

## 1. An Accredited Pastor

An accredited pastor is a member of Baptist Churches SA & NT Assembly. This means accredited pastors are key leaders in our movement, entrusted alongside our member churches to carry our history and to shape our future. Accreditation is both an affirmation by the movement of an individual's calling and a commitment by the individual to ongoing relationship, ongoing development, and leadership within the movement.

BCSANT Member churches place their confidence in accredited pastors to lead and serve them. Our churches have entrusted the Assembly, Assembly Board, and the Accreditation and Ordination Committee (AOC) to both discern and affirm a person's calling, competence, and character to be accredited. Accreditation is an affirmation by the movement that a person is competent to be called by a church in our movement as its pastor.

To be an accredited pastor is a great privilege and responsibility that requires a clear sense of calling, a wide-ranging knowledge, a broad variety of skills, a depth of character and maturity, and a heart alive to God. We therefore see the value of theological education, spiritual formation, the development of ministry skills in context, and alignment and commitment to our movement of churches across our accreditation processes.

## 2. 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. The following definitions from the Constitution apply.

**Accreditation** is “the recognition by the Assembly that a person's spiritual gifts, training, demonstrated ability, life experience and personal and spiritual maturity appropriately equips them to serve Jesus Christ within the Baptist Churches of South Australia and the Northern Territory in the following roles: As a senior or sole pastoral leader of a local church; As a pastor with defined responsibility in a local church; As a chaplain representing the Association; As a church planter; As an intercultural worker; In other roles to be determined from time to time by the Assembly.”

**Continuing Accreditation** is “the process designed to assist Accredited persons to continue their personal development, spiritual and practical ability and appropriate accountability to carry out their ministry.”

**Ordination** is “the solemn public act conducted under God, by which the Assembly confirms a person's call to Accredited ministry within the Churches of the Association and that person makes a public commitment to represent the Association faithfully.”

**Accreditation and Ordination Committee (AOC)** is a sub-committee of the Assembly Board who are entrusted to “Recommend to the Assembly Board for approval the criteria and process by which a person may obtain and retain Accreditation and Ordination; Consider applications made according to the application process from persons desiring Accreditation and/or Ordination and advise the Assembly Board of its recommendation with respect to each applicant; Receive regular progress reports on people accepted into the Accreditation and/or Ordination process and make suitable recommendations to the Assembly Board; and Interview applicants for Accreditation and/or Ordination as part of the application and Continuing Accreditation processes.”

## 3. Categories of Accreditation

While there are various roles listed in clause 19.1.1 of the BCSANT Constitution for which a person may be accredited, there is one single category of accreditation for all persons who have been affirmed by Assembly as appropriately equipped and called to serve in one of these roles.

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A person must have received a call from a BCSANT church (or other recognised body in the case of a church planter, chaplain, or intercultural worker) in order to be accredited. Aspects of the process of Accredited Ministry Formation may be adapted to the circumstances of an individual who is identified as called to and serving within one of these particular roles.

## 4. Accreditation Criteria

- 4.1 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.
- 4.1.1 **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 and the Northern Territory ministering outside South Australia and/or the Northern Territory, or
  - a person employed as a Pastor in an organisation not affiliated with Baptist Churches of South Australia and the Northern Territory, who has complied with the provision of Clause 9 of this Accreditation Policy.
  - the person will have also satisfactorily demonstrated a commitment to and connection within the Baptist movement.
- 4.1.2 **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.
- 4.1.3 **Ministry Experience and Learning.** The person will have satisfactorily completed the relevant biblical, theological, and practical training required to seek accreditation, and will demonstrate both competence in the relevant ministry functions (as specified in the Accredited Ministry Formation Handbook) and an ongoing commitment to:
- personal and spiritual growth,
  - theological and functional knowledge, and
  - understanding of ministry practices.
- 4.1.4 **Ethical Standards.** The person must certify that they agree with, and will abide by, the Baptist Churches of South Australia and the Northern Territory Code of Conduct, Code of Ethics, and Child Protection Policy, including undertaking BCSANT recommended Child-safe training and having a current Working with Children's Check.
- 4.1.5 **Relational Commitment.** The person must certify that they agree with, and will abide by, the Baptist Churches of South Australia and the Northern Territory Foundational Values and have satisfactorily demonstrated their commitment to Baptist values and connection within the Baptist movement.
- 4.2 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.

## 5. Accreditation Process

- 5.1 Applications for Accreditation may be made to the AOC by the following:

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- 5.1.1 A person who has successfully completed the Accredited Ministry Formation Process as outlined in the Accredited Ministry Formation Handbook.
- 5.1.2 A person who has been actively engaged, in either a paid or voluntary capacity, in pastoral ministry within a Member Church of BCSANT for a significant and sustained period of time (normally not less than eight years immediately prior to the application) and who, during that time, has gained extensive experience and demonstrated consistent engagement with the wider movement that is satisfactory to the AOC. Such a person must also give evidence of maturity, spiritual integrity, competency, adequate knowledge of the Scriptures and Baptist principles and policy.
- 5.1.3 A person who is accredited/ordained in any other Baptist Australian State or Territory ministry, who has accepted a call to a SA or NT Baptist ministry, and who seeks transfer of their accreditation/ordination.
- 5.2 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:
- 5.2.1 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, , occupation, citizenship and residency status, and include a recent photograph.
  - A list of places of employment since leaving school.
  - Marital status, including spouse's name if applicable.
  - Names and ages of children and names of any other members of their immediate family.
  - Educational qualifications, including an academic transcript or details of relevant subjects studied at tertiary level.
  - Details of conversion and baptism.
  - History of church membership.
  - Details of any application for accreditation (or equivalent) to any other faith-based organisation.
  - 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 & NT Foundational Values, Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy.
- 5.2.2 A completed Health Form.
- 5.2.3 A Working With Children Check (WWCC).
- 5.2.4 If relevant, a letter from the Applicant's spouse/fiancée/fiancé to the Accreditation and Ordination Committee.
- 5.2.5 A succinct written statement from the Applicant's Church Leadership Group, with their collective comments on the application. In arranging this, the Applicant is encouraged to meet with the Leadership Team to discuss God's call to ministry.
- 5.2.6 If the Applicant has completed the Accredited Ministry Formation process, the final reports from the AMF Coach and Congregational Support Representatives.
- 5.2.7 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 Ministry Accreditation Facilitator as the AOC will consult separately with them.
- 5.2.8 If the Applicant has been employed in a non-church organisation (e.g. as a school Christian Pastoral Support Worker) over recent times, including during the period of the

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Accredited Ministry Formation process, a reference, in general format, from the appropriate senior person in that workplace.

- 5.2.9 A written commitment that the Applicant will meet the requirements of maintaining currency of accreditation if the application is accepted.

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

## 6. Continuing Accreditation Process

- 6.1 The following process is established to enable ongoing review of accredited people to ensure ongoing maintenance of appropriate Accreditation Criteria and professional standards, and to encourage relevant self-development.
- 6.2 This process of continuing accreditation is promoted and conducted at all stages in a spirit of constructive and positive cooperation.
- 6.2.1 All accredited persons are required to engage in a process developed by the AOC to maintain currency of their accreditation including professional development, professional pastoral supervision, and compliance.
- 6.2.2 The Ministry Accreditation Facilitator will monitor this process and report to AOC if any requirements for maintenance of accreditation are not being met.
- 6.2.3 Should, upon receipt of this report, the AOC have any concerns, it will arrange appropriate discussions with the participant and, if required, the Church Leadership Group 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 program in order to maintain currency of accreditation.
- 6.2.4 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 & NT policies and the principles of 'natural justice', the Assembly Board deems appropriate.
- 6.3 Accredited persons employed by certain external bodies (e.g. Australian Defence Force, Baptist Mission Australia) may come under additional agreements between AOC and their employing body in order to meet the requirements of Continuing Accreditation.
- 6.4 **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.

## 7. Ordination Process

- 7.1 The term "ordination" is used as an additional, optional, public recognition of a call to ministry for accredited persons working in any of the ministry categories.
- 7.2 Should an Accredited person decide to seek ordination, the following process applies.
- 7.2.1 The accredited person contacts the AOC and indicates a desire to be formally ordained.
- 7.2.2 The AOC makes sufficient enquiries to confirm that the person seeking formal ordination is accredited with Baptist Churches SA & NT.
- 7.2.3 The AOC requests the applicant's local Church to arrange the Ordination Service, including in that Service the involvement of representatives of the wider family of churches through BCSANT.

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## 8. Provisional Accreditation Process

- 8.1 A number of Churches include in their constitutions a requirement for a Pastor to hold Accreditation with Baptist Churches of SA & NT.
- 8.2 Should a Pastor who is not accredited be called to ministry in such a Church, a system of “Provisional Accreditation”, covering a period of up to 12 months, is available.
- 8.3 Provisional Accreditation requires:
  - 8.3.1 The submission, by the individual concerned, of an application for Accreditation,
  - 8.3.2 A preliminary enquiry by the AOC to ensure that no potential problem exists, and
  - 8.3.3 A recommendation by AOC to the Assembly Board for Provisional Accreditation pending full processing of the application.
- 8.4 A recommendation for full Accreditation may be considered by Assembly after due process.

## 9. Revision of Register of Accredited and Ordained Persons

- 9.1 Clause 19.3.2 of the Constitution provides for the revision, by the Assembly, of the Register of Accredited and/or Ordained Persons.
- 9.2 The Assembly Board may remove an accredited person from the Register in any of the following circumstances:
  - 9.2.1 After due investigation as outlined in Clause 5.2.3 of this Policy Statement relating to failure to fulfil the requirements of the Continuing Accreditation Process.
  - 9.2.2 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.
  - 9.2.3 In the case of any person whose behaviour is deemed to be prejudicial to the witness of the Baptist Churches of South Australia and the Northern Territory or the good name of the Christian ministry. (Refer to the BCSANT Code of Conduct and Regulations for Dealing with Complaints.)
  - 9.2.4 In the case of a person whose acknowledged theological views are deemed a radical deviation from the Foundational Values set out in Clause 4 of the Constitution.
  - 9.2.5 When an Accredited person has not held a position relevant to the accreditation for a period of three years.
  - 9.2.6 When an Accredited person 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.
  - 9.2.7 When an Accredited person resigns their Accreditation.
- 9.3 Retirement
  - 9.3.1 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. The AOC will maintain a list of both non-active and active retired pastors. A person recorded on the non-active retired pastors list will not be bound by the requirements of Clause 5, Continuing Accreditation Process.
  - 9.3.2 A person recorded on the active retired pastors list will provide the AOC with a written affirmation of their agreement to uphold the Foundational Values of BCSANT and to abide by the BCSANT Code of Conduct, Code of Ethics and Child Protection Policy, including undertaking the BCSANT recommended Childsafe training. A person recorded on the active retired pastors list will also engage in the process approved by the AOC from time to time to maintain active retired pastor status.

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- 9.3.3 Should a person on the non-active retired pastors list accept a call as a Pastor or Chaplain in a Member Church or affiliated agency, including in an interim capacity, they will move to the active retired pastors list and as such need to meet the requirements of clause 8.3.2.

## 10. Employment in an organisation not affiliated with Baptist Churches of South Australia and the Northern Territory

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

- 10.1 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 or Inter-cultural Worker, the member church of which they are a member in good standing.
- 10.2 The AOC will confirm the suitability of the proposed ministry arrangement and seek the approval of the Assembly Board for the Accreditation to continue.
- 10.3 The accredited person will be advised in writing of the Assembly Board's decision.
- 10.4 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.
- 10.5 The accredited person will advise the AOC of any change in their employment arrangements to enable the matter of their Accreditation to be reviewed.