

# Designated Lay Ministers

---

October 2017



The United Church of Canada  
L'Église Unie du Canada

Designated Lay Ministers (October 2017)



Copyright © 2015, 2017  
The United Church of Canada  
L'Église Unie du Canada



The content of this resource is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd) Licence. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/ca>. Any copy must include the United Church copyright notice and the Creative Commons licence.

Care has been taken to trace ownership of copyright material contained in this text. The publisher will gratefully accept any information that will enable it to rectify any reference or credit in subsequent printings.

The United Church of Canada  
L'Église Unie du Canada  
3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300  
Toronto, ON  
Canada M8X 2Y4  
1-800-268-3781  
[www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca)

Design: Ian Ball, Graphics and Print



Supported by  
Mission & Service

# Contents

---

- Living Out God's Mission in the World . . . . . 4
- Definitions. . . . . 4
- Policy . . . . . 4
- Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice. . . . . 5
- Forms . . . . . 5
- Procedure . . . . . 6
  - Inquirer Stage. . . . . 6
  - Applicant Stage. . . . . 7
  - Recognition Stage . . . . . 10
  - Becoming a Designated Lay Minister. . . . . 11
- Appendix . . . . . 15
  - Adapting the Designated Lay Ministry Program for Youth Ministry. . . 15

## **ABOUT THIS RESOURCE**

This resource expands on the policy found under Entering Ministry; Pastoral Relations; and Oversight, Conflict Resolution, and Discipline in *The Manual*. Please refer to the current edition of *The Manual*.

This edition of the Designated Lay Ministers resource replaces the February 2017 edition. There are changes to the police records check policy and the requirements for mandatory training.

Further resources that are referenced may be found on the United Church website ([www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca)).

# Living Out God’s Mission in the World

---

The policies and procedures of The United Church of Canada exist to support the church in living out God’s mission in the world. The designated lay minister policies and procedures aim to support lay members of the United Church who are called to paid accountable ministry in their local context.

## Definitions

---

A “designated lay minister” is a member of the United Church who has been appointed by the presbytery to meet a specific need of a pastoral charge or other presbytery-accountable ministry for paid accountable ministry.

“Ministry personnel” is a general term that refers to members of the order of ministry, designated lay ministers, candidates serving under appointment, diaconal supply, and ordained supply.

A “presbytery-accountable ministry” refers to any kind of local ministry unit that is accountable to the presbytery. It includes congregations, pastoral charges, missions, and any outreach ministry or other ministry accountable to the presbytery.

For additional terms, please see the Definitions section of *The Manual*.

## Policy

---

The policies about inquiry and discernment may be found in *The Manual* under Entering Ministry:

- H.1.2 Forms of Paid Accountable Ministry in the United Church—Designated Lay Ministry
- H.1.3 Forms of Paid Accountable Ministry in the United Church—Requirements
- H.3 Discernment for Ministry
- H.4.1 Applicants for Designated Lay Ministry

The policies about lay ministry in general, and designated lay ministry specifically, may be found in *The Manual* under Pastoral Relations:

- I.1.3.6 Designated Lay Ministers
- I.1.8 Lay Ministry
- I.3.3.2 Discontinued Lay Ministry Appointment List

The policies about oversight of ministry personnel, including designated lay ministers, may be found in *The Manual* under Oversight, Conflict Resolution, and Discipline:

- J.3 Presbytery Oversight of Ministry Personnel

# Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice

---

Designated lay ministers are ministry personnel of The United Church of Canada, appointed by presbyteries/districts to serve presbytery-accountable ministries. The policy that defines the effectiveness of ministry personnel—Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel—was approved by the 38th General Council. Please familiarize yourself with these standards (available on the United Church website at [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca)).

## Forms

---

Forms that are part of the designated lay ministry process can be found on the United Church website ([www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca)).

# Procedure

---

## Inquirer Stage

Any member of the United Church who feels a call to ministry—designated lay ministry, diaconal ministry, or ordained ministry—must first complete a time of inquiry. Inquiry includes discernment of a person’s call and testing of their suitability for ministry.

The policies and procedures for inquiry and discernment may be found in the Entering Ministry resource, available on the United Church website ([www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca)).

Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre in Beausejour, Manitoba, offers a path to recognized designated lay ministry for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students. For more information on the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre and the programs for ministry offered by the centre, please visit <http://sandysaulteaux.ca>.

When a lay member has completed discernment, and discerned a call to designated lay ministry, the following are the procedures:

1. It is the responsibility of the governing body to forward the recommendation about the inquirer to the presbytery.
2. At the same time, it is the responsibility of the inquirer to make an application to the presbytery to be recognized as an applicant for designated lay ministry. The inquirer’s application must include a current vulnerable sector police records check. The inquirer is responsible for the cost of the police records check. The presbytery must see the original police records check, and may keep a copy of the document in the inquirer’s file.
3. Once the presbytery has received
  - (a) the Discernment Committee’s report;
  - (b) the recommendation of the governing body; and
  - (c) the inquirer’s application to be received as an applicant, including a vulnerable sector police records checkthe presbytery arranges for the inquirer to meet with the Conference Interview Board, or equivalent.
4. The Conference Interview Board interviews the inquirer, and makes a confidential report about the interview to the presbytery and the inquirer. The report is given at the same time to both parties. Whenever possible, the report is

### **Police Records Check Policies**

DLM applicants must refer to the Police Records Checks resource for additional information and ongoing obligations related to filing police records checks.

### **Conference Interview Board Interviews**

Inquirers and applicants are invited to bring a member of the Discernment Committee or another support person to all Conference Interview Board interviews.

given in person to the inquirer. The report from the Conference Interview Board makes one of the following recommendations:

- (a) recommended;
  - (b) recommended with suggestions;
  - (c) recommended with conditions; or
  - (d) not recommended.
5. The presbytery Education and Students Committee interviews the inquirer to determine suitability for ministry by considering the inquirer's genuine call to ministry, personal character, motives, faith, and general fitness for ministry in the United Church.
  6. The Education and Students Committee uses all of the following information to decide if it recognizes the inquirer as an applicant for designated lay ministry:
    - (a) the Discernment Committee's report;
    - (b) the recommendation of the governing body;
    - (c) the inquirer's application to be received as an applicant, including a vulnerable sector police records check;
    - (d) the Conference Interview Board's report and recommendation; and
    - (e) the presbytery interview report.
  7. The presbytery is responsible for deciding whether to recognize an inquirer as an applicant for designated lay ministry.
  8. The inquirer must be recognized as an applicant for designated lay ministry before beginning the Designated Lay Ministry Program.

### **Requirements for Presbytery Interviews**

Inquirers and applicants are invited to bring a member of the Discernment Committee or another support person to all presbytery interviews.

When the person being interviewed is an inquirer for designated lay ministry, every effort must be made to include a designated lay minister on the interview team.

## **Applicant Stage**

A person who has completed the inquirer stage and has been recommended for designated lay ministry is called an "applicant" until they are formally recognized as a designated lay minister. The applicant stage includes completing the DLM program (including complementary courses) and supervised ministry education.

## **Designated Lay Ministry Program**

1. The designated lay minister applicant is required to complete the United Church's Designated Lay Ministry Program at St. Andrew's Collage in Saskatoon. An alternative program is offered for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students at the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre in Beausejour, Manitoba.

2. The program is a three-year, community-based program consisting of three components:
  - (a) Learning Circles. Six residential learning circles over three years, each of 10 days' duration, held twice a year. The learning circles introduce theory and theology, guide students in reflection on integrating the content with the practice of ministry, and provide a peer setting for deepening formation in lay ministry. An online community supports preparation for and follow-up after the learning circles. The learning circles are required for all students regardless of previous formal learning or experience.
  - (b) Complementary Courses. Complementary courses are chosen to round out the educational program based on the learning needs and particular ministry focus on the student. Three courses, each a semester or equivalent, are taken at a theological school, university, or educational centre or other venue, as approved by the Designated Lay Ministry director and presbytery Education and Students Committee.
  - (c) Supervised Ministry Education. Three years of reflection and integration on the practice of ministry with an educational supervisor and lay supervision team in a presbytery appointment at a Conference-approved learning site.

The Designated Lay Ministry Program may be adapted to focus on youth ministry (see Appendix A).

### **St. Andrew's College DLM Diploma Program Entrance Requirements**

1. To be accepted into the Designated Lay Ministry Diploma Program, applicants must have met one of four criteria:
  - (a) successful completion of a Licensed Lay Worship Leader (LLWL) program;
  - (b) successful completion of the Learning on Purpose Module at the Centre for Christian Studies;
  - (c) successful completion of a lay certificate in ministry (at a United Church theological college); or
  - (d) successful completion of a prior learning assessment that demonstrates a basic level of competence in critical theological reflection.
2. Acceptance into the Designated Lay Ministry Diploma Program is normally contingent on final presbytery approval of an appointment. DLM applicants who do not have an appointment may be conditionally accepted into the program with permission from their home presbytery. In order to continue in the program beyond one learning circle, the student must secure an appointment.



## Supervised Ministry Education

3. Designated lay minister applicants are also required to complete a supervised ministry education placement in a presbytery appointment that is a minimum of 20 hours per week.
4. It is the responsibility of the designated lay minister applicant, in consultation with the Pastoral Relations Committee and the Education and Students Committee of the presbytery to find an appointment appropriate to their educational process.
5. The Education and Students Committee must confirm the applicant's acceptance into the Designated Lay Ministry Program at St. Andrew's College or Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre, and forward the confirmation to the Conference Internship and Education and Supervision Committee and the presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee of the location where the appointment has been found.
6. The Conference Internship and Education Supervision Committee must approve the pastoral charge or presbytery-accountable ministry as a supervised ministry education site. This approval must be shared with the Pastoral Relations Committee in the appointing presbytery.
7. The presbytery must approve the appointment to the pastoral charge or presbytery-accountable ministry, and ensure that an educational supervisor is named.
8. The pastoral charge must appoint a lay supervision team.
9. A designated lay minister applicant may be appointed to a pastoral charge or presbytery-accountable ministry that is outside of their home presbytery. The applicant would be a member of the presbytery in which they are appointed, but the oversight of their application to ministry would remain in their home presbytery, in which they are a corresponding member.
10. The home presbytery Education and Students Committee is responsible for interviewing the designated lay minister applicant each year to
  - (a) assess ongoing suitability and readiness for ministry; and

### What is a supervised ministry education site?

A supervised ministry education site is a pastoral charge or presbytery-accountable ministry that has been approved by the Conference Internship and Education Supervision Committee as a ministry site appropriate for teaching ministry. The site must have a presbytery appointment (a ministry position) of 20 hours a week or more, an educational supervisor appointed by the presbytery, and a lay supervision team appointed by the pastoral charge.

### Mandatory Training

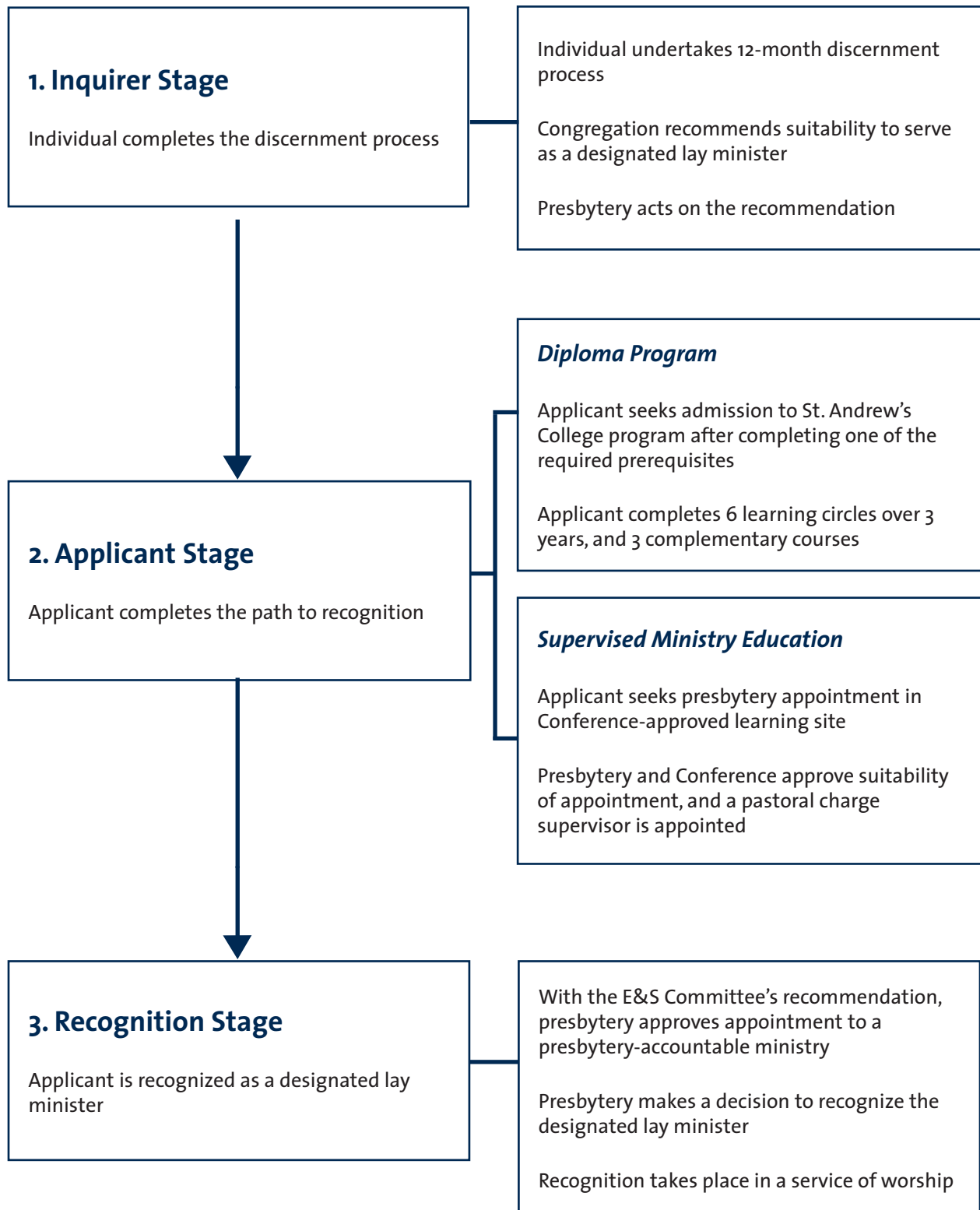
Designated lay minister applicants must complete mandatory trainings required of all ministry personnel. Refer to *Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting* for more information.

- (b) help the applicant clarify their learning goals for the Designated Lay Ministry Program, and assess completion of learning goals outlined for the previous year.
11. The Education and Students Committee uses the following resources in the annual interview with designated lay minister applicants:
    - (a) a self-assessment, provided by the designated lay minister applicant;
    - (b) a report on the applicant's educational progress provided by either St. Andrew's College or Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre; and
    - (c) a report provided by the supervised ministry education site and supervisor.
  12. Following the annual interview, the presbytery Education and Students Committee is responsible for confirming the status of the designated lay minister applicant with the presbytery.
  13. A lay member whose application process for designated lay ministry is terminated is no longer eligible for appointment. If a designated lay minister applicant is appointed at the time that their application process is terminated, the appointment must be ended with 90 days' notice following the policies and procedures of pastoral relations.
  14. If a presbytery receives a request from a governing body of a pastoral charge for an appointed designated lay minister applicant to administer the sacraments, the presbytery may request the Conference to license the applicant to administer the sacraments on the pastoral charge or presbytery-accountable ministry to which they are appointed for the duration of the appointment.

### **Recognition Stage**

15. At the beginning of the final year of the Designated Lay Ministry Program, the applicant is responsible for completing an application to be recognized as a designated lay minister and sending it to the home presbytery Education and Students Committee.
16. The Education and Students Committee must hold a final interview with the applicant, and send a recommendation to the presbytery for action.
17. The applicant must be recognized to an appointment. The applicant may be reappointed to their current ministry setting or appointed to a new pastoral charge or presbytery-accountable ministry.
18. The presbytery with oversight of the applicant's educational process is responsible for considering the recommendation of the Education and Students Committee and making a decision either to recognize or not to recognize the applicant as a designated lay minister.
19. If the presbytery decides to recognize the applicant, the recognition takes place at a meeting of the presbytery in a service of worship.
20. Presbytery informs Conference and the appropriate General Council working unit of the recognition.

# Becoming a Designated Lay Minister through the St. Andrew's College Diploma Program



# Designated Lay Ministry Diploma Program at St. Andrew’s College

## 1. Admission to St. Andrew’s College

- Applicant must have successfully completed presbytery Education and Students Committee and Conference Interview Board interviews.
- Applicant must meet the required prerequisites for the diploma program.

The application process includes:

- transcripts of previous formal education;
- a written reflection of 8–10 pages on your faith journey;
- a writing sample of 3–10 pages or more (a sermon would be ideal); and
- letters of reference from four people.

Applications are reviewed twice a year. Please contact the DLM director at St. Andrew’s College for deadlines and ensure that you begin the application process well in advance.



Begin the search for a supervised ministry education (SME) appointment of at least 50% (20 hours/week) at a Conference-recognized learning site.

- Successfully apply to the DLM Diploma Program
- Secure an appointment of at least 50% time

## 2. Educational Requirement

Applicant must complete three sets of requirements for the diploma program:

- Learning Circles.** Six learning circles of 10 days’ duration each over the course of three years (two learning circles per year).
- Complementary Courses.** Three one-semester courses are taken over the course of three years.
- Supervised Ministry Education.** Meeting regularly with an education supervisor (named by the presbytery/district) and the lay supervision team (members of the pastoral charge you serve) over the course of three years, while serving in an appointment of at least 50% time.

## Recognized Designated Lay Ministers

For more information on appointments, pastoral relationships, needs assessments, search and selection, and covenanting, please see the Pastoral Relations: Engaging and Supporting resource, available on the United Church website ([www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca)).

### Appointments

Recognized designated lay ministers are eligible for presbytery appointments that fill vacancies or supply positions within pastoral charges or other presbytery-accountable positions.

A recognized designated lay minister meets the quorum requirements for meetings of the pastoral charge or congregation. Additionally, a designated lay minister may chair the governing body of the pastoral charge (see *The Manual* B.7.6.1) and be a member of or the chairperson of the Board of Trustees (see *The Manual* G.3.5).

### Sacraments

The presbytery, upon receipt of a request from a governing body, may take an application to the Conference for a recognized designated lay minister to administer the sacraments; the licence authorizes the designated lay minister to preside at the sacraments within the presbytery to which the designated lay minister is accountable.

### Conference, Presbytery, and Congregational Meetings

When appointed to a pastoral charge or presbytery-accountable ministry, designated lay ministers are members of the presbytery in which they are appointed, and expected to be active participants in the life and work of the presbytery. Designated lay ministers are also members and active participants of the Conference in which they serve. Finally, as lay members of the United Church, designated lay ministers retain congregational membership, normally in their home congregation.

At the end of a pastoral relationship, it is the role of the presbytery together with the designated lay minister to discern questions of ongoing ministry leadership and presbytery membership. Continuous presbytery membership is not assumed at the end of the pastoral relationship and designated lay ministers are not transferred from one presbytery to another. At the beginning of each appointment, the new pastoral relationship is celebrated in worship at a presbytery meeting or at the local ministry.

### Retirement

Designated lay ministers who at the time of their retirement are serving in a presbytery appointment are retained on the roll of presbytery and may, at the request of the presbytery, be granted a licence to administer the sacraments by the Conference within the presbytery, in cooperation with a governing body of a pastoral charge or presbytery-accountable ministry.

### **Former Staff Associates (Designated Lay Ministers Who Are Not Recognized)**

Individuals who were appointed as staff associates at the time that the DLM policies came into effect were considered to be *designated lay minister applicants*.

If a former staff associate is interested in being recognized as a designated lay minister, they are required to follow the procedures outlined in this handbook. They are not, however, required to complete the inquirer stage, since they are already considered to be a DLM *applicant*. This means that a formal discernment process is not required.

If a former staff associate secures a DLM position in another pastoral charge, they are required to pursue the process of becoming recognized as a designated lay minister, including enrolling in the DLM program at St. Andrew's College.

A DLM applicant who was a former staff associate is eligible to fill a congregational designated minister position without pursuing the process of becoming recognized as a DLM. However, they will no longer be considered a DLM applicant. If they choose to become recognized after they have secured a CDM position, they are required to follow the full process, starting with the inquirer stage.

# Appendix

---

## Adapting the Designated Lay Ministry Program for Youth Ministry

As a student, there is flexibility in the St. Andrew's College program so that you may adapt the program to your particular interests in ministry.

### Learning Circles:

Some have specific content about ministry with children, youth, and young adults.



E.g., in a learning circle about preaching, biblical exegesis, and church history, a student could choose assignments that focus on how to engage youth in biblical stories and in understanding some church history, and in sharing faith stories in ways that are relevant to youth.

Students may tailor assignments to exploring youth ministry.

### Complementary Courses:

Students choose courses that meet learning goals.



Choose a youth ministry course at a theological school or education centre of the United Church to fulfill the complementary course requirements (e.g., the Diploma in Youth Ministry Program at the Atlantic School of Theology).

Courses may be unrelated or part of another program.

### Supervised Ministry Education:

Depending on appointment availability, students may be appointed to a ministry primarily with youth, children, young adults, or young families.



Students therefore gain practical experience in the practice of youth ministry through their supervised ministry education in their learning site.



[www.united-church.ca/handbooks](http://www.united-church.ca/handbooks)