



MINISTRY ACCREDITATION FAQ SHEET

1. WHO MAY APPLY FOR MINISTRY ACCREDITATION?

Ministry Accreditation is available for all current full or part-time Ministers/Chaplains who are working with, or nominated by a Churches of Christ church or affiliated agency.

COCWA recommends that persons who have a lay ministry position, or who are acting in a voluntary capacity in a Churches of Christ church or affiliated agency be provided with a letter of commendation/ recognition from their Churches of Christ church or affiliated agency.

2. WHY MINISTRY ACCREDITATION?

It is an initiative to help create public confidence in the character, calling and competence of Ministers/Chaplains. Accreditation is a means by which the Association can serve Elders/Boards in the appointment, accountability and support of Ministry/Chaplaincy staff.

3. WHERE CAN I GET AN APPLICATION FORM?

All nominations for Ministry Accreditation are submitted to COCWA using the Ministry Accreditation Application pack available from the COCWA Office or the COCWA website.

4. WHAT DO I REQUIRE FOR MINISTRY ACCREDITATION?

1. A completed Ministry Accreditation Application signed by the Churches of Christ church or affiliated agency's Senior Leader to whom the Minister/Chaplain is accountable.
2. A current passport-type photograph or equivalent JPEG file.
3. A current National Police Certificate.
4. Signed indication that the Applicant has read, understood and accepted the COCWA documents Professional and Ethical Standards of Ministry and the related Procedure for Investigating Complaints of Serious Misconduct as the basis for any ethics violation procedures that may be required.
5. Signed acknowledgment of commitment to Ongoing Personal Growth.

5. WHICH SENIOR LEADER WILL NOMINATE ME?

For a Churches of Christ church or affiliated agency with a single Minister undertaking the leadership role, then the Senior Leader would be the Chairperson of the church Board/Leadership Team to whom that Minister is accountable. Where a church has multiple ministry staff, the Senior Leader would be the Chairperson of the Church Eldership/Leadership Team to whom that Minister is accountable. All other ministry staff would be nominated by the Senior Minister of the church to whom they are all accountable.

Ministers working with affiliated agencies, Chaplains of partner organisations, Ministers in transition and retired Ministers would be nominated for their accreditation by their home Churches of Christ church or affiliated agency.

6. WHO WILL PROCESS MY APPLICATION

Completed Ministry Accreditation Applications will be processed by the COCWA Church and Ministry Support Team.

7. WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR ACCREDITATION?

1. Accreditation applications are to be submitted to COCWA using the Ministry Accreditation Application pack.
2. The applying Minister/Chaplain is required to fill in Part 1 of the Ministry Accreditation Application and provide their security clearance (National Police Certificate), together with a digital image (JPEG) or photograph.
3. The Applicant will be contacted for an initial meeting with the COCWA Church and Ministry Support Team.
4. In cases where Applicants do not fully meet COCWA Ministry Accreditation requirements, the COCWA Church and Ministry Support Team will assist the Applicant through the process of attaining all requirements.
5. Successful Applicants will be notified and supplied with a Ministry Accreditation Card.

8. HOW IS ACCREDITATION RENEWED?

Ministry Accreditation will be granted for three years.

Every third year a new Ministry Accreditation Card will be issued following renewal by the Minister/Chaplain. The renewal process will require the sighting of a new or current (within 6 months) National Police Certificate.

The renewal process will include a review of recognised Ongoing Personal Growth (OPG) activities. Ministers/Chaplains will be required to provide evidence of these activities.

9. WHEN WOULD MY ACCREDITATION NO LONGER BE VALID?

Accreditation will become invalid when:

- The Minister/Chaplain ceases to be a Minister/Chaplain of a church or affiliated agency within Churches of Christ in WA.
- The Minister/Chaplain is suspended on grounds of an ethics violation and/or the Minister/Chaplain is deemed to have brought Churches of Christ into disrepute. Any withdrawal of Ministry Accreditation will take place under the process outlined in the two COCWA documents Professional and Ethical Standards of Ministry and the related Procedure for Investigating Complaints of Serious Misconduct.

10. IS THERE AN APPEALS PROCESS?

If an Applicant is refused Accreditation for any reason, the person shall be notified of the decision and the reasons for it.

11. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MY PRESENT MINISTRY FINISHES?

1. If a Minister/Chaplain transfers between a Churches of Christ church or affiliated agency, accreditation remains current until the expiry date on the Ministry Accreditation Card. Renewal of Accreditation is submitted through the new church or agency.
2. When a Minister/Chaplain has completed ministry at a Churches of Christ church/affiliated agency and does not immediately continue in another ministry, there is a grace period of six months. This is to allow for re-entry into active ministry, provided he/she remains in fellowship with a Churches of Christ church in WA.
3. If the Minister/Chaplain is not in attendance at a Churches of Christ church, then Accreditation will be reviewed by COCWA Church and Ministry Support Team at the end of the grace period. COCWA Church and Ministry Support Team may provide ongoing Accreditation but on an annual renewal basis only.

4. If there is a desire to return into Churches of Christ ministry, then Accreditation will be reviewed by the COCWA Church and Ministry Support Team at the end of the grace period. If appropriate, the COCWA Church and Ministry Support Team may provide Accreditation but on an annual renewal basis only.
5. If there is not a desire to return into Churches of Christ ministry or the Minister has transferred to another denomination, then Accreditation will be withdrawn.

12. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I RETIRE?

Where a Minister/Chaplain has passed retirement age and is no longer seeking paid ministry activities but is still active in ministry, then they may continue to maintain Accreditation.

13. ACCREDITED MINISTERS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

An Accredited Minister transferring into a Churches of Christ church or affiliated agency from another recognised denomination's church or agency must be nominated, and would normally qualify, providing that the security clearance is acceptable, COCWA's *Ministry Ethics – Commitment to Compliance* form has been signed and that the person attends an On Mission Connect retreat.

14. WHAT DOES AN OPG COMMITMENT MEAN FOR ME?

The purpose of OPG (Ongoing Personal Growth) is to assist people in ministry roles to remain healthy and vital in ministry. It is assumed that all churches and agencies will assist ministry staff by encouraging participation in retreats, conferences, mentoring, coaching, ongoing study and the like. By attaching this requirement to Ministry Accreditation, COCWA desires to underscore the importance of ministry staff engaging in ongoing learning and in maintaining a vital personal walk with Christ.

The undertaking of OPG is measured over a three year period. OPG opportunities may include:

For Spiritual Formation:

- Attending COCWA Ministers gatherings.
- Being mentored by an appropriate person.
- Involvement in a Life or Accountability Group.
- Maintaining a personal reading log.

For Community Formation:

- Conducting workshops or seminars for Churches of Christ Ministers or churches.
- Writing, publishing and sharing resources with other Ministers or churches.
- Serving in a Churches of Christ team or agency.
- Being a mentor to another Churches of Christ Minister.
- Safe Training.

For Academic Formation

- Attending academic lectures, short courses or special programs.
- Attending practical workshops or seminars related to ministry and/or chaplaincy.
- Undertaking advanced levels of study.

Please Note: Retired Ministers/Chaplains - OPG requirements are not mandatory for Retired Ministers/ Chaplains, however we do encourage Retired Ministers/Chaplains to maintain a lifelong commitment to learning and growth.