

# **RULES FOR THE MINISTRY OF PASTOR**

**Uniting Church in Australia**

**Ministerial Education Commission**

## **RULES**

### **Competencies, Education and Formation for the Ministry of Pastor**

*These rules are to be read in conjunction with the Regulations of the Uniting Church  
(2.14.1 – 2.14.17)*

#### **1. The Ministry of Pastor**

Pastor is a lay ministry of the Uniting Church in Australia and means a lay person commissioned by a Presbytery, (or a Synod in the case of a Synod appointment, or the Assembly in the case of an Assembly appointment), to minister within a Congregation, community or a Uniting Church based organization for the purpose of undertaking one or more of the following tasks:

- a) teaching the beliefs and practices of the Uniting Church; and/or
- b) pastoral oversight of members and/or groups operating under the auspices of the Uniting Church; and/or
- c) leadership of worship in congregations or faith communities of the Uniting Church; and/or
- d) evangelism or service beyond a gathered congregation but which is exercised under the auspices of the Uniting Church.

See Regulation 2.14.1 and 2.14.2

#### **2. Selection and Preparation**

- 2.1 In the case of congregational and Presbytery appointments the Presbytery has responsibility for:
- (i) selecting, commissioning, formation, training and supervision of Pastors as defined in Regulation; (Regulation 2.14.6, 2.14.7, 2.14.9, 2.14.11 to 2.14.16)
  - (ii) assessing an applicant's competency and capacity to exercise the responsibilities of the specific role to which they may be appointed; (Regulation 2.14.9, 2.14.13 (b))
  - (iii) ensuring that an applicant is suitable in character, personality and spiritual maturity for the specific role to which they may be appointed; (Regulation 2.14.7)
  - (iv) ensuring that Pastors are assessed in Core Competencies for ministry within the Uniting Church in the manner described below; (Regulation 2.14.9 (a) (i))
  - (v) ensuring that Pastors undertake such training as may be required to achieve competency in Core Competencies within the specified period. (Regulation 2.14.13)

In the case of a Synod or Assembly appointment, the above responsibilities shall be those of the Synod or Assembly rather than the Presbytery.

- 2.2 In the case of applicants under Regulation 2.14.6(b) the Synod shall have the responsibilities outlined in 2.1.

#### **3. Competencies for the Ministry of Pastor**

Competencies for the ministry of Pastor consist of the knowledge, skills and other attributes necessary for the specific role to which they are appointed. Appointment and continuing education of Pastors shall include assessment of competency for ministry in relation to their specific role. (Regulation 2.14.13 (a))

With regard to the following rules, competency definitions and frameworks will be as defined by the Ministerial Education Commission.

### **3.1 Core Competencies**

- (a) Core competencies comprise the minimum essential knowledge required of Pastors by the Assembly at the time of appointment.

These competencies shall cover:

- (i) understanding of the UCA Basis of Union and ethos of the Uniting Church;
  - (ii) understanding of the UCA Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice for people engaged in professional ministry and the Sexual Misconduct Regulations of the Uniting Church.
- (b) The MEC shall provide a detailed description of the Core Competencies.
- (c) Presbyteries shall assess an applicant's Core Competencies at the time of appointment. The assessment shall be conducted by persons designated by the Presbytery. The assessment process shall take account of an applicant's prior learning and experience.
- (d) Applicants who cannot demonstrate competency in the Core Competency areas shall undertake a program of learning provided by bodies approved by the MEC for this purpose.

### **4. General Competencies**

- (a) The Presbytery shall designate a person or persons to determine the competencies that correspond with the role and tasks required of the Pastor in her or his appointment (as described in the job description). These competencies shall be drawn from competency descriptions provided by the MEC. The level of such competencies shall correspond with the level of responsibility contained in the Pastor's role description.
- (b) Following selection of an applicant for appointment as a Pastor, the Presbytery shall assess the current competencies of the applicant. The applicant will be asked to provide evidence of current competency including prior learning and experience. The Presbytery will ensure that the assessment principles of validity, sufficiency, fairness and currency are maintained in this process.
- (c) The Presbytery shall ensure that a person with ministry or supervisory experience related to the Pastor's ministry role participates in both the selection and assessment processes.. (eg. youth ministry, chaplaincy)
- (d) The Presbytery, (or the Synod in the case of a Synod appointment, or the Assembly in the case of an Assembly appointment), shall identify the general competencies yet to be developed by the Pastor and the time frame within which they shall be acquired.

### **5. General Competency Development**

#### **5.1 Oversight**

The Presbytery that has oversight of the Pastor, (or the Synod in the case of a Synod appointment, or the Assembly in the case of an Assembly appointment), shall monitor the progress of the Pastor to ensure that the relevant competencies are being developed. (Regulation 2.14.3 (c)).

- (a) The Presbytery, in consultation with the Pastor, shall develop a learning agreement achieving the general competencies relating to the Pastor's appointment. The nature of the program and supervision shall take into account the Pastor's cultural and educational background. The program may take place through a range of learning methods, formal and informal, including 'on the job' learning, and may include a range of learning providers.
- (b) The Presbytery shall provide a time frame in which the Pastor shall demonstrate the general competencies which have been identified as yet to be achieved.
- (c) The Presbytery shall

- (i) identify a person or persons who will act on behalf of the Presbytery to monitor the progress of the Pastor's learning program and report back at regular intervals to Presbytery;
- (ii) advise the Synod Ministerial Education Board annually of each Pastor's learning agreement and progress and provide feedback concerning the assessment and supervision of Pastors.

## **5.2 The Scope of the Learning Programme**

The learning programme shall

- (i) reflect the commitment of the Uniting Church to work and witness in the fullness of the Catholic faith and its evangelical expression in the Reformed tradition of the Basis of Union;
- (ii) focus on the specific nature and identity of the Ministry of Pastor in relation to his/her appointment;
- (iii) reflect an awareness of the specific nature and interrelatedness of ministries in the Uniting Church;
- (iv) include the development of competencies in the practice of ministry grounded in deepening biblical and theological understandings;
- (v) take account of the capacities, needs and interests of the Pastor; the needs of the Church, the nature of contemporary society and the missional opportunities of the Pastor's appointment;

## **6. Formation**

- (a) The Presbytery shall determine a program of ongoing ministry formation following consultation with the Pastor. This program shall take into account the spiritual maturity, learning styles, cultural background and needs of the Pastor in his or her appointment.

The program shall foster

- (i) a growing understanding of the nature of the Church, ministry and mission;
  - (ii) a deepening understanding and experience of the spiritual disciplines;
  - (iii) the development of the Pastor's identity in ministry in terms of his or her personality, character, gifts, spiritual growth and well-being;
  - (iv) increasing congruence between belief, knowledge and practice.
- (b) The formation program shall include both individual and communal formation exercises and experiences.
  - (c) The formation programme shall consist of at least 50 hours per year.

*Approved by the Assembly Standing Committee, November 2008*