



Ethics Review System Policy

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE ETHICS REVIEW SYSTEM (ERS)

1.1 Is to establish guidelines, requirements and standards that provide a supportive and compassionate review of allegations of ethical violations and sexual misconduct.

1.2 ERS reviews ethical concerns, not competency. If competency issues surface in the course of a review, recommendations may be made to address them.

1.3. ERS Reviews are ecclesiastical in nature rather than legal proceedings

2.0 SCOPE

2.1 This policy applies to:

2.1.1 All credentialed leaders:

Licensed or ordained Unity ministers, licensed Unity teachers (LUTs)

2.1.2 All non-credentialed leaders:

For purposes of this document, all non-credentialed leaders serving under special dispensation in the capacity as a credentialed leader are subject to the provisions for credentialed leaders.

2.1.3 Ministerial candidates from all affiliated Unity schools.

2.1.4 All member ministries and expansion ministries:

Including but not limited to members of the decision-making bodies (Boards of Trustees/Directors, Leadership Councils, etc.) individually or collectively.

2.1.5 All members of the UWM board of trustees,

2.1.6 All UWM staff members

2.1.7 All individuals certified to serve as consultants to our ministries

2.1.8. All members of UWM Ministry Teams that have decision-making authority

2.2 Other UWM policies related to this policy include: Codes of Ethics, Sexual Conduct Policy, Employment during Review, Re-Entry, Restoration, and Credentialed Leaders and Membership Records.

3.0 ERS POLICY

3.1 Criteria for Review

3.1.1 An individual covered by the scope of this policy may be subject to review:

3.1.1.1 If a signed statement is received by a Unity Worldwide Ministries official making an official ethics allegation with a signed release allowing us to share information.

3.1.1.2 If the leader fails to follow policies and procedures of Unity Worldwide Ministries.

3.1.2 A ministry may be subject to review:

3.1.2.1 If a signed statement is received by a Unity Worldwide Ministries official making an official ethics allegation.

3.1.2.2 If the ministry “loses the service” of a credentialed leader prior to his/her serving at least two [2] years in the ministry.

3.1.2.3 If the ministry “loses the service” of two [2] credentialed leaders during any five [5] year period.

3.1.2.4 If the ministry terminates the employment of the minister or spiritual leader without cause.

3.1.2.5 If the ministry fails to follow policies and procedures of Unity Worldwide Ministries.

3.1.2.6 If the ministry hires a spiritual leader who is not currently approved for ministry employment by Unity Worldwide Ministries

3.2 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.

3.3 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.

3.4 Legal Counsel/Proceedings:

ERS reviews are considered purely religious and ecclesiastical in nature. In this regard, 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 investigations.

3.5 Expert Assistance:

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 Possible outcomes of Review may be:

3.6.1. The complaint is without merit.

3.6.2. Clearance

3.6.3. Mutually Agreed-Upon or Required Plan of Action

3.6.4. Suspension from membership in UWM

3.6.5. Dismissal of Case

3.6.6.1 If the Reviewee(s) has/have not been contacted by the appropriate member of the ERS Team within the timeframes outlined in the Procedures below, they may immediately request a dismissal.

3.6.6.2 If a response has not been received from the complainant in 30 days, the case will be closed.

3.7 ERS only reviews ethical concerns. If competency issues surface in the course of a review, the ERS review team will consult with UWM's Ministry Leadership Coordinator 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.

3.8 Decisions of the ERS:

Will be considered to be decisions in effect under the authority of the Board of Trustees of Unity Worldwide Ministries. The decision of the ERS Discernment Panel is final.

3.9 Cost of the Process:

Unity Worldwide Ministries and the Reviewee(s) will be responsible for their own respective costs in the review process. Any costs related to complying with a Plan of Action, a psychological evaluation, a financial review/audit, or other agreed upon assistance will be the responsibility of the Reviewee. (Which may include the ministry.)

3.10 Confidentiality

3.10.1 Strict confidentiality is maintained by all involved with ERS. Information is shared only with ERS team members and UWM staff members as necessary.

3.10.2 All involved with ERS will sign confidentiality agreements.

3.10.3 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.

3.11 Disposal of Case Review Team materials:

3.11.1 All original files, emails, reports, letters or correspondence records are to be emailed or hard copy mailed to the Executive Director of Member Services at Unity Worldwide Ministries.

3.11.2 All duplicate hard copies, notes, working papers and any other duplicate information pertaining to the case will then be shredded and permanently disposed of.

3.11.3 All team computer files, once emailed to the Executive Director of Member Services for permanent filing, will be deleted from personal team computers.

3.11.4 Should a verbal report of an ethical issue be made to a UWM staff member or ERS Team Member, the staff or team member will take notes of this conversation. If the individual chooses not to follow-through with a formal allegation and sign a release of information form, these notes will be treated as ERS files and handled as above.

4.0 DEFINITION OF TERMS

- 4.1 Cleared for Employment: The status granted a credentialed leader who is eligible to apply for ministerial appointments. It is used interchangeably with "in good standing."
- 4.2 Code/s of Ethics: The Codes of Ethics for credentialed and non-credentialed leaders and ministries which includes the Sexual Conduct Policy whether or not it is specifically delineated.
- 4.3 Sexual Conduct Policy: Policy on credentialed leadership sexual conduct in ministry (appropriate relationship boundaries in ministry).
- 4.4 Credentialed Leader: All licensed or ordained Unity ministers, licensed Unity teachers
- 4.5 Non-Credentialed Leader: Spiritual leaders, expansion ministry coordinators, ministerial candidates from all affiliated Unity schools, employees of UWM and any non-credentialed members of the UWM Board of Trustees For purposes of this document, all non-credentialed leaders serving in the capacity as a spiritual leader are subject to the provisions for credentialed leaders.
- 4.6 Ethics Review System Case Review Team (CRT):
This is the team conducting the review. It is composed of the Case Manager, an Advocate for the Reviewee, and an Advocate for the Complainant
- 4.7 Expanding the Review:
During the course of fact finding, additional ethical allegations regarding other parties may come to light which require a need to review the other parties.
- 4.8 "In Good Standing":
The status of a credentialed leader who is cleared for employment, having no unresolved ethical complaints outstanding and is used interchangeably with "cleared for employment."
- 4.9 Ministries (Field or Alternate):
All UWM member ministries and expansion ministries including but not limited to members of the decision-making bodies (boards of trustees/directors, leadership, etc.) individually and/or collectively.
- 4.10 Plan of Action:
Refers to a series of steps to address the concerns raised in the review. The plan may be either Mutually-Agreed Upon (MPoA) with the Reviewee or required by a Discernment Panel team.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE INVOLVED

3.1 Case Manager

Is responsible for leading and conducting the reviews according to the policies and procedures listed.

5.2 Reviewee:

Will be responsible for responding and for cooperating with the members of the ERS.

5.3 Advocate:

An Advocate is a 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.

5.4 Editorial Team:

Reviews Ethics Review System reports for consistent format, language and style; clarity and appropriateness of facts, findings and conclusions.

5.5 UWM's Ministry Leadership Coordinator

Responsible for training and supervising ERS team members and overseeing/administering ERS process. When there is a review of a ministry, the Ministry Leadership Coordinator serves in the role of Case Manager and works with consultant trained in ERS System in addressing systemic issues in the ministry that led to review.

5.6 Discernment Panel:

When a case cannot be resolved by the ERS Case Team, the Discernment Panel will review the work that has been done and bring the case to resolution. A Case Reviewer serving on a review may not serve on the Discernment Panel for that case.

5.7 Executive Director of Member Services

Responsible for guidance and oversight of Ethics Review System, and ensuring confidentiality of system. He/she determines what information should be shared with other members of ERS or UWM staff.