

OUTLINE OF A MINISTERIAL FILE

An authorized minister's standing and fitness are evidenced through the **Ministerial File**, a continually-collected record of the United Church of Christ that documents an authorized minister's covenant with the denomination, its Local Churches, Associations and Conferences.¹ The contents of a well-kept Ministerial File should include:

1. Record of Local Church membership and Association standing, such as letters of church membership and transfer of standing documentation.
2. Documentation of ordination or other standing²; minutes from any Ecclesiastical Council.
3. Copy of current three- or four-way covenant and (for local church pastorates) copy of call agreement; OR copy of documentation of Leave of Absence or Exempt Standing; OR documentation that minister is transferring standing between Associations without a call, either because they are seeking a call or available for occasional service.
4. Documentation of boundary awareness training, continuing education, anti-racism training, or any other requirement for maintaining standing.
5. Copy of ecclesiastical endorsement, if applicable. Ecclesiastical endorsement is transferrable between Associations; however, the Authorized Minister and Association should consult with the Denominational Endorser to review necessary forms.
6. Documentation of changes in ecumenical standing (e.g. Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with the Disciples of Christ or United Church of Canada, authorization with the Fellowship of Affirming Ministries, Dual Standing in another denomination) and any conditions thereof.
7. Evidence of the four forms of oversight in covenantal cooperation with an Association: annual Information Review Forms, Periodic Support Consultation reports, Situational Support Consultation reports (if any), Fitness Review reports (if any).
8. Most recent validated ministerial profile; on rare occasions when an authorized minister receives a call without a ministerial profile, then the individual's most recent criminal background check should be included in the Ministerial File.

¹ During a Transfer of Standing, the Ministerial File is copied by the Association of an Authorized Minister's current standing and the copy is conveyed in total to the Receiving Association.

² Those holding Lay Ministerial Standing may not transfer their standing between Associations; nevertheless, the authorizing Association still creates and maintains a Ministerial File and reports the Lay Ministerial Standing and fitness to the UCC Data Hub. Commissioned Ministers may transfer their Commission, provided they are still serving in the same specialized ministry. (New Commissions are not anticipated after 2018.)

9. Addenda to the Ministerial File include:
 - Pre-authorization documentation for *Member in Discernment* and *Privilege of Call* discernment processes such as psychological assessment reports, original authorization in another denomination, letter of reference from local UCC congregation, documentation related to educational formation, ordination paper, Committee on Ministry minutes, third party references, etc.
 - Documentation of a Fitness Review procedure: timeline of events, Committee on Ministry minutes, Response Team report, interviews, outcomes (including program of growth, if any), Committee on Ministry annual report to the Association of ecclesial action related to the completed Fitness Review, etc.

Files should be established by Associations/Conferences for all ministers holding standing (Ordained, Lay Ministerial Standing, Commissioned, Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing, Dual Standing) and for all those seeking standing (Members in Discernment, Privilege of Call). Files for those whose standing has been resigned or terminated should be stored in perpetuity.

Files are to be maintained in a secure environment. Conference Staff and members of Committees on Ministry where ministerial standing is currently held may view the contents of a Ministerial File.

When the Transfer of Standing process is initiated between Associations/Conferences, the Conference Staff and Committee on Ministry where standing is being sought may view the contents of the Ministerial File as it is received in full from the originating Association/Conference. Additionally, whenever a person seeks ministerial standing, if that individual has ever sought or held standing in another Association/Conference (e.g. Member in Discernment, Privilege of Call candidate, Lay Ministerial Standing, Dual Standing, previously Licensed Minister, previously Commissioned Minister, Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing), the Conference Staff and Committee on Ministry where standing is being sought may view the individual's Ministerial File from another Association/Conference.

Ministers may view their own files under supervision of a member of Conference Staff or by the chairperson of the Committee on Ministry. No documents shall be removed, copied or altered by the minister.

The United Church of Christ Office of General Counsel and the Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization Ministry Team may also request to view a Ministerial File.