



These procedures correspond with the Ethics Review System policy and outline the process for implementing the policy.

Ethics Review System Procedures

1.0 Definitions

- 1.1 **Code of Ethics for Unity Leaders:** The Codes of Ethics for Unity Leaders defines the ethical standards for Unity.
- 1.2 **Credentialed leader:** UWM licensed Unity minister, ordained Unity minister, or licensed Unity teacher.
- 1.3 **Sexual Conduct Policy:** Policy regarding sexual conduct for Unity leaders
- 1.4 **Cleared:** The status granted a credentialed leader who is eligible to apply for ministerial appointments. It is used interchangeably with "in good standing."
- 1.5 **Plan of Action:** Refers to a series of steps to address the concerns raised in the review. The team endeavors to create this plan in collaboration with the Reviewee. The plan may be either Mutually-Agreed Upon (MPoA) with the Reviewee or required by ERS team (RPoA).
- 1.6 **Suspension:** Refers to a temporary removal of UWM membership. The ERS Case Team may make the recommendation for suspension. The UWM board has final authority to suspend. Membership may be restored through the restoration policy.
- 1.7 **Rescinded Ordination:** Refers to a permanent removal of a minister's ordination. This may be through a recommendation by the ERS Case Team with approval by the UWM board of trustees, or through a direct decision by the UWM board of trustees.
- 1.8 **Restoration Policy:** Offers a reconciliation process by which a person has been suspended by the [ERS] or who has chosen to relinquish their membership can be restored to good standing in Unity Worldwide Ministries.

2.0 Responsibilities/Roles

- 2.1 **Case Manager:** assembles ERS case teams and leads and conducts reviews
- 2.2 **Reviewee:** responsible for responding and for cooperating with the members of the ERS.
- 2.3 **Complainant:** individual who lodges complaint of ethical violation; responsible for meeting with review team and sharing relevant information
- 2.4 **Advocate:** member of the ERS Review Team who connects with, assures, supports, and responds to the needs of the Reviewee or Complainant while supporting the highest healing/resolution of the situation. The role of the Advocate is not to advocate for the reviewee, but to maintain a supportive presence, provide information, and give feedback to assist the reviewee in processing emotions and responding to concerns with the ERS Case Team.
- 2.5 **Editor:** Reviews Ethics Review System reports for consistent format, language and style; clarity and appropriateness of facts, findings and conclusions.
- 2.6 **UWM's Manager of Member Services:** trains and supports ERS team members and oversees

the ERS process, not the case itself ensuring confidentiality of system. When there is a review of a ministry, the Member Services Manager supports the review team and works in collaboration with the Director of Member Services and/or ERS Case Manager. They may assemble a larger team to conduct the review

- 2.7 **Director of Member Services:** Responsible for guidance and oversight of Ethics Review System, and ensuring confidentiality of system; determines what information should be shared with other members of ERS or UWM staff and is the UWM representative on official notices and correspondence.

3.0 Criteria for Review

- 3.1 ERS only reviews ethical concerns. If competency issues surface in the course of a review, the ERS review team will consult with UWM's Manager of Member Services to provide support and assistance to reviewee in addressing these concerns. Identified competency issues may be included in any Plans of Action and in the final ERS Report.
- 3.2 ERS reviews are considered purely religious and ecclesiastical in nature. Legal and other counsel may not be physically present during the face-to-face or telephone interview process. Credentialed leaders and ministries being reviewed have the right to retain private legal counsel to advise them of any legal rights they may have, however legal proceedings are beyond the scope of our reviews.
- 3.3 Reviews are limited to the allegations expressed in the complaint. If during the course of the review, additional ethical allegations arise, the ERS Team will communicate with the Manager of Member Services. They will collaboratively determine if the scope of the review needs to be expanded.
- 3.4 Reviews are individualized. If more than one individual is named in a complaint, each individual is reviewed separately and a separate report is created for each person.
- 3.5 When deemed appropriate or necessary, the ERS may seek assistance from experts to help them make a full and fair determination of the case, including psychological and/or medical evaluations, legal advice, and/or financial review prepared by an independent professional.
- 3.6 Decisions of the ERS will be considered to be decisions in effect under the authority of the Board of Trustees of Unity Worldwide Ministries.
- 3.7 All involved with ERS will sign confidentiality agreements. This confidentiality doesn't prohibit Unity Worldwide Ministries from disclosing information pertaining to an ERS review to our attorneys, insurance agents or other professionals from whom we seek assistance from in the course of a review.
- 3.8 Allegations must relate the Code of Ethics for Unity Leaders or the Sexual Conduct policy. Additionally, a ministry may be reviewed for hiring a spiritual leader who is not currently approved for ministry employment by UWM.
- 3.9 The standard of proof is "a preponderance of the evidence": Which means that a reasonable person hearing the evidence would conclude that it is more likely that the behavior occurred than that it did not occur. Evidence to be considered will be factual, first-hand and verifiable. Opinions, second- or third-hand statements are not evidence.
- 3.10 Cost of the Process: Unity Worldwide Ministries and the Reviewee(s) will be responsible for their own respective costs in the review process.

4.0 ERS Case Review Process

- 4.1 All allegations of ethical violations will be submitted to ERS@unity.org. Should a staff member receive an electronic or verbal allegation that is ethical in nature, they will hold this communication in strict confidence until/unless the individual signs a release of information.

- Should the individual choose not to sign a release, documentation of their concern will be retained within a confidential file.
- 4.2 The Director of Member Services and the Manager of Member Services review ethical allegations to determine if the allegation is ethical in nature. If the complaint is deemed ethical in nature, a Release of Information form will be sent to the complainant.
 - 4.3 Within 30 days of receiving the signed Release of Information, the Manager of Member Services will work with the Case Manager and assemble a team to review the allegations. Team will consist of a Case Manager, an Advocate for the Reviewee, and an Advocate for the Complainant.
 - 4.4 The Director of Member Services sends a Letter of Notification to Reviewee. Included with the letter are the following documents: ERS policy and procedures, UWM's Code of Ethics, a copy of the complaint, and the Reviewee Response Form. If the allegations pertain to the Sexual Conduct Policy, a copy of this document is included as well
 - 4.5 Within 5 days after notification has been sent, the assigned Reviewee Advocate contacts the Reviewee and introduces themselves; explains the Ethics Review System Policy and their role as an ERS Advocate and makes themselves available for support and processing
 - 4.6 Within 5 days after notification has been sent, the assigned Complainant Advocate contacts the Complainant and introduces themselves; explains the Ethics Review System Policy and their role as an ERS Advocate and makes themselves available for support and processing
 - 4.7 The Case Manager and the Review Team work collaboratively, talking to the complainant, the reviewee and other individuals who have direct knowledge of the situation.
 - 4.8 The Case Manager will determine if other individuals need to be interviewed and obtain signed Release of Information forms for each person.
 - 4.9 If an on-site visit seems advisable, the Case Manager obtains authorization to conduct the review on-site from UWM.
 - 4.10 If additional allegations or concerns regarding the Reviewee arise during the course of the review, the Case Manager and Reviewee Advocate will advise the Reviewee. The Reviewee will have the opportunity to respond to allegations or concerns in writing.
 - 4.11 If, during the course of fact finding, additional information comes to light that suggests a need to expand the scope of the review (e.g., to include the ministry or an Associate Minister or LUT) the Case Manager shall confer with the Manager of Member Services. If it is determined that the review process needs to be expanded, a new case will be initiated, using the same Case Manager and a new Advocate assigned for the new Reviewee. Additional team members may be added if the Case Manager deems it necessary.
 - 4.12 Based upon the evidence provided, the Case Review Team will make a decision.
 - 4.13 If a Plan of Action is necessary, the Case Review Team will collaborate with the Reviewee in developing the plan. This plan will be included in the report.
 - 4.14 The Case Manager in collaboration with the review team, writes a draft report and sends it to the ERS Editor for review. Once the report is returned from the Editor and all corrections are completed, the report is sent to the Director of Member Services and then to the appropriate Case Team Members for signatures.
 - 4.15 The Director of Member Services sends the final report to the Reviewee and copies to all members of the Case Review Team
 - 4.16 The Director of Member Services informs the Complainant that the case is complete.

- 4.17 Disposal of Case Review Team materials:
 - 4.17.1 All original files, emails, reports, letters or correspondence records are to be emailed or hard copy mailed to the Director of Member Services at Unity Worldwide Ministries.
 - 4.17.2 All duplicate hard copies, notes, working papers and any other duplicate information pertaining to the case will then be shredded and permanently disposed of.
- 4.18 All team computer files, once emailed to the Director of Member Services for permanent filing, will be deleted from personal team computers.

5.0 Case Determinations/Decisions

- 5.1 **Dismissal of Case:** If the Reviewee(s) has/have not been contacted by the appropriate member of the ERS Team within 5 days of receipt of the Letter of Notification they may immediately request a dismissal.
- 5.2 **Clearance:** A decision for clearance is indicated by the following:
 - 5.2.1 The allegation(s) is/are without merit.
 - 5.2.2 If allegations of Code of Ethics and/or Sexual Conduct Policy violations are disproved or unverifiable.
 - 5.2.3 Unity Ministers are cleared for employment, Licensed Unity Teachers are cleared for active service in a Unity ministry. Ministerial Candidates (students) affiliated with any Unity Worldwide Ministries schools and Field Licensing Program candidates are cleared to continue pursuing licensing and ordination as a Unity minister.
- 5.3 **Plan of Action (POA):**
 - 5.3.1 Team determines that there was a breach of the Code of Ethics and creates a Plan of Action to address the issue.
 - 5.3.2 If there is a Plan of Action, the Reviewee Advocate oversees its completion with oversight by the Case Manager. When the plan is complete, the Case Manager notifies the Manager of Member Services, and the Director of Member Services.
- 5.4 **Suspension of Credentialed Leader:**
 - 5.4.1 Suspension is warranted when the ERS Team finds that the Reviewee(s) has breached the Code of Ethics and no Plan of Action would address the violation. These cases are typically, but not limited to, cases when the Reviewee(s) clearly violated ethical standards, repeatedly violated ethical standards, failed or refused to cooperate with the ERS process, refused or failed to comply with and/or complete a Plan of Action.
 - 5.4.2 The ERS Team recommends suspension to the UWM board of trustees. UWM board makes the final determination to suspend.
 - 5.4.3 Consequences of suspension are:
 - 5.4.3.1 Credentialed leaders on suspension may not be employed as ministers/spiritual leaders in Unity Worldwide Ministries' ministries and may not vote at UWM membership meetings.
 - 5.4.3.2 Suspension is a public designation and will be published in accordance with Unity Worldwide Ministries' policies.
- 5.5 **Rescinding Ordination:**
 - 5.5.1 In particularly egregious circumstances the ERS Team may recommend the UWM board of trustees rescind a minister's ordination. UWM board makes final determination to suspend.

- 5.5.2 Criteria of recommending rescinding ordination include:
 - 5.5.2.1 Felony conviction in a criminal court
 - 5.5.2.2 Embezzlement, larceny, fraud
 - 5.5.2.3 Physical assault
 - 5.5.2.4 Abuse or endangerment of child, elder or vulnerable person
 - 5.5.2.5 Blatant and repeated discriminatory practices
 - 5.5.2.6 Repeated offenses of similar nature as those addressed in previous ERS cases
 - 5.5.2.7 Seeking employment in a Unity ministry or starting a Unity ministry while suspended