

UUMA Guidelines and Code of Conduct items that apply to the relationship between a congregation's minister and ministers wishing to participate in that congregation

UUMA COVENANT (excerpt):

United in our call to serve the spirit of love and justice through the vocation of ministry in the liberal religious tradition, we, the members of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, covenant with one another: To support one another in collegial respect and care, understanding and honoring the diversity within our association;

Expectations of Conduct (selected items)

6. If I am not a settled, interim or consulting minister of a congregation served by a colleague, I will not offer, and will not accept requests for, ministerial services or public leadership from members of that congregation, or in that congregational context, unless I have a covenant with or until I have consulted with the minister serving there.

7. If my colleague asks me to refrain from performing such service or appearing in a leadership capacity, I will comply.

15. When my ministry to a congregation has ended, I will refrain from offering or performing ministerial services for members of that congregation, except at the invitation of my incumbent successor colleague(s).

16. If I belong to or attend a congregation served by a colleague, I will honor the prerogatives of that colleague's responsibility for leadership in that congregation, and in all ways seek to support that colleague's ministry. I will initiate an open and direct conversation with my colleague(s) in order to create a mutually agreed covenant, expressed in a Letter of Understanding, about the role I am to play in the church. If I have a partner, I will seek to have my partner participate in the conversation and be one of the mutually agreeing parties to the covenant and a signer of the Letter of Understanding about the roles each of us will play in the church. If I am a member of a congregation that I once served, this may include the possibility of absenting myself from any presence at all. I will articulate clearly my own hopes and expectations regarding my relationships in the congregation, and my intention to avoid wielding any undue influence among the members. I will only participate in leadership roles that support and benefit the ministry, and at the request and with the permission of the minister(s). I will neither listen to nor volunteer criticisms of my colleague(s). As necessary I will describe appropriate channels of communications to members seeking to express concerns.

17. If I am a settled minister in a congregation having retired or other ministers as members, I will seek to foster cordial and candid relations with my colleagues in recognition of the value of their presence in the congregation. I will initiate an open and direct conversation with my colleague(s) to enter a mutually agreed covenant, expressed in a Letter of Understanding, about their participation in the life of the congregation. I will bring any concerns arising from the relationship my colleague(s) have with the congregation directly and promptly to the attention of my colleague(s).

18. If I am elected Minister Emerita/us/x, I will recognize that this honor sustains a continuing but changed relationship with the congregation I once served as one of its ministers. I will initiate an open and direct conversation with my successor colleague(s) to enter a mutually agreed covenant, expressed in a Letter of Understanding, about the role I am to play in the church. My successor colleague may choose to include the congregation's board of trustees in this covenant process. I will honor the prerogatives of my colleague's responsibility for leadership, and in all ways seek to support that colleague's ministry.

19. If I am a settled minister in a congregation that has elected a Minister Emerita/us/x, I will recognize the meaning of the honor that the congregation has bestowed, and the significance of the continuing relationship of ministry it implies. I will initiate an open and direct conversation with my Emeritus/a colleague(s) to enter a mutually agreed covenant, expressed in a Letter of Understanding, about their participation in the life of the congregation. I will bring any concerns arising from the relationship the Minister Emerita/us/x has with the congregation directly and promptly to that colleague's attention.

20. In calling attention to any deviation by my colleague(s) from this Code, I will adhere to the processes described in Accountability Procedures, below. So doing will not be regarded as a failure of collegial loyalty.

E. Interim Ministers (selected item)

3. There are relationships between ministers and congregations, agencies and enterprises that endure beyond the tenure of any particular minister. Interim Ministers are expected to acknowledge and respect these relationships and not disrupt them arbitrarily. Colleagues in enduring relationships with congregations in transition are expected to support the work of the Interim Minister. These enduring relationships include: Emeritus status as voted by the congregation; Affiliation status of Community Minister(s); and, the congregational call of other ministers.

H. Ministers Emeritus/a

1. The role of Minister Emeritus/a must be exercised in such a way as to support the well-being of the congregation and the success of future ministers.
2. All expectations in the Code of Professional Conduct and the section of the Standards regarding "Departing Ministers" apply to Ministers Emeriti/ae, except as specified in the Declaration granting Emeritus/a status. The declaration, however, cannot over-ride the expectation of a covenant, expressed in a Letter of Understanding, with any successor colleague.