



### Referee screening questionnaire for ministers from another denomination and pastors

The Uniting Church in Australia (the Church) is a Christian church in the reformed/evangelical tradition.

The life of the Church is governed by the foundational document of the Uniting Church in Australia, the *Basis of Union*, along with the Constitution, Regulations and Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice.

Church policies aim to ensure the physical, sexual and emotional safety of all people who come into the care of the Church.

The Church believes that all people are made in the image of God and as such we accept every individual regardless of race, age, creed or gender. As a Christian community we believe that God reaches out to us in love and acceptance and that our relationships with each other should express love and respect and not be abused. As a community of faith we are committed to providing a place in society where human beings can explore what it means to be made in the image of God. As an expression of this commitment the Uniting Church in Australia recognises its responsibility to provide worshipping and pastoral communities that are free from abuse and that provide safe environments for all people to explore and express their faith in the Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

The Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod (the Synod) is required to conduct referee checks on applicants who intend to seek placement with one of the specified ministries of the Church.

As part of the placement process, the applicant is required to submit to background checks which allow the Church to scrutinise their work and ministry experience and character through referee checks. Each nominated referee is requested to answer personal and sensitive questions about the applicant in a screening questionnaire. The information obtained as part of the placement process will be collected in accordance with the Synod's privacy policy and the associated privacy collection statement, located on the Synod website at [ucaqld.com.au](http://ucaqld.com.au). By responding to this request, you confirm that you have read and understood these documents.

You have been nominated by \_\_\_\_\_

as a referee.

If you agree to provide a reference for this person, you are required to answer the questions to the best of your knowledge and to sign the statutory declaration which is a legal document. Supplying false information is an offence which can result in imprisonment and/or a fine. Be advised that the applicant may request a copy of the referee screening questionnaire.

If you would like to discuss these questions call the associate general secretary of the Synod on 07 3377 9822 or 61 7 33779822 if calling from overseas. The completed referee form should be sent directly to the address below and will be kept secure in accordance with the Synod privacy policy.

Please return this questionnaire in the enclosed stamped and addressed envelope directly to:

Name

Address

Postcode

<sup>1</sup> UCA Commission on Women and Men, Safe Place Position Statement, 1997

## Referee declaration

Please answer each question with one response. If you do not have the direct knowledge required to answer the question, tick "don't know". If you give an answer which may be considered to be adverse or unfavourable to the applicant, please provide additional information in support of your answer, including the basis of your knowledge on that subject, on the page provided at the end of the questionnaire. Any adverse or unfavourable information will not automatically exclude the applicant from the selection process.

The word "charged" or "charges" means any allegations made in writing and known to you or any allegation made to a court, disciplinary body, employer or church in Australia or in any other country.

By completing this declaration, you consent to the completed form being provided to the applicant upon request by them to obtain the details of your comments and reflections.

I \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

do solemnly and sincerely declare that I have known the applicant for (include dates) in the following capacity

Date	Capacity

Are you a member of the applicant's immediate/extended family? (Spouse, partner or in-law)

Yes      No

Have you ever resided at the same address as the applicant?

Yes      No      Don't know

If you were an employer, is there any reason why you would not employ this applicant? If yes, please provide details on the page at the end of the questionnaire.

Yes      No      Don't know

Is there any reason why you would not leave your children in the care of this applicant? If yes, please provide details on the page at the end of the questionnaire.

Yes      No      Don't know

## Capacity for ministry

1. Please provide examples of your observations and knowledge of the applicant's sense of call to ministry.
2. Please provide examples of your observations and knowledge of the applicant's capacity for self-awareness and reflection.
3. Please provide examples of your observations and knowledge of the applicant's commitment to self-care.
4. Please provide examples of your observations and knowledge of the applicant's ability to respond to supervision, especially in relation to those who provide oversight and direction to the applicant.
5. Please provide examples of your observations and knowledge of how the applicant engages with technology including social media.

## Character check

1. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant is suited to working with children. If no, please provide details including examples of your observations of the applicant working with children on the page at the end of the questionnaire.  
Yes    No    Don't know
2. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant does not have any health problem(s) or other issues (such as caring for parent, spouse, child; commitments to other organisations; need for particular services other than health services) which may impact on their ability to work with the Church.  
Yes    No    Don't know
3. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has never had permission to undertake paid or voluntary work with children refused, suspended or withdrawn in Australia or in any other country.  
Yes    No    Don't know
4. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has never been asked to resign nor had their employment terminated (a redundancy is not applicable here) by an employer or any church body.  
Yes    No    Don't know
5. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has not engaged in any behaviour past or present (including through the use of technology) that has resulted in allegations being made against them of exploiting or abusing other people physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually or financially.  
Yes    No    Don't know
6. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has not engaged in any behaviour past or present that has resulted in allegations being made against them of bullying.  
*Bullying is considered repeated unwelcome and unsolicited behaviour towards a person who considers it offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening and which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would consider to be offensive, humiliating, intimidating or threatening.<sup>2</sup>*  
Yes    No    Don't know
7. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has never had any disciplinary action taken against them by any church, professional organisation or community association, employer, educational institution or other body.  
Yes    No    Don't know
8. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has never been the subject of any disciplinary matter by any of the bodies mentioned in the question above.  
Yes    No    Don't know
9. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has never been charged with a criminal offence in Australia or in any other country.  
Yes    No    Don't know
10. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has never been convicted of a criminal offence in Australia or in any other country.  
Yes    No    Don't know
11. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has never been charged with a criminal offence in Australia or in any other country which was subsequently withdrawn or of which he/she was acquitted.  
Yes    No    Don't know
12. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has never been the subject of a court order in Australia or in any other country.  
Yes    No    Don't know
13. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has not been charged with any offence in Australia or in any other country that is incomplete or awaiting legal action, nor am I aware of any investigation into their affairs that has the potential to lead to such charges.
14. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has never been the subject of any allegation of an incident relating to sexual misconduct.  
*Sexual misconduct means one or more of the following:*  
*Sexual harassment: any unwelcome sexual advance, or unwelcome request for sexual favours to a person, or engagement in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to that person, in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated the person complaining would be offended, humiliated or intimidated;*  
*Sexual assault: any unwelcome sexual behaviour that may occur along a continuum from verbal insult to sexual intercourse, that makes a person threatened or afraid;*  
*Sexual conduct prohibited by criminal law;*  
*Sexualisation of a pastoral relationship: any interaction, consensual or otherwise, in which the Minister engages in sexualised behaviour with or towards a person with whom he or she is in a pastoral relationship, which is in breach of the Code of Ethics.<sup>3</sup>*  
Yes    No    Don't know
15. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has never been subject of an allegation of an incident of verbal or physical harassment.  
Yes    No    Don't know

<sup>2</sup> Uniting Church in Australia Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice approved Twelfth Assembly July 2009, Effective 1 January 2010, Section 3.6 9c).

<sup>3</sup> Uniting Church in Australia Regulations 2012, Regulation 5.6.2.

16. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has never had an apprehended violence court order, order for protection or the like issued against them as a result of allegations of domestic violence, abuse, unauthorised surveillance, harassment or stalking.  
Yes      No      Don't know
17. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant does not have a history of alcohol abuse.  
Yes      No      Don't know
18. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant does not have a history of substance abuse including prescription, over-the-counter, recreational or illegal drugs.  
Yes      No      Don't know
19. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant does not have a history of problem gambling.  
Yes      No      Don't know
20. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has never been charged with a traffic offence which required them to attend court.  
Yes      No      Don't know
21. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has never had a licence to own firearms refused or revoked.  
Yes      No      Don't know
22. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has never had a child or dependent young person in their care (as a parent or in any other capacity) removed from their care, or been the subject of a risk assessment by the authorities.  
Yes      No      Don't know
23. To the best of my knowledge, the applicant has never been charged with misappropriating funds or otherwise breaching fiduciary duties in any capacity. A fiduciary duty is a duty placed upon a person of utmost trust; to act in good faith, not to use any power for an improper purpose and to avoid a conflict of interest when discharging their duties managing and protecting property or money.  
Yes      No      Don't know

### Add any additional information here for the character check

Question number

Answer

Question number

Answer

Question number

Answer

Question number

Answer

Question number

Answer

Question number

Answer

Question number

Answer

## **Referee declaration**

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the Oaths Act 1867.

Signed (*signature of referee*)

Declared at (*location*)

Date

Before me (*signature of witness*)

Name of witness

(*Justice of the Peace/Commissioner of Declarations*)