

## **Process for Endorsement and Support of Military Chaplains and Chaplain Candidates**

### ***Types of Chaplain Recognition***

The UUA Official Endorser is the only officially recognized endorsing person for Unitarian Universalist applicants for Military Chaplain Candidate Programs, Active Duty Military Chaplains, National Guard/Reserve Chaplains, Civil Air Patrol Chaplains, Merchant Marines, and other federally recognized military/government branches and agencies.

*Ecclesiastical Approval:* Ecclesiastical approval for the Chaplain Candidate Program may be given to persons in Aspirant status in graduate school of theology or seminary who apply during their first or second year of full-time enrollment and who qualify for the Chaplain Candidate Program. The applicant should be in the process of obtaining ministerial fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association and be working toward ordination. If the aspirant remains in good standing with the UUA, makes normal progress, and meets all other stipulated requirements, he or she may then be considered for endorsement for Active Duty, Armed Forces Reserves, or National Guard ministry after graduation and acceptance into fellowship. Advancement to Ecclesiastical Endorsement would take place after successful interview with the Official Endorser, and it would not be necessary to obtain additional experience prior to such Endorsement.

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

### ***Qualifications and Process for Approval and Endorsement***

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

### ***Ecclesiastical Approval Qualifications***

*Candidates for Ecclesiastical Approval as Chaplain Candidates must:*

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

### ***Ecclesiastical Endorsement Qualifications***

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

1. Be a minister in good standing and in fellowship with the UUA
2. Either be in final fellowship, or if in preliminary fellowship have two years of pastoral experience demonstrating effective and excellent ministry; exception is made for those who have successfully completed the Chaplain Candidate program—for them acceptance into preliminary fellowship will be sufficient
3. Be ordained by a UU congregation, or, if transfer member, be ordained by another religious tradition
4. Meet age and physical requirements of the Armed Forces
5. Receive favorable criminal background check (costs of which to be paid for by the applicant)
6. Have ability to serve in situations where rank and line of authority are valued
7. Understand the nature of military chaplaincy and have ability to faithfully represent Unitarian Universalism in the carrying out of their responsibilities, as well as ability and willingness to provide ministry to non-Unitarian Universalist personnel

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

1. Be a minister in good standing and in fellowship with the UUA
2. Either be in final fellowship, or if in preliminary fellowship have two years of pastoral experience demonstrating effective and excellent ministry; exception

is made for those who have successfully completed the Chaplain Candidate program—for them acceptance into preliminary fellowship will be sufficient

3. Be ordained by a UU congregation, or, if transfer member, be ordained by another religious tradition
4. Meet age and physical requirements of the National Guard or applicable Reserve
5. Receive favorable criminal background check (costs of which to be paid for by the applicant)
6. Have ability to serve in situations where rank and line of authority are valued
7. Understand the nature of multi-faith chaplaincy and have ability to faithfully represent Unitarian Universalism in the carrying out of their responsibilities, as well as ability and willingness to provide ministry to non-Unitarian Universalist personnel

*Candidates for Ecclesiastical Endorsement as Veteran's Affairs Chaplains must:*

1. Be a minister in good standing and in fellowship with the UUA
2. Either be in final fellowship, or if in preliminary fellowship have two years of pastoral experience demonstrating effective and excellent ministry, with exception made for those who have successfully completed the Chaplain Candidate program and been accepted into preliminary fellowship
3. Be ordained by a UU congregation, or, if transfer member, be ordained by another religious tradition
4. Meet age and physical requirements of the Department of Veterans' Affairs
5. Receive favorable criminal background check (costs of which to be paid for by the applicant)
6. Have ability to serve in situations where rank and line of authority are valued
7. Understand the nature of military chaplaincy and have ability to faithfully represent Unitarian Universalism in the carrying out of their responsibilities, as well as ability and willingness to provide ministry to non-Unitarian Universalist personnel

*Candidates for Ecclesiastical Endorsement as Civil Air Patrol and/or State Militia Chaplains must:*

1. Be a minister in good standing and in fellowship with the UUA
2. Either be in final fellowship, or if in preliminary fellowship have two years of pastoral experience demonstrating effective and excellent ministry, with exception made for those who have successfully completed the Chaplain Candidate program and been accepted into preliminary fellowship
3. Be ordained by a UU congregation, or, if transfer member, be ordained by another religious tradition
4. Meet age and physical requirements of the Civil Air Patrol and/or State Militia
5. Receive favorable criminal background check (costs of which to be paid for by the applicant)

6. Have ability to serve in situations where rank and line of authority are valued
7. Understand the nature of military chaplaincy and have ability to faithfully represent Unitarian Universalism in the carrying out of their responsibilities, as well as ability and willingness to provide ministry to non-Unitarian Universalist personnel

### ***Endorsement and/or Approval Process***

*Candidates seeking either Ecclesiastical Endorsement or Approval must:*

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

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

*Responsibility of Chaplain/Chaplain Candidate:*

1. Chaplain/Chaplain Candidate provides update as to duty assignments and contact information.
2. Chaplain/Chaplain Candidate maintains membership in a UU congregation. It is understood that the Church of the Larger Fellowship may be the most appropriate congregation for membership.
3. Chaplain continues in good standing and fellowship with the UUA.
4. Chaplain/Chaplain Candidate prepares a brief annual report that summarizes the service provided in their duty assignment.
5. Chaplain/Chaplain Candidate submits all their officer evaluation to the Official Endorser. These documents will only be reviewed by the Official Endorser and will be placed within their Ministerial Fellowship file at the UUA for safekeeping.
6. Chaplain/Chaplain Candidate is required to attend annually the UUMA Professional Days/UUA General Assembly. Chaplains/Chaplain Candidates are also expected to attend other national meetings of the UU Ministers Association, UU Ministers Association Chapter meetings, and/or meetings of host nation UU bodies. Dispensation may be granted by the Official Endorser in exceptional circumstances. This requirement is in place so that Chaplains may retain on-going connection with the UUA.

*On-going Support by UUA:*

1. Chaplain/Chaplain Candidate is expected to annually attend the UUMA Professional Days/UUA General Assembly. Further they are expected to attend other national meetings of the UU Ministers Association, a UU Ministers Association Chapter meeting, or meetings of host nation UU gatherings. Exceptions can be made for Chaplains serving in multi-year overseas assignments. This requirement is in place so that Chaplains may retain on-going connection with the UUA.
2. UUA through Department of Ministry appoints Committee on Military Ministry to support, mentor and befriend UU military chaplains/chaplain candidates, and their families. Members of Committee on Military Ministry (CMM) should be persons with knowledge and commitment to supporting UU military chaplains/chaplain candidates. As volunteers, expenses for phone calls and small appreciative items will be reimbursed.
3. Committee on Military Ministry (CMM) to be in regular contact with the Military Chaplains, and their families, to provide on-going support. The Department of Ministry provides the CMM with contact information for the Military Chaplains and their families.
4. UUA and Committee on Military Ministry develop and use rituals for military chaplains/chaplain candidates, including commissioning service, blessing for departing service members, acknowledgement and thanks for retiring Chaplains.
5. Official Endorser and/or chaplain/mentor visit Chaplains annually, where possible.
6. Official Endorser and/or Committee on Military Ministry members visit with Chaplain's/Chaplain Candidate's Command should issues arise in the Chaplain's/Chaplain Candidate's service to provide support and ensure fair treatment.
7. UUA identify and use services of consultant on military protocol to advise on any visits with, or services for, military Chaplains/Chaplain Candidates.