE VII, Section 7.6 and ARTICLE XI of the Bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association. A copy of ARTICLE VII, Section 7.6 and ARTICLE XI, is printed in this booklet. In these Rules, the word "society" refers to a church or fellowship. All rules previously promulgated are hereby rescinded and revoked.

2. Committee's Jurisdiction

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee ("MFC" or "Committee") has jurisdiction over Ministerial Fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association ("UUA") and promulgates rules, policies and procedures from time to time. These Rules apply to all ministers who are in Ministerial Fellowship with the Association. The MFC also has jurisdiction over the approved list of ministers making any changes to the list as provided in these rules and may determine when and in what manner this list shall be published.

3. Executive Secretary

The Director of the Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group ("MFD") is the Executive Secretary of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, but is not a voting member of the Committee. The Executive Secretary has charge of the correspondence and the custody of the Committee's records and files, which shall be kept confidential as provided in the Bylaws. Upon request and agreement, information about a minister from the files of the Committee shall be shared with that minister except for information transmitted in confidence or otherwise deemed confidential by the MFC. The Executive Secretary shall keep a complete and accurate list of ministers who have, and who have had, Ministerial Fellowship, and such other books and documents as may be necessary or convenient to maintain complete and adequate records.

4. Executive Committee

The MFC's Executive Committee consists of the MFC Chair, MFC members appointed by the Chair, and, as non-voting members, the MFC Executive Secretary, UUA Professional Development Director, and the UUA Ministerial Credentialing Director.



5. Meetings

The Committee shall meet at such times and places as it shall determine. Special meetings may be called by the Chair or by the Executive Secretary. Five voting members constitute a quorum.

6. Definition of a Minister

For the purposes of these Rules, the term "Minister" applies to those persons whose work is theologically grounded, whose work expresses Unitarian Universalist values and principles, whose self and contextual understanding are as a professional religious leader, and who has been granted fellowship by the MFC.

Types of ministry in which fellowshipped ministers engage include:

A. Community Ministers

Ministers qualified for and applying their skill and experience to the community setting in such capacities as counseling, chaplaincy, social justice, education in religious studies, and other ministries as the Ministerial Fellowship Committee may recognize, shall be categorized and referred to as "Community Ministers".

B. Ministers of Religious Education

Ministers qualified for and applying their skill and experience to educational settings related to religious growth and development in one or more congregation(s) that is or are members of the Unitarian Universalist Association shall be categorized and referred to as "Ministers of Religious Education."

C. Parish Ministers

Ministers qualified for and applying their skill and experience in one or more congregation that is or are members of the Unitarian Universalist Association shall be categorized and referred to as "Parish Ministers."

7. Definition of Professional Ministry

To qualify as active service in ministry, a position must:

- A. Require the use of traditional ministerial skills, such as pastoral counseling, worship and preaching, religious education, social witness and advocacy, and institutional leadership.



- B. Have as its central purpose service to persons or the transformation of society. In addition, the minister must be a member of, and maintain active involvement in, a UUA member society.

A minister who does not serve in a UU related institution shall be required to demonstrate continued interest in retaining that status by giving evidence of active involvement in denominational district, local society, and collegial activities.

8. Application for Candidacy for Ministerial Fellowship

An application for Ministerial Fellowship shall be submitted to the Committee following the process outlined in the Preparatory Stages listed in MFC Policy 3.

As part of the application, the candidate must agree in writing to be bound by the rules, policies and procedures of the MFC. In examining each candidate's qualifications, the Committee may consider any evidence which it deems relevant to assess the candidate and may reject any application. Upon the recommendation of Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group, persons who are unsuitable for Ministerial Fellowship will by vote of the Executive Committee be ineligible to receive financial aid or to appear before the full Committee.

A. Background Checks

All candidates for ministry are required to undergo a background check before being permitted to interview with the Committee. Candidates are responsible for paying for the background check from an agency approved by the MFC and have the reports sent directly to the Committee. All reports will become property of the UUA. The MFC reserves the right to contact references, supervisors, and other individuals from any source to clarify information supplied in the candidate's packet or to obtain further information about the candidate's suitability for ministry.

9. Interview Procedure

No applicant shall receive Ministerial Fellowship without being interviewed at least once by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

Following the interview the candidate will be informed by the Committee of its decision. Candidates receiving either a Category I or a Category II for Preliminary Fellowship shall be required to satisfy all contingencies within three years of the Committee's decision. Failure to do so will result in nullifying the original decision.



A. Decision Categories

Category I

Qualified for Unitarian Universalist ministry with no contingencies other than satisfactory completion of degree, internship, and Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE).

Category II

Qualified for Unitarian Universalist ministry provided specific contingencies are met satisfactorily.

Category III

Encouraging progress for Unitarian Universalist ministry, but with issues to be addressed, (i.e., academic, personal, institutional understanding, etc.) so that the MFC requires a return visit. If specific work has been outlined, it must be completed before a return visit.

Category IV

Considerable doubt as to whether the candidate meets the general qualifications for Unitarian Universalist ministry.

Category V

The MFC sees no potential for the candidate in Unitarian Universalist ministry, and discourages the candidate from further preparation.

B. Return Interviews

Applications to appear before the Committee from candidates who have previously received a Category IV or V shall be reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee at its discretion.

10. Granting of Fellowship

Ministerial Fellowship is a privilege and not a right. Committee decisions regarding Preliminary Fellowship shall not be subject to appeal. If Preliminary Fellowship has been terminated, a person may re-apply for Ministerial Fellowship. In appropriate circumstances the MFC may meet with a minister upon request of the minister regarding fellowship status.

11. General Qualifications

All candidates must have satisfactorily completed all educational and skill training programs and demonstrate the qualities, skills and aptitude required for Unitarian Universalist ministry as determined by the MFC. Those qualifications and requirements include, but are not limited to, the following:



- satisfactory completion of an approved clinical pastoral education (CPE) program and an internship (as described in Rule 12, “Internships”), or the equivalent;
- have completed the required reading;
- have undergone an approved career assessment program;
- be able to demonstrate an understanding of and experience with UU congregational life based on at least two years’ active involvement or equivalent;
- must demonstrate a strong motivation for our ministry;
- must be sponsored by a member society;
- and must demonstrate a balanced and healthy personality, a capacity for self-understanding, a concern for others, and ministerial leadership skills.

The Committee will further require that the candidate be well informed on the history and development of Unitarianism and Universalism, familiar with the Bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and fully committed to the purpose, objectives and guidelines of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers’ Association. A candidate for the Ministry shall also have a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent from a theological school approved by the Committee, or have had an equivalent educational experience. Any exceptions to these qualifications must be approved by the MFC.

The MFC retains the right to request and consider any and all information it deems relevant in making its determination regarding whether to accept or reject a candidate.

12. Internships

All Candidates are required to complete satisfactorily a full-time or part time supervised internship. Full-time internships must be for at least nine months. Part-time internships extend over a total of 18 months at a minimum of 20 hours per week. Supervision will be provided by a minister in Full Fellowship. Equivalent experience, e.g., fieldwork placements or supervised ministries, may be considered on a case by case basis.

Internships play a crucial role in ministerial formation, thus:

- The MFC expects a candidate applying for Preliminary Fellowship to demonstrate abilities in the full range of ministerial competencies, defined jointly by the MFC and the UUMA as Pastoral Work, Prophetic Outreach, Teaching, Practical Arts and Worship. An internship shall therefore be designed to enhance existing and needed skills within these broad competencies.



- Lay leaders must evaluate and affirm the ministerial roles of a candidate during an internship. The internship committee shall therefore include a majority lay committee of five or more persons.
- An internship is not only about development of skills. The internship shall therefore be designed to enhance the intern's ability to reflect on the theological and ethical bases from which these skills arise.
- An internship is an opportunity to grow into the identity and role of a minister. Therefore, the internship shall include evaluations from the intern, supervising minister, and lay committee, which are shared and which shall accompany other application documents to the MFC. Such evaluations shall emphasize reflections on areas of change and growth during the internship. Interns are required to develop a written learning agreement with their supervisors and lay committees before, or at the beginning of, any internship.

13. Preliminary Fellowship

When the Committee determines that the candidate is qualified to pursue Ministerial Fellowship, the Committee shall grant the candidate Preliminary Fellowship status.

A. Renewal of Fellowship

A person in Preliminary Fellowship shall be reviewed approximately every year from the date of hire or call. To be eligible for review, the minister must be engaged in compensated ministerial activities which constitute fifty-percent or more of a typical work schedule for a renewal period of 10 to 12 consecutive months. The Committee will also consider, for review, compensated ministerial activity which constitutes at least twenty-five percent of the typical work schedule (430 hours per year) if the renewal period is at least 24 consecutive months in duration.

This requirement may, at the Committee's discretion, be waived when it determines that the ministerial service is substantial enough to warrant eligibility for review.

B. Renewal Requirements

Each renewal review must include the following:

- i. A self-evaluation
- ii. An evaluation completed by one's supervisor or supervising committee (i.e. Board of Trustees, supervising minister, supervisor, etc. In ministries where one does not have a supervisor, a supervisory committee or relationship must be established for the purpose of evaluation.)

Community ministers serving institutions in which they are regularly and formally



evaluated have the option to submit their institution's evaluation forms or a supervisor's letter of evaluation in lieu of the MFC's Board of Trustees/Supervisor's evaluation form. The self-evaluation and an evaluation from the Ministerial Formation Team is also required. The MFC requires UU representation through either the supervisor or someone on the Ministerial Formation Team.

- iii. An evaluation from one's Committee on Ministry. For community-based ministers, an appointed Ministerial Formation Team may be appointed to serve this function. The Ministerial Formation Team should include members of a congregation and appropriate representation from the institution or agency being served by the minister. If the minister is not employed by an institution or agency, then composition of the Committee on Ministry must be approved by the Professional Development Director of the UUA.
- iv. A professional development plan
- v. A form completed by the minister's mentor confirming that the minister is in a mentoring relationship.
- vi. A copy of the agreement or covenant with one's affiliating congregation. (Community ministers only.)

Following any review, Preliminary Fellowship may be renewed, continued in present status, terminated or a determination made to move the candidate to Full Fellowship.

C. Renewal Period

A person has up to three years to establish a ministry that is eligible for renewal of fellowship and submit an application for renewal of fellowship. Once a person begins working in ministry that is eligible for renewal of fellowship, one must submit an application for renewal of fellowship annually. If a person stops working in ministry, the minister may remain in that renewal period for up to three years before either entering Inactive Status or applying for a waiver from the Committee. If a waiver is granted to extend the renewal period, the extension will be for one year.

D. Community Minister Renewals

All ministers serving community settings must during Preliminary Fellowship receive affiliation with a UUA or CUC member congregation. Affiliation involves a formal connection to a congregation and recognition of the community minister as performing a ministry. Affiliation should include a vote of the Board and having a covenanted relationship with the congregation's minister(s), if there is one.



E. Continuity of Ministry of Preliminary Fellowship

To receive Full Fellowship, a minister must have been granted at least two renewals from the same congregation or organization. Where, however, the minister has been accepted into the Accredited Interim Ministry training program and is making expected progress toward completion, each year of interim ministry may be counted.

14. Inactive Fellowship Status

Any minister holding Preliminary Fellowship, who in the judgment of the Committee ceases to work as a minister, shall be moved to Inactive Fellowship Status. The decision of the Committee to move a minister to Inactive Fellowship Status shall not be subject to appeal. A minister may apply to the Committee to be removed from Inactive Fellowship Status.

Ministers in Inactive Fellowship Status and their families will not ordinarily be eligible for financial aid administered through Ministry and Professional Leadership until the needs of ministers in Fellowship have been met.

Every year ministers in Inactive Fellowship Status who wish to retain their Preliminary Fellowship credential must pay a fee of \$25 and keep the MFC informed of current contact information. Ministers who fail to respond within 60 days to a letter of inquiry from the Committee or who fail to pay the required fee will be removed from Preliminary Fellowship by a vote of the MFC.

15. Entry into Professional Ministry

A. Settlement

Only a candidate who has received Preliminary Fellowship is entitled to represent themselves as a fellowshipped UU minister and to access the UUA's settlement system.

B. Preliminary Fellowship Qualifications

All ministers in Preliminary Fellowship must meet all requirements and general qualifications of professional ministry, as well as any additional requirements established by the MFC, which shall include, but are not limited to:

- i. Being in a mentored relationship with a UU minister in Full Fellowship who is serving or has served in the same type of ministry;
- ii. Being actively involved in a UU congregation;
- iii. Undergoing annual review;



- iv. Maintaining contact with the UUA Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group; and
- v. Demonstrating continued growth and satisfactory progress toward Full Fellowship.

16. Termination of Preliminary Fellowship

A. Grounds for Removal from Preliminary Fellowship

Ministers in Preliminary Fellowship who demonstrate significant problems that raise questions about their suitability for the UU ministry may have their fellowship terminated by vote of the MFC.

Significant problems include, but are not limited to the following:

- i. Inappropriate or counterproductive behavior toward the settlement process as determined by the Transitions Director.
- ii. Inability or difficulties establishing and/or maintaining successful relationships without conflict with parishes or communities served.
- iii. Evaluations for renewal that raise issues of concern, including failure to make satisfactory progress towards Full Fellowship.
- iv. Failure to receive satisfactory renewals on a timely basis.
- v. Any other reason(s) or problem(s) deemed significant by the MFC.

B. Procedures for Removing Ministers from Preliminary Fellowship

When warranted the staff of Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group may handle situations that arise concerning a minister's performance.

If the Executive Committee deems that evidence warrants a review of the minister's Preliminary Fellowship, it will ask the minister to meet with the Executive Committee for a Fellowship Review at the next most convenient meeting. The Executive Committee shall give the minister a minimum of 30 days' notice. The minister may submit any relevant material prior to the Executive Committee's decision. The minister must be accompanied by a Good Offices person of the UUMA, who must be a minister in Full Fellowship. Expenses for both ministers' travel will be borne by the MFC.

The Executive Committee shall also invite the complainant to meet privately with the Executive Committee, accompanied by an advocate designated by the Office of Ethics and Safety. The option to appear before the Committee shall be in person or by secured teleconference software. The choice between such methods of appearance shall be at the discretion of the invitee. All expenses involved in the travel and appearance of the complainant, or individual representatives of classes of complainants, will be borne by the Committee. The Executive Committee may



invite additional representatives or complainants to meet privately with it, accompanied by an advocate designated by the Office of Ethics and Safety, if (1) the Executive Committee deems such meeting essential to fully understand the nature of the complaint and ensure its appropriate resolution, and (2) the Moderator of the Board of Trustees approves its payment of expenses involved in the travel and appearance of such person(s).

Following the Fellowship Review with the Executive Committee, the minister will be informed of the decision of the Executive Committee as to whether the minister will be continued in Preliminary Fellowship and/or any contingencies that have been voted before the minister can continue in Fellowship.

A recommendation by the Executive Committee to terminate a minister's preliminary fellowship will be referred to the full Committee for a vote.

If the executive committee established contingencies or made requests of the minister, the minister's failure to satisfactorily fulfill the contingencies and/or requests shall constitute grounds for termination of preliminary fellowship.

17. Granting of Full Fellowship

To be granted Full Fellowship, a minister must have been in Preliminary Fellowship for at least three years, received three satisfactory renewals, and be deemed by the Committee to be an appropriate candidate for Full Fellowship.

18. Settlement Restrictions for Ministers Serving Congregations

In order to ensure an equitable settlement process for congregations and ministers in transition, policies, procedures and restrictions have been developed by the Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group and are administered by the Transitions Director. Failure to adhere to the policies, procedures and restrictions governing the settlement process, including, but not limited to, the restrictions described below may constitute grounds for termination of Ministerial Fellowship.

A. Three-Year Rule

A minister is not eligible for settlement in a congregation for a least three years following previous engagement in a professional capacity in that congregation. This includes but is not limited to interns, field-education students, interims, contract ministers, Ministerial Settlement Representatives, religious educators, etc. Waivers may be granted by application to the MFC.



B. Professional Engagement Rule

For any given professional vacancy, a minister who has visited a congregation in any professional capacity after the most recently settled minister has announced their resignation to the congregation shall not be recommended to that congregation by Ministries and Faith Development for twelve months following the visit.

C. Inside Candidate Rule

Any minister who is either employed by or a member of a congregation seeking to fill another ministerial position on staff may not accept a call for that position once the Transitions Director has submitted a list of potential candidates to that congregation.

19. Candidates Seeking Transfer or Plural Standing

The Committee shall determine whether or not to grant Preliminary Fellowship to a transfer candidate based on a review of that candidate's completed application and any other information discovered during the review conducted by the Ministries and Faith Development staff on behalf of the MFC.

Transfer candidates, or those seeking plural standing, shall be subject to a thorough review of their present and/or past denominational, associational or adjudicatory standing to ensure that all appropriate information has been shared with Ministries and Faith Development and the Committee, and that no pertinent information has been withheld. Candidates will be required to sign an authorization form, either before or immediately after their interview with the Committee, permitting Ministries and Faith Development to conduct such a review. If Ministries and Faith Development later learns of detrimental information previously undisclosed, the Committee will be notified and may recall the candidate or deny Preliminary Fellowship until the matter is resolved.

The MFC may require that transfer or plural standing candidates fulfill certain contingencies and/or requests, which may include, but are not limited to, an internship, supervised ministry or CPE as determined by the Committee.

A. Ministers in Plural Standing and Disciplinary Issues

A minister in plural standing is required to notify the Executive Secretary of the MFC in writing, as soon as practicable but no later than 10 days after notice of the initiation of an investigation or fitness review as a result of any complaint made against them to—or any disciplinary action taken by—any non-UU judicatory.

The minister shall cooperate with the MFC's Executive Secretary or their designee and promptly provide any and all requested information, including authorization to speak with any person



relevant to the complaint, investigation, fitness review, or disciplinary action, on a continuing basis.

Failure to comply with the requirements of this rule may result in suspension and/or removal from Fellowship. The MFC will make recommendations for appropriate actions, if necessary, in accordance with the MFC Rules and Policies.

20. Complaint Procedures

Complaints or issues regarding a minister's conduct or performance may be raised by the MFC at any time through the initiation of a Fellowship Review. Any individual wishing to file a complaint against a minister must contact the Intake Person for the Office of Ethics and Safety. Complaints must be in writing.

At the "intake" stage, the Intake Person for the Office of Ethics and Safety hears the complaint, provides information on the process, responds to questions from the complainant and conducts an assessment of the complaint to determine whether the complaint should be referred on to the MFC. The assessment shall include any statements by the persons filing the complaint about any other victims, or classes of victims, that should receive consideration if the complaint is referred to the MFC.

The Intake Person for the Office of Ethics and Safety has the discretion to refer matters not suitable for adjudication by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) to other resources such as District Staff, Ministries and Faith Development staff, Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA) or Good Offices, etc.

When the Committee receives a complaint about ministerial conduct or receives concerns regarding a minister's competency the Committee shall take appropriate corrective action which may include a process of redress which can range from no action, specific professional development assignments, a period of probation or, in cases involving serious misconduct or incompetence, termination of Fellowship.

If the concerns of the Committee cannot or have not been addressed through specified assignments and/or a probationary period, then the Committee will recommend the minister be removed from Fellowship.

21. Procedures for Review of Full Fellowship

The Committee may call for a Fellowship Review on its own motion or upon the receipt of a complaint regarding a minister's conduct or competence. Action may be taken by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee regarding a minister's Full Fellowship status for unbecoming conduct, incompetence or other specified cause after notice and opportunity for a Fellowship Review before the Committee.



A. Invitation to Appear before Committee

The MFC shall give the minister notice and an opportunity to be heard before the MFC. The minister may submit any relevant material to the Committee and will be given copies of any documents upon which the Committee may rely. The minister will be invited to meet with the Executive Committee of the MFC and is expected to be accompanied by a UUMA Good Offices person in Full Fellowship.

The Executive Committee shall also invite the complainant to meet privately with the Executive Committee, accompanied by an advocate designated by the Office of Ethics and Safety. The option to appear before the committee shall be in person or by secured teleconference software. The choice between such methods of appearance shall be at the discretion of the invitee.

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 and a full Committee Fellowship Review is warranted.

B. Investigation for Fellowship Review

If a full Committee Fellowship Review is called for, the Executive Committee will assign an investigative team from outside the Ministerial Fellowship Committee's membership, to be in contact with complainants and other individuals the team deems relevant. Information gathered by the investigative team will be shared with the Committee and with the minister.

C. Notice of Investigation Findings

A written notice shall be sent to the minister outlining the reasons for the Fellowship Review, all information gathered from the investigation that will be considered at the Fellowship Review, the date and location of the Fellowship Review, and the procedures which will be followed. Such notification shall be postmarked not less than one month prior to the scheduled date of the Review.

D. Expenses of Parties to Appear before Committee

All expenses involved in the travel and appearance of the minister and the minister's Good Offices person will be borne by the Committee. All expenses involved in the travel and appearance of the complainant, or individual representatives of classes of complainants, will be borne by the Committee. The Executive Committee may invite additional representatives or complainants to meet privately with it, accompanied by an advocate designated by the Office of Ethics and Safety, if:

- i. the Executive Committee deems such meeting essential to fully understand the nature of the complaint and ensure its appropriate resolution, and



- ii. the Moderator of the Board of Trustees approves its payment of expenses involved in the travel and appearance of such person(s).

E. Response Period

A written response to the contents of the investigation including the name of the minister's Good Offices person and any additional material the minister intends to submit for consideration is required within 14 days of receipt of the notice referred to in Rule 21C.

If a minister fails to appear at a Fellowship review, the Review will proceed in the minister's absence.

F. Procedures in Cases of Criminal Charges

In the event that criminal charges are pending against the minister, the Executive Committee may suspend all or part of the investigation until the conclusion of the criminal adjudication. A court transcript/record may be used in lieu of or in addition to an investigative committee report. Ministers should cooperate with the MFC in providing access to any transcript or record. A termination of Full Fellowship may be based in whole or in part on the court transcript/record without any further evidence.

G. Procedures for Administrative Suspension

Upon recommendation of the Executive Secretary, the Executive Committee may administratively suspend a minister's fellowship until, and while, a minister's status is being reviewed by the MFC. A minister will be expected to abide by any such suspension and any other conditions or requirements imposed by the MFC during any investigation or deliberation by the Committee.

22. Probation

The MFC may require or impose conditions, requirements or contingencies on a minister in Full Fellowship during a period of probation.

In addition to any specific requirements imposed on the minister, all ministers on probation shall be required to be evaluated annually and have evaluations submitted to the MFC. The Committee will require a self-evaluation and evaluations from the minister's committee on ministry and governing board or supervisor addressing the specific concerns of the Committee. The minister will also be required to have a formal mentoring relationship and a developmental plan. All requirements must be documented annually and submitted to the Committee for annual review. The length of the probationary period shall not exceed three years without a waiver being granted by the Committee. If the minister is not engaged in an active ministry during the



probation period then the minister will be moved to Inactive Fellowship Status until such time that the minister reenters active ministry at which point the probation will be reinstated.

23. Administrative Hold

When a minister experiences conflict or a difficult parting with a congregation or other institution, UUA Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group or Congregational Life staff (collectively, “MFD or CL staff”) may refer that minister to participate in a process of assessment by the UUA review team. MFD or CL staff may also refer ministers who show patterns of incompetence for a process of assessment by the UUA review team. MFD or CL staff have the right to place the minister on hold from settlement until the assessment process has been concluded, or for a period of not more than three years.

During or at the conclusion of that period of time, if there is no resolution of the assessment, the minister will be referred to the MFC Executive Committee for consideration of a Fellowship review. The list of ministers on Administrative Hold will be reviewed annually by the MFC Executive Committee at the September meeting. If at any time the minister wishes to contest being placed on hold for settlement and/or recommendation for ministerial positions, the minister has the right to request a Fellowship Review before the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

24. Criteria for Termination of Full Fellowship

The status of Full Fellowship of a minister in the Unitarian Universalist Association may be terminated upon occurrence of any of these circumstances:

- A. When the Committee is unable to maintain contact with a minister for two consecutive years, the Committee shall make a record in summary form of its efforts to maintain such contact. Reinstatement may be made by the Committee upon petition of the minister.
- B. When a minister's performance and/or behavior is found by the Committee to be conduct unbecoming a minister, incompetence, or for other specified cause. Incompetence includes, but is not limited to, a pattern of conflicted ministries and/or inability to maintain positive congregational or community relationships.
- C. When the minister has not satisfactorily completed probation or addressed the concerns previously identified by the Committee during a Fellowship Review.

25. Appeals

In all cases involving termination of Full Fellowship, except those arising under Rule 24A, the minister may appeal the decision and the following procedures shall be followed:



Appeals to the Board of Review must be made within thirty (30) calendar days of notice of the MFC's decision terminating a minister's Full Fellowship. A minister who appeals to the Board of Review agrees to abide by the Bylaws of the Association and the Board of Review's requests and rules, policies and procedures. The minister also agrees that the final disposition of the appeal by the Board shall be binding upon the minister and that the minister shall have no further recourse to any proceeding or review within the Unitarian Universalist Association.

If such an appeal is not filed in accordance with rules of the Board of Review, the minister whose Fellowship status has been terminated agrees that the decision of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee shall be final and binding.

When an appeal is timely filed, the minister's status shall be that of "suspension from Ministerial Fellowship" until their case is finally disposed of, and during the suspension the minister's name shall not appear on lists of those in Ministerial Fellowship, and the minister shall not be recommended for settlement by Ministries and Faith Development. However, financial rights existing at the time of suspension, including any right to receive pension or insurance payments which are dependent upon Ministerial Fellowship, shall not be affected during the period of suspension.

If action by the Committee is affirmed, modified, or reversed upon appeal, the Ministerial Fellowship Committee shall take such action and make such entries on its records as required by any decision or order entered in the appeal proceedings.

26. Re-Admission

The Committee shall have authority to re-admit a minister to Ministerial Fellowship. An application in a form as the Committee shall determine shall be filed. The application shall include, but not be limited to, a brief statement of the reasons for termination of Fellowship status, and the reasons for the consideration of re-admission which the applicant believes should be considered. Readmission may be contingent on satisfying certain requirements or conditions. Compliance with any requirements or conditions set by the MFC shall constitute some evidence of satisfactory progress, but is not necessarily a sufficient basis for re-admission and shall not limit in anyway the right of the MFC to make the readmission decision notwithstanding such compliance. The decision on an application for re-admission shall not be subject to appeal.

27. Conviction Disclosure and False Representation

Ministers in Fellowship and applicants applying for Fellowship shall inform the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of any of the following incidents immediately:



Any criminal arrest and/or conviction that occur except for violations that are classified as infractions, such as speeding tickets and other violations that cannot result in incarceration. Arrests and convictions related to substance use must be reported.

Any complaint of abuse and/or neglect of a child or any other person brought against the minister. Any complaint of domestic violence, harassment or request for a restraining order brought against the minister.

Failure to disclose any convictions or complaints immediately to the MFC may result in removal of Fellowship or rejection of any application.

If at any time the Committee determines that Fellowship was granted based on misleading, or false representation(s), fraud or omission of any information, the MFC has the right to remove a minister from Fellowship.

28. Cooperating with the Committee

It is expected that all candidates for Fellowship and all ministers in Fellowship will cooperate with the Committee at all times. This includes, but is not limited to, responses to requests for information, provision of requested documentation, attendance at meetings with the Committee, and compliance with any remediation and/or probation requirements. Non-compliance may be grounds for termination of Fellowship.



Policies of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee

1. Notification of Rules and Policies

Rules and policies currently in effect are those posted on the UUA website at www.uua.org/careers/ministers/support/fellowship/rules-policies

2. Policy on Inclusion

With respect to its Rules and Policies, the Ministerial Fellowship Committee declares and affirms its responsibility to treat persons in a manner consistent with Section C-2.3 of the UUA Bylaws (“Inclusion”):

“Systems of power, privilege, and oppression have traditionally created barriers for persons and groups with particular identities, ages, abilities, and histories. We pledge to replace such barriers with ever-widening circles of solidarity and mutual respect. We strive [...] to empower and enhance everyone’s participation.”

3. Preparatory Stages for Ministerial Fellowship

The following outline describes the stages of preparation for Unitarian Universalist ministry and some of the policies and procedures associated with each stage.

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A. Applicant Status

Applicants are those who have contacted the Ministerial Credentialing Office indicating intent to pursue ministerial fellowship. The Ministerial Credentialing Office will maintain a record of applicants.

B. Aspirant Status

An Aspirant is a person sponsored for ministerial fellowship by a Unitarian Universalist congregation. To be in Aspirant Status, an Applicant must submit the following forms to the Ministerial Credentialing Office. All required forms are found in “Required Forms for Unitarian Universalist Ministerial Fellowship,” an appendix to these Policies.



- i. Initial Inquiry Form;
- ii. Interview Form for Ministerial Applicants
- iii. Transfer/Plural Standing Forms (if applicable);
- iv. If not graduated from a graduate theological school, evidence of acceptance to a theological school or another approved program, such as an acceptance letter, enrollment verification letter, or unofficial transcript. Or, if graduated from a theological school, submission of an official transcript.
- v. Application for Candidate Status and Waiver of Claims and Authorization.
This form stipulates agreement to abide by the Rules and Policies of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and to defer accepting any UUA congregationally-based position other than internships and student ministries unless approved by the Ministerial Credentialing Director.
- vi. Criminal Offense Disclosure Form/False Representation Statement;
- vii. Statement of Congregational sponsorship submitted by sponsoring congregation.
Clergy seeking dual or transfer standing or active UUA Congregational Life staff may have this requirement waived. Please contact the Ministerial Credentialing Director for further information.

C. Candidate Status

In addition to the items completed for Aspirant Status, a Candidate has also:

- i. Completed an approved career assessment program (and the written report has been received by the Ministerial Credentialing Office);
- ii. Completed at least one year of theological education;
- iii. Submitted final evaluations from a field education experience, Level 1/Unit 1 Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)/College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP) unit or an internship.

D. Further Requirements prior to the MFC Interview

In addition to the items completed for Candidate Status, a Candidate will have:

- i. Completed the MFC Appointment Request form;
- ii. Submitted the \$250 application fee at the time the MFC interview is scheduled.
This fee will be used to build a fund to help offset travel equalization costs. This fee may be waived under extenuating circumstances. Please consult with the Ministerial Credentialing Director for further information.
- iii. Submitted the following paperwork required for inclusion in the MFC interview packet:



- a. Biographical Information Form;
- b. Personal essay as described in the “Required Forms” appendix
- c. Digital (head shot) photograph;
- d. Career Assessment;
- e. RSCC letter (if applicable);
- f. Competencies and Reading List;
- g. First Unit CPE or CPSP evaluations from Candidate and supervisor
- h. Internship Learning/Serving Agreement
- i. Internship evaluations from Candidate, supervisor, and internship committee
- j. Five letters of reference (dated, signed and indicating that they have been shared with the candidate) written by:
 - i. A faculty member or advisor if the candidate is enrolled in seminary, or a recent graduate;
 - ii. A Unitarian Universalist minister other than the internship supervisor;
 - iii. Anyone of the candidate’s choice who has known them for at least six years;
 - iv. Anyone of the candidate’s choice;
 - v. A religious educator
- k. All official (up to date) seminary transcripts;
- l. All official undergraduate transcripts (and graduate transcripts, if applicable);
- m. Conviction Offense Disclosure form;
- n. Criminal background check;
- o. If applicable, Consent for Release of Information for Transfer and Plural Candidates

4. Internships

Interns must have achieved Aspirant Status prior to the commencement of their internship.

Candidates, supervisors, and intern committees must use the evaluation forms provided. Evaluative letters may also be included. When the Ministerial Fellowship Committee grants Preliminary Fellowship, it expects the Candidate to be competent to serve in any type of ministry (See “Rule 6”). Internships must be created with this in mind. Interns are required to develop a



written “Learning and Service Agreement” with their supervisors and intern committees before, or at the beginning of, any internship.

Candidates are strongly discouraged from undertaking internships in their home congregations or current places of employment, and must seek a waiver of this policy from the MFC when considering such an internship.

Having served a congregation as an intern, student minister, summer minister, or contract minister, individuals are ineligible for settlement in that congregation under Rule 18.

A. Guidelines for Off-site Supervised Internship Sites

In those rare situations in which on-site supervision is impossible, the intern and off-site supervisor must consult the Ministerial Credential Director about designing the “Learning and Service Agreement.” In addition, the off-site supervisor must:

1. Meet with the intern weekly;
2. Be a Unitarian Universalist minister in Full Fellowship;
3. Not be a UUA Regional staff member.

B. Waivers for Internships

All candidates who wish to request a waiver of the internship requirement must arrange to have this request considered at an MFC meeting held in advance of their MFC interview.

Internship waiver requests must include:

- Two letters of recommendation that address work in a previous ministerial role and grounding in Unitarian Universalist congregational life.
- Where applicable, recent ministerial employment records and evaluations.

5. Request for CPE Equivalency

All Candidates who wish to request a CPE equivalency must arrange to have this request considered at an MFC meeting held in advance of their MFC interview. CPE waiver requests should include:

- A. A detailed explanation of the program they wish to attend, or the training they have already experienced which the Committee will examine against the following criteria:
 - i. The program should be such that it will:
 - a. provide an opportunity to develop ministerial role identity;
 - b. promote growth in self-understanding;



- c. increase competence in interaction with others;
 - d. help the candidate utilize methods of self-evaluation; and
 - e. include didactics, peer review, and practical counseling.
- ii. The time requirement shall be equivalent to a CPE program (approximately 400 hours).
 - iii. The program must provide evaluation by the supervisor and the candidate based on CPE evaluation models.
- B. If applicable, include certificates noting professional licenses, current membership and good standing in a relevant professional organization.

If the Committee is satisfied that the proposed program meets the above criteria, it may grant the Candidate permission to substitute it for the CPE requirement.

6. Candidate File Review

The Ministerial Credentialing Director may, in rare cases, provide to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee a written review of the material in the candidate's file prior to the candidate's interview when significant information is included there that is not included in the candidate's MFC packet. The review will be written by the Ministerial Credentialing Director in mutual agreement with the candidate, whenever possible. If not possible, that fact will be noted in the written review.

7. Scheduling of Interviews

A. Requirements for Scheduling Interviews

Candidates for Unitarian Universalist ministerial fellowship must request an interview in writing using the Ministerial Fellowship Committee Appointment Request Form. Candidates should be at least two-thirds of the way through their preparation for ministry at the time of their MFC interview. Final evaluations of either Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) or the internship must be available to request an MFC appointment. See Policy 3D for additional requirements.

B. Return Interviews

Candidates who received a Category III may meet with the Committee again a year (or later) after the initial interview. Candidates who received a Category IV or V decision by the MFC must receive MFC Executive Committee approval before scheduling a return interview.



C. Interview Date Assignment

To balance the number of interviews at any one meeting, appointments will be made in consultation with, and at the final discretion of, the Ministerial Credentialing Director.

D. Interview Confirmation

Five months prior to each meeting, a materials checklist and a reconfirmation will be sent to each Candidate. Notification of interview date, time and place will be made at least six weeks before the Committee meeting. Candidates who fail to submit all materials to the Ministerial Credentialing Office by the deadline (approximately six weeks prior to the Committee meeting), may have their appointments canceled.

E. Interview Cancellation by Candidate

A Candidate canceling their appointment less than four months before the meeting will be put on the waiting list for a future appointment.

F. Interview Waiting List

Deadlines may be extended at the discretion of the Ministerial Credentialing Director for Candidates accepted from the waitlist.

8. Travel Expenses for Candidates

Following the conclusion of their interview, Candidates are eligible to request travel equalization funds by submitting receipts to the Ministerial Credentialing Office up to a predetermined figure based upon where the Candidate resides at the time of their interview. Requests must be submitted within the same fiscal year in which the interview took place.

If a Candidate has special accessibility needs, the MFC will cover any additional expenses necessary for the Candidate to appear before the Committee.

9. Requirements

The Ministerial Credentialing Director will determine whether a requirement has been completed satisfactorily.



10. Length of Candidate Status and Removal of Candidate Files

Candidate Status is limited to seven years from the date that candidacy was granted. Any Candidate file which has been inactive for seven years may be destroyed by the Ministerial Credentialing Office.

A Candidate who receives a Category IV will be removed from Candidate Status after four years following the date of their MFC interview.

A Candidate who receives a Category V will be removed from candidate status.

11. Mentorships

All active ministers in Preliminary Fellowship are required to have mentors, whom they may choose themselves. The mentor relationship begins when a minister enters Preliminary Fellowship. A minister may change mentors during Preliminary Fellowship as geographic location or ministry positions change. The mentee shall discuss matters of professional concern with their mentor for at least an hour monthly. The mentor must receive all completed forms for renewal of Preliminary Fellowship, but will not be called upon for evaluations or for information about the mentee. The mentor will affirm the mentor/mentee relationship annually by submitting the mentor form directly to the Professional Development Office at the time of the mentee's renewal submission. An internship supervisor may not serve as a mentor.

12. Renewals of Preliminary Fellowship

A. Ministers in Preliminary Fellowship Serving Non-UU Congregations

Ministers serving a non-UU congregation will be considered to be serving in a community setting and must comply with the requirements of Rule 13.D.

B. Alternate Renewal Option for Ministers Transferring from Another Denomination

At the discretion of the Professional Development Director, fellowshipped ministers with five (5) or more years of credentialed experience in another denomination may be eligible for renewal of Preliminary Fellowship under an alternate procedure. This option may be used for any number of renewals of Preliminary Fellowship.

These ministers have the option of submitting an application of renewal that includes:



1. A note from a Unitarian Universalist colleague confirming that the minister has been meeting with a Unitarian Universalist collegial group on a regular basis (at least every two months) with at least four other colleagues for the previous year;
2. A 1–2 page written self-reflection on their Unitarian Universalist ministry experience;
3. A submission of a professional development report from the past year and a plan for the upcoming year;
4. A Parish Ministry Cover Page or a Community Minister Cover Page.

Renewal of fellowship will be based on this material submitted.

13. Progress towards Full Fellowship and Ministry Eligible for Renewal

Full Fellowship will be awarded when three successful renewals of Preliminary Fellowship are completed.

A minister is expected to submit an application for renewal annually. If a minister is not currently working in ministry, that minister may remain in any one renewal period for up to three years. Each renewal period must be based on evaluations covering 10–12 months. If the minister is not working in ministry and is in one renewal period for longer than three years, they must apply to the MFC for a waiver of this policy or request to be placed in Inactive Status; otherwise they will be removed from fellowship.

A. Criteria for Ministry Eligible for Renewal

Ministerial Fellowship Committee will determine whether ministry work is eligible for a renewal of Preliminary Fellowship in consideration of the following:

1. The minister’s work should comply with MFC Rule 6 (“Definition of a Minister”) and MFC Rule 7 (“Definition of Professional Ministry”)
2. If employed in a Unitarian Universalist congregation, the employing or affiliating congregation should recognize the minister’s work as professional ministry.
3. If employed outside a Unitarian Universalist congregation, the minister’s supervisor and/or the community served by the minister should recognize the minister’s work as professional ministry.

Ministers are strongly advised to consult with the Professional Development Director about whether their work is eligible for renewal of Preliminary Fellowship.



B. Preliminary Fellowship Registration

All ministers in Preliminary Fellowship must register annually with the Professional Development Office informing them of the minister's current contact information and the nature of one's current ministry position. Ministers who do not register annually may be removed from fellowship.

C. Ministers who Become Board Certified Chaplains

Ministers in Preliminary Fellowship who become Board Certified Chaplains can apply to the MFC to have their certification process count as one renewal of fellowship. The Board certification certificate must be submitted to the MFC and the renewal approved by the Professional Development Director.

D. Military Chaplains Who Have Completed Deployment

All military chaplains who have completed one year of deployment can apply to the MFC to have that year count as one renewal of fellowship. The UUA ecclesiastical endorser must recommend the chaplain for renewal.

14. Waivers for Preliminary Fellowship and Settlement Restrictions

A. Consideration of Historically Marginalized Identities

In support of equity and inclusion, the Ministerial Fellowship Committee will prioritize waiver requests of Rule 18 ("Settlement Restrictions for Ministers Serving Congregations") for ministers from historically marginalized identities who wish to remain in their internship congregation. Such waivers can be granted by the Executive Committee.

B. Waivers of Renewal Period Limits

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee grants authority to the Professional Development Director to approve a first request for a waiver of MFC Rule 13C. Subsequent requests for a waiver of MFC Rule 13C must be reviewed and decided upon by the Committee.

15. Inactive Status and Active Status Requests

The MFC grants the Professional Development Director the authority to approve requests for being placed on Inactive Status ("Rule 15") as well as being returned to Active Status in ministry. All such requests must be in compliance with MFC Rule 14.



16. Minister's Files

Ministers may have access to their files at a pre-arranged meeting on site at the UUA headquarters except for information transmitted in confidence or otherwise deemed confidential by the MFC.

17. Procedures for Complaints against Ministers

A. Initiating a Complaint

Complaints involving alleged unprofessional/unbecoming conduct of a minister or other violation of the rules of Fellowship shall be received and reviewed by the Office of Ethics and Safety Intake person (hereafter called the "Intake Person"). Complaints may be from: a person or persons with knowledge of the circumstances (or, if a minor child, their custodial parent); the congregational, institutional, or agency board with whom the minister works; the UUA Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group; UUA Congregational Life Staff; or a member of Ministerial Fellowship Committee who is not a member of the Executive Committee.

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 congregational Board President and/or direct supervisor of the minister will be informed that an investigation is being undertaken, and informed of the nature of the complaint. The Consultant will investigate and determine whether the matter should go before the Executive Committee of the MFC for a Fellowship Review. Decisions to not refer a complaint to the consultant or the Executive Committee of the MFC 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 Ministerial Fellowship Committee may also be consulted.

An advocate will be assigned by the Intake Person to individuals considering filing a complaint. The role of the advocate is to provide neutral, compassionate assistance in determining whether to file a complaint, and to provide information and support through the processing of a 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 reducing the complaint to writing.

B. Governing Rules and Policies

Determinations of unbecoming conduct, incompetence or other specified cause shall be governed by the rules of Fellowship in force at the time of the acts under review. In all cases, complaint procedures and decisions will follow MFC Rules and Policies in force at the time of the receipt of the complaint.



C. Confidentiality and Communication

Confidentiality is key to the complaint process, and all parties are asked to respect the sensitivity of the information generated. The parties shall have, except where confidentiality and privacy concerns warrant, comparable access to information about the process, including the outcome of the proceedings. The complainant will have the ability to review and respond to the written response of the minister to the complaint.

D. Resolution of Complaints

Upon receipt of a complaint, the minister may be invited to meet with the Executive Committee of the MFC and is expected to be accompanied by a UUMA Good Offices person in Full Fellowship. The cost of meeting with the Committee will be borne by the Committee. The Executive Committee shall also invite the complainant to meet privately with the Executive Committee, accompanied by the advocate designated by the Office of Ethics and Safety. The option to appear before the committee shall be in person or by secured teleconference software. The choice between such methods of appearance shall be at the discretion of the invitee. All expenses involved in the travel and appearance of the minister and the minister's Good Offices person will be borne by the Committee. All expenses involved in the travel and appearance of the person filing the complaint, or individual representatives of classes of complainants, 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 recommend removal from fellowship to the Full Committee (this may require further investigation and a Full Committee Fellowship Review if the minister is in Full Fellowship).

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

E. 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 Full Fellowship Committee Review, it will charge the Executive Secretary to determine the type and scope of the investigation and appoint an investigation team from outside the Ministerial Fellowship Committee's membership, in consultation with the MFC Chairperson.

If interviews are required as part of an investigation, both the individual (s) bringing the complaint and the minister 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 are guidelines which are to be used by the investigators in conducting its investigation:

- In consultation with the Executive Secretary and the MFC Chair, it is the responsibility of the investigators to develop a 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 the MFC Chair, 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 minister 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 MFC Chair and the Executive Secretary shall 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.

F. Recommendation for Fellowship Review

Once the report is complete, the Executive Committee shall determine whether or not there is sufficient concern to believe that the minister has engaged in unprofessional/unbecoming conduct or other conduct in violation of Rule 24.

If it is determined by the Executive Committee that there are insufficient grounds for a Fellowship Review, the Executive Secretary shall so notify the minister, complainant(s), and other interested parties. The determination by the Executive Committee to not recommend a Fellowship Review may be appealed by the complainant(s) to the full Committee. The appeal should be written and contain a review of the reasons why the determination to not recommend a Fellowship Review should be overturned and must be received within one month of the receipt of notice of the no cause determination. As soon as an appeal is received, the Executive Secretary should give notice to the minister involved and the minister may file a response.



If it is determined that there are sufficient grounds for a Fellowship Review, the Executive Secretary shall so notify the minister, complainant(s), the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association Executive Director, and other interested parties and schedule a Fellowship Review before the full Committee.

G. Fellowship Review

The Fellowship Review before the Committee shall follow the guidelines set forth in Rule 21 of the MFC Rules.

H. Right of Appeal by the Complainant

Complainants have an opportunity, on the basis of newly discovered evidence, to request reconsideration of a decision to not terminate Fellowship.

18. Procedures for Complaints against Candidates

A. Complaints and Notification

Any individual wishing to file a complaint against a Candidate must contact the Professional Development Director. Complaints must be in writing. As soon as appropriate after receipt of a complaint, the Professional Development Director will notify the candidate as well as the board chair and/or supervisor if they are working in a ministry setting. With the initial notification, a request shall be made to the Candidate to provide a written statement of the Candidate's position on the allegations in the complaint within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the notice of complaint. At the "intake" stage, the Professional Development Director hears the complaint, provides information on the process, responds to questions from the Complainant and conducts an assessment to determine whether the complaint should be referred for further investigation. The Professional Development Director will consult with the Ministerial Credentialing Director to determine if further investigation is warranted and keep the complainant informed of the ongoing process and any actions.

B. Investigations

If an investigation is warranted, the Ministerial Credentialing Director will be notified to conduct the investigation, which will generally include consultation with all involved parties (candidate, Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group, complainant(s), theological school, supervisor, etc.) and review of any additional information, including the candidate's file, etc. If the complaint involves either a Candidate or complaint from a traditional marginalized community, the UUA Multicultural Growth and Witness Staff may also be consulted. The Candidate may be invited to meet with the Ministerial Credentialing Director and the Executive Secretary of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee to discuss the complaint. In consultation with the Ministerial



Development Director, the Ministerial Credentialing Director will prepare a written report of relevant findings and recommendations that will be presented to the Executive Committee of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

C. Resolutions

The Executive Committee may consider a range of resolutions to the complaint, including, but not limited to, a letter of reprimand, suspension, counseling, return to aspirant status or removal from candidate status, etc. The Executive Committee will inform the Candidate of the resolution and a copy of the letter will become part of the candidate's permanent file and sent to the complainant.

D. Removal of Candidacy Status

If the Executive Committee believes removal of candidacy status is warranted, they shall make a recommendation to the Full Committee.

E. Notification of the Decision of the Full Committee

The decision of the Full Committee shall be communicated as soon as possible to the candidate, the complainant(s), and the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association Executive Director.

19. Procedures for Complaints against Aspirants

When a complaint is received by the Ministerial Credentialing Director regarding the conduct of an Aspirant, the Ministerial Credentialing Director will confer with UUA staff and/or Ministerial Fellowship Executive Committee members as is helpful, conduct an investigation and may consider a range of resolutions, including, but not limited to: reprimand, suspension, counseling, or removal of aspirant status. The Ministerial Credentialing Director will draft a letter regarding the complaint and the resolution(s) and send it to the Aspirant and the Executive Committee of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. A copy of the letter will become part of the Aspirant's permanent file.

20. Notification of Termination of Fellowship

In cases of fellowship termination under Rules 24B, 24C, or 16A or resignation pending a fellowship review, the Committee shall inform: complainant(s), all fellowshiped ministers, candidates, aspirants, all congregational board presidents, the UUA Board of Trustees, a Director of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, the Chair of the Association of Unitarian Universalist Music Ministries, the Chair of the Liberal Religious Educators Association, the Chair of the Association of Unitarian Universalist Administrators, the Chair of the Association of



Unitarian Universalist Membership Professionals, the Chair of the Unitarian Universalist Society for Community Ministries, and the Leadership Council of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

If the minister is serving in a non-UU setting, such as a hospital or community organization, the minister's supervisor will be informed.

Notices of fellowship termination or resignation pending a fellowship review will be considered matters of public record. Notice will be published in the *UU World* and include a statement describing the stage of the review process at the time of resignation. A record of all terminations under Rule 24B, 24C, or 16A and resignations pending fellowship review will be posted to the UUA website by the Ministries and Faith Development office.

21. Procedures for Readmission to Fellowship

A minister seeking readmission shall submit a Readmission Application form.

1. The Executive Committee shall review such application and determine whether or not to readmit the minister to Fellowship, or to require further consideration of the application subject to conditions which the Committee shall prescribe.
2. An assessment by a mental health professional, ministerial career center counselor, or other specialist may be required. The focus of such an assessment shall be determined by the Executive Committee. A release for the disclosure of the findings of the assessment, including any recommendations for follow up work by the applicant, must be given in writing in advance and such reports will be the property of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and filed in the minister's file. The minister will also receive a copy of the findings.
3. Upon receipt and review of the assessment, the Executive Committee will determine whether or not to further consider the applicant for readmission. If the Executive Committee finds in favor of the applicant, cooperation with the recommendations of the assessment process and progress reports or other appropriate documentation will be required.
4. If the Executive Committee determines to review further the application it shall notify the appropriate officer(s) of the congregation(s) affected, any original complainant(s), and appropriate field staff that such application has been received. The Executive Committee will receive invite their comments prior to determining and determine if the re-admission process shall continue.
5. Upon the applicant's successful completion of the plan approved by the Executive Committee, the full Ministerial Fellowship Committee shall determine whether or not to readmit the applicant to Ministerial Fellowship. If re-admission is granted, a re-entry plan and/or conditions shall be designated by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee in conjunction with the Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group.





Bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association

7.6. Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee shall consist of no fewer than fourteen members as follows:

- (a) at least six members who are not ministers appointed by the Board; and
- (b) at least eight members who are ministers in full fellowship with the Association, four appointed by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association and the remainder by the Board.

The committee shall have jurisdiction over ministerial fellowship with the Association as provided in Article XI hereof. The Board of Trustees shall designate a UUA staff person who is not a member of the committee to be its Executive Secretary and keep its records.

C-11.1. Ministerial Fellowship.

Each member congregation has the exclusive right to call and ordain its own minister or ministers, but the Association has the exclusive right to admit ministers to ministerial fellowship with the Association. Fellowship may be for the purposes of parish, religious education and/or community ministry as determined by action of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

No minister shall be required to subscribe to any particular creed, belief, or interpretation of religion in order to obtain and hold fellowship,

11.2. Ministerial Fellowship Committee

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee shall have exclusive jurisdiction over ministerial fellowship except as otherwise provided in these bylaws. It shall make rules governing ministerial fellowship, subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees.

11.3. Admission to Fellowship.

A minister may be admitted to fellowship by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, upon complying with the requirements of these Bylaws and the rules, policies, procedures and requests of the Committee. A minister who is admitted to fellowship shall be admitted to preliminary



fellowship for a period that allows the Committee to evaluate ministry, and may thereafter be admitted to full fellowship. The term of preliminary fellowship shall be defined in the rules of the Committee.

11.4. Fellowship Records.

The Executive Secretary of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee shall maintain up to date records of all ministers in fellowship with the Association. These records shall be available only to members of the committee, persons designated by the Committee, and, in cases of appeals, the Board of Review.

11.5. Termination of Fellowship and Administrative Suspension.

The fellowship of a minister may be terminated by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee for unbecoming conduct, incompetence or other specified cause. Full fellowship may be terminated only after notice by the Committee and opportunity for a Fellowship Review before the Committee. During an investigation or the pendency of a complaint, the Ministerial Fellowship Committee may suspend a minister until a final determination can be made on the minister's fellowship status.

11.6. Reinstatement to Fellowship.

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee may reinstate in or readmit to fellowship a minister who has previously resigned from fellowship or whose fellowship has been suspended or terminated.

11.7. Appeal.

A minister in full ministerial fellowship whose fellowship is terminated may appeal the determination of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee to the Board of Review. The Board of Review shall have exclusive jurisdiction to hear and decide such appeals. No other appeal shall be allowed from any decision of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

11.8. Procedure on Appeal.

An appeal to the Board of Review may be heard by a panel of the Board selected as provided in its rules. The Board of Review or its panel hearing an appeal shall limit its review to an examination of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee's decision, the information presented to the Committee, including the documents and other evidence compiled during the Fellowship



Review, and the reasons articulated by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee for its decision terminating the minister's fellowship. If the minister requests consideration of newly discovered evidence not previously presented to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, then the matter shall be returned to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee for consideration of that evidence before the Board proceeds with the appeal. These Bylaws and the rules of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee shall be binding upon the Board of Review or its panel. The Ministerial Fellowship Committee's determination of fact and/or credibility will not be overturned unless no reasonable fact finder could have reached such determination, and disputes of fact are to be resolved in favor of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee's determination. The Board of Review or its panel may set aside the decision of the Ministerial Committee only where necessary to correct or prevent manifest injustice. The Board of Review or its panel may remand the case in whole or in part to the Committee or take such other action as may be just. The Board of Review or its panel shall set forth its finding and conclusions and will serve upon the affected minister and the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. The decision shall be entered in the fellowship records and shall be final and binding upon all parties. No appeal shall be allowed from the decision of the Board of Review. The Board of Review shall make rules to carry out the intent of this Section