

Readmission to the Order of Ministry

October 2021



Office of / Bureau de la
vocation

The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada

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Policies and Procedures

The policies about readmission for members of the order of ministry are found in *The Manual* in section H.8 Readmission to the Order of Ministry. This resource gives additional policies and procedures that must be followed. It includes the policies from *The Manual* in order to give a complete picture of the process for readmission. Policies from *The Manual* are written in italics.

Readmission of Members of the Order of Ministry

1. *A person whose name has been placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary) or the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary) may apply to the Office of Vocation for readmission to the order of ministry.*
2. The person applying for readmission must submit an application to the Office of Vocation. The application must include
 - a. a statement about why the person wants to be readmitted;
 - b. a statement reaffirming that the person is in essential agreement with the doctrine of the United Church;
 - c. a statement reaffirming that the person will comply with the polity of the United Church; and
 - d. a vulnerable sector (level two) police records check;
 - e. a letter of standing and a record of service (if currently serving within another denomination).
3. The Office of Vocation is responsible for
 - a. consulting concerning the reasons why the person was placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary) or (Voluntary);
 - b. reviewing the letter of standing (if applicable) to determine that the minister is in good standing in their current denomination and is not facing disciplinary action. If the denomination refuses to provide a letter of standing, the Office of Vocation makes reasonable efforts to determine the minister's standing in the denomination. When a letter of standing indicates that the applicant is not in good standing based solely on criteria that would not prevent service within the United Church, such as divorce, marriage, sexual orientation, or some other criteria, the requirement of good standing in the applicant's denomination may, at the Office of Vocation's discretion, be waived;
 - c. gathering further information, which may include an interview in order to make a recommendation to the Board whether or not the person is fit and ready for readmission to the order of ministry. The further information includes the following:
 - Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary)**
 - i. An interview is mandated for a person applying to be removed from the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary) in order to examine the faith and theological stance of the person; their learning from the events that placed their name on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary); ensuring they completed the conditions

identified in a negotiated agreement, if applicable; their understanding related to the Standards of Practice and Ethical Standards; and their overall fitness for ministry and readiness to return.

- ii. If the Office of Vocation wishes to assure itself of the person's readiness to return to ministry, it can require the person to serve in an appointment on a probationary basis (see 4 below).

Discontinued Service List (Voluntary)

- i. The Office of Vocation must decide if an interview is necessary for a person who is applying to be removed from the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary). An interview is recommended but not required unless the person is on the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary) out of a negotiated settlement to a complaint, in which case the process outlined for Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary) should be followed.
 - ii. If the Office of Vocation wishes to assure itself of the person's readiness to return to ministry, it can require the person to serve in an appointment on a probationary basis (see 4 below).
- c. deciding whether to recommend or not recommend the person for readmission to the order of ministry; and
- i. If the decision is to not recommend the person for readmission, the person must be informed in writing by registered mail and in person.
 - ii. The purpose of sharing the information in person is to ensure that the person understands the reasons that the application for readmission was denied.
4. The Office of Vocation may require the person requesting readmission to serve in an appointment on a probationary basis. The Office of Vocation is responsible for appointing a member of the Regional Council to closely supervise the person while they are in the probationary appointment. In order to complete the probationary appointment, the requirements in *The Manual* under Pastoral Relations, section I.3.3.5 Consequence of Name Being Placed on the Discontinued Service List (Disciplinary) or (Voluntary), are suspended. The person is appointed as United Supply.
5. *The Board of Vocation is responsible for deciding whether to readmit a person to the order of ministry.*
- a. If the recommendation is to not readmit the person to the order of ministry, the person requesting to be readmitted will be invited to respond to that recommendation before the Board of Vocation makes a decision.
- The Office of Vocation is responsible for informing the applicant about both the decision and the right of appeal. While only the decision has to be delivered by registered mail, sending all of the information at once is helpful and efficient.
- b. The Office of Vocation must also inform the person making the request to be readmitted of the right of appeal.
6. *If the Office of Vocation does not approve the application for readmission, the applicant may not apply again for at least three years from the date of the Board of Vocation decision.*

7. The Board of Vocation is responsible for deciding how the costs of readmission applications will be shared between the readmission applicant and the Office of Vocation.
 - a. An initial application is shared equally unless the Board of Vocation decides to divide the costs differently.
 - b. A second or subsequent application is the responsibility of the person making the request unless the Board of Vocation decides to divide the costs differently.
 - c. A second or subsequent application must be paid for in advance of the process.