



OneSpirit
Interfaith Foundation

COMMUNITY HANDBOOK **2012**

*Ask not what this Community can do for me;
But what I can Be in the world when at One within this Community*

The aims of our community

All those who have been ordained by the Interfaith Seminary comprise the spiritual community of ministers. It is the ground from which we go out to minister in service to others, and to which we return for support and sanctuary. This Handbook describes how our community works for ALL ministers, and provides information about the additional benefits available to those ministers who choose to step into membership of the Interfaith Ministers Association (IMA)

The IMA is the tangible and practical manifestation of this community and all ministers are encouraged to join the Association whose aims are to:

- Bring us together in an inclusive, supportive, and mutually-nurturing community for the sharing and growth of our spiritual life
- Establish opportunities for shared spiritual practice across the community
- Provide a means by which we can engage together in practice, supervision, learning and development
- Establish a public register whereby we can offer our services to the community and the public can find a minister for their needs
- Define and maintain the standards by which we serve others
- Provide appropriate mechanisms for the resolution of any conflict or complaint.



Interfaith
Ministers
Association

The community supports us in both a personal and professional capacity, and in our relationships with each other, with clients, and with the Source of All.

How our community lives

We are a peer community of ministers. We commit to supporting each other and to serving our Highest Purpose. As community members we are all of equal status and worth; we have no hierarchic structure. We share a responsibility and duty to each other – through love, prayer, support, supervision and wise counsel, or by any other nurturing and affirming means that may be appropriate to the circumstances.

Individual members of the community are invited, encouraged and supported to step forward into offering service to the community at large. There are many opportunities, including: creating post-graduate events; hosting the annual convocation gathering; becoming a supervisor; serving on one of the various panels or task groups; becoming a tutor or staff member; offering your specialist counselling expertise; volunteering as a mentor, trustee or other role. Members fulfilling official roles in the Foundation such as tutor, staff member, mentor, supervisor, trustee or other role are expected to be in membership of the Interfaith Ministers Association.

Our community comprises ALL ministers.

We encourage ministers to support the on-going work of One Spirit Interfaith Foundation by joining the IMA – but membership is not mandatory. IMA membership fees enable the Foundation to provide this expanding support to ministers after ordination. IMA members receive enhanced benefits at either no-cost or reduced-cost rates; non-IMA members are asked to pay fees for each service. We invite you to step into membership of the IMA and help co-create this spiritual community.

What our community offers

iConnect and Gracevine

Our weekly *iConnect* newsletter and twice-yearly *Gracevine* journal are distributed free to all ministers and students.

Shared spiritual practice

You are invited to participate from wherever you are in the weekly time for community prayer. Individual ministers offer to create and lead shared worship in local and regional groups on either a one-off or regular basis; such events are promoted in our publications. Each year, the Convocation Gathering brings ministers together in an event hosted by community members; there are also opportunities for minister-led retreats and other gatherings. IMA members pay a reduced rate for such events.

Post-graduate training

All ministers are welcome to attend post-graduate events. IMA members are invited to create and lead post-graduate workshops, training events, seminars and other events and may submit their events for

approval by the CPD Panel and they will then be endorsed and promoted through our publications. Different fees may be charged for IMA members and non-members. Non-IMA members may also offer post-graduate events but a fee will be charged for their CPD approval and publicity.

Minister marketing and the Public Register of Interfaith Ministers

All IMA members on the Public Register can create an illustrated online public profile that displays to the general public in the Find-a-Minister area of our website. Ministers may promote their services and ceremonies including contact information and website details. This directory is promoted to the public and is the basis for all referrals on our public helpline.

The IMA produces a range of marketing materials for ministers including promotional postcards and posters (that can be overprinted with your details), template press releases, and an official Photo ID badge.

We are launching a major national initiative to raise public awareness of interfaith ministry and one outcome of this project should be further attention for those ministers on the Public Register.

Logos

IMA members may use the Foundation logos in their own marketing. They may designate themselves as MIMA (Member) or RIMA (Registered Member) after their names to confirm their professional status. Non-IMA members are not authorised to use the Foundation or Seminary materials in any description or promotion of their services or ministry.

Regional and thematic groups and networks

Any minister is welcome to convene and organise regional (e.g. Tyneside, Devon, Ireland) or thematic (e.g. Funerals, Chaplaincy, Supervisors) groups and networks. Such groups are self-managing. They may meet face-to-face, online, or via telephone conferencing. IMA members may submit their groups, networks and events to the website from where they will be promoted through our publications.

Events calendar

IMA members can publish and promote their events and activities through the online events calendar, and these events are further promoted through our publications.

Professional insurance

The IMA has negotiated tailored professional indemnity and public liability insurance at attractive rates for members. Further details are available on the website or from the office.

Library of resource materials

IMA members can share and download resource materials (prayers, talks, briefing papers, services, and much more) through the online resource library which is growing into a valuable toolkit of useful materials.

Prayer requests

IMA members may publish their prayer requests to other members of the community.

Supervision

A list of Seminary-accredited Supervisors is available via the website or from the administrator; all Supervisors are IMA members on the Public Register.

Support for ministers in crisis

From time-to-time, individual interfaith ministers may be in need of practical support of a physical, emotional or spiritual nature. Regular supervision or spiritual direction is strongly recommended for all ministers (and is a requirement for those on the Public Register). Beyond this, experience demonstrates that we may each encounter a difficult period and that may lead to a crisis on our spiritual journey. Such situations may include: a loss of faith, exhaustion and burnout, a crisis of confidence, uncertainty in how to respond, a lapse in professional conduct, or a loss of direction. All ministers share a duty of care for other community members. The IMA can help identify crisis support for you, including:

- A panel of trained, experienced and accredited supervisors
- A panel of impartial ministers to investigate allegations of misconduct or complaints
- A list of recommended short-stay retreat houses
- A network of ministers who are highly experienced in responding to burnout, relationship breakdown, bereavement, severe illness, sexual identity and similar crises.

Please contact your supervisor or the Community Facilitator at any time for further help.

Governance role within the Interfaith Foundation

IMA members elect representatives to serve as trustees on the Board of One Spirit Interfaith Foundation.

The role of the Community Facilitator

The Foundation has appointed one minister as a (part-time) Community Facilitator to foster and nurture the growth of the community and all of the activities and services offered by ministers. You are welcome to contact the Facilitator at any time; contact details are included in every publication. Non-IMA members are asked to pay for services, particularly if they involve staff time or publicity.

Sustaining our integrity

As community members, we share the duty of care and support for each other. We commit to taking supportive action when we see another minister in difficulty. We expect ministers to be in regular supervision and/or spiritual direction for their own self-awareness; this is a requirement for those on the Public Register. Sometimes a minister may be unaware of their own distress, inauthenticity, imbalance or lack of centredness. When we see another minister in difficulty – whether they recognise this or not – we have a responsibility as a 'soul friend' to approach them with love and compassion to support them in returning to a place of integrity and congruence. We do not "walk by on the other side". We risk our friendship by offering the truth to our friend. To support you in doing this, any community member may approach a supervisor or a staff member for guidance.

On the rare occasions when things go seriously wrong, we have a [Conflict resolution and Reconciliation](#) process (Annex 6) to resolve grievances between us.

Our [Professional conduct procedure](#) (Annex 7) has been developed to investigate any formal complaints made against an interfaith minister, **tutor, trustee, mentor, staff member** or student. The aim is to afford protection to **all those with whom we work** and to protect the reputation of One Spirit Interfaith Foundation. We undertake to inform **anyone** who indicates that they have a complaint or grievance about the existence of this procedure. The procedure allows for the recording of all formal complaints, the establishment of a professional conduct hearing, and an appeals process. When a complaint is received, the minister concerned may be suspended from the Register if the matter is sufficiently serious. Where a complaint is upheld, the professional conduct panel will determine the most appropriate sanction.

Membership of the IMA

Membership of the Interfaith Ministers Association is open to all those who have been ordained by the Interfaith Seminary or One Spirit Learning Alliance or the New Seminary in the USA. Applications for membership will be considered from ministers ordained by similar bodies who seek to support our community work.

There are two modes of membership:

1. A **Friend/Member** is a minister or other close associate wishing to belong to a community of like-minded and like-qualified people and intending to participate in the activities, communications and opportunities provided by the Association. Ministers need not have an active or overt ministry; we welcome your support for the wider community. This mode is akin to a "Friend of the Interfaith Foundation" and demonstrates your support for our continuing work. Friends/Members must be ordained by the Interfaith Seminary (or other recognised body), or be closely linked with this work; and where appropriate, they must abide by their Personal Vow, Seminary Vows and the Code of Ethics and by all other guidelines published by the Interfaith Foundation.
2. A **Member on the Public Register** is an ordained minister who probably has an active or overt ministry in the world, who wishes to be listed in the Public Register of Interfaith Ministers. Registered Members enjoy the same community benefits as Friend/Members; they have access to additional benefits including listing in the Public Register. They must meet the same criteria as Members. In addition, they must abide by the requirements for Supervision and Continuous Professional Development and they must hold valid public and professional liability insurance.

All other ministers who have been ordained by the Interfaith Seminary and who choose not to take out membership of the IMA are regarded as members of the community of ministers. The guidelines and procedures that apply to IMA members (particularly with regard to supervision and spiritual direction, conflict resolution, and professional conduct) remain available to them. Such ministers are warmly welcome to attend events and request support and assistance for which fees will be charged. Such support does not extend to help with marketing, promotion, library resources and similar facilities except at an appropriate professional fee for each service.

Students in training with the Interfaith Seminary are regarded as temporary Members and are entitled to the many of the same benefits as IMA Members.

Trustees, faculty members, mentors, accredited supervisors and management staff are normally expected to be Members on the Public Register.

The guidelines for membership of the IMA

All **Members** agree to follow:

1. Their **Personal Vow** that we each created and took, before witnesses, at the time of our ordination.
2. The **Interfaith Seminary Vows**, that were taken during ordination:-
 - a. I promise to be inclusive, serving without discriminating on the basis of race, age, gender, religious affiliation, ethnic background, economic status, sexual orientation or any other distinction.
 - b. I promise to continue to deepen in my own spiritual practice, that the service I offer others may always be grounded in the integrity of an authentic and evolving spiritual life.
 - c. I promise to fulfil, to the best of my ability, the personal vow I took on retreat.
 - d. I promise to abide by the Interfaith Seminary's code of ethics.
3. The **Code of Ethics**, as published in Annex 1.

In addition, all **Members on the Public Register** agree to follow these additional guidelines:-

4. **Regular supervision and/or spiritual direction.** All Members on the Public Register engage in a formal process of supervision and/or spiritual direction to support their work and personal growth as an interfaith minister. Supervision may be provided by a peer minister, a person accredited by the Interfaith Seminary to offer supervision, or a suitably experienced external supervisor. Supervision may be arranged on a one-to-one basis, or within a structured group. We particularly encourage IMA members to join an Independent Practitioner Network Group (www.i-p-n.org), which would provide a support structure with other professionals and offer mutual accountability and supervision. Spiritual direction may be provided by any appropriately experienced director. As a guideline, we are expected to engage in supervision at least four times each year, and more often if we have a full caseload, or when we experience difficulties or uncertainty in our work. Further advice on these requirements is provided in the Annex 2.
5. **Continuous professional development and/or personal growth.** Members on the Register undertake further study, practice and learning in order to enhance their knowledge, skills and expertise. This is known as continuous professional development (or CPD). The aim of CPD is to support the spiritual, mental and emotional growth of ministers and thereby develop personal and professional abilities. IMA members are required to regularly review their own needs and to identify suitable opportunities by which these can be met. A supervisor may assist in this process. Such study and learning may be accomplished through a wide variety of activities including further training, practice, retreats, practical placements, project work, research, reading and writing, study groups and other development initiatives. As a guideline, ministers on the Public Register are expected to undertake a minimum of 25 hours or 4 days of relevant CPD activities each year. Further advice on identifying and meeting CPD requirements is provided in the Annex 3. A template for reporting our individual learning is offered in the [CPD record](#) (Annex 4). We welcome ministers creating, offering and promoting courses and activities of interest to other ministers; where these are [accredited](#) (Annex 5), they are included in the post-graduate programme.
6. **Insurance.** All Members on the Public Register agree to be insured for professional indemnity and public liability. We have negotiated a group insurance policy with Balens. Further details are available in the Insurance Proposal document available on the website or from the office. Alternative comparable insurance arrangements are accepted.

Membership fees and payments

Current IMA membership fees are set out in the application form. Membership fees are reviewed annually in line with the cost of providing the benefits and services of the Association. Fees are payable on 1 April each year and are not refundable; **fees are pro-rate for new members joining part-way through a year**. Current students are not required to pay a fee to be temporary Members. Students who are ordained in the summer may join the Association at a discounted rate for that year.

For ministers wishing to commit to the Association and support it with a generous donation, Life Membership is available for a one-off payment. This entitles you to all the benefits of being a Member. Life Members wishing to be included in the Public Register pay a nominal fee each year to confirm their eligibility.

Payment by annual or quarterly direct debit is encouraged as this reduces our administration costs. Payment is also accepted by cheque, BACS and PayPal.

For ministers experiencing financial hardship, a lower fee is accepted on request; please reflect on what you can afford to pay for the community benefits you receive.

Ministers who choose not to join the IMA and who request a service or facility will be asked to pay fees for each service requested.

Communications with members of the community

Many of the community's communications will be delivered by email. Please ensure that the Administrator is kept informed of any change to your email address. Members on the Register are responsible for maintaining their own contact details on their online profile. If you would prefer to receive the regular communications by post, please enclose 50 A5-sized, stamped, self-addressed envelopes with your membership application each year.

Relationship with One Spirit Interfaith Foundation

One Spirit Interfaith Foundation is the 'umbrella' body that holds and nurtures both the Interfaith Ministers Association (for ministers) and the Interfaith Seminary (for students). **IMA members and Seminary members periodically elect trustees to One Spirit Interfaith Foundation's board.**

Removal from the Public Register or from Membership

Members may be suspended from the Public Register pending an investigation into any complaint alleged against them. Members may be removed from the Public Register or from the Association:

- when a complaint has been formally investigated and upheld
- for non-payment of membership dues by 15 May in each year
- for non-adherence to the requirements of membership
- in the event of persistent non-communication by the minister.

Freedom of practice and ministry

All ministers are entirely free to decide how they will practice and minister. In line with our Code of Ethics, the Interfaith Foundation does not seek to determine, control or influence the specific spiritual practice, faith belief, creed, ministry or service offered by any member of our community.

Enquiries

For all enquiries about the *Community Handbook* please contact:

The Community Facilitator, The Interfaith Foundation, Communications House, 26 York Street, London W1U 6PZ

Tel: 0844 4457 004

Email: ima@osif.org.uk

Annex 1: Code of ethics

To promote integrity in our training and practice, the staff, students and ministers of The Interfaith Foundation commit ourselves to the following precepts:

Remembering our unity, honouring our uniqueness

We aim to keep our hearts and minds open to everyone, celebrating difference but not separation. We refuse to marginalise people on the basis of age, disability, state of health, race, gender, nationality, religion, sexuality, economic status or any other distinction.

Walking our talk

We understand the importance of practising what we preach, and agree to uphold the ethical and practical principles of the spiritual path we follow. We recognise that all paths emphasise the importance of honesty, respecting self and others, non-stealing and non-harming.

Celebrating honesty

Knowing that truthfulness brings freedom, we aim to cultivate conscious and clean communication. We aim to speak and listen as truly as we can, being mindful that our words are kind, true and useful.

Protecting clarity

Since we value purity of awareness, we support each other in exercising maturity over the ingestion of intoxicants or mind-altering substances.

Honouring physical boundaries

In order to create safe space for the opening of our hearts and minds, we aim to be sensitive and respectful in expressing physical affection. Mindful of the power our position as teacher, counsellor or minister may bring, we undertake to refuse

absolutely sexual relationships with our students or clients.

Representing ourselves accurately

Since we strive for integrity, we understand the importance of not misleading others about the services we can offer, and not exaggerating our professional achievements. Further, we commit ourselves to open and just dealings in all of our financial transactions.

Maintaining confidentiality

We honour the sacred trust between a spiritual counsellor and a client, and between a minister and the community served, and promise to hold any personal information in the strictest confidence within the law. The same applies to our group settings, so that a safe space is created for heartfelt sharing.

Valuing support and supervision

We acknowledge the need for supervision and guidance beyond our years of study at The Interfaith Seminary. We commit to regular supervision of our spiritual counselling and ministry work.

Committed to continued awakening

We understand that our spiritual unfolding is an ongoing process, and dedicate ourselves to continually deepening our personal spiritual practice, that our service may be grounded in an authentic and evolving spiritual life.

Safeguarding the whole

We commit, where necessary, to lovingly call to attention, either one-to-one or through our peer group, any issue that may place another in danger or compromise the good reputation of interfaith ministers however difficult this may seem.

Annex 2: Supervision guidelines

Purpose

The purpose of supervision is to improve the quality of practice offered by a minister. This is achieved by entering an agreed, formal process for discussing and reflecting upon the work that occurs between a minister and his or her client(s), with the support and guidance of the supervisor. The focus of supervision is on the growth journey of the interfaith minister through his or her work in the community.

Whilst supervision may often use methods employed in spiritual counselling or spiritual direction, it differs in its prime focus. Spiritual counselling is concerned with the client's own personal relationship with the Divine; supervision is concerned with the quality and nature of the minister's relationship with his or her client(s) including the way in which that relationship is held in the Divine presence.

Frequency

Registered Members of the Interfaith Ministers Association who are providing services to clients or their community are expected to engage in supervision at least four times each year, and more often if they have a full caseload, or when they experience difficulties or uncertainty in their work.

Formal arrangements

Supervision should be pre-arranged between those involved; have a clear structure that is understood by all; and maintain a focus throughout on the practice issues being discussed. All supervision arrangements should be jointly reviewed (by supervisor and minister) at least once each year to ensure that they are working effectively for the purposes described here, and more often if either person feels that the arrangements are not working effectively.

Supervision may be provided in a face-to-face meeting, in a group setting, or by telephone.

Recognised models of supervision

The Interfaith Ministers Association supports members in selecting the most appropriate and practical form of supervision for their needs. Ministers may choose from the following models of supervision:

1. **Peer-based co-supervision:** Ministers may establish a peer-supervision relationship with another Seminary-trained minister. To reduce the risk of collusion, we recommend a three-way triad (A supervises B, B supervises C, C supervises A). Co-supervisors are required to agree a supportive framework for sharing

their experiences and difficulties, listening attentively to each other, offering constructive comments and insights, and challenging each other when appropriate. All fees payable are by mutual agreement.

2. **Group supervision:** Ministers may establish their own arrangements for group-based supervision using each other as peer-supervisors, or contracting with a more experienced minister to provide supervision for a fee. Ministers are encouraged to align themselves with the Independent Practitioners Network and join an already existing Group, which is the preferred route, or alternatively start the process of establishing a new Group. (see www.i-p-n.org for further information) Several faculty members hold regular group supervision for second-year students at which ministers are welcome.
3. **Seminary-accredited supervisor:** The Interfaith Foundation accredits several ministers as experienced supervisors; a list of such supervisors is available on the website or from the Administration Office.
4. **External supervision:** Ministers may receive formal supervision from an external person. This may be appropriate when a minister is also a member of another related professional body. The external person should be trained, qualified and experienced to provide supervision. You should check that the external person is knowledgeable and competent to supervise all aspects of your ministry and spiritual counselling practice.

Verifying supervision arrangements

On the renewal of your Interfaith Ministers Association membership each year, Registered Members are asked to confirm their supervision arrangements. The supervisor is also asked to counter-sign the annual CPD record of Registered Members.

Training for supervisors

The Interfaith Foundation promotes a post-graduate training programme for supervisors that is delivered by experienced ministers and/or external teachers. Those who satisfactorily complete this programme are eligible to become an accredited supervisor.

Foundation-accredited supervisors

Foundation-accredited supervisors are those experienced Members on the Register who have successfully completed the Foundation's post-graduate training programme for supervisors (and/or such other requirements as may be determined). Accredited supervisors can be found through their listing on the Public Register.

Annex 3: CPD guidelines

Purpose

All Registered Ministers undertake further study and learning in order to enhance their knowledge, skills and expertise. This is known as continuous professional development (or CPD). The aim of CPD is to support the spiritual, mental and emotional growth of the minister and thereby develop their personal and professional abilities.

Identifying your learning needs

Our approach to identifying learning needs is rooted in our culture of peer supervision and self-assessment. There are many ways in which you can identify those areas of knowledge, skill or expertise that will help you grow and develop as a minister:

- Reflect on your recent practice with clients to identify situations that have been problematic or difficult to handle
- List some of the situations, events or services that you have tended to avoid – perhaps because you felt insufficiently skilled.
- Review any feedback received from clients, groups or your supervisor to identify areas of weakness in your work
- Consider what new areas or subjects or issues you feel drawn to and might like to explore further
- Take the question of your future development into your prayer practice
- Consult with your supervisor.

Meeting your identified learning goals

The Interfaith Foundation recognises that there are very many approaches to effective learning. In considering how to meet your learning goals, you might want to draw upon several different methods. Here are some suggestions to get your started:

Experiential methods

Taking on a new job or role
Starting a short-term placement
Joining a working group

Teaching methods

Attending a Seminary-accredited course or event
Attending an externally provided short course, seminar or conference
Doing a distance learning course
Being coached or mentored

Observational methods

Visiting a different project or organisation
Study visits or sabbaticals

Shadowing another minister

Reflective methods

Reading
Writing a case study
Keeping a journal
Writing a policy paper
Soliciting feedback from others
Using a 'critical incident analysis' tool

Creative methods

Creative writing, artwork, singing, pottery
Developing new materials and resources
Carrying out some research
Co-working with a colleague with different skills
Swapping roles with a colleague

Participative methods

Bodywork – dance, massage, exercise
Running a workshop
Giving a talk or lecture
Supervising others
Debating issues at Convocation

CPD-accredited training courses, workshops, retreats and events

One option for CPD is to participate in formally accredited events. All Ministers on the Public Register are invited to propose and lead suitable post-graduate programme events including courses, workshops, retreats and events. These events will be [CPD accredited](#). It is recommended that Registered Members engage in a mix of relevant accredited and less formal CPD each year.

Time requirements

As a guideline, ministers are expected to undertake a minimum of 25 hours or 4 days of relevant CPD each year.

Relationship of CPD to supervision

From time-to-time it is recommended that you review your learning needs and CPD activities with your supervisor. This will help you to assess whether you are setting the best goals for your learning, whether the depth and breadth of your learning is satisfactory, and what new learning needs are emerging.

Recording your CPD

Each year, Registered Members are required to submit a summary record of their CPD. This record should be verified and countersigned by your supervisor. A simple template is provided in the [CPD Record](#) (Annex 4).

Annex 4: CPD record

Registered Members of the Interfaith Ministers Association are required to complete and return this record each year as part of your membership renewal.

Your name

What were your identified learning needs and goals as an Interfaith Minister during the past year?

What learning activities have you undertaken to meet these learning needs and goals during the past year? Please give summary details of the nature, format and duration of each activity, and indicating those that were accredited by the Seminary.

What learning needs and goals as an Interfaith Minister have you identified for the year ahead?

Your supervisor's comments and signature

Your signature and date

Annex 5: CPD accreditation

The Interfaith Foundation gives formal CPD accreditation to post-graduate training courses, events and retreats that meet the criteria for accreditation. These learning activities may include courses provided by the Seminary and other courses and activities that are designed and offered by Registered Members.

The CPD Accreditation process is free for IMA Members. Non-members will be asked to pay an accreditation fee for each event submitted.

We ask that in determining the fee for your event, a differential fee is charged that offers a lower rate to IMA Members and a higher rate to non-IMA members.

Process for obtaining CPD accreditation

Any Registered Member or Faculty member may put forward a training course, retreat, learning activity or other event for formal CPD accreditation at any time.

Full details of the activity including (as appropriate to the format) its title, description, style, format, participant numbers, learning outcomes, content/programme, teaching method(s), dates, organiser or teacher, venue, fees or budget, and satisfactory assessment or feedback or completion arrangements should be sent to the IMA Coordinator or the Faculty Leader.

The proposal will be reviewed by an Accreditation Panel of two registered members against the accreditation criteria. They may approve the

proposal, recommend changes to the proposal, or decline the proposal.

If the proposal is approved, the Accreditation Panel will determine the number of hours or days of CPD to be awarded.

Upon approval, the Interfaith Foundation will promote the event within the Post-Graduate Programme, and the registered member may promote the event as one that carries CPD Accreditation, and those who satisfactorily complete the event may claim the CPD entitlement.

Criteria for determining CPD accreditation

The Accreditation Panel will assess each proposal against the following criteria:

1. Is the subject matter relevant to the professional work of an Interfaith Minister?
2. Is the content of the event likely to contribute significantly to the professional development of the minister?
3. Are the learning methods appropriate for the subject matter?
4. Are those people responsible for delivering the event experienced and competent in this area of work?
5. Is there a relevant mechanism in place for determining whether participants have satisfactorily completed the learning event and/or provided feedback about the event?

Annex 6: Conflict resolution and reconciliation

It is the wish of One Spirit Interfaith Foundation that internal conflicts or difficulties between ministers and/or students should be resolved speedily, effectively and fairly. **This four-stage conflict resolution and reconciliation procedure applies across and between all ministers and students (and including all roles of employee, contractor, volunteer, trustee, faculty and mentor).**

Stage 1: Spiritual practice

In most cases grievances can be resolved by individuals taking any feelings of conflict or difficulty to their spiritual practice and asking: "What is being reflected here?", or "What part of myself am I refusing to accept?" Having checked out what is going on inside themselves those in conflict are encouraged, wherever possible, to work together to reach a mutually agreeable solution.

If this does not resolve the issue the next stage is supervision.

Stage 2: Supervision

If **the person** does not have a supervisor they should ask **a** minister to act in this capacity. A list of recommended supervisors can be obtained from the office. Students should speak to their mentors.

The questions the supervisor will ask are: "What is the blockage?", or "What needs to be resolved in you?", and "What more do you need to do?"

If the issue is still not resolved and it is a personal issue between two **people** the last option available for resolution is to ask an experienced minister to act as a mediator; both parties need to agree to this and be willing to abide by the agreement negotiated by the mediator.

Stage 3: Mediation

The role of the mediator is to help bring a clear and constructive approach to the issue and to help the **people** concerned resolve the issue in the best interests of all concerned and the charity. If mediation is agreed upon, all parties must agree to abide by the resolution/agreement negotiated by the mediator.

The agreed resolution will be put in writing and circulated to all parties involved and the grievance procedure will end.

Stage 4: A formal grievance

If, after speaking to a supervisor and offering mediation, the grievance is still not resolved, and the issue concerns a member of staff, the faculty, the management team or the trustee board, or it represents a risk to the reputation of the Foundation, the issue should be put in writing and sent to one of the management team or a trustee to initiate the [Professional Conduct Procedure](#).

Annex 7: Professional conduct procedure

Interfaith Ministers and Spiritual Counsellors (including employees, contractors, faculty, mentors, volunteers and trustees) are required to inform any person who indicates they have a complaint or grievance relating to their work or service about the existence of this procedure. If requested to do so, they should inform the person that further information concerning these procedures may be obtained from the Interfaith Foundation and give contact details. We encourage the mutual adoption of informal means of conflict resolution at the outset of any process; only if these are unacceptable or unworkable should these formal procedures be implemented.

1. Introduction

1.1. Aim

The aim of the Professional Conduct Procedure is to afford protection to people using our services and to protect the reputation of the Interfaith Foundation.

1.2. Bringing a complaint

A complaint can be brought by anyone who is or has used or received the services provided by an interfaith minister or student minister (including those services provided in their capacity as an employee, contractor, tutor, mentor, volunteer or trustee). A complaint can also be brought to the attention of the Professional Conduct Panel by any Interfaith Minister following public allegations of unprofessional conduct by a minister or student.

1.3. Timescale

A complaint must be lodged within a year of the alleged breach.

1.4. Expenses

The Foundation is not responsible for travel or any other expenses incurred either by the complainant or the person complained against in connection with any stage of the complaint.

2. Making a complaint

2.1. The Complaint

The complaint must satisfy the following conditions:

- a) The allegation is of a breach of the commitments, code of ethics or agreed principles, policies or procedures of the Interfaith Foundation or any of its component parts.
- b) It is brought by a person (or their representative) seeking or using a service provided by an Interfaith Minister or student minister (including those services provided in their capacity as an employee, contractor, tutor, mentor, volunteer or trustee).
- c) The individual complained against is named.

- d) It is in writing, signed and received by one of the Management Team.

A complaint not satisfying the above conditions will be rejected.

2.2. Notification

The Minister or student complained against will be notified that a complaint has been received, given a copy of that complaint and details of this procedure. The student or minister is not required to respond at this stage, but will be given an opportunity later if the complaint is accepted for a hearing.

2.3. Receipt of the Complaint

- a) The complaint will be submitted to a pre-hearing assessment panel comprising of one of the Management Team and two experienced Ministers.
- b) The pre-hearing panel will decide whether the complaint is appropriate to forward to a professional conduct hearing; the panel may seek further clarification or information.
- c) If further information or clarification is requested, upon receipt, the pre-hearing panel will decide whether to accept it for a hearing or reject it.
- d) If the complaint is not appropriate for a professional conduct hearing, the complainant and the person complained against will be formally notified in writing.
- e) If the complaint is for hearing the Management Team member will start the professional conduct procedure; the pre-hearing assessment panel has discretion to suspend a minister from the public Register of Interfaith Ministers (including from other roles within the Foundation where appropriate) or to suspend a student from further training, pending the outcome of a professional conduct hearing.

The decision of the pre-hearing panel is final.

3. The Professional Conduct Procedure

3.1. Acceptance of the complaint

The complainant and the person complained against will be notified in writing that the complaint will proceed to a professional conduct hearing.

3.2. Responding to a formal complaint

At the time of notification of acceptance of the complaint, a full copy of the now formal complaint will be submitted to the person complained against, who will have 28 days to respond to the complaint. Any response to the complaint must be forwarded to the Management Team member dealing with the complaint.

3.3. Evidence

All evidence submitted by either the complainant or the person complained against shall be available to the parties involved in the complaint. The Management Team member will distribute to the parties copies of all submissions made.

4. The Professional Conduct Hearing

4.1. Professional Conduct Panel

The panel consisting of three experienced Ministers, one of whom will be a Trustee, will hear the complaint.

4.2. Purpose

The purpose of the professional conduct hearing is to examine the complaint and decide whether the complaint is proven or not. If proven, the panel will decide whether or not any sanction should be imposed on the minister or student concerned.

4.3. Presence of a support person

When appearing at the professional conduct hearing, the complainant and the person complained against may each be accompanied by a representative who may support and/or speak on behalf of the party concerned.

4.4. Failure to attend the Professional Conduct Hearing.

Where a complainant or member complained against fails or refuses, without good reason or notice, to attend a hearing, the chair of the panel has the power to decide:

- a) To proceed with the hearing in the absence of one of the parties
- b) To adjourn to a date not more than 28 days in advance
- c) To terminate the proceedings.

What constitutes good reason shall be solely at the discretion of the chair of the panel.

4.5. Notification of Findings

The decision of the professional conduct panel will be notified in writing to the parties within 28 days of the professional conduct hearing.

If the complaint is upheld the decision will state the grounds:

- a) Professional misconduct (the student or Minister has contravened the ethical or

procedural standards expected by the Interfaith Foundation); and/or

- a) Bringing the Interfaith Foundation into disrepute (the student or Minister has acted in such a way that the public's trust in the Interfaith Foundation might reasonably be undermined).

5. Sanctions

5.1. Sanctions available

The professional conduct panel, having regard to the findings, may impose one or more of the following sanctions:

For Students of the Seminary:

- a) Extra tuition and/or supervision with a named Minister or external counsellor
- b) Retaking of the course
- c) Dismissal from the course

For Interfaith Ministers and Spiritual Counsellors:

- a) Extra supervision/spiritual counselling with a named Minister or external counsellor
- b) Removal from the public Register of Interfaith Ministers
- c) Removal from membership of the IMA.
- d) Removal from any position (paid or voluntary) held in the Interfaith Foundation.

6. Appeals Procedure

6.1. Process

Appeals will be heard by the Chair of the Trustees if:

- a) S/he receives a request in writing within 28 days of notification of the professional conduct panel's decision and,
- b) There is new evidence that was not available to the panel or,
- c) There is evidence to suggest procedural impropriety.

6.2. Format of Appeal Hearing

The appeal will be by way of a re-hearing chaired by the Chair of Trustees. The Chair will decide whether to involve the same panel or to convene a new panel.

6.3. Notification of Decision

The Chair will report the appeal decision in writing to all parties involved. The decision will be final.