The background of the cover is a close-up photograph of a stained glass window. The window is composed of various colored panes in shades of purple, orange, and red, separated by dark leaded glass lines. The entire surface of the window is covered with numerous small, clear water droplets, giving it a fresh and vibrant appearance. The lighting is bright, highlighting the textures and colors of the glass.

LAY SPECIFIED MINISTRY OF PASTOR HANDBOOK

Guidebook for
Synod Agencies,
Presbyteries and
Congregations



**uniting
church**
in Australia,
Synod of NSW & ACT

Contact Information

The Synod of NSW & the ACT has established a specific working group for the Ministry of Pastor. This working group is a Sub-committee of the Synod Standing Committee. You can contact this group via the email ministryofpastor@nswact.uca.org.au or the Chairperson of the working group, the Associate Secretary.

If you would like more information about any aspect of the Ministry of Pastor please contact:

Ministry of Pastor Facilitator, UME - Joanna Drayton

joannad@nswact.uca.org.au or 0419 632 888

or

Associate Secretary - Rev. Bronwyn Murphy

bronwynm@nswact.uca.org.au or 8267 4327

Online Resources

Further information about the Rules and Competencies related to the Lay Specified Ministry of Pastor can be found on the Uniting Church in Australia Assembly's website:

www.assembly.uca.org.au/education-for-ministry/resources/ministry-pastor

Information about The Ministry of the Laity in the UCA can be found:

<https://assembly.uca.org.au/cudw/resources/item/1671-the-ministry-of-the-laity-in-the-uca>

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LAY SPECIFIED MINISTRY OF PASTOR

Introduction

Pastor is the title of the role a lay person may undertake in the Uniting Church in Australia. If assessed competent, a lay person may be commissioned by a Presbytery or Synod or Assembly, to minister within a Congregation, community or Church based organisation for the purpose of undertaking one or more of the following tasks:

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

Regulation 2.2.2a

Pastors are appointed in consultation with the Presbytery¹ generally the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC). Reviews are conducted annually by the Presbytery/Appointing body. At the conclusion of an appointment the person ceases to be a pastor but would be eligible to apply for another appointment. There are some prerequisites (i.e. The “Core Competencies”) but most of the training for the Ministry of Pastor is done whilst on the job and is role specific (General Competencies).

Pastors may be full-time or part-time and may be paid or unpaid. Applicants will be a confirmed member or a member in association with the Uniting Church. They will be assessed to see that they are suitable in character, personality and spiritual maturity as well as having the competence and capacity to exercise the responsibilities of the specific ministry to which they are appointed.

Persons who are accountable to the Church under the Pastor Regulations do not have to be called pastor in their ministry. They may be, for example, part-time or full-time paid Youth Workers, Youth and Family Ministry Workers, Chaplain or Pastoral Assistants in a congregation. Any of these descriptors are appropriate.

People exercising ministries that have been designated by the Church as “pastor” shall be identified by their position description, e.g. Youth Worker etc., and not automatically as “pastor”. The important thing is that whatever they are called, such people are in a relationship of accountability with the Church.

¹ There are a number of UCA agencies who are responsible for hiring and line management of Pastors. In these circumstances there is shared oversight responsibility with Presbyteries. Presbyteries have a clearly defined role in continuing education, formation and vital ministry/performance reviews. See flow charts on pages 26 to 29 of this handbook.

LAY SPECIFIED MINISTRY OF PASTOR - ASSEMBLY RULES 2010²

Competencies, Education and Formation for the Ministry of Pastor

1. The Ministry of Pastor

Pastor is a Lay Specified 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 congregation 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 2.2.2(a).

2. The Role of the Presbytery

The Presbytery has responsibility for selection and preparation:

- (i) selecting, commissioning, formation, training and supervision of pastors as defined in Regulation;
- (ii) assessing an applicant's competency and capacity to exercise the responsibilities of the specific role to which they may be appointed;
- (iii) ensuring that an applicant is suitable in character, personality and spiritual maturity for the specific role to which they may be appointed;
- (iv) ensuring that pastors are assessed in Core Competencies for ministry within the Uniting Church in the manner described below;
- (v) ensuring that pastors undertake such training as may be required to achieve Core Competencies within a 3-month period (Reg. 2.6.9(d)). In the case of a Synod or Assembly appointment, the above responsibilities shall be that of the Synod or Assembly rather than the Presbytery.

² These rules and descriptions of competencies were developed in 2010, and while they are still current, refer in some places to organisational structures which have since changed names. In particular the 'MEC' was an Assembly body at that time with responsibility for setting standards for Specified Ministries. The current equivalent body is the Assembly Standards for Ministries Committee.

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.

Regarding the following rules, competency definitions and frameworks will be as defined by the Assembly Ministerial Education Commission (MEC).

3.1 Core Competencies

- a) Core competencies comprise the minimum essential knowledge required of pastors by the Assembly at the time of appointment.³

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 as well as those specific to the role. 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.

³ Or shall be attained in the first 4-6 months of employment

- 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. (e.g. 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 2.4.3 (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:
 - 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;
 - (i) 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 Program

The learning program 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 in discussion with UME shall determine a program of ongoing ministry formation following consultation with the pastor. This program shall consider the spiritual maturity, learning styles, cultural background and needs of the pastor in his or her appointment. Formation in this instance needs to shape the person to serve in the ministry of pastor for a season. It does not seek to shape someone for 'whole of life' ministry as is the case for those seeking ordination.

Formation requirements shall be documented in the assessment report which should also identify the continuing education program.

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 program, also known as Professional Development, shall consist of at least 50 hours per year for full time roles and for part time roles a pro rata equivalent.

It is important that this formation component is taken very seriously so that the person is able to align themselves with the values and ethos of the Uniting Church. Ensuring provision is made for the person to interact with the various parts of the church so that they can become familiar with the UCA's inter-conciliar and collaborative processes.

The Ministry of Pastor – Summary of Core Competencies

Core Competencies are those areas determined by the UCA Assembly as essential minimum requirements for an appointment for the ministry of pastor. The Assembly has determined that these Core Competencies address two areas: The Basis of Union and UCA ethos, and the UCA Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice. Competencies include knowledge, skills and other abilities.

In assessing Core Competencies, Presbyteries will be asking applicants for evidence of their understanding and ability in the areas listed. Such evidence may be provided in a range of ways including an interview, written statement, or a record of assessment conducted by and training body. Some assessment tools are provided by the MEC to assist with this task. The Presbytery is responsible for determining whether the evidence is sufficient as entry-level competency.

It is also important to note that these Core Competencies are entry-level competencies designed to be applicable to all pastors, regardless of their role. However, some pastor roles will require higher levels of competency with regard to preaching and teaching. Such responsibilities will be outlined in a pastor's job description and reflected in the General Competencies related to their particular role. A pastor's suitability for a particular appointment should be assessed in relation to the job responsibilities of the appointment.

UNIT OF COMPETENCY

Work within the doctrine, ethos and polity of the Uniting Church

Elements of Competency

1. Articulate the key theological foundations of the Basis of Union:
Identify and explain the key theological themes expressed in the BoU (in particular paras 1 to 4) and the Creeds, in particular:
 - a. God as Trinity
 - b. the person and saving work of Jesus Christ
 - c. the nature and mission of the church as a pilgrim people
 - d. Christian hope in the coming reconciliation and the renewal of Creation
2. Describe key historical elements contributing to the formation of the Uniting Church
 - a. describe key characteristics of the Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian churches
 - b. describe the key documents in the formation of the Uniting Church
 - c. describe the key main events in the process of church union.
3. Articulate the place and role of key aspects of the Church's life and witness, in particular
 - a. Scripture
 - b. Creeds and Confessions
 - c. the Sacraments
 - d. Christian witness to the Word, including preaching
 - e. Christian service
 - f. commitment to scholarly enquiry and an informed faith
 - g. the place of ecumenism within the UCA's history and vision

4. Understand the Councils and Ministries of the UCA
 - a. explain the UCA understandings of church membership, ministry and service
 - b. identify the key documents that describe UCA polity and procedures
 - c. identify the Councils of the Church; their functions and interrelationships
 - d. describe the forms of ministry within the UCA and their inter-relationships

Approved by Assembly (MEC) July 2010

Work within the Uniting Church Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice

Elements of Competency

5. Articulate and practice key elements of the UCA understanding of gifts, ministry and service
 - a. seek to care for all people regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, or other personal characteristics
 - b. encourage and respect the giftedness and ministry of other people and be willing to learn from them
 - c. teach in a manner that seeks to represent faithfully the Scriptures and the teachings and practices of the UCA
 - d. work effectively in a team setting with appropriate accountability and responsibility
 - e. engage others in respectful dialogue and decision-making and respect the decisions of the councils of the church
6. Identify the behavioural and boundary issues involved in ministry conduct and accountability in both personal discipleship and professional ministry
 - a. identify the parts of key documents which relate to the ordering of ministries within the UCA
 - b. explain the nature and responsibilities of pastoral ministry and pastoral relationships
 - c. the potential for conflict in responsibility and accountability and appropriate means to resolve this
 - d. explain and give examples of:
 - (i) the nature and boundaries of power in ministry relationships
 - (ii) the nature and boundaries of confidentiality
 - (iii) appropriate reasons for referral of pastoral issues
7. Identify and practice appropriate standards of professional conduct at a level appropriate to the ministry in which the pastor is engaged
 - a. accurately represent one's competencies and commit to developing one's knowledge, skills, and spiritual disciplines
 - b. explain UCA expectations regarding gifts, fees and financial gain
 - c. exercise responsible self-care
 - d. explain the purpose of supervision and give evidence of willingness to be subject to supervision

- e. identify current legal and other regulatory requirements and procedures relevant to the particular area of ministry, including Duty of Care and Mandatory Reporting
- f. explain the ethical and organisational responsibilities of ministry in other organisations as appropriate
- g. explain the responsibilities of persons in ministry regarding breaches of the Code of Ethics, including sexual misconduct complaints.

Approved by Assembly (MEC) July 2010

EXTRACTS FROM THE UCA REGULATIONS - THE MINISTRY OF PASTOR

Definition and Scope of The Ministry of Pastor

2.2.2 (a) Pastor is a specified lay ministry of the Church 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 Church based organisation for the purpose of undertaking one or more of the following tasks:

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

(b) No appointment of a person to a remunerated position, which involves the exercise of the responsibilities outlined in Regulation 2.2.2(a), shall be made without prior consultation with the Presbytery (or the Synod in the case of a Synod appointment, or the Assembly in the case of an Assembly appointment).

(c) The Presbytery shall consider designating a ministry location as appropriate for the ministry of Pastor when lay persons are making a significant contribution of their gifts to the Church by fulfilling any of the tasks set out in Regulation 2.2.2(a) in ministry locations designated as appropriate for the ministry of pastor (See Reg. 2.6.9).

Process for the Selection of a Pastor

2.3.3 (a) A person may make application for the ministry of pastor by applying for a ministry appointment that is designated by the Presbytery, (or the Synod in the case of a Synod appointment, or the Assembly in the case of an Assembly appointment), as appropriate for the exercise of the ministry of pastor.

(b) In considering and determining applications made under Regulation 2.3.3(a) the appointing body shall have reference to:

- (i) confidential testimonials, supplied at the request of the appointing body, from an appropriate minister; and the Church Council of the applicant's Congregation;
- (ii) the gifts and graces appropriate to the particular expression of the ministry of pastor for which the person is applying;
- (iii) the applicant's spiritual maturity and sense of call;
- (iv) the applicant's capacity for exercising this ministry and perceived potential to meet the required competencies for the ministry of pastor;
- (v) the applicant's personality and character; and
- (vi) the applicant's willingness to accept the doctrine, polity and discipline of the Church.

Competency Development for Ministry of Pastor

2.4.3 Core competencies means those competencies determined by the Assembly as essential for all persons that exercise the ministry of pastor.

General competencies mean those competencies determined by the Assembly as essential for all persons exercising a particular ministry role, for example chaplain, youth worker, etc.

(a) A pastor shall develop the general competencies identified by the Assembly as appropriate for the particular ministry in which the pastor is engaged.

(b) 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.

(c) 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.

Designating an Appointment as Appropriate for the Ministry of Pastor

2.6.9 (a) A ministry location shall be designated as an appropriate appointment for the exercise of the ministry of pastor for the purposes of these Regulations when:

- (i) the position description of the role the person undertakes includes one or more of the tasks named in Regulation 2.2.2; and the Presbytery, (or Synod in the case of a Synod appointment, or Assembly in the case of an Assembly appointment) designates that the position description and ministry location are suitable for the exercise of the ministry of pastor; or
- (ii) a lay person is appointed to fill an approved placement.

(b) When the Presbytery, (or Synod in the case of a Synod appointment, or Assembly in the case of an Assembly appointment), has resolved to recognise a ministry location as appropriate for the exercise of the ministry of pastor, it shall advise the faith community, congregation(s) or other appropriate body and the Placements Committee.

(c) Before making an appointment the appointing body should satisfy itself that the applicant has been able to demonstrate the core competencies of the ministry of pastor.

(d) Where an applicant cannot demonstrate the core competencies the Presbytery (or the Synod in the case of a Synod appointment, or the Assembly in the case of an Assembly appointment), may grant permission to make the appointment subject to a six month probation period by the end of which time the person shall have demonstrated the core competencies.

Conditions of Appointment for a Pastor

2.7.4 (a) The Presbytery, (or the Synod in the case of a Synod appointment, or the Assembly in the case of an Assembly appointment), shall approve the terms and conditions of appointment.

(b) The appointment shall be subject to regular evaluation by the Presbytery, (or the Synod in the case of a Synod appointment, or the Assembly in the case of an Assembly appointment), in consultation with the pastor and the Congregation or other appropriate body.

Commissioning of a Pastor

2.8.2 The Presbytery, (or the Synod in the case of a Synod appointment, or the Assembly in the case of an Assembly appointment), shall be responsible for conducting a service of commissioning. The commissioning service shall be conducted on the commencement of an appointment of a pastor and in accordance with a form authorised by the Assembly.

Accountability of a Pastor

2.9.2 (a) A pastor shall be accountable to the Presbytery which has oversight of the pastor in matters of faith and discipline and to the appointing body for the exercise of their ministry.

(b) Pastors are subject to the Code of Ethics and Part 5 of these Regulations.

Membership of a Pastor

2.9.4 A pastor shall be:

(a) included on the roll of confirmed members, or members-in-association, of a Congregation in which the pastor is serving, or, where the appointment is other than in a Congregation, included on the roll of confirmed members, or members-in-association, of the Congregation with which the pastor chooses to be actively involved;

(b) a member of the Church Council of the Congregation in which the pastor is serving, if serving in a congregational context unless the Presbytery, after consultation with the Congregation, determines otherwise;

(c) a member of the Presbytery (See Reg. 3.3.4(c)(i)), and eligible for election as a lay member of the Synod and the Assembly.

Termination of Recognition of a Pastor

2.10.2 The recognition of a pastor shall cease upon:

(a) the acceptance by the appointing body of the pastor's resignation from a ministry location which has been designated as appropriate for the ministry of pastor;

(b) the determination by the Presbytery, (or the Synod in the case of a Synod appointment, or the Assembly in the case of an Assembly appointment), that the general competencies identified by the Assembly as appropriate for the particular ministry in which the pastor is engaged have not been demonstrated within the period of time determined by the Presbytery, (or the Synod in the case of a Synod appointment, or the Assembly in the case of an Assembly appointment);

(c) the termination of the appointment of the pastor for whatever reason; or

(d) the determination of the Committee for Discipline pursuant to Regulation 5.7.4(r)(vi), subject to the Regulations relating to appeal. Where a pastor is appointed to an approved placement the Regulations related to the termination of a placement shall not apply.

Ministry of Pastor as Religious Practitioner: Policy Statement

The Synod of NSW and the ACT determines that for a person to be considered for classification as a Religious Practitioner the role must first be approved by ACOMP through its Executive. The role and person must be guided by the Basis of Union, operate under and comply with the Uniting Church in Australia Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice, as amended from time to time by Assembly and accept the discipline of the Church.

On fulfilment of the above criteria prior to the classification being ratified the requirements of the role, skills and experience of the person must be assessed against the requirements of the Australian Tax Office definition of a Religious Practitioner to determine percentage of role capable of being able to receive available religious practitioner taxation benefits.

Please note, a Religious Practitioner and remuneration being paid under the ATO Religious Practitioner tax concession benefits are an employee of the Church, and not an ordained minister of the Uniting Church in Australia or the recipient of a Stipend.

Ministry of Pastor (MoP) – Criteria of Call

Christ chose some of us to be apostles, prophets, missionaries, pastors, and teachers, so that his people would learn to serve, and his body would grow strong. Ephesians 4:11

Such passages of Scripture are often cited in any call for ministry. Whether ordained or lay, we are called to proclaim God's message in whatever context we are located. The call to the Lay Specified Ministry of Pastor (MoP) is a call to respond to a particular context for a limited period of time. Pastors are not expected to give their life to this expression of ministry – it is for a season. It is particular – whether it is serving as a Chaplain in a prison or aged care home, or as a youth and family worker – there are set responsibilities that shape this ministry. When payment is involved, the ministry of pastor is an employed position with an employment contract issued by the Synod. Where a person is undertaking the responsibilities of the ministry of pastor without payment, it is a volunteer role and will be conducted according to a volunteer agreement provided by the Synod.

In the Synod of NSW and the ACT, 'pastor' is not used as a formal title. It is the designation given to a particular role. A ministry of pastor position is often the result of an advertised vacancy. It is not the call to be a pastor that attracts an applicant, but the nature of the work involved. For example, an aged care chaplain responds to the invitation to serve the residents of an aged care facility, rather than seeking to become a 'pastor'.

The ministry of pastor is an internal church process that enables us to recognize this ministry in ways that respect the employment process yet enable Agency, Congregation, Presbytery and Synod to work together as required. For example, a Chaplain who is not ordained may be required to conduct Holy Communion in an aged care facility. They cannot do this without Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee giving permission.

Most Presbyteries require the position to be recognized as ministry of pastor for such authorisation to be given. In such an instance, there shall be clear rationale as to how the designation of pastor enhances the delivery of ministry.

Uniting have deemed any lay chaplain must meet the ministry of pastor criteria as a way of embedding the ministry beyond the location of employment. This designation says the role is more than a remunerated or volunteer position – it is an expression of faith and service, not just to God, but to the wider Uniting Church in Australia. It says this person is willing to go beyond the contractual agreement and serve in ways that build up the faith and mission of members of the church. It is a leadership position. It is not a way of accessing benefits taxation or otherwise. Ministry of pastor is not about what the person might get, but how they might more fully serve.

It is vital that the employing agency refer any appointed ministry of pastor position to the local Presbytery for assessment, oversight and joint commissioning.⁴ Equally important is the

⁴ Flowcharts for processes supporting School and Uniting interaction with Presbytery

Presbytery's responsibility to support and work collaboratively with the employing agency in providing oversight.

In Section 12 of the 2019/3 Australian Taxation Office Rulings,⁵ 'Religious practitioner' is defined as:

- a member of a religious institution;
- a minister of religion;
- a student at an institution who is undertaking a course of instruction in the duties of a minister of religion;
- a full-time member of a religious order; or
- a student at a college conducted solely for training persons to become members of religious orders.

Except in rare cases, a minister of religion would have all these characteristics⁶:

- is recognised by ordination or other admission or commissioning, or has authority from the religious institution to carry out the duties of a minister based on theological training or other relevant experience;
- is officially recognised as having authority on doctrine or religious practice; is distinct from ordinary adherents of the religion;
- is an acknowledged leader in spiritual affairs of the institution; and
- is authorised to act as a minister or spiritual leader, including the conduct of religious worship and other religious ceremonies.

The Synod understands this contextually. For example, a Hospital Chaplain may not have authority on doctrine in the wider church but would in terms of the employing agency and hospital. Another example might be a Youth Worker who is an acknowledged leader in spiritual affairs in the context of youth ministry. Both would qualify under the ATO ruling.

Section 48 lists examples of the pastoral duties undertaken by religious practitioners⁷ :

- communication of religious beliefs;
- teaching and counselling adherents and members of the community;
- providing adherents and members of the community with spiritual guidance and support;
- conducting an in-service seminar of a spiritual nature;
- meeting with or visiting adherents, the sick, the poor, and others who need emotional and spiritual support; and
- providing pastoral supervision to those engaged in pastoral duties.

These do not mean duties performed every now and then, but regularly and consistently. The major proportion of the role must be spent in pastoral or directly related and measurable religious activities.

⁵ ATO TR 2019/3 p.4

⁶ ATO TR 2019/3 p.4

⁷ ATO TR 2019/3 p.8

These criteria are not a series of boxes to be ticked in order to receive applicable benefits, but a sincere commitment to serve as a religious practitioner. The practice of re-writing job descriptions to mirror the language used by the ATO regarding religious practitioner demeans the spirit and integrity of this ministry.

Any position that seeks to be deemed a religious practitioner for tax purposes must be approved by the Synod of NSW and ACT.⁸ Without this endorsement, no benefits, taxation or otherwise will apply.

In summary, there are three decisions which need to be made in relation to potential ministry of pastor positions.

1. The decision, according to regulations of the Uniting Church (2.2.2(a)), as to whether the position in question meets the criteria for being named as a ministry of pastor position. This is a decision of the Presbytery, although the Presbytery shall take into consideration the needs and policies of the employing agency, should this be relevant. Should a Presbytery require guidance in this matter, they may seek assistance from the Associate Secretary. If the position is not deemed to be suitable for the exercise of the ministry of pastor, then normal requirements for employment or volunteering will apply.
2. If the position is to be remunerated, then the Synod will draw up an employment contract, or where the position is not remunerated, a volunteer agreement.
3. In a small number of cases, a Presbytery may consider that the pastor also fits within the Tax Office rulings related to Religious Practitioners. In these cases, the Presbytery or Agency must request that the Synod determine whether this is correct, and this approval will happen through the Executive of the Placements Committee.

The ministry of pastor is a valued pathway for lay people to serve in ministry for a season and in a specific location without requiring ordination. Understanding these three interlocking possibilities will ensure consistency and compliance to the Regulations of the Church, to appropriate care and oversight of employees and volunteers, and to Religious Practitioner/ATO Rulings.

⁸ Reg 2.2.2(b)

Steps for Appointing a Pastor

(that also seeks recognition as a Religious Practitioner under the ATO 2019 Rulings).

Note: Any ministry of pastor position that does not also include recognition as a Religious Practitioner (RP) is overseen by the Presbytery and has no need to refer to the Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements (ACOMP).

1. Congregation or other employing body (Agency, church-based organisation, Presbytery or Synod) seek to employ a lay person to carry out one or more of the responsibilities outlined in Regulation 2.2.2(a) which are:
 - a) Teaching the beliefs and practices of the Church;
 - b) Pastoral oversight of members and/or groups operating under the auspices of the Church;
 - c) Leadership of worship in congregations or faith communities of the Church; and
 - d) Evangelism or service beyond a gathered congregation but which is exercised under the auspices of the Church.

Except in rare cases, a Religious Practitioner will also have all these characteristics⁹:

- is recognised by ordination or other admission or commissioning, or has authority from the religious institution to carry out the duties of a minister based on theological training or other relevant experience;
- is officially recognised as having authority on doctrine or religious practice;
- is distinct from ordinary adherents of the religion;
- is an acknowledged leader in spiritual affairs of the institution; and
- is authorised to act as a minister or spiritual leader, including the conduct of religious worship and other religious ceremonies.

In the Synod of NSW and ACT, the congregation or employing body must seek approval from the Presbytery (or the Synod for a Synod appointment) for this to be recognised as a religious practitioner/ministry of pastor position before proceeding to fill the position. Regulation 2.2.2 (b) (c)

2. Church Council or employing body requests the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) (or the Secretariat for a Synod Appointment) to provide it with a copy of the following documents:
 - a) These guidelines for appointment of a pastor;
 - b) The Pro Forma Position Description (PD) for a pastor position;
 - c) The Pro Forma Letter of Appointment; and
 - d) Synod Lay Ministry Remuneration Guidelines
3. Church Council or the employing body prepares the Position Description (PD), including proposed remuneration and conditions, indicating what classification level the position will be according to the Lay Ministry Remuneration Guidelines. Accompanying the PD shall be a clear rationale of why this employment is sought as a ministry of pastor position, and what difference the designation pastor will make to the delivery of duties.

⁹ ATO TR 2019/3 p.4

4. Completed PD and accompanying rationale is submitted to the PRC (or the Synod for a Synod appointment) seeking approval as a designated ministry of pastor position.
5. PRC forwards PD to Associate Secretary to ensure compliance with Regulation 2.2.2(a) and Uniting Resources Employment & IR Manager/HR. This shall include ensuring the level of remuneration and hours per week aligns with the approved Lay Ministry Remuneration Guidelines. If Religious Practitioner employment status is sought, the Associate Secretary forwards the Position Description to ACOMP through its Executive, who have been authorised by Synod Standing Committee to oversee that all approved ministry of pastor positions meet the criteria (Reg 2.6.6). This responsibility sits with ACOMP through its Executive '(Exec.)' to provide consistent oversight ensuring compliance with ATO rulings. PRC is informed of decision.
6. PRC conveys ACOMP's decision to the congregation or employing body. There may be further negotiation between the congregation or employing body and PRC in relation to the PD in order to ensure compliance with Regulations and policies. (Regulation 2.7.4 (a))
7. Once the PD is approved by Presbytery (non-Religious Practitioner status) or ACOMP Exec (Religious Practitioner status), the congregation or employing body may advertise the position. The advertisement needs to make clear that only those who are either a Confirmed Member or a Member in Association of the UCA can fill a pastor position. (Regulation 2.4.6 (a)) In the case of a Synod agency, if the successful applicant is not already a member of the Uniting Church, they must agree to become so before they are able to take up the position.
8. A selection committee (not a Joint Nominating Committee (JNC)) is appointed by the Church Council or employing body, with at least one Presbytery representative appointed by PRC who has been authorized by UME to assess competency, and interviews commence. In the interviews the selection committee shall consider the issues covered in Regulation 2.3.3 (b) which include:
 - a) Confidential testimonials from an appropriate minister and the Church Council (or equivalent body) of the applicant's congregation;
 - b) Gifts and graces of the applicant which are appropriate to the position;
 - c) Applicant's spiritual maturity and sense of call;
 - d) Applicant's capacity to exercise this ministry and potential to demonstrate the Core Competencies (Regulation 2.4.3);
 - e) Applicant's personality and character;
 - f) Applicant's willingness to accept the doctrine, polity and discipline of the UCA; and
 - g) Confirmation of Confirmed membership or Member in Association (Regulation 2.4.6 (a))
9. Once a successful applicant is selected, the congregation or employing body, through the Presbytery representative of the selection committee, notifies the PRC (or the Synod in the case of a Synod appointment).
10. Presbytery, in collaboration with the successful applicant, will appoint a Mentor. Mentors shall be equipped for their task by Uniting Mission and Education (UME). Presbytery shall inform UME in readiness for training.

11. PRC (or the Synod for a Synod appointment) informs UME¹⁰ and requests an assessment of the applicant's competency in relation to the Core Competencies required by Assembly, and any immediate general competencies (Reg 2.4.3). If the applicant is unable to demonstrate the Core Competencies, they can undertake training in these areas and be reassessed before a six-month period has expired. During this time a mentor is appointed by PRC (or Synod in the case of a Synod appointment) to support the applicant in the training process.
12. Presbytery shall arrange for the assessment of the prospective candidate to ensure competency. Any Assessor must be UME trained and authorised.
13. PRC shall request the Synod Office¹¹ to issue a contract of employment. Terminology and benefits applicable only to ordained ministers must not be referenced. Once the applicant signs the contract of employment, they may commence work in the position, noting that there will be a six-month probationary period. If the person fails to demonstrate the Core Competencies before six months has expired, the appointment is terminated (Regulation 2.6.9 (d)). Please note: This decision must be executed, and the applicant informed before the six months 'actually' expires.
14. Once the applicant has demonstrated the Core Competencies, the Presbytery or Agency will take steps to commission the person into the role of pastor. Normally this will happen in the context of worship within the congregation or the employing body. In the case of a Synod appointment, Presbytery and Agency shall work collaboratively to arrange the Service of Commissioning and ongoing oversight.
15. After the Commissioning, PRC shall add the name of the person to the list of commissioned pastors within the Presbytery and the person becomes a member of the Presbytery (Reg 2.9.4(c)). PRC has the responsibility for maintaining an up to date list of pastors. PRC also informs the Secretariat who checks the name has been added to the Secretariat records.
16. At some point in the process, PRC shall consult with the successful applicant to provide a mentor. PRC informs UME so that the [appointed] mentor understands what is required and participates in developing a Learning Agreement for the pastor. Mentors shall be equipped for their task by UME.

Oversight of Pastors

1. Pastors are accountable to the Presbytery for faith and discipline and to the Church Council or employing body for the exercise of their ministry. (Regulation 2.9.2 (a))
2. Pastors must abide by the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice of the UCA and participate in the Ethical Ministry Refresher workshops – twice each year. (Regulation 2.9.2 (b))
3. Pastors are required under the Code of Ethics to participate in regular Professional Supervision.

¹⁰ Head of Vital Leadership or Nominee

¹¹ Employment and Industrial Relations Manager

4. Soon after Commissioning, the mentor will discuss with the pastor, PRC and the Church Council, Agency or employing body, what further training in the General Competencies the pastor needs for them to carry out for their ministry. A Learning Agreement is then drawn up between the relevant stakeholders, i.e., pastor, the Church Council, PRC, Agency, and Synod. The Learning Agreement will document any ongoing education, training and formation the pastor is required to complete and the specified time frame. The Learning Agreement will allow for at least 50 hours per year pro rata of ongoing education, training and formation. (Regulation 2.4.3 (b) and (c))
5. Annually the PRC, in consultation with the congregation or employing body and Synod, will evaluate the ministry of the pastor including assessment of progress in relation to the Learning Agreement and development of General Competencies. (Regulation 2.7.4 (b)).
6. A pastor position may be terminated for the following reasons:
 - a. The Church Council or employing body accept a letter of resignation from the position
 - b. ACOMP Exec, acting on behalf of the Presbytery, determines that the General Competencies needed for the position have not been demonstrated within the agreed time frame, according to the Learning Agreement
 - c. The pastor is subject to disciplinary action under the Uniting Church Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice.

Core and General Competencies

Refer Assembly Rules on Page 6 of this handbook

Personal Abilities / Skills

- Level of Written and Verbal Communication Skills
- Requirement for a Driver's License – Yes / No
- Current Working with Children Check or Working with Vulnerable Persons Check
- Ability to work with particular computer software
- Qualifications e.g., Clinical Pastoral Education; Certificate IV in Christian Ministry and Theology

Footnote Attachments

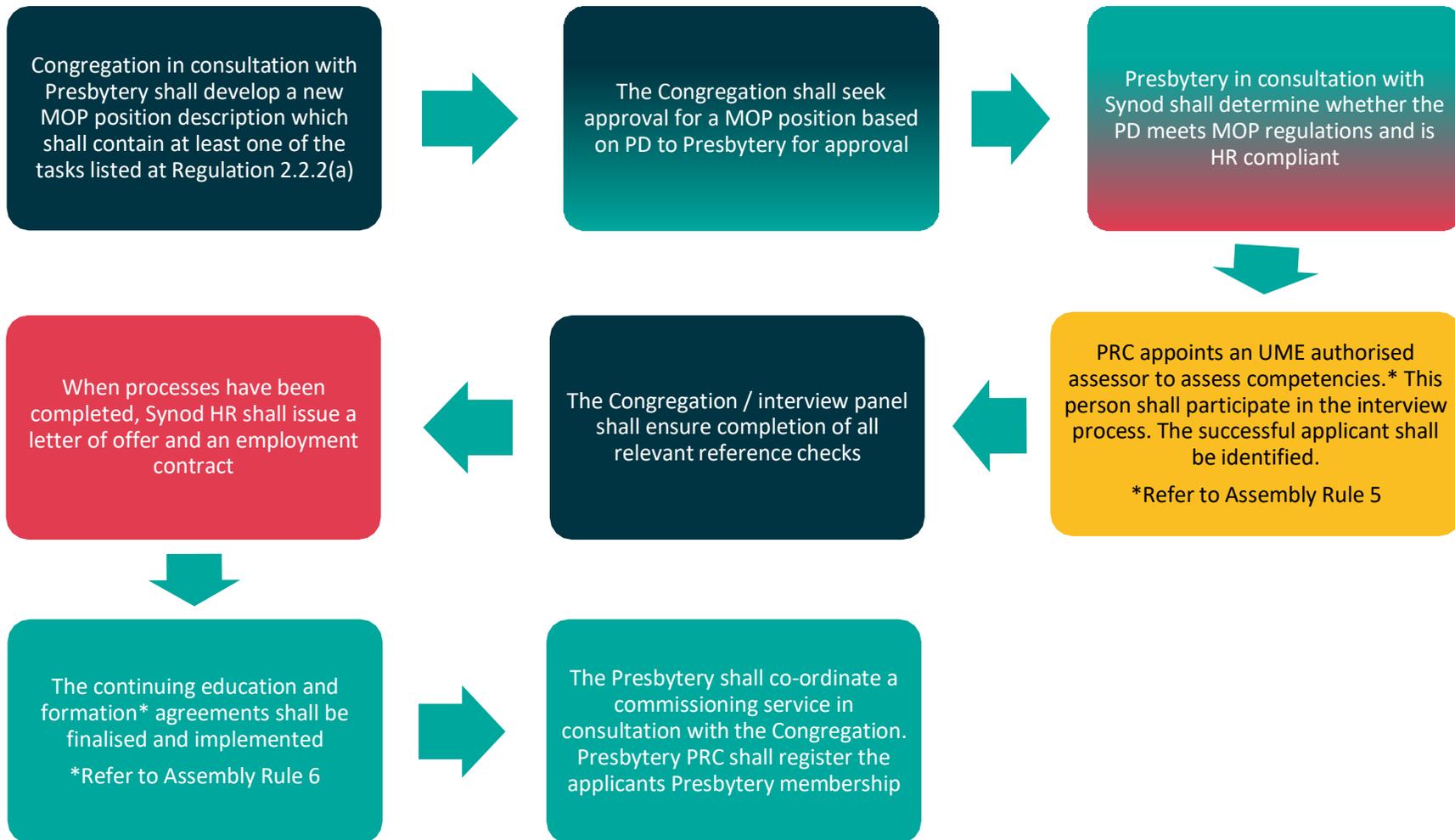
- Flowcharts for processes supporting School and Uniting interaction with Presbyteries
- Regulation 2.2.2 (b) *page 6 of this handbook*

Refer Synod website for copies of:

- ATO TR 2019/3 p. 4
- ATO TR 2019/3 p. 8

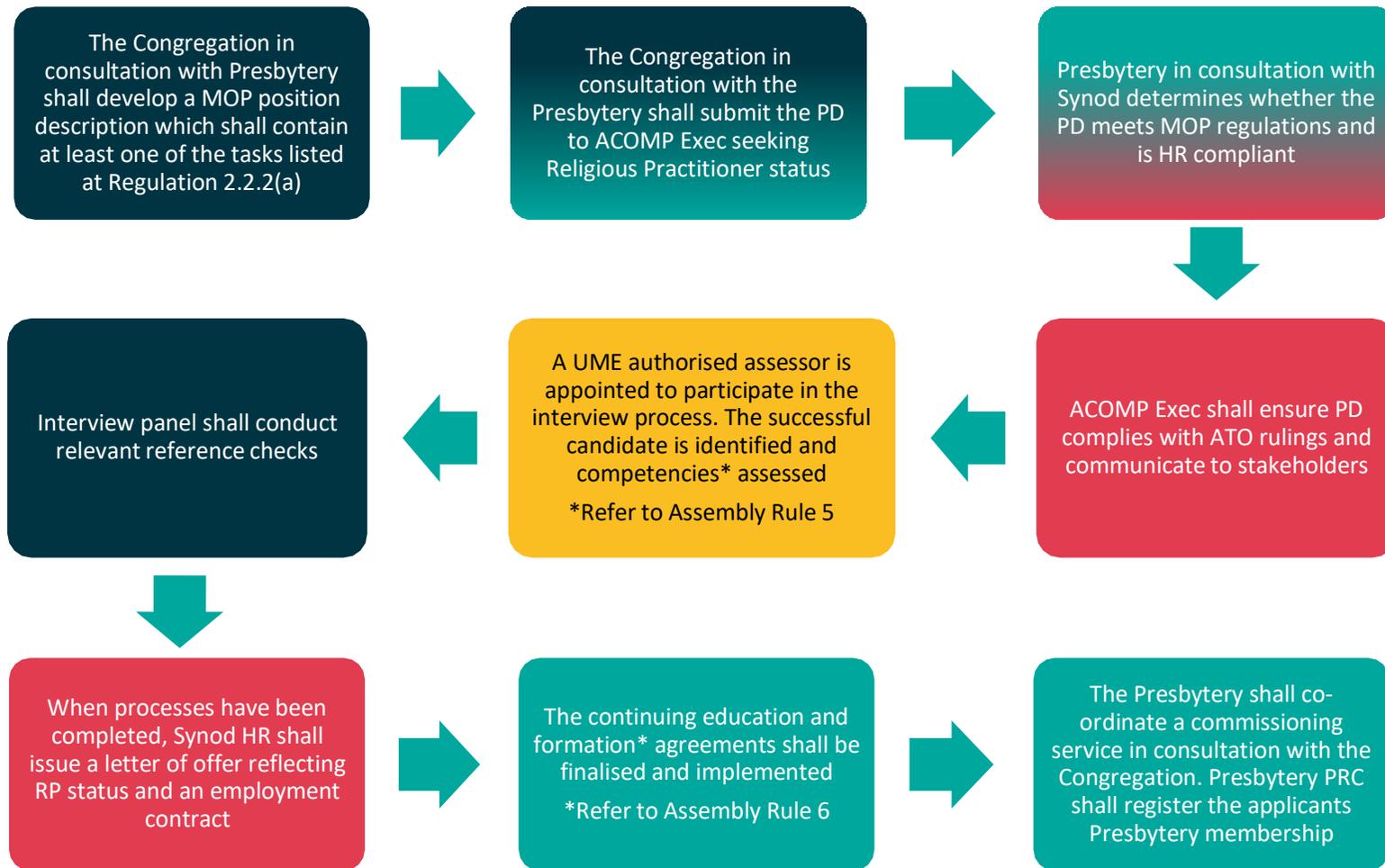
Flowchart: Employment Process for a Ministry of Pastor position in a Congregation

(Not seeking recognition as a Religious Practitioner under the ATO 2019 Rulings)

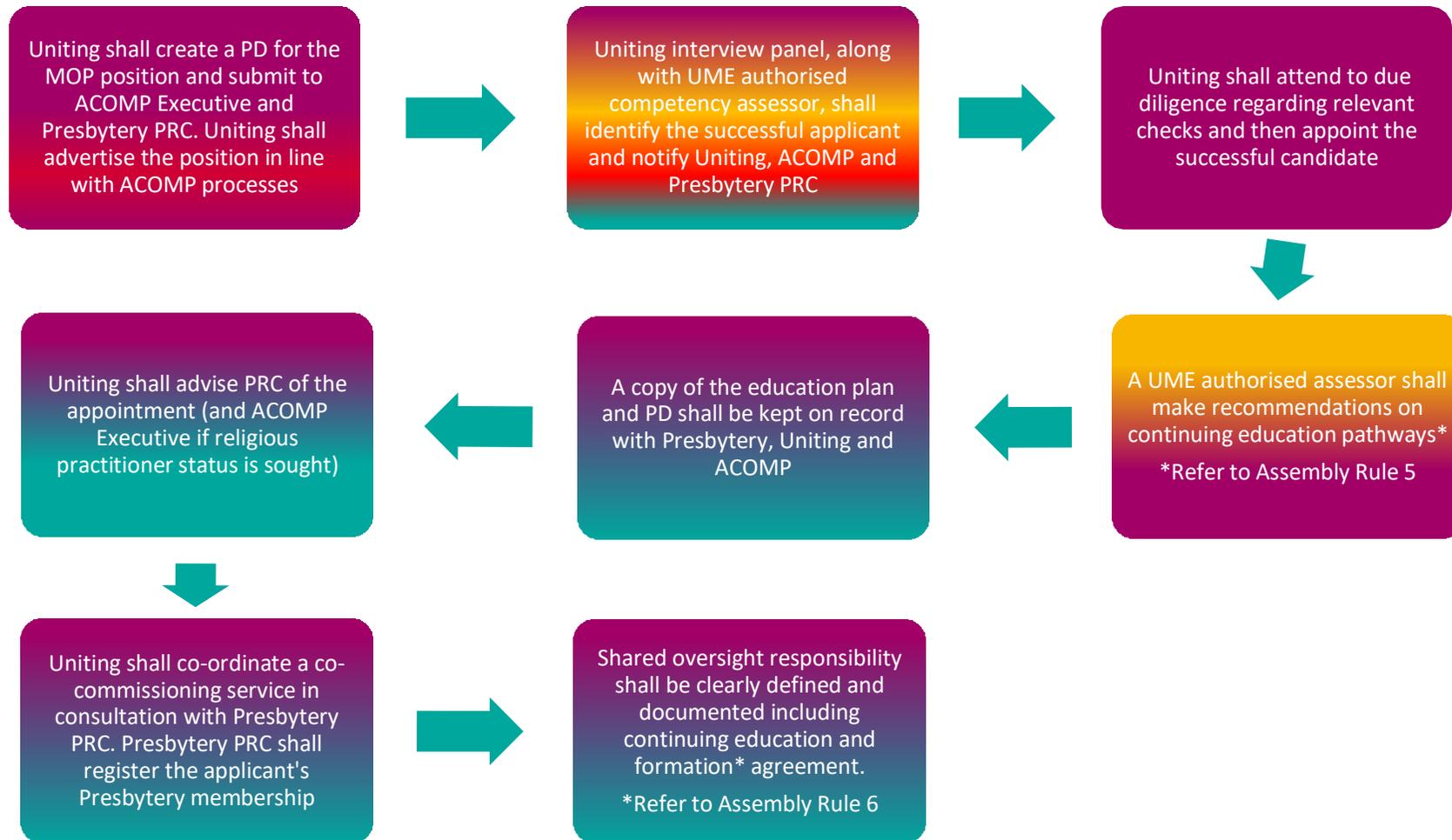


Flowchart: Employment Process for a Ministry of Pastor position in a Congregation

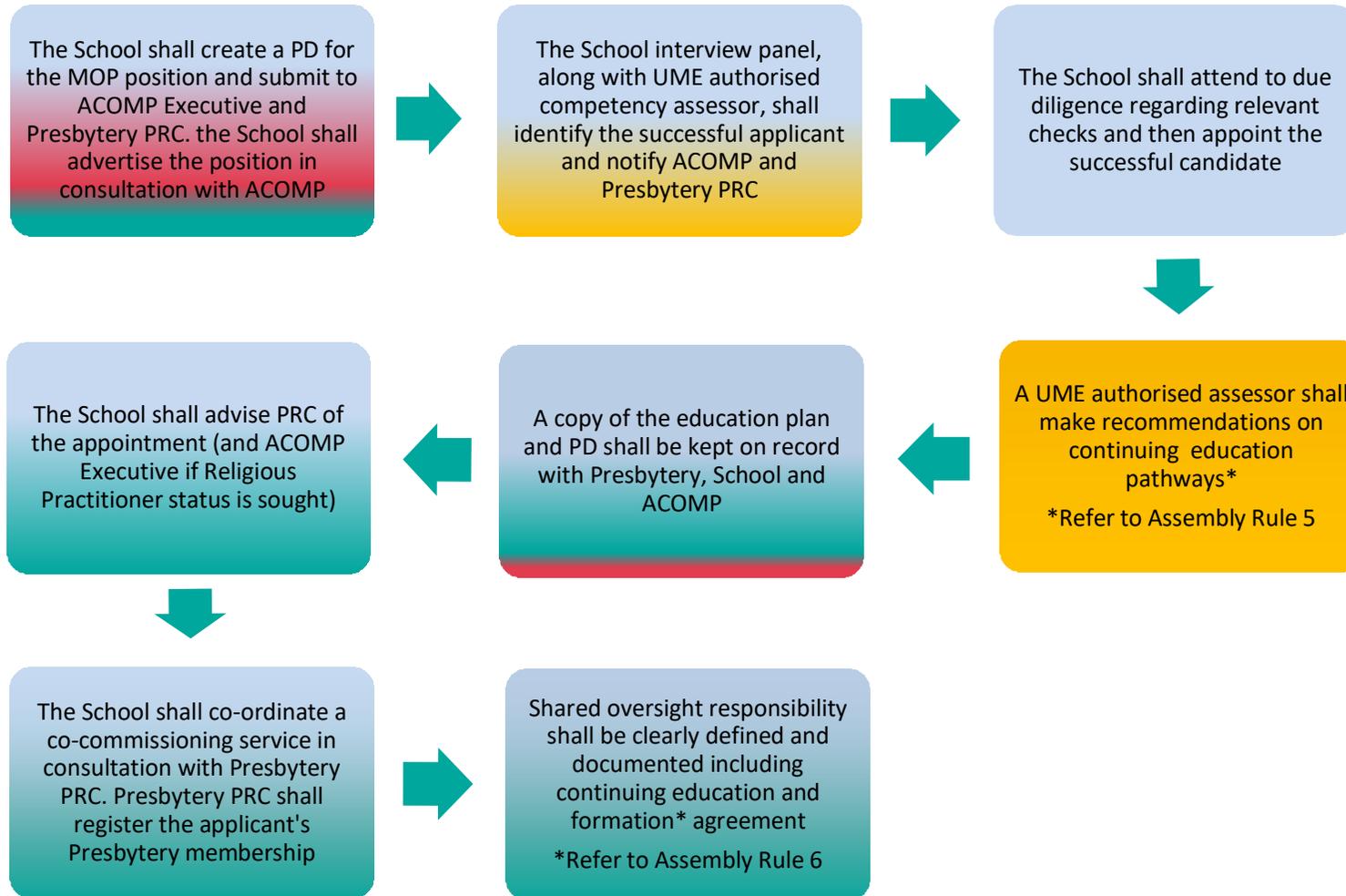
(Seeking recognition as a Religious Practitioner under the ATO 2019 Rulings)



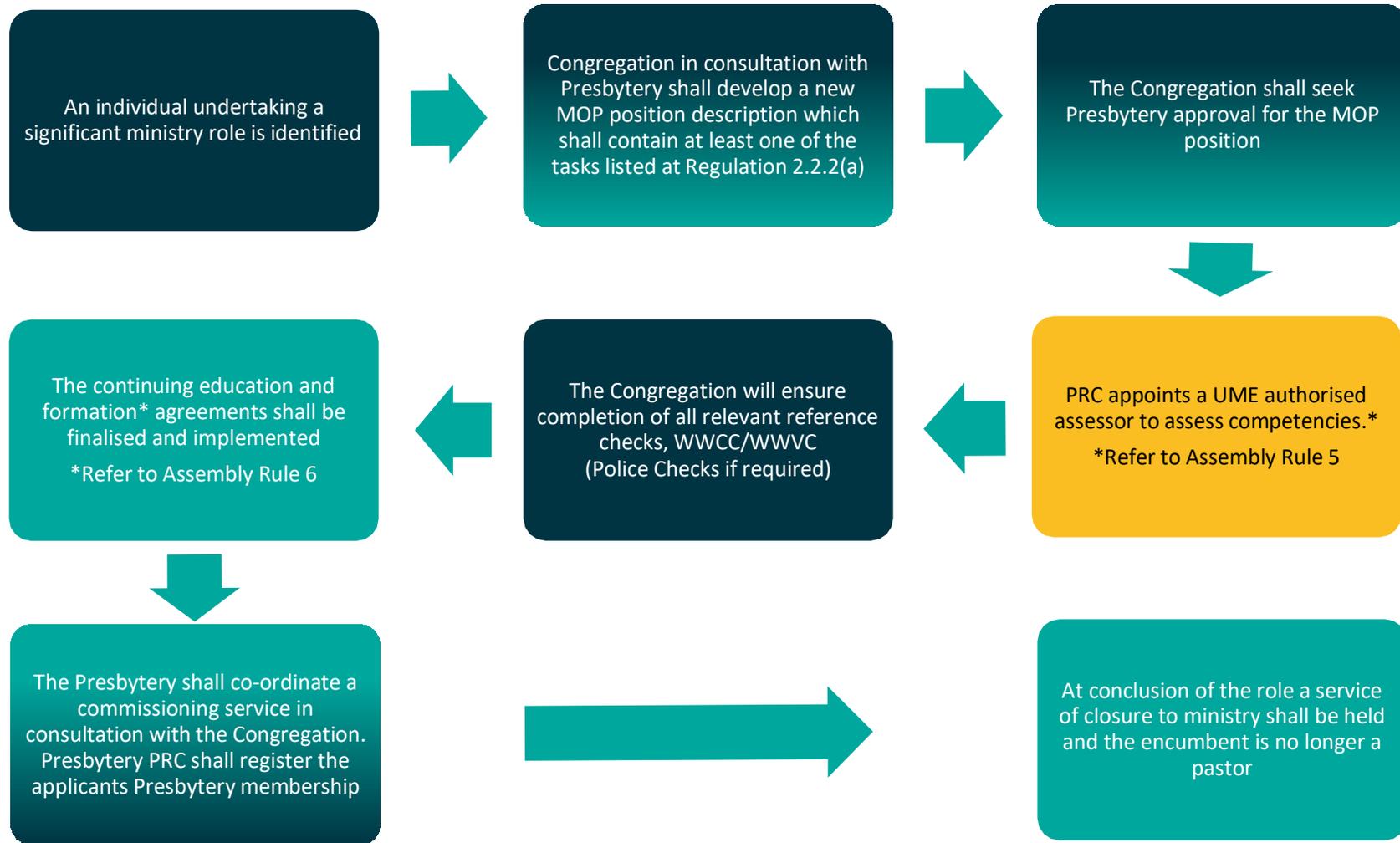
Flowchart: Employment Process for a Ministry of Pastor position in Uniting



Flowchart: Employment Process for a Ministry of Pastor position in Uniting Church Schools



Flowchart: Employment Process for a Volunteer Ministry of Pastor Role



Key:	Congregation	Presbytery	UME	Synod
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Requirements for Supervision

Background

Professional supervision is defined in the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice (3.9(c)) as a relationship with a supervisor to assist in enhancing the quality of ministry by enabling the pastor to maintain the boundaries of the pastoral relationship, and to intentionally reflect on their ministry practice and context.

As part of their self-care, all employed pastors have a responsibility to ensure they receive regular professional supervision. It is also a requirement of the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice that all those in active ministry meet regularly with a Professional Supervisor (COEMP 3.8(b) and 3.9(c)(d)).

The appointing body generally meets the cost of Professional Supervision for pastors up to an amount determined by appointing body. Often this is about \$850pa. The purpose of Professional Supervision is to ensure that each ministry practitioner maintains high ethical standards, reflects on the quality of their ministry, and engages in ongoing formation and education.

Professional Supervision for employed pastors is compulsory. It allows for the Synod to:

- Have a consistent practice and expectation of informed ethical ministry practice
- Ensure a high standard of supervision by requiring professional supervision from a qualified supervisor, or a Supervisor trained and authorised by the Synod
- Have a Presbytery record of the name and qualification of supervisor
- Receive a signed certification from the Supervisor as to the number of sessions attended each year, which would also be added to the pastors Presbytery records.

Eight (8) supervised sessions per year is the minimum expectation. It is acknowledged that those in a rural and/or isolated community may experience difficulty in accessing supervision and may have to look at different options. Ideally supervision will take the form of face-to-face contact with supervisors, however a number of different models exist that may involve phone or skype supervision. Peer supervision or peer group supervision is no longer considered professional in its delivery. Supervision should be a regular commitment, ideally every month to six weeks.

Selection of a Supervisor

Pastors may select their own Professional Supervisor. As ministry has different contexts; differs from role to role; and pastors have different needs and requirements; supervisors should be chosen carefully. Supervisors should be people trained for the role of supervision; have good communication skills; understand the ethos of the Uniting Church and the role and responsibility of the pastor; and can engage a person in reflecting and critiquing their ministry.

People in a ministry of pastor role are encouraged to develop a Supervision Covenant with their supervisor. The Associate General Secretary is available to offer assistance in choosing a suitable supervisor. There is also a list of UCA authorised Supervisors on the website.

Confidentiality and Accountability

All ministry agents who come under the oversight of the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice are required to have regular supervision. Pastors are also required to provide their Supervisor with a copy of the Basis of Union and the CoEMP in order to orient them to the requirements, values and ethos of the Uniting Church.

The content of supervision sessions remains confidential and stays between pastor and supervisor.

The Appointing Body and Presbytery may request a certificate from the Supervisor, documenting the supervisor's name, relevant qualifications and the total number of sessions attended that year. This should be included in the annual appraisal which each pastor is required to submit to Presbytery. A copy of the Specified Minister Annual Report pro-forma can be accessed via the link on page 2 of this handbook.

Requirements for Continuing Education

Background

At the 1997 Assembly, the Uniting Church affirmed the importance of continuing education and requested all pastors (and ministers) to enter into continuing education learning agreements with Presbytery in order to enhance professional development and skills required for ministry (Regulation 2.2.1 (xi)).

Due to the changing nature of society and the role, purpose and value of the Church within it, it is vital for those in ministry to be able to respond to, and minister effectively. All employed pastors are expected to engage in 50 hours of continuing education pro rata (CoEMP 1.7; 3.4a). This will include the fulfilment of General Competencies as well as an annual retreat appropriate to the role in which the pastor is serving.

Professional Standards Training

In response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and taking into account developments in other Synods, the Synod of NSW.ACT established new requirements in terms of Professional Standards training for all those in active ministry.

These requirements for Professional Standards Training apply to everyone in active ministry including the following:

- Candidates for ordained ministries
- Deacons and ministers of the word in Placement, Supply or awaiting Placement
- Ministry of pastor positions
- Lay people employed in ministry positions, even if these are not recognised as pastor positions
- Ministers from other churches serving in an approved Placement
- Ministers seeking admission as ministers of the UCA
- Retired ministers who are still in active ministry (this means anything involving conducting a regular service through to providing supply).

It is a requirement that all those in active ministry will participate in the following training:

Foundations of Ethical Ministry Course: This 2-day course is provided by Uniting Mission and Education (UME). Ministry agents are expected to attend this course once every 5 years as per recommendations from the Placements Committee and Synod Standing Committee.

Ethical Ministry Refresher Workshops: These 3-hour workshops provide opportunity for a group of peers to explore in depth a particular aspect of the Code of Ethics or an associated issue. Two are required each year and will be hosted by Presbytery facilitators who are trained and authorised by Uniting Mission and Education (UME). Each Presbytery generally offer multiple sessions.

Should any ministry agent be unable to participate in their home Presbytery, they are responsible to locate and attend a session in another Presbytery or one being run by UME. For pastors who fail to fulfil this requirement, a formal warning may be issued by the Associate Secretary. Should two consecutive sessions be missed with no supporting rationale from Presbytery, a range of consequence may apply. This could include the Moderator standing the pastor aside at the appointing bodies expense (deleted ref to ministers expense facility) until requirements have been met.

Annual appraisals: Presbyteries & other appointing bodies should conduct an annual appraisal for each pastor under their oversight. Presbyteries may create their own appraisal form or use the template provided by Synod. Each pastor is required to submit this report as part of their accountability. Presbytery has the authorisation to manage this process and determine any potential consequences for failure to be accountable.

Professional Supervision: it is a requirement of the Code of Ethics that all those in active ministry meet regularly with a Professional Supervisor.

The name and qualifications of the Supervisor and the number of sessions attended should be included in the annual appraisal conducted by Presbytery.

Safe Church Awareness Training: Pastors are required to undertake Safe Church Awareness training. This includes a Refresher Course every three years. However, those who are employed in chaplaincy positions, (such as in schools, prisons, hospitals, aged care), will be exempt from Safe Church Awareness training if the institutions in which they work provide similar training which is compulsory for all staff. This should be reported and updated in their annual appraisal to Presbytery and their appointing body and reported to the Secretariat for inclusion in the Ministry file.

General Competencies: When the Core Competencies are fulfilled most of the ongoing training for the ministry of pastor is done whilst on the job and is role specific and will fall under the General Competencies.

The General Competencies are grouped under the following headings. Note that the categories are not mutually exclusive, so there are some overlaps of competency in some areas.

1. Community Development
2. Education
3. Evangelism
4. Leadership
5. Pastoral Care
6. Organisation & Administration
7. Worship & Preaching

Refer Assembly Rules on Page 6 of this handbook for further details.

Ministry Agents Obligations in Relation to Government Bodies

Background

As part of the Church's commitment to working with Government, the following obligations are part of any pastor's legal and ethical responsibility:

- National Police Check (if required)
- Working with Children and/or Working with Vulnerable Persons Check
- Mandatory Reporting

Police Check

Certain parts of the church may require a police check, i.e., Uniting. Should this be required, guidance will be provided as to process.

Working with Children and/or Vulnerable Persons Check

NSW Requirements: The Working with Children Check (WWCC) is a legal requirement for every ministry agent of a religious body within NSW, regardless of whether they are directly engaged with children in ministry. If you are engaged in remunerated ministry an Employment WWCC must be held. If you are serving as a volunteer with no remuneration received a Volunteer WWCC must be held.

The outcome of a check is either a clearance to work with children or a bar against working with children. If cleared, the check will be valid for five years, however applicants are continuously monitored.

Link: <https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check>

ACT Requirements: The Working with Vulnerable People Check (WWVP) is a legal requirement for every ordained minister of a religious body within the ACT, regardless of whether they are directly engaged with vulnerable people in ministry.

The outcome of a check is either a clearance to work with vulnerable people or a bar against working with vulnerable people. If cleared, the check will be valid for three years, however applicants are continuously monitored.

Link: https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/1804/~/working-with-vulnerable-people-%28wwvp%29-registration

NSW and ACT: Some ministry agents will need to obtain both WWCC and WWVP due to their geographical location. For example, a pastor working in Goulburn or Queanbeyan may minister in NSW and ACT, and so would be required to obtain both Checks.

Responsibilities: It is not possible to engage in any form of ministry without holding a current WWCC/WWVP. Failure to hold a valid check is an offence. Penalties range from fines to imprisonment.

It is the responsibility of each ministry agent to pay for and maintain a current WWCC/WWVP and to lodge and maintain their WWCC/WWVP number and expiry date with both Presbytery and Secretariat. A copy of the WWVP Card must be sent to Presbytery and Secretariat for verification.

Any ministry agent within the Synod of NSW and the ACT with an expired WWCC/WWVP will be immediately stood aside from all ministry duties, at the appointing body's expense, until the renewed check has been updated and validated. Should this not be immediately rectified, the placement and/or Presbytery may consider termination of placement.

Should any ministry agent move interstate, they will need to attend to the requirements of that state in this regard.

While this is the responsibility of each pastor, it is also part of the appointing body and Presbytery oversight responsibility to ensure proper records are kept and communicated to the Secretariat.

Mandatory Reporting Obligations and Reportable Conduct

Mandatory reporting is a term used to describe the legislative requirement for selected groups of people to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to government authorities. All ordained ministry agents, commissioned Ministry of Pastor and anyone who works with children in a paid or voluntary capacity are Mandatory Reporters.

It is the responsibility of every specified ministry agent to be aware of the Mandatory Reporting requirements within their State, Territory and Synod. Where a Mandatory Report concerns a ministry agent, volunteer, or employee, they may also be the subject of a Reportable Conduct complaint.

Mandatory Reporting	Reportable Conduct
A mandatory reporter must report suspected abuse against a child regardless of whether it happened in a church context or not. Reports are made to the Dept of Communities and Justice (NSW) & Child and Youth Protective Services (ACT)	Any allegations against an employee, volunteer, or ministry agent of the Uniting Church involving misconduct towards a child, must be immediately reported by the Employer to the Office of the Children’s Guardian (NSW) or Ombudsman (ACT)

Mandatory reporters are encouraged to seek support for vicarious trauma which may arise out of dealing with child protection concerns. Support can be provided by the Synod Employee Assistance Program or further guidance can be given by the Synod Safe Church Unit.

A range of church policies and guidelines exist to support safe church practice. It is the responsibility of every ministry agent to be informed of such resources as may exist from Assembly and the Synod of NSW and the ACT.

Reportable Conduct

Both NSW and ACT have reportable conduct schemes which are legislated under the [Children’s Guardian Act 2019 \(NSW\)](#) and the [Ombudsman Act 1989 \(ACT\)](#).

Employers must report allegations, offences or convictions relating to child-related misconduct by ‘employees’ of the Uniting Church to the relevant authority.

Misconduct may be of a sexual, physical, or psychological nature. All allegations of reportable conduct will be investigated and reports on the investigation made to the Ombudsman in the ACT or to the Office of the Children’s Guardian in NSW.

You don’t need to be paid to be considered an ‘employee.’

In NSW anyone required to hold a Working with Children Check falls under the definition of ‘employee,’ while in the ACT an ‘employee’ is a minister of religion, religious leader or an officer of the religious body, a person engaged under a contract of employment, or a person engaged to provide services other than under a contract of employment.

A policy and guidelines exist for NSW and the ACT regarding Reportable Conduct and it is the responsibility of ministry agents to be informed about their responsibilities.

Discipline

Background

‘Discipline in the church is the exercise of spiritual authority with a view to honouring Christ the Head of the Church and ensuring the spiritual well-being of its members.’ Reg 5.1.2
As part of the commissioning liturgy, every pastor pledges to submit to the discipline and authority of the church.

The expectations of how a specified ministry agent should behave are recounted in the

Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice (CoEMP).

Any breach of the CoEMP can become grounds for a complaint against a pastor or minister.

Participating in a discipline process can range from uncomfortable to deeply painful and each of the discipline committees have different regulations to guide and assist in the process.

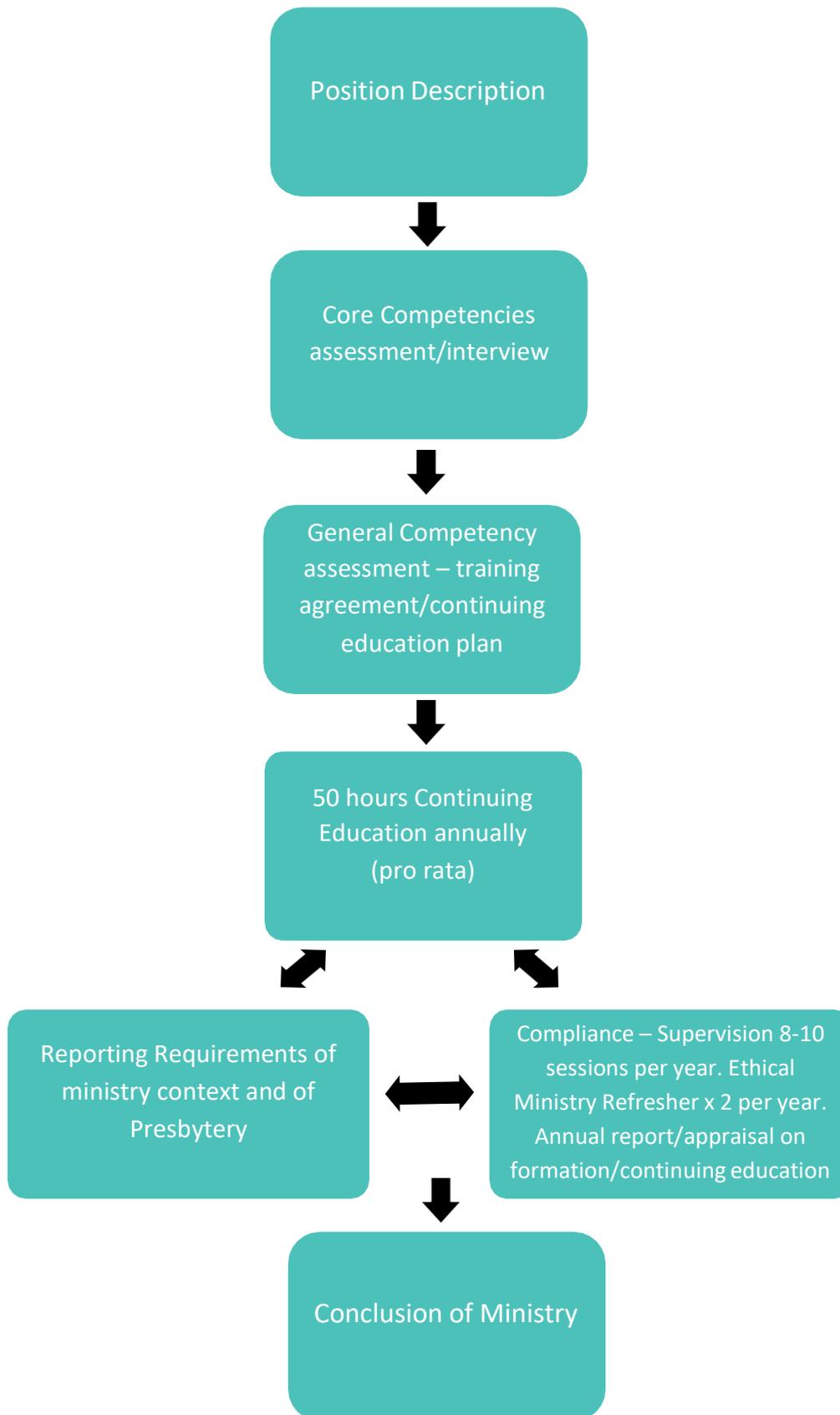
There are three synod discipline committees:

- Committee for Counselling (C4C)
- Synod Sexual Misconduct Complaints Committee (SSMCC)
- Committee for Discipline (C4D)

Any complaint made against an ordained minister of the Uniting Church in Australia, or a lay person commissioned into the ministry of pastor, and which is unable to be resolved at a local or Presbytery level will be sent to the C4C or SSMCC. Both committees seek reconciliation and healing, enabling all parties to move forward in positive ways.

This is not always possible and so, should it be necessary, a matter may be referred to the C4D. This is a more formal process and can involve legal representation.

Requirements for Duration of Employment – Ministry of Pastor



Useful Links

[The Uniting Church in Australia Regulations](#)

[Synod By Laws](#)

[Royal Commission-Child Abuse](#)

[Synod Website](#)

[Assembly Website](#)

[WWCC](#)

[Speak Out](#)

[Australian Tax Office \(ATO\)](#)

[Specified Minister Annual Report pro-forma](#)



LAY SPECIFIED MINISTRY OF PASTOR HANDBOOK

Guidebook for Synod Agencies,
Presbyteries and Congregations

