

11.5 PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS TRAINING

Requirements in relation to Professional Standards Training

In response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and taking into account developments in other Synods, the Synod of WA established new requirements in terms of Professional Standards training for all those in active ministry which took effect from 1 January 2017.

To whom do these Standards apply?

These requirements for Professional Standards Training apply to everyone in active ministry which includes the following

- Candidates for ordained ministries
- Deacons and Ministers of the Word in placement or awaiting placement
- Community Ministers
- Pastors
- Lay people employed in ministry positions, even if these are not recognised as Pastor positions
- Ministers from other churches serving in an approved placement
- Ministers seeking admission as ministers of the UCA
- Retired ministers who are still in active ministry. For a Retired Minister, active ministry can include any of the following
 - Being employed as a supply minister
 - Leading worship more frequently than once a quarter
 - Leadership within a congregation by serving as an elder, being a member of Church Council, or providing pastoral ministry or ministry with children or young people.
 - Leadership in regions, presbytery or synod, such as being a Regional Pastor or chairing a Presbytery or Synod body
 - Providing Professional Supervision, mentoring for POD or candidates, or field education supervision for candidates.

For those in any of the categories above, the following are the expectations of the UCA

Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice

The expectation is that all those in active ministry will participate in the following training.

- **Code of Ethics Overview**- this one day workshop provides an overview of the full Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice. It is expected that all those in active ministry will participate in this only once, as close to the start of their ministry as possible.
- **Ethical Ministry Workshops**- these 3 hour workshops provide opportunity for a group of 6 to 12 peers to explore in depth one aspect of the Code of Ethics. For those in placement — a formal warning be given by the General Secretary with instruction to complete the training within a set time period in accordance with the discipline requirements of the Church. It is recognised that at times individuals will be prevented

from attending due to illness, holidays, sudden pastoral emergencies, etc. In such circumstances they are expected to give a formal apology to their group leader and then arrange to participate in a different group meeting on a different date.

- **Professional Supervision-** it is a requirement of the Code of Ethics that all those in active ministry meet regularly with a Professional Supervisor. The purpose of Professional Supervision is to ensure that each ministry practitioner maintains high ethical standards, reflects on the quality of their ministry, and engages in ongoing formation and education. The Pastoral Relations Committee may exempt some retired ministers from the requirement for Professional Supervision.

Safe Church Awareness Training

All those in active ministry are also required to undertake Safe Church Awareness training. They are also required to undertake a Refresher Course every three years.

However, those who are employed in chaplaincy positions, (such as in schools, prisons, hospitals, aged care), will be exempt from Safe Church Awareness training, if the institutions in which they work provide similar training which is compulsory for all staff.

Consequences for Non-Compliance

The following are the consequences for non-participation in Professional Standards training:

- For candidates- that the General Secretary inform Perth Theological Hall that candidates cannot participate in any Supervised Field Education until they have completed the Code of Ethics Overview and Safe Church training and inform the Candidates for Ministries Commission that candidates who are not up to date with Professional Standards training are ineligible for ordination.
- For those in placement – a formal warning be given by the General Secretary with instruction to complete the training within a set time period in accordance with the discipline requirements of the Church.
- For those awaiting placement- that the General Secretary inform them that their name will be removed from the list of those seeking a placement until they complete the training.
- For Community Ministers and Pastors- a formal warning be offered by the General Secretary that failure to complete the training within a set time period will result in their recognition by the presbytery being withdrawn and their Church Council informed of this.
- For lay people employed in ministry roles- that General Secretary inform their Church Council that they are in breach of the UCA Professional Standards and ask the Church Council to terminate their employment if they do not complete the training within a set time period.
- For retired ministers- that the General Secretary inform them that they cease all active ministry until they complete the training.