

ACCREDITATION POLICY

1. CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

This Accreditation Policy has been prepared by the Accreditation and Ordination Committee in accordance with Clause 19.2.3.1 of the Constitution.

2. CATEGORIES OF ACCREDITATION

- 2.1 Provision is available for people to seek accreditation in any of the following categories.
- 2.1.1 **Pastor-Leader:** Women and men who have been called by a church community and are gifted to bring Godly leadership to the church community as a whole.
 - 2.1.2 **Pastor:** Women and men who have been called by a church community and are gifted to bring Godly leadership to a particular area of church focus.
 - 2.1.3 **Chaplain**
 - 2.1.4 **Church Planter**
- 2.2 The accreditation of an Associate Pastor will specify the particular category to which that accreditation applies. Should an Accredited Associate Pastor or Chaplain seek accreditation as a Pastor-Leader or in a different category as an Associate Pastor or as a Chaplain, they make application to the Accreditation and Ordination Committee (AOC). The AOC will then determine any additional qualifications, training or experience required to recommend such further accreditation, based on the specific circumstances of the individual. Once the applicant has satisfied the AOC that they have demonstrated the required Character, Ministry Experience and Learning, the AOC will recommend to the Assembly Board that the additional accreditation category be endorsed and the recommendation will be processed in accordance with Clause 19.2 of the Constitution.

3. ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

- 3.1 To demonstrate suitability for initial or continuing accreditation, a person must meet the following criteria. It is to be noted that the way in which people achieve these criteria will vary, depending on their past and present circumstances and the ministry challenges which they might reasonably be expected to confront in the future.
- 3.1.1 **Membership.** Unless otherwise approved by the Assembly Board, the person will have been baptised as a believer, and will be:
- a member in good standing of a Member Church, or
 - a representative of Baptist Churches of South Australia ministering outside South Australia, or
 - a person employed as a Pastor in an organisation not affiliated with Baptist Churches of South Australia, who has complied with the provision of Clause 9 of this Accreditation Policy.

- 3.1.2 **Character.** The person will demonstrate:
- an appropriate level of spiritual and relational maturity,
 - faithfulness to the Gospel,
 - integrity,
 - accountability,
 - commitment to Baptist values and principles.
- 3.1.3 **Ministry Experience.** The person will demonstrate competence in the relevant ministry functions as specified in the relevant Accreditation Training Manual.
- 3.1.4 **Learning.** The person will have satisfactorily completed Biblical, theological and practical training relevant to the area of ministry for which they seek accreditation and will demonstrate an ongoing commitment to:
- personal and spiritual growth,
 - theological and functional knowledge, and
 - understanding of ministry practices.
- 3.1.5 **Ethical Standards.** The person must certify that he/she agrees with, and will abide by, the Baptist Churches of South Australia Foundational Values, Code of Ethics and Child Protection Policy, including undertaking BCSA recommended Childsafe training.
- 3.2 In each case the AOC is delegated responsibility for determining the details of the assessment process used to assess each individual's compliance with these criteria.

4. ACCREDITATION PROCESS

- 4.1 Applications for Accreditation may be made to the AOC by the following:
- 4.1.1 A person who has successfully completed the Accreditation Training Process as outlined in the relevant Accreditation Training General Handbook.
- 4.1.2 A person who has been engaged in a paid or voluntary capacity in a pastoral ministry in a Member Church of Baptist Churches of South Australia for a significant period of time, normally not less than eight years, immediately prior to the application, and has given evidence of maturity, spiritual integrity, competency, adequate knowledge of the Scriptures, Baptist principles and policy, and intellectual ability.
- 4.1.3 A Baptist Pastor who is accredited/ordained in any other Australian State or Territory, who has accepted a call to a South Australian Baptist ministry, and who seeks transfer of their accreditation/ordination.
- 4.1.4 A Pastor in a Member Church whose name does not appear in the list of accredited/ordained ministers in any other State or Territory, but who is deemed to have had adequate theological training and whose record in the ministry is fully satisfactory to the Assembly Board.
- 4.2 An applicant is normally required to submit to the AOC a full application for Accreditation. That Application may be submitted in hard copy or electronically. It is required to contain:
- 4.2.1 A paper succinctly outlining the category of accreditation sought and the basis on which the applicant claims to be ready for ministry. This paper should include the following information:
- Full name, address, phone numbers, email address, date and place of birth, height, weight, occupation, and include a recent photograph.
 - A list of places of employment since leaving school.
 - Marital status including partner's name and attitude to the applicant's commitment to the ministry.

- Names and ages of children and names of any other members of the family.
- Educational qualifications, including list of subjects studied at tertiary level.
- Details of conversion and baptism.
- History of church membership.
- Details of any application to any other Christian organization for services or training.
- A current statement of the essentials of the applicant's Christian belief, their position on theological doctrine, and advice of their commitment to the Baptist Churches of SA Foundational Values, Code of Ethics and Child Protection Policy.

4.2.2 A completed Health Form.

4.2.3 A Working With Children Check (WWCC).

4.2.4 If relevant, a letter from the Applicant's spouse to the Accreditation and Ordination Committee.

4.2.5 A succinct written statement from the Applicant's Church Leadership Group, with their comments on the application. In arranging this, the Applicant is encouraged to meet with the Leadership Team to discuss God's call to ministry.

4.2.6 If the Applicant has completed the Accreditation Training Process, the final reports from the Accreditation Training Supervisor and Congregational Feedback Team.

4.2.7 Three completed Referee questionnaires. It is the Applicant's responsibility to arrange the three referees. Members of the Applicant's own family should not be used as referees. Furthermore, the list of referees should not include the Applicant's Senior Pastor or the Accreditation and Formation Facilitator as the AOC will consult separately with them.

4.2.8 If the Applicant has been employed in a non-church organization (e.g. as a school Christian Pastoral Support Worker) over recent times, including during the period of the Accreditation Training process, a reference, in general format, from the appropriate senior person in that work place.

4.2.9 A three-year Professional Development Plan for use should the Applicant's application for accreditation be approved. Before preparing this Professional Development Plan, the Applicant will consult with the Accreditation and Formation Facilitator, who will provide advice of any AOC requirements for the contents of that Plan.

The Applicant obtains an Application Pack by contacting the Personal Assistant to the Director of Ministries at the Baptist Centre.

5. CONTINUING ACCREDITATION PROCESS

5.1 The following process is established to enable a periodic review of accredited people to ensure ongoing achievement of appropriate Accreditation Criteria, and to encourage self-development and the maintenance of professional standards.

5.2 This process of professional development and continuing accreditation is promoted and conducted at all stages in a spirit of constructive and positive cooperation.

5.2.1 A Professional Development Plan is a three-year plan designed to assist an accredited person (participant) to maintain and update relevant Accreditation Criteria. It is a requirement that this programme will include the appointment of a suitable Professional Development Plan Mentor/Companion.

- 5.2.2 As part of an application for Accreditation, the applicant will prepare their initial Professional Development Plan (see 4.2.9)
 - 5.2.3 The participant will commence their initial Professional Development Plan upon approval of Accreditation.
 - 5.2.4 On a triennial basis, the AOC will write to each participant, asking for a succinct written summary of activities, relevant to the Accreditation Criteria, undertaken during the previous three years, and including guidelines to assist the participant in preparing this written summary. At the same time, the AOC will write to that participant's Church Leadership Group (or other appropriate body) and any other person that the participant agrees might help in the review, seeking a succinct written statement on the participant's suitability for continuing accreditation and encouraging consultation with the participant on this matter.
 - 5.2.5 Upon receipt of these documents, the AOC will check if there are any concerns. If not, the AOC will advise the Assembly Board, the participant, and the Church Leadership Group accordingly, the participant's accreditation will continue, and no further action will be required. The participant will then develop a self-development programme to cover the ensuing three-year period, with assistance, if sought, by the AOC.
 - 5.2.6 Should, upon receipt of the documents, the AOC have any concerns, it will arrange appropriate discussions with the participant and, if required, the Church Leadership Group, the participant's Professional Development Program Mentor/Companion, and/or any other person who is able to assist with the review. If, after these discussions, the AOC considers that suitability for the participant's continuing accreditation has been demonstrated, it will advise the Assembly Board, the participant, and the Church Leadership Group accordingly and no further action will be required, other than the preparation of the ensuing self-development programme.
 - 5.2.7 In the event that, after an appropriate level of consultation with the participant and others involved in the process, the AOC forms the view that the participant's accreditation should be discontinued, it will fully document its recommendations and forward them to the Assembly Board for consideration and whatever action, within the provisions of Baptist Churches of SA policies and the principles of 'natural justice', the Assembly Board deems appropriate.
- 5.3 **Notification of change of circumstances.** In the event of a change in circumstances, e.g. employment situation, marital status, etc., an accredited person is to advise the AOC in order to enable a review of their professional development and continuing accreditation arrangements.

6. ORDINATION PROCESS

- 6.1 The term "ordination" is used as an additional, optional, public recognition of a call to ministry for accredited pastors working in any of the ministry categories.
- 6.2 Should an Accredited Pastor or Chaplain decide to seek ordination, the following process applies.
 - 6.2.1 The accredited pastor contacts the AOC and indicates a desire to be formally ordained.
 - 6.2.2 The AOC makes sufficient enquiries to confirm that the person seeking formal ordination is an accredited South Australian Baptist Pastor or Chaplain.
 - 6.2.3 The AOC requests the Pastor's/Chaplain's local Church to arrange the Ordination Service, including in that Service the involvement of representatives of the wider family of churches.

7. PROVISIONAL ACCREDITATION PROCESS

- 7.1 A number of Churches include in their constitutions a requirement for a Pastor to hold Accreditation with Baptist Churches of SA.
- 7.2 Should a Pastor who is not accredited be called to ministry in such Church, a system of "Provisional Accreditation", covering a period of up to 12 months, is available.
- 7.3 Provisional Accreditation requires:
 - 7.3.1 The submission, by the individual concerned, of an application for Accreditation,
 - 7.3.2 A preliminary enquiry by the AOC to ensure that no potential problem exists, and
 - 7.3.3 A recommendation by AOC to the Assembly Board for Provisional Accreditation pending full processing of the application.
- 7.4 A recommendation for full Accreditation may be considered by Assembly after due process.

8. REVISION OF REGISTER OF ACCREDITED AND ORDAINED PERSONS

- 8.1 Clause 19.3.2 of the Constitution provides for the revision, by the Assembly, of the Register of Accredited and/or Ordained Persons.
- 8.2 The Assembly Board may recommend the removal from the Register of a Pastor/Chaplain in any of the following circumstances:
 - 8.2.1 After due investigation as outlined in Clause 5.2.5 of this Policy Statement relating to failure to fulfil the requirements of the Continuing Accreditation Process.
 - 8.2.2 In the case of a person who is deemed to no longer meet the Accreditation Criteria as outlined in Clause 3.1 of this Policy Statement.
 - 8.2.3 In the case of any person whose behaviour is deemed to be prejudicial to the witness of the Baptist Churches of South Australia or the good name of the Christian ministry. (Refer to the *Code of Ethics applicable to Pastors/Ministers of the Baptist Churches of South Australia and The Protocol for Investigating Complaints on Matters Pertaining to Breaches of the Code of Ethics.*)
 - 8.2.4 In the case of a person whose acknowledged theological views are deemed a radical deviation from the Foundation Values set out in Clause 4 of the Constitution.
 - 8.2.5 When an Accredited Pastor/Chaplain has not held a position relevant to the accreditation for a period of three years.
 - 8.2.6 When an Accredited Pastor/Chaplain is not working for the number of hours deemed by the Accreditation and Ordination Committee to be sufficient to maintain competence in the relevant accreditation category.
 - 8.2.7 When a Pastor/Chaplain resigns their Accreditation.

8.3 Retirement

Clause 19.3.1.3 of the Constitution provides for the inclusion in the Register of Accredited and/or Ordained persons those who have retired from active ministry on account of age or certified medical unfitness. A person so recorded will not be bound by the requirements of Clause 5, *Continuing Accreditation Process*. However, should that person accept a call as a Pastor or Chaplain in a Member Church or affiliated agency in an interim capacity, he/she will provide the AOC with a written affirmation of their agreement to uphold the Foundational Values of Baptist Churches of South Australia and to abide by the Baptist Churches of South Australia Code of

Ethics and Child Protection Policy, including undertaking the BCSA recommended Childsafe training.

9. EMPLOYMENT IN AN ORGANISATION NOT AFFILIATED WITH BAPTIST CHURCHES OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

An accredited person who accepts employment as a Pastor or Chaplain with an organization not affiliated with Baptist Churches of South Australia may retain their accreditation by adhering to the following process:

- 9.1 Upon accepting such employment, the person must advise the AOC in writing of the details, including the time-frame, of the proposed ministry role, and also, in the case of a Chaplain, the member church of which they are a member in good standing.
- 9.2 The AOC will confirm the suitability of the proposed ministry arrangement, and seek the approval of the Assembly Board for the accreditation to continue.
- 9.3 The accredited person will be advised in writing of the Assembly Board's decision.
- 9.4 Where the Assembly Board has approved the continuation of the Accreditation, the accredited person will continue to comply with the provisions of Clause 5, Continuing Accreditation Process.
- 9.5 The accredited person will advise the AOC of any change in their employment arrangements to enable the matter of their accreditation to be reviewed.