



Continuing Education

POL-MAP-01

Statement

At the 1997 Assembly, the Uniting Church affirmed the importance of continuing education and asked all its ministry agents to enter into Continuing Education Learning Agreements to foster their faith and understanding.

As such, this policy provides the practice model framework for managing continuing education for ministry agents across the Queensland Synod. It is intended that the framework will support the selection of continuing education activities and courses to enhance and develop the right ministry skills at the right time for each ministry agent. The framework is aimed to use continuing education in a manner to support congregations and agencies through providing opportunities for their ministry agent to be skilled to deliver the desired outcomes for their community.

This framework supports the commitment to continuing education and the affirmation of the 1997 Assembly to ensure the fulfillment of Regulation 2.2.1(xi) where it lists “the enhancement of the Minister’s own gift for the work of ministry” and also 3.4(a) of the Code of Ethics where it states ministry agents have a responsibility to maintain high standards of knowledge and skills in all the areas of ministry relevant to their placement. Also, 3.4(b) requires ministry agents not to misrepresent their competence, training and experience.

In the Assembly’s document “*Seeking a Heart of Wisdom*” the following goals have been established to guide continuing education for ministry agents:

- Growing faith and spirituality that will sustain life in ministry;
- Conscious and critical commitment to ministry and mission;
- Knowledge and appreciation of the tradition of the church;
- Skills appropriate for particular ministry; and
- Critical imagination

To achieve these goals, a life-long commitment to continuing education by ministry agents is required. Within the Queensland Synod, the continuing education framework is designed to place rigor at the Presbytery level for determining and encouraging specific continuing education activities for ministry agents.

The continuing education framework of the Queensland Synod will focus on the following elements:

- Spiritual Growth;
- Biblical Studies;
- Theology and Church History;
- Skills for Practical Ministry; and
- Society and Culture

It is expected to achieve the commitment to the above elements; attention will be given to achieving:

- Developing an integrated and coherent approach to annual continuing education for ministry agents based on the goals in *Seeking a Heart of Wisdom* through the Queensland Synod’s specified elements;
- Developing a systematic approach to avoid duplication of effort where possible in the running of activities across congregations or presbyteries;
- Ensuring accountability for expenditure of the CEM allowance annually;
- Sending consistent messages that focus on continuing education leads to improved, common ministry practices; and
- Delivering a systematic method of evaluating the use of continuing education for ministry agents across the life of the Queensland Synod.



It is intended that the continuing education framework will be a 'virtuous cycle' as personal growth that enhances an individual's gifts of ministry leads to improved ministry capability which then encourages the ministry agent to seek out other further continuing education opportunities for greater personal growth of their gifts of ministry.

Scope

This framework for continuing education applies to all ministry agents engaged in ministry placement and other religious activities of the Uniting Church in Australia within the bounds of the Queensland Synod.

Ministry agents, who have elected only to be available for supply, will need to satisfy the Placements Committee of their current practice, gifts and skills to undertake the proposed supply arrangement.

Compliance is achieved through adherence to the Principles.

Principles

1. The presbytery minister, or other person appointed by the presbytery will be responsible in consultation with the ministry agent for the coordination and priority setting for continuing education across the presbytery and the development of Continuing Education Learning Agreements for each ministry agent.
2. Continuing Education is a core component of a placement and includes providing documentary evidence of undertaking a relevant ministry training activity; evidence of other training course/s or an ability to demonstrate that a range of readings and learning have been undertaken to keep current an individual's ministry practice.
3. Continuing education sought and undertaken will meet the **SMART** principle. That is: **S**pecific-**M**easurable - **A**chievable – **R**elevant – **T**imely (time framed).
 - **Specific** – What are the objectives that need to be achieved? Will the continuing education activity or course support the intended outcomes for the ministry agent and the congregation or agency?
 - **Measurable** – Does the continuing education activity or course have a means of monitoring the ministry agent's progress? Are there indicators of success for the presbytery minister to review?
 - **Achievable** – Is the proposed continuing education activity or course realistically achievable yet challenging enough for the ministry agent?
 - **Relevant** – Is the proposed continuing education activity or course meaningful, worthwhile and relevant to the priorities of the ministry agent's placement?
 - **Timely** – Will the proposed continuing education activity or course be able to be completed within a timeframe that will meet the objectives of the ministry agent's placement?
4. The presbytery minister, or other person appointed by the presbytery will approve the attendance of a ministry agent at a continuing education activity or course in consultation with the relevant congregation or agency as necessary.
5. The proposed continuing education comes from an identified need by the ministry agent and/or a need identified from a conversation with the presbytery minister that will specifically enhance the ministry agent's skills in their role within the congregation or agency.
6. The agreed continuing education for the ministry agent must be documented on the Continuing Education Learning Agreement and signed by the designated parties.



7. The continuing education activity or course will enhance the ministry agent's skills to be able to perform certain functions; or is necessary to meet a requirement for the development of practical ministry skills for their placement.
8. All ministry agents are required to undertake annual continuing education activities, courses and/or readings.
9. Record keeping is the responsibility of the Pastoral Relations Committee or other group to whom they delegate this responsibility.
10. Academic study undertaken through tertiary institutions will be accredited through normal awards e.g. diplomas or degrees and copies of these and transcripts must be submitted annually for validation of the commitment to continuing education.
11. Other study where certificates and written statements of completion are provided, such documentation must be submitted annually for validation of the commitment to continuing education.
12. All ministry agents are required to provide information about the continuing education that they have undertaken annually through the completion and submission of the Continuing Education Learning Agreement (TOO-MAP-01).
13. The annual learning agreement should include activities of at least 10 continuing education points or other agreed amount by using a selection of activities from below or those negotiated and approved by the presbytery.

Points allocated to activities are detailed as follows:

Group A Activities (8 points)

- Recognised post degree course - masters, doctorate, graduate diploma etc- with a work load requirement of approximately 10 hours of work per week; or
- Immersion field experience in a Uniting Church in Australia partner country with Uniting World for more than 14 days; or
- A guided field trip to Biblical places or Holy Land for a minimum of 14 days.

Group B Activities (5 points)

- Week long School of Ministry or Theology conference with recognised/ quality teaching professors; or
- Assembly attendance as a delegate.

Group C Activities (3-4 points)

- 4 points - Membership and participation in Assembly or Synod official committee like BCF for a 3 year appointment; or
- 3 points – Undertaking a College short course of 15-20 contact hours; or
- 3 points – Presbytery Retreat with guidance and teaching of a minimum of 3 days attendance; or
- 3 points – Undertaking any other theological college short course of 15-20 contact hours; or
- 3 points – Completion of a DVD or online course prescribed as 15-20 hours required from a reputable university or seminary; or
- 3 points - Theological or Ministry related conference requiring 3 days or a full weekend; or
- 3 points - Publication of ministry or theological paper over 1000 words in reputable relevant journal.



Group D Activities (2 points)

- Preparing and leading or presenting at a conference for an hour session of teaching peers; or
- Guided book or journal reading program (2000 words minimum) with a TCQ lecturer or other college lecturer conversation or email correspondence; or
- Attendance at 6-8 sessions series of theological or ministry related seminars in evenings (e.g. Indooroopilly programs); or
- Production of worship or teaching resources - print or audio-visual. (points variable if major resource program or book).

Group E Activities (1 point)

- Attendance as a full one day (5-6 hours minimum) seminar; or
- Full attendance at Child Safe Church training; (half point for half-day programs); or
- Leading a biblical or theological DVD resource program of a minimum 3 sessions in own Church or placement.

- 14 The presbytery minister of the ministry agent is to oversee the program choice and is to sign off on the ministry agents' completion of at least 10 points of activities per annum unless otherwise negotiated with their presbytery.
- 15 The continuing education allowance will be paid automatically annually subject to the ministry agent providing satisfactory evidence to the presbytery minister, or other nominated person that their annual Continuing Education Learning Agreement has been fulfilled.
- 16 If the continuing education for a ministry agent has not been sufficient to proceed with the continuing education allowance payment for the following year, the presbytery will provide notification to payroll services after consultation with the ministry agent.
- 17 To support continuing education, up to 14 days per annum will be approved by the presbytery for agreed continuing education activities.
- 18 Where a ministry agent is aggrieved by an action not to accept the completion of the activities of their Continuing Education Learning Agreement, the ministry agent may request in writing a review of the decision to the Associate General Secretary. The Associate General Secretary must consult as appropriate (including the Moderator) to make a determination. This decision is then deemed to be final within the Queensland Synod.

Term	Meaning
Queensland Synod	Means the work and activities of the Uniting Church in Australia within the bounds of the Queensland Synod office, Trinity College Queensland, all congregations, agencies and presbyteries.
Presbytery minister	Means the minister responsible for ministry agents in all placements within the geographical boundaries of the presbytery or other their delegate.
Ministry agent	Means all ministers of the word, deacons, pastors, chaplains, educators, youth workers
CEM	Means continuing education for ministers
Group Activities	Means the defined acceptable activities which may in full or in part contribute to the annual 10 continuing education points required by ministry agents
Framework	Means the operational requirements of fulfilling the regulations for the provision of Continuing Education for Ministers



References & Related Documents

- POL-0001 Privacy
- The Uniting Church in Australia Regulations 2012
- The Uniting Church in Australia Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice 2009
- The Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod, Code of Conduct *Seeking a Heart of Wisdom* – approved by the UCA Assembly Standing Committee Dec 2011
- TOO-MAP-01 Continuing Education Learning Agreement Form

Revisions & Reviews

#	Date	Reason	Author / Reviewer	Approved
1.0	08.10.15	New framework to compliment " <i>Seeking a Heart of Wisdom</i> ".	I Waters (People & Projects); Rev. Dr E. Nolan; and Rev. L Hanson	Resolution 15.62 of BCF 8.10.15
DUE	01.08.18	Review cycle – every 3 years unless requirements are modified by the Assembly	Presbytery Ministers with Manager People and Projects	