



**Churches
of Christ**

Building Communities
of Hope & Compassion

Accreditation And Endorsement Of People In Ministry Policy

of Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania Inc

Version 1

Approved 05.10.2017

Evaluation, Review, and Update

CCVT is eager to receive feedback on this policy. Any future revision will consider feedback from Affiliates and their Leaders, and any developments in regulation and best practice. The CCVT Accreditation and Endorsement Policy will otherwise be reviewed regularly.

This document is clearly marked with the date of adoption by the Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania Inc Board. The Board will provide opportunity for Affiliates and their Leaders to contribute to the review of this policy.

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Definitions	5
General Principles	6
Fig.1 Accreditation Process Outline	7
Accreditation Process	8
Applying for Accreditation	8
Review of Accreditation.....	9
Cancellation of Accreditation	10
Accreditation for Retired Ministers.....	10
Ministers Who Are Not Accredited	10
Fig. 2 Endorsement Process Outline	12
Endorsement Process.....	13
Ministry Discernment Panels	13
Approved Course of Study.....	14
Approval of Endorsement and Ordination	14
Transferring Accreditation/Endorsement/Ordination from another State or Denomination .	14
Cancellation of Endorsement	15
Appeal Processes	16
Accreditation and Endorsement	16
Ministry Discernment Panel.....	16
Cancellation of Accreditation and Endorsement	16
Minimum Requirements	17
Transition Process	19
Accreditation.....	19
Endorsement.....	19
Authorisation	20
Related CCVT Documents	20

Introduction

Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania (CCVT) is a movement of more than 130 Communities of Hope and Compassion (or, churches and agencies, in all different shapes and sizes) spread across Victoria and Tasmania, each embedded in their neighbourhoods as a sign, witness, and foretaste of the Kingdom of God.

CCVT Inc is the networking and coordinating body that exists to support these diverse Communities of Hope and Compassion in their God-given and mission-propelled calling or vocation in their location, in their neighbourhoods.

The relationship between CCVT and Affiliated Communities and their Leaders is a covenant partnership, expressed in a document called Affinity (:2). This covenant (like a marriage covenant) seeks to describe a living and dynamic partnership, where more is implied than stated, and where much of the future is yet to be lived out. CCVT values this covenant partnership with each Affiliate.

CCVT is committed to doing better at building Communities of Hope and Compassion and developing Leaders to lead them. We believe that CCVT will be doing better at this when each place of ministry and mission affiliated with CCVT is a Safe Place for everyone to grow in their discipleship of Jesus, and in their relationships with one another. To CCVT, providing those kinds of Safe Places is both an expression of the Gospel and the Kingdom, as well as fulfilling the increasing expectations of community and government.

We also believe that CCVT will be doing better at developing Leaders when each Minister, supported by their Community (church or agency), is accredited by CCVT for the role they fulfil. Accreditation includes a commitment by Ministers, again supported by their Community, to lifelong learning.

This is expressed through a range of personal and professional development options, including ongoing external supervision and accountability as described in this Accreditation and Endorsement Policy.

This is part of CCVT's commitment to being a safe place for all people who engage with us, as outlined in the  [CCVT Safe Places Policy](#).

Affinity (:2) outlines the requirement that affiliated churches and agencies seek the accreditation of all appointed Ministers.

The purpose of this document is to set out CCVT's policy in relation to the accreditation and endorsement of Ministers.

This policy applies to CCVT Inc. and its subsidiary entities, all CCVT Affiliates in Victoria and Tasmania, and CCVT's national partner Stirling Theological College.

Definitions

Accredited is used to indicate the status of a person who has been recognised as fulfilling the criteria of the accreditation process contained in this policy.

Accreditation and Endorsement Taskforce is a group established by the CCVT Board to manage and monitor the processes and requirements for accreditation, endorsement and marriage licences.

Affiliate is a church or agency affiliated with CCVT.

Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania (CCVT) is a movement of more than 130 Communities of Hope and Compassion (Affiliates) spread across Victoria and Tasmania.

Council of Churches of Christ in Australia (CCCA) is the national body for Churches of Christ, made up of representatives from each of the states.

Endorsement is used to refer to the process contained in this policy to further equip and form people for professional ministry in CCVT once they have been accredited.

Endorsement Status refers to the category of ministry endorsement a person has achieved:

Endorsed (E) is used to indicate the status of a person who has completed all the requirements of this policy for endorsement and who is therefore eligible for ordination with Churches of Christ in Australia.

Endorsed for Specific Ministry (SM) is used to indicate the status of a person whose training and formation has been undertaken with a particular ministry context in mind and meets all the requirements of this policy for endorsement for specific ministry. Examples have included Urban Neighbours of Hope (UNOH) and various chaplaincy roles, although people undertaking these ministries can also seek endorsement. Endorsement for Specific Ministry is not generally transferable to another distinct area of ministry or mission without a reassessment of knowledge.

Ministers refers to people appointed to formal ministry roles, paid or unpaid. For example: Senior Pastors, Ministers, Associate Pastors, Families/Children's Pastors, Youth Ministers, Chaplains, Church Planters, and student Ministers. Ministers will be listed in the "People in Ministry" section in the CCVT directory.

Ministry Professional Standards Committee (MPSC) is a committee of the CCVT Board that oversees compliance with the CCVT *Practice of Ministry Code of Ethics* (or equivalent replacement policy) and investigation of breaches of that Code.

Ordination is the public recognition by CCCA that a Minister has met the requirements set out in their Policy on the Endorsement and Ordination of Ministers.

General Principles

The draft Affinity:2 document states that it is the responsibility of Affiliates to ensure that all Ministers appointed by them are accredited.

The Affiliate will be responsible for completing an application for accreditation, as well as overseeing the Minister's fulfilment of requirements necessary to maintaining their accreditation. These requirements include regular external supervision.

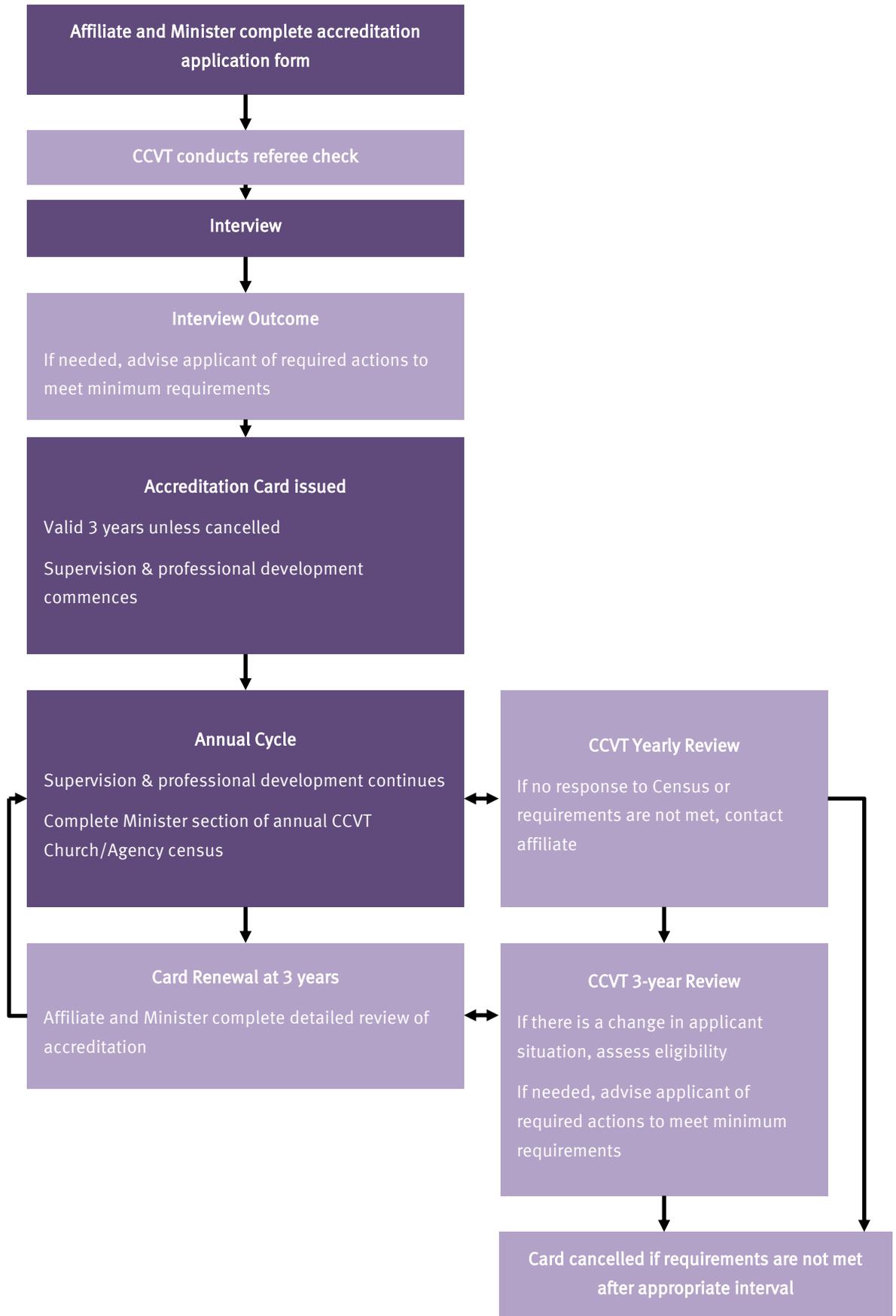
Accreditation will be reviewed by CCVT through a Minister section in the annual CCVT Church Census, random conversational assessments, and in-depth assessments every three years.

As all accredited Ministers are expected to value lifelong learning, they are encouraged to progress through the endorsement process relevant to their context and circumstances. People will be assessed for their suitability for endorsement by a Ministry Discernment Panel, which will make recommendations to the CCVT Board.

When a Minister concludes a ministry appointment in an Affiliate, their accreditation and endorsement will lapse after one year unless that person is actively seeking a placement within CCVT, or has been formally seconded to another organisation.

Oversight of the accreditation and endorsement processes rests with the Accreditation and Endorsement Taskforce, working in conjunction with the CCVT Leadership Team Leader and ultimately, the CCVT Executive Officer and Board.

Fig.1 Accreditation Process Outline



Accreditation Process

The purpose of accreditation is to ensure all Ministers in CCVT meet an appropriate level of personal, spiritual, and leadership formation, supported by participation in regular external supervision and professional development. This will facilitate ongoing development and accountability for Ministers who are recognised as 'belonging' within CCVT. The accreditation process is summarised visually at Figure 1.

Applying for Accreditation

Accreditation is overseen by the CCVT Leadership Team Leader and the Accreditation and Endorsement Taskforce.

The Affiliate is responsible for ensuring that all existing and new Ministers complete an accreditation application form if they are not currently accredited. This includes Ministers who attend their church but have their ministry in another organisation, such as chaplains, or Ministers who are retired and need to retain their marriage licence. The accreditation application form will require information concerning the following:

- Personal faith statement and sense of call and commitment to ministry;
- Alignment with CCVT purpose and values;
- Understanding of Churches of Christ identity, theology, culture, and polity, including its understanding of New Testament shapes of leadership and ministry;
- Understanding of CCVT's Affinity:2 and Safe Places Policy;
- Statement of compliance with and commitment to abide by CCVT's *The Practice of Ministry Code of Ethics* (or equivalent replacement policy);
- National Police Check (or international equivalent);
- Working With Children Check (or Working with Vulnerable People (children) in Tasmania);
- Letter of support from the Affiliate where they lead and/or serve;
- Completion of an NCCA Safe Church Awareness workshop;
- Completion of Introduction to Churches of Christ Identity workshop, Introduction to Theological and Spiritual Formation workshop, and Staying Healthy in Ministry workshop;
- Commitment to engage in regular external supervision;
- Commitment to engage in continuing education or professional development (40 hours/year or pro-rata for part time);
- Photo for accreditation card;
- Names and contacts of three referees;
- Academic certificates or transcripts; and
- Other relevant information determined by the Accreditation and Endorsement Taskforce.

The commitment to engage in professional development must include marriage licence training if the Minister requires a marriage licence. Professional development can include a range of learning activities that are relevant to Ministers in their role such as: formal tertiary

studies, seminars and workshops, CCVT Summit, supervision, spiritual direction, mentoring, conferences, and retreats. The Minister will maintain a record of the professional development they complete.

Once the Affiliate and Minister have completed and submitted the accreditation application form, the Minister's referees will be contacted and the Minister will be interviewed by two people nominated by the CCVT Leadership Team Leader. The Minister is encouraged to bring an elder or equivalent leader from the Affiliate to the interview for support. The interview team will assess the person against the criteria for accreditation listed in this policy under Minimum Requirements. The interviewing team will identify any issues and required actions. Once these have been addressed, the CCVT Board or their delegate will approve the issue of an Accreditation card, which is valid for three years. The CCVT Leadership Team Leader may determine in special circumstances that a Minister does not need either referee checks or an interview and can recommend the Minister to the CCVT Board for accreditation. If an accredited Minister moves to a ministry with a different Affiliate, they need to inform CCVT of the change in order to maintain their accreditation.

Review of Accreditation

Accredited Ministers will record whether they have regularly participated in external supervision and professional development (40 hours per year or pro rata for part time) in the Minister segment of the annual CCVT Church Census. If a Minister is not working in an affiliate for an agreed reason, such as secondment or special circumstances, they will be sent an individual census to complete. If the Minister has not met their accreditation requirements, they will be contacted by the CCVT Leadership Team Leader (or their delegate) so that appropriate action steps may be agreed and implemented.

When the accreditation card expires, every 3 years, the Minister will complete and submit a more detailed review in collaboration with the Affiliate where they lead and serve.

The review will cover: supervision, professional development, safe practices (such as taking leave, clear job description, annual performance reviews, WWCC, National Police Check, awareness of Code of Ethics for Ministers in CCVT, NCCA Safe Church Awareness Refresher Workshop), and other relevant areas (including progress in the endorsement process). The CCVT Leadership Team Leader will identify any issues and required actions. Once they have been addressed and the Minister meets the minimum requirements for accreditation, the accreditation card will be re-issued for a further three years.

Cancellation of Accreditation

An accredited Minister will provide the required information for the annual census or the three-yearly review by the required date. If the required information is not provided within a reasonable and agreed timeframe, their accreditation and endorsement status will be cancelled and, if they have a marriage licence, that will also be cancelled. If a Minister has been Ordained, that Ordination is not seen as active unless they are currently accredited. If there are exceptional or extenuating circumstances—e.g. extended leave for personal reasons (such as ill health) or long service leave—the CCVT Leadership Team Leader or CCVT Executive Officer can choose to delay cancelling the accreditation card, endorsement status and marriage licence for up to 1 year.

If a Minister's accreditation has been cancelled they can re-apply for accreditation by providing the required information and a letter of support from their CCVT affiliated church or agency for the reinstatement of their card and endorsement status. They may be required to be interviewed before becoming re-accredited.

When a Minister concludes a ministry appointment in an Affiliate, their accreditation and endorsement status and card will be cancelled after one year (and, if they have a marriage licence, that will also be cancelled) unless the person is actively looking for a placement in CCVT or has been formally seconded to another organisation.

If a Minister has been found to be in breach of the CCVT Code of Ethics, the MPSC may recommend to the CCVT Board that their accreditation, endorsement status, and marriage licence be cancelled. The MPSC determination should indicate whether the person can re-apply for accreditation after certain requirements have been met. The MPSC may also recommend to the CCVT Board that the Minister's name be submitted to the Council of Churches of Christ in Australia (CCCA) to put on the Ministers Disqualified from Service list. If a Minister has their name on the Ministers Disqualified from Service list they are not eligible for Accreditation or Endorsement.

Accreditation for Retired Ministers

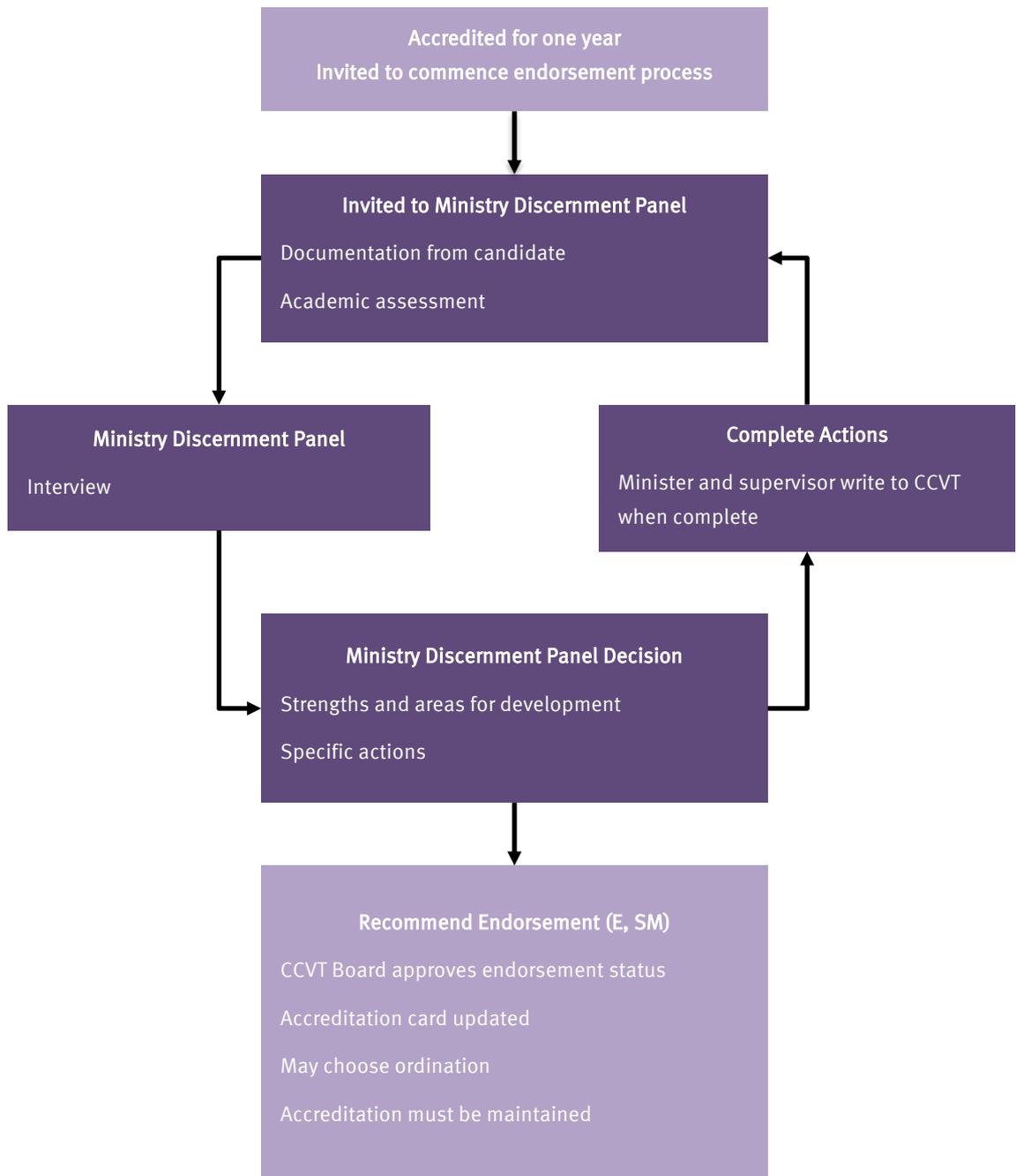
Generally retired Ministers will have their marriage licence, accreditation, and endorsement status cancelled after 6 months. The exception is where a retired Minister has active membership in an Affiliate, and they are available for casual, interim, or itinerant ministry. These retired Ministers who are still involved in ministry can retain their accreditation or endorsement status and marriage licence as long as they continue to meet the requirements of accreditation

Ministers Who Are Not Accredited

Affiliates who appoint and maintain the appointment of Ministers who are not accredited will inform CCVT of this in the annual CCVT Church Census, with an awareness that this could have insurance implications (such as different premiums or modified assessment of ministry-related claims).

Ministers who are not accredited will be listed as such in the CCVT directory if they are still in ministry and eligible to be listed in the directory. Ministers who are not accredited will not be eligible to hold a marriage licence. Ministers who are not accredited, and do not have an accreditation card, are still subject to CCVT's *The Practice of Ministry Code of Ethics* (or equivalent replacement policy) and need to fulfil the expectations set out in that Code.

Fig. 2 Endorsement Process Outline



Endorsement Process

The purpose of ministry endorsement is to further acknowledge appropriately equipped and formed people for professional ministry in CCVT. The theological studies and ministry experience required by endorsement gives CCVT and its Affiliates additional confidence in the quality of their Ministers. It is a significant achievement on the part of Ministers themselves, and a pre-requisite for ordination by CCCA. The endorsement process is summarised visually at Figure 2.

After at least one year of accreditation a Minister will be invited to enter the endorsement process within a category relevant to them: Endorsement or Endorsement for Specific Ministry. Each endorsement candidate will undertake an individually shaped process of preparation which considers previous ministry experience and studies. This will usually be arrived at after participation in reflective discernment conversations with a Ministry Discernment Panel.

Ministry Discernment Panels

The Accreditation and Endorsement Taskforce will oversee the Ministry Discernment Panels process, including the appointment of panellists and the list of accredited Ministers eligible to be invited. Panels will take place at least once a year. Panellists will declare any conflicts of interest.

The Minister will be invited to a Ministry Discernment Panel when they enter the endorsement process. They will prepare requested materials for the panel, which will remain confidential and will be destroyed at the completion of the endorsement process. There will be an academic assessment of transcripts from previous study against the study required for endorsement to identify gaps. Following interviews, the Ministry Discernment Panel will provide written feedback to the Minister about their strengths and areas for further development in relation to the minimum requirements for endorsement. The Ministry Discernment Panel will also recommend specific actions that will need to be completed before the Minister can be endorsed in the category relevant to them.

If the Minister cannot attend a Ministry Discernment Panel for reasons acceptable to the CCVT Leadership Team Leader, that leader or their delegate and one another person nominated by the Accreditation and Endorsement Taskforce (typically an experienced panellist) may instead meet with the Minister. The CCVT Leadership Team Leader will provide written feedback to the Minister about their strengths and areas for further development in relation to the minimum requirements for endorsement. The CCVT Leadership Team Leader will also recommend specific actions that will need to be completed before the Minister can be endorsed in the category relevant to them.

When the Minister and their supervisor are satisfied that the Minister has addressed the areas for further development and specific actions set by the Ministry Discernment Panel or the CCVT Leadership Team Leader they will contact the CCVT Leadership Team Leader with details about how they have met the requirements. The CCVT Leadership Team Leader will confirm whether the Minister is ready to be invited to the next Ministry Discernment Panel to seek the appropriate category of endorsement.

The Ministry Discernment Panel can either recommend the Minister to the CCVT Board as being ready to be endorsed in the relevant category, or it can recommend that the Minister should complete further actions.

The Accreditation and Endorsement Taskforce or CCVT Leadership Team Leader can recommend to the CCVT Executive Officer that a person should not continue with endorsement if there are concerns that they are not able to meet the minimum requirements. This may or may not have impact on their ongoing accreditation, depending on whether other relevant requirements are met.

Approved Course of Study

To be Endorsed an approved course of theological study, generally equivalent to a three-year degree, must have been undertaken. The study is expected to include Biblical studies, theology, Church of Christ history and identity, spirituality, practical ministry, and leadership skills. It is also expected to include Supervised Theological Field Education or an equivalent (such as Clinical Pastoral Education). The approved course of study will be suitable for leadership in a missional church and the specific subject areas that are required will be agreed by the Accreditation and Endorsement Taskforce. The Minister's previous experience in ministry may be recognised as prior learning in some areas and reduce the amount of theological study that is required, if agreed by the Accreditation and Endorsement Taskforce.

To be Endorsed for Specific Ministry the approved course of study will contain different subject areas that focus on the relevant areas of ministry. The specific subject areas will be agreed by the Accreditation and Endorsement Taskforce or their nominated representative with relevant experience in the area.

Approval of Endorsement and Ordination

Recommendations from the Ministry Discernment Panel for a change in endorsement status will be reviewed by the CCVT Leadership Team Leader before going to the CCVT Board for approval. When the CCVT Board approves a change in endorsement status, the Minister will be issued with a new accreditation card, listing their amended endorsement status, which is valid for 3 years.

People who are Endorsed (or Endorsed for Specific Ministry, where requested and appropriate) may choose to be ordained by CCCA. This includes people who have been through the Ministry Discernment Panel process and people transferring their Endorsement, as outlined below.

Transferring Accreditation/Endorsement/Ordination from another State or Denomination

Ministers who wish to transfer their accreditation, endorsement, or ordination from another State Conference to CCVT, or from another accrediting entity that is not affiliated with CCVT, need to apply for accreditation. Their application will then be assessed by the CCVT Leadership Team Leader for outstanding requirements and an appropriate pathway will be suggested. The Minister will need to provide a letter of good standing from their previous State Conference, movement or denomination, and where applicable complete a Churches of Christ Identity

study unit or equivalent. The person may be recommended for endorsement without presenting to Ministry Discernment Panels if the CCVT Leadership Team Leader is satisfied that they have previously completed an equivalent process. If the person has not been through an equivalent process, they will be invited to the next Ministry Discernment Panel.

Cancellation of Endorsement

If a person has been found to be in breach of CCVT's *The Practice of Ministry Code of Ethics* (or equivalent replacement policy), the MPSC may recommend to the CCVT Board that the person's endorsement be cancelled. If this occurs their accreditation card will be updated or cancelled, and if accreditation is cancelled, their marriage licence (if any) will also be cancelled. The MPSC in their determination will indicate whether the person will or will not be allowed to reapply for accreditation and endorsement after an appropriate length of time. The MPSC may also recommend to the CCVT Board that the Minister's name be submitted to the Council of Churches of Christ in Australia (CCCA) to put on the Ministers Disqualified from Service list. If a Minister has their name on the Ministers Disqualified from Service list, they are not eligible for Accreditation or Endorsement.

Appeal Processes

Accreditation and Endorsement

A person who disagrees with the decision of the CCVT Board in relation to accreditation or endorsement status may write to the Chair of the Board requesting a review of that decision. The Chair will nominate appropriate people to review the decision and communicate with the complainant.

Ministry Discernment Panel

A person who disagrees with the recommendation of the Ministry Discernment Panel may appeal to the Accreditation and Endorsement Taskforce. The appeal cannot include issues relating to disputes with academic institutions regarding their course assessment or workplace matters with agencies or churches where the person is employed. The Taskforce will appoint a review panel of three people to meet with the person lodging the appeal and to bring a recommendation to the Taskforce. No member of the review panel will have been party to the decision that is being appealed. The person requesting the appeal may bring a support person to the meeting. The Taskforce will consider the review panel's recommendations and come to a decision, which is final.

Cancellation of Accreditation and Endorsement

A person who disagrees with the cancellation of their accreditation card or endorsement status may write to the CCVT Executive Officer and ask for a review of that decision. If the decision was made on the recommendation of the MPSC, the appeal process in CCVT's *The Practice of Ministry Procedure for Investigating Complaints Relating to Breaches of the Code of Ethics* (or equivalent replacement policy) must be followed.

Minimum Requirements

To be **Accredited**, the minimum requirements are:

- Actively involved in ministry in an Affiliate of CCVT, as a Minister, a ministry student, a retired Minister, or in an agreed secondment position;
- A demonstrated and clearly articulated commitment to missional ministry;
- A clearly articulated commitment to CCVT's purpose and values, and the theology and practices of Churches of Christ, including its understanding of New Testament shapes of leadership and ministry, demonstrated by attendance and participation at CCVT's Introduction to Churches of Christ Identity and Introduction to Theological and Spiritual Formation workshops;
- A developing level of competency for ministry in each of the following ministry characteristics demonstrated by:
 - An understanding of, and commitment to demonstrating, CCVT's Leadership Indicators;
 - An ability to share personal faith with others;
 - An ability to integrate spirituality, learning and life;
 - An ability to relate to people pastorally;
 - An awareness of boundary issues and the limits of their skills;
 - Demonstrated communication skills on a personal and professional level;
 - An ability to reflect with others on personal strengths and weaknesses and how they impact on ministry;
 - A commitment to lifelong learning and professional development including supervision;
 - A mature understanding of scripture and ability to share insights with others;
 - A capacity to lead, inspire and implement mission and ministry goals;
 - An understanding of the process of change and skills to resolve/manage conflicts;
- An understanding of CCVT's Affinity:2
- An understanding and commitment to CCVT's Safe Places Policy suite;
- An understanding of the need for healthy and safe ministry and the importance of maintaining personal, professional and spiritual balance and standards demonstrated by attendance at Staying Healthy in Ministry workshop;
- A current Working With Children Check (or Working with Vulnerable People (children) in Tasmania);
- An acceptable National Police Check (completed in the past 3 years) (or international equivalent);
- Have completed a NCCA Safe Church Awareness workshop or refresher within the last 3 years;
- Letter of support from the Affiliate where they lead and serve.

To be **Endorsed** or **Endorsed for Specific Ministry**, the minimum requirements are:

- Accredited with CCVT for at least one year;

- The satisfactory completion of most of their approved course of theological study (equivalent to a three-year degree including recognition of prior learning from formal ministry experience);
- Engagement in the Ministry Discernment Panel process or an equivalent discernment process in another denomination;
- At least two and a half years of formal ministry experience;
- Fulfil all other requirements as outlined in the above Accreditation section, including demonstrating a high level of competency for ministry, which is being recognised as competent or excellent in each of the ministry characteristics listed above.

Transition Process

Accreditation

Following the commencement of this policy, it is expected that all Ministers will be accredited within 2 years.

All Ministers who are currently hold an endorsement status (Endorsed, Endorsed for Specific Ministry, Provisionally Endorsed, or Lay Minister) and who need accreditation will be required to complete a streamlined accreditation application form to confirm their compliance with the minimum requirements. They will not need to provide referee details or go through an interview, and will automatically receive an accreditation card once the required information has been provided. Ministers who have completed an Endorsement Application form in the past three years will also have a streamlined accreditation application form but they may have their referees contacted and they may need to go through an interview.

All other existing and new Ministers will need to complete the accreditation application form and go through the interview process. After 2 years, any Ministers who are not accredited will be listed as 'not accredited' in the CCVT directory and their endorsement status will be cancelled; if they have a marriage licence, that will also be cancelled.

Endorsement

All Ministers who have an endorsement status but are not eligible for accreditation (e.g. they are not in an active ministry role within CCVT) will have their endorsement status cancelled.

All Ministers who apply for accreditation and are currently Endorsed will maintain their endorsement status. All Ministers who apply for accreditation and are currently Endorsed for Specific ministry will maintain their endorsement status if they are in the same specific ministry, otherwise, they will be invited to a Ministry Discernment Panel to be endorsed in the category now relevant to them.

All Ministers who are Provisionally Endorsed or who were previously recognised as Lay Ministers will be invited to a Ministry Discernment Panel during the transition period. The Ministry Discernment Panel will either recommend that the Minister is ready to be endorsed in the category relevant to them, or it will recommend that the Minister complete further actions in preparation for such endorsement. At the end of two years, the Minister's previous endorsement status of Provisional Endorsement or Lay Minister will be cancelled.

Authorisation

Responsible person	Paul Cameron, EO
Version	1
Approved by the Boards of:	
CCVT Inc	05.10.2017
Scheduled review date	2020

Related CCVT Documents

 [Affinity:2](#)

 [Safe Places Policy](#)

 [Child Safety Policy of CCVT](#)

 [Terms and Conditions for Employment of Ministers](#)

 [Recognition of Ministers as Marriage Celebrants Policy](#)

 [The Practice of Ministry Code of Ethics – Professional and Ethical Standards Applicable to People in Ministry in Churches of Christ](#)

 [The Practice of Ministry – Procedure for Investigating Complaints Relating to breaches of the Code of Ethics](#)