

PROCEDURE 1: PROCEDURE FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF CANDIDATES FOR THE MINISTRY IN THE UCCSA

1. FELLOWSHIP OF VOCATION

- 1.1 Each Regional Council/Synod sets up a Fellowship of Vocation, consisting of a selection of ministers and laity within the Regional/Synod, under the direction of a Regional/Synodical Fellowship of Vocation director.
- 1.2 The prospective candidate is at this stage known as an Enquirer.
 - 1.2.1 The age for beginning the process leading to ordained ministry be 18 years, with the maximum age at which his/her studies will be completed be 55 years.
 - 1.2.2 The enquirer must be a member, for at least two years, of the local church which makes the recommendation to the Regional Council.
 - 1.2.3 Enquirer makes his/her call known to the local Minister.
 - 1.2.4 Minister opens a file on Enquirer, interview Enquirer and assesses Enquirer's sense of call and advises the Enquirer accordingly.
 - 1.2.5 Enquirer makes formal application to local church council to be considered for the UCCSA Ministry.
 - 1.2.6 Local Church makes their recommendation to the Secretary of the Regional Council.
 - 1.2.7 Regional Council interviews Enquirer and assesses his/her sense of call.
 - 1.2.8 Regional Council presents the Enquirer to the regional Fellowship of Vocation.
 - 1.2.9 The Fellowship of Vocation normally meets monthly.

1.3 The purpose of the Fellowship of Vocation includes:

- 1.3.1 to provide care and nurture of those people, called enquirers, who show an interest in the ordained ministry;
- 1.3.2 to provide a community of prayer, discussion and reflection on the church and its ordained ministry;
- 1.3.3 to be a contact group between the enquirer and the wider Church, including the supervision of the enquirer's local church involvement;
- 1.3.4 to enable the enquirers to explore and test their sense of call or vocation;
- 1.3.5 to enable the Regional Council/Synod to assess each enquirer as an applicant for the ordained ministry;
- 1.3.6 to assess when the enquirer is ready to apply for admission into candidacy for the ordained ministry;
- 1.3.7 to guide applicants in the completion of the documents, which the Training for Ministry and Assembly Ministerial Committees require of them.
- 1.3.8 to make provision for Supervised Lay Training.

1.4 EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

- 1.4.1 The minimum entrance qualification for an enquirer is a Grade 12 Certificate or its equivalent.
 - 1.4.1.1 The Mature Age entrance qualification shall be determined by Assembly from time to time.
- 1.4.2 To ensure that the theological institution at which students study are appropriate to the needs of the UCCSA, the following five elements are regarded as essential to a balanced curriculum:
 - 1.4.2.1 the biblical foundation of the Christian Faith;

- 1.4.2.2 the Church; its mission, life, faith and witness, past and present;
- 1.4.2.3 Systematic Theology, including worship, preaching, communication, evangelism, Christian Education, and pastoral counselling;
- 1.4.2.4 Christian Ethics on contemporary culture; the forces, pressures and conflicts facing individuals and society in the modern world.
- 1.4.2.5 Furthermore appropriate courses in the history, theology and polity of Congregationalism are to be completed, as well as any other courses or programme which the Assembly or the Training for the Ministry Committee consider necessary from time to time.

1.5 REQUIREMENTS

Applicants for the ordained ministry in the UCCSA must meet the following requirements;

- 1.5.1 have been in a Regional Fellowship of Vocation for at least one year;
- 1.5.2 have the written support of the Fellowship of Vocation director;

1.6 PROCEDURES

- 1.6.1 When the application meets the above requirements the Fellowship of Vocation director forwards the application and supporting documents to The Ministerial Committee in whose Region the enquirer has been a member of the Fellowship of Vocation.
- 1.6.2 The required documentation consists of;
 - 1.6.2.1 an application form completed by the candidate;
 - 1.6.2.2 a medical certificate in respect of the applicant completed by a qualified medical practitioner;
 - 1.6.2.3 a confidential report from the minister of the local church of which the candidate is a member;
 - 1.6.2.4 letters of support from the home local church and from other local churches with which the candidates has been associated;
 - 1.6.2.5 all relevant academic transcripts.
- 1.6.3 The Regional Ministerial Committee interviews the applicant and his/her spouse or intended spouse.
- 1.6.4 Regional Council will submit the names of the successful applicants to the Synod by 1 March at the latest.
- 1.6.5 The Synods submit the names of successful applicants to the Training for Ministry Committee by 1 June at the latest.
- 1.6.6 Upon acceptance of the enquirer as an official student of the UCCSA ministry by the Assembly Ministerial Committee, the student shall proceed toward Theological and Ministerial training at a UCCSA-approved institution.

1.7 SELECTION

- 1.7.1 All applicants approved by Regional Councils are invited to a selection conference held annually by the Training for Ministry Committee of the Synod. Here they are interviewed as to their sense of call and their suitability for the ordained ministry in the UCCSA
- 1.7.2 The Training for Ministry Committee then submits to the Assembly Ministerial Committee its recommendations concerning the applicants it has interviewed. It may recommend that:
 - 1.7.2.1 a candidate be accepted as a ministerial student.

- 1.7.2.2 a candidate be given further opportunity to test his/her vocation through continued participation in a Fellowship of Vocation;
- 1.7.2.3 a candidate be not accepted.
- 1.7.3 The Assembly Ministerial Committee makes its decisions in respect of each applicant, and recommends accordingly to the Assembly or the Executive Committee.
- 1.7.4 Successful applicants are informed that they have been officially accepted and are to commence ministerial training as soon as this can be arranged.