

UUA Religious Education Credentialing LREDA Mentoring Program As of September 2022¹

Sources: RECC Credentialing Policies and Rules, UUA website Credentialing Program; LREDA Model of Mentoring (rev.2007); LREDA Mentoring, version 6; Mentoring Task Force Report to the LREDA Board 2002

What is the purpose of Mentors in the Religious Education Credentialing Program?²

Initially, at the time of the creation of the Credentialing program, some of the impetus for the creation of a Mentorship component in the RE Credentialing program was a similar role of mentors in ministerial formation (that existed at the time.) Many religious traditions and professional organizations mandate or offer some form of mentorship for the newly called or hired, pairing them with more experienced leaders or leaders with similar life experiences.

Mentoring relationships are important to a religious educator's professional development, and are a key component of the Religious Education Credentialing Program at all three levels. Mentors are resources for reflection, support and encouragement, familiar with aspects of the Religious Education Credentialing program, self-assessment and the development of a learning plan, goal setting, and portfolio development — all within the context of a team supporting the Credentialing Program ([RECC](#), [PDPM](#), [Mentors](#) and the [LCOM](#)). The Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) is responsible for administering the mentoring program, by charging the LREDA Committee on Mentoring (LCOM) to recruit, select, train, match, and evaluate Mentors.

LREDA Credentialing Mentors Criteria³

- Credentialed religious educators⁴; and are
- members in good standing of the Liberal Religious Educator's Association (LREDA)⁵; and
- have been paired with a candidate for Credentialing by LREDA's Committee on Mentoring; and
- have agreed to serve from the onset of a candidate's acceptance into the credentialing program to being "credentialed;" and
- have attended and "passed" a New Mentor training on how to mentor.

Application Process to Serve as a Mentor

- Application to be a religious education credentialing Mentor is a two-part process.

¹ Reviewed and approved by LCOM, LREDA Board and RECC (LREDA Rep and Chair)

² "LREDA Mentoring, version 6; Mentoring Task Force Report to the LREDA Board 2002"

³ [UUA website](#): Religious Education Credentialing Program, Program Plan, Information for All Levels

⁴ In the early years of the program, there was a shortage of credentialed mentors and Ministers of Religious Education and Parish Ministers were asked to serve. The Ministerial formation served as their credential. Some of these mentors still serve as of this writing.

⁵ In the early years of the program, there was a shortage of mentors and LREDA membership was waived. As of November 2021 it is a requirement.

- An application is submitted to the LCOM using this [online form](#). Before an application is considered, the person applying shall be furnished a copy of, or with a website link to, the Rules and Policies of LCOM's Mentor Responsibilities, and as part of their application, they shall agree in writing to be bound by said Rules and Policies and amendments thereof. An interview may be necessary to clarify any items on the application.
- After initial approval by the LCOM, the applicant is invited to attend an online training to learn about mentoring protocol and practice needed skills. Participants are recommended for final approval as mentors by the New Mentor Training Lead Facilitator upon successful completion of the training. The LCOM reviews and gives final approval, notifying the Mentor.
- Our hope is that everyone who takes the training will be equipped and inspired to mentor, but occasionally the Lead Facilitator and/or the LCOM may feel that someone is not ready, or a participant may decide that mentoring is not a good fit.

Requirements of the Mentor component of the Religious Education Credentialing Process⁶

- Working with a Mentor is a requirement for completing the Religious Education Credentialing Program (RECP) whose requirements are established by the Religious Education Credentialing Committee (RECC), a UUA Board-appointed Committee. The Mentoring component is under the purview of the LREDA Committee on Mentoring (LCOM), a Committee whose members are elected by the membership of LREDA. The UUA's PDPM is part of the collaborative team supporting the Mentor/Candidate requirement.
- Every Candidate seeking a religious education credentialing status is required to have completed at least one mentor relationship with a mentor assigned by the Liberal Religious Educators Association's (LCOM), unless waived by the RECC.⁷
- A mentor agrees to work with up to 2 candidates⁸ though the LCOM's will honor requests to limit this to one candidate at a time.
- Regular conversations (one hour, 10 times/year)⁹ with a mentor help ensure candidates receive thoughtful suggestions and feedback, allow for progress, and stay on target to complete the Program within the established timeframe. Please note that for any candidate wishing to complete the program in one year or less, mentor conversations must happen monthly for as long as the candidate is working the program.

Meeting Expectations¹⁰

- LREDA mentors support candidates in achieving their credentialing goals by providing coaching and feedback on a regular basis. Ten, hour-long meetings (phone, online, or in-person) are required. Except in extraordinary circumstances, there should be no longer than two months between meetings)Thus, we trust that candidates and mentors are meeting ten times per year. Sustained email exchanges may occasionally take the place of a meeting.

⁶ [UUA Website](#): RECC Policies

⁷ [UUA Website](#) RECC Rules

⁸ 2007 LREDA Mentoring Plan (LCOM archives)

⁹ [UUA Website](#): RECC Policies

¹⁰ [UUA Website](#): RECC Policies

Religious Education Credentialing Mentor Responsibilities

- In the initial conversation, the mentor and candidate get to know each other, establish a covenant (rules of engagement), compare schedule and other logistics, and begin to talk about the candidate's credentialing program needs and timeline. Mentors and their candidates will find their own rhythm for their conversations.
- Topics of conversation¹¹ during the mentoring sessions might include:
 - Setting goals
 - what to put in the portfolio;
 - what type of professional development to pursue and where to pursue it;
 - how to document previous, current, and future experience for inclusion in a portfolio; and
 - what books to read on the reading list;
 - suggestion of discernment process for articulation of a personal theology or preferred pedagogy;
 - review the timeline of progress and help problem solve;
 - serving as a sounding board on seeking additional credentials; and
 - Assessing the mentoring process and relationship if necessary.
- Each year, Mentors are requested to give feedback to the LCOM by way of the Annual Mentor Status Check (see this specific section below).

Mentor and Candidate Matches¹²

- Information for mentor matching is taken during the Entry Interview with a candidate for credentialing. This information is shared by the Professional Development Programs Manager (PDPM) with the LREDA Committee on Mentoring (with permission from the candidate) for purposes of matching candidates and mentors. Please note: The PDPM will pass along any special mentor requests to the LREDA Committee on Mentoring. However, the Committee on Mentoring makes all decisions regarding mentor matching and cannot guarantee that the request can be honored.
- Mentors who have been credentialed are matched with candidates pursuing a level no higher than the level the mentor has achieved. The LCOM may, in extraordinary circumstances, make an exception to this.
- Mentors are generally assigned to new candidates within **4 to 6 weeks** of their acceptance into the credentialing program.
- It is LREDA policy that candidates should not be mentored by members of their own congregation. It is UUA practice that UUA staff can mentor candidates from other departments/regions.¹³
- The mentor contacts the participant initially. After this, it is the participants' responsibility to contact the mentor.

Mentor Preparation¹⁴

¹¹ [UUA Website](#): Religious Education Mentoring

¹² [UUA website](#): Religious Education Credentialing Program, Program Plan, Information for All Levels

¹³ LREDA Mentoring Plan, revised 2007 (LREDA archives)

¹⁴ LREDA Mentoring Plan, revised 2007 (LCOM archives)

- Mentors are required to attend a New Mentor Training which is the responsibility of the LREDA Committee on Mentoring to conduct.
- Mentors may be alerted and/or invited by the LCOM to attend additional training germane to mentoring.

Annual Mentor Status Check

- A Mentor is asked, as part of a conversation with the candidate, to complete an annual (due February 1st), Mentor/Candidate Status to the PDPM who then in turn shares the information with the LCOM. This offers mentors and candidates the chance to assess their relationship: to affirm that it is a helpful, productive one; to bring to light any concerns about progress or about the mentoring relationship.
- If a credentialing candidate is granted Inactive Status, access to a LREDA Mentor is terminated.¹⁵
- If a Mentor needs to step away from Mentoring, they are encouraged to first contact the Candidate with whom they are working and secondarily to contact the LCOM who in turn will contact the PDPM and re-match the Candidate with a mentor.

Mentor Support and Assistance¹⁶

- The Mentor/Candidate relationship is conceived of as being supportive rather than evaluative in nature. If there is a problem with the mentoring relationship, the grievance process for the Candidate is that the PDPM should be contacted. If the problem cannot be resolved between the PDPM and the Candidate, the PDPM will contact the LREDA Committee on Mentoring for assistance.¹⁷
- If a mentor does not hear from a candidate in two months, they should contact the LREDA Committee on Mentoring who in turn will contact the PDPM and alert them.¹⁸
- The LCOM is the primary support for Mentors and for any general questions or concerns they should be contacted [here](#).
- The Professional Development Programs Manager (PDPM) is a resource person for candidates to talk over any questions they have regarding the mentoring relationship.¹⁹
- Both the PDPM and the LCOM have specific and agreed upon actions in the case of communication or relationship concerns between candidates and mentors and these can be found [here](#). These practices are shared with each candidate or mentor aimed at re-establishing, improving or changing a Mentor/Candidate match, one of which may include Mentors and Candidates meeting with the PDPM and a member of LCOM.²⁰

¹⁵ [UUA Website](#): RECC Rules

¹⁶ LREDA Mentoring Plan, revised 2007 (LCOM archives)

¹⁷ Credentialing Program version 6 (LCOM archives)

¹⁸ [UUA Website](#): RECC Rules

¹⁹ UUA website: Page 15 of the RE Credentialing Program Plan, rev Sept 2019

²⁰ 2019 LREDA Website (LREDA Archives)

- If the mentor wants help with coaching skills or has a question clearly related to mentoring, they are asked to contact the LREDA Committee on Mentoring (LCOM) who will connect them with the appropriate support which may include Mentors to Mentors.
- Sometimes a problem or conflict with the mentoring relationship cannot be resolved through communication between the parties (e.g., one party has disengaged). In such cases, a concerned mentor should contact the LCOM Chair who will contact the PDPM.
- The [Chair of the LCOM](#) can also be contacted for any other questions or information requests.