



B13 STANDARDS FOR MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

1. HISTORY OF THE STANDARDS FOR MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

The review of Assembly structures in 2018 resulted in a new Assembly committee the Standards for Ministries Committee which incorporated the work of the previous Education for Ministry Working Group and the Admission for Ministers Committee. The Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) established the Standards for Ministries Committee and adopted the mandate in Appendix A minuted as ASC resolution 18.05.02. Members were appointed at the August ASC meeting in resolution 18.44.06. The Committee held its first meeting face-to-face in November 2018.

2. WORK OF SFM 2018-2021

The Committee has consisted of: Emeritus Professor Ross Chambers, Ms Isobel Thomas Dobson, Rev Dr Andrew Dutney, Rev Salesi Faupula (resigned mid-term), Mr Mitchell Garlett, Rev Benjamin Gilmour, Mr Mark Kickett, Jorge Rebolledo (resigned mid-term), Rev Denise Savage (resigned mid-term), Rev Dr Christine Sorensen, Rev Dr John Squires (resigned mid-term), Dr Leigh Trevaskis, (resigned mid-term), Rev Dr Sean Winter, Rev Dr Anne Wright, Professor Kaye Roberts-Thomson (chair).

The following people were co-opted to assist in working groups: Rev Dr Peter Walker, Rev Viola Leung, Ms Joanna Drayton, Rev Jay Robinson, Dr Paul Jones, Rev Helen Paine

The Standards for Ministries Committee (SFM) held one face-to-face meeting and eight meetings by teleconference or Zoom during the triennium. The pandemic delayed some work of the Committee. The priorities for the Committee have been Phase 4 standards, developing a consistent approach for Admission of Ministers, and revising the standards for education of Pastors. To address these priorities three subgroups were established. These have been working on the issues and reporting their progress to the Committee.

The Guidelines for Admission of a Minister from Another Denomination developed by the sub-group and approved by the SFM have been circulated to Synods. It is anticipated that a substantial revision of standards for Phase 4, including requirements for continuing education for lay specified ministries, and a revision of standards for Ministry of Pastor will be submitted to the Assembly Standing Committee prior to the 2022 Assembly (Reconvened).

SFM recognised that standards for chaplaincy ministry in the UCA were variable and unspecified. Other issues related to chaplaincy were out of the remit of SFM. The Committee recommended that ASC establish a task group to work on these issues and include some SFM Committee members. This task group has been established.

The Consultation of the Ministerial Education Boards (MEBs) and theological colleges and educational agencies is one avenue through which the Assembly ensures and encourages the adherence to and maintenance of the standards. Consultations were held with the Queensland Board of Christian Formation in November 2018 and with the Vic/Tas MEB in September 2018. Consultations with the MEBs of South Australia and Western Australia were planned for 2020 but have been delayed to 2021 due to the pandemic.

SFM requests reports from MEBs annually and consolidates them for the ASC. In recent years a cycle of questions have been asked of MEBs relating to implementation and outcomes of the revised Phase 2 standards, issues related to formation panels; relationships between MEBs and Presbyteries in relation to pastors and Phases 3 and 4, numbers of candidates for the various specified ministries; formational requirements for ministers seeking to enter the UCA, how applicants for whom English is

not their first language are assisted, and provision for formation and continuing education of lay preachers.

SFM has begun conversations with the Sovereignty Affirmation Practical Outcomes Task Group as to ways to incorporate issues related to the Covenant with some consistency in the UCA theological colleges. All colleges cover the Covenant to some degree and all express interest in doing more but the how and the what need to be developed.

The Theological Educators' Conference and the National Deacons' Intensive are organised on a biennial basis. The focus of the Theological Educators' Conference is to develop a shared vision, goals and principles for theological education in the Uniting Church, taking into account earlier work of the Assembly,

3. NATIONAL COLLABORATION ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The SFM organises an annual meeting of the principals of theological colleges to facilitate collaboration and the sharing of resources and approaches. This has been a useful collaboration particularly during the lockdowns when principals were able to share both through the networks that had been developed and in a more formal meeting, approaches to maintaining classes, formation activities and field education.

Kaye Roberts-Thomson
Chairperson
Standards for Ministries Committee

STANDARDS FOR MINISTRIES COMMITTEE MANDATE

[Approved by Assembly Standing Committee March 2018]

Responsible to:	The Assembly / Assembly Standing Committee
Reporting Arrangements:	The Assembly / Assembly Standing Committee
Mission:	To advise the Assembly and the Assembly Standing Committee on the standards required for Specified Ministries within the Uniting Church and to ensure that the Assembly's responsibilities in relation to training for Specified Ministries and admission of ministers from other denominations are met.

Background:

Constitution 38. (a)

The Assembly shall have determining responsibility in matters of doctrine, worship, government and discipline, including the promotion of the Church's mission, **the establishment of standards for theological education and the reception of Ministers from other denominations**, and is empowered to make final decisions on all matters committed to it by this Constitution.

Mandate:

1. Advise the Assembly regarding standards required for the specified ministries within the Uniting Church, including:
 - responding to the changing context of church, culture and approaches to ministry;
 - developing policies relating to standards of formation, education and training for the specified ministries in the Uniting Church, including continuing education, professional development and supervision;
 - developing policies for people of other denominations including Partner Churches of the UCA, to serve and be admitted to the specified ministries of the Uniting Church, including the requirements for the education and ministry formation of the applicant;
 - report to the ASC regarding significant changes.
2. Advise the Assembly regarding centres approved for training for ministry.
3. Organise regular Consultations with Ministerial Education Boards (MEBs) and through them, their approved centres and Synod lay education and leadership development agencies, for the purpose of ensuring that standards for ministry education are being appropriately implemented.
4. Resource the Church including relevant Synod committees in issues relating to admissions for ministry, through:
 - Establishing guidelines for assessing the suitability of, and requirements for the education and formation of, ordained ministers of other denominations who apply to serve in a placement as a Minister in the Church, or for admission as a Minister of the Word or Deacon;
 - Organise regular consultations with appropriate Synod Committees for the purpose of ensuring that standards for admission of Ministers are being appropriately implemented;
 - Maintaining a list of ordained ministries of denominations of the church catholic that are recognised for the purposes of Regulation 2.5.1(e); and

- Where an application for admission is made by a person holding an ordination which is not so listed, determining the matter;
 - Foster relationships of collaboration and understanding with ecumenical and overseas partners with particular regard to the processes concerned in the placement of Ministers from other denominations within the Uniting Church, and the admission of Ministers from other denominations as Ministers within the Uniting Church.
5. Develop mechanisms to enable input from MEBs, Synods and Colleges, and to foster relationship and active collaboration between them, including the sharing of expertise and resources for education for ministry and admission of ministers.
 6. Encourage regular national networking of key leaders in formation, theological education, continuing education for ministry, lay education and leadership development, and admission and placement of ministers.

As a Body of the National Assembly, the Standards for Ministries Committee will also:

1. Ensure that the activities of the Committee are consistent with the Vision and current strategic priorities of the Assembly.
2. Advise the Assembly/Assembly Standing Committee on policy matters within its area of responsibility and expertise.
3. Make decisions where the Assembly/Assembly Standing Committee has delegated authority for certain policy areas, either through this Mandate, or by resolution.
4. Implement policies determined by the Assembly/Assembly Standing Committee when relevant to its mandate and operations.
5. Work collaboratively with other Assembly bodies.

Chair:

The Chair will be appointed by the Assembly every three years at its triennial meeting. The selection process will consider the skills and expertise required to undertake the work of the Committee.

Membership:

The Assembly Standing Committee will appoint the Standards for Ministries Committee and delegate to that Committee the work covered by this mandate.

Members of the Committee will be appointed/re-appointed every three years at the Assembly Standing Committee meeting following the three yearly Assembly meetings. Casual vacancies will be filled as required by the Assembly Standing Committee, with guidance from the Chair and the Assembly General Secretary.

The Committee will have a diversity of age, gender and cultural background. All members will be expected to be committed to the fundamental values of the Uniting Church including:

- living out our covenant as First and Second peoples,
- being a multicultural Church
- oriented towards justice
- engaging constructively with ecumenical and overseas partners.

Whilst skills will be a priority, attention will also be given to geographical considerations.

Membership should cover the following range of skills and experience:

- Strategic, innovative thinking about the future of the church
- Practice of Theological Education

- Formation for Ordained Ministry, including an awareness of the two Ordained ministries of the Uniting Church
- Formation for Discipleship and Lay Ministry (including Lay Specified Ministries)
- Culturally contextual education including an awareness of Partner Churches of the UCA
- Experience in ministry focused toward children, young people and families
- Awareness of Ecumenical issues and relationships
- Knowledge of issues related to immigration and employment
- Continuing Education for Specified Ministries
- Tertiary Education (including Vocational Education and Training)
- Distance Education, Online Education and Mixed-mode Education

The Committee will have a membership of up to twelve people, two of whom will be appointed by the UAICC. In addition, a representative of the Assembly Resourcing Unit will attend meetings.

Members other than those appointed by UAICC may serve for up to three consecutive terms before becoming ineligible for further membership for a period of one term.

The Committee has the delegated authority to establish sub-committees for various tasks related specifically to the mandate.

Reporting:

The Standards for Ministries Committee will report to the Assembly Standing Committee as and when required by that Committee.