



Policies and Procedures Related to Special Dispensation

Revised April 2025



Special Dispensation Policy

(Revised 2-2023)

1.0 Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to collaborate with Unity Worldwide Ministries (UWM) ministries in ensuring that their ministry is led by a credentialed UWM Unity minister.

2.0 Persons Affected: This policy applies to:

- 2.2 Ministries seeking to employ a licensed Unity teacher (LUT) as a spiritual leader.
- 2.3 Ministries seeking to employ a leader without Unity credentials.
- 2.4 Individuals who are not Unity ministers who wish to serve as the leader of a Unity ministry.

3.0 Policy:

- 3.1 UWM requires that its member ministries employ Unity ministers. This ensures that our ministries are led by skilled professionals trained in Unity teachings and the essential elements of thriving ministry.
- 3.2 UWM recognizes that at times a member ministry may have difficulty finding a Unity minister to serve in their ministry. If a UWM member ministry is unable to employ a Unity minister, it may retain its membership by obtaining permission from UWM to temporarily employ a LUT or an individual without Unity credentials. This authorization is called Special Dispensation.
- 3.3 Special dispensation is contingent upon a mutual agreement between the ministry, the leader, and UWM. This agreement commits the leader and the ministry to a path and a timeline for the leader to become a Unity minister.
- 3.4 All individuals requesting special dispensation are required to have a psychological examination prior to being approved for special dispensation.

4.0 Definitions:

- 4.1 **Special Dispensation** refers to authorization for a ministry to employ an individual who is not a Unity minister to lead the ministry. This authorization is contingent upon the ministry and the individual entering into an agreement with UWM for the individual to commit to a path to Unity ordination and to follow through on that commitment.

- 4.2 **Unity Minister** refers to individuals who are licensed and/or ordained by UWM.
- 4.3 **Member Ministry** refers to a Unity ministry that has been approved for membership in UWM.
- 4.4 **A Licensed Unity Teacher (LUT)** is an individual who is trained and credentialed through UWM to teach Unity principles and serve under the leadership of a Unity minister.
- 4.5 **A Spiritual Leader** is an individual who is not a Unity minister and has special dispensation to lead a member ministry on a temporary and conditional basis.
- 4.6 **A Ministry Coordinator** is an individual without Unity credentials who has special dispensation to coordinate the activities of a member ministry on a temporary and conditional basis
- 4.7 **The Regional Representative** is a Minister selected by a Region to serve as liaison between UWM members in the region and UWM's central office. This individual serves on UWM's Standards Ministry Team

5.0 Responsibilities:

- 5.1 **The Board of Trustees** of a ministry seeking to employ an individual who is not a Unity minister is responsible for contacting UWM and receiving approval for special dispensation; this includes entering into an agreement and following through with the terms of the agreement.
- 5.2 **LUTs and individuals without Unity credentials who desire to lead a Unity ministry** are responsible for connecting with the Credentialing Coordinator, committing to a path to ordination, and following through on that agreement.
- 5.3 **The Credentialing Coordinator** is responsible for informing ministries and individuals being considered for special dispensation about the paths to ordination that are available, assisting them in selecting a path that is appropriate for them, and supporting them along the path to ordination.
- 5.4 **The Member Support Coordinator** ensures that ministries utilize UWM's employment process and employs Unity ministers to lead their ministries. He/she collaborates with the ministries, the Regional Representative, and the UWM central office staff in this process. He/she also has the authority to approve applications for special dispensation.
- 5.5 **The Regional Representative** provides input into this process and supports the ministries and leaders in moving through the path to ordination.
- 5.6 **UWM's Board of Trustees** grants extensions for special dispensation.

6.0 Procedures:

- 6.1 The ministry's board of trustees sends a letter to UWM's Member Support Coordinator requesting special dispensation. This letter must include the following:
- 6.1.1 Reason ministry is requesting special dispensation rather than employing a Unity minister.
 - 6.1.2 Qualifications this individual has to serve in this capacity.

Qualification must include demonstrated leadership skills.

6.1.3 To receive special dispensation to serve as a spiritual leader, the individual must meet one of the following criteria:

6.1.3.1 Be a licensed Unity teacher “in good standing.”

6.1.3.2 Have an ordination with another approved denomination that has a similar philosophy to Unity.

6.1.3.3 If the individual does not meet one of these criteria, he/she may be given special dispensation to serve as Ministry Coordinator. The title of spiritual leader can be approved after the individual becomes a LUT.

6.2 The Member Support Coordinator discusses the request with the Regional Representative, the Credentialing Coordinator, and UWM’s COO or CEO.

6.3 With a recommendation from Regional Representative, Credentialing Coordinator, and CEO/COO, the Member Support Coordinator grants approval to the ministry and leader for special dispensation.

6.4 A special dispensation agreement is created based on the expertise and experience of the individual. This agreement is for a period of six (6) months.

6.5 As many as three (3) six (6) month renewals requested by the affected Board of Trustees may be granted subject to review and approval of UWM’s Member Support Coordinator. To obtain a renewal, the individual must have fulfilled the terms of the agreement and be making progress toward qualifying for a credentialing path.

6.6 Extensions may be granted after two (2) years if the spiritual leader is actively following through on the designated path to ordination. Requests for extensions must be sent to the Member Support Coordinator.



Use of Titles Implying Minister Status (Approved 11-28-23)

Replaces Use of the Title Reverend Policy FINAL 4-25-23

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to clarify titles that may be used by spiritual leaders, guest speakers, and those in supporting roles in Unity ministries while honoring ministers ordained by another denomination.

Policy:

Individuals who are licensed or ordained by a faith organization other than Unity and are serving as the Spiritual Leader for a Unity group must be enrolled in the Special Dispensation program and may use the title Reverend in Unity materials and publications, with the source of their ordination listed, after receiving written approval from Unity Worldwide Ministries and confirmation that they are in good standing with their ordaining body.

Individuals who are licensed or ordained by a faith organization other than Unity and are serving in any Unity organization in a staff or leadership capacity, may not use the title Reverend in relation to their Unity role without the source of their ordination listed and written approval from the Senior Minister, Spiritual Leader, or Board of Trustees/Directors in lieu of a Senior Minister/Spiritual Leader.

For non-ordained individuals, the use of the terms Minister, Associate Minister, Assistant Minister, Youth Minister, Prayer Minister, etc., or any such title that implies Unity ordination, may not be used by any leader until Unity licensure or ordination is achieved.

Definitions:

Special Dispensation refers to authorization for a ministry to employ an individual who is not an ordained Unity minister to lead the ministry. This authorization is contingent upon the ministry and the individual entering into an agreement with UWM for the individual to commit to a path to Unity ordination and to follow through on that commitment.

Spiritual Leader is an individual who is not a Unity minister and has a special dispensation to lead a member ministry on a temporary and conditional basis.

Ministry Coordinator is an individual without Unity credentials who has a special dispensation to coordinate the activities of a member ministry on a temporary and conditional basis.



Minister Employment Assessment Policy

(Revised 4-10-2023) = separate Procedures into their own document / no changes made

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support ministers to have a successful transition into their next ministry if they have been away from field ministry for more than a year, had abbreviated tenures in ministry, or left a ministry due to challenging circumstances. The Employment Assessment will include the reasons for the leave, the activities pursued during the leave, and the individual's current situation.

2.0 Scope

An assessment process is required of any Unity minister who:

- 2.1 Is absent from field/center ministry for a period exceeding one (1) year.
- 2.2 Leaves two (2) ministries within a five (5) year period.
- 2.3 Leaves any ministry prior to completing two (2) years in that ministry.
- 2.4 Leaves a ministry due to challenging circumstances, such as an extended illness, a death, a period of conflict, a forced resignation, or a termination.

3.0 Policy

- 3.1 Any minister going through Employment Assessment must meet all current requirements for admissions, including a psychological assessment if this has not been done previously, as well as demonstrate rubric competencies for ordination.
- 3.2 The Employment Assessment Team will assess the physical, emotional, and professional preparedness for field ministry and may offer suggestions and guidance that would support the individual in having a successful experience in their next ministry.
- 3.3 The Employment Assessment Team may create a Required Plan of Action for the individual to complete prior to entering the employment process.
- 3.4 An Advocate may be assigned to the Employment Assessment Team if the situation is sensitive or the minister requests it.

4.0 Definitions

- 4.1 A **Unity minister** is any minister who is licensed and/or ordained by UWM.
- 4.2 The **Employment Assessment Team** is the group of individuals who review applications for Employment Assessment, interview those in the Employment Assessment process, and make a decision about their eligibility for employment in a UWM ministry. This team is comprised of at least 2 individuals.
- 4.3 **Admissions standards** refer to the current requirements for admission to Unity Worldwide Spiritual Institute's ministerial path.

- 4.4 **Rubric competencies** refer to the rubrics used in UWM's credentialing process that measure competencies for successful ministry.
- 4.5 The **Ethics Review System (ERS)** is the UWM process that explores potential violations of the Code of Ethics. The Employment Assessment Process is not an ERS process. Because ethical concerns sometimes arise during Employment Assessment, team members receive training regarding our ERS process. This allows them to identify these concerns, and work through them in a compassionate and supportive manner.

5.0 Responsibilities

- 5.1 A UWM staff member, the **Member Support Coordinator**, initiates the Employment Assessment Process by sending the minister the Ministry Assessment Application and assigns Employment Assessment Team members to conduct the assessment process. This person also ensures that those in Employment Assessment meet the current requirements for admissions.
- 5.2 Employment Assessment Team reviews the Employment Assessment application, interviews the minister, make recommendations, and determines the minister's eligibility for employment.
- 5.3 The **Advocate** provides support to the minister in Employment Assessment.



*These procedures correspond with the Appeals policy
and outline the process for implementing the policy.*

Minister Employment Assessment Procedures

(Revised 4-10-2023) = separated Policy from procedures / no changes made

1.0 Definitions

- 1.1 A **Unity minister** is any minister who is licensed and/or ordained by UWM.
- 1.2 The **Employment Assessment Team** is the group of individuals who review applications for Employment Assessment, interview those in the Employment Assessment process, and make a decision about their eligibility for employment in a UWM ministry. This team is comprised of at least 2 individuals.
- 1.3 **Admissions standards** refer to the current requirements for admission to Unity Worldwide Spiritual Institute's ministerial path.
- 1.4 **Rubric competencies** refer to the rubrics used in UWM's credentialing process that measure competencies for successful ministry.
- 1.5 The **Ethics Review System (ERS)** is the UWM process that explores potential violations of the Code of Ethics. The Employment Assessment Process is not an ERS process. Because ethical concerns sometimes arise during Employment Assessment, team members receive training regarding our ERS process. This allows them to identify these concerns, and work through them in a compassionate and supportive manner.

2.0 Responsibilities

- 2.1 A UWM staff member, the **Member Support Coordinator**, initiates the Employment Assessment Process by sending the minister the Ministry Assessment Application and assigns Employment Assessment Team members to conduct the assessment process. This person also ensures that those in Employment Assessment meet the current requirements for admissions.
- 2.2 Employment Assessment Team reviews the Employment Assessment application, interviews the minister, make recommendations, and determines the minister's eligibility for employment.
- 2.3 The **Advocate** provides support to the minister in Employment Assessment.

3.0 Procedures

- 3.1 A minister who fits the above criteria and is interested in employment in a Unity ministry will contact the UWM Member Support Team.

- 3.2 Member Support staff will determine whether the minister meets current admission standards and notify the minister of anything that needs to be completed to fulfill these standards.
- 3.3 Member Support staff will send the minister an Employment Assessment application.
- 3.4 The minister will complete the application and return it to the Member Support Coordinator.
- 3.5 Member Support Coordinator will assign an Employment Assessment Team to implement the Employment Assessment process and send the team the application.
- 3.6 The Employment Assessment Team will review the application, noting any possible competency weaknesses based on the rubrics created by the Licensing and Ordination Team.
- 3.7 The Employment Assessment Team will hold a phone interview with the applicant, paying special attention to any potential competency weaknesses.
- 3.8 Either before or after the initial phone interview, the Employment Assessment Team will contact references and individuals familiar with the applicant to gather additional facts and written recommendations.
- 3.9 Upon completion of the phone interview, the team will discuss their findings. The team leader will communicate the findings to the applicant or request an additional phone interview.
- 3.10 Possible decisions of the Employment Assessment Team are:
 - 3.10.1 The minister is immediately cleared for employment.
 - 3.10.2 The Employment Assessment Team may offer recommendations that will support the minister in having a successful re-entry experience.
 - 3.10.3 The team may work with the minister in creating a Mutually Agreed-Upon Plan of Action (MPoA) to address identified concerns in order to support a successful ministry experience. Where appropriate, the team may also encourage a redirection of the minister to a different style of ministry.
 - 3.10.4 The Employment Assessment Team may create a Required Plan of Action (RPoA), that the minister must complete before being eligible to seek employment in a Unity ministry. The Advocate monitors the completion of this plan and notifies the Member Support Coordinator.
 - 3.10.5 Once a decision has been made, the Employment Assessment Team Leader sends a letter to the applicant, notifying him/her of the decision, including any recommendations the team has to assist the minister in having a successful experience in ministry. A copy of this letter is sent to the Member Support Coordinator and the ERS Chair.
- 3.11 If during the interview the Employment Assessment Team becomes aware of or suspects possible ethical issues/violations, the team leader will contact the Member Support Coordinator to determine if an ethics review is in order. If such a review is necessary, the situation will be referred to the Ethics Review System



Ministry Employment Readiness Policy (Revised 12-2022)

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support ministries to have a successful relationship with their next minister if they have been without a minister for more than two years, have a history of abbreviated tenures with a minister, or lost their last minister due to challenging circumstances. Ministry Employment Readiness will include and explore the reasons for the minister's departure, the activities pursued since the minister's absence and the ministry's current situation.

2.0 Scope

An employment readiness process is required of any Unity ministry that:

- 2.1 Is without a minister for a period exceeding two (2) years.
- 2.2 Has had two (2) ministers depart within a five (5) year period.
- 2.3 Has released or lost their minister due to challenging circumstances, such as an extended illness, a death, a period of conflict, a forced resignation, or a termination.

3.0 Policy

- 3.1 Any ministry entering the Employment Process must meet all current requirements of their bylaws, including making contact with the UWM Member Support Team.
- 3.2 The Ministry Employment Readiness Case Team will assess the physical, emotional, and professional preparedness of the ministry for hiring a minister and may offer suggestions and guidance that would support the ministry in having a successful experience with its next minister.
- 3.3 The Ministry Employment Readiness Case Team may create a Required Plan of Action for the ministry to complete prior to entering the employment process.

4.0 Definitions

- 4.1 A **minister** is one who is ordained or licensed by UWM, or who is serving under Special Dispensation from UWM.
- 4.2 The **Ministry Employment Readiness Team** is a group of trained individuals who review applications for Ministry Employment Readiness, interview the Board of Trustees or designated Leadership Team, and make a decision about the ministry's readiness to enter the UWM Employment process. The Case team is comprised of at least 2 individuals.



These procedures correspond with the Ministry Employment Readiness policy and outline the process for implementing the policy.

Ministry Employment Readiness Procedures (Revised 12-2022)

1.0 Responsibilities

- 1.1 **Member Support Coordinator** oversees the Ministry Employment Readiness Process and, if necessary, recruits a team to work with the ministry.
- 1.2 **Ministry Employment Readiness Team** works with the ministry to build the capacity to enter into a successful relationship with a new minister.

2.0 Process

- 2.1 Member Support Coordinator or designee will meet with the board or designated leadership team of the ministry and:
 - 2.1.1 Advise them of the need for a Ministry Employment Readiness Process and the benefit this has for the spiritual community.
 - 2.1.2 Learn what has occurred from the board's perspective, and how this has impacted the spiritual community including:
 - 2.1.2.1 Reasons for the minister's departure,
 - 2.1.2.2 The activities pursued since the minister's absence,
 - 2.1.2.3 The ministry's current situation,
 - 2.1.2.4 Making an initial assessment regarding the status and needs of the spiritual community.
- 2.2 Should deeper work be needed, an Employment Readiness Team may be formed to work with the ministry to:
 - 2.2.1 Develop the physical, emotional, and professional preparedness for hiring a minister.
 - 2.2.2 Offer guidance that would support the ministry in having a successful experience with their next minister.
 - 2.2.3 If needed create a Plan of Action for the ministry to complete prior to entering the employment process.
 - 2.2.4 This team will work collaboratively with the Member Support Coordinator in developing skills and competencies for the ministry's success in their next minister relationship.
 - 2.2.5 Member Support Coordinator or designee will oversee the completion of the plan of action.
 - 2.2.6 When deemed ready for employment, the ministry will be eligible to begin their minister search and work with UWM in the field employment process.



Code of Ethics for Leaders Policy

(5-1-2024 reviewed by Standards Team; 5-28-2024 approved by UWM Board of Trustees)

Unity Worldwide Ministries (UWM) Code of Ethics for Leaders applies to the following:

- All credentialed leaders
 - Licensed or ordained Unity ministers (LUM or OUM)
 - Licensed Unity teachers (LUT)
- All non-credentialed leaders serving in the capacity of a credentialed Unity leader
- All ministerial candidates from all affiliated Unity schools
- All LUT candidates from all affiliated Unity schools
- All certified leaders and candidates
- All members of the UWM Board of Trustees
- All UWM staff members and contract employees
- All individuals certified to serve as consultants to our ministries
- All members of UWM Ministry Teams
- Unity Worldwide Ministries organization and representatives

Introduction and Intention

Foundational to Unity is the principle and teaching that we are individualized expressions of God. This calls us, as Unity leaders to live from our Christ nature in all circumstances thereby being a harmonizing presence and a role model for those we serve. Because of this, it is our intention to be accountable to one another and UWM in maintaining a high level of professional ethics.

Our Code of Ethics articulates a vision of ethical behavior grounded in our teachings. Its purpose is to provide guidelines for behavior that is both ethical and authentic; and encourages us to give full expression to our Christ nature.

We also recognize that certain violations of our Code of Ethics must be addressed. Some behaviors are explicitly illegal, and such violations may require suspension of membership or revocation of licensure and/or ordination from Unity Worldwide Ministries. Some behaviors are unethical by UWM standards and compromise our ability to perform and provide ministry. These behaviors harm our movement and interfere with our effectiveness in achieving our mission.

This document describes the process of how we hold one another accountable to this standard. Leaders who act in ways that are inconsistent with our Code of Ethics, Policies, Procedures, and Branding Guidelines may be subject to review through our Competency & Ethics Support System (CESS), Minister

Assessment System, and/or Competency & Ethics Support System Policy (CESS). These violations will be addressed in a consistent and open manner which assists us all in living our highest potential.

This Code of Ethics applies in conjunction with the Sexual Conduct Policy and Social Media Policy.

Section I and Section II Ethics are grounded in spiritual principles and self-care. It is recommended that all leaders aspire to follow these practices.

I. Dedication to Truth Principles

- A. As a Unity leader, I dedicate myself to the principles of Truth as follows:
 - 1. God is Absolute good, everywhere present.
 - 2. Every human being is an expression of the Divine; the Christ spirit, by whatever name, indwells all people. Their very essence is of God, and therefore they are also inherently good.
 - 3. Human beings create their experience by the activity of their thinking. Everything in the manifest realm has its beginning in thought.
 - 4. Prayer is creative thinking that heightens the connection with God-Mind and therefore brings forth wisdom, healing, prosperity, and everything good.
 - 5. Knowing and understanding the laws of life, also called Truth, are not enough. A person must also live the truth that they know.
- B. I look to the indwelling Christ for inspiration, to guide, govern, heal, and prosper me.
- C. I demonstrate Truth in my personal and professional life.
- D. I maintain a consistent prayer practice.

II. The Relationship to Self / Self-Care

- A. I keep in mind that my personal self-care is paramount to the welfare of the ministry.
 - B. I demonstrate self-care by designing, implementing, and maintaining a plan of regular renewal and spiritual growth for my life.
 - C. I care for my body with good nutrition and exercise.
 - D. I consciously say “yes” or “no” to prevent burnout.
 - E. I lead by my strengths; I model and teach self-care.
 - F. I ask for help when I recognize the need, modeling and teaching the value in doing so.
 - G. I balance work, relationships, recreation, and renewal.
 - H. When I experience any personal crisis, I will seek help (recognizing that any personal crisis will also impact my ministry). I will confer with my board of trustees, my regional representative, and/or a representative of Unity Worldwide Ministries. I may also choose to seek counseling or confer with colleagues.
- See “Appendix Self-Care Standards and Rubrics” for further details applied to this section.

Sections III through Section VII relate to standards of behaviors all are expected to demonstrate. Failure to do so could result in a review through the Minister Assessment System, and/or Competency & Ethics Support System (CESS).

III. The Leader’s Relationship with Others

All credentialed leaders and non-credentialed leaders are accountable to one another and UWM to maintain ethical expectations as described in this and other UWM policy documents.

- A. I understand the role of the leader carries with it authority and power. I fulfill my responsibility and use this power to benefit the people who call upon me for service. I offer acceptance and support to all people with whom I have contact regardless of age, race, socio-economic status, creed, nationality, political affiliations, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation. When people are angry, critical, or unkind, I respond compassionately.
- B. I recognize that more is taught by what a leader does than what they say. Therefore, I seek to keep my morals above reproach. I exercise good judgment regarding my social conduct. My relationships will be such as to command only the highest respect. I am conscious of the fact that to be pure in heart is to be pure in conduct also.
- C. I conduct my work, private and public, in accord with the teachings, standards, and ideals of Unity World Headquarters at Unity Village and Unity Worldwide Ministries without competition or contention.
- D. I maintain appropriate leadership boundaries realizing that crossing boundaries is a betrayal of trust. In honor of that trust, I do not exploit nor violate the emotional, spiritual, physical, or financial well-being of people or institutions who come to me for help or over whom I have any kind of authority. I do not create or cultivate dependencies.
- E. I do not use my authority to defame or manipulate individuals or groups, or foster division within the ministry. I avoid situations and relationships that could impair my professional judgment or compromise the integrity of the ministry.
- F. I monitor my personal and ministry social media presence and communications in such a way that represents my role as a leader and demonstrates Truth principles in my personal and professional life. (See the Social Media Policy)
- G. As a leader, I work within my professional qualifications and limitations. I will refer people with needs beyond my expertise to a qualified professional.
- H. When appropriate, we will refer to the Disruptive Behavior Policy.
<https://www.unityuwm.org/policies>
- I. Confidentiality:
 - 1. I am honor bound to hold sacred all confidences shared with me, except if a confidence reveals that the person confiding may pose a threat to self, others, or property.
 - 2. I never mention, without permission, either privately or publicly, the name, residence, or locality of any person under treatment in the past or present as an illustration or verification of Truth principles.
 - 3. I do not use privileged information for personal gain.
- J. Intervention in Abusive or Neglectful Situations/Mandated Reporting:
 - 1. In our unwavering commitment to recognize and honor the inherent worth and dignity of every individual, we bear the responsibility to promptly report instances of abuse or neglect (child abuse, elder abuse, dependent adult abuse, animal abuse, etc.) to the relevant agencies.
 - 2. I make a good faith report of such abuse to the appropriate agencies whether or not reporting is mandated by law.
It is imperative that I, as a minister or acting spiritual leader, understand and abide by my local mandated reporting laws. If I am classified as a mandated reporter in my jurisdiction, it is important to know how my jurisdiction views the relationship between the clergy-penitent privilege and the responsibilities of a mandated reporter since many areas do not allow an exception for clergy privilege. Relocation to a new ministry in a different jurisdiction requires me to do due diligence to know the laws of the area.
For United States: <https://www.startchurch.com/blog/view/name/are-you-a-mandated->

[reporter-what-every-minister-should-know](https://www.churchlawandtax.com/keep-safe/abuse-prevention/child-abuse-reporting-laws-22-facts-church-leaders-should-know/)

<https://www.churchlawandtax.com/keep-safe/abuse-prevention/child-abuse-reporting-laws-22-facts-church-leaders-should-know/>

For Canada: [https://cwrp.ca/frequently-asked-questions-](https://cwrp.ca/frequently-asked-questions-fags#:~:text=Everyone%20has%20a%20duty%20to,the%20'duty%20to%20report)

[fags#:~:text=Everyone%20has%20a%20duty%20to,the%20'duty%20to%20report](https://cwrp.ca/frequently-asked-questions-fags#:~:text=Everyone%20has%20a%20duty%20to,the%20'duty%20to%20report)

3. As a mandated reporter, it is a best practice to inform the person confiding (regardless of their age) of your reporting obligations.
 4. Regarding minors, it is important to know your local laws regarding age, topic, and exceptions to confidentiality expectations. For additional information contact UWM Member Support.
- K. I refrain from sexual contact and/or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, or employee with whom I have a professional and/or pastoral relationship, realizing it is unethical and is deemed sexual misconduct. (Sexual misconduct involving sexual abuse and/or sexualizing a professional relationship is defined as sexual activity or contact, not limited to sexual intercourse.) [Refer to Unity Worldwide Ministries [Sexual Conduct Policy](#).]

IV. Relating to All Ministers, Credentialed Leaders, Spiritual Leaders, Ministry Coordinators, and Lay Leaders regardless of Denomination

- A. I hold all leaders in esteem and respectful regard; and use all rightful means to protect the personal and professional honor of all other credentialed or lay leaders.
1. I honor & support the work of other credentialed or lay leaders.
 - a. I refrain from conversations with member(s) of another community that undermine the decisions or actions of the ministry's leadership. Should members of that community come to me for opinions, input, or advice about their ministry, I encourage them to talk to the ministry's leadership.
 - b. I reach out to the Regional Representative or the UWM Chief Operating Officer, and/or Member Support Team Lead to process any concerns I might have about the leadership of another ministry.
 - c. I provide cooperative assistance to other leaders as they endeavor to do ministry or serve on a ministry team.
 2. When assuming the leadership of an established ministry as a credentialed leader or non-credentialed leader, I avoid criticism of the former leadership and their work. In those rare times when an ethical lapse by a prior ministry's leadership has occurred, I am truthful and compassionate while maintaining confidentiality.
 3. After leaving a ministry I will relinquish my work with that ministry. I will modify my relations with members of that ministry to support the highest interest of the current Unity ministry and its leadership.
 - a. I will not directly participate in that ministry in any way without the approval of the ministry's current credentialed leader (or leadership team in the absence of a credentialed leader).
 - b. I will refrain from actively soliciting the participation of this ministry's members whether in person or virtual in any new ministry endeavors I begin without the permission of the current credentialed leader (or leadership team in the absence of a credentialed leader). Increasing virtual accessibility makes defining ministries only by geographical space obsolete and necessitates a higher call to *professional courtesy* rather than solely relying on ethical "rules."
 4. When I am disturbed by the activities of another credentialed or lay leader:

- a. I hold the situation in prayer.
 - b. I communicate directly with that leader.
 - c. If unresolved, I will consult with my Regional Representative and/or the UWM Chief Operating Officer, and/or Member Support Team Lead.
 - d. If necessary, I will seek spiritual counseling or coaching from a licensed professional outside Unity.
 - e. If guided, I will file an Ethics Review System complaint.
5. When I am disturbed by the activities of an assistant or associate minister or licensed Unity teacher:
 - a. I hold the situation in prayer.
 - b. I communicate directly with that leader.
 - c. If unresolved, I will consult with my Regional Representative, the UWM Chief Operating Officer, and/or Member Support Team Lead.
 - d. If necessary, I will seek spiritual counseling or coaching from a licensed professional outside Unity.
 - e. If guided, I will file an Ethics Review System complaint.
6. When I am disturbed by the activities of another Unity ministry:
 - a. I hold the situation in prayer.
 - b. I communicate with the appropriate leaders of the ministry.
 - c. If unresolved, I will consult with my Regional Representative, the UWM Chief Operating Officer, and/or Member Support Team Lead.
 - d. If necessary, I will seek spiritual counseling or coaching from a licensed professional outside Unity.
 - e. If guided, I will file a Competency & Ethics Support System (CESS) complaint.
- B. As an assistant or associate minister or a licensed Unity teacher (LUT):
 1. I give the senior credentialed leader full support and cooperation.
 2. I do not criticize the credentialed leader in any way or discuss the credentialed leader in a negative way with any ministry member, board member, or person outside the ministry.
 3. If a problem arises:
 - a. I hold the situation in prayer.
 - b. I communicate directly with the senior credentialed leader.
 - c. If unresolved, I will consult with my Regional Representative, the UWM Chief Operating Officer, and/or Member Support Team Lead.
 - d. In cases of perceived violations of the Code of Ethics, I will consult with my Regional Representative, the UWM Chief Operating Officer, and/or Member Support Team Lead.
 - e. If guided, I will file a Competency & Ethics Support System Policy (CESS) complaint.
- C. Competency & Ethics Support System Policy (CESS), Minister Assessment System, and/or Competency & Ethics Support System (CESS) Team members and relevant Unity Worldwide Ministries staff must be able to speak frankly about ethical violations in Competency & Ethics Support System (CESS) Policy, Minister Assessment System, and/or Competency & Ethics Support System Policy (CESS) reviews, in Competency & Ethics Support System (CESS), Minister Assessment System, and/or Competency & Ethics Support System Policy (CESS) training, and in evaluations of the Code of Ethics and related policies. Performing these activities is not to be construed as a violation of the Code of Ethics and related policies.

V. Leaders Relating to Ministries

- A. I respect the free will of members to move or transfer membership away from the Unity ministry I serve and will accept such requests without hesitation or inquiry.
- B. I do not use a ministry for personal gain. Any funds or assets that have been raised in the name of a Unity ministry will be registered in the name of that ministry and not in the name of an individual. I do not mishandle funds, give the appearance of mishandling funds, or ignore or enable the mishandling of funds. I ensure proper tracking and recordkeeping of all funds.
- C. I will not directly attempt to draw members or congregants away from any other established ministries or groups without the permission of the ministry leadership.
- D. Increasing virtual accessibility makes defining ministries only by geographical space obsolete and necessitates a higher call to *professional courtesy* rather than solely relying on ethics “rules.” Virtual ministries on the Internet are open to the World Wide Web and should not be seen as an attempt to draw members or congregants away from any other established ministry or group; however, unauthorized use of a ministry email list is unethical.
- E. I am ethical and respectful in my conduct and attitude toward other ministries, denominations, organizations, and metaphysical groups.

VI. Relating to Our Unity Worldwide Ministries

- A. I work in harmony and accord with Unity Worldwide Ministries.
- B. I uphold, communicate, and embody the Unity Worldwide Ministries’ values, mission, vision, and goals.
- C. I adhere to the policies and bylaws of Unity Worldwide Ministries.
- D. I first seek the full approval of Unity Worldwide Ministries before initiating a Unity ministry (study group, church, or alternative/evolving).

VII. My Pledge

I sincerely devote myself to living in accord with this Code of Ethics in letter and in spirit. Code of Ethics provides a framework that holds me accountable to my colleagues and UWM. I recognize that such an agreement augments our mutual and individual effectiveness.

If I find myself questioning or confused about any part of this Code of Ethics I agree to consult with my Regional Representative and/or UWM Member Support Team Lead.

Please sign the Code of Ethics, Sexual Conduct Policy, and Social Media Policy Acknowledgement & Signature Form (single-page document) and return it to Unity Worldwide Ministries.

Appendix A: Self-Care Standards & Rubrics

| C.1 | | Beginning | Developing | Competent | Exceptional | |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| Takes time for renewal of spirit, mind, and body. | | Articulates an awareness of the need for self-care. | Designs a plan for self-care and begins implementing it. | Maintains a self-care plan and is consciously aware of needs and how to address them. | Models and teaches a life of regular renewal of spirit, mind, and body. | |

| C.2 | | Beginning | Developing | Competent | Exceptional | |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| Supports self-differentiation through clear and appropriate boundaries. | | Articulates awareness of need for clear sense of self and setting of healthy boundaries. | Demonstrates capacity to set healthy boundaries. | Establishes healthy boundaries while maintaining connections. Takes a stand when necessary. | Models and teaches skills for developing a clear sense of self and setting healthy boundaries while maintaining connections to others. | |

| C.3 | | Beginning | Developing | Competent | Exceptional | |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| Able to ask for help. | | Expresses recognition for the need to ask for help and identifies barriers to follow through. | Expresses recognition of comfort levels in asking for help and cites examples of follow through. | Describes concisely asking for help and expresses comfort in doing so. | Models and teaches the value in asking for help. | |

| C.4 | | Beginning | Developing | Competent | Exceptional | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Maintains mutually enriching relationships. | | Describes the differences between personal and professional relationships. | Develops healthy personal relationships outside of the ministry. | Active participant in non-church (spiritual) community activities, developing inter-professional and personal relationships. | Models and teaches skills for cultivating enriching relationships. | |



Code of Ethics for Unity Ministries Policy

(5-1-2024 reviewed by Standards Team; 5-28-2024 approved by UWM Board of Trustees)

The Unity Worldwide Ministries (UWM) Ministry Code of Ethics applies to all member ministries, alternative ministries, and expansion ministries, represented by their Boards of Trustees/Steering Committees. It is the expectation that a ministry's elected leaders support the congregations in supporting their own ministry, behavior, values, code of ethics, or membership accountabilities.

Introduction and Intention

Foundational to Unity is the principle and teaching that we are individualized expressions of God. This calls us, as Unity ministries to live from our Christ nature in all circumstances thereby being a harmonizing presence and a role model for those we serve. Because of this, it is our intention to be accountable to one another and UWM in maintaining a high level of professional ethics.

Our Code of Ethics articulates a vision of ethical behavior grounded in our teachings. Its purpose is to provide guidelines for behavior that is both ethical and authentic; and encourages us to give full expression to our Christ nature.

We also recognize that certain violations of our Code of Ethics must be addressed. Some behaviors are explicitly illegal, and such violations may require suspension of membership. Some behaviors are unethical by UWM standards and compromise our ability to perform and provide ministry. These behaviors harm our movement and interfere with our effectiveness in achieving our mission.

This document describes the process of how we hold one another accountable to this standard. Ministries who act in ways that are inconsistent with our Code of Ethics, Policies, Procedures, and Branding Guidelines may be subject to review through our Ministry Employment Assessment System and/or Ministry Competency & Ethics Support System Policy (CESS). These violations will be addressed in a consistent and open manner which assists us all in living our highest potential.

This Code of Ethics applies in conjunction with the Sexual Conduct Policy and Social Media Policy.

Section I and Section II Ethics are grounded in spiritual principles and self-care. It is recommended that all leaders aspire to follow these practices.

I. Dedication to Truth Principles

- A. As a Unity ministry, and as members of the Board of Trustees/Steering Committees, we dedicate ourselves to the principles of Truth as follows:

1. God is Absolute good, everywhere present.
 2. Every human being is an expression of the Divine; the Christ spirit, by whatever name, indwells all people. Their very essence is of God, and therefore they are also inherently good.
 3. Human beings create their experience by the activity of their thinking. Everything in the manifest realm has its beginning in thought.
 4. Prayer is creative thinking that heightens the connection with God-Mind and therefore brings forth wisdom, healing, prosperity, and everything good.
 5. Knowing and understanding the laws of life, also called Truth, are not enough. A person must also live the truth that they know.
- B. We look to the indwelling Christ for inspiration, to guide, govern, heal, and prosper us.
 - C. We demonstrate Truth in our personal and official roles.
 - D. We maintain a consistent prayer practice.

II. The Relationship to Self – Self Care

- A. We keep in mind that personal self-care is paramount to the welfare of the ministry.
- B. We consciously seek to prevent burnout by developing and implementing policies that teach and support self-care.
- C. We demonstrate self-care by designing, implementing, and maintaining a plan of regular renewal and spiritual growth for our lives.
- D. We consciously say “yes” or “no” and ask for help when needed to prevent burnout.
- E. We lead by our strengths.
- F. As an individual ministry leader, should I experience any personal crisis, I will seek the counsel of the board president and/or minister. If necessary, I will seek spiritual counseling or coaching from a licensed professional outside Unity.
- G. Should our ministry experience a crisis, we will confer with our regional representative, and a representative of Unity Worldwide Ministries.

Sections III through Section VII relate to standards of behaviors all are expected to demonstrate. Failure to do so could result in a review through the Ministry Employment Assessment System and/or Ministry Competency & Ethics Support System Policy (CESS).

III. The Ministry Board Member’s Relationship with Others

All ministry leaders serving in the capacity of a Unity Ministry Board member or leader within the spiritual community are accountable to one another and UWM to maintain ethical expectations as described in this and other UWM policy documents.

- A. We understand the role of a Board/Steering Committee member carries with it authority, power, and accountability. We will use our positions to benefit and be accountable to the people we serve. We will accept and support all people regardless of age, race, socio-economic status, creed, nationality, political affiliations, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation. When people display unhealthy behaviors we will respond compassionately.
- B. We recognize that more is taught by what a leader does than what they say. We will seek to keep our morals above reproach. We will exercise good judgment in regard to our social conduct. Our relationships will be such as to command only the highest respect. We are conscious of the fact that to be pure in heart is to be pure in conduct also.
- C. We will conduct our work, private and public, in accord with the teachings, standards, and ideals

of Unity World Headquarters at Unity Village and Unity Worldwide Ministries without competition or contention.

- D. We will maintain appropriate leadership boundaries realizing that crossing boundaries is a betrayal of trust. In honor of that trust, we will not exploit nor violate the emotional, spiritual, physical, or financial well-being of people or institutions who come to us for help or over whom we have any kind of authority. We will not create or cultivate dependencies.
- E. We will not use our authority to defame or manipulate individuals or groups, or foster division within the ministry. We will avoid situations and relationships that could impair our judgment or compromise the integrity of the ministry.
- F. We will monitor both the ministries' and our personal social media presence and communications in such a way that represents our role as Board/Steering Committee members. (See Social Media Policy)
- G. When appropriate, we will refer to the Disruptive Behavior Policy.
<https://www.unityuwm.org/policies>
- H. Confidentiality:
 - 1. As a Board/Steering Committee member, we are honor bound to hold sacred all confidences shared with us individually or collectively, except if a confidence reveals that the person confiding may pose a threat to self, others, or property.
 - 2. As a Board/Steering Committee member, we will never mention, without permission, either privately or publicly, the name, residence, or locality of any person under treatment in the past or present as an illustration or verification of Truth principles.
 - 3. As a Board/Steering Committee member, we will not use privileged information for personal gain.
- I. Intervention in Abusive or Neglectful Situations/Mandated Reporting:
(NOTE: When a minister is not present, Board members will seek the assistance of the Regional Representative and a representative of Unity Worldwide Ministries.)
<https://mandatedreporter.com/faq/>
 - 1. It is imperative that we, as a Board, understand our state's mandated reporting laws.
 - 2. When a conversation reveals that the person confiding, regardless of age, may pose a threat to self, others, or property, we will make a good faith report of such abuse to the senior minister/acting spiritual leader who will then inform the appropriate agencies.
 - 3. Regarding minors, as a Board it is important to know our state laws regarding minors' confidentiality expectations.
 - 4. For additional information contact UWM Member Support.

IV. Relating to All Ministers, Credentialed Leaders, Spiritual Leaders, Ministry Coordinators, and Lay Leaders regardless of Denomination

- A. We hold all leaders in esteem and respectful regard and use all rightful means to protect the personal and professional honor of all other credentialed or lay leaders.
 - 1. We will honor & support the work of other credentialed or lay leaders.
 - a. We refrain from conversations with member(s) of another community that undermine the decisions or actions of the ministry's leadership. Should members of that community come to us for opinions, input, or advice about their ministry, we will encourage them to talk to the ministry's leadership.
 - b. We reach out to the Regional Representative, the UWM Operating Officer, and/or Member Support Team Lead to process any concerns we might have about the

- leadership of another ministry.
 - c. We provide cooperative assistance to other leaders as they endeavor to do ministry or serve on a ministry team.
 - 2. As elected leaders of an established ministry we avoid criticism of the former leadership and their work. In those rare times when an ethical lapse by a ministry's prior leadership has occurred, we are truthful and compassionate while maintaining confidentiality.
 - 3. As an elected leader when I am disturbed by the activities of a credentialed or lay leader:
 - a. I will hold the situation in prayer.
 - b. I will communicate directly with that leader.
 - c. If unresolved, I will consult with my minister, or other members of the Board of Trustees if no minister is present, the Regional Representative, the UWM Chief Operating Officer, and/or Member Support Team Lead.
 - d. If guided, I will file an Ethics Review System complaint.
 - 4. When I am disturbed by the activities of another Unity ministry:
 - a. I will consult with my minister, the Regional Representative, the UWM Operating Officer, and/or Member Support Team Lead.
 - b. I will hold the situation in prayer.
 - c. If guided, I will file an Ethics Review System complaint.
 - B. I will be ethical and respectful in my conduct and attitude toward other ministries, denominations, organizations, and metaphysical groups.
 - C. Competency & Ethics Support System Policy (CESS), Ministry Assessment Team, and/or Competency & Ethics Support System (CESS) Team members and relevant Unity Worldwide Ministries staff must be able to speak frankly about ethical violations in Competency & Ethics Support System (CESS) Policy, Competency & Ethics Support System Policy (CESS) reviews, in Competency & Ethics Support System (CESS) Policy, Competency & Ethics Support System Policy (CESS) training, and in evaluations of the Code of Ethics and related policies. Performing these activities is not to be construed as a violation of the Code of Ethics and related policies.

V. Leaders Relating to the Ministry I Serve

- A. I respect the free will of members to move or transfer membership away from the Unity ministry I serve and will accept such requests without hesitation or inquiry.
- B. As an elected leader I will not use a ministry for personal gain. Any funds or assets that have been raised in the name of a Unity ministry will be registered in the name of that ministry and not in the name of an individual. I will not mishandle funds, give the appearance of mishandling funds, or ignore or enable the mishandling of funds. I will ensure proper tracking and recordkeeping of all funds.
- C. I will not directly attempt to draw members or congregants away from any other established ministries or groups without the permission of the ministry leadership.
- D. Increasing virtual accessibility makes defining ministries only by geographical space obsolete and necessitates a higher call to *professional courtesy* rather than solely relying on ethics "rules." Virtual ministries on the Internet are open to the World Wide Web and should not be seen as an attempt to draw members or congregants away from any other established ministry or group; however, unauthorized use of a ministry email list is unethical.
- E. I am ethical and respectful in my conduct and attitude toward other ministries, denominations, organizations, and metaphysical groups.

VI. Relating to Our Unity Worldwide Ministries

- A. As an elected leader and congregant, I will work in harmony and accord with Unity Worldwide Ministries.
- B. As an elected leader and congregant, I will uphold, communicate, and embody the Unity Worldwide Ministries' values, mission, vision, and goals.
- C. I adhere to the policies and bylaws of Unity Worldwide Ministries.
- D. I first seek the full approval of Unity Worldwide Ministries before initiating a Unity ministry (study group, church, or alternative/evolving).

VII. My Pledge

I sincerely devote myself to living in accord with this Code of Ethics in letter and in spirit and to seeing it manifest in all others. I recognize Unity Worldwide Ministries and this Code of Ethics provides a framework that holds me accountable to my colleagues and UWM.

I recognize that such an agreement is necessary for our mutual and individual effectiveness.

If I find myself contemplating or actually functioning, outside of this framework, I agree to consult with my minister, the Regional Representative, the UWM Chief Operating Officer, and/or Member Support Team Lead.

Failure to seek such help will mean that by my own choice, I am functioning outside of the framework of this code and consequently placing myself outside of Unity Worldwide Ministries.

Please sign the Code of Ethics, Sexual Conduct Policy, and Social Media Policy Acknowledgement & Signature Form (single-page document) and return it to Unity Worldwide Ministries.

Appendix A: Self-Care Standards & Rubrics

| C.1 | | Beginning | Developing | Competent | Exceptional | |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| Takes time for renewal of spirit, mind, and body. | | Articulates an awareness of the need for self-care. | Designs a plan for self-care and begins implementing it. | Maintains a self-care plan and is consciously aware of needs and how to address them. | Models and teaches a life of regular renewal of spirit, mind, and body. | |

| C.2 | | Beginning | Developing | Competent | Exceptional | |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| Supports self-differentiation through clear and appropriate boundaries. | | Articulates awareness of need for clear sense of self and setting of healthy boundaries. | Demonstrates capacity to set healthy boundaries. | Establishes healthy boundaries while maintaining connections. Takes a stand when necessary. | Models and teaches skills for developing a clear sense of self and setting healthy boundaries while maintaining connections to others. | |

| C.3 | | Beginning | Developing | Competent | Exceptional | |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| Able to ask for help. | | Expresses recognition for the need to ask for help and identifies barriers to follow through. | Expresses recognition of comfort levels in asking for help and cites examples of follow through. | Describes concisely asking for help and expresses comfort in doing so. | Models and teaches the value in asking for help. | |

| C.4 | | Beginning | Developing | Competent | Exceptional | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Maintains mutually enriching relationships. | | Describes the differences between personal and professional relationships. | Develops healthy personal relationships outside of the ministry. | Active participant in non-church (spiritual) community activities, developing inter-professional and personal relationships. | Models and teaches skills for cultivating enriching relationships. | |



Policy: Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for Credentialed Unity Leaders

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide standards which support the ongoing growth and development of Unity Worldwide Ministries (UWM) credentialed leaders.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all:

2.1 Ministers licensed or ordained by UWM

2.2 Licensed Unity teachers

2.3 Individuals serving under special dispensation in a UWM member ministry

3.0 Policy

3.1 All ministers, licensed Unity teachers, and those serving under special dispensation are required to complete the minimum CEUs as outlined by the UWM CEU procedures.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 A Continuing Education Credit (CEU) is a measure used for ongoing education used to assist professionals in maintaining their certification.

4.2 Special Dispensation is a UWM policy that allows individuals not ordained by Unity to serve as the leader of a UWM ministry on a temporary basis while they obtain a Unity ordination.



Procedures: Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for Credentialed Leaders

These procedures correspond with the CEU policy for Credentialed Leaders and outline the process for implementing the policy.

1.0 Responsibilities

- 1.1 **Credentialed Unity Leaders** are responsible for tracking their CEUs and reporting them to UWM through their annual Credentialed Leader Report (CLR).
- 1.2 UWM's **Virtual Experience Team** will provide a variety of E-Learning opportunities to support the growth and skill development of our Unity leaders – including Ethics/Boundaries, Inclusivity/Diversity, and Ministry Administration & Management training.

2.0 CEU Standards

- 2.1 One (1) hour of class time is equivalent to one (1) credit hour.
- 2.2 Credit hours do not carry over from year to year.
- 2.3 Unity ministers
 - 2.3.1 Unity ministers are required to obtain **seven (7) hours** of continuous education each year. At least one hour must be in each of these areas: -Ethics/Boundaries, Inclusivity/Diversity, and Ministry Administration & Management.
 - 2.3.2 Newly licensed or ordained ministers will receive credit for the annual CEU requirements in the calendar year of ordination only. Ministerial prerequisite requirements and required coursework will count for the ordination year continuation education credits.
 - 2.3.3 Ministers must have CEUs up to date to retain active status as a minister, teach-Unity courses for credit or seek employment in a UWM member ministry. Ministers must have CEUs up to date in order to vote at the annual business meeting by 2026.
- 2.4 Licensed Unity Teachers (LUTs)
 - 2.4.1 LUTs are required to obtain **five (5) hours** of continuous education each year. At least one hour must be in each of these areas: Ethics/Boundaries, Inclusivity/Diversity, and Ministry Administration & Management.
 - 2.4.2 Newly licensed Unity teachers will receive credit for the annual CEU requirements in the calendar year of licensing only. LUT prerequisite requirements and required coursework will count for the licensing year continuation education credits.
 - 2.4.3 LUTs must keep their CEUs up to date to retain active status as a LUT and teach Unity courses for credit. LUTs must have CEUs up to date in order to vote at the annual business meeting by 2026.
- 2.5 Individuals serving under Special Dispensation in a UWM member ministry
 - 2.5.1 Special Dispensation participants are required to obtain **five (5) hours** of continuous education each year. At least one hour must be in each of these areas: Ethics/Boundaries, Inclusivity/Diversity, and Ministry Administration & Management.
 - 2.5.2 Special Dispensation prerequisite requirements and required coursework will count for the two (2) general continuation education credits.



POLICY ON CREDENTIALLED LEADERSHIP SEXUAL CONDUCT IN MINISTRY

Appropriate Relationship Boundaries in Ministry

I. Purposes

This policy addresses the issue of sexual misconduct including, but not limited to, sexual molestation, sexual abuse/harassment, and sexual exploitation by Unity Credentialed Leadership. The policy also specifies procedures by which a Unity Credentialed Leader can ethically transition a pastoral relationship into a personal or romantic relationship.

II. Scope of Policy

For simplicity, the term “Credentialed Leader” is used to apply to all a) ordained or licensed Unity Ministers, (active and inactive), b) licensed Associate Ministers, c) Licensed Unity Teachers, d) Spiritual Leaders serving Unity churches under special dispensation from Unity Worldwide Ministries, e) Spiritual Leaders and Study Group Coordinators of churches and study groups affiliated with Unity Worldwide Ministries, f) Ministerial Education Candidates, g) Ministers in the Field Path Program.

Individual Unity ministries are strongly encouraged to formally adopt their own separate policy on sexual conduct to include lay leaders or associate ministers from other faiths, or guest presenters that are not under the sanction of Unity Worldwide Ministries. [Examples of policies which could be adopted for use in local ministries are available on the Sacred Safety page at www.unityworldwideministries.org/sacred-safety-background-checks-and-resources.]

III. Core Values in Sexual Misconduct Cases

1. Unity Worldwide Ministries is called to respond compassionately and directly to every allegation of sexual misconduct by a credentialed leader. Unity Worldwide Ministries has an intention to respond to the spiritual needs of all interested parties: the alleged victim, the complainant(s), the credentialed leader against whom accusations are made, as well as the congregation and the Unity Movement as a whole. This is a very different set of priorities than is commonly found within the private sector.

2. Every allegation of sexual misconduct deserves careful consideration and a prompt appropriate response.

3. Fair procedures for handling complaints of sexual misconduct need to provide due process to all parties in interest.

4. A uniform procedure of peer review for resolving allegations of sexual misconduct provides a sense of justice and impartiality for all concerned.

5. The Ethics Review System [ERS] Case Review Team may consult with other persons with expertise concerning the issues and unique concerns regarding alleged incidents of sexual misconduct in order to facilitate their review.

IV. Definitions of Sexual Misconduct by Credentialed Leaders

1. The term “sexual misconduct” in the context of credentialed leadership embraces several distinct yet interrelated concepts, a) sexual molestation, b) sexual harassment, and c) sexual abuse or exploitation.

- a. Sexual Molestation is the unwarranted sexualized touching of any person, including but not limited to, any sexual involvement or sexual contact with a person who is a minor or who is legally incompetent.
- b. Sexual Harassment by a credentialed leader may occur within any aspect of a credentialed leaders roles and responsibilities, or in a pastoral relationship. It includes, but is not limited to, conduct such as sexually oriented humor or language; questions or comments about sexual behavior or orientation unrelated to legitimate employment qualifications; inappropriately sexualized comments about clothing or physical appearance; and/or repeated unwelcome requests for social engagements or dates. Sexual harassment may lead to a hostile work environment that compromises the integrity of the ministry.

The term “sexual harassment” also includes, but is not limited to, acts which constitute a violation of the sexual harassment as defined in the federal law of the country in which the ministry is located. For example, Title VII of the U. S. Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 provides a detailed definition of sexual harassment as follows:

- (1) “Quid pro quo” harassment refers to sexual harassment (requests for sexual favors, sexual remarks about an individual’s body or clothing, sexual stereotyping, unwelcome or offensive sexual comments, and other conduct of a sexual nature) by a supervisor or other person in authority which operates – either through submission or rejection by the victim – as the basis for any employment decision affecting the victim. Common examples of “quid pro quo” harassment are hiring, granting or denying a promotion, demotion, transfer, training, salary increase, discharge, work assignments and/or volunteer opportunities on the basis of the victim’s response to unwelcome acts of sexual harassment.
- (2) “Hostile work environment” harassment is any conduct that creates a hostile work environment even though the victim has not suffered a tangible employment injury as, for example, denial of raises, promotion, or termination. To state a legal claim for “hostile work environment”

harassment, the sexual harassment must be sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the victim's employment and create an abusive working environment.

- (3) Under federal law, "sexual harassment" also includes any reprisal or retaliation against anyone by any co-workers or supervisors because that person in good faith, reports a violation or suspected violation of sexual misconduct, whether or not the reported violation is substantiated by an investigation.
- (4) Any pertinent state or common law definition of "sexual harassment" that is enacted would also apply.

- c. "Sexual Exploitation" includes but is not limited to, the development of or the attempt to develop a physical or sexual relationship between a credentialed leader and an employee, congregant, or volunteer as well as any person with whom he/she has any pastoral or professional relationship, whether or not there is apparent consent from the individual.
- d. Where political jurisdiction imposes a higher standard, credentialed leaders must adhere to that higher standard.

2. The term "pastoral relationship" or "ministerial capacity" means: a relationship between a credentialed leader and any person to whom such credentialed leader provides counseling, pastoral care, prayer support, spiritual direction or spiritual guidance, including that received from Sunday services and/or church related classes, workshops, retreats, weddings, funerals or any other church related activity.

3. A "romantic relationship" includes dating and/or an expressed desire for personal, physical and sexual intimacy with another person.

4. The term "minor" means anyone who has not attained eighteen [18] years of age or as defined by applicable local law.

5. The term "professional counseling" means counseling by an accredited professional in the area of psychiatry, psychology, social work, or family therapy which does not include any elements of spiritual direction or guidance.

V. Sexual Misconduct

1. Child sexual abuse and/or molestation includes physical, sexual, and psychological harm to a minor or any person who is incompetent or who has a diminished mental capacity that is at the level of a child. It includes, but is not limited to, any act against a minor or incompetent person that constitutes a crime under applicable state and federal law. Allegations of child sex abuse or molestation shall be reported to proper authorities.

2. Any unwelcome or non-reciprocal sexualized overtures or conduct either verbal, non-verbal, or physical by a credentialed leader towards a co-worker or a member of their staff or congregation constitutes sexual misconduct. It includes, but is not limited to, acts, which constitute a crime under applicable law. It may include sexually oriented humor or language, questions or comments about one's sexual behavior or preference, unwelcome or undesired physical contact, inappropriate comments about one's clothing or body, or repeated requests for dates or social engagements.

Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to: **a.** Verbal sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, insults, degrading humor and jokes about sex or gender specific traits, threats. **b.** Non-verbal suggestive or insulting sounds; leering; whistling; obscene gestures; display of objectionable posters, cartoons, pictures and/or magazines. **c.** Physical touching such as pinching; brushing the body; coerced sexual relations; assault.

3. Sexual misconduct occurs whenever a credentialed leader has any sexualized or romantic contact, interaction and/or relationship with anyone whom the credentialed leader came into contact with while serving in any ministerial capacity. When there is an imbalance of power there cannot be meaningful consent for romantic or sexual relations between a credentialed leader and anyone the credentialed leader meets while in a ministerial role. One way to define "power" is the possession of one or more bases of power which include: formal authority, charisma, wealth, race, age, position or connections, emotional influence, rewards and punishment, expertise, physical appearance, gender or sexual influences, intellectual or verbal ability, and secrecy (withholding of pertinent information). Within a ministry, the credentialed leader possesses multiple bases and therefore more power than others in the ministry.

Even if the possibility of romantic or physical involvement appears to be initiated by the congregant, it is the credentialed leader's responsibility to maintain the boundaries of the pastoral relationship. The question of the intent of the credentialed leader is not a factor: romantic or physical involvement with an adult congregant is sexual misconduct until and unless the pastoral relationship has been discontinued by following the procedures specified in Section VI. Beyond the Pastoral Relationship.

VI. Beyond the Pastoral Relationship

[**Note:** This is about helping the credentialed leader be responsible in reciprocal adult relationships, with provisions that protect the credentialed leader, church, Unity Worldwide Ministries and other individuals involved.] The rule is that no credentialed leader shall have a romantic relationship with any person with whom s/he has a pastoral relationship, or with whom s/he has had a pastoral relationship within the past 6 months. However, in circumstances in which a romantic relationship might develop, these are the procedures to follow to comply with Unity Worldwide Ministries' Sexual Conduct Policy:

1. A relationship between a credentialed leader and a person with whom the credentialed leader has a pastoral relationship at the same time carries with it the risk of coercion, misuse of power, and consequently, sexual exploitation. As such, no credentialed leader shall have a

romantic relationship with any person with whom he or she has any ongoing pastoral relationship, or with whom s/he has had a pastoral relationship within the past 6 months.

2. Whenever a credentialed leader recognizes that a romantic relationship is developing in the course of a pastoral relationship, they will immediately terminate the pastoral relationship, while ensuring that the other person has been referred to another independent source for appropriate pastoral support.

3. The credentialed leader should promptly advise the Executive Director of Unity Worldwide Ministries, and/or the Executive Director's designee of the existence of the romantic relationship and keep them apprised of any developments and be willing to openly discuss with the Executive Director or their designee, the issues and dangers inherent in this type of romantic relationship. If the credentialed leader is an Associate Minister or LUT, they shall notify their Senior Minister and/or sponsoring minister as well.

4. No credentialed leader shall pursue or encourage romantic relationship with any person with whom he or she has had a prior pastoral relationship within the past 6 months unless both parties meet for professional counseling, outside their regular areas of ministry and/or work involvement. The credentialed leader shall notify the same people as identified in the above paragraph before instituting a romantic relationship.

Before a credentialed leader pursues or encourages any sexual or romantic relationship with any person with whom they had any prior pastoral relationship they must: a) contact those identified above to review the requirements of the sexual conduct policy and to familiarize themselves with the issues and dangers inherent in pastoral congregant relationships and b) if serving at a local church must notify their board of a developing romantic relationship and c) before any sexualized contact occurs arrange a meeting with their prospective partner and an independent professional counselor who can advise them both of the inherent issues and dangers in a pastoral congregant relationship. The credentialed leader and/or their church shall pay for this counseling.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

1. **Decision to review.** The decision to initiate a review of a minister accused of sexual misconduct shall be made by the Ethics Review System [ERS] Case Manager after consultation with the Executive Director or their designee. The policies and procedures outlined here are guidelines. A decision to review may be made or not made based on all of the facts and circumstances known to the appropriate Unity Worldwide Ministries' officials.

2. **Preliminary Review.** The ERS Case Manager has the authority to conduct a preliminary review and to initiate an Ethics Review System [ERS] process.

In a preliminary review, the ERS Case Manager will determine the exact nature of the allegation and request the reviewee complete a written statement in response to the allegation.

In a preliminary review, the ERS Case Manager, after hearing from the complaining party and the party against whom the complaint is brought, and after consulting with two (2) other individuals trained in the Ethics Review System process, has the authority to propose a resolution of the complaint to the parties involved. If the parties are agreeable to the resolution, and if the ERS Case Manager concludes that the ministry leader shall be cleared, then the preliminary review will be concluded except for “notice of disposition” and “handling records and information” as required by and outlined herein. If, however, the ERS Case Manager feels that a Plan of Action or suspension of the ministry leader might be warranted, then the ERS Case Manager will initiate an Ethics Review System process.

3. Receipt of complaint.

- a. Involving an adult.** Complaints of sexual misconduct involving an adult must be received from the complainant, preferable in writing. In the event that the complainant(s) chooses not to submit a written allegation, the ERS Case Manager may still decide to initiate a review if in his/her judgment an Ethics Review System process is warranted.
- b. Involving a minor.** In addition to being reviewed according to the procedures outlined here, complaints alleging sexual contact between a minister and a child will be reported to state child protection agencies.
- c. Time sensitive.** Any complaint of misconduct within the past five [5] years will be considered a current complaint. A complaint more than five [5] years old will be considered a lapsed complaint. Depending on the nature of a lapsed complaint, the ERS Case Manager may decide to initiate an Ethics Review System process. Complaints of sexual contact between a minister and a minor will be considered current no matter how long ago the alleged behavior occurred.

4. No promise of confidentiality. Unity Worldwide Ministries makes no promise of confidentiality with respect to communications of complaints or other allegations of any form of sexual misconduct. Unity Worldwide Ministries reserves the right to disclose information for the protection of others, to ensure the adequacy of the review by Unity Worldwide Ministries and the ability of Unity Worldwide Ministries to take appropriate action consistent with this policy. Nevertheless, Unity Worldwide Ministries shall intend to limit disclosure to those individuals, who have a need to know, including Unity Worldwide Ministries’ Board of Trustees, Leadership Team, and Ministry Consultants & Transition Specialists, among others, and shall proceed with due sensitivity to the protection of the legitimate privacy interests of the persons affected by the allegations.

- **Demand for confidentiality.** A complainant may demand confidentiality. In that case the person receiving the complaint should advise the complainant that in most cases the request denies Unity Worldwide Ministries the ability to take any action to discipline the accused or prevent a recurrence. The Executive Director of Unity Worldwide Ministries shall be advised of the situation.

- 5. Commencement of review.** The ERS Case Manager will begin their preliminary review as soon as possible, but not later than twenty-one [21] days after receiving the complaint, unless documented circumstances exist for delaying the commencement of the preliminary review.
- 6. Paid leave of absence without prejudice.** Within three days after determining that a complaint merits an Ethics Review System process and prior to the commencement of the Ethics Review System process, the ERS Case Manager will recommend to the church's board that the accused leader be placed on a leave of absence with pay and without prejudice of ministerial standing pending the outcome of the Ethics Review System process. This recommendation to the board for a leave of absence without prejudice occurs as a matter of policy.
- 7. Non-interference and cooperation with civil agencies.** If the alleged misconduct must be reported to any civil agency for investigation [as in the case of child abuse], the ERS Case Manager and/or ERS Case Review Team will contact the Executive Director or their designee and conduct the respective review(s) in a manner that does not interfere with a civil or criminal investigation carried out by local authorities.
- 8. Procedures for Review.** Allegations of sexual misconduct will be reviewed under the provisions of the Ethics Review System policies and procedures.
- 9. Unsubstantiated allegations.** If the ERS Case Manager finds that the allegation of sexual misconduct cannot be substantiated and does not warrant an Ethics Review System process, they will provide the written decision to the Executive Director or their designee and share such written decision as widely as the original allegation. The ERS Case Manager will also provide a written recommendation to terminate the leave of absence without prejudice specifying a date to the ministry and to the Executive Director or their designee.
- 10. Notice of disposition.** When an outcome has been determined, the ERS Case Manager will contact the complainant and inform him or her of the action taken. The complainant will also be advised that the accused may choose to appeal the decision.
- 11. Handling records and information.**
- a. Substantiated complaints.** As outlined in the Ethics Review System [ERS].
 - b. Unsubstantiated complaints.** A report of all unsubstantiated complaints and related recommendations, along with any statement submitted by the minister about the complaint, shall be kept and maintained indefinitely in the minister's personnel file at Unity Worldwide Ministries' home office.
 - c. Disclosure of facts.** Nothing in the policy or in these procedures will be deemed to preclude disclosure of facts and circumstances surrounding any complaint or allegation to any insurer, attorneys or other individuals whose assistance is sought in connection with the preliminary review or defense of any complaint or allegation.

Please sign the Code of Ethics and Sexual Conduct Acknowledgement & Signature Form and return to Unity Worldwide Ministries.



Social Media Policy

(3-19-2024 reviewed by Standards Team; 3-26-2024 approved by UWM Board of Trustees)

1.0 Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to support Unity leaders and ministries to engage in positive public discourse.

2.0 Persons Affected: This policy applies to:

2.1 UWM Member Ministries

2.2 Licensed and ordained ministers, licensed Unity teachers and candidates, spiritual leaders, ministry coordinators, Special Dispensation participants, and those serving in leadership positions in Unity ministries without Unity credentials.

3.0 Policy:

We aspire to honor the inherent worth of all, and endeavor to participate in all public discourse in respectful, compassionate, and dignified ways, refraining from making disparaging public remarks particularly when we are expressing disagreement. Subject to applicable law, online or other public activities that violate Unity standards for ethical behavior may subject a minister or leader to disciplinary action.

We commit to direct and compassionate communication. Any concerns we have about the organization (the organization being but not limited to UWM, UWH, Unity (generic), the region, the ministry, the minister, the spiritual leader, the LUT, the board, etc.) shall be addressed in a private format.

Specifically, we agree to:

- a.** Refrain from posting social media content and images that may be considered defamatory, pornographic, harassing, libelous, racist, sexist, or may create a hostile work environment.
- b.** Be aware and assume that our position and title give the impression that we speak for Unity, Unity Worldwide Ministries, or a local Unity center or ministry. We may not make social media posts on behalf of a Unity organization unless we have authorization from the leadership of that center, ministry, or organization.
- c.** In addition, follow ethical standards set by Unity Worldwide Ministries when making public posts initiated from any and all personal accounts. What we say in tweets, blogs, etc. reflects on our Unity Member Ministries and Communities and the organization as a whole.
- d.** Refrain from sharing information considered to be confidential. If unsure, do not share.

e. Obtain appropriate permission to use Unity or third-party copyrights, copyrighted material, trademarks, images, service marks, or other intellectual property.

f. Get appropriate permission before live streaming, video filming, posting, or sharing images of children, youth, or teens. (See additional documents: Social Media Policy Template for a ministry <https://www.unityuwm.org/sacred-safety-background-checks-and-resources> and Youth Registration forms in the UWM YFM Guidebook <https://www.unityuwm.org/resources-starting-or-enhancing-youth-and-family-ministry> .)

g. Recognize that social media networks, blogs, and other types of online content may generate press and media attention. Refer all media inquiries to the organization's leadership.

4.0 Definitions:

4.1 **Social Media** refers to interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Social Media means a service, platform, or website where users communicate with one another and share media, such as pictures, videos, music, and blogs, with other users free of charge.

4.2 **Unity Minister** refers to individuals who are licensed and/or ordained by UWM.

4.3 **Member Ministry** refers to a Unity ministry that has been approved for membership in UWM.

4.4 **A Licensed Unity Teacher (LUT)** is an individual who is trained and credentialed through UWM to teach Unity principles and serve under the leadership of a Unity minister.

4.5 **A Spiritual Leader** is an individual who is not a Unity minister and has a special dispensation to lead a member ministry on a temporary and conditional basis.

4.6 **A Ministry Coordinator** is an individual without Unity credentials who has special dispensation to coordinate the activities of a member ministry on a temporary and conditional basis.

4.7 **Organization** refers to UWM, UWH, Unity (generic), the region, the ministry, the minister, the spiritual leader, the LUT, the board, etc.

4.8 **Special Dispensation** refers to authorization for a ministry to employ an individual who is not a Unity minister to lead the ministry. This authorization is contingent upon the ministry and the individual entering into an agreement with UWM for the individual to commit to a path to Unity ordination and to follow through on that commitment.