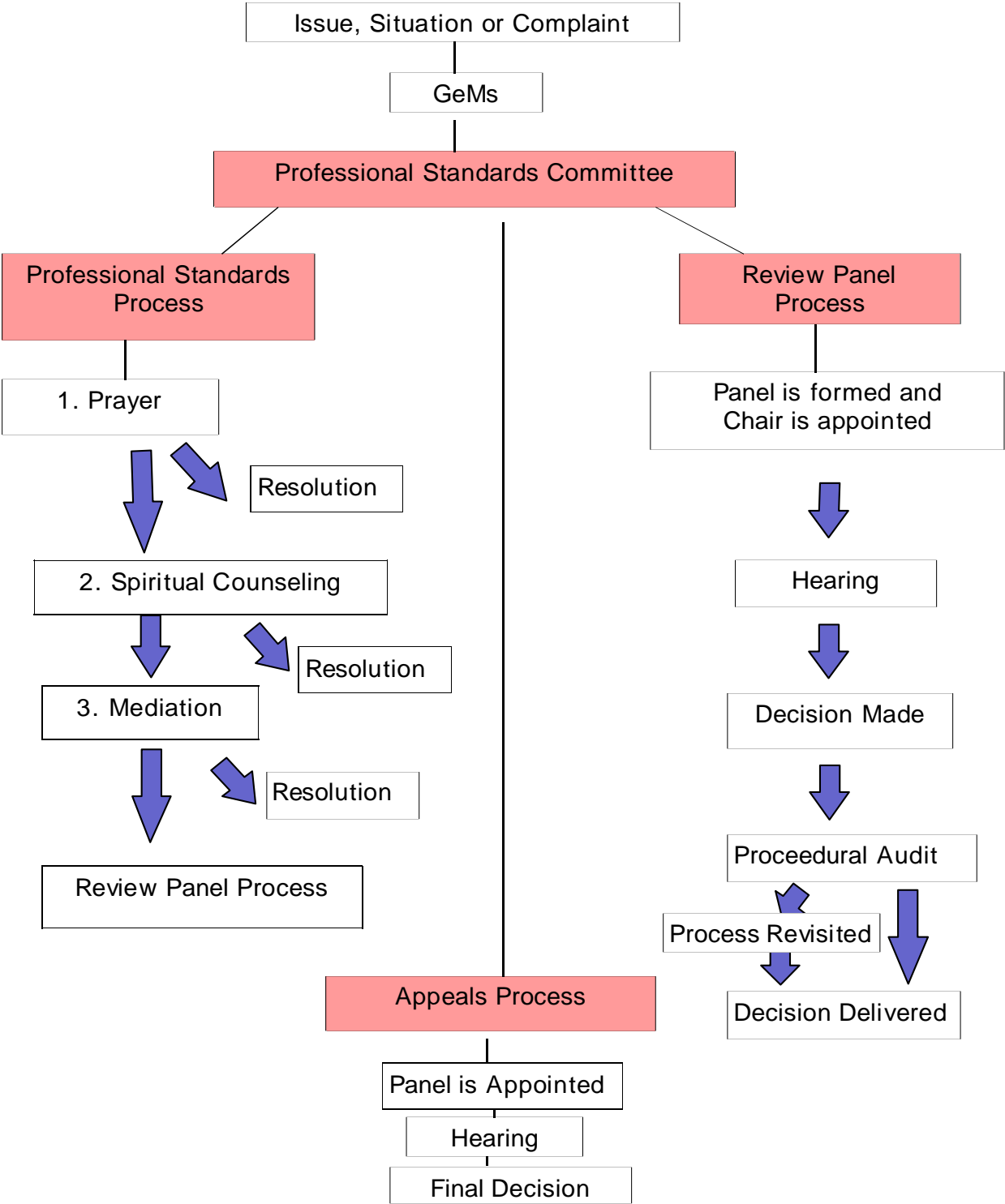


Professional Standards Process



United Centers for Spiritual Living

Professional Standards Policies and Procedures Manual

Effective July 2007

Science of Mind

A philosophy, a faith, a way of life

**United Church of Religious Science/United Centers for Spiritual Living
Professional Standards Policies and Procedures Manual**

Approved by the CORE Council

Effective

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Table of Contents

To come when document is final

Section One

**Professional Standards &
Ethics Team Process**

A. Professional Standards and Ethics Team

As an essential part of our dedication to a high standard of professional performance, the United Church of Religious Science/United Centers for Spiritual Living (UCSL) has established a Code of Ethics for its leaders and specific requirements for licensing its practitioners and ministers. If at any time, a practitioner or minister is found to be in violation of these licensing requirements, UCSL is authorized to suspend or revoke the license previously granted.

In addition, the Professional Standards and Ethics Team has been established and holds the responsibility to conduct inquiries, review complaints and oversee hearing panels to review situations that cannot be otherwise resolved. The members of this committee are recommended by GEMS and approved by the CORE Council Chair. These individuals are selected based upon their own impeccable ethics and demonstrated skills and behaviors appropriate to this work. This can include but is not confined to mediation skills, compassion, excellent listening ability, leadership, and deep spiritual practice. GEMS arranges that each member of this committee receives all the information and training necessary to be an active, productive, contributing member of this team.

The Professional Standards and Ethics Team is charged with the obligation to:

1. Treat all parties with respect, dignity, and impartiality.
2. Assist all parties with the provisions in this Professional Standards Policies and Procedures Manual .
3. Maintain a strict level of confidentiality.
4. Insure that counseling, mediation, and all other recommended actions have taken place.
5. Carry out its duties fairly and uniformly according to the guidelines and provisions of this professional standards manual in order to maintain consistent administration and enforcement of professional standards for all who are brought to the attention of this committee.

B. Process for Resolution of Disputes and Complaints

As a spiritual organization, UCSL is dedicated to being a transformative force for peace in the world. It is our intention to support peaceful resolutions for any issues that may arise within our communities. We are mindful of the words of our founder, Ernest Holmes who taught mutual respect and the control of conditions through the power of the mind.

We also wish to offer a compassionate ear to those who have a difference of opinion or who feel that a UCSL practitioner or minister is not living up to the terms of their license and Code of Ethics with UCSL. We are willing and available to assist in any situation that may arise but we will not support or participate in situations of conflict within our organization that do not support the practice of our spiritual principles. It is our intention to respond in a timely fashion in order to support our communities in peaceful resolution, kindness and with a loving response to all.

With these ideas in mind, this is the Professional Standards and Ethics Team's procedure for assisting our covenanted communities in resolving disputes or complaints:

Steps for Resolution of conflict or dispute:

1. Prayer

It is an integral part of our philosophy that our first resort is always to go to prayer. In order to be of assistance, our Religious Science practitioners will do Spiritual Mind Treatment with each person involved with this situation. Each person must go through this step before any further action is taken. Following the personal session, a prayer request will also be submitted to the World Ministry of Prayer to know the continued expression of truth for all concerned.

2. Spiritual Counseling

In addition to praying with the parties concerned, our Religious Science practitioners will also be available to do spiritual counseling with each person concerned. The Professional Standards and Ethics Team will make a recommendation for each situation, but it is recommended that there be no fewer than 3 sessions per person. It is the intention of this spiritual counseling to affirm our beliefs in the wholeness of all life and to ensure that each person understands and accepts their individual role in the creation of this situation and the meaning it has in their own life.

3. Mediation Process

When the counseling step is complete, if the situation is still unresolved, each person will enter into mediation to find a peaceful solution to the issue or problem. It is our belief and our intention that conflict of any nature can have a peaceful resolution. UCSL has trained mediators available to assist with this process. The cost for this service will be shared equally by UCSL and the member community.

When the recommendation of the committee is to mediate, GEMS will contact a trained UCSL mediator who will oversee this process. This process will include the services of the professional mediator and the opportunity for all concerned parties to be present during the mediation. The results of the mediation will be provided to the Professional Standards and Ethics Team in written documentation. These results will be kept on file at the GEMS office. After reviewing these findings, the Professional Standards and Ethics Team will initiate a panel review if necessary or suggest further action if the matter is still unresolved.

At no time during the mediation process may either side have legal counsel present. UCSL is a spiritual organization and will make decisions regarding ecclesiastical matters, adherence to its licensing requirements and operation of its covenanted communities in keeping with its community member covenant agreement and its own bylaws. Issues and actions involving any parties of a legal nature are outside the jurisdiction of UCSL and cannot be pursued through the Professional Standards Process.

4. Review Panel

If, after prayer, counseling and mediation, the matter remains open, the Professional Standards and Ethics Team can arrange for a panel review of the situation. The Review

Panel process will also be regularly utilized under certain situations of ministerial departure, leaves of absence and community change. Please see the Review Panel section of this manual for complete details on this process.

The Professional Standards and Ethics Team, under the authority designated to it by the CORE Council of UCSL, will make the final decision regarding any professional standards issue. Once the matter is resolved, the files will be sealed and cannot be accessed without CORE Council action.

C. Confidentiality

While UCRS/UCSL may communicate the final decision and disciplinary action to all parties involved, all matters of inquiry, mediation and paneling are confidential in order to protect the rights and privacy of each party. All parties will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement before entering into the process.

D. Notices

Any notices or paper documents required to be given may be served by personally handing it to the party or mailed first class to the address maintained by UCRS/UCSL. Any person giving written communication to UCSL in this process shall send it through GEMS and to the attention of the Professional Standards and Ethics Team.

E. Non Prejudicial Policy

All members of the Professional Standards and Ethics Team and the CORE Council shall endeavor to maintain an unbiased opinion when dealing with the Professional Standards process. As such, the policy is that no one will be involved at more than one level or aspect of a complaint. A person who has been previously involved, or has material information regarding the matter, shall disqualify himself or herself. Especially, no family member or anyone who has served as the spiritual leader or practitioner, teacher or student of the party in question, or has any kind of personal or professional relationship with the party in question, will participate in this process.

Section Two

Review Panels

Process

Purpose

The purpose of the Review Paneling process is to provide compassionate adjudication as needed to aid in the healthy transformation of credentialed ministers, students, practitioners and covenanted communities.

Intent

The intent of the Review Panel is to provide a peer review process and to separate the sanctioning body from the appeals body.

Function

The panel will be exploratory and determinative in character. It will conduct reviews of credentialed ministers, practitioners, ministerial students, and covenanted ministries.

Decisions

Decisions of the Review Panel will be considered to be decisions in effect under the authority of the Core Council of United Centers for Spiritual Living. A process providing for appeals to Review Panel decisions remains separate from the Review Panel process.

Position Regarding Legal Counsel:

Review Panels and appeals to Review Panel decisions are considered purely religious and ecclesiastical in nature. In this regard legal and other counsel may not be present during the review process. The subjects of review are allowed pastoral support. If any party appears with their legal counsel, the process will be adjourned and the matter will remain in abeyance until all parties appear without legal counsel.

Position Regarding Documented Evidence:

Reviewee(s) will be given the opportunity to see and examine copies of documentation that prompted the review.

Position Regarding Cost of the Process:

United Centers for Spiritual Living and the reviewee(s) will be responsible for their own respective costs in the review process, including travel, lodging and all other related expenses.

Position Regarding Disposition of Material:

Material furnished to the reviewee(s) and the Review Panel Team members is considered to be relevant to the Review Panel only and should not be shared or copied for any purpose other than the review. All material other than that to be retained in the United Centers for Spiritual Living office files should be disposed of when the review is completed. Material retained by the UCSL office shall include the final report, interview notes, and any documentation received by the review team during the review process.

Review Panels

The Review Panel Process is designed to provide essential support and counsel at significant moments within a ministry or a community. It is the focus, intention and spirit of the Review Panel Process to serve as a resource and guidance tool so that ministers, spiritual leaders and practitioners may have counsel and support during times of change in their ministry. It is equally its intention to support our communities when going through times of transition so that we may assess the immediate or long term needs as well as offer services and resources of assistance and experience, thereby ensuring stability and success.

As part of the Global Heart community, we know that we do not walk alone. The Review Panel Process is a system designed to ensure that this is true in our lives and ministries.

I. Review Panel Process

A. Formation of a Review Panel

The Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair shall appoint a three person panel, plus one or more alternates, and select a presiding Chair from the panel. If one of the reviewees is a minister, practitioner, or lay person then at least one of the panelists must be of the same classification. A hearing date of at least twenty (20) business days forward shall be determined and all parties notified using Form PS 2, Notice of Panel Review Hearing.

The **World Ministry of Prayer** shall be notified of the date and time of the Panel Review and a practitioner will hold the panel in prayer during the proceedings.

B. Challenge of Panel Member

In order to conduct a fair hearing and insure due process for all parties, it is essential that no member of a Panel be related through blood to the fourth degree to either party, have prior substantial knowledge, or a bias toward either party. Either party may challenge a panelist using Form PS 3, which is to be provided with the Notice of Review Panel.. The challenge must be mailed or returned to GEMS at least ten (10) business days prior to the hearing and the Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair shall make a final determination of the parties' challenge.

C. Continuances

Either party may request a continuance if it is at least seven (7) days prior to the review. The continuance shall be granted only for significant reasons such as health conditions, a material witness unavailable, etc. A continuance request shall be submitted through GEMS and the

Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair shall make a determination of the acceptability of the reason.

If the hearing has convened and a continuance is requested, the Review Panel Chair shall have the authority to decide the issue. If granted, the requesting party may be required to pay for any expenses incurred by the other party and UCSL to reconvene the hearing at a later date. Only one continuance shall be granted.

D. Panel's Review

Panel members will be given the opportunity to review the material and evidence available to become familiar with the issues. Prior discussions regarding the issues with either the reviewee or the inquirers are not allowed. If it is found that a panel member has discussed the issue with the reviewee(s), the staff, or anyone else before the panel hearing, that panel member will be disqualified. It is the intention of this panel to give a fair and unbiased review.

E. Panel Alternates

Alternate panel members may be named and notice given to the parties on the original mailing of Form PS 2. The alternates will serve as a backup as needed. If an alternate is present at a hearing they may not participate in any discussions or deliberations unless seated as a member of the Review Panel. Once seated, an alternate shall become a permanent panelist with full rights and authority.

F. Hearing Location

The primary location of hearings shall be in the offices of United Centers for Spiritual Living. The Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair has the authority, if circumstances warrant, to use another location. A telephone conference call process may be used if the circumstances warrant it in the opinion of the Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair.

G. Complaint Hearings: Witnesses, Evidence, and Testimony

Each party is responsible for their witness's attendance at the hearing. If a witness is unable to attend the hearing, the matter should be discussed with the Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair in sufficient time to set parameters for obtaining sworn statements from said witness and the witness' availability during the hearing process for a telephone conference call whereby all parties and the Panel may question the witness.

All parties may present such evidence, as they deem necessary to prove or disprove the allegations. Five (5) photocopies of any written evidence shall be brought to the hearing so the other party and Panel members can be given copies. The Panel Chair will have all parties distribute copies of the evidence at the beginning of the hearing.

All persons giving testimony shall affirm the truth of his/her statements. It is the intention of this process to operate within the context of spiritual community and the expectation that all parties share a commitment to lead lives of integrity within themselves and with each other.

If a person testifying is not a party in the action, his/her attendance in the hearing will be allowed only during the testimony and subsequent questioning by either party. Questioning of any witness shall be performed compassionately, without badgering, undue repetition, demeaning, or inquiring into their character.

H. Admission to the Complaint

A reviewee may admit to the actions that created the complaint filed in the action. In this regard, a formal hearing may be replaced by a process whereby a three (3) person panel shall review the complaint and the file to determine the appropriate action.

I. Transcripts and Recordings

There shall be either a recording secretary present at the hearing or a tape recording made of the proceedings. This shall be considered the official record. A party may have a recording secretary present at their own expense. A party may not tape record the proceedings themselves. Any party or UCSL has the right to review another person's transcript or tape. No copies will be made. Parties are authorized to use transcripts or tape recordings only for the review of the hearing. Any other use shall be considered a violation of the confidentiality rules. At the conclusion of the proceedings, the tapes will be destroyed.

J. Costs

All parties shall bear their own costs which include court reporters, travel costs, and all expenses incurred that are related to the matter. Panelist costs are paid by UCSL.

K. Failure to Attend

If either party fails to attend a scheduled and noticed hearing, the Panel Chair should attempt to contact them by whatever means possible. The hearing will continue if no valid cause can be determined for the failure to attend.

L. Rendering a Decision

Upon the conclusion of the hearing, all parties shall leave the room. The Review Panel shall deliberate in private until a decision is reached. A simple majority shall decide the issue on each of the alleged violations. The parties shall be notified in a timely manner, in writing, by Form PS 4, which is completed and signed by the Review Panel.

II. Complaint Filing Process

A. Filing a Complaint

Complaints may be filed alleging that a minister or practitioner has violated one or more of the provisions of the Code of Ethics. The complaint can be initiated by a party to the action or by anyone who has explicit facts and knowledge. This complaint will be sent to the GEMS manager who will then contact the ER and the Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair.

Additionally, the Professional Standards and Ethics Team can initiate an inquiry and/or file a complaint if there is no one willing or able to do so.

The filing of a complaint shall be in writing on Form PS 1, "Notice of Complaint" and delivered or mailed first class to offices of UCSL to the attention of GEMS. When a complaint is received it will be delivered to the Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair for review.

Any person who requests assistance in the filing of a complaint shall be directed to an appropriate member of the committee.

For purposes of complaint, a situation is considered current if it is within 2 years of the current date. Situations occurring more than 2 years ago shall be considered inactive.

A copy of the Complaint Form PS 1 shall be given to the reviewee as soon as practical. If no formal complaint has yet been filed, the respondent should be notified of the inquiry and given a blank Form PS 1 in order to have knowledge of the process and their rights and obligations.

Once the complaint is filed and reviewed by the Professional Standards and Ethics Team, the process as defined in Section I will go into effect and be administered by the Team.

B. Withdrawal of a Complaint

The complaint may be withdrawn at any time prior to a Review Panel being convened. If the complaint is withdrawn, the Professional Standards and Ethics Team will review the situation and determine if the allegations and evidence are such that they should act as the Complainants in the place of the original Complainant.

If the panel has convened, the Review Panel will determine whether to allow the complaint to be withdrawn. If it is allowed to be withdrawn, the matter will be reviewed by the Professional Standards and Ethics Team for the possibility of filing as the Complainants.

C. Amendment of a Complaint

A complaint may be amended, if deemed to be material, no less than 5 days before the Review Panel. If the complaint is amended less than 5 days before the panel, the panel will be postponed and the matter will be reviewed by the Professional Standards and Ethics Team.

If the panel has been convened, the request to amend is subject to approval by the Review Panel. If granted, the respondent shall be given the opportunity to continue the hearing at a later date in order to prepare.

III. Criteria for Review

A. Ministers

It is the intention of the process to support each minister in their ministry to ensure their own well-being and success. A Minister may be subject to review:

1. If he or she leaves any ministry prior to completing two years in that ministry.
2. If he or she is absent from active ministry for a period exceeding one year.
3. If a signed statement is received by a UCSL official alleging that a Code of Ethics violation has occurred.
4. If the minister fails to follow the ethical codes and licensing requirements of UCSL.
5. If he or she leaves two ministries during any five year period.

B. Ministerial Students and Practitioners

A ministerial student or practitioner may be subject to review:

1. If a signed statement is received by an UCSL official alleging that a Code of Ethics violation has occurred.
2. If a formal complaint is received from a Dean or official of Holmes Institute, or from the Spiritual Leader of the community to which the student or practitioner belongs.
3. A decision to review a ministerial student or practitioner may be made or not made based on all of the facts and circumstances known to the appropriate USCL official.

C. Covenanted Member Communities

It is the intention of the process to support strong healthy communities and to assist them in times of transition or stress. A ministry or community may be subject to review:

1. If the ministry “loses the service” of two ministers during any three year period. The ER will consult with the community and determine if a review is necessary.
2. If the ministry “loses the service” of a minister prior to him/her serving at least two years in the ministry.
3. If a signed statement is received by a UCSL official alleging that a Code of Ethics violation has occurred.
4. If the ministry has been without a UCSL minister for one year.
5. If the ministry fails to follow current policies and procedures of UCSL.
6. If the ministry hires a spiritual leader who is not currently approved for ministry employment by UCSL.

IV. Categories of Decisions

Following are the only four categories of decisions that can be made by a Panel Review Team.

A. Clearance

The decision that contains NO STIPULATIONS where:

1. UCSL ministers are cleared for UCSL community or ministry employment.
2. UCSL ministries are cleared for UCSL minister employment.
3. Ministerial students are cleared to continue pursuing licensing as a UCSL minister.
4. Licentiate Ministers are cleared to continue pursuing ordination.
5. Practitioners are cleared for continued practice under their license.

B. Required Plan of Action

The decision where specific tasks or achievements must be attained before a reviewee(s) can be cleared.

1. A minister may not pursue ministerial employment at UCSL churches unless stated otherwise in the Required Plan of Action created by the Review Panel.
2. Ministries may not seek to fill ministerial vacancies unless stated otherwise in the Required Plan of Action. This includes fulfillment of the transitional ministry process. Approval of GEMS Manager is also required.
3. A Ministerial student may not be licensed as a minister unless stated otherwise in the Required Plan of Action.
4. A licensed minister may not be ordained unless stated otherwise in the Required Plan of Action.
5. A licensed practitioner may not continue to practice under a UCSL license unless otherwise stated in the Required Plan of Action
6. A reviewee(s) placed on a Required Plan of Action may appeal the decision of the Panel Review Team within thirty [30] days in writing to the Appeals Panel Chair.

C. Suspension

Suspension is a severe decision. Suspension is given only if the Review Panel Team finds that the reviewee(s) cannot be cleared and no tasks or achievements can be prescribed that would alter the decision.

1. Ministers on suspension may not serve as ministers/spiritual leaders in UCSL ministries.
2. Ministries that employ suspended ministers risk suspension and loss of membership in UCSL.
3. Ministerial students on suspension may not graduate or be licensed.
4. Suspended reviewee(s) may appeal the decision of the Review Panel Team within thirty [30] days in writing to the Appeals Panel Chair.
5. Suspended reviewee(s) who have exhausted their appeals may be eligible at a later date to seek restoration under the UCSL Restoration Policy.

D. Reclassification

A church community that has been reviewed may be reclassified as a study group or teaching chapter affiliated with UCSL if any of the following is true:

1. No UCSL approved spiritual leader has been leading the ministry in the past year.
2. A UCSL approved leader is not being sought.
3. Regular Sunday Services are not being offered.
4. Services are held in a private home, not a public setting.
5. A quorum of the Board has met less than ten times in twelve months.
6. There has not been an annual meeting in twelve months.
7. It does not maintain minimum requirement for charter status.

E. Revocation

Revocation is the most severe decision available. Should the Review Panel Team decide to revoke a licentiate or ordained minister's license, s/he may appeal that decision according to Article V of the United Centers for Spiritual Living's Ministerial Code.

V. New UCSL Employment during the Panel Review Process

A. Ministers

1. From the time of notification of review, a minister can not seek employment as a minister/spiritual leader in a UCSL community or begin a new UCSL ministry until the review process is complete and s/he is cleared.
2. The Required Plan of Action for a minister will state whether or not the minister can seek employment while the Required Plan of Action is being fulfilled.

3. Should a minister under a Required Plan of Action seek employment with a covenanted UCSL community, s/he must provide GEMS with a signed statement to accompany their resume. This statement will include the following:

I have been reviewed by a panel of my peers and I am bound by a Required Plan of Action with a completion date of _____.

A copy of the Review Panel report including my Required Plan of Action is available from the Review Panel chair [include name and contact information here]. I hereby grant permission for you to discuss the report with the Review Panel chair.

Should I be selected while under the Required Plan of Action, I will sign a conditional contract until such time as I am cleared for employment in UCSL.

Should I subsequently be suspended, or have my license revoked, the employment contract will be null and void.

B. Ministries and Communities

1. Prior to initiating a review of a ministry or community, GEMS may, after consultation according to policy, release them to hire a credentialed minister in a temporary or transitional capacity.
2. A ministry or community being reviewed cannot seek the services of a full-time credentialed minister until the review process is complete and the ministry is cleared unless allowed as stated above.
3. The Required Plan of Action for a ministry will state whether or not the ministry can seek the services of a credentialed minister or a transitional minister while the Required Plan of Action is being fulfilled.
4. Should a ministry under a Required Plan of Action wish to hire a credentialed minister, the ministry must provide a signed statement to GEMS. This statement will include the following:

This ministry has been reviewed under the Professional Standards review process and is bound by a Required Plan of Action.

A copy of the Review Panel Team report including the ministry's Required Plan of Action is available from the Review Panel Chair [include name and contact information here].

We hereby grant permission for applicants to discuss the report with the Review Panel Chair.

We have advised our prospective minister that we are only able to offer a conditional contract until such time as clearance is granted. Should we subsequently be suspended, the employment contract will be null and void.

VI. Review Panel Procedural Audit

Before a Review Panel decision is delivered, a procedural audit will be conducted of the Review Panel Decision. This audit will take place within 14 days of receipt of the written request for audit from the Review Panel team. This audit will take place before the reviewed party is notified of the Review Panel Decision.

A. Purpose

The purpose for this procedural audit is to ensure that the Panel Review process has been complete and executed according to policy.

B. Process

The process for this procedural audit is:

1. Proceedings are confidential.
2. The audit team will consist of two Ecclesiastical Representatives, one member of the Stewardship Core, and one member of the GEMS department. Communication among the audit team members will be by the most expeditious manner possible [bridge line, e-mail, fax, personal meeting, etc.].
3. The appointed audit team members will have access to all data used by the Review Panel with the purpose of determining whether or not the policies and procedures were followed. The GEMS member of the team will provide a check list outline of the policy and procedure to more easily facilitate the audit.
4. If the audit team determines that the Review Panel policies and procedures were not followed, the case will be remanded to the Review Panel for reconsideration. Specific comments pertaining to the basis of the remanding will be made.
5. Within five [5] days after the decision is reached, the Audit Team will provide written notification of the outcome to the Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair, the Review Panel members, the GEMS Manager and the ECC.

C. Timeliness

Procedural audits must be completed before an appeal may be made to the Appeals Panel.

D. Decision is Final

Audit decisions of the Audit Team will be considered to be decisions in effect under the authority of the CORE Council of UCSL.

VII. After Care

Following the completion of the Professional Standards Process, the appropriate Service Area ER will check in once a month with the individual or community to offer support and assistance and report back to the GEMS Manager. The resources of UCSL will be available to the individual or community as appropriate to support the completion of this issue and the fulfillment of the decisions made in the Professional Standards process. It is recommended that 6 months following the completion of the process, GEMS mail an evaluation query to the individual or the community to ascertain the effectiveness of the process and to obtain ideas for improvement in the program and policies of the Professional Standards and Ethics Team.

Section Three

Disciplinary Action

I. Type of Action

The Review Panel shall recommend the type of action to be taken if one or more allegations are found to be substantiated. Actions or sanctions *for ministers* that may be recommended include:

- a. Letter of admonishment or reprimand.
- b. Suspension for a specific period of time.
- c. Permanent revocation of license.
- d. Specific education requirement.
- e. Probation with monitoring and/or other specific action.
- f. Financial redress.
- g. Referral of the matter to appropriate governmental agencies.

II. Review of File

At the discretion of the Review Panel, the Review Panel may review the minister or practitioner file that is maintained by UCSL. Previous actions or current probation may be used to determine the disciplinary action.

III. Review Panel's Recommendation

The Review Panel shall use Form PS 4 to notify the parties of the recommended disciplinary action, which shall be mailed by GEMS within five days of receipt of recommendation. The Professional Standards and Ethics Team shall automatically adopt the recommendations in the absence of an appeal.

Section Four

Appeals

I. Time Limit for Appeal

Either party is granted a right to appeal any aspect of the Review Panel decision. An appeal must be filed on the appropriate form within twenty-one (21) days of receipt of the Review Panel's written decision. The Professional Standards and Ethics Team must adopt the findings and disciplinary action of the Review Panel in the absence of an appeal.

II. Basis for an Appeal

An appeal may be filed by either party that believes the following to be true:

A. New Evidence

Newly discovered material evidence which could not, with reasonable diligence, have been available at the time of the hearing shall be summarized on the Appeal Request, Form PS 5. This shall be reviewed by the Review Panel members who heard the case to determine if the newly discovered evidence would have changed the outcome if it had been known during the hearing. If so, the Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair shall order a new Review Panel with panel members unfamiliar with the case.

B. Misapplication or Procedural Flaw

A party may appeal if there is a belief that the Review Panel misapplied or misinterpreted the Code of Ethics, the disciplinary action is inappropriate, or procedures were not followed causing a lack of due process. The appeal will be heard by the Appeals Panel only as to the reasons claimed for the appeal. A member of the Review Panel that heard the matter shall testify and present evidence as necessary. The Appeals Panel shall meet the same test of qualifications as the members of the Professional Standards and Ethics Team as detailed in this manual. A majority of those in attendance at the appeals hearing shall determine the merit of the request. If the Appeals Panel determines the appeals request to be valid, a new Review Panel will be scheduled with members unfamiliar with the matter.

III. Status of Disciplinary Action During an Appeal

If the appeal request results in a new hearing, the Review Panel's original decision shall be set aside, and the disciplinary action recommended by the Review Panel shall become official only upon ratification by the Professional Standards and Ethics Team. The newly seated Panel will recommend new disciplinary action, if violations of the Code are substantiated, after the rehearing. The investigation, hearing, or appeal process shall not interfere with an action of placing a minister on mandatory leave.

IV. Appeals Panel

A. Appeal Process

1. Only a reviewee(s) may appeal a Review Panel decision for a Required Plan of Action, suspension, or reclassification.
2. Once the reviewee(s) has(have) decided to appeal the Review Panel findings, a minister reviewee may not seek placement as a minister and a ministry reviewee may not seek a minister [temporary or permanent]. The appellant must report every thirty [30] days to the GEMS Manager during this period, and is not required to fulfill conditions of the Required Plan of Action while the appeal process is underway.
3. Appeals must be initiated within twenty-one [21] days after written notification of the audited decision. Appeals must be made in writing to the Appeals Panel Chair with a copy sent to the Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair.
4. The Appeals Panel will convene as deemed necessary by the Appeals Panel Chair. Panels must meet within 30 days of the receipt of the appeal by the Appeals Panel.
5. Grounds for hearing an appeal will be claims for any or all of the following:
 - Lack of due process.
 - Violation of rights.
 - Improper weighting of evidence.
 - New evidence that would justify a new review.
 - Inappropriate decision.
6. The Appeals Panel will decide whether or not the claim(s) that led to an appeal had merit and determine whether a significant error had been made in the application or interpretation of Professional Standards policies and procedures. The Appeals Panel will review the submissions from the Audit Team, the appellant, and other parties of interest as determined by the Appeals Panel.
7. Process notes:
 - a. The Appeals Panel will respond to an appeal within thirty [30] days of its filing.
 - b. The Appeals Panel, at its discretion, may invite the reviewee(s) to meet with them.
 - c. Proceedings are confidential.
 - d. All parties are responsible for their own respective costs.
 - e. When a decision is reached, all parties will be informed of the decision within five (5) days.
 - f. Written decision will also be sent to the Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair, the GEMS Manager, the ECC, and the CORE Council Chair.
 - g. Reports and all materials will be returned to the GEMS Department.
8. The Appeals Panel may decide any of the following:
 - a. To remand the case to the Professional Standards and Ethics Team.
 - b. To affirm the decision of the Review Panel.
 - c. To reverse the decision of the Review Panel.

- d. To make recommendations to the CORE Council via the Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair for policy adjustment.
9. The final level of appeal is the Appeals Panel.
10. Decisions of the Appeals Panel will be considered to be decisions in effect under the authority of the CORE Council of United Centers for Spiritual Living.

Section Five
Composition of
Professional Standards and
Ethics Team and Review
Panels

I. Composition of Professional Standards and Ethics Team, Review Panels, and Appeal Panels

A. Members of the Professional Standards and Ethics Team and The Review Panels will not be:

1. Members of the staff or management of UCSL
2. Members of the Appeals Panel.
3. Members of the CORE Council of UCSL.
4. A member of the ER group.

B. The Chair of the Professional Standards and Ethics Team will be recommended by the GEMS Manager and approved by the Chair of the CORE Council of UCSL

C. The members of the Appeals Panel will be recommended by the Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair and the GEMS Manager, and appointed by the Chair of the CORE Council. The Appeals Panel consist of qualified persons who meet the membership requirements outlined herein. There is no term limit.

D. The Chair of the Appeals Panel will be appointed by the Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair.

II. Qualifications

A. Qualifications for members of the Professional Standards and Ethics Team and of Review Panels

1. Will have served successfully for at least 3 years as a spiritual leader of a ministry and be an ordained minister.
2. Will be recommended by their regional Ecclesiastical Representative, subject to final approval by the Chair of the CORE Council.
3. Will have been trained in Peacemaking or a recognized equivalent approved by the GEMS Department.
4. Will attend initial Professional Standards and Ethics Team Training and refresher training at least once every two [2] years and remain current in UCSL policy and procedure at all times.
5. Will have demonstrated commitment and loyalty to UCSL and its programs through involvement in regional or national ministry team work; regular attendance at regional and national conferences; regular financial support of the ministry they serve; and compliance with UCSL policies, bylaws, and ethics.

B. Qualifications for Review Panels of ministerial students

Qualifications for review of ministerial students will be the same as for the ministers' Review Panel with the exception that each Review Panel will have one ministerial student in their senior year (third year) of ministerial study as a voting member.

C. Qualifications for Appeals Panels

1. Must meet the qualification requirements for Review Panel members listed above.
2. Will be appointed by the Chair of the CORE Council from a list jointly recommended by the GEMS Manager and the ER Team.
3. Willing to serve on a Case Review Team.

D. Ad Hoc Members

Anyone with some, but not all, the above qualifications are welcome to attend Ministry Review Panel Training and be an ad hoc member of the Review Panel Process. However, until all the above qualifications are met they can not serve as a member of a Review Panel or an Appeal Panel.

III. Responsibilities

A. Chair of the CORE Council pertaining to the Professional Standards and Ethics Process:

1. Appoint a Chair for the Professional Standards and Ethics Team from a list provided by the GEMS Manager
2. Appoint qualified members to the Appeals Panel from a list jointly recommended by the GEMS Manager and the ER team.

B. Ecclesiastical Representatives pertaining to the Professional Standards and Ethics Process:

1. Consult with two individuals trained in the Review Panel process prior to initiating a Review Panel.
2. Use all possible alternatives within established Professional Standards and Ethics Team policies prior to initiating a Review Panel. When in doubt, a review should be initiated.
3. Participate in on-going professional development in Peacemaking, Professional Standards training and leadership skills.
4. Conduct a procedural audit of Review Panel decisions.

C. Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair

1. Respond to the ER's initiation of a Review by appointing a Review Team of at least three members.
2. Notify GEMS and the ECC of the composition of the Review Team so that pertinent information can be forwarded.
3. Establish and maintain a Case Review Record for tracking cases.
4. Submit a quarterly written report to GEMS, summarizing Professional Standards and Ethics Team actions.
5. Recommend policy changes and submit a written report to the Core Council annually.
6. Organize, promote, and conduct Review Panel Training and inform members of policy updates as necessary.

D. GEMS Manager

1. Provide the Application for Reinstatement of Active Status to a minister who requests clearance.
2. Attach the signed statement provided by a credentialed minister under a Required Plan of Action to their resume when sending it to member ministries for employment considerations.
3. Provide resource services to the Review Panel members, the Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair, and Review Panel Team members as required.
4. Provide pertinent information from the file of the minister or ministry being reviewed to the Review Panel Team, upon request of the Professional Standards and Ethics Team Chair.
5. Maintain copies of reports of Professional Standards and Ethics Team action and attendant information.

Section Seven

Standard Forms

Notice of Complaint

PS 1

Filed: _____ 20__

Complainant(s)

Respondent(s)

Complainant(s) allege violations as follows: _____

_____ The above allegation(s) and any attached statements have been filed with United Church of Religious Science/United Centers for Spiritual Living

_____ The above allegations are being investigated by the Professional Standards and Ethics Team because of information that has become known.

Complainant(s)

Signature _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Notice of Hearing

Form PS 2 Part 1

_____ VS. _____
Complainant(s) Respondent(s)

Above parties are hereby notified that the Chair of the Review Panel has designated _____/_____/_____, _____ o'clock __.m. at _____ as the time and place for hearing the above case.

This hearing is being convened regarding an alleged violation of _____

You are hereby notified to appear at the time and place so designated.

Three (3) of the following persons shall constitute the Panel:

A potential Panel member may not be seated if he or she is related to either party or has prior substantial knowledge or a bias to any party. Please refer to the attached form, Challenge a Panel Member, if you believe this to be true. This form must be submitted at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing.

A copy of the outline of Hearing Procedures is on the reverse side of this notice. Please refer to it in preparation of the hearing. Legal Counsel is not permitted during any portion of the Panel Hearing.

Dated: _____

UCSL Agent's Signature

Outline of Hearing Procedures

Form PS 2 Part 2

To all Parties:

In accordance with the Professional Standards Policies and Procedures Manual, the Review Panel Chair has been selected for the hearing. In addition to presiding at the hearing, he/she will rule on the admission or exclusion of evidence and questions of hearing procedure.

The hearing procedures will be as follows:

1. Prior to giving any testimony, all parties and witnesses shall sign a statement that what they are reporting to the Panel is true.
2. Since UCSL is a spiritual organization and only has the power to rule in the internal matters of ecclesiastical issues, there may be no legal counsel present during the proceedings.
3. The complainant may present such evidence or give such testimony as is deemed applicable to the matter being heard. The parties are reminded that no testimony is to be admitted relating to the character or general reputation of any person unless such testimony has a direct bearing on the matter being heard.
4. At the conclusion of testimony the other party may question the witness.
5. Witnesses will be allowed in the hearing room only while giving testimony and during questioning.
6. When both parties have concluded their questioning of a witness or a party, members of the Panel may question the witness.
7. Upon completion of all testimony, each party may make a closing statement, first the complainant, followed by the reviewee(s).
8. The deliberations will be conducted in a closed session immediately after the hearing.

The foregoing is not intended to restrict or limit the parties in their presentation or defense of the dispute. It is a suggestion for an orderly process to guide the panel itself.

Challenge of Panel Member

Form PS 3 Rev. 2/96

_____ VS. _____
Complainant(s) Respondent(s)

A Panel member shall not serve if he or she is related to any party by blood or marriage to the fourth degree or has prior substantial knowledge of the complaint or a bias to either party.

In the matter stated above, I hereby challenge the qualification of the following named individual(s) as a Panel Member(s) for the following reasons.

IMPORTANT This form must be mailed or delivered to GeMs at least ten (10) days prior to the scheduled hearing date.

Member Challenged: _____

Reason: _____

Member Challenged: _____

Reason: _____

Dated: _____

Party's Signature

Appeal Request

Form PS 5

The Professional Standards and Ethics Team of United Church of Religious Science/United Centers for Spiritual Living held a hearing on the ____ day of _____, 20____. The party(ies) reviewed at this time were

The undersigned party(ies) to this matter file(s) this appeal request within twenty-one (21) days of receipt of the Review Panel's decision based upon the following reason:

____ New evidence that was not available at the time of the hearing as follows:

Attach if additional pages if necessary.

____ Misapplication of a Code, inappropriate disciplinary action, or procedural flaw of due process as follows:

Attach if additional pages if necessary.

Appealing Party

I (we) declare to the best of my (our) knowledge and belief that the statements contained in this Appeal Request are true and correct.

Signature _____

Address _____

Telephone _____