

# Curriculum for WSC Intermediate and Advanced Steps

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## Introduction

This document sets out the framework for the curriculum of the Worship Studies Course (WSC) and the Unitarian Studies Course (USC), Intermediate and Advanced Step, for the UK.

WSC and USC (hereinafter WSC) students tackle challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of moral and ethics, human nature, biblical interpretation, world religion, women in religion, earth-centred spirituality, contemplation and meditative practices, and creating multi-cultural and multi-generational environments. Students will learn to discover, explore and consider different answers to issues concerning religion and spirituality.

The course offers an exploration of Unitarianism and other religions with deep historical roots.

It is a recognised programme for the formation of religious Lay Preaching.

The overarching aim of the WSC is to promote a high standard of worship by equipping students with the skills for putting together excellent Unitarian worship services; to deliver them competently and sensitively and to enjoy the experience. Throughout the WSC the selection of modules embodies respect for the principles of freedom, reason and tolerance, demonstrating a commitment to the Unitarian values of the denomination world-wide.

It is hoped that through the programme, students will grow in confidence in their own beliefs and values, and respect religions and cultures different from their own.

## Aims

The range of content covered by individuals depends on the specific modules chosen for study. The rich diversity of modules offered means that students have significant choice. Therefore, the curriculum for WSC aims to ensure that all students:

- Are prepared to explore the spiritual, moral, cultural development of their faith.<sup>1</sup>
- Know of, and understand, a range of Unitarian beliefs and other religious worldviews.
- Demonstrate knowledge of issues, themes, theories, inclinations, sources, and diversity of Unitarianism, both British and global.
- Read a wide range of religious and faith materials, especially Unitarian, developing a religious literacy that is both deep and broad.
- Focus on key sacred texts (e.g. the Bible, the Torah, the Vedas) and key religious traditions (e.g. Christianity, Buddhism, Paganism).
- Demonstrate an understanding of the breadth of Unitarian worship, traditions and practices.
- Demonstrate an understanding of some world faiths in a Unitarian context.
- Create and write excellent worship, adapting language and style, for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Are provided with a reading list from which they may choose to follow up their specific interests or diversify, incorporating elements of theology and religious studies.
- Appreciate our rich and varied heritage.

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<sup>1</sup> National Curriculum for Education

- Are challenged to reflect on and develop their own values, beliefs and attitudes in the light of what they have learnt.

The WSC is rigorous about allowing for theological enquiry and academic study that does not exclude believers, non-believers or agnostics.

### Objectives and Skills

By the end of the course, students are expected to apply their knowledge and skills to excellence in worship. They should:

- Demonstrate the ability to read and use texts both critically and empathetically.
- Show an appreciation of the complexity of different worldviews, mentalities, faith behaviours.
- Be sensitive to the problems of religious language and experience, and to the issues of multiple and conflicting interpretations of language and symbols, texts and traditions.
- Recognition that statements should be tested, and that the interpreter's role demands critical evaluation.
- Provide a clear and accurate account of a subject, marshal arguments in a mature way and engage in debate and dialogue with respect for the opposite case or different viewpoint.
- Describe and discuss critical comprehension of some of the following: the political, social, textual, philosophical, historical, theological, ritual, practical, ethical, institutional or aesthetic expressions of the religion(s) studied.
- Apply insights, themes and debates from theology and religious studies.

### Skills, attitude and behaviour:

- Skills that may be acquired include:<sup>2</sup>
- Empathy and imaginative insight, with a tolerance of diverse positions.
- Self-discipline.
- Self-direction.
- Independence of mind and initiative, the ability to attend to others and have respect for others' views.
- Ability to gather, evaluate and synthesise several types of information.
- Writing skills, including clarity of expression, citation of relevant evidence and authorities and accurate referencing.
- Work effectively and responsibly in the role of Service Leader.
- Work autonomously to design a worshipful experience.
- Lead acts of worship with the preaching of a wide range of services (both regular and for marked occasions).
- Presentation skills, both oral and written, supported by appropriate technologies.
- Work collaboratively with others in the commission of worship.
- Show independence in thought, and critical self-awareness about one's own outlook, commitments and prejudices.
- Present arguments for their own views while acknowledging and representing fairly the views of others.

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<sup>2</sup> Subject benchmark statement. Theology and religious studies. UK Quality code for higher education.

- Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of how personal and communal identities and motivations are shaped by religion, how this has both positive and negative effects, and how important such identities are.
- Ability to engage critically with the meaning of documents and recognise that meanings may be multiple.
- Connect the history of Unitarian social justice engagement to present 21<sup>st</sup> century worship.
- Nurture congregations in faith through worship.
- Be willing to respond constructively to the outcome of appraisal, and performance assessments.

#### Relationships:

There is an expectation that WSC students will always, in the context of worship, behave appropriately as a Guest Leader of Worship. To this end, all students are required to sign the WSC Conduct of Relationship Agreement respecting the following points:

- a) Respect individuals with regard to their beliefs, race, colour, gender, sexuality, disability, age, social or economic status.
- b) Respect the rights of individuals to hold diverse and conflicting theological, philosophical and ethical beliefs.
- c) Communicate effectively, sensitively and respectfully with others, including home and host congregations, leadership, members and visitors.
- d) Communicate respectfully on other faiths (claiming none to be the definitive one and only truth).
- e) Be sensitive to the needs of vulnerable persons.
- f) Understand and respect the many roles in a church setting.
- g) Demonstrate effective teamwork and cooperation with churches.

## WSC Conduct of Relationship Agreement

There is an expectation that WSC students will always, in the context of worship, behave appropriately as a Guest Leader of Worship.

To this end, this document requests that you (the participant) understand and agree that you are an ambassador for the Worship Studies Course and behave accordingly. This applies anywhere and anytime, in particular whilst conducting WSC worship, conducting congregational worship or engaged in religious-related activities, including in your dealings with other students, tutors, WSC representatives and congregations. By enrolling on any WSC course or programme, a student becomes a member of the WSC community and is subject to WSC and LLSG discipline. The WSC/LLSG may also take action under this Code when the individual concerned is no longer registered or enrolled on the WSC. Action taken may include recommendation of suspension from the course, up to and including, dismissal from recognition on the GA Roll of Lay Preachers.

WSC expects you to:

1. Value people equally, respecting differences of beliefs and liberal religion opinion.
2. Act on the feedback we give you, being a reflective, cooperative and collaborative learner to improve your performance.

WSC will not tolerate the following whenever and wherever it occurs:

1. Antisocial, aggressive and /or loud behaviour at any time including when travelling to and from congregations, on any Unitarian sites, that disrupts others or could give the WSC or denomination a bad reputation. This includes the use of social media through posting either text, including sexting, or images, including video of such behaviour.
2. Violent, dangerous, threatening, bullying and intimidating conduct. Verbal abuse that is either bullying or harassment including inappropriate and/or unwelcome comments, requests and messages on grounds of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sex, pregnancy, marital status, disability/learning difficulty or socio-economic status of another student, member of staff, or member congregations. (This list is not exhaustive, and we also include any developments through laws, through safeguarding terminology including spiritual abuse, that involve discrimination of any type.)

Your signature on this document reflects your agreement to adhere to these standards.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ASSIGNMENTS

**If students have not undertaken any academic study for a long time, they may feel nervous at the thought of the challenges that lie ahead. Students will be offered a lot of support and encouragement and, although they may find the work challenging at times, the tutors want everyone to succeed and perform to the best of their ability. Students are encouraged to seek help from the appropriate source as needed.**

### **WSC only:**

The Intermediate Step students undertake four written assignments and two assessed Conduct of Worship services. The Advanced Step students undertake twenty-four written assignments and six assessed Conduct of Worship services.

Students are asked to put together a full service of worship for each assignment, with hymns, readings, opening and closing words, together with a discourse/address/sermon on the theme described in the module sections. Included also are any 'rubrics' – chalice candle lightings, periods of silence and any ways in which the student involves the congregation. If certain elements are not included, (for instance, there are no hymns), it is expected that a brief explanation as to why is appended, unless the reason is obvious from the service.

### **Students will be encouraged to:**

Read a wide range of books, stories, poems, prose, etc.

Understand and critically evaluate increasingly challenging text to widen their areas of subject knowledge.

Make inferences and refer to evidence in the text.

Write knowing the purpose and audience for the context.

Write accurately, fluently and effectively for worship.

Organise material, supporting ideas and arguments with necessary factual detail.

Write and select using appropriate form and vocabulary.

Understand the differences between spoken and written language, formal and informal register, to effectively produce eloquent worship.

Reflect on their understanding to make sure that what they have read and written makes sense.

Make critical comparisons.

Reflect and express their own ideas, thoughts with accountability and responsibility to the principles of Unitarianism.

Respond to faith wisdom and worldviews in informed, rational and insightful ways.

Demonstrate understanding of the theology and practices of effective preaching.

Exhibit strong skills in construction and delivery of engaging sermons.

Use art and music to create multisensory worship.

## SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

We generally suggest that the sermon length should be about fifteen to twenty minutes. This will give students time to develop their theme. However, we realise that sermons are often shorter in our modern services, so a shorter sermon might be appropriate, but students will need to take care when trying to condense their answer into a short discourse.

Assignments should be **either** typed and sent on paper **or** sent by e-mail attachment. (Acceptable formats are **Word** or **Word 97-2003 Document**. PDF or WordPro are not acceptable.)

Students must cite their sources, either in the body of the text itself or in footnotes. A Bibliography page is expected for works consulted at the end of their essay/ worship.

## INTERMEDIATE MODULES:

There is an expectation that all WSC students will have completed the WSC Foundation Step, and therefore, understand the basics of putting together a worship service. The Intermediate modules introduce thematic worship under four module headings of Unitarian Thought and Theology, Unitarian History in Worship, Biblical Studies, and Earth-Centred Spirituality. Students complete one written assignment / worship service per module, and taking two of these assignments, are then assessed through their Conduct of Worship, on the preachability. The course is completed when all four written assignments and two Conduct of Worships reach a satisfactory standard.

The objectives describe in the Intermediate Step modules reflect **some** of the areas that student may cover. However, no one assignment can cover all aspects of a unit and is not intended to do so. They are offered so that students have flexibility of choice and the opportunity to explore the subject.

The objectives will only be reached if participants use the unit as a starting-point for further exploration(s), rather than simply as a project to be completed.

### Unitarian Thought and Theology

This module introduces the concept and identity of the term 'Unitarianism' and its philosophical / theological development over time.

#### **By the end of this module, students should be able to:**

- Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the identity, policies and practices of Unitarianism, and develop an awareness of the identity and practices of Unitarians.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the term 'Unitarian' past and present.
- Explore the definition of identity for Unitarians as individuals and groups.
- Expand on an understanding of identity analysing the advantages and disadvantages of using the term 'Unitarian.'
- Demonstrate an understanding of Trinitarian and heterodox viewpoints.
- Explore the differences between Jesus as Divine and Jesus as human.
- Explore the origins of the Enlightenment period with reference to Unitarianism.
- Explore a Unitarian understanding of evil. How it is similar or different to Christianity's understanding of that term.
- Demonstrate deep reflection on the works of Unitarian authors.

### Unitarian History in Worship

This module offers an introduction to the use of Unitarian history in Worship, or an expansion of the participant's awareness: by exploring key events in the Unitarian story; by considering the lives of possibly more widely well-known Unitarian figures from the past; by describing a particular Unitarian value or idea - and their or its significance and influence contemporaneously, and possibly for 21st century Unitarian life.

#### **By the end of this module, students should be able to:**

- Reflect an awareness of the basic sweep of Unitarian history
- Describe who are "The Unitarians".

- Demonstrate a knowledge of the spiritual ideas of significant individuals.
- Explore the various strands of Unitarian development.
- Evaluate the significance of what are reckoned significant dates in the Unitarian story.
- Trace the origin and significance of a shared Unitarian idea or value.
- Consider what first impressions you have gained, and how this may be related to the history.

### Biblical Studies

This module allows a simple introduction to the Bible, and an opportunity to engage a Biblical text that inspires the student.

#### **By the end of this module, students should be able to:**

- Demonstrate an awareness of biblical themes.
- Explore similar reference to the theme in various places of the Bible.
- Assess the relevance of using the Bible in developing one's understanding of a theme / subject.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the intended audience of the original biblical text, and its application for today's audience.
- Understand the relevance of the passage for Unitarians today.
- Engage with their own thought on the use of biblical text in worship.

### Earth-Centred Spirituality

This module introduces Celtic/Pagan festivals in our Unitarian worship, deepening our understanding of life, different expressions of 'divinity' in our experience of life and worship.

#### **By the end of this module, students should be able to:**

- Identify some of the aspects of the mid-winter celebrations that exist under the heading of Earth-Centred Spirituality alongside more familiar winter celebrations.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the symbol of light in mid-winter celebrations and apply that within a worship service.
- Explore the significance of "light" to Earth-Centred Spirituality.

OR

- Explore aspects of the Beltane – May/Spring Festival.
- Demonstrate an understanding of Beltane history in a service of worship.
- Apply 21<sup>st</sup> century understanding to the Festival and introduce elements into a worship service.

OR

- Demonstrate an understanding of "Harvest" within the Celtic/Pagan calendar.
- Examine the celebration of Lughnasadh and Samhain festivals.
- Explore the similarities and differences between a Christian interpretation of harvest festival and an Earth-Centred interpretation of the harvest season.
- Create an Earth-Centred harvest service.

## World Religion in a Unitarian Context

This module introduces a general look at a World Religion, its beliefs and principles, analysing its impact on Unitarian communities.

**NB.** This module is offered only to students who began studies before 2014, (before the introduction of the Earth-Centred Spirituality module). This module introduces a general look at a World Religion, its beliefs and principles, analysing its impact on Unitarian communities.

### **By the end of this module, students should be able to:**

- Demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of one world religion.
- Consider the nature of a founding figure, and their significance to adherents.
- Explore its principal festivals, and their spiritual significance to adherents
- Evaluate its sacred writings, and their spiritual significance to adherents.
- Analyse its understanding of the nature of worship
- Pursue some understanding of the problems of interpretation, and trans-cultural perspective.

OR

- Examine one faith tradition's ideas of a supreme being (if any).
- Analyse its historical, social, philosophical ideas of 'God' and the divine nature.
- Consider similarities and differences of such ideas in relation to their own faith tradition.
- Investigate its recognised "sources of wisdom".
- Consider the diversity of beliefs and practices existing within the faith tradition's community.

OR

- Examine the chosen faith's understanding of human nature, of 'being truly human'.
- Identify and assess its source of wisdom on being human.

## ADVANCED STEP MODULES:

The Advanced Step modules deepen the work begun in the Intermediate Step Modules. The course is studied under **eight** module headings: Unitarian Thought and Theology, Unitarian History in Worship, Biblical Studies, Earth-Centred Spirituality, Intergenerational Worship, Meditation and Contemplative Practices, Women and Religion in a Unitarian Context, and World Religion in a Unitarian Context. Students complete six written assignments/ worship services in the first two modules, which are **compulsory**, and may choose which of the other modules to complete as a full or half module, to make up the additional twelve services. Therefore, some modules have the option of three assignments (half modules), and some modules have the option of six assignments (full modules). Students **must** complete twenty-four assignments to a satisfactory standard to complete this level. In addition, WSC students only must deliver a total of six of these assignments, (at least one from each module chosen) as their assessed Conduct of Worship, on the preach-ability of the assignment. The course is completed when all twenty-four written assignments and six Conduct of Worships reach a satisfactory standard.

### Unitarian Theology and Thought

The course consists of six assignments. This is a compulsory and core module. The intention is to deepen the student's understanding of the fundamental issues in Unitarian Thought and Theology. Unitarianism is marked out by its extraordinary diversity, breadth of views, and differences of belief. It is to be expected that students will reflect this in their own submissions. The student's own beliefs will inform the services they produce for each assignment but will not affect the assessment.

The aim of this course is to place different views about Unitarianism and its range of beliefs in a proper context and qualify where necessary and as appropriate. It is quite in order to express what some might regard as controversial views: all that is asked is that students use reasoned argument, clarity and courtesy.

The objectives below describe **some** of the areas that student will cover. However, no one assignment can cover all aspects of a unit and is not intended to do so. They are offered so that students have an opportunity to explore the subject.

#### Unit 1: God and Unitarians

##### Here, students will:

- Explore aspects of the existence of God, gods and ultimate reality, and ways in which those might be understood; through revelation, visions, miracles or enlightenment. How varied interpretations of sources or of teachings may give rise to diversity within traditions.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the idea of God for Unitarians in contemporary culture.
- Identify theological influences on the concept of God for Unitarians.

## Unit 2: Jesus and Unitarians

### Here, students will:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of differing perspectives about Jesus.
- Explore Unitarian understandings of Jesus and their relevance today.
- Critically analyse Christological influences on Unitarianism.
- Reflect on the importance of Jesus as an inspirational figure.

## Unit 3: Unitarians view on Humanity

### Here, students will:

- Demonstrate critical understanding of the humanity versus divinity argument.
- Present information / argument for humane theology.
- Explore areas of good vs evil with respect to Christianity's original sin theory, and evolving Unitarian thought.
- Engage with Unitarianism, justice and inherent human dignity thoughts.
- Develop own perspective on the science of genetics and religion.

## Unit 4: Unitarianism and Christianity / non-Christian elements of Unitarian thought

### Here, students will:

- Demonstrate understanding of where Unitarianism sits on the religious spectrum.
- Explore British and American Unitarianism.
- Expand understanding of Unitarian Christianity, analysing Hungarian/ Transylvanian Unitarians.

OR

- Expand understanding of non-Christian Unitarianism in the present day.
- Explore British and American Unitarianism.
- Explore what is meant by pluralistic Unitarianism.
- Demonstrate a knowledge of non-Christian Unitarian spiritual practices.

## Unit 5: Unitarian Ethics and Values

### Here, students will:

- Reflect on the traditional values of freedom, reason, and tolerance for Unitarians.
- Explore contemporary Unitarian ethics and values.

## Unit 6: Unitarianism's future

### Here, students will:

- Integrate theoretical and practical understanding of the Unitarian denomination.
- Critically reflect on the future of Unitarianism, considering current trends, aging community, and social, political and cultural influences.
- Explore issues of growth for Unitarianism.

## Unitarian History Local and Broader

The course consists of six assignments. This is a compulsory and core module. The intention is to deepen the student's understanding of the historic roots of Unitarianism. The module aims to help participants to be able to see something of the sweep of our past in its own context, to present it in a worship service - and at the end be able to explain to someone new to our movement where, we have come from, and what factors have influenced what we are today, locally, regionally and nationally. The hope is to stimulate an awareness, clarification and the articulation of the "Life of Faith" of true religion, beyond creed and dogma, of our proper humanity.

The objectives below describe **some** of the areas that student will cover. However, no one assignment can cover all aspects of a unit and is not intended to do so. They are offered so that students have an opportunity to explore the subject.

### Unit 1: History of Own Local Congregation

#### **Here, students will:**

- Demonstrate knowledge of their own local Unitarian congregation, with respect to its origin(s) and relation to the wider Unitarian community.
- Articulate the spiritual and philosophical values of the community.
- Include and reflect on a human-interest story relating to an individual or individuals.

### Unit 2: Is History Important?

#### **Here, students will:**

- Evaluate the relevance of a knowledge of Unitarian history for the conduct of worship today.
- Explore and evaluate the reputation "enjoyed" by our being "Dissenters", past and present.
- Consider the role and influence of reputation in the locality, on Unitarianism past and present.
- Consider what relevance our history has for our Unitarian witness today, and in the future.

### Unit 3: 1662

#### **Here, students will:**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the significance of "1662" within and beyond Unitarianism.
- Consider if there are other dates of equal significance, and in what way.
- Evaluate what British Unitarians owe to separate developments in other countries.
- Explore perception of times when a shift in theological perspective might be detected.
- Compare the development of Unitarian ideas with another country's history.

## Unit 4: American Unitarian Universal Influence on British Unitarianism

**Here, students will:**

### **For the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

- Explore the theological influences, thought and impact of Theodore Parker and W E Channing on both sides of the Atlantic.
- Explore American transcendentalist hymn writers, identifying who they were, their hymns and demonstrate the impact of American hymn writers compared with British hymn writers both inside and outside Unitarianism.
- Consider the impact of transatlantic ministerial pulpit exchange, identifying individuals involved.
- Evaluate Transcendentalism's continuing impact and possible relevance in congregational life today.

### **OR For the 20th Century**

- Investigate the premise that American Unitarianism expanded in the twentieth century while contracting in Britain.
- Demonstrate understanding of the difference between Unitarianism and Universalism and the significance of their joining together in 1961, in America.
- Explore the significance of James Luther Adams on 20th century Unitarian thinking in terms of his thought and influence.
- Compare the development and nature of organised Unitarianism in the UK (the GA) and America (the UUA).

## Unit 5: Significant Individuals or Places

**Here, students may:**

- Identify two significant individuals for them, in Unitarian history.
- Explore why, how, when and where, these individuals were significant, including their personal appeal to their ideas, values, theology.
- Examine the significant historical influence the individual had on their time and their relevance today.
- Engage with a critical examination of significant women in history.
- Apply today's standards of awareness to understanding the contribution women made to history.
- Connect the history of any 'two famous' individuals outside of Unitarianism, to values, ideas and theories significant to Unitarians.
- Examine the status (class, socially, economically, education) of Unitarians pre-1918, and consider their impact.
- Consider why Unitarians were more likely to be factory owners rather than mill workers.
- Examine the historical development of one of our UK Unitarian Colleges.
- Discuss the significance of the colleges with respect to the wider movement.

## Unit 6: History Reflection

### **Here, students will:**

- Consider whether we make 'myths' out of our history, and if so whether there can be positive value in this.
- Evaluate the value/irrelevance of our history for the challenge of worship today.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the historic Unitarian view of Christianity as being "corrupt".
- Examine the historical relevance of 'Trinity' in Unitarian contexts.
- Consider the spiritual basis for and principles of our communion of faith, our "Way of Life".
- Assess whether Unitarianism means simply "Unitarians"

## Biblical Studies Module

Overall, the module looks to develop a deeper knowledge of the Bible, Judaeo-Christian and Unitarian traditions, and articulate their relevance in relationship to the Unitarian faith. Students will be able to demonstrate a breadth of biblical understanding from a Unitarian and Christian perspective; and use the Bible to enhance understanding of Unitarian values in worship.

This module can be taken as a half module (three units) or full module (six units).

The objectives below describe **some** of the areas that student will cover. However, no one assignment can cover all aspects of a unit and is not intended to do so. They are offered so that students have an opportunity to explore the subject.

### Unit 1: Book in the Bible.

#### **Here, student should be able to:**

- Read and explore a book in the Bible, summarising the main points, and critically reflecting on its social, historical and political values, underpinning its Unitarian values.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the theme and its application to today's Unitarian culture.
- Identify the central characters.
- Identify the nature of the text, who and when it was written and its purpose.
- Show in-depth knowledge of one book of the Bible.

### Unit 2: Persons in the Bible

#### **Here, students should be able to:**

- Assess and critically analyse a biblical character.
- Identify values and situations that they do and do not identify with.
- Identify behavioural and ethical values that relate to Unitarianism.

### Unit 3: The Bible and Unitarians

#### **Here, students will:**

- Show the value the Bible has for Unitarians (past and present).
- Identify the place it holds in Unitarian worship
- Explore areas of the Bible they find inspirational and relate it to important points on their faith journey.
- Contrast and compare another sacred writing to the Bible for Unitarian usage in worship.

### Unit 4: Commandments and Rules

#### **Here, students will:**

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of 'rules' or 'laws' of a religious denomination from the Bible.

- Explore the relevance or application of rules for Unitarians today, and the effect on religious freedom.

#### Unit 5: Oneness of God

**Here, students will:**

- Explore the Unitarian understanding of oneness of God.
- Demonstrate biblical reference to the concept of One God.
- Show how this is relevant to the development of Unitarian thought.
- Show understanding of the spectrum of beliefs found in Unitarianism today.

#### Unit 6: Authority of the Bible

**Here, students will:**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the argument about the authority of scripture.
- Focusing on a theme in the Bible, critically analyse the topic for relevancy or irrelevancy.
- Provide stimulating thoughts on the issue of interpretation.
- Explore scientific and historic-critical challenges to the authority of scriptures.

## Earth-Centred Spirituality

This module looks at Celtic/Pagan wisdom. It encourages the student to examine, from an earth-centred perspective, spirituality, G/god and creation. It asks the student to gain an understanding of a pan(en)theistic view of the world, recognising that all creation is part of a divine whole. It asks the student to create ways of incorporating Pagan wisdom, ritual and understanding into our worship. The role of a Unitarian worship leader is to seek to build bridges between diverse ways of understanding 'religion', 'faith', 'belief' and 'spirituality' and should seek to both understand and discover ways to speak to all the members of our congregations. It is hoped that by looking at the Celtic/Pagan tradition and its legacy in our 21<sup>st</sup> Century world it will aid the deepening of spiritual understanding.

This module can be taken as a half module (three units) or full module (six units).

The objectives below describe **some** of the areas that student will cover. However, no one assignment can cover all aspects of a unit and is not intended to do so. They are offered so that students have an opportunity to explore the subject.

### Unit 1: The Wheel

#### **Here, students will:**

- Explore the concept of “the Wheel [of the Year]” in Pagan/ Celtic wisdom.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the circle or cycle of the year.
- Examine the application of the wheel to the cycle of human life.
- Use the understanding of wheel to explore the ways that human life and living may be deepened.

### Unit 2: Samhain

#### **Here, students will:**

- Explore the festival and meaning of Samhain.
- Identify its historic significance.
- Reflect on the theme of transition, and the balance of light and dark in Samhain.
- Apply understanding of the theme to today's living and on their own spiritual growth.
- Explore the relevance of Samhain to human life.

### Unit 3: Summer Solstice/ Winter Solstice

#### **Here, students will:**

- Demonstrate an understanding of both summer and winter solstices.
- Examine the term “seasons of the soul.”
- Reflect on the theme of 'light and joy' and 'darkness and grief' in the solstice.
- Consider a cross-cultural comparison of the theme.
- Demonstrate knowledge of belief and practices in the summer/ winter solstice.
- Explore how these beliefs and practices may influence our life today.

## Unit 4: Christian festivals that overlaid Pagan festivals

### Here, students will:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of Celtic/ Pagan belief system.
- Demonstrate understanding of Celtic/Pagan history, in a historic context and apply that understanding to human daily living.
- Choose one festival/ celebration to compare with its Christian equivalent festival.
- Examine and apply theme of relevancy for today's worshippers.

## Unit 5: Birth and Death

### Here, students will:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of modern customs surrounding Christmas and Easter.
- Explore the 'birth and death' themes surrounding Christian Christmas and Easter stories and compare / contrast them with the Celtic/ Pagan understanding of the theme of Pagan festivals at the same time.
- Critically assess the relevance of customs to the stories of Christmas and Easter.
- Examine the importance of custom on physical, psychological and spiritual life.

## Unit 6: Shortest and Longest Day

### Here, students will:

- Demonstrate understanding of the Celtic/Pagan shortest and longest day.
- Explore the theme of light on the longest and shortest day.
- Examine the significance of the theme to the Wheel of the Year.
- Illustrate how the theme speaks to our modern human experience and spiritual growth.

OR

## Unit 7: Time of Balance

### Here, students will:

- Demonstrate in-depth understanding of the idea of 'nature's resurrection' and a time of balance, in the celebrations of the Spring and Autumn Equinoxes.
- Demonstrate knowledge of its symbolic significance.
- Explore the topic of both 'beginning and endings' in our lives, exploring their interpretation with that of the Celtic/Pagan celebrations.
- Reflect wisdom drawn from the celebrations of beginning and endings.
- Assess what lessons can be learned from the subject topic.

## Intergenerational Worship

This module looks at diverse ways to bring all people together, not divide or isolate groups through age. It seeks to bridge the gap our increasingly secular society is creating. The module looks at intergenerational worship as a vehicle for growth, responding to the needs of all the community and adapting to changing society.

This module is a half module (three units) course.

The objectives below describe **some** of the areas that student will cover. However, no one assignment can cover all aspects of a unit and is not intended to do so. They are offered so that students have an opportunity of choice and to explore the subject.

### Unit 1: Intergenerational worship in Unitarian movement

#### **Here, students will:**

- Discuss intergenerational worship in the Unitarian movement.
- Explore advantages and disadvantages of intergenerational worship using examples to illustrate.
- Identify elements of intergenerational worship.
- Discuss the use of intergenerational elements/ approaches to worship in British Unitarians and other geographical areas of Unitarianism.
- Create and implement elements of intergenerational approaches in worship.

### Unit 2: Intergenerational approaches in other faiths

#### **Here, students will:**

- Define and explain what intergenerational worship looks like.
- Explain why intergenerational worship is important to the Unitarian movement.
- Explore the significance of intergenerational services on spirituality.
- Investigate one faith tradition/ spirituality practicing an intergenerational approach.

### Unit 3: Intergenerational services and sermons

#### **Here, students will:**

- Demonstrate understanding of the role of sermons/ address in an intergenerational service.
- Demonstrate leadership skills in coordinating participation of all ages in a worship service.
- Illustrate understanding of the use of sermon in intergenerational services.

## WSC - Meditation and Contemplative Practices

This module invites students to develop both their experiential and theoretical knowledge of different meditative and contemplative practices and consider their relevance within a Unitarian context. Students are encouraged to explore forms of meditation from various traditions, contemplate derivations of mindfulness, and the adoption and evolution of elements of meditative and contemplative traditions in worship.

This is a half module with options for two of the questions. The first question is compulsory, the second and third are the student's choice – from a range of five questions. This choice is offered so that students have an opportunity to explore the subject of meditation, based on their own personal interests and preferences.

The objectives below describe the **key areas** that it is hoped the student will cover. However, no one assignment can cover all aspects of a unit in any depth and is not intended to do so. The Marking criteria will consider to what extent the student has covered these objectives to a satisfactory level.

### Unit 1: Exploring Meditation (compulsory)

#### Here, students will:

- Demonstrate general awareness of the diversity of meditation practices.
- Examine in detail the theory and practice of one chosen expression of meditation, including its historical role and source of wisdom.
- Devote a period of time to explore this chosen form of meditation and keep a record of experiences.
- Reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of the chosen meditation practice, and highlight its benefits and any challenges encountered.
- Disseminate some of this knowledge to others through a worship service, incorporating both theory and practice

### Unit 2: Mindfulness

#### Here, students will:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the term 'Mindfulness' – in its widest sense.
- Understand key concepts and terms related to 'mindful attention' (i.e. present moment awareness, paying attention on purpose, 'beginners mind', with-holding judgements).
- Explore various mindfulness practices (i.e. mindfulness of the breath, mindfulness of the body, mindful eating, mindful walking, mindful use of all the senses).
- Draw together a range of mindfulness practices appropriate to a worship service.
- Show awareness of how mindfulness within worship could be adapted to specific congregational needs and settings (e.g. All Age worship.)

### Unit 3: Historical overview of meditation

#### Here, students will:

- Demonstrate an historic awareness of silence & meditation in Unitarian services.

- Examine the importance generally attached to the “word” as opposed to silence / space for reflection, in Unitarian services.
- Evaluate the validity of a statement – considering arguments both for and against.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the Transcendentalists and their influence on modern Unitarianism – and in particular contemplative practices.
- Study one contemporary expert of meditation in the Unitarian arena.
- Illustrate their understanding of the Unitarian context of meditation, with application in a worship service.

#### Unit 4: Interchangeable terms

##### **Here, students will:**

- Demonstrate understanding of the interchangeability of the terms meditation, prayer and contemplation within Unitarian worship.
- Demonstrate knowledge of, and discriminate between Buddhist and Christian understandings of prayer, contemplation and meditation.
- Compare and contrast Buddhist and Christian understandings with a Unitarian perspective.
- Reflect on their own interpretations of these interchangeable terms.
- Illustrate their understanding of these terms with application in a worship service.

#### Unit 5: Contemplation – the Silence

##### **Here, students will:**

- Examine the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson in relation to silence in worship.
- Assess if Emerson’s words are still applicable today and give reasons why/why not?
- Examine the place of silence / meditation in contemporary Unitarian worship.
- Examine the place of silence / meditation in Unitarian religious education programmes.
- Consider practical ways to strengthen meditation/ contemplation in Unitarian communities.
- Enable other Unitarians to experience meditation / contemplation within a worship service.

#### Unit 6: Mindfulness for Health

##### **Here, students will:**

- Identify secular forms of “mindfulness” and recognise its wide application in today’s society.
- Understand the historical and religious roots of Mindfulness
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the argument of ‘misappropriation of practice from its religious roots’ – considering both sides.
- Explore and evaluate the medical and scientific evidence for mindfulness practice in contemporary life – in relation to health and well-being.
- Create a worship service that touches on the possible benefits of Mindfulness for Unitarian communities.

## USC - Meditation and Contemplative Practice: Advanced Step

This module invites students to develop both their experiential and theoretical knowledge of different meditative and contemplative practices and consider the relevance with in a Unitarian context. Students are encouraged to explore forms of meditation from various traditions, contemplate derivations of mindfulness, and the adoption and evolution of elements of meditative and contemplative traditions in Unitarian thought and practice.

This is a half module with options for two of the questions. The first question is compulsory, the second and third are student choice – from a range of five questions. This choice is offered so that students have an opportunity to explore the subject of meditation, based on their own personal interests and preferences.

The objectives below describe the key areas that it is hoped the student will cover. However, no one assignment can cover all aspects of a unit in any depth and is not intended to do so. Marking criteria will take into account to what extent the student has covered these objectives to a satisfactory level.

### Unit 1: In Depth Exploration of a Meditation practice (compulsory)

*N.B. this unit does not have to be tackled first*

#### **Here, students will:**

- Demonstrate general awareness of the diversity of meditation practices.
- Examine in detail the theory and practice of one chosen expression of meditation, including its historical role and source of wisdom.
- Devote a period of time to explore this chosen form of meditation and keep a record of experiences.
- Reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of the chosen meditation practice, and highlight its benefits and any challenges encountered.

### Unit 2: Comparing Meditation practices

#### **Here, students will:**

- Demonstrate knowledge of two different meditation practices originating from two different religious traditions.
- Understand the historical lineage of these meditative practices and how they have evolved over time into modern forms.
- Compare and contrast the two practices - showing how they overlap and differ - both in theory and practice.
- Consider how these two practices may / may not be considered relevant to a Unitarian context (i.e. utilised in worship or small group situations)

### Unit 3: Historical overview of meditation within a Unitarian context

#### Here, students will:

- Demonstrate an historic awareness of silence & meditation in Unitarian services.
- Examine the importance generally attached to the “word” as opposed to silence / space for reflection, in Unitarian services.
- Evaluate the validity of a statement – considering arguments both for and against.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the Transcendentalists and their influence on modern Unitarianism – and in particular contemplative practices.
- Study one contemporary expert of meditation in the Unitarian arena.

### Unit 4: Interchangeable terms

#### Here, students will:

- Demonstrate understanding of the interchangeability of the terms meditation, prayer and contemplation within Unitarian worship.
- Demonstrate knowledge of, and discriminate between Buddhist and Christian understandings of prayer, contemplation and meditation.
- Compare and contrast Buddhist and Christian understandings with a Unitarian perspective.
- Reflect on their own interpretations of these interchangeable terms.

### Unit 5: Contemplation – the Silence

#### Here, students will:

- Examine the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson in relation to silence in worship.
- Assess if Emerson’s words are still applicable today and give reasons why/why not?
- Examine the place of silence / meditation in contemporary Unitarian worship.
- Examine the place of silence / meditation in Unitarian religious education programmes.
- Consider practical ways to strengthen meditation/ contemplation in Unitarian communities.

### Unit 6: Mindfulness for Health

#### Here, students will:

- Identify secular forms of “mindfulness” and recognise its wide application in today’s society.
- Understand the historical and religious roots of Mindfulness.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the argument of ‘misappropriation of practice from its religious roots’ – considering both sides.
- Explore and evaluate the medical and scientific evidence for mindfulness practice in contemporary life – in relation to health and well-being.
- Consider the possible benefits of Mindfulness for Unitarian communities.

## Women and Religion in a Unitarian Context

The assignments cover a range of themes looking at the roles women have played in the Unitarian Movement. From writers to ministry, there are stories to explore. Christian feminist theology and Pagan / goddess theology are the two most common beliefs seen through the lens of women's experience within the Unitarian movement. Here, students will explore gender inclusive issues, equality, vocabulary, power and status of women and religion.

This module is a half module (three units). Student will complete three of the four units.

The objectives below describe **some** of the areas that student will cover. However, no one assignment can cover all aspects of a unit and is not intended to do so. They are offered so that students have an opportunity of choice and to explore the subject.

### Unit 1: Unitarian women

#### **Here, students will:**

- Assess and critically analyse one Unitarian woman, her faith and its influence on her thoughts and deeds.
- Demonstrate understanding of 'looking through the lens of women's experience.'
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of gender roles and status of women.

### Unit 2: Roles of women

#### **Here, students will:**

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of gender influences on roles for women in their own District, past and present.
- Discuss the changes, if any, in their own congregations.
- Explore the status of women within Unitarianism.
- Reflect on the feminist theological understanding of women's status.

### Unit 3: Inclusive Language

#### **Here, students will:**

- Demonstrate understanding of "inclusive language" in worship.
- Engage with feminist theological analysis of worship styles and vocabulary.
- Demonstrate inclusive approaches in worship.

### Unit 4: Equality or Inequality

#### **Here, students will:**

- Examine how Unitarian beliefs respect both men and women equally.
- Explore feminist theological influence on the Unitarian movement.
- Illustrate influences of feminist theology on Unitarian worship.

## World Religion in a Unitarian Context

This module looks at a wide range of religious views of the world, including relation to secular, scientific views. It invites the participant to explore contrasting views of the origin and nature of the universe, of human nature and its behaviour, of death and the afterlife.

Alongside this exploration can be consideration and articulation of the challenges in pursuing inter-religious dialogue, and the various way in which "Religious Studies" can be approached.

This module can be taken as a half module (three units) or full module (six units).

The objectives below describe **some** of the areas that student will cover. However, no one assignment can cover all aspects of a unit and is not intended to do so. They are offered so that students have an opportunity of choice and to explore the subject.

### Unit 1: Foundation Figures

#### **Here, students will:**

- Demonstrate knowledge of one foundation figure of World Religion, including their ideas, beliefs values, significant teachings, and life.
- Explore the nature of what makes of someone a foundation figure.
- Show how they/their ideas are relevant in a Unitarian context from a personal point of view.

### Unit 2: Religious Festivals

#### **Here, students will:**

- Demonstrate knowledge of a festival of one World Religion.
- Compare and contrast the relationship between belief and popular practice for the festival chosen.
- Consider insights and ideas about the spiritual significance and impact on individuals and communities within that tradition.
- Examine the importance of the festival to a Unitarian context.

### Unit 3: Scriptural Texts or multiple choice on different faith traditions

#### **Here, students will:**

- Examine a scriptural text from one World religion.
  - Compare a text from the World Religion with one from their own faith tradition.
  - Discuss the impact / influence of the text to their own spiritual developments.
  - Consider what makes a piece of writing "scripture" i.e. sacred text.
  - Examine the significance in a Unitarian context.
- OR
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the World Religion faith tradition.
  - Explore the beliefs, practices, principles, in relation to one of the texts listed.

## Unit 4: A Moral Issue

### Here, students will:

- Examine a moral stance in one chosen World Faith tradition.
- Explore the restrictions on human behaviour, the roots and significance in contemporary life of the chosen world tradition.
- Express opinions on the humaneness and humanness of the moral stance.

## Unit 5: The Life of Society

### Here, students will:

- Examining one faith tradition, express understanding of society and social organisation.
- Consider how beliefs influence ideas of the ideal social community.
- Evaluate the consequences for family life and wider political life.
- Reflect on how this relates to a Unitarian perspective.

## Unit 6: An Interfaith Service

### Here, students will:

- Consider what the nature of an "Interfaith" service might be, for example:  
a worship celebration/meditation calling on resource from a variety of Faith traditions;  
an act of worship which involves representatives of different Faith traditions.
- Articulate what is being expressed in such an event.
- Explore and compare differing ways of ritual and expression in worship.
- Celebrate the diversity in an Interfaith community, recognising its willingness to unite in diversity.
- Evaluate what themes, spiritual perspectives may be shared in an Interfaith context.
- Assess insights of the "faith communities" in coming together in an act of worship.
- Reflect on the many aspects, from a variety of academic disciplines, of the challenge of interfaith relationship and engagement.

## Conduct of Worship

The main rationale for the WSC (as opposed to the USC) is to help individuals create Excellence in Worship. As such, assessment of learning is required and takes place in the conduct of worship module. This consists of the assessment of the student while delivering **two** of their four assignments at Intermediate Step Level and **six** of the twenty-four assignments marked by the tutors on the Advanced Step Level (at least one from each module studied).

### **Through the conduct of worship, students will:**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the theologies and practices of effective preaching.
- Demonstrate an ability to create relevant traditional and contemporary services.
- Demonstrate awareness of multicultural and multigenerational approaches to worship.
- Exhibit strong skills in construction and delivery of engaging sermons.
- Prepare and deliver sermons / homilies and reflections.
- Work collaboratively with professional colleagues and lay personnel.
- Integrate theologies into practice.
- Gain confidence with experimenting with participatory services.
- Show learning through subsequent services from the tutors' feedback and assessors' comments.

## Teaching Methods

Teaching should equip students with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities. It should develop in students an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in our communities with their diverse religious views and worldviews. Students should gain and deploy the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence. They learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.<sup>3</sup>

WSC promotes lifelong learning. Many of those who are attracted to the course approach it as a stepping stone to Ministerial Training. However, it is **stressed** that although it is looked on with favour by the Interview Panel, it is not a pre-requisite for Ministerial Training. Many approach the WSC as a prelude for Lay Preaching in their congregations and District, and as a useful skill to develop for charge and leadership of a congregation. Many students on the WSC are later accepted onto the Ministerial Training programme.

Although the WSC is predominantly an independent, distance-learning programme, the methods of study include:

- The reading, analysis and interpretation of texts including focusing on the historical context, hermeneutic concerning meaning and application.
- Reflection of practices of religious communities in their own context.
- Engaging with the ethics, morality, and values of aspects of religion in the development of worship.

Students engage actively with a variety of sources and experiences. The ability to evaluate sources critically is essential to the learning process. The production of assignments for assessment is a significant element in digesting, analysing and presenting what is learned. Guidance is provided through recommended resources and feedback from tutors. The development of a range of academic skills or literacies is a key part of programme design. Students undertake the study and complete assignments that enable them to progress effectively through each level of the course. Students access materials in their own time (subject to allocated time allowance per module), and tutorial guidance is available.

Group learning and peer learning takes place annually at Unitarian Association for Lay Ministry (UALM) Conference. Participation in discussion facilitates understanding of concepts and issues. It provides opportunities to interact with people from a range of social backgrounds and learn together.

Conduct of Worship Assessments (work-based learning) are incorporated into the programme for students to engage with the living practice of leading worship. The assessment supports the curriculum, allowing students to demonstrate the learning that has taken place, and show what they can do. Professional attitude and behaviour are also assessed.

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<sup>3</sup> National Curriculum for Religious Education 2013

Both the written and performance competences contribute to the overall results. Students who have not satisfied the assessment components of both parts of the curriculum objects will not be allowed to graduate until both have been achieved.

**Predominant Teaching and learning methods:**

Independent learning through guidance drawing on variety of sources.

Students are expected to develop skills in sourcing appropriate online material with discernment.

Individual tutorials and support are common elements of the Modular learning experience.

## Assessments

The relationship between formative and summative teaching and learning opportunities is considered in the design of programmes. Students are provided with opportunities to undertake assignments that build cumulatively toward summative assessment outcomes. Assignments are formatively marked. However, the tutor feedback aids in addressing concerns, allowing for re-mark opportunities. A module is not passed until the assignments are summative assessed through the Conduct of Worship Assessment process. The programme of study is designed to develop student understanding through structured learning materials and cumulative assessment process.

In terms of assessment, students should show that they know, understand and can apply the subject matter through the skills of creating and conducting worship.

The range of assessment methods used in the WSC, as appropriate to the learning outcomes specified, include:

- Written assignments (involving analysis, commentary, interpretation, exegesis, reflection).
- Oral presentations.
- Self-reflection journaling.
- Forms of assessment developed over time in response to innovations in technology and learning and teaching practice.

The assessment process is intended to ascertain that stated learning outcomes have been achieved. A variety of assessment methods enables students to demonstrate a range of attainments and skills. Modes of assessment and the range of assignments are diverse, with different methods justified by their purpose.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, a mentor's reports will be used in the process of assessment.

Assessment opportunities across the programme are designed to be formative in the sense of assisting students to reach agreed learning objectives. All assessed assignments work in a formative way to provide students with evidence of their achievements and the areas where they may improve their performance. The feedback is a crucial element of student learning and assessment. The feedback provides guidance to enhance student learning and may be formal or informal. In both cases, feedback may be oral, or written in email. Feedback on written assignments provides students with information about their progress and allows

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<sup>4</sup> Subject benchmark statement

them to deal with any areas of concern before applying it to the Conduct of Worship Summative Assessment.

All assessment has clear criteria against which students and teachers measure the achievement of learning outcomes. It is recognised that explicit assessment of some skills, especially those implying personal development, may be more difficult than assessment of the acquisition of knowledge. A student's personal spiritual development and religious outlook are not included in the criteria for the award.

A small number of students may decide not to continue on to the next stage. All work will be held in abeyance for 3 years when students may return to the stage they left. After 5 years, students may be asked to retake the Foundation Step before continuing with the stage they left. Students with work held in abeyance for more than 8 years may be required to return to the Foundation Step. All decisions will be at the WSC team's discretion and all returns at the 3 years point will require a reference. (Please see the application form for who can act as reference.)

**WSC students** are expected to find their own suitably qualified or experienced assessor(s) for the Conduct of Worship element. Assessment schedules are available from the Course Administrator. In addition, students are expected to secure a mentor (preferably the person who gave them a reference to join the course), as a report from the mentor will be needed at the end of the course.

## WSC Process for Application, Certification, and Recommendation for GA Rolls.

This section sets out the process of acceptance and qualification and accreditation on the WSC from Foundation level through to Advanced Level.

### **Foundation Step:**

1. Applicants apply to the Foundation Step through their Districts. There is no set essential requirement except enthusiasm and attendance, and either attendance at a Unitarian congregation for a minimum of 6 months / or membership of NUF for around the same period.
2. All applicants will need to sign a conduct of relationship agreement at each stage of the WSC beginning at Foundation Step. The application process for Foundation Step does not require a reference.
3. To pass the Foundation Step, participant will need to have attended all written classes, participated in the classroom work, completed a classroom set assignment (which may be a video recording of their performance of a sermon, reading, prayer) used for evaluation of practical stance, voice, diction etc needed for worship. In addition, participant will need to have passed two Conduct of Worship Assessments at a satisfactory level. This is an equivalent to a D grade.

### **Intermediate Step:**

1. Application for the Intermediate Step requires completion of the Foundation Step not more than five years previously. It also requires a reference from a person of long standing in the Unitarian movement in the participant's congregation. This could be a minister, lay pastor or a member of the committee. If there is no minister in the congregation, but there is a minister locally that the applicant is known to, then they may act as referee. If there is no long-standing member (all are under 6 years of membership) then a reference from the District Association is required in addition to any from persons named above.
2. If the applicant has not completed the Foundation Step but wishes to start from Intermediate level, the USC is available until the Foundation Step is completed. In special circumstances, an exception can be made for an experienced worship leader. Please contact the Administrator for more details.
3. Although the tutors on the WSC are happy to offer guidance on individual assignments, it is good if the referee can also act as mentor on an as needed basis to help the applicant with their studies. This should be kept in mind when choosing and asking someone to be your referee.
4. To pass the Intermediate Step, candidates must complete four (4) written assignments (as described in the prospectus) and two (2) Conduct of Worship assessments based on the set assignments, at satisfactory to good grade level (Grade C or D). Learning must be evidenced throughout. This can be seen in improvements of set work with a

correction of any issue, evidence of improvement remarks in feedback by tutors, evidence of improvement in the conduct of worship skills.

**Advanced Step:**

1. Acceptance to the Advanced Step requires successful completion of the Foundation Level and Intermediate Level. An application form must be completed. With the application a reference from a person of long-standing is required. This person will also be expected to write a report at the end of the candidate's learning at this step, therefore they may also act a mentor to the candidate.
2. To pass the Advanced Step all twenty-four (24) written assignments are expected to be completed at a good, very good and excellent level (Equivalent to grades A, B, C), and six (6) Conduct of Worship assessments must be completed, based on the set assignments, at good to excellent level. There is an aspiration that by the end of the course, students should be reaching excellent level in conduct of worship, progressing from a C grade to an A grade where possible. It is important that issues of concern are addressed and improved upon, evidenced through comments made through tutors' feedback and assessors' comments. Evidence of repetition of the same issue of concern will require the assignment / assessment to be retaken, or an additional assessment requested. This is at the WSC's discretion. However, it is possible for a student to write good, highly intellectual written assignments and yet not give performance of excellence within the Conduct of Worship element. This will be evident from assessor's comments. Evidence of understanding their performance and what is needed for improvement, and subsequently improvement of the issue of concern will result in a satisfactory pass mark. However, if improvement of the issue(s) of concern is not evidenced, the student may have completed all set assignments and assessment and still not have passed the course to the required grade level. In which case, the student will be asked to conduct additional Conduct of Worship assessments to show understanding and learning correcting their errors until the level of learning requirement is met.
3. If the student passes all twenty-four (24) written assignments but does not pass all six (6) Conduct of Worships satisfactorily evidencing improvement, the student will receive a pass and completion of the written component of the Advanced Level until such time that they complete satisfactorily the Conduct of Worship component of the course. If after two (2) years the Conduct of Worship component of the Advanced Step is still not completed to a satisfactory level, the WSC team may, at their discretion, offer the student recommendation for Certification of Completion of the USC at Advanced Level. If after three (3) years the Conduct of Worship component of the course is still not completed to a satisfactory level, at the WSC team's discretion, the student may be asked to retake all six (6) Conduct of Worship components of the course again to the required satisfactory level, showing a succession of improvement in skills.

4. On satisfactory completion of the twenty-four (24) written assignments and six (6) Conduct of Worship assessments, the student receives a Certification of Completion of the Advanced Step Course from the WSC. The WSC team then also writes a report on the student and requests a report from the student's referee who was listed on the application form. If that person is no longer available, the WSC will request a report from the home congregation of the student and one other congregation that the student has built a relationship with. These reports are forwarded to the LLSG as evidence and support of their application for recommendation for entry on the GA Roll for Lay Preachers. In summary, four pieces of evidence are sent to the LLSG to assist them in the process of deciding whether or not to recommend the candidate to the GA Roll for Lay Preachers. It is not the WSC decision to make the final recommendation of candidates for entry on the GA Roll for Lay Preachers. Rather the WSC is a training entity of the Unitarian Movement that provides Certificate of Completions for Lay Worship Elements. It does not act as the body for accreditation.
5. The four pieces of evidence are: Completion of Advanced Step Course Certificate, Report from the WSC team, Report from the Referee/ Mentor, and Report from a Congregation (if needed).
6. On receipt of the three or four pieces of evidence, the LLSG will make their decision based on their own set criteria as to whether to recommend a candidate to the Executive Committee (EC) for GA entry to the Rolls of Lay Preachers. Once they have made their decision the LLSG informs the EC.
7. The Executive Committee then make the final decision based on the recommendation of the LLSG whether a candidate will be admitted to the GA Roll of Lay Preachers. As this is an honorary accreditation there is no appeal process if the candidate is declined entry to the GA Roll of Lay Preachers. As with honorary positions, the criteria are varied and influenced by many factors, and not based purely on completion of assignments and assessments. It is also at the EC's discretion to withdraw entry on the GA Roll of Lay Preachers.

## Marking Criteria for Assignments:

### WSC Grade descriptions Scheme

The following grade descriptors indicate the level of attainment. They give a general indication of the required learning outcome at each specific grade. The descriptors should be interpreted in relation to the content outlined in the specification of each module. They are not designed to define that content. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the student has met the assessment objectives listed under the module headings.

To achieve Grade as described below, all targets must be met. If all the target descriptors are not met, then the grade goes down one. **For example**, a student who does not meet all the criteria listed under grade A would therefore achieve a grade A-, or B, or B-. To achieve an A- the student will have had to achieved all of B grade criteria and some of A grade criteria. If a student achieves all the criteria in grade B only and nothing more, then they are marked at grade B. There is no plus + grades in this scheme.

A (A-, A)	is equivalent to	70% and above - excellent, outstanding
B (B-, B)	is equivalent to	60% to 69% - very good.
C (C-, C)	is equivalent to	50% to 59% - good
D	is equivalent to	45% to 49% -satisfactory
E	is equivalent to	40% to 44% -barely adequate – possible retake required

While tutors would never class any act of worship as 'a fail' as no-one can read the hearts of worship leader or fellow worshippers, if the work / worship is of an unsatisfactory quality (and it does happen), then the student would be asked to resubmit. Helpful suggestions would first be fed back to the student.

(Exception: Essays on the USC, if below standard, will be classed as a fail.)

In addition to the marking scheme, tutors also mark according to ECOP: E for Ethos, C for Content, O for Originality, P for Preachability. Tutors therefore give a separate mark for P - Preachability as well as an overall grade based on the marking scheme for each assignment.

The student is asked to pay attention to the feedback comments of the tutors and revise the piece of worship accordingly. The Conduct of Worship Assessment will show indications whether this review has taken place. Continual repetition of mistakes shown in the Conduct of Worship may indicate the student has ignored the remarks and recommendations made by the tutor on its Preachability. This may jeopardise the summative assessment of the module, and students may be asked to repeat services to show improvements before being passed as complete in that module or on that level.

There is an expectation that at Foundation Step Level, students are expected to reach a satisfactory grade or higher (grade D or higher). At Intermediate Step Level, students are expected to progress from satisfactory to good grade (grade D to C) at a minimum. By the end

of the Advanced Step Level, students should aspire to progress from good through very good to excellent grade (Grade C to B to A).

The following acts as guidelines in understanding what is expected to attain **grades A through E**. To achieve a particular Grade as described below, all targets must be met. If all the target descriptors are not met, then the grade goes down one. If all the target descriptors and more is met, then the grade goes up one. The highest grade is A. ECOP: E for Ethos, C for Content, O for Originality, P for Preachability is also considered within each grade descriptor.

### **Grade A**

Within the context of the WSC modules, to receive this grade, students must:

- Demonstrate an excellent understanding and knowledge of the module's facts, concepts and techniques that are needed for excellence in worship, selecting appropriate readings / hymns / music in a wide variety of contexts, both familiar and unfamiliar.
- Show a high level of critical comprehension or understand the meaning of almost all theories, selecting appropriately a wide variety of real-world situations.
- If diverse interpretations are found, or errors in thesis / theories are found, these are at most times noticed, explained and corrected.
- Correctly refer to given context with convincing reasoned, intelligent, sensible comments or predictions with possible application for today's society.
- Demonstrate high accuracy and skill.
- Use Unitarian language and symbols correctly and effectively in presenting a convincing reasoned argument.
- Show excellent engagement with alternative views and effective solutions to concerns.
- Express their opinion and conclusion in a mature way.
- Express excellent personal communication, succinct well-structured worship integrating experience with theory and practice

**Key terms: accuracy, excellent, high accuracy/ skill. Correctly. Convincing reasoned argument.**

### **Grade C**

Within the context of the WSC modules, to receive this grade, students must:

- Demonstrate refined understanding of the module's facts.
- Show reasonable recall of concepts and techniques that are needed for satisfactory worship, usually selecting appropriate readings / hymns / music in a variety of recommended readings or familiar contexts.
- Show some comprehension of or understand the meaning of most theories, selecting appropriately a variety of real-world situations.
- Show occasional engagement with alternative views and devise solution to concerns.
- Occasionally notice and correct errors in interpretation or theories indicating some critical reflection.
- Sometimes refer to given context with sensible comments and devise useful application for today's society.

- Demonstrate reasonable level of accuracy and skill.
- Use Unitarian language and symbols with some skill and sometimes proceed logically through extended arguments.
- Show sometimes awareness of their opinion giving sensible interpretations.
- Express satisfactory personal communication, and structured worship integrating realistic situations.

**Key terms: refine or extend, most, satisfactory, usually, reasonable, sometimes, occasionally, useful**

### **Grade E**

Within the context of the WSC modules, to receive this grade, students may:

- Recognise or recall a few of the module's facts, and yet show no evidence of the use of primary sources or personal research.
- Attempt concepts and techniques that are needed for adequate worship, occasionally selecting appropriate readings / hymns / music to use in some contexts.
- Show low comprehension or understanding of the meaning of theories.
- Try to interpret the meaning of theories in the context of realistic situations or original context.
- Selecting appropriately a variety of real-world situations.
- Sometimes refer to given context with sensible comments and devise useful application for today's society.
- Demonstrate little or low level of accuracy and skill.
- Use language and recognise some symbols with little or low skill and occasionally make some arguments.
- Show some attempt to comment on information.
- Engage some personal communication but with no critical understanding with a seemingly unstructured worship.

**Key terms: some, little or low, occasionally, try, attempt, rarely.**

## Marking Criteria for Conduct of Worship:

As part of a controlled assessment, students will be asked to conduct worship from the module assignment already marked. Student are required to:

- Make sure they prepare well. Practice their presentation several times beforehand and check that it is neither too short nor too long.
- If using Power-point, make sure that they are familiar with the technology and have a back-up plan if the technology should fail on the day.
- Try not to be nervous. Smile at their audience and make eye contact at regular intervals.

The conduct of worship assessment will:

- Examine something of the variety of styles of worship and preaching and will seek to relate these to the traditions represented by the participants.
- Explore the necessary knowledge and understanding required to design worship effectively in a variety of contexts has been achieved.
- Examine basic effective communication skills.

## Conduct of Worship Assessors:

**Services are to be assessed by a Minister or approved or experienced Lay Preacher only. Other assessors are possible for students without a Minister in their congregation, and with the approval of the WSC team. Please contact the Administrator for approval.**

Students are expected to find their own assessors. As there is currently no formal training for assessors in place, WSC team cannot be responsible for the credibility of the assessors. Assessments from the assessors hold much weight. However, the final decision of the satisfactory pass of the conduct of worship is assessed by the WSC team. The WSC team looks at the tutor's assignment feedback **and** the assessor's feedback to determine the satisfactory achievement of a conduct of worship assessment.

- 1** The assessor is responsible for assessing the service taken by the student on a pre-arranged occasion.
- 2** Constructive criticism of the service should be discussed on a one to one basis, in confidence with the student as soon as possible after the service.
- 3** The assessment criteria are outlined on the assessment sheets.
- 4 Completed forms are sent to the Administrator who will then copy it to the student to guide their future practice and send a copy to the students. This is not the Assessor's role.**
- 5** Final decision of the pass or fail of the assessment is made by the WSC team.
- 6** If either the student or the assessor has any queries they should contact the Administrator.

## Self-Assessments:

Students are encouraged to keep a record of their learning and a portfolio folder. They are also encouraged to:

- Identify their own learning needs.
- Use different techniques to record and present information for worship.

## Accreditation:

At the satisfactory completion of the Foundation Step, students will receive a Foundation Step Certificate.

At the satisfactory completion of the Intermediate Step, students will receive a Certificate for the Intermediate Step.

At the satisfactory completion of each module of the Advanced Step, students will receive a Certificate.

At the satisfactory completion of all the modules at Advanced Step and the satisfactory completion of all Conduct of Worship Assessments, students will receive a Certificate of Completion of the Advanced Step.

Students who have successfully completed all components of the Advanced Step and received their Certificate of Completion will be referred to the Local Leadership Strategy Group (LLSG). The LLSG discerns recommendation to the Executive Committee (EC) for admittance to the Roll of Lay Preachers of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. The LLSG criteria are their own.

# STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

## Introduction

In any community there will occasionally be matters which cause resentment or disputes. Good relationships will best be maintained if they are resolved informally but it is also necessary to identify the channels through which they can be raised more formally should the need arise.

## Student grievance procedure

### 1 For Written Assignment and Conduct of Worship

- (i) A student who feels aggrieved by any matter relating to his or her assignment or assessed conduct of worship should discuss it informally with the appropriate tutor / assessor.
- (ii) If the matter is not satisfactorily dealt with within 14 days, the student may raise it with the Chairperson and Mentor for WSC.
- (iii) If the matter is not satisfactory dealt with, the student may request that a WSC Appeal Board consisting of no less than 4 WSC team members, convene to review the matter, whose decision shall be final.

### 2 For Overall Satisfactory Completion of the Course:

- (i) A student who is deemed to have not satisfactorily completed the course and feels aggrieved, should discuss it informally with the WSC Chairperson and Mentor.
- (ii) If the matter is not satisfactorily dealt with within 14 days, the student may request that a WSC Appeal Board consisting of no less than 4 WSC team members, convene to review the matter.
- (iii) If the matter is still not satisfactorily dealt with, within a further 30 days, the student may refer the grievance with their Minister or Congregation Leader who gave the reference for their application to the course. If there, is no referee then their Foundation Step Organizer is the person to approach. The individual will be empowered to discuss the concern with the WSC Chair.
- (iv) If the matter is not then satisfactory dealt with, within a further 30 days, the student may refer the grievance to the Local Leadership Strategy Group (LLSG), through the WSC Chair.
- (v) The WSC Chair may then ask the LLSG to discuss the matter with the student and make such enquiries as they think necessary. The LLSG decision shall be final.
- (vi) All time limits may be extended by agreement.