

Guide to Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry Leadership for Candidates, Educational Supervisors, and Lay Supervision Teams

This document serves as a guide to the [Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry Leadership](#), primarily for the use of candidates in developing their draft learning goals for field education/field placements and for Supervised Ministry Education (SME) appointments. This document also serves as a guide to mentors, field education supervisors, Educational Supervisors for SMEs, and Lay Supervision Teams.

The additional points noted under each competency (next pages) are examples of learning activities that may guide applicants and candidates in developing and demonstrating each competency. These examples can also guide Educational Supervisors and Lay Supervision Teams in helping candidates to develop their learning goals, and to assess candidates in progress on their learning goals.

A note to applicants and candidates

In creating learning goals to help learn and deepen your knowledge and skills, as well as continue to shape your identity in ministry, you may wish to use “SMART” goals as a framework. SMART goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-limited.

How the Competencies Are Organized

Knowledge, skills, and identity form the basis of each of the following competencies. Quotations from A Song of Faith are interspersed with the competencies.

The competencies for practice of ministry are organized in four main ways:

1. Engage in Spiritual Practices and Development of Identity in Ministry
2. Integrate, Articulate, and Facilitate Learning of Christian Faith
3. Expand Cultural and Contextual Knowledge and Analysis
4. Demonstrate Leadership Skills for Community Life

1. Engage in Spiritual Practices and Development of Identity in Ministry

General Competency

In and with God,
we can direct our lives toward right relationship
with each other and with God.
We can discover our place as one strand in the web of life.
We can grow in wisdom and compassion.
We can recognize all people as kin.
We can accept our mortality and finitude, not as a curse,
but as a challenge to make our lives and choices matter.



In community, we are formed as disciples of Christ. Candidates of The United Church of Canada will demonstrate a deep understanding of their identity in relationship to systemic power, privilege, and oppression as a person and as a minister. The candidate will articulate a strong sense of call to ministry and an awareness of power and vulnerability. The candidate will identify spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental practices that sustain well-being and will integrate these into their ongoing vocational formation. The candidate will have a strong and active spiritual life.

Competencies

A. Demonstrates evidence of personal and spiritual growth and healthy self-awareness¹

- commits to spiritual direction, mentoring, and/or other means of on-going development of spiritual life
- possesses support systems, habits, and practices for maintaining mental, emotional, and physical health and well-being
- relates positively to colleagues, friends, and community
- articulates their own privilege, power, and vulnerability as a person and as a minister
- exercises appropriate care of self and accountability to others, and has an awareness of sources of support available when needed²
- demonstrates humility in appropriate ways
- demonstrates openness to ongoing learning about oneself, including in the area of emotional intelligence

B. Demonstrates a clear understanding of call to ministry and sense of identity in ministry

We are each given particular gifts of the Spirit.
For the sake of the world,
God calls all followers of Jesus to Christian ministry.
In the church,
some are called to specific ministries of leadership,

¹ [Competencies for Ordination to the Priesthood](#), The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, 2013, 10.

² Ibid.

both lay and ordered;
some witness to the good news;
some uphold the art of worship;
some comfort the grieving and guide the wandering;
some build up the community of wisdom;
some stand with the oppressed and work for justice.
To embody God's love in the world,
the work of the church requires the ministry and discipleship
of all believers.



- describes their sense of call to ministry, connected to biblical and theological reflection within the traditions of Christianity and within the particular history and theologies of The United Church of Canada
- identifies and honours the various ways in which lay people live out their ministry and discipleship in the world
- articulates knowledge, realistic expectations, and willingness to accept the rigours of ministry
- identifies peers in ministry who are resources and supports for ministry questions and issues
- understands and demonstrates appropriate ethical behaviour in ministry, according to United Church of Canada [*Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel*](#)

2. Integrate, Articulate, and Facilitate Learning of Christian Faith

General Competency

God is Holy Mystery,
beyond complete knowledge,
above perfect description.

The candidate of The United Church of Canada will be able to articulate the faith traditions of the United Church, the wider ecumenical community, and historic Christian traditions; and show evidence of integrating and embodying Christian belief in their work, personal life, and relationships.

Competencies

A. Interprets the Bible and makes it accessible to the community

- continues to read the Bible as a source of personal devotion for the shaping of personal life and public ministry
- exegetes (interprets) texts from the Bible using appropriate theological, historical, critical, and literary tools
- demonstrates awareness of how the Bible is interpreted through the lenses of gender, race, socio-economic, historical, and cultural perspectives.

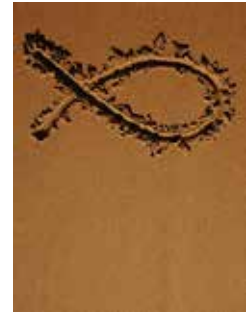
- develops a practice of study and reflection, and a working knowledge of how to interpret and use scripture in a range of different contexts
- interprets the Bible in a way that makes it accessible to the community
- commits to helping the community of faith understand and appropriately use scripture to guide and form their internal life and witness to the world
- uses scripture as a resource for speaking truthfully and prophetically to and about systems of oppression

B. Knows, teaches, and embodies the theologies and traditions of the historic church and the particular theology of United Church

Our ancestors in faith

bequeath to us experiences of their faithful living;
upon their lives our lives are built.

Our living of the gospel makes us a part of this communion of saints,
experiencing the fulfillment of God's reign
even as we actively anticipate a new heaven and a new earth.



- understands the historical development of the Christian tradition
- demonstrates a basic understanding of the historic documents and debates of the Christian faith
- articulates the core doctrines of the Christian Church and the faith traditions of The United Church of Canada
- knows and appreciates the theological traditions of the United Church's ecumenical partners
- knows and teaches the significance of historic documents, policy statements, and actions of The United Church of Canada, including the four subordinate faith statements
- draws on Christian doctrine and faith statements in speaking to contemporary issues and contexts
- understands the importance and implication of global and Canadian mission history, particularly the effects of colonialism
- demonstrates familiarity with the writings of a variety of major theologians, including non-European thinkers
- appreciates the diversity of Christian tradition historically, ecumenically, locally, and globally
- understands emerging expressions of the Christian faith
- develops and participates in personal, individual, and community faith formation across all generations
- teaches the Christian faith in a variety of settings and with varied pedagogies
- leads others in reflecting on and living out the theology, mission, vision, and purpose of The United Church of Canada

C. Demonstrates knowledge of the unique history and place of the Indigenous church within the United Church and is committed to working toward reconciliation

- Demonstrates awareness of and engages the [Calls to the Church](#) and the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)
- Demonstrates commitment to seeking right relationship with Indigenous communities and churches



D. Shows respect for, and appreciation of, the traditions, beliefs, and practices of the ecumenical Christian community and the major global religious traditions

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- demonstrates respectful knowledge of the essential tenets of the major faith traditions of the world
- recognizes the interconnections of all major faith traditions
- understands the significance of the relationship between the Christian faith and its Jewish origins and the subsequent influence of Islam in the development of Christian thought
- encourages the community of faith in the study of other faith traditions
- encourages and supports opportunities for dialogue, friendship, and cooperation with the major faith traditions
- demonstrates knowledge of the various United Church documents that describe our relationship with global faith traditions, including the concept of “whole world ecumenism”

3. Cultural and Contextual Knowledge and Analyses

General Competency

We sing of a church

seeking to continue the story of Jesus
by embodying Christ’s presence in the world.

We are called together by Christ

as a community of broken but hopeful believers,
loving what he loved,
living what he taught,
striving to be faithful servants of God
in our time and place.



The candidate will be able to read, understand, and relate to the cultural and systemic realities of the United Church in its diverse environments. This includes social and theological awareness and willingness to listen with and for all types of diversity. It includes an ability to inspire authenticity and faithfulness of believers within community.

Competencies

A. Uses contextual analysis to guide participation in God's work and love in the world

- analyzes, listens to, and understands their faith community
- discerns and articulates the vision and mission of a community of faith, including social and theological analysis
- encourages and teaches theological beliefs that study and address systems of injustice and exclusion, including (but not limited to) sexism, racism, ableism, classism, heterosexism, and transphobia
- draws on the [Calls to the Church](#) and the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) as frameworks and guides for reconciliation and building right relationships

B. Engages the community with a biblical vision to recognize and respond to needs beyond their own.

- includes and joins with communities to develop social ministry, including outreach, social justice, and advocacy
- facilitates pursuit of eco-sustainable ways of living a life of faith both individually and collectively
- teaches and guides ways for reconciliation with Indigenous communities and peoples
- participates in ecumenical and interfaith activities for their own spiritual development and the flourishing of the community

C. Exercises creativity, imagination, and good judgment to enable groups and communities to adapt in the face of changing contexts and demands.

- is aware of the challenge and promise of living as a Christian in a pluralistic and secular society
- considers the place of Christian faith in ever-changing contexts and its implications for building relationships with those of other faiths and for sensitive and effective proclamation of the gospel
- demonstrates a capacity to understand how the ministry of a congregation is shaped by the community it serves³

4. Leadership within the Faith Community and Wider Community

General Competency

³ [Competencies for Ordination to the Priesthood](#), The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, 2013, 14.

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The candidate will demonstrate vocational identity, practise effective ministry, and provide responsible leadership in both ecclesial and secular contexts.

Competencies

A. Models effective leadership

- demonstrates an understanding of effective communication
- guides the community in ethical decision-making
- manages conflict appropriately
- works with others as a servant leader
- distinguishes between adaptive and technical problem-solving
- carries out administrative duties
- demonstrates commitment to anti-racism and the intercultural church
- examines and articulates their call to paid, accountable ministry in The United Church of Canada

B. Fosters the community's spiritual life

- bears witness to their own faith
- discerns and encourages the leadership gifts of the community
- facilitates pastoral care
- encourages discernment in the community of the leading of God, Jesus Christ, and the Spirit toward transformation

C. Leads worship designed for meaningful engagement

We sing of God's good news lived out,
a church with purpose:
faith nurtured and hearts comforted,
gifts shared for the good of all,
resistance to the forces that exploit and marginalize,
fierce love in the face of violence,
human dignity defended,
members of a community held and inspired by God,
corrected and comforted,
instrument of the loving Spirit of Christ,
creation's mending.

- offers meaningful liturgical leadership within the broad traditions of The United Church of Canada
- supports and empowers others to create and lead in liturgy
- demonstrates an understanding of the connections in liturgy with Christian education, pastoral care, administration, and social ministry
- demonstrates an appreciation for ritual in relation to life experiences and spiritual, contextual, and cultural needs
- prepares and delivers sermons appropriate to a variety of contexts
- demonstrates an understanding of the theology of sacraments and is able to offer appropriate leadership in the sacramental ministry of the church