



Special Dispensation Program

Revised March 2023



Special Dispensation Packet

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Policies Related to Special Dispensation

- Special Dispensation Policy
- Minister Employment Assessment Policy & Procedures
- Ministry Employment Readiness Policy & Procedures
- Code of Ethics for Unity Leaders
- Sexual Conduct Policy
- Currently in the Approval Process:
 - Policy Regarding Use of Title Reverend for non-Unity ordained leaders*

Forms to Complete and Return

- Special Dispensation Application
- Background Screening Release Consent & Payment Receipt
- Psychological Evaluation Memo of Understanding, Demographic Info, Payment Receipt
- COE & SCP Acknowledgement & Signature form
- Release of Information Authorization
- UWM, Ministry & Spiritual Leader Agreement
- Special Dispensation 6-Month Renewal fillable

If you are a non-Unity-ordained leader and are seeking employment or have already been hired by a Unity congregation-based ministry, the Special Dispensation program is your path to employment and Unity ordination. Special Dispensation applies to both the non-Unity-ordained leader and the ministry seeking to hire a non-Unity-ordained leader.

Special Dispensation Process

UWM requires affiliated congregation-based ministries to be under the leadership of an ordained Unity minister. This ensures that the ministry is served by a trained professional who is grounded in the Unity teachings and ministry best business practices. Sometimes a ministry is not in a position to hire a Unity minister. UWM's Special Dispensation process supports ministries in hiring someone who is not a Unity ordained minister while they prepare for a Unity ordination path. The steps for approval of Special Dispensation for both the applicant and ministry are outlined in this document.

Approval of Special Dispensation is the first step in a journey and ***does not mean*** that the individual has been admitted to a Unity ministerial path. Application to a ministry path is a separate process and requires that the individual complete all the prerequisite courses for admissions.

It is expected by UWM and agreed upon by the applicant, ministry board, and UWM that the individual serving under Special Dispensation will take the courses, and then apply to the ministerial path of their choice. Special Dispensation must be renewed each May and November until the individual is ordained as a Unity minister.

(PLEASE NOTE: All requested applications and documents from the ministry board and applicant must be submitted electronically only.)

Applicant Instructions to Complete the Special Dispensation Packet

Your application to the Special Dispensation program can be processed anytime throughout the year. Please read these instructions in their entirety before starting the process then submit all the requested documents listed below in one email with your separate documents attached, to jburns@unity.org or specdisp@unity.org **DO NOT** send one pdf scan with multiple documents. (Documents must be separate for UWM filing purposes.)

Application Process for all Special Dispensation Applicants

Actions of the Ministry:

(Please send all of the following to the Special Dispensation assistant at specdisp@unity.org)

- Once the ministry decides they are ready to begin the hiring process, the board president makes a request to the UWM Member Support Coordinator to have a discussion to confirm the ministry is in alignment with the current Ministry Employment Assessment Policy & Procedures, Ministry Employment Readiness Policy and Procedures, and the Code of Ethics for Unity Leaders which applies to all credentialed and non-credentialed leaders serving in a capacity of a spiritual leader, board members, and member ministries.
- During the search process the board president makes a request to UWM to receive the resumes from those individuals interested in the Special Dispensation Program.
- Once the ministry board decides to hire someone needing to participate in Special Dispensation, the board is to send a copy of their board minutes reflecting that decision.
- In addition, the ministry board will send a letter to the UWM Member Support Coordinator requesting approval to hire a non-Unity-ordained individual and why they desire to hire this specific individual.
- Please include a copy of your IRS SS-4 letter (notification of Employer Identification Number) with your letter.
- Also, a copy of the ministry's current bylaws must be submitted at this time.

Actions of the Special Dispensation Applicant and Documentation Required:

(Please send all of the following documents to the Special Dispensation assistant at specdisp@unity.org)

- Complete SD Application
- Send a copy of your resume and any previous transcripts
- Proof of Ordination (if non-Unity ordained)
- Sign the Acknowledgement & Signature form for the Code of Ethics for Unity Leaders and Sexual Conduct Policy
- Sign the release authorizing UWM to obtain confirmation of ordination and good standing in that organization.
- Pay the current fee for background screening and psychological assessment. Send a copy of the paid receipt as proof of payment. (The psychological evaluation fee is not required until the ministry has decided to hire.) These fees may be covered by the ministry. (See below)

The UWM Application Review Process:

- The Special Dispensation Assistant will review and process the incoming applicants' documentation.
- UWM will initialize background screening. (See below)
- The Member Support Coordinator will contact the ordaining organization.
- The Credentialing Administrative Assistant will connect the applicant with a UWM-approved psychologist to conduct the psychological assessment. The psychologist will notify UWM if there are any concerns about the individual. (See below)

- The Member Support Coordinator will review all the information; if the applicant is approved an agreement will be created to be signed by UWM, the ministry board president, and the applicant receiving the job title of Spiritual Leader or Ministry Coordinator.
- The Special Dispensation Assistant will connect the newly approved SD applicant with a mentor and mentoring group.
- The Special Dispensation Assistant will connect the applicant with standard Unity denominational information, Unity Worldwide Spiritual Institute (UWSI), additional UWM support services, class information, newsletters, regional support, etc.
- The Special Dispensation Assistant will receive CSL transcripts from the applicant showing the completion of courses. This will also be reviewed by the Credentialing Administrative Assistant if necessary.
- The Member Support Coordinator will review each of the 6-Month Renewal Request Report documents, making comments and suggestions for the applicant and ministry and sign to approve another 6 months of Special Dispensation if approved. A signed copy will be sent to the applicant and their mentor.
 - If there is a concern or non-compliance, the Member Support Coordinator will reach out to the applicant, the board president, and the applicant's mentor to request action to resolve the issue.
 - If the issue is not resolved, the applicant will be removed from the program due to the inability to fulfill requirements.
- Staff will receive final UWSI transcripts showing completion of required prerequisite courses.
- Staff will work in conjunction with the UWM Credentialing Coordinator to approve the applicant for ordination.

Working with your Mentor

- The applicant will be interviewed by the Member Support Coordinator and assigned a mentor. One mentor will be assigned for the initial Special Dispensation Program and a different mentor will be assigned for the ministerial program portion of your program. This is done intentionally for you to build a support system and learn from a variety of ministers. The mentor is a volunteer at UWM, no financial compensation is required to be paid to your mentor.
- Monthly meetings with your mentor are **required**.
- A 6-Month Renewal Request Report document must be filled out by the applicant and the ministry board and is required each **May 1 and November 1** until the individual is ordained as a Unity minister.
- Demonstrated progress in the required classes for each applicant must be listed in the 6-Month Renewal Request Report document.
- Each applicant is responsible for turning in the 6-Month Renewal Request by the due dates of **May 1st and/or November 1st**.
- A signed copy of the 6-Month Renewal Request Report will be sent to the mentor.
- Class completion transcripts are required to move into the ministerial path.

Removal from the Special Dispensation Program:

- The applicant will be removed from the program due to the inability to fulfill requirements, including but not limited to completion of class prerequisites and working with their mentor.

Regarding the Background Screening Process:

After your application is processed, and proof of payment is received, UWM will request a background screening to be submitted and you will receive an email from Enterprise First Advantage with a link to securely upload your personal information for the background screening. You will also receive an email with the contact information of a psychologist in your state who will perform your psychological evaluation. Information regarding these two requirements is included in this packet.

Send the signed documents called Criminal Background Screening Authorization - Dec 2022 and Psych Eval forms 3 pages - Dec 2022 and copies of your receipts from your background screening fee payment and your psychological evaluation fee payments to the Credentialing Administrative Assistant at dboehm@unity.org. This will verify that this step is underway.

Regarding the Psychological Evaluation Process:

- The candidate will be removed from the program due to the inability to fulfill requirements.

Prerequisite Classes

The prerequisite courses are listed below. Please see the list of prerequisite courses that apply to your Unity or non-Unity credentials.

Prerequisite Classes

Foundations of Unity
Metaphysics 1
Metaphysics 2
Metaphysics 3
Metaphysics 4
The Twelve Powers
Prosperity
Jesus Teachings
The Christ
Healing and Wholeness
History of New Thought and Unity

Unity prayer
 Meditation Practices
 Self-Awareness
 Overview: Hebrew Scriptures
 Overview: Christian Scriptures
 Bible interpretation: Hebrew Scriptures
 Bible interpretation: Acts to Revelation

The following Spiritual Education & Enrichment (SEE) Courses are NOT required for application to the ministry path but are highly recommended.

SPD 112 - Conversation Skills
 SPD 115 - Self-Care
 SPD 111 - I of the Storm
 SPD 120 - Discerning Your Purpose

<https://www.unityworldwideministries.org/uwsi/ministerial-studies>

<https://www.unityworldwideministries.org/uwsi/course-schedules>

Additional training is NOT required for application to the ministry path but are highly recommended.

Accounting
 Emotional Intelligence
 Interpersonal Skills
 Mediation Skills (Lombard Mennonite Peace Institute)
 Non-Violent Communication

Entrance into a Ministry Path

Approval for the Special Dispensation program ***does not mean*** that an individual has entered a Unity ministerial path. It is a temporary designation until the individual is ordained as a Unity minister. Once the applicant has completed all the prerequisites for a ministerial path, they must apply to enter a ministerial program.

<https://www.unityworldwideministries.org/become-minister>

The applicant will not need to repeat the psychological assessment and their ministerial program application fees will be reduced accordingly.

Ministerial Program Prerequisites

The minimum requirement to apply to the ministerial path is a high school diploma. Please visit the UWM website to learn more about ministerial programs and the application process.

<https://www.unityworldwideministries.org/become-minister>

The applicant will not need to repeat the psychological assessment and their ministerial program application fees will be reduced accordingly.

Eligibility for Application to the Ministry Path

The Field Ministerial Program Team will consider candidates meeting the following criteria:

- Individuals who have completed the 18 Spiritual Education and Enrichment courses or obtained equivalents for these courses.
- Have a high school diploma.
- Be employed in a leadership position in a Unity ministry for a minimum of one year.
- Currently serve as one of the following:
 - a. The spiritual leader of a recognized Unity ministry (pulpit or alternative).
 - b. An assistant to the senior minister of a recognized Unity ministry.
 - c. Performing the function of minister within a recognized Unity ministry whose work represents an established major program such as youth and family ministry.
 - d. An approved spiritual leader of a recognized Unity ministry that has been approved for revitalization.
 - e. An ordained minister of a recognized denomination serving as the senior minister of an independent church seeking affiliation.
 - f. An employee in a significant leadership role of a Unity organization.
- Work at least 20 hours per week in the ministry.
- Complete the application following approved guidelines.
- Demonstrate competent computer/internet capability and skills.

Unity Field Ministerial Program

Unity's Field Ministerial Path is designed for those already serving in spiritual leadership.

Eligibility for the Field Ministry Program requires that an individual is serving in spiritual leadership in one of the following ways:

- serving under Special Dispensation in a Unity ministry
- as an associate in a UWM-approved ministry under the direction of a Unity minister
- as the spiritual leader of a UWM-approved expansion ministry
- serving in a leadership role with Unity World Headquarters, Unity Worldwide Spiritual Institute, or Unity Urban Ministerial School

There is significant variation in the skills and experience of those in the Field Program. The Field Ministry Program and the qualifications are detailed in the [Field Ministerial Path](#). All aspects of UWM's credentialing process apply to the Field Ministerial Path.

Special Dispensation must be renewed each May 1 and November 1 until the individual is ordained as a Unity minister.

Paying for Criminal Background Checks and Psychological Evaluations

Payments for criminal background checks and psychological evaluations are done via the UWM website.

The fee for a criminal background check is \$50.00

The fee for a psychological evaluation is \$700.00

To make a payment go to www.unityworldwideministries.org and click on the "Fees" button on the upper right side.

1. In the top section, select the service(s) for which you are paying:

☒ **Background Check - \$ 50.00**

☒ **Special Dispensation Psychological Evaluation Fee - \$ 700.00**

2. Ensure that the total payment is correct based on the service(s) selected:

Total Amount \$ 750.00

3. In the Fee Payment Information section OTHER box, enter the name of the person for which you are paying – in most cases this will be your name.

Other**

Background check and psych evaluation for Rev. I. M. Example

4. Then, complete the personal information, credit card and billing payment fields.
5. Finally, if all looks OK, click on "Confirm Contribution" on the lower left-hand side of the page

You will then need to forward a copy of the receipt (screenshot or system-generated email) to specdisp@unity.org to verify payment has been made.