

Requirements for Ministerial Fellowship With The Unitarian Universalist Association

Ministerial Credentialing Office
Unitarian Universalist Association
Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Roster and Description of Ministry and Professional Leadership Group	4
Welcome and Introduction and UUA's AR/AO/MC Imperative	5
General Qualifications	6
Specific Requirements	6
Aspirant Status	6
Candidate Status	7
Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy/RSCC Interview	7-8
RSCC Evaluation Instrument/16 Attributes	8-9
Directory of Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy	10
UUMINS2B List Serve	10
Recommendation: "Middler" Review	10-11
Theological Schools Offering the Masters of Divinity Degree	11
Incentive Grants for Students of Color/From Historically Marginalized Groups	11
Financial Aid	11
General Grants	11-12
Panel on Theological Education	12
Program Assistance Grants	12
Scholarships/Awards Awarded Independent of the UUA	12
Career Assessment	12-13
Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA)	13
Military Ministry	13
Congregational Sponsorship	14-17
Areas of Academic and Professional Competence	17
Areas of Unitarian Universalist Competence	17
Areas of Professional Competence	18
Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)	18
Internships	18-20
Ministerial Fellowship Committee	20
Purposes and Membership of the MFC	20
Scheduling MFC Interviews	20-21
Preparing Your Packet to Meet with the MFC	21-22
MFC Interview	22
Decision Categories	22-23
Petitions for Return Appointments	23
Preliminary Fellowship	23
Clearance for Settlement	23
Service of the Living Tradition	23-24
Ministerial Settlement	24
Timing of Search and Settlement	24
Ordination	24
 APPENDIX	
MFC Approved Career Centers	26
Initial Inquiry Form (RSCC-1)	27
Interview Form for Prospective Aspirants for the UU Ministry (RSCC-2)	28-29
Criminal Offense Disclosure/False Representation Statement (RSCC-3)	30
Consent for Release of Information for Transfer/ Plural Standing (RSCC-4)	31
Application for Candidate Status /Waiver of Claims & Authorization (RSCC-5)	32
Financial Planning Worksheet (RSCC-6)	33-35
MFC Appointment Request Form (MFC-1)	36
Biographical Information Form (MFC-2)	37-38
To All Candidates for Ministerial Fellowship Form (MFC-3)	39
Letter of Recommendation (MFC-4)	40
MFC Statement of Congregational Sponsorship (MFC-5)	41
MFC Required Reading List (MFC-6)	42-44
Directions for Completing Statements of Competence	45
Statements of Competence(MFC SOC 2-16)	46-60

MINISTRY AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF GROUP

The Ministry and Professional Leadership (MPL) Staff Group assist UU ministers, religious educators, and congregational administrators and music directors from discernment through retirement and beyond. Directors within MPL and their assistants provide credentialing and settlement services, offer counsel in career development, congregational relations, worship and music resources, and financial planning, work to maintain collaborative relationships with our constituents' Professional Organizations, strengthen collegial relations among professional leaders, and, in collaboration with other UUA Staff Groups, strive to deliver excellent services to our congregations.

Director of MPL: Rev. Beth Miller; Assistant to the Director: Marion Bell

The Director of MPL oversees the work of the Staff Group, is Executive Secretary of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) and the Religious Education Credentialing Committee (RECC), serves on the UUA Leadership Council, the Panel on Theological Education, and the Diversity of Ministry, Large Congregations, and MPL's Review Teams, convenes the Professional Leaders Coordinating Council, and strives to maintain positive partnerships with our congregations and the religious professionals we serve. The Assistant to the Director keeps MPL information up to date and supports the work of the Director.

Ministerial Credentialing Office (MCO) Director: Rev. David Pettee; MCO Administrator: Christine May; MFC Assistant: Mohammed El-Khatib; Internship Clearinghouse Coordinator: Rev. Kim Wilson

The Ministerial Credentialing Director is responsible for relating to all aspirants and candidates seeking to become Unitarian Universalist ministers. The Director is a liaison with the theological schools, convenes the UUA Scholarship Committee, and is MPL liaison with the Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy (RSCC) and the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC). The Director also serves as Executive Secretary of the Panel on Theological Education and assists with general ministry concerns. The MCO is your primary point of contact for questions and concerns related to ministerial fellowship! Please do not hesitate to contact us by email or by phone. We are here to assist you with answering any question about the process and offer counsel regarding requests for waivers from the MFC for CPE Equivalencies, M. Div Equivalencies, the internship requirement and other matters addressed in the MFC Rules and Policies, etc. It is your responsibility to be knowledgeable about current information, procedures and policies. See: www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/ministerialcredentialing/index.shtml

Transitions Director: Rev. Dr. John Weston; Transitions Administrator: Emily Schwab

The Transitions Office advises congregations seeking ministers and ministers seeking positions in all forms of ministry. The Transitions Office supports ministerial search committees and recommends ministers for their consideration and oversees the training and placement of interim ministers.

Office of Church Staff Finance Director: Rev. Richard Nugent; Retirement and Group Insurance Plans Director: Joyce Stewart; Assistant Plan Administrator: Liz Oliver; UUA Health Plan Director: Jim Sargent; Health Plan Coordinator:

The Office of Church Staff Finances provides information, services, programs and counsel to UU congregations and religious professionals regarding [compensation and benefits, coordinates the UUA health and insurance programs and the UUA retirement plan, administers funds](#) to aid ministers and religious educators, and staff the Council on Church Staff Finances, the Compensation, Pension and Benefits Committee and the Employee Benefits Trust.

Ministerial Development Director: Rev. Jory Agate; Assistant: Margaret Montore

The Ministerial Development Office provides [career advice](#) to ministers, maintains information on [continuing education opportunities](#) and sabbatical planning, leads workshops and events for the development of skills and insights for effective ministry, makes continuing education grants, and, in collaboration with others, develops processes, instruments, and models for shared ministry, conflict management, and professional evaluation. The Director especially supports ministers in meeting Preliminary Fellowship requirements.

Religious Education Credentialing Director: Rev. Beth Williams; Assistant: Paula Welling

The Religious Education Credentialing Office works with the Religious Education Credentialing Committee and the UU Musician's Network's Credentialing Committee to support individuals seeking credentialing as professional church Religious Education and Music Directors, trains interim Directors of Religious Education, and administers the UUA's Renaissance religious education training program.

Worship and Music Resources Director: Rev. Erik Wikstrom

The Worship and Resources Director supports quality UU worship, music and liturgy by seeking and maintaining a library of resources reflective of the diversity we represent and aspire to, serving as a clearinghouse for current "best practices," working with training opportunities, interfacing with UUA Professional Organizations, and offering direct support to congregations, ministers, music directors, religious educators, worship teams, and lay leaders.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Welcome! We are delighted that you are considering becoming a Unitarian Universalist minister! As a vocation that seeks to live out a religious vision, ministry involves opportunities to serve others, nurture communities, develop significant relationships and constructively engage with the broader culture. Ministry can be deeply satisfying in the midst its frequent frustrations, and offers a breadth of experiences rarely found in other occupations. For those who pursue this calling, ministry allows an opportunity for a truly meaningful professional life.

Ministerial fellowship within the UU tradition takes on a variety of forms. Within a congregational setting, ministers focus on preaching and leading worship, religious education, social justice, pastoral care and administration. Beyond the walls of a congregation, ministry takes place in hospitals, schools, social service agencies and pastoral counseling centers. In a variety of settings and pursuing a variety of ends, the Unitarian Universalist ministry is committed to bringing about healing and wholeness for the individuals and communities that ministers serve.

This material has been prepared to help you understand the process of preparing for ministerial fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) whether you are just beginning theological school, transferring credentials from another denomination or seeking plural fellowship. Important forms can be found in the appendix. Ministerial fellowship is distinctly different from ordination. Only a UU congregation, through our congregational polity, has the privilege to ordain a person to the ministry. The granting of preliminary fellowship indicates that the UUA formally recognizes a person is a UU minister. Ministers in preliminary fellowship have access to the UUA retirement plan, the search and settlement process, professional development and debt reduction resources and other privileges.

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) is the national credentialing body for the Unitarian Universalist Association. The Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy (RSCCs) of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee exist to help you through the early stages of your preparation for ministry. The MFC strongly encourages you to contact the appropriate RSCC Administrator to establish a relationship, and declare your intentions as early as possible. Why? So the Ministerial Credentialing Office knows who you are! Benefits include reduction in the isolation experienced by many new students, learning how to apply for scholarship funds and gaining access to important listserves and deeper connections with the many ways that Unitarian Universalism is manifested. We urge you to get the assistance you need by communicating directly with local UU ministers, district field staff, internship committee chairs, career counseling centers and theological schools, etc. who are or represent the many people and agencies concerned with theological education and ministerial formation.

The Ministerial Credentialing Office is eager to assist you at any phase of your preparation. In order to maintain the high standards that are expected of Unitarian Universalist ministers and to protect the interests of all those preparing for the ministry, the RSCC's and the MFC are committed to upholding the policies, rules and guidelines stated in this handbook and in the MFC Rules and Policies:

www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/ministerialfellowship/62658.shtml At the same time, we understand that the journey toward ministerial fellowship is different for each person. If it is necessary for you to depart from expectations in any way, please confer with the Ministerial Credentialing Director.

THE UUA'S ANTI-RACISM, ANTI-OPPRESSION AND MULTICULTURAL IMPERATIVE

The MFC declares and affirms its special responsibility to value all persons without regard to race, color, gender, disability, affectional or sexual orientation, family structure, age, ethnicity or national origin in making its credentialing decisions. The UUA has been actively committed to become an anti-racist, anti-oppressive and multicultural institution since 1997. The ministerial credentialing process materials were audited by the UUA Journey Towards Wholeness Transformation Committee.

While many aspirants and candidates who identify as a person of color/or from another historically marginalized groups have positive experiences preparing for and serving in the UU ministry, for others the experience has been very difficult. In particular, the experience of ministers of color/or from another historically marginalized groups serving UU congregations has been quite mixed, and in some circumstances, very difficult for the minister. The UUA, the Ministerial Credentialing Office, the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and the Diversity of Ministry Team are committed to improving the formative experience of all those who identify as a person of color/or from another historically marginalized group and seek to be accountable to other organizations engaged in this work.

We look forward to hearing from you!

--David Pettee, Christine May, Kim Wilson, and Mohammed El-Khatib
-UUA Ministerial Credentialing Office

GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS

The general qualifications for ministerial fellowship are stated in MFC Rule 11:

“All candidates must have satisfactorily completed all educational and skill training programs and demonstrates 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 MFC Rule 12), 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.”

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

The process to become fellowshipped as a Unitarian Universalist minister involves a considerable and sustained commitment of time, money and a willingness to grow professionally and personally. The basic requirements involved to prepare for ministerial fellowship include successful completion of:

- A) The materials required to become an aspirant;
- B) A career assessment from a center approved by the MFC (Page 23: see Appendix);
- C) Candidacy status granted through an RSCC interview;
- D) Sponsorship by a UU Congregation;
- E) An approved internship (on an internship waiver approved by the MFC);
- F) A unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (or CPE Equivalency as determined by the MFC);
- G) The MFC Reading List
www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/ministerialcredentialing/16224.shtml;
- H) A Masters of Divinity degree (or an equivalent determined by the MFC);
- I) A Criminal Record/Background Check;
- J) An interview with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

ASPIRANT STATUS

A person in aspirant status has submitted the following forms to the appropriate RSCC Administrator:

- 1) Initial Inquiry Form (RSCC-1: All RSCC and MFC forms are in Appendix)
- 2) Interview Forms: UU minister (RSCC-2)
- 3) Essay on ministerial aspirations and relevant biography (1-2 pages) in which you say something about who you are and the ministry you feel called to serve.
- 4) A signed Criminal Offense Disclosure/False Representation Statement (RSCC-3)
- 5) A transfer/Plural Standing Form, if applicable. **The requirements for clergy seeking transfer or plural standing with the UUA are essentially the same as for all other aspirants. Please note that the MFC seeks evidence of a clear demonstration of motivation and commitment to Unitarian Universalism.** Clergy seeking transfer or plural standing must also:
 - a. Sign a consent form allowing for the release of information to certify status of standing in current or prior denomination; (RSCC-4)
 - b. Submit a letter of reference from a ministerial colleague from current or prior denomination;
- 6) Has been accepted into theological school or other approved program or has graduated
- 7) Signed the Application for Candidate Status/Waiver of Claims & Authorization (RSCC-5)
- 8) Completed the Financial Planning Worksheet (RSCC-6)

CANDIDATE STATUS

In addition to 1 through 8 above, a candidate has also:

- 9) Completed and released a career assessment from an approved center
- 10) Completed at least one year of theological education
- 11) Been interviewed and granted candidate status by an RSCC.

Please note that as of September 2009, all interns must have interviewed with an RSCC prior to the commencement of their internships. Please be aware that MFC Policy 3, C. 9 states that candidates for the UU ministry "Agreed in writing to defer accepting any ministerial position other than internships and student ministries unless approved by the Ministerial Credentialing Director. Violation of this policy shall render the candidate ineligible for an interview with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee or Ministerial Fellowship for four years from the commencement of the position."

After being granted candidate status and before requesting an MFC interview, a Candidate must have:

- 12) Completed CPE or the internship and have evaluations
- 13) Completed the MFC Appointment Form (MFC-1)
- 14) Completed the Biographical Form (MFC-2)
- 15) Completed "To All Candidates for Ministerial Fellowship" (MFC-3)
- 16) Obtained Five (5) Letters of Reference (MFC-4)
- 17) Obtained sponsorship from a UU congregation (MFC-5)

Once an MFC interview has been requested and an interview date has been set:

- 18) Completed the Criminal Record/Background Check
- 19) Completed required ministerial packet including MFC Reading List (MFC-6)
- 20) Collaborated with Ministerial Credentialing Director for the Candidate File Review.

In order to protect the integrity of the ministry, in rare instances it may be necessary for the UUA to permanently discourage certain persons from pursuing ministerial fellowship. Therefore, upon the recommendation of the Ministerial Credentialing Director, the Executive Committee of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee may refuse to grant an interview to an individual they deem highly unsuitable for Unitarian Universalist ministry.

REGIONAL SUB-COMMITTEES ON CANDIDACY

There are four Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy. Each committee has clergy and lay members serving two-year terms, renewable to a total of eight years of service. A critical function of the RSCC is to make early decisions regarding candidacy status and provide honest feedback to aspirants regarding their suitability for the ministry. A second function is to provide accurate information about the credentialing process and offer opportunities for further formation.

RSCC INTERVIEW

The purpose of the RSCC interview is to evaluate an aspirant's *potential* to be a UU minister, not to determine if they are ready to *be* a minister. The RSCC's have been empowered by the MFC to grant, postpone or deny candidacy status. *The RSCC interview should take place early in the ministerial formation process, typically at the end of the first year of seminary or the beginning of the second year if the aspirant is a full time student. Students preparing part time should schedule their interview after they have taken enough courses to equal one full year of seminary.*

Since each aspirant is unique, no two interviews are alike. RSCC members will have carefully read your written materials. Prior to the interview, a member of your panel will come out to greet you and ask you about your first question. Some aspirants use the first question to cover an issue or concern in their materials they are sure the RSCC will want to discuss. Others use the first question to help manage their anxiety and get comfortable at the beginning of their interview. The questioning may cover a wide range of subjects. The RSCC will ask you about personal and professional behaviors drawn from your references, career assessment, CPE evaluation (if available) and your personal essays. The interview typically lasts about forty-five minutes long.

At the conclusion of the interview you will be asked to wait outside the meeting room while the RSCC deliberates and reaches a decision. When a decision is reached, you will be invited back into the meeting room and told the decision. For those granted candidacy status the RSCC will make recommendations which it feels will be helpful in future ministerial preparation. *The MFC takes RSCC recommendations very seriously, and so should you!* When candidacy status is postponed, the RSCC will typically identify requirements that must be satisfied before a return interview can be scheduled. *Aspirants who are denied candidacy status are being discouraged from pursuing ministerial fellowship.*

Motivation to be a candidate for ministry is among the key attributes of an aspirant that the RSCC panel will have interest. The panel will assess how an individual's age and life experience figure into their commitment to ministry. Has this person learned through their life experience? Is this person motivated by study, drawn to theological inquiry, but not to the work of the ministry? Is this a genuine calling, or a last ditch effort to find oneself? Does this person believe ministry is all about them? Does the aspirant understand that ministry is ultimately about service to others?

Elements of character are also assessed. Are weaknesses of character areas in which the aspirant is growing or are these permanent features not likely to change? How warm and open is this person? How well does the person know himself or herself? How aware of strengths and weaknesses? Does this person listen to feedback that is given, or are responses mostly defensive? Does this person have passion? Express emotion? Does this person take responsibility for self-care? Are there any untreated substance abuse or unresolved psychological issues?

The panel will also consider how well an aspirant relates to people, the community, and to issues of authority. What are the aspirant's interpersonal skills? How well does he or she listen? Is this the kind of person others flee from, or are drawn to? Does the individual present as a leader, as one who feels comfortable in guiding others about matters of the greatest significance in their lives? How does this individual relate to other authority? What is their response to criticism?

The panel may consider how an individual deals with practical matters. Do they seem to have administrative common sense? And is there congruence between their lifestyle and their religious understanding? Does the spiritual dimension in their life reflect familiarity and experience with Unitarian Universalism? Does the person communicate hope?

The RSCCs may be asked to recommend to the MFC whether an M. Div Equivalency, CPE Equivalency or waiver of the internship requirement is warranted. These waiver processes do not require that the aspirant be present.

The interview should be understood to be a critical learning experience in that each aspirant discovers and becomes more familiar with the tension inherent in being judged and evaluated by others. Many candidates have noted that the RSCC interview significantly prepared them for their MFC interview!

RSCC EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

The RSCCs use an evaluation instrument that incorporates 16 specific attributes and capabilities that seek to assess the potential for ministry for the aspirant and to identify areas for development. The elements of the model are:

1. Motivation and Genuineness of Purpose

Desire to pursue ministry motivated by a genuine concern for the needs of others, UU congregations and the larger community; recognizes importance of providing spiritual guidance.

2. Personality Integration and Maturity

Have the maturity, emotional stability, and strength to authentically and effectively minister to others.

3. Intellectual Capability

Has the capability to identify and discuss issues intelligently and can articulate their historical context with knowledge and sensitivity.

4. Support Network

Develops and maintains a strong collegial, denominational and personal support system.

5. Self-Care and Spiritual Development

Knows the importance of self-care and spiritual development as resources for ministry.

6. Theological Understanding

Well-grounded in denominational values and history; projects spiritual strength in exploring issues of pain, suffering, injustice, and relates them in theological terms which reflect denominational principles; understands and can knowledgeably discuss other religions and spiritual practices in the world.

7. Awareness of Social and Ethical Issues

Identifies critical issues of social and ethical import appropriate for the attention, reflection and response by congregations and individuals.

8. Respect for Confidentiality

Appropriately keeps confidences resulting from counseling, casual conversation or institutional and personal life.

9. Communication and Listening Skills

Interacts and relates well with others in all modes of communication; possesses the ability to hear and reflect on the comments and thoughts of others; excellent writing and oral skills.

10. Empathy and Counseling Ability

Able to respond appropriately to the counseling needs of individuals and families in a congregation or a community setting; understands counseling dynamics; can identify behavioral signs of dangerous or high-risk individuals

11. Social Skills

Provides a warm and welcoming presence; shows sound judgment in social situations; indicates through behavior respect for self and others

12. Leadership Potential

Shows capability to grow a ministry through nurturing and fostering the ability of others; possesses vision and direction; holds the respect of colleagues, staff, church members, clients; has the ability to influence, inspire, enable, empower; shares leadership and resources; serves as appropriate role model for denominational values and principles.

13. Crisis Management

Has ability to confront difficult issues with skill and insight; does not avoid difficult situations that arise within a congregation or institutional setting; invites discussion of perceptions and feelings in a way that is constructive and leads to resolution or mutual understanding; displays calming presence in times of crisis or need; knows available resources and supports.

14. Administrative and Financial Effectiveness

Has the ability to oversee volunteer or paid staff; can responsibly and knowledgeably manage finances of ministry; understands the financial needs and operations of the church or other institutions, and responsibly manages personal finances.

15. Clarity of Roles and Boundaries

Understands and maintains appropriate boundaries with staff and congregants; sensitive to dynamics of UU congregational life.

16. Commitment to the Unitarian Universalist Association and Principles and Purposes

Supports the principles and purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

DIRECTORY OF REGIONAL SUB-COMMITTEES ON CANDIDACY

SOUTH-EAST REGIONAL SUB-COMMITTEE ON CANDIDACY

Those applicants who reside in the Metro New York, Joseph Priestly, Thomas Jefferson, St. Lawrence Florida and Mid-South Districts and Southwest Conference will be under care of the South-East RSCC.

Please direct all inquiries to:

Connie Moore, Administrator 908-766-6253
39 Mt. Airy Rd. SERSCC@uua.org
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

MID-WEST REGIONAL SUB-COMMITTEE ON CANDIDACY

Those applicants who reside in the Prairie Starr, Central Midwest, Heartland and Ohio-Meadville Districts will be under care of the Mid-West RSCC.

Please direct all inquiries to:

Velna Kolodziej, Administrator (773) 626-9385
Third Unitarian Church MWRSCC@uua.org
301 North Mayfield
Chicago, IL 60644

NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL SUB-COMMITTEE ON CANDIDACY

Those applicants who reside in the Clara Barton, Ballou Channing, Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire-Vermont, Northeast District and those in Canada, Manitoba and east will be under care of the New England RSCC.

Please direct all inquiries to:

Maureen Tobin, Administrator (617) 515-2001
51 Cutler Street NERSCC@uua.org
Winthrop, MA 02152

WEST REGIONAL SUB-COMMITTEE ON CANDIDACY

Those applicants who reside in the Pacific Central, Pacific Northwest, Pacific Southwest, Mt/Desert Districts and those in Canada, Saskatchewan and west will be under the care of the West RSCC.

Please direct all inquiries to:

Stephanie Barnhizer (720) 304-8172
939 Cedwick Dr. WRSCC@uua.org
Lafayette, CO 80026

The RSCC Administrator will open a file for each aspirant and notify the Ministerial Credentialing Office when aspirant status has been obtained. Aspirants will be placed on the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group's mailing list and will be mailed the Religious Leader three times a year, a publication from the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group.

UUMINS2B LIST SERVE

After gaining aspirant status, please subscribe to the UUMINS2B. This is a closed and unmoderated list managed by the Ministerial Credentialing Office. It is a network for all those pursuing fellowship and an excellent way to make contact with others preparing for fellowship. The Ministerial Credentialing Office occasionally sends out important emails from people and institutions central to the credentialing process. To subscribe, send an email to: <http://lists.uua.org/mailman/listinfo/uumins2b>. The message should include only the following: subscribe UUMINS2B.

RECOMMENDATION: MIDDLE REVIEW

The MFC commends the 'middler review' process (or a comparable review) is available. This is not a requirement. Typically, about half way through a student's academic program, a small group gathers that might include the student's academic advisor, a professor, other students and a member representing the

Association who is knowledgeable about the policies, procedures and expectations of the MFC. At the review, the student's academic and vocational journey is discussed, and recommendations are often considered. This report is not typically included in the candidate's file, but can be if it includes important information unavailable in other materials in the packet of information, prepared by the candidate in advance of their MFC interview.

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS OFFERING THE MASTERS OF DIVINITY DEGREE

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee encourages you to contact seminaries of interest to obtain the latest materials on entrance requirements, programs of study, degree requirements, field education and internship opportunities, and financial aid. The Ministerial Fellowship Committee will accept a Master of Divinity degree from any seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in the United States and Canada. ATS can be contacted at www.ats.edu. *Aspirants attending theological schools that are not accredited by the Association of Theological Schools must seek an M. Div. Equivalency from the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.*

Only Starr King School for the Ministry, www.sksm.edu and Meadville Lombard Theological School, www.meadville.edu are affiliated with the UUA. The UUA has a historic relationship and maintains close ties with Harvard Divinity School at www.hds.harvard.edu. While it is not required that you attend a UU seminary, by doing so, you will have greater access to UU history, polity, religious education and arts of ministry courses that may not be available at non-UU seminaries. Students associated with UU seminaries are also able to develop and enjoy a sense of community, and rich opportunities for academic discourse from a liberal religious perspective. The Ministerial Credentialing Director visits the UU schools on a regular basis and is available for consultation concerning the requirements for fellowship.

Other schools with a significant UU student presence include: Andover Newton Theological School, Bangor Theological Seminary, Seattle University, Iliff School of Theology, Lancaster Theological Seminary, Pacific School of Religion, Union Theological School, United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities and Wesley Theological Seminary. The Ministerial Credentialing Director visits non UU schools as needed and meets with non-UU students at General Assembly.

INCENTIVE GRANTS

Incentive grants are available to people of color and those from historically marginalized communities in their first year of theological school by contacting the Ministerial Credentialing Office. Those seeking transfer or plural standing are not eligible for financial aid from the UUA other than the Program Assistance Grant. It is possible for an applicant to request that the RSCC review academic transcripts before setting up an RSCC interview to determine to what extent prior academic work will meet requirements for an M. Div. equivalency. Please contact your RSCC Administrator for more information.

FINANCIAL AID

The UUA has a limited amount of financial aid available for those preparing for fellowship. The sources of these funds include the St. Lawrence Foundation for Theological Education, the Living Tradition Fund, capital campaign funds and various UUA scholarship trust funds, some of which are designated for aspirants and candidates of color/from historically marginalized groups.

Unless otherwise specified, information and applications for financial aid can be obtained by contacting the Ministerial Credentialing Office. Application deadline is April 15th for the following academic year. The resources of the Office of Church Staff Finances in the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group are available to aspirants and candidates who have questions regarding the financial aspects of a career in the Unitarian Universalist ministry. In addition, the Director of the Office of Church Staff Finances is available to groups of students for consultation and workshops on ministerial finances.

GENERAL GRANTS

Applications for general financial aid are accepted from aspirants or candidates who are attending theological school at least half time. Part time students have five years of eligibility. Full time students

have three years of eligibility. Those in internships are also eligible to apply. The UUA Scholarship Committee reviews grant applications and decisions are made on the basis of merit and need. Aspirants who have been denied candidacy status by an RSCC are not eligible to receive UUA financial aid.

PANEL ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION (POTE)

The UUA through the POTE offers fellowship grants each academic year to scholars engaged in advanced work in liberal religious studies. Candidates must have a documented commitment to Unitarian Universalism and be enrolled in a Ph.D. or Th.D. program. The purpose of the program is to help scholars train for seminary teaching in subjects pertaining especially to UU traditions and interests. Grants can range from \$6,000 to \$25,000. There is a one-year Dissertation Year grant available to a highly qualified individual who has completed the doctoral examinations or equivalent and is working on an approved dissertation. Please contact the Executive Secretary of the Panel on Theological Education, dpettee@uua.org, 617-948-6402 for further information.

PROGRAM ASSISTANCE GRANT (PAG)

Aspirants with financial need may apply for a \$1000 Program Assistance Grant to offset the costs related to the career assessment. Please request a PAG from your RSCC Administrator. Full time students are eligible for reduced registration rates for the UUA General Assembly. Students who are attending school at least half time are eligible to apply for scholarships beginning in their second year of school. (There is one scholarship available for first year entering students. Please contact the Ministerial Credentialing Office for further information about the Chuck and Nancy Thomas Scholarship.

SCHOLARSHIPS/AWARDS AWARDED INDEPENDENT OF THE UUA

There are a number of scholarships and awards independent of the Ministerial Credentialing Office that students are eligible to receive. Please go to www.uua.org/giving/awardscholarships/index.shtml

CAREER ASSESSMENT

A career assessment—which in actuality is a more comprehensive personal, emotional, and psychological evaluation than the name implies- is required for all persons at centers accredited by the Ministry Development Council (MDC). www.ministrydevelopment.org. (Page 23) *It is recommended that aspirants complete a career assessment as early in the process as possible.* Participants in career assessment programs will be asked to provide personal and biographical information and take a series of standardized tests. Individual programs take approximately two days; group programs typically are held over the course of three days. In either type of program, you can expect a minimum of four hours of career counseling plus a one hour consultation with a psychologist. Both options cover the same materials in a slightly different format.

Most centers also offer the option of a couple's interview and welcome the participation of a spouse or partner. While not required, this option offers an important opportunity for a spousal pair to examine together what one partner's pursuit of a ministry career portends for both partners. Whether through a group, individual or couples program, we hope you will benefit from the opportunity for extensive evaluation of personal strengths, motivation, areas of needed growth, and potential for success in the ministry by staff members who are experienced in working with aspirants, candidates and clergy. The career assessment program is more than evaluative: it is educational and developmental.

Some people feel caught off-guard by the amount of preparation required and the degree of self-disclosure expected in these programs. Others feel caught off-guard by the lead-time required. For example, the counseling center may need several months' lead-time, plus an additional month to produce its written summary report. The RSCC needs the career assessment report two months in advance of the interview. We encourage you to talk with the career center, your RSCC administrator, or the Ministerial Credentialing Director to gain a thorough understanding of what is involved. The results of the assessment will be confidential. A written report will be released to the Ministerial Credentialing Office

and the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and mailed to the RSCC office *only upon your written release*. If you have questions about your unreleased report, you may request a confidential consultation with the Ministerial Credentialing Director. If you think the report is inaccurate, follow up with the counselor who wrote your report *before you sign the report*. Typically, counselors are only willing to make factual corrections. If you have released the report, the Ministerial Credentialing Director may call the counselors for clarification or additional consultation. The MDC centers adhere to the highest standards of professional practice when dealing with issues of confidentiality.

We recommend you make use of the career center reports by sharing the results with advisors, mentors, CPE and internship supervisors, and anyone else who is in a position to give you additional feedback about the suitability of your vocational goals. It is in your best interest to check out possible areas of concern or "growing edges" by engaging in honest conversation with people who know you well.

Fees vary from center to center. It is your responsibility to make appointments and pay all fees. Please be very careful that you thoroughly understand the center's cancellation policy. In most cases, if you cancel after the deadline, you will be responsible for paying for the program anyway. We realize the fees for career assessment programs are high but feel the value of the experience outweighs the expense. *The Program Assistance Grant has been set aside to help you offset the costs of the career assessment process*. Please consider approaching your congregation for financial assistance in meeting career center fees.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MINISTERS ASSOCIATION (UUMA)

The UUMA is the continental organization of ministers serving the Unitarian Universalist movement. Once candidate status has been granted, the MFC strongly encourages all candidates to become members of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association and to commit themselves to its Code of Professional Practice. All aspirants and candidates should become familiar with the Code and use it as a guide for professional behavior. www.uuma.org/guidelines

Candidate membership, which is non-voting, is \$25.00 per year. The UUMA assists to help foster improved capabilities and skills of ministers; aids members through chapters and support groups; offers a sense of commitment to one another and a concern for high standards of professional conduct; supports and promotes the Unitarian Universalist tradition of freedom and responsibility in all congregational, societal and ministerial relations.

As a candidate member of the UUMA you will:

- receive the UUMA News providing tidings, perspectives and concerns of colleague;
- receive the annual volume of scholarly works, "Selected Essays;"
- have the opportunity to participate in UUMA's annual business meeting and workshops at General Assembly;
- enjoy access to the UUMA Executive Committee and to all programs of your local UUMA Chapter, including Good Offices and Continuing Education;
- join in promoting high standards of rights and responsibilities in the UU ministry.

For current information about candidate membership in the UUMA and/or application for membership, contact the UUMA Administrator, Janette Lallier at administrator@uuma.org.

MILITARY MINISTRY

Increasingly, the UUA is receiving inquiries from persons interested in serving as military chaplains. The Rev. Beth Miller is the officially recognized endorser for UU 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.

Please contact Rev. Miller for further information about these specific requirements at bmiller@uua.org.

CONGREGATIONAL SPONSORSHIP

All candidates preparing for fellowship are required to obtain sponsorship by a UU congregation.

What is the purpose of this requirement?

The purpose of this requirement is to ensure familiarity on the part of new ministers with UU congregational life, and encourage congregations to take a responsible role in the recruitment, preparation and assessment of our future ministers. Our congregations, our ministries and our religious movement all stand to gain if we can work together creatively to identify and support potential leaders.

When does sponsorship occur?

Since the Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy (RSCC) make the first official decision regarding a person's fitness for ministry using input from a number of different sources, a request for sponsorship from a congregation occurs after an aspirant have been granted candidate status by an RSCC.

Who should decide who is or isn't sponsored?

In most instances, sponsorship will be decided by a vote of the congregation or its representative body, such as the Board of Trustees. If the congregation has a minister, he or she may have a recommendation, but it is not the minister's role to make the final decision.

Is some kind of documentation required?

Yes. Documentation of congregational sponsorship should be provided using the following form at www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/ministerialcredentialing/22461.shtml or the form in the Appendix.

What happens if a congregation chooses not to sponsor a candidate?

The Ministerial Credentialing Office would appreciate being contacted in the event a congregation chooses not to sponsor a candidate so appropriate steps can be taken to address the concerns regarding why this decision was made.

What is being said with the decision to sponsor a candidate?

At the most basic level, congregational sponsorship indicates confidence in the candidate's potential and suitability for UU ministry. The MFC regards sponsorship as evidence that the candidate is actively committed to the Purposes and Principles of the UUA and the institutions which uphold them. A congregation is not indicating that the candidate is presently ready for ministry when the congregation commits to sponsorship. The final decision to grant fellowship to a candidate is made by the MFC after careful consideration of written materials, evaluations and a personal interview.

What are the other requirements for UU ministry?

The general qualifications, as stated by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, are these:

“All candidates must have satisfactorily completed all educational and skill training programs and demonstrates 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), 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.”

In addition to the general qualifications for ministerial fellowship, there are many specific requirements for candidates. Go to: www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/ministerialcredentialing/index.shtml

Doesn't this requirement have the potential for creating an uncomfortable situation in the congregation if the congregation is not enthusiastic about sponsoring a candidate, especially if the candidate is a long-term member, big contributor, etc.?

Yes. This is an important concern which needs to be dealt with carefully. It is especially important, however, not to back away from the challenge of providing the person with honest feedback. Chances are if a congregation has severe reservations about a person's potential for ministry, the candidate will not be well-served in the long run if falsely encouraged.

The MFC does not recommend that a congregation risk conflict over sponsorship. In expressing reservations to a candidate, it is important to try to stress concern for a candidate's well-being and success in employing their unique gifts, which might not necessarily be for ministry. If a congregation comes to an impasse or don't know what to do, please call the Ministerial Credentialing Director.

In many instances, a congregation will be asked for sponsorship by a person who is away at school or simply moved away for other reasons. If the person is reasonably well known within the congregation, it is certainly appropriate to consider sponsorship. A congregation may want to recognize a candidate's aspirations through, for example, newsletter articles, announcements, and invitations to participate in congregational activities when the candidate is in the area. A congregation could invite a candidate to write a newsletter article sharing with the congregation some of the excitement of their journey.

If the congregation has a minister, their relationship with a candidate is important. The minister may be a mentor, role model, teacher and spiritual guide of considerable influence. The minister may also have mixed feelings about the candidate or the role that person is playing within the congregation. In any case, it is important to be sensitive to the possibilities and pitfalls inherent in the relationship and include the minister when developing policies regarding congregational response to candidates.

Who's supposed to be providing all this support?

Again, congregations will respond to this opportunity in a variety of ways. Some will be able to offer little support at all and will simply deal with requests for sponsorship at the board level on a case by case basis. If this is apt to be the scenario in your congregation, it is still important to have a policy in place which will guide your response to possible inquiries. For example: Who decides? What criteria are important? Will you want to interview the candidate? What happens if someone tries to block sponsorship? What if the board and the minister disagree?

If there is more interest and energy within a congregation for working with candidates, the board might, for example, recruit a subcommittee to develop policies, explore possibilities and relate to candidates and their needs for support.

In what ways might a congregation support a candidate?

Depending on their interests, resources, and the needs of the candidate, congregations will choose to support the people they sponsor in a variety of ways. Nothing in particular is required.

One of the major concerns for theological school students is their high level of debt; financial assistance can sometimes make the critical difference between staying in school and dropping out. A congregation and candidate may want to work together to raise money in any number of ways, including special fund-raisers and help with locating grant money or with direct backing from generous parishioners. People who are looking for opportunities to donate money tend to believe that contributing to the education of our future leaders is a good and worthwhile investment. Some congregations contribute to the cost of the

career assessment program. It is important for persons aspiring to the ministry to do this as early as possible in their preparation. Congregational support and encouragement to do career assessment will benefit the individual and our ministry as a whole. The cost of the program can be considerable.

Valuable support can be offered in less tangible ways as well. Candidates may benefit from opportunities to preach or lead other forms of worship. They may need experience working with committees and the financial aspects of running a church. They might be asked to be leaders in the religious education program, or organize a social action project.

Candidates could be encouraged (and supported financially) to participate in UUA district and continental events. A particularly worthwhile opportunity, especially for people who are relatively new to Unitarian Universalism and/or concerns of the larger Association, is attendance at the UUA General Assembly. Consider having the candidate seek delegate status from your congregation.

With a UU theological school nearby congregations are liable to be deluged by requests for sponsorship. What should a congregation do when the candidate is not well known?

If a congregation is near a theological school attended by many UU students, it will be particularly important to develop policies regarding sponsorship as soon as possible. Most congregations in this circumstance already have developed certain understandings about how to welcome, integrate and support ministerial students and value their presence. The challenge may simply be to become more intentional about a sponsoring relationship.

If a candidate not well known asks for sponsorship, it's perfectly acceptable to expect that person to become involved in the life of the congregation for a period of time before considering sponsorship. Some congregations ask for a reference from a UU minister or other mutually acceptable person who knows the candidate to get more background.

All candidates are expected to have been minimally been actively involved with a UU congregation for at least two years before interviewing with the MFC. For people who became UU's during seminary or for ministers who want to transfer from another denomination, this requirement may seem like a difficult obstacle. Despite this challenge, the MFC firmly believes that those aspiring to professional leadership positions in our Association need to have grounding in, and understanding of, UU congregational life. Congregational sponsorship may not guarantee this understanding, but it is meant to encourage, facilitate and underscore its importance.

Is sponsorship like having a ministerial intern?

No. Congregational sponsorship and ministerial internships are very different. An intern has contracted with the congregation and the minister for supervision as a learner for an agreed upon length of time. The intern is acting in a professional ministerial capacity, even though ministerial credentials have not yet been granted. Interns are evaluated and held accountable in a structured way that is not appropriate for someone the congregation sponsors. A sponsored candidate who is not an intern will participate as a layperson, not a minister. If a congregation has an intern or field education student, it will be important for both minister and congregation to be clear about the distinction so the intern's position of authority is not jeopardized or confused.

Does a person need to be a member for congregational sponsorship?

While it is important for a candidate to indicate their institutional commitment by membership in a UU congregation *somewhere*, it is not necessary for them to be members of the sponsoring congregation. It would be important to consider this issue on an individual basis. Some candidates seek sponsorship from their internship sites and this is permissible.

This seems like a big responsibility. What's in it for a congregation?

What's in it for congregations is the opportunity to play a pivotal role in promoting responsible, well-prepared leaders for our religious communities and Unitarian Universalism in general. The MFC's

experience with sponsorship is that it is not burdensome. In fact, both congregations and candidates have expressed pride and enthusiasm about the opportunity to claim one another. For more information about sponsorship or a person requesting sponsorship, please contact the Ministerial Credentialing Office.

AREAS OF ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

The MFC expects that each candidate will have achieved a satisfactory level of competence in specified areas. Students are encouraged to work closely with their seminary in planning their courses of study so that the following areas can be covered through course work, independent study, reading, seminars, workshops or other experiences. The following is a description of the areas of competence that the MFC feels each candidate should cover in the course of their preparation. How these areas are covered is left to the candidate and the theological school. The Committee requires that each candidate prepare a written statement of competency. Course work with *brief* course descriptions can be included in the statement as well as *brief* descriptions of the readings, seminars, workshops, or life experience being cited as pertinent to the specific areas of competence.

THEOLOGY: Each candidate is expected to have competency in theological studies, both historical and contemporary, with the ability to articulate and discuss his/her own theology.

CHURCH HISTORY: Candidates are expected to be familiar with the major events, themes, controversies and theological issues in the history of the Christian Church, with particular attention to the development of Unitarianism and Universalism.

HEBREW AND CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES: All candidates are required to have the equivalent of one graduate level course in critical analysis of the Hebrew Scriptures, and one graduate level course in critical analysis of Christian Scriptures. An additional course in each area is strongly recommended.

WORLD RELIGIONS: Candidates are expected to have graduate level knowledge in two areas: general comparative studies of major world religion traditions, and the in-depth study of one specific religious tradition other than Unitarian Universalism.

SOCIAL THEORY/SOCIAL ETHICS: Candidates are expected to be knowledgeable about social theory (issues of ethics and justice), to understand the religious issues involved, to have responses to the issues, and to have a practical understanding of the dynamics of social change.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT/FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION/MINISTRY WITH YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS: Candidates are expected to be knowledgeable about theories and research in human development and how these theories relate to issues such as aging, adolescence, parenting, and death. In addition, candidates should be familiar with issues, programs, and resources for ministry with youth and young adults.

AREAS OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST COMPETENCE

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST HISTORY AND POLITY: Candidates should be able to demonstrate graduate level knowledge of issues, themes, theological motifs, sources and literature of Unitarian and Universalist history, and be able to describe and critique institutional history, present organization and issues, with an emphasis on building an anti-racist, multi-cultural movement.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION HISTORY, THEORY, METHOD, AND PRACTICE: Candidates should have an understanding of several current philosophies of educational learning theories, teaching methods (including methods of teacher training,) and the history and philosophy of Unitarian Universalist religious education. Candidates are expected to be knowledgeable about several current philosophical and methodological trends in UU religious education, and be familiar with at least one Unitarian Universalist religious education curriculum at each age level. Candidates should be able to discuss the theological and educational assumptions and methodologies each religious education curriculum uses.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS/ UUMA GUIDELINES: A thorough knowledge of the UUMA Guidelines, paying special attention to professional ethics, is expected.

AREAS OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

WORSHIP, PREACHING, MUSIC AESTHETICS: Candidates are expected to know the theory and art of worship, preaching and rites of passage, and have experience in conducting religious ceremonies.

PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELING: Candidates should be familiar with theories, techniques and issues related to pastoral counseling, and be able to demonstrate ability in pastoral counseling. One unit of Clinical Pastoral Education is required.

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION: Candidates are expected to have good skills in working with committees and boards, and in training, motivating, and sustaining volunteers. A working knowledge of group dynamics, interpersonal communication, theories of ministry and family systems theory is expected.

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT: Candidates are expected to have familiarity with and basic competence in methods and theories of administration and fundraising. Work in this area should be a combination of academic and experiential.

ANTI-RACISM, ANTI-OPPRESSION AND MULTICULTURALISM: Candidates are expected to be conversant with concepts of anti-racism and to demonstrate a commitment to anti-racism and diversity in our Association.

CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION (CPE)

Candidates are required to complete a basic unit of certified Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). For many aspiring clergy, CPE represents the first experience of being considered a minister, both by the candidate and by others. It is strongly recommended that you complete CPE prior to meeting with the MFC. Most candidates find CPE to be a rewarding, though rigorous, learning experience. A significant part of the work occurs in a small group of peers, led by the supervisor, during which issues of self-awareness are addressed. The knowledge gained in this way can be critical to competence in ministry, which depends heavily on the quality of one's character and personal relations.

Most CPE settings are at hospitals, although alternate sites may be available. All CPE programs require a minimum of 400 hours of work on-site. About half of that time will be spent doing the work of ministry, the other half reflecting on that work one-on-one or in the group. CPE can be completed in a 10-12 week intensive program or in an extended unit. The MFC is willing to consider a CPE Equivalency when a candidate brings relevant experience and references. Please contact the Ministerial Credentialing Director for further information.

A directory of certified CPE programs is available from the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc., at www.acpe.edu.

INTERNSHIPS

All candidates are required to satisfactorily complete a full-time or part time supervised internship. Full-time internships must be for at least nine months. Part-time internships typically extend over a total of 18 months at a minimum of 15 hours per week. Supervision is to be provided by a UU minister in final 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.

All interns, regardless of their setting, will be expected by the MFC to demonstrate a basic competence for ministry in the areas listed here. These descriptions of ministerial competencies are not meant to be exclusive, nor does the MFC expect that all interns will incorporate every task into a Learning/Service Agreement. Interns in community based settings may find that not all of these are immediately applicable to their work; however, it is expected that they develop these competencies in their relationship with a UU congregation.

A. The MFC expects a candidate applying for Preliminary Fellowship to demonstrate their 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 defined as follows:

1. **Pastoral Work** refers to direct service to persons, families, or groups within a congregation or community based setting. This work includes: counseling with regard to life issues, relationships, and spiritual growth with the minister cognizant of her/his abilities and limitations; small group facilitation and leadership; care-giving to individuals and groups and tending to the institution's spirit.

2. **Prophetic Outreach** refers to those aspects of ministry that extend the Unitarian Universalist commitment to justice, peace, democratic process, and interdependence beyond the congregational or community based setting. This work includes: public witness or the intern's personal involvement with regard to community or world issues; social advocacy, the intern's engagement with anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multi-cultural initiatives and promotion of institutional inclusivity and commitment to Unitarian Universalist values.

3. **Teaching** refers to creating, leading and facilitating educational programs. This work includes: educational program development; fostering theological thoughtfulness and depth in individuals and the congregation or community based setting, as appropriate and advancing Unitarian Universalism, its heritage, practices, and ideals.

4. **Practical Arts** refer to the nuts and bolts of everyday congregational or institutional life. This work includes: program administration and development; denominational participation; working with governing boards, committees and volunteers; working with peer and support staff, and the direct provision of service/s.

5. **Worship** refers to all aspects of corporate worship. This work includes: the art of preaching and leading worship; worship service development and leadership for all ages; the intern's personal spiritual life, and administering rites of passage (children's dedications, coming of age ceremonies, weddings, memorial, and funeral services).

B. Lay leaders must evaluate and affirm the ministerial roles of a candidate during an internship. The internship supervision shall therefore include a majority lay committee of five or more persons.

C. 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.

D. 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 Ministerial Fellowship Committee. Such evaluations shall emphasize reflections on areas of change and growth during the internship. Interns are required to develop a written Learning/Service Agreement with their supervisors and lay committees before, or at the beginning of, any internship. The Learning/Service Agreement must be approved by the Internship Clearinghouse Coordinator and/or the Ministerial Credentialing Director.

Whatever the setting, direct weekly supervision is required. For community based internships, it is not required that the intern's supervisor be a Unitarian Universalist minister in final fellowship. However, the intern must have a Unitarian Universalist minister in final fellowship available for consultation and reflection and serve as a member of the intern committee. The MFC discourages congregations from offering internships during the minister's sabbatical year.

Effective September 2009 all interns must have interviewed with an RSCC prior to the commencement of their internships. Go to: www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/ministerialcredentialing/internships

Interns will be supervised **on site**. In rare and exceptional cases, the MFC Candidacy Working Group may authorize offsite supervision. Interns must consult in advance with the Internship Clearinghouse Coordinator to develop a written request. Offsite supervision guidelines include:

- a. that the offsite supervisor and intern meet preferably face to face weekly;
- b. that the offsite supervisor only be supervising one intern at a time;
- c. that the offsite supervisor must be in full and final fellowship;
- d. that the offsite supervisor preferably not be a District Staff member;
- e. that the offsite supervisor and intern be in consultation with the Internship Clearinghouse Coordinator in design of the Learning/Service Agreement
- f. At the discretion of the Ministerial Credentialing Director, offsite supervisory arrangements may be referred to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee for approval.

MINISTERIAL FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE (MFC)

While each member congregation has the right to call and ordain its own ministers, the MFC has the exclusive right to admit ministers into ministerial fellowship with the Association. In addition, the MFC has exclusive jurisdiction over and makes rules governing ministerial fellowship, subject to approval by their oversight body, the UUA Board of Trustees. The UUA staff members in MPL will only recommend a minister to a congregation after the minister has been granted ministerial fellowship by the Committee. The MFC oversees the four Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy to review and support prospective candidates for ministerial fellowship.

The Director of MPL serves as the Executive Secretary of the MFC, without vote. The Ministerial Credentialing Director and the Ministerial Development Director serve as staff liaisons, without vote. Two newly fellowshipped ministers sit as liaisons to candidates for each meeting, but do not vote. <http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/ministerialfellowship/liaisonscandidates/index.shtml>

PURPOSES AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE MFC

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee is a committee of the UUA Board of Trustees. There are fourteen members, six who are lay people and eight who are ministers. Two of the ministers are appointed by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association. One lay member and one minister are members of the UUA Board of Trustees. With the exception of the UUMA appointees, all the other members of the MFC, including the Chair, are appointed by the UUA Committee on Committees.

SCHEDULING MFC INTERVIEWS

Persons seeking ministerial fellowship must request an interview in writing using the Ministerial Fellowship Committee Appointment Form.(MFC-1)

Candidates should be approximately two-thirds of the way through their preparation for ministry at the time of their MFC interview. Final evaluations of either Clinical Pastoral Education or the internship must be available by the time of the interview, with CPE preferred.

Those who have previously received a Category IV or V decision by the MFC must receive MFC Executive Committee approval before scheduling a re-interview. Please see MFC Policy 3D for additional requirements. In order 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.

Five months prior to each meeting, a materials checklist and a reconfirmation form will be mailed to each candidate. A candidate canceling his or her appointment less than four months before the meeting will be put on the waiting list for a future appointment. 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.

Candidates on the waiting list will be scheduled at the discretion of the Ministerial Credentialing Director. The order in which a candidate is added to the waiting list will be taken into account. A candidate may request the city for their interview and may decline an inconvenient appointment without penalty. Interviews must be requested in writing at least **12 months** prior to preferred interview date. Request deadlines are:

Meeting

MARCH (Chicago, IL)

SEPTEMBER (Boston, MA)

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER (San Francisco, CA)

Request Deadline

March 1 (previous year)

September 1 (previous year)

November/December 1 (previous year)

PREPARING YOUR PACKET TO MEET WITH THE MFC

All materials must be typed or printed on one side only of 8 1/2" x 11" white paper. Any replicated forms must contain exactly the same information as the originals distributed by the Ministerial Credentialing Office. Please use paper clips only. Internship evaluations from intern committee members should be consolidated on to one form.

Packets which make the best impression are neat, organized, concise, readable, consistent, complete and *on time*. It is the candidate's responsibility to make sure all evaluations, letters and other materials arrive by the deadline. Requests and tasks left until the last minute are an inconvenience to all concerned. Prior to the interview, candidates will receive a copy of their entire packet.

It is not necessary to have all requirements completed in order to interview with the MFC, but most candidates are nearing the end of seminary and often at least half way through their internship. Though candidates will be notified in a timely fashion regarding required materials, the following items may be submitted at any time.

- 1) Biographical information form (MFC-2)
- 2) To All Candidates for Ministerial Fellowship form (MFC-3)
- 3) Essay -- four pages, double spaced, 2000 words or less on the topic "What Is the Theological Context of Your Call to Unitarian Universalist Ministry?" referring to at least one theologian, one personal experience and one sacred text
- 4) Please write a short reflection paper explaining how your analysis of anti-racism, anti-oppression and multiculturalism is reflected in your ministry
- 5) Please write a short reflection paper describing a personal experience of ministering with children or youth and how this experience informs your philosophy of religious education
- 6) Five letters of recommendation (MFC-4)
- 7) MFC Statement of Congregational Sponsorship form (MFC-5)
- 8) Clinical Pastoral Education evaluation(s) (self and supervisor)
- 9) Internship final (or mid-term) evaluations (self, supervisor and intern committee)
- 10) Statements of Competency (MFC SOC 2-16)
- 11) Report(s) from career assessment program with information release form
- 12) All *Official* transcripts, both undergraduate and graduate
- 13) Criminal Record/Background Check
- 14) Recent photograph -- 2" x 2" (color preferred)
- 15) Signed MFC Reading List (MFC-6)
- 16) RSCC letter(s)
- 17) Candidate File Review (prepared in consultation with the Ministerial Credentialing Director)

The five required letters of recommendation **must be signed and dated** and must include the following:

- (1) faculty member or advisor if the candidate is enrolled in seminary or a recent graduate
- (2) a Unitarian Universalist minister other than the internship supervisor
- (3) anyone of the candidate's choice who has known him or her for at least six years
- (4) anyone of the candidate's choice.
- (5) a religious educator.

As a candidate for the Unitarian Universalist ministry, you are expected to maintain active participation in a UU congregation. The MFC requires at least one letter of recommendation describing the extent of your participation. The MFC expects candidates to be able to demonstrate an understanding of and experience with UU congregational life based on at least two years active involvement. If you have not completed your internship by the time of your MFC interview, a mid-term letter from your supervisor, if appropriate, is strongly advised.

MFC INTERVIEW

The purpose of the interview is for MFC members to explore the specific areas of your knowledge and competence, determining effectiveness of communication in both formal and informal situations, and observing resourcefulness and openness. While the RSCC seeks to evaluate your potential to be a UU minister, the MFC decides if you are ready to serve as a UU minister.

The interview begins with an introduction to each member of the Committee, after which you will deliver a ten-minute sermon or presentation. The sermon is your opportunity to have the full attention of the Committee for ten minutes and the choice of topic is up to the candidate. You may wish to speak about meaningful religious experiences, theological views, ministerial roles and functions, the meaning of religion, religious education, etc. Both the content and appropriateness of the subject, the structure and quality of the presentation, and the effectiveness of delivery are seriously considered.

Since each candidate is unique, no two interviews are the same. Committee members will have carefully read your written materials. Prior to the interview, a member of your panel will come out to greet you and ask you about your first question. All candidates are given the opportunity to prepare the first question asked after the sermon. Some candidates use the first question to cover an issue or concern in their packets they are sure the MFC will want to discuss. Others use the first question to help manage their anxiety and get comfortable at the beginning of their interview.

At the conclusion of the sermon, you will join the Committee in conversation. The questioning will cover a wide range of subjects. The MFC will cover many of the required competencies and ask you about personal and professional behaviors drawn from your references, career assessment, CPE and internship evaluations and your personal essays. The interview lasts about forty-five minutes to an hour.

At the conclusion of the interview you will be asked to wait outside the meeting room while the Committee deliberates and reaches a decision. When a decision is reached, you will be invited back into the meeting room and told the decision. Frequently, the Committee makes recommendations or suggestions, which it feels may be helpful in future preparation for the ministry. In addition, the Committee may have specific requirements that must be met before fellowship is granted.

Candidates are encouraged to come to the interview with a spouse, friend, colleague or other supportive person who will remain in the waiting area during your interview. Candidates are asked to limit the number of support people to one or two to avoid having the waiting area become overly crowded, negatively impacting the experience for others who are waiting to interview with the Committee.

Following the MFC interview, a letter is sent officially informing the candidate of the decision. Any questions concerning the decision letter should be directed to the Ministerial Credentialing Director.

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 work still 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.

Decisions of I thru III will not be valid after three years without further action by the Committee.

Candidates receiving a Category IV will retain candidate status for three years from the time of the interview and are not eligible for further UUA scholarship assistance. Those who receive a Category V will be removed from candidacy status as this is meant to be a strongly discouraging decision.

PETITIONS FOR RETURN APPOINTMENTS

In the event a person receives a Category IV or V decision from the MFC, it is necessary to petition the Executive Committee of the MFC for a return appointment. The Committee expects to receive a sober and reflective letter that shows an understanding of why the original decision may have gone the way it did, and what has been done in the meantime to address the Committee's concerns. Excuses and reasons why the Committee was wrong the first time are not particularly helpful. The Executive Committee is looking for evidence that things will go better for the Candidate the next time. The petition may also include evaluations from, for example, Clinical Pastoral Education units or internships, and/or relevant letters and reports from career centers, therapists, employers, supervisors, etc. It is important to consult with the Ministerial Credentialing Director regarding appropriate and helpful content for the petition.

All material for petitions should be submitted to the Ministerial Credentialing Office at least six weeks prior to the MFC meeting at which it will be reviewed. Successful petitioners will be placed on the waiting list for the next available, and mutually agreeable, MFC appointment.

PRELIMINARY FELLOWSHIP

Preliminary Fellowship is granted to candidates who have completely fulfilled all the requirements for fellowship to the satisfaction of the MFC. It is your responsibility to make certain that the Ministerial Credentialing Office has received all final internship, CPE and other reports, plus official notification of graduation.

CLEARANCE FOR SETTLEMENT

If you receive a "I" from the MFC, you may be eligible to be referred to the Transitions Office by the Ministerial Credentialing Director for entrance into the settlement process. There are occasionally reasons why there is a delay. The Ministerial Credentialing Director makes sure all contingencies have been adequately met. Please contact the Ministerial Credentialing Director for further information.

If you receive a "II" from the MFC, you will need to complete the specified contingencies before being cleared to enter search. The Ministerial Credentialing Director will assist you to get cleared to enter search as quickly as is possible. The Transitions Director is unable to meet with candidates until they have been cleared for settlement, and thus will only respond to general questions about the settlement process. Before contacting the Transitions Office, you are encouraged to read the *Settlement Handbook for Ministers and Congregations* and to review the Opportunities for Ministry page and other materials available from the Transitions website, <http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/transitions/>.

After being cleared to enter the settlement process, you will need to submit the "Application for Ministry Position," and meet with the Transitions Director, either in person or by phone, before you can begin indicating interest in being considered by specific congregations. Candidates are eligible to work on their Ministerial Record prior to being granted fellowship.

SERVICE OF THE LIVING TRADITION

Ministers will be invited to participate in the annual Service of the Living Tradition (SLT) at General Assembly as soon as they have been granted Preliminary Fellowship. If a minister has been granted

Preliminary Fellowship by May 15th, they will be eligible to participate in the service the following month in June. If Preliminary Fellowship is granted after the May 15th deadline, the minister would be invited to participate in the service the following year.

In some cases, graduations do not take place until after May 15th. If this situation applies to you, and you do not wish to wait until the following year to be in the Service of the Living Tradition, you can be granted Preliminary Fellowship if your school will send the Ministerial Credentialing Office a letter, by the May 15th deadline, stating that you have completed all requirements for the degree and that the faculty or board has actually voted your graduation. A statement that you will graduate upon completion of your requirements is not sufficient.

Although the requirements for participation in the Service of the Living Tradition are tied to graduation requirements, the Service of the Living Tradition is **not** your graduation ceremony. It is a worship service honoring our ministry and those among us traversing the rites of passage in a minister's career, including death. As such, it is conducted with a dignity appropriate to an annual worship celebration of the meaning of professional ministry. You are responsible for insuring that relatives, friends and classmates attending the service understand the need for this decorum.

MINISTERIAL SETTLEMENT

The Ministerial Transitions Office plays a primary role in the placement and settlement of ministers in congregations, and working with congregations to secure interim ministers. MFC Rules (which are approved by the UUA Board) state that only fellowshipped ministers can be considered for a settled or interim position in a Unitarian Universalist congregation. Candidates *can* complete a Ministerial Record. The ministerial search process is detailed in the Settlement Handbook, which is sent to new ministers when the Ministerial Credentialing Director clears them for settlement. Ministers seeking placement as chaplains, pastoral counselors, and other non-congregational ministries use the networks and organizations specific to each specialty. In addition, the Transitions Director periodically sends announcements of community based positions to ministers who express interest in receiving these.

It has become an option for some in candidate status to consider seeking a contract ministry position, which *must* be negotiated with the district staff in the district where the congregation is located and approved by the Ministerial Credentialing Director. Contract ministries are understood to be time-limited hires typically of one year's duration. *Candidates who accept a call to a UU congregation will not be permitted to interview with the MFC for four years.*

TIMING OF SEARCH AND SETTLEMENT

If you hope for a fall settlement, it is a good idea to schedule your MFC interview for no later than the previous December. Those who interview at MFC meetings scheduled in the spring often find that there are very few congregations with open pulpits still available.

Three additional pieces of advice from the Transitions Office: 1) congregational experience is often the most underrated part of preparation for ministry. This experience, however, is crucial to a candidate's education and is always important to congregations when they are looking to hire ministers; 2) Save evidence of the work you have done while preparing for ministry. This will be vital when you are putting your packet together; and 3) continually solicit feedback on your ministry from friends, teachers, and laity--even strangers! It is important to know thy strengths and weakness.

ORDINATION

It is the custom and recommendation of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association that ordination occur only **after the granting of Preliminary Fellowship**. Ordination certificates and letters of congratulation are sent out only to those who are in preliminary fellowship. While ordination information is available through the UUMA, you can contact the Administrative Assistant to the Director of the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group to request ordination certificates. Premature ordination planning runs the risk of causing a great deal of embarrassment and confusion to everyone concerned if things don't work out as expected.