Uniting Church in Australia

Ministry of Lay Preacher

Standards for formation and education for the Specified Ministry of Lay Preacher, including Core & General Competencies

EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY WORKING GROUP

STANDARDS FOR FORMATION AND EDUCATION FOR THE SPECIFIED MINISTRY OF LAY PREACHER

The following requirements for the specified ministry of Lay Preacher are as determined by the Assembly Standing Committee. These include requirements for Phase 2 of Lay Preacher formation and education. Within the context of worship, Lay Preachers provide encouragement and equipping for the witness and service of the people of God in God's world.

The relevant UCA Regulations are as follows:
2.2.3 Definition and Scope of the Ministry of Lay Preacher

> *The ministry of Lay Preacher is one in which lay persons may participate in the proclamation of the gospel and in witness to Christian faith and experience, and for which they have received gifts and are called by the Holy Spirit.*

2.3.4 Process for Candidature and Selection of Lay Preachers
2.4.4 Training for a Lay Preacher
2.4.7 Recognition of Lay Preachers
3.1.3 (j) Responsibilities of the Presbytery

1. The Education for Ministry Working Group shall provide national oversight of Lay Preacher formation and education on behalf of the Assembly Standing Committee.

2. Formation and education for Lay Preachers shall be based on a national competency and assessment framework as specified by Education for Ministry Working Group. These competencies shall be equivalent to the general competencies for the specified ministry of Pastor in relation to worship and preaching and the core competencies.

3. Formation and education for Lay Preachers shall

   a. reflect the beliefs and ethos of the Uniting Church as expressed in the Basis of Union;
   b. take account of the existing competencies and gifts of applicants;
   c. take account of the inter-related ministries of the whole people of God, including the particular responsibilities of specified ministries and church councils;
   d. provide varied learning approaches for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities;
   e. include a range of approaches to teaching, learning and assessment appropriate to adult education.

4. Competencies for Lay Preachers shall include

   a. preparing material for worship appropriate to local contexts
   b. facilitating shared planning of worship services
   c. setting up and utilising worship spaces
   d. speaking and leading in worship settings
   e. undertaking exegesis of biblical texts
   f. developing sermons appropriate to local contexts
   g. presenting sermons appropriate to local contexts
   h. ability to articulate a biblical and theological basis for Christian worship
   i. ability to explain the shape and elements of Christian worship

j. ability to undertake evaluation and act on feedback
k. ability to articulate the scope and implications of the "Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice for Lay Preachers"

5. Assessment of Lay Preacher competencies shall be undertaken according to the principles of validity, sufficiency, fairness and currency.

6. Assessment of learners shall include recognition of prior learning in determining current competency.

7. Courses of education and assessment methods conducted within synods shall be approved by the Synod Ministerial Education Board (MEB) or another body appointed by it. Assessments shall be conducted by people approved by the MEB or another body appointed by it. The Working Group shall review education and assessment undertaken within synods at least every five years (normally within the Review of the MEB and its associated agencies.)

8. Formation of Lay Preacher applicants in the responsibility of the Presbytery in which they hold membership. Formation shall include
    a. regular participation in the worship or a congregation or faith community
    b. supervision in the preparation and leading of worship and feedback by an ordained Minister, accredited Lay Preacher, or other person/s designated by the presbytery
    c. participation in the spiritual disciplines of prayer and study of the Scriptures
    d. reflection on the Basis of Union and ethos of the Uniting Church
    e. reflection on the UCA Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice for Lay Preachers

9. When a Presbytery determines that the applicant is to be recognized as a Lay Preacher, the Assembly Lay Preacher Certificate shall be issued by the Presbytery.

Approved by the Standing Committee, March 2016

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

Approved by MEC July 2010

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

UNIT OF COMPETENCY

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 MEC July 2010

The Ministry of Pastor

General Competencies

Ministerial Education Commission
Uniting Church in Australia

2009

Overview

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 2.4.3)

MEC Rules for the Ministry of Pastor

This document outlines General Competencies as determined by the Ministerial Education Commission. General Competencies are those competencies that Pastors need to demonstrate within their specific appointments. These competencies relate directly to each Pastor's particular job description. Hence, not all competencies relate to all Pastors.

Items 4 and 5 of the MEC Rules for the Ministry of Pastor outline the nature and purpose of General Competencies, and the Presbytery's role in oversight of assessment and learning. In summary, the process to be followed is this:

1. The Presbytery designates people to examine the Pastor's job description in order to identify which of the General Competencies relate directly to the Pastor's role and tasks. [see Rule 4 (a)] (The Presbytery may wish to seek guidance from synod personnel at this stage.)
2. Following selection, the Presbytery will assess a Pastor against the particular General Competencies that match his or her job description. [see Rules 4(b) and (c)] (Note: It is possible that **part** of this assessment can take place within the selection process itself.)
3. If there is a gap between the competencies required and those currently held by the Pastor, the development of the said competencies becomes the primary goal of the Pastor's initial competency development, overseen by the Presbytery. [see Rules 4(d) and 5]

The Schedule of 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

In order to keep the competencies as succinct as possible, the descriptions are written in generic terms. Hence they do not take into account every possible variation of context, culture, age grouping and level of responsibility for particular Pastor roles. Therefore, the Presbytery assessor will need to determine the extent to which each particular competency unit needs adaptation for a particular role or task. (Note: Some *elements* of competency within particular *units* may not always be applicable.)

It is very likely that not all tasks required of Pastors have been included in these General Competencies. In such instances, the Presbytery will need to add additional competencies, preferably in consultation with synod Human Resources staff or the appropriate synod education agency staff. [Note: Such competencies should be described in a similar competency format.] The Presbytery is asked to notify the Ministerial Education Commission of such additions, so that they might be considered for inclusion in future versions of this Schedule.

Assessment of General Competencies should conform to the assessment principles of validity, sufficiency, fairness and currency. [see Rule 4(b)]. The MEC will produce assessment tools to assist Presbytery assessors in planning and recording assessments.

For further information about these General Competencies, contact:
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Summary of General Competencies

Units of Competency

Community Development
1. Understand community development principles
2. Develop community information and relationships
3. Develop community leadership and networks
4. Develop community programs
5. Support community action

Education
1. Understand foundations and approaches for education
2. Plan learning programs
3. Conduct and evaluate learning programs

Evangelism
1. Understand foundations and approaches for evangelism
2. Articulate an understanding of other faiths and cultures
3. Engage in culturally appropriate conversations about faith and life
4. Plan and conduct an evangelism process
5. Foster new faith communities

Leadership
1. Provide ministry leadership and guidance within a congregation, faith community or agency
2. Provide ministry leadership of a group
3. Mentor others
4. Evaluate effectiveness in ministry

Organisation & Administration
1. Organise ministry priorities
2. Undertake ministry tasks
3. Communicate effectively with people
4. Organise ministry information

Pastoral Care
1. Understand foundations and approaches for pastoral care
2. Identify pastoral care issues or needs
3. Provide pastoral care
4. Review pastoral care
5. Foster a caring community

Worship & Preaching
1. Prepare and lead worship
2. Prepare and present sermons
3. Preside at sacraments
4. Preside at funerals

WORSHIP & PREACHING COMPETENCIES

These competencies are applicable to Pastors whose role includes responsibility for leading or facilitating worship and / or preaching or proclaiming the gospel. It is assumed that the Pastor has attained the Core Competencies, as defined by the Ministerial Education Commission, which include:

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*

5. Articulate and practice key elements of the UCA understanding of gifts, ministry and service
- *c.   teach in a manner that seeks to represent faithfully the Scriptures and the teachings and practices of the UCA*

These competencies shall be applied to the particular role and responsibilities of a Pastor's appointment. Hence they will relate to the particular group or groups of people with whom a Pastor exercises a worship leadership or preaching role, taking into account the people's age, maturity, cultural background, and other capacities. NOTE: It is intended that Pastors with responsibility for preaching will have competency at least equivalent to a Lay Preacher.

Units of Competency
1. Prepare and lead worship
2. Prepare and present sermons
3. Preside at Sacraments
4. Preside at Funerals

A   *Unit of Competency – Prepare and lead worship*

Elements of competency

1. Prepare material for worship

Performance criteria
- a.   articulate a biblical and theological basis for Christian worship, with particular reference to the UCA and its traditions
- b.   explain the elements of Christian worship, with particular reference to the 'Service of the Lord's Day' in *Uniting in Worship 2*
- c.   explain the seasons of the church year and the contribution of the Revised Common Lectionary
- d.   identify the spiritual, cultural and contextual characteristics of the worshipping community
- e.   identify and access resources relevant to worship
- f.   prepare an order or plan for worship connecting both theological and contextual sources

2. Facilitate shared planning of worship services

Performance criteria
- a.   identify, affirm and encourage the use of others' skills and gifts in leading worship
- b.   facilitate group planning processes which foster collaboration, consensus and shared responsibility
- c.   contribute to the choice of music, visual and other creative elements of worship
- d.   facilitate shared evaluation of worship services

3. Set up and utilise worship spaces

Performance criteria
a. demonstrate awareness of the spatial characteristics of a worship space, including seating, symbols, visibility, lighting and sound
b. demonstrate appropriate ways to use and adapt a worship space for particular worship services
c. liaise effectively with people responsible for preparing the worship setting, including music, sound, lighting, projection, visual and other elements

4. Speak and lead in worship settings

Performance criteria
a. read aloud and speak with sufficient clarity and articulation and appropriate timing and mood
b. demonstrate effective use of microphones and presentation aids (if required)
c. provide clear introductions, directions and explanations to facilitate participation in worship
d. use appropriate gestures and movement to accompany speaking
e. lead extemporaneous prayer in an appropriate manner
f. demonstrate sensitivity and responsiveness to the work of the Spirit during worship

B Unit of Competency – Prepare and present sermons

Elements of competency

1. Undertake exegesis of biblical texts

Performance criteria
a. understand the history and main theological themes of the books of the New Testament
b. understand the history and main theological themes of the books of the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures)
c. understand the main literary forms and styles of the Old and New Testaments
d. understand and apply exegetical approaches and skills in studying biblical texts
e. identify and access appropriate reference materials including recent and relevant commentaries and dictionaries

2. Develop sermon appropriate to congregational or group context

Performance criteria
a. understand a range of preaching styles and how they might be appropriate to different communities, contexts and times
b. address the pastoral, educational and missional characteristics of the congregation or faith community
c. express key doctrines of the Christian faith within preaching
d. draw upon theological and historical insights, cultural and contemporary references, and personal experience in crafting appropriate sermons

3. Present sermons

Performance criteria - as for 'Speak and lead in a worship setting' above in terms of sermon delivery, taking into account a range of sermon approaches or styles as appropriate

Lay Preacher Competency Assessment Record

Version 1.0

Name: _____

Unit of Competency	Element of Competency	Performance Criteria	Forms of Evidence	Approval (Name, Role, Presbytery/Agency)
Prepare and lead worship	1. Prepare material for worship	a. articulate a biblical and theological basis for Christian worship, with particular reference to the UCA and its traditions b. explain the elements of Christian worship, with particular reference to the 'Service of the Lord's Day' in Uniting in Worship 2 c. explain the seasons of the church year and the contribution of the Revised Common Lectionary d. identify the spiritual, cultural and contextual characteristics of the worshipping community e. identify and access resources relevant to worship f. prepare an order or plan for worship connecting both theological and contextual sources		Date: _____
	2. Facilitate shared planning of worship services	a. identify, affirm and encourage the use of others' skills and gifts in leading worship b. facilitate group planning processes which foster collaboration, consensus and shared responsibility c. contribute to the choice of music, visual and other creative elements of worship d. facilitate shared evaluation of worship services		Date: _____
	3. Set up and utilise worship spaces	a. demonstrate awareness of the spatial characteristics of a worship space, including seating, symbols, visibility, lighting and sound b. demonstrate appropriate ways to use and adapt a worship space for particular worship services c. liaise effectively with people responsible for preparing the worship setting, including music, sound, lighting, projection, visual and other elements		Date: _____

	4. Speak and lead in worship settings	a. read aloud and speak with sufficient clarity and articulation and appropriate timing and mood b. demonstrate effective use of microphones and presentation aids (if required) c. provide clear introductions, directions and explanations to facilitate participation in worship d. use appropriate gestures and movement to accompany speaking e. lead extemporaneous prayer in an appropriate manner f. demonstrate sensitivity and responsiveness to the work of the Spirit during worship		Date: _____
Prepare and present sermons	1. Undertake exegesis of biblical texts	a. understand the history and main theological themes of the books of the New Testament b. understand the history and main theological themes of the books of the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures) c. understand the main literary forms and styles of the Old and New Testaments d. understand and apply exegetical approaches and skills in studying biblical texts e. identify and access appropriate reference materials including recent and relevant commentaries and dictionaries		Date: _____
	2. Develop sermon appropriate to congregational or group context	a. understand a range of preaching styles and how they might be appropriate to different communities, contexts and times b. address the pastoral, educational and missional characteristics of the congregation or faith community c. express key doctrines of the Christian faith within preaching d. draw upon theological and historical insights, cultural and contemporary references, and personal experience in crafting appropriate sermons		Date: _____
	3. Present sermons	as for 'Speak and lead in a worship setting' above in terms of sermon delivery, taking into account a range of sermon approaches or styles as appropriate		Date: _____

Record of competencies achieved: Date: _____

Name: _____

Role: _____   Presbytery: _____

NOTE: Record of competencies achieved does not constitute recognition by the Presbytery. This is a separate decision.