# Introducing the New Continuing Education Standard for Ministry Personnel

## Transcript of video

### Welcome and introduction: Who are we?

Welcome. I’m Deborah Deavu, the Chair of the Standards for Accreditation Committee within the Office of Vocation.

And I’m Adam Hanley. I serve as the staff support to the Standards Committee within the Office of Vocation.

### What is this new Continuing Education Standard?

As a church, our work intentionally reflects Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, and Daring Justice. Ministry personnel who serve in communities of faith or in other ministry appointments take opportunities to nurture and grow their gifts and skills in these areas.

**[Slide:] Policy**

The expectation for ministry personnel serving in communities of faith or in other ministry appointments is that, at least every three years, they will engage in nurturing and growing competencies in the areas of Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, and Daring Justice (the [[Call](https://united-church.ca/community-and-faith/welcome-united-church-canada/our-call-and-our-vision)](http://Call) of The United Church of Canada).

The new Continuing Education Standard outlines the scope of taking advantage of those opportunities when they arise.

In the new Continuing Education Standard, ministry personnel use the [Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry Leadership](https://united-church.ca/leadership/supporting-ministry/office-vocation) and the Call of The United Church of Canada to meet their continuing education goals.

In a two-step process, they select competencies for growth and learning, and then connect their chosen competencies with the Call and Vision.

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Step 1. Select competences for growth and learning.

Step 2. Connect competencies with the Call of the United Church: Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, and Daring Justice.

I know you might want to think about what the implications of the standard might be, but I want to assure you that this framework is really flexible and considers the many types of continuing education that ministry personnel engage with.

#### [Slide]

The standard does NOT:

* Change the study leave time or the minimum allowance
* Require you to track hours
* Require a minimum of continuing education units
* Report hours or details to the Office of Vocation

### Why is the Office of Vocation introducing this new standard?

As you know, the Office of Vocation and the local community of faith both have responsibilities related to continuing education.

The Office of Vocation establishes standards for ministry personnel’s continuing education.

The community of faith oversees the continuing education of ministry personnel who are called or appointed to serve them.

The 42nd General Council gave the Office of Vocation the responsibility for establishing standards for continuing education and professional development of ministry personnel in 2015.

### When did the Board of Vocation approve this standard?

The Board of Vocation approved this Continuing Education Standard late in 2023, although the Office of Vocation Standards for Accreditation Committee had been working on it since 2020, including surveying ministry personnel and Ministry and Personnel Committees in 2022.

**[Slide] Survey said! Ministry personnel and M&P Committees respond**

The surveys determined:

* How ministry personnel use their study leave and continuing education allowance
* Specifics on beneficial experiences of continuing education throughout one’s vocational life
* The level of oversight provided by M&P Committees
* The expectations of the M&P Committee

The survey results influenced the content of the standard, and an initial draft was reviewed in consultations in the spring of 2023.

### Where can you find a copy of the Continuing Education Standard?

The Continuing Education Standard can be found on the [Office of Vocation page](https://united-church.ca/leadership/supporting-ministry/office-vocation) at united-church.ca. The Office of Vocation is also sending out a notice by e-mail, with a link to the Standard, to all ministry personnel and chairs of M&P committees.

**[Slide]:** Screenshot of the document

### Where can ministry personnel use the standard in their ministry context?

Whether ministry personnel are serving in a community of faith or in an “other ministry appointment,” they can use the framework outlined in the standard to make their plans for the year’s continuing education.

For ministry personnel serving a community of faith, the standard is meant to inspire conversation between them and their M&P Committee.

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Conversation starter between minister and the M&P Committee

### Where can an M&P committee use the standard?

If used as intended, the standard should focus the conversation about continuing education between ministry personnel and M&P Committees. It must *never* be used in an adversarial way.

It’s also meant to give M&P Committees some awareness of what kinds of continuing education ministry personnel could focus on.

### Can you show me how ministry personnel could use the continuing education framework?

As a diaconal minister, I intentionally attend diaconal events: Diakonia of The United Church of Canada], Diakonia of the Americas and Caribbean, and the Diakonia of World Federation gatherings. These events include worship, theme speakers, offsite visits, and a chance to get to know each other.

The competency that this could fit into is **Competency #1:** **Engage in Spiritual Practices and Development of Identity in Ministry**—demonstrates a clear understanding of call to ministry and sense of identity.

**[Slide:]** Screenshot of the competencies within the framework

These events ground me in my diaconal identity, being with others not just from Canada but around the world who hold ministries of education, service, pastoral care, and social justice at the heart of their ministry identity.

These gatherings expand my vision and challenge me to wonder what that might look like where I am. It calls me to hear and tell stories of what diakonia looks like in other places.

I come back re-energized and encouraged—it places me in community, reminds me that I am not alone in this.

The **Call** might be spiritual development: self-care, time with colleagues to discuss ministry, to share joys, sorrows, concerns.

It also might be **Daring Justice**. Itopens my eyes and expands my horizons by learning and experiencing many forms of diaconal ministry.

I encourage you to read the Continuing Education Standard document for more examples of how to apply the framework to different continuing education opportunities.

**[Slide:] What’s next?**

Read the Continuing Education Standard document.

If you have questions, contact either:

* Vocational Minister
* regional council Pastoral Relations Minister

From this video and your own review of the standard, we hope you have a real sense of the flexibility of this framework and that you’ll see that you can explore new paths for lifelong learning aided by this flexible framework.

If you have any questions, contact your Vocational Minister or regional council Pastoral Relations Minister.

Most of our ministry personnel engage annually in lifelong learning. We, within the Office of Vocation, are grateful for their commitment to being faithful, well-equipped, and effective leadership.

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Thank you for embracing lifelong learning!

God bless.