

CONTENTS

CONTACT THE AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF MINISTRIES	2
INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL FORMATION	3
FORMATION DIRECTORS	4
WELCOME TO YOUR ROLE AS FORMATION DIRECTOR	5
QUALITIES OF A FORMATION DIRECTOR	5
FORMATION DIRECTOR AS GROUP LEADER	6
REFERRAL AND TRIANGULATION	6
FACILITATION OF LIFE STORIES	7
STORYTELLING	7
SUBSEQUENT FORMATION MEETINGS	8
FORMATION GROUP REQUIREMENTS.....	9
FORMATION GROUP ABSENCE POLICY	9
FORMATION GROUP COVENANT.....	10
RECORDS AND REPORTS.....	10
SUPERVISION OF MENTORS	11
STUDENT ASSISTANCE	11
FIRST CONTACT WITH MENTOR	11
ONGOING SUPERVISION OF MENTORS	12
TRAINING, SUPERVISION, AND EVALUATION.....	12
FORMATION DIRECTOR ADDITIONAL AIDS	12
<i>FORMATION DIRECTOR KEY TASKS GRID.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>SAMPLE PERSONAL FORMATION YEARLY PLAN.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>(P5001).....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>SAMPLE SPIRITUAL FORMATION YEARLY PLAN.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>(S7101, S7201, S7301, S8501, S9601).....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>SPIRITUAL FORMATION CURRICULUM OVERVIEW.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>OVERALL THEMES TO SPIRITUAL FORMATION.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKILLS</i>	<i>19</i>
SHARED APPENDICES.....	19
1. PERSONAL FORMATION STUDENT DEMAND HOURS.....	19
2. STUDENT DEVELOPMENT CHART AREAS	19
3. STUDENT DEVELOPMENT CHART.....	19
4. SPIRITUAL FORMATION GROUP COVENANT	19
5. CHOOSING A MENTOR.....	19
6. MENTOR COVENANT	19
Personal Formation Student Demand Hours	20
<i>STUDENT DEVELOPMENT CHART AREAS.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Spiritual Formation</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Student Development Chart.....</i>	<i>22</i>

Purpose:.....	22
The Student Development Chart Explained:.....	22
Who fills out this chart?	23
Instructions:	23
Spiritual Maturity	25
Emotional Maturity	26
Self Awareness	26
Leadership Capacity	27
Vocational Clarity.....	28
Relational Skills.....	28
Personal Integrity.....	29
Spiritual Formation	31
<i>Summary of Student Development Chart.....</i>	31
Spiritual Formation	32
Group Covenant	32
CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY POLICY	32
DUTY OF CARE AND DISCLOSURE.....	33
CHOOSING A MENTOR	34
Spiritual Formation	35
Mentor Covenant.....	35
UNDERSTANDING.....	35
REQUIRED HOURS	35
RESPONSIBILITIES.....	35
MENTORING ATTENDANCE LOG	36
CONFIDENTIALITY, PRIVACY, DUTY OF CARE AND DISCLOSURE POLICIES.....	36

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CONTACT THE AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF MINISTRIES

All staff details and contacts can be found via our website www.acom.edu.au

INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL FORMATION

ACOM considers Spiritual Formation to be essential and foundational in preparation for Christian Ministry. Nurturing spiritual depth, energy, and excellence is the centrepiece of ACOM's vision for equipping students for lifetime ministry. ACOM has long recognised that attention to one's spiritual formation is the crucial element that enables ministers to thrive in sometimes difficult environments.

Therefore, for Learning Cohort students, formational studies do not sit as an option or supplement to other subjects, rather 'Spiritual or Personal Formation' units are mandatory and are offered as year-long experiences involving practical and academic activities that enhance overall personal and spiritual development. 'Spiritual or Personal Formation' units are designed to extend the capabilities of students in the following areas:

- Spiritual maturity
- Emotional maturity
- Self-awareness
- Leadership capacity
- Vocational clarity
- Relational skills
- Personal integrity

'Spiritual Formation' units encompass three integrated activities:

- Intensive participation in a **Formation Group** led by a Formation Director
- Thoughtful engagement with the online **Spiritual Formation Curriculum**
- An ongoing relationship with a **Personal Mentor**

Thank you for agreeing to partner with ACOM by undertaking one of the vital roles within the Spiritual Formation Program. ACOM's unique approach to preparing people for ministry would not be possible without the many willing and enthusiastic partners we have in the field. We consider Formation Directors and Mentors to be an essential part of the learning team and, as such, they are critical to our educational structure and are much-valued members of the Learning Cohort they represent. Apart from the Formation Directors and Mentors, the Spiritual Formation team also includes key ACOM staff, which includes the Spiritual Formation Program Coordinator, the Spiritual Formation National Supervisor and a Learning Cohorts' Student Engagement Manager. During the year, at times these roles interface and overlap with one another to ensure the overall success of the Spiritual Formation program and so that Learning Cohort students can engage with the transformative experience that comes from journeying with one another through the Spiritual Formation process.

Importantly, we want to reassure you that you are not alone in your formation role. The Spiritual Formation Program Coordinator and Student Engagement Manager will assist you to access any resources and other support you may need. Additional information including student curriculum, required forms and resources can also be found on the online learning site, Moodle (<https://acm.mrooms.net>). You should have received an email with your login details from ACOM. If not, please contact moodle@acom.edu.au.

FORMATION DIRECTORS



WELCOME TO YOUR ROLE AS FORMATION DIRECTOR

Formation Directors have primary responsibility for the health and conduct of their Formation Group as well as the progressive formation of the students in their group. Formation Directors are invited into their role on an annual basis by their Learning Cohort.

Formation Directors Role:

- Facilitate their Formation Group at an initial gathering, and around 4-5 additional meetings during the year. For Spiritual Formation Groups this will total 53 hours for the year. For Personal Formation students this will total 11 hours.
- Oversee and monitor each student's Mentor to provide an integrated approach to the student's development in life and ministry.
- Conduct end of year Student Interviews using The Student Development Chart (this is not compulsory but may be helpful).
- Maintain accountability to the Learning Cohort Coordinator regarding the overall conduct of their Formation Group and any concerns arising with students in the group, and
- Learning Cohort Formation Directors are invited to a Training Day and an end of year Debrief Day, held annually (this is not compulsory but may be helpful).

QUALITIES OF A FORMATION DIRECTOR

ACOM and partnering Learning Cohorts seek Formation Directors who exhibit a significant knowledge of formation-related issues, who possess solid group facilitation skills, and who model and live out the values that we seek to impart to students in the areas of personal and spiritual formation.

Each Formation Director must supply a Working With Children Check (WWCC) or National Police Check to their Learning Cohort Coordinator who will send a copy to ACOM's Spiritual Formation Program Coordinator.

Formation Directors who possess professional skills and knowledge in the following:

- Group facilitation and/or group spiritual direction
- The dynamics of personal spiritual formation and spiritual renewal, encouraging and supporting psychological wellbeing
- Contemporary issues in ministry contexts
- Professional ministry ethics

Formation Directors who are outstanding role models in the following areas:

- Healthy and sustainable Christian leadership
- Leadership incorporating appropriate levels of vulnerability and transparency with respect to character and faith

- Self-awareness and accurate self-assessment
- Discernment of individual and group needs
- Maintaining a vibrant spiritual life through engagement with multiple spiritual disciplines
- Maintaining a contemplative and reflective outlook on life
- Balancing skill, intellect, and service in ministry
- Employing healthy and effective relational, ethical and moral boundaries
- Intentionally engaging in personal accountability through supervision and/or mentoring relationships.

FORMATION DIRECTOR AS GROUP LEADER

With the appropriate knowledge and modelling, the Formation Director's task is to create and sustain a safe physical, social, emotional, cognitive and sacred 'learning space' which is conducive to helping students fulfil the aims of ACOM's Spiritual and Personal Formation Units. Formation Groups are formed as learning spaces so that, in the context of the group, students can engage actively with God and others in the pursuit of health and maturity. Formation Directors should employ dynamics that enhance formation-group life.

These include:

- Building trust and safety in the group through relationship-building activities and exercises
- Promoting equity and inclusivity in group life
- Developing an ambience that supports and challenges personal growth and faith
- Modelling depth, honesty, and transparency
- Utilising a facilitation-based (rather than command and control) leadership style.

REFERRAL AND TRIANGULATION

Formation Directors are not acting as counsellors or psychologists. The Formation Director's role is to orient their group towards the health and development of each member, encouraging the group to stay focused on supporting each student in healthy ways.

The Formation Director should help each student to:

- Share their experiences and perspectives rather than conjecturing about what others may/may not be thinking
- Talk about others in positive ways - avoiding putdowns, condemnation, and judgment

Remember that students may overstate concerns when they are feeling hurt, and that there are always two sides to every story. Comments arising from anger or hurt may

misrepresent others and may allow group members to draw unfair conclusions about people to whom they may relate in other contexts. Due to the nature of a Learning Cohort, Formation Directors need to pay particular attention to this dynamic within the Cohort upholding the signed covenant.

Significant emotional, relational and psychological problems may occasionally become evident in the context of Formation processes and experiences. With respect to these problems, Formation Directors and Mentors will not attempt to investigate any matter subject to disclosure and will refer students to professional care services when appropriate. A key resource is a list of counsellors and trained professionals who are accessible in your local area.

FACILITATION OF LIFE STORIES

Group life begins at an initial gathering where covenants are signed before life stories are shared. To build trust within the group, a Formation Director should share their life story with their Formation Group. In doing so, we encourage Formation Directors to be vulnerable and to share honestly with their group. However, it is vital that Formation Directors do not become self-absorbed in the telling of their life story, thus leading to a subsequent loss of leadership, focus and group stability. The Formation Group should always focus on a student's formation, and Directors should ensure that their own Spiritual Formation issues do not become a focus of the group. Specifically, the Formation Director should find a forum other than the Formation Group to share difficult personal issues. For example, if a Director is having marital difficulties, a Formation Group where the Director is the leader is not the forum to reveal and explore these difficulties. Ideally, Formation Directors should have their own mentors, supervisors, etc. who can assist Directors in processing their own formation issues.

STORYTELLING

The process of storytelling allows students to relate openly to each other, and to practice authentic self-disclosure, thus creating an environment of trust within the group. However, storytelling can leave a person feeling emotionally vulnerable, and so the storytelling process needs to be handled very carefully by the Director.

The following guidelines may help:

- No one should be forced to share beyond their comfort level.
- There is no specified time limit for storytelling. However, if a life story goes for an excessively long period, or becomes trivial, and/or the group is showing signs of discomfort at the length of the story, the Director must interrupt the story to check on its progress and to make the speaker aware of the time elapsed. The Director may recommend a break if the group needs it, and may speak to the storyteller during the break about projections for the length of the story from this point.
- Don't interrupt, and block group members who do. The group should listen without any responses which infer or convey judgements or assessments of the story or the storyteller. Also, block others who may be inclined to problem solve or give advice. However, Formation Directors must intervene in cases where

students share or attempt to share, explicit and inappropriate details relating to any subject.

- Don't terminate the story early - make sure the person has finished telling their full story and then thank the person for doing so.
- Immediately after the story is told, allow the group to respond positively and emotionally (not negatively and/or analytically) to the story. Each group member should respond, in turn, to each story. Failure to allow these responses can leave significant doubt in the mind of the storyteller about how s/he has been received.
- The storyteller may welcome questions and other responses. However, block any attempts to diagnose, advise or solve problems.
- Pray for the storyteller. Gather around the storyteller, even lay hands on them with their permission, and ask a few people to pray in response to the work God is doing in the life of the storyteller as evident from their story.

Students who apply themselves to the richness in these learning environments will find themselves more passionately intimate with God, more able to navigate their interior terrain and better equipped for a lifetime of sustained and effective ministry.

SUBSEQUENT FORMATION MEETINGS

When your Formation Group gathers for sessions after the initial gathering, it is important to allow adequate time for students to give an update since the last time they shared. Each student can report on significant life events and inner challenges as these relate to their Spiritual Formation. Allowing the group to interact in positive and supportive ways is also crucial in assessing the character and formation of all students.

In addition to this 'catch-up' activity, workshops can be offered at each session to help students reflect, identify, clarify, process and strengthen their spiritual formation. Formation Directors may develop and implement their own workshops in spiritual formation. However, the online spiritual formation curriculum and other online materials will also provide valuable workshop-related resources for Directors to use. Ask your Learning Cohort Coordinator or Student Engagement Manager for access to these resources, if you have not been given your own login to the Spiritual Formation Training and Resources unit on Moodle.

Some suggested workshop themes include:

Life story - deeper explorations, spiritual maturity, emotional health, character integrity, relational skills, relational health, stress and burnout in ministry, leadership development, intimacy with God, self-care strategies, spiritual disciplines, spirituality and sexuality, life stages, vocational clarity, personality assessments, life mission statement, case studies in ministry, critical incident management in ministry, conflict resolution skills.

Some tips for workshop creation include:

- Be creative – think outside the square.
- Vary workshop exercises to include activities such as debates, role playing, creative movement and acting.

- Encourage sharing in pairs, triads, and small groups.
- Allow time for reflective activities such as journaling and retreating to assist students in developing their inner awareness.
- Create a file as a way of collecting interesting ideas and resources for future workshops. File articles, DVD clips, and other resources.

Also, you will find on Moodle (<https://acm.mrooms.net>) all the information you require for leading your Formation Group, as well as the Spiritual and Personal Formation curriculum materials students will be accessing. These curriculum materials are essential for students, and can also be used to support and inform activities you choose to conduct in your group. These materials are, however, not designed to detract from, or overshadow, the objectives or activities of your group in any way. Formation Directors who may have been leading Formation Groups for many years will have assembled a range of materials and are encouraged to continue to use these materials as appropriate. The curriculum, however, will provide themes for Formation Group activities for those who wish to make use of them.

FORMATION GROUP REQUIREMENTS

Formation Group requirements form part of the demand hours for Spiritual Formation subjects. Students who miss a Formation Group meeting without an exemption may fail their Spiritual Formation unit.

FORMATION GROUP ABSENCE POLICY

Attendance at formation group meetings while studying the SF subjects must be maintained as a high priority. It is expected that holidays, sporting events, church events and other social events are scheduled around them. An absence always affects group life and detracts from the goal of building a deep and safe community, which is important formational work. Groups are known to thrive where there is a high commitment to attendance mirroring an honouring of each other's journeys. An absence for unexpected or serious reasons from Formation Group meetings requires an exemption. Failure to attend a Formation Group meeting without an exemption may result in a student FAILING their Spiritual Formation unit. If a student is ill or cannot attend for a serious reason, where possible written (email) permission must be applied for in advance to the Learning Coordinator and where applicable a Medical Certificate should also be supplied. Where an exemption is granted, supplementary work will be set to cover hours missed.

In the case of the Formation Group that chooses a retreat model for meeting throughout the year, an absence of an entire 1st, 2nd or 3rd retreat will result in an inability to pass any SF unit. As soon as the Formation Director is aware an absence will take place, he/she should 'cut and paste' the section below and advise all group members about the ensuing process. The reason for involving the whole group in any absence is to preserve unity and bonding within the whole group despite the absence of a group member.

FORMATION GROUP COVENANT

The central purpose of Formation Groups is to build 'Christian communities' that offer support, care and challenge in the advancement of each student's spiritual formation. This advancement occurs as the group provides openness, safety and hospitality to each student despite their life circumstances and personal challenges - thus building Christian character and maturity in each student.

In order for each community to form and function, students must commit fully to the aims and process under which a Formation Group flourishes. This includes a commitment to adhering to the confidentiality and privacy policy (see Formation Group Covenant for details).

Students must read the policy and sign the Formation Group Covenant at the formation of the group usually at the initial gathering.

Please find a copy in the appendix.

RECORDS AND REPORTS

Students are required to attend the initial gathering and all subsequent Formation Group meetings. Hence, Formation Directors must keep accurate records of student attendance. Formation Directors must also monitor each student's attendance for their Mentoring appointments.

SUPERVISION OF MENTORS

Adequate orientation and supervision are essential to the effectiveness of a decentralised, context- based model of training such as ACOM's. Our accreditation for Mentoring is only maintained subject to appropriate supervision of Mentors in the field. The following processes will help ensure the effectiveness of your Learning Cohort's Mentoring program and will provide the director with invaluable opportunities to liaise with mentors in support of students.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Formation Directors should ensure all students, especially first-year students, have an adequate grasp of how important mentoring is to their formation and to their overall educational experience with ACOM. Some students will need assistance with choosing a mentor. Adequate discussion should take place at the retreat so that first-year students are able to choose their mentors wisely.

FIRST CONTACT WITH MENTOR

As soon as possible after the student has completed their Mentor Covenant, the Formation Director should contact the mentor and:

- Welcome them to their role on behalf of ACOM,
- Thank them for their willingness to undertake this role,
- Explain the Formation Director's role in assisting the Mentor, and
- Arrange an orientation meeting either in person or by Zoom or telephone.

It is impossible to overestimate the value of this first contact. Mentors are otherwise left feeling isolated and uncertain in their role.

Formation Directors meet with Mentors at the start of the year to ensure Mentors know what to do, and to what standard they need to do it. Additionally they will ensure they have been provided access to the Mentor Orientation on Moodle and the Spiritual Formation Mentor Handbook. This Handbook provides Mentors with the information they require, as well as a copy of their Covenants, other forms they need and URL links to Moodle. It is important to explain to the Mentor that while you wish to liaise with the Mentor regarding the student's attendance and general wellbeing, that information the student divulges in their Mentoring sessions is protected by the safety of their Covenant.

Key ideas to discuss with Mentors include:

- An awareness of the number of hours required
- An understanding of what Mentoring itself involves and the process of setting goals
- The overall yearly plan for Mentoring sessions
- Key skills mentors require.

ONGOING SUPERVISION OF MENTORS

Formation Directors contact their student's mentors during the year to check on attendance records, and at the end of the year for a final debrief.

The final supervision meeting conducted by the Formation Director with each Mentor will:

- Assess how well the Mentor has grasped their role and fulfilled it,
- Deal with any issues of concern raised by students concerning their Mentor,
- Debrief the Mentor to help them be more self-aware concerning their functioning in their role,
- Help the Mentor prepare for closure of the Mentoring relationship.

TRAINING, SUPERVISION, AND EVALUATION

Formation Directors are accountable to their Learning Cohort for their ministry through the ACOM Spiritual Formation Program. The Spiritual Formation Program Coordinator is responsible for ACOM's Spiritual Formation Policies and Strategies and provides training and supervision for Formation Directors. The Program Coordinator can appoint a National Supervisor who oversees Formation Directors. The National Supervisor and/or Student Engagement Manager will oversee and conduct an annual Formation Director's Training and/or Debrief Day where the Spiritual Formation Program Coordinator cannot be present. Every Learning Cohort is invited to have Formation Directors participate in these training and debrief days each year.

At the end of each year, students return a Formation Group Evaluation Form. The Spiritual Formation Program Coordinator will individually follow up with Learning Cohorts any issues of concern raised by students in the context of this evaluation..

Yearly training and debrief days for Formation Directors seek to refresh and enrich professional knowledge in the areas listed above, whilst encouraging Formation Directors in their own spiritual formation.

FORMATION DIRECTOR ADDITIONAL AIDS

1. Formation Director Key Tasks Grid
2. Sample Yearly Plan
3. Spiritual Formation Curriculum Overview
4. Overall Themes to the Spiritual Formation Curriculum

FORMATION DIRECTOR KEY TASKS GRID

TIMELINE TO BE COMPLETED BY

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓										
Attend Formation Director's Training Day (Not Compulsory)	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓										
Establish Formation Group with Covenant and storytelling (For Personal Formation See Appendix)		✓										
Liaise with students in their choice of a Mentor		✓										
Orientation of student's Mentors			✓									
Check deadline for mentor selection that all students have mentors in place			✓									
Run Formation Group meetings as arranged with group throughout the year (53 Hours for Spiritual Formation. 11 hours for Personal Formation)			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓		
Assess students gradually through the year			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓		
Remind Mentors and Students to fill out <i>Student Development Chart</i> and send to you (Optional)									✓			
Organise and assess charts from Student, Mentor and yourself (Optional)										<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	
Conduct Student Interviews giving feedback (Optional)										<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	
Debrief and thank students' Mentors											✓	
Bring Formation Group to a close											✓	
Attend FD Debrief Day and pencil in dates for Training in the following year. (Optional)											<input type="checkbox"/>	✓

SAMPLE PERSONAL FORMATION YEARLY PLAN

(P5001)

ACTIVITY	TASKS	RESOURCES
Pre-Trimester 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend Formation Director Training Day online on Zoom Session (Optional) or watch the Recording on Moodle 	
Trimester 1 begins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diarise FD debrief day to be held in November/December. (Optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students and Formation Directors receive login for Moodle
Mentor Orientation Meetings (February/March)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief SF Students on Mentor selection Personal introduction by phone or in person thanking the Mentor and orientating Mentors to their role Ensure Mentor has login to Moodle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Learning Cohort Spiritual Formation Handbook</i> <i>Separate Mentor Handbook available</i> <i>Student Development Chart available for optional use</i> Mentor Orientation on Moodle
END OF TRIMESTER 1		
Initial Gathering (May/June)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in Session 5: Life stories Establish group community Students complete SF Covenants Storytelling and responses Set remaining Formation Group date/s for the year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All FD Information and resources online <i>Learning Cohort Spiritual Formation Handbook</i> (found at https://acm.mrooms.net) Relational Skills sheet Covenants online
End of Trimester 2		
Further Formation Group Meeting/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Update Workshop Begin using the <i>Student Development Chart</i> (Optional) Closure Activity Group Evaluation If desired, read a copy of Students Personal Growth Reflection Paper Remind students to complete FG Evaluation and Unit Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-developed workshop materials (Optional) Online curriculum materials

Student Interview Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange Student Interviews with students • Collect <i>Student Development Charts</i> from Mentor (Optional) • FD finalises their <i>Student Development Chart</i> (Optional) • Collate a summary of points for the Student Interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Student Development Chart</i> instructions online
Student Interviews (October)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask relevant questions from Student Interview sheet • Compare strengths and growth areas on <i>Student Development Chart</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Chart online • Student Interview outline online • Student Interview Questions sheet FG Evaluation online • Student Unit Evaluation online
Mentors Supervision Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FD's to debrief and thank each Mentor/ or group of Mentors 	
End of Year Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend FD Supervision Debrief Day or Zoom session (Optional) 	
END OF TRIMESTER 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students submit final assessment paper in Moodle 	

SAMPLE SPIRITUAL FORMATION YEARLY PLAN

(S7103, S7296, S7301, S8503, S8596)

ACTIVITY	TASKS	RESOURCES
Pre-Trimester 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Formation Director Training Day online on Zoom Session (Optional) or watch the Recording on Moodle 	
Trimester 1 begins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarise FD debrief day to be held in November/December. (Optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and Formation Directors receive login for Moodle
Initial Gathering (February/March)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish group community • Students complete SF Covenants • Brief SF Students on Mentor selection • Storytelling and responses • Set FG dates for the year • Students to complete retreat reflection by the mid-trimester assessment due date (found online) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All FD Information and resources online • <i>Learning Cohort Spiritual Formation Handbook</i> (found at https://acm.mrooms.net) • Relational Skills sheet • Covenants online

Mentor Orientation Meetings (February/March)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal introduction by phone or in person thanking the Mentor and orientating Mentors to their role • Ensure Mentor has login to Moodle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning Cohort Spiritual Formation Handbook</i> • <i>Mentor Handbook</i> available • <i>Student Development Chart</i> available
Formation Group (FG) Meeting 1 – (March/April) Suggested theme: Spiritual Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Update • Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-developed workshop materials (Optional) • Online curriculum materials
FG Meeting 2 Suggested theme: Family Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Update • Workshop • Begin using the <i>Student Development Chart</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-developed workshop materials (Optional) • Online curriculum materials
END OF TRIMESTER 1		
FG Meeting 3 Suggested theme: Personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Update • Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-developed workshop materials (Optional) • Online curriculum materials
FG Meeting 4 Suggested themes: Spiritual Disciplines or Spiritual Pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Update • Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-developed workshop materials (Optional) • Online curriculum materials
FG Meeting 5 Suggested themes: Relationships skills/health or Personal mission/ calling/vocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Update • Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-developed workshop materials (Optional) • Online curriculum materials
FG Meeting 6 Suggested theme: Emotional Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Update • Workshop • Students to begin completing <i>Student Development Chart</i> form and send copy via email to their relevant FD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-developed workshop materials (Optional) • Online curriculum materials
END OF TRIMESTER 2		
FG Meeting 7 Suggested theme: Self-care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Update • Workshop • Collect <i>Student Development Charts</i> from students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-developed workshop materials (Optional) • Online curriculum materials

Student Interview Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange Student Interviews with students • Collect <i>Student Development Charts</i> from Mentor sent via email to FD (Optional) • FD finalises their <i>Student Development Chart</i> (Optional) • Collate a summary of points for the Student Interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Student Development Chart</i> instructions online
Student Interviews (October)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask relevant questions from Student Interview sheet • Compare strengths and growth areas on <i>Student Development Chart</i> (Optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Chart online • Student Interview outline online • Student Interview Questions sheet
Mentors Supervision Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FD's to debrief and thank each Mentor/ or group of Mentors 	
FG Meeting 8: Closure (November)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Update • Closure Activity • Group Evaluation • If desired, read a copy of Students Personal Growth Reflection Paper • Remind students to complete FG Evaluation and Unit Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FG Evaluation online • Unit Evaluation online
End of Year Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend FD Supervision Debrief Day or Zoom session (Optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November FG Report Form online
END OF TRIMESTER 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students submit final assessment paper in Moodle 	

SPIRITUAL FORMATION CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

SESSION	PERSONAL FORMATION AQF5 LEVEL P5001	SPIRITUAL FORMATION 1 UG SPIRITUAL FORMATION 4 PG	SPIRITUAL FORMATION 2 UG SPIRITUAL FORMATION 5 PG	SPIRITUAL FORMATION 3 UG
Theme	Invitation to a Journey	Personal Transformation	Community Transformation	Ministerial Formation
1	Invitation to a Journey	An invitation to Spiritual Formation	An invitation to Formation with Others	Introduction to Spiritual Formation for Ministry
2	Developing a Biblical Theology of Spiritual Formation	Grace: Discovering Who We Are	Presence: Who We Are on the Journey	Autobiography: God's story in ours
3	Introduction to Identity: Personality and Preference	Grace: Becoming Active Participants	Presence: Becoming Active Alongsiders	Spiritual Growth in Ministry
4	Introduction to Identity: Calling and Vocation	Grace: Living from Acceptance	Presence: Living in Cultures of Grace	Transitions in life and Ministry
5	Lifestory: Developing your Life Narrative	Story: The Power of Narratives	Praxis: Living New Narratives	Emotions and Joy in Ministry
6	The Classic Christian Pilgrimage: From 'Awakening' to 'Unity'	Story: The Good and Beautiful God	Praxis: Good and Beautiful Kingdom	A Theology of Failure inside Ministry
7	Introduction to The Spiritual Disciplines	Story: The Good and Beautiful Life	Praxis: Good and Beautiful Community	Ministry and Mental Health
8	The Nature and Inner Dynamics of the Spiritual Disciplines	Spirit: The Gift God Gives	Posture: Courage and Consciousness	Ministry as Heart Hospitality
9	'For The Sake of Others'	Spirit: God's Empowering Presence	Posture: Curiosity and Collaboration	The Art of Personal and Communal Discernment
10	Spiritual Leadership	Spirit: Empowered Confidence	Posture: Kingdom Confidence	Reflection on Personal Growth

SHARED APPENDICES

Please see attached for the following appendices.

1. Personal Formation Student Demand Hours
2. STUDENT DEVELOPMENT CHART AREAS
3. Student Development Chart
4. Spiritual Formation Group Covenant
5. CHOOSING A MENTOR
6. Mentor Covenant

Personal Formation Student Demand Hours (P5001)

Attend all group gatherings	11 Hours
Assessments	41 Hours
Meeting with Mentor	10 Hours
Online study sessions, required interactive activities and reading	40 Hours
Cohort Determined Hours	41 Hours
Subject Total	143 Hours

Student Development Chart Areas



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Spiritual Maturity

- Cultivates Desire for God
- Practices Spiritual Disciplines
- Cultivates Wisdom & Discernment
- Emanates Love, Joy, Peace & Hope
- Open Posture towards God

Emotional Maturity

- Reads & Expresses a Wide Range of Emotions
- Reads Emotional Incongruences in Self & Others
- Displays Healthy Emotions with Freedom

Self-Awareness

- Sifts Feedback & Criticism for Truth
- Monitors & Deepens Inner World
- Accepts & Integrates Flaws
- Develops an Enjoyment of Being One's Self
- Practices Self Control

Leadership Capacity

- Leads with Humility & Meekness
- Leads with a God-Given Calling
- Communicates Vision Effectively
- Promotes & Enables Others
- Builds Spiritual Resilience

Vocational Clarity

- Identifies Personal Passion/s
- Develops a Vocational Vision
- Identifies & builds Vocational Gifting & Skills
- Seeks Community Affirmation

Relational Skills

- Truly Present to Others
- Initiates & Deepens Relationships
- Confronts & Reconciles Difficulties
- Regulates Appropriate Intimacy & Distance
- Practices Inclusiveness

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Personal Integrity

- Expresses Vulnerability
- Honesty & Humility
- Reliability & Dependability
- Purity & Temperance
- Demonstrates Life/Work Balance



Spiritual Formation Student Development Chart

(Optional for Learning Cohort Students)

Date:

Student Name:

Year of SF: Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 PG (Year 4/5)

Form filled in by: Student Mentor FD

Name of person who filled in form:

Purpose:

To assist assessment in the areas of Spiritual Formation, two measuring tools have been provided.

1. The Student Development Chart – completed by the Student, Formation Director and Mentor
2. Spiritual Formation Assessment Matrix – a summary of the three Student Development Charts, completed by the Formation Director

Students' development will be assessed in their formation group by their Formation Director. Students will also be assessed in their development by their mentor. Progress and development of each student is observed and recorded in seven areas:

1. Personal integrity
2. Self awareness
3. Emotional maturity
4. Relational capacity
5. Spiritual maturity
6. Vocational clarity
7. Leadership capacity

The Student Development Chart Explained:

The seven assessable areas are listed as headings down the left hand side of the document. Under each heading is a more detailed range of criteria to be observed as supporting evidence of a general assessment in each area. Along the top of the chart are a number of levels under which the assessor will select an evaluation, spanning from elementary levels through to exceptional capacities. This chart will be filled out by the Formation Director, the mentor and the student during the year. During the Student Interview in October the FD and the student will compare their summarizing selection of up to four areas of strength and up to four areas that require further development. The student's mentor will also provide the FD with a completed Student Development Chart that will contribute to the Interview discussion.

Who fills out this chart?

The Student:

- At the beginning of the SF unit of study, a student would be wise to study these tools and be fully aware of specific areas their FD and mentor will be observing and evaluating.
- The student might select from a number of these criteria and set specific goals for growth.
- The student fills out the chart making their own self-assessment and emails to their FD just prior to the student interview held in October.
- At the student interview all the charts will be compared and contrasted by the Formation Director and the student together, by noting the selection of up to four areas of strength to be affirmed as well as up to four areas of minimal development that need focus.
- During the interview the SF Assessment Matrix will be finalized by the FD in the presence of the student so they are aware of the overall rating of development which will be kept on file by ACOM.

The Mentor:

- The mentor is provided with the Student Development Chart at the commencement of the mentoring agreement, and can access an electronic copy on Moodle.
- The mentor will begin making preliminary observations in the individual line items and overall areas.
- Together with the student they may discuss any subsequent desire to set goals in these areas.
- As the mentoring sessions progress the mentor will continue to observe and evaluate.
- The Mentor will share their observations and evaluations with the student prior to the interview.
- Just prior to the Student Interview in October the mentor will email the FD with their evaluation, also selecting up to four areas of affirmation and including four areas needing development and further focus.

The Formation Director

- Before retreat, the Formation Director will make a copy of the Chart to record preliminary observations on each student at retreat.
- The Formation Director will reflect on each student's group interactions throughout the year and make evaluations in these seven areas.
- Immediately prior to the student's interview, a final evaluation will be made, selecting four criteria noteworthy of affirmation as well as four individual areas needing further development by the student.
- The FD will take into consideration the Mentors evaluation of the student as well.
- During the interview the FD will share with the student their final conclusions, which are recorded in the SF Assessment Matrix of the student's development that is emailed to ACOM, along with the three Charts, and is kept on record by ACOM.

Instructions:

Filling out the form: This form is a *Microsoft Word* Form Document. If you only have a paper or PDF copy, you can obtain a Word version on Moodle. Please fill in this form using Microsoft Word (tick the grey boxes), and save it to your computer. **Mentors:** Please complete this form and email it to your Formation Director

by September (electronic copy available on Moodle. Please contact your Formation Director if you do not have a login.) (Optional for Learning Cohort Students).

Students: Please complete this form and email it to your Formation Director prior to your Student Interview (electronic copy available on Moodle). (Optional for Learning Cohort Students).

Formation Directors: Please complete this Form and file it with the forms submitted by the mentor and the student. Use ALL THREE forms for the Student Interview. You may wish to print a copy this Form for use during the Student Interview, but please make sure to complete the Form electronically as well. Once the Student Interview is complete, please upload all 3 Forms to the submission space on Moodle. (Optional for Learning Cohort Students).

Observed Behaviours	N/A or Not Observed	Beginning	Developing	Competent	Excellent
	Not every behaviour below must necessarily be observed. Tick only the behaviours that apply.	The student displays this behaviour minimally or inconsistently	The student displays this behaviour with general consistency	The student displays this behaviour in a consistent manner	The student displays this behaviour in a highly consistent manner
Spiritual Maturity					
Expresses a desire for intimacy with God	==	==	==	==	==
Responds to identified movements of God's Spirit in their lives	==	==	==	==	==
Acts with mercy, gentleness, and loving-kindness towards others	==	==	==	==	==
Displays a peaceful trust in God in both ordinary and stressful circumstances	==	==	==	==	==
Demonstrates wisdom and discernment in decisions and actions	==	==	==	==	==
Practices spiritual disciplines	==	==	==	==	==
Takes responsibility for their personal spiritual growth	==	==	==	==	==
Overall Spiritual Maturity	==	==	==	==	==

Observed Behaviours	N/A or Not Observed	Beginning	Developing	Competent	Excellent
Emotional Maturity					
Regulates/controls emotions and emotional reactions	==	==	==	==	==
Expresses a wide range of feelings and emotions	==	==	==	==	==
Expresses emotions with sensitivity to others	==	==	==	==	==
Names 'surface' feelings	==	==	==	==	==
Identifies deeper emotions giving rise to surface feelings	==	==	==	==	==
Displays empathy towards others	==	==	==	==	==
Overall Emotional Maturity	==	==	==	==	==
Self Awareness					
Evaluates self with appropriate insight and objectivity	==	==	==	==	==
Demonstrates self acceptance	==	==	==	==	==
Identifies, evaluates and demonstrates acceptance of strengths	==	==	==	==	==

Observed Behaviours	N/A or Not Observed	Beginning	Developing	Competent	Excellent
Identifies, evaluates and demonstrates acceptance of weaknesses	==	==	==	==	==
Sets and pursues achievable goals	==	==	==	==	==
Establishes appropriate personal boundaries	==	==	==	==	==
Overall Self Awareness	==	==	==	==	==
Leadership Capacity					
Nurtures personal leadership qualities, capacities and limitations	==	==	==	==	==
Demonstrates a desire to serve others	==	==	==	==	==
Communicates vision and strategy in a way that inspires healthy commitment from others	==	==	==	==	==
Handles criticism and opposition appropriately	==	==	==	==	==
Demonstrates resilience following defeat, disappointment or failure	==	==	==	==	==
Adapts to changing circumstances utilising a range of problem-solving skills	==	==	==	==	==

Observed Behaviours	N/A or Not Observed	Beginning	Developing	Competent	Excellent
Overall Leadership Capacity	—	—	—	—	—
Vocational Clarity					
Articulates vocation-related purposes, passions and commitments	—	—	—	—	—
Establishes vocational goals and strategies	—	—	—	—	—
Develop vocation-related skills and capacities	—	—	—	—	—
Networks with professional colleagues	—	—	—	—	—
Adheres to professional standards and ethics	—	—	—	—	—
Utilises professional mentoring/supervision structures and accountability mechanisms	—	—	—	—	—
Overall Vocational Clarity	—	—	—	—	—
Relational Skills					
Is emotionally 'present' for others	—	—	—	—	—
Initiates and nurtures healthy relationships	—	—	—	—	—

Observed Behaviours	N/A or Not Observed	Beginning	Developing	Competent	Excellent
Displays a range of relational skills (e.g., assertiveness, affirmation, collaboration, etc.)	—	—	—	—	—
Confronts, and is reconciled with, others in emotionally healthy ways	—	—	—	—	—
Communicates effectively in a variety of relational settings (e.g. one-to-one, small group, larger group)	—	—	—	—	—
Balances intimacy with appropriate space/distance	—	—	—	—	—
Overall Relational Skills	—	—	—	—	—
Personal Integrity					
Articulates their life story with authentic and appropriate self disclosure, vulnerability and transparency	—	—	—	—	—
Articulates their life story with discernment and insight	—	—	—	—	—
Articulates their life story in a way that assists and empowers others	—	—	—	—	—
Is reliable and dependable	—	—	—	—	—

Observed Behaviours	N/A or Not Observed	Beginning	Developing	Competent	Excellent
Balances work and family responsibilities	—	—	—	—	—
Exhibits personal honesty and integrity	—	—	—	—	—
Overall Personal Integrity	—	—	—	—	—

Spiritual Formation Summary of Student Development Chart

These items will be discussed during the Student Interview.
Students do not need to complete this summary.

Date:

Student Name:

Year of SF: Year 1 Year 2 Year
3 PG (Year 4/5)

Form filled in by: Mentor FD

Name of person who filled in form:

Select up to four line items from the Student Development Chart above that represent areas worthy of particular affirmation and/or encouragement for the student.

Item 1:

Comment:

Item 2:

Comment:

Item 3:

Comment:

Item 4:

Comment:

Select up to four line items from the above Student Development Chart that identify areas requiring further development and focus by the student.

Item 1:

Comment:

Item 2:

Comment:

Item 3:

Comment:

Item 4:

Comment:

Spiritual Formation Group Covenant

(Applicable to Students and Formation Directors)



Date: / /

Student:

Return to the Learning Cohort Coordinator

Australian College of Ministries

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The central purpose of Spiritual Formation Groups is to build 'Christian communities' that offer support, care and challenge in the advancement of each student's spiritual formation. This advancement occurs as the group provides openness, safety and hospitality to each student despite their life circumstances and personal challenges - thus building Christian character and maturity in each student.

In order for each community to form and function, students must commit fully to the aims and process under which a Formation Group flourishes. This includes a commitment to:

- Attend every session
- Enthusiastic engagement with the process and content of Formation Groups
- Respect the policies listed in this Covenant
- Failure to attend a formation group meeting without exemption may result in a student FAILING their entire Spiritual Formation Unit. If a student is ill or cannot attend for a serious reason, where possible written (email) permission must be applied for in advance to the Learning Cohort Coordinator and where applicable a Medical Certificate should also be supplied. Extra Work will be assigned.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY POLICY

- All Students and Formation Directors will maintain a Covenant of Confidentiality, whereby information shared within the Formation Group, or with another person in the context of Group Activities, is not passed on to anyone. Students are free to disclose their own learning and the personal impact of the Formation Group on them – but the content of this disclosure is not to be repeated outside the group. This point represents a critical covenantal promise that promotes safety and depth of sharing in the group.
- Students who break the covenant are subject to reprimand, suspension or dismissal. Students should report any breaches of the Covenant immediately to their Formation Director or the Learning Cohort Coordinator.
- Notwithstanding the above points, relevant academic, financial and personal information may be shared between Formation Directors, Mentors and Learning Cohort Coordinators as they prepare for Student Interviews and in instances concerning issues regarding Duty of Care. The student gives permission for this sharing to occur.
- The Student gives permission for the marked versions of their Retreat Reflection and other assessments to be forwarded and read by their Formation Director in order to give them a rounded view of the student's performance in the unit.

DUTY OF CARE AND DISCLOSURE

In some circumstances, keeping information confidential may result in harm to the student or others. At times, keeping of certain information confidential is also unlawful and/or immoral. Formation Directors, Mentors and Learning Cohort Coordinators assume Duty of Care and Disclosure by virtue of their personal work with students. Circumstances in which information supplied by students may be disclosed are outlined below. This list of circumstances is indicative rather than exhaustive.

- A Formation Director must disclose to the Learning Cohort Coordinator at the earliest opportunity, any incident that seriously compromises the integrity of ACOM and/or its training. Any delay in reporting incidents of this kind will be interpreted as failure to disclose.
- If it appears that a crime has been committed, the Formation Director must inform the Student that it is a legal requirement to report such an offence. In the case where court orders are issued for disclosure, all Learning Cohort personnel must abide by such orders.
- If it appears that a child is in danger, the Formation Director must take all reasonable steps (short of direct intervention) to ensure the safety and protection of the child. This includes reporting a matter to the Police or other authority.
- In the case of suspected or actual mental illness, or related behavior, involving a Student or Formation Director, any group member shall consult the Learning Centre Coordinator in order to secure appropriate advice and assistance.
- Disclosure to the Learning Centre Coordinator and any other appropriate authority (including the Police) must occur in cases of:
 - Abuse or harassment (sexual or otherwise) of a group member,
 - Abuse or harassment (sexual or otherwise) of another person by a group member,
 - Non-clinical depression and similarly serious psychological states of a group member,
 - Significant unresolved conflict in the life of a group member likely to lead to harm to the student and/or others.

Formation Directors and students should not seek to provide care of a specific, therapeutic or professional nature to any person for any reason. Referral to appropriate professional care-givers should be made where such care is required, usually through disclosure to the Learning Cohort Coordinator.

Disclosure may be made between the Formation Director, Mentor and Learning Cohort Coordinator for the purposes of coordinating support and care for a student. Where possible and appropriate, the Formation Director, Mentor or Learning Cohort Coordinator will normally seek to inform the Student that disclosure has taken, or is taking place.

AGREEMENT

- I agree to participate fully in a Formation Group by attending all group sessions and abide by all Confidentiality, Privacy, Duty of Care & Disclosure provisions noted above.

The electronic copy of this document is to be agreed to by all Formation Directors and Students.

CHOOSING A MENTOR

At ACOM, we understand mentoring as an intentional, interpersonal relationship in which the mentor encourages whole of life growth in another person, whose needs, activities and ministry are the mentor's primary concern.

As part of your SF studies, you are required to participate in 10 hours of mentoring.

Here are some questions that can help you think through if the person you identify as a possible mentor is suitable.

- Do you look up to this person?
- What makes you want to be mentored by them?
- Have they ever mentored anyone else?
- What communication skills do they possess?
- Will they hold you accountable?
- Do they have the time, energy and desire to mentor you?

Your mentor should be selected with care and requires consultation with and approval from your Formation Director. Your Formation Director is responsible for ensuring that your mentor selection fits with ACOM's guidelines.

These include:

- That your mentor is not a relative or close friend. Your mentor should be someone who has a level of relational separation from you, who can ask you hard questions and encourage new areas of growth.
- That your mentor is not someone in authority over you, such as a minister or employer. It is difficult to develop the kind of transparency that aids transformation when you are mentored by someone who, you might feel, needs to see your best self.
- That your mentor is someone with training or competency in mentoring.
- That your mentor is someone whose spiritual walk and character are central to who they are and who you aspire to be.

Spiritual Formation Mentor Covenant



Date: / /

Australian College of Ministries
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Ph: 1800 672 692

Student:

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This covenant is an agreement between a Mentor and Student and is to be discussed, completed and signed together. This covenant is between the Mentor and the Student and does not need to be submitted to ACOM, but both parties should keep their own-signed copies. Individual copies can be found and downloaded from Moodle in the unit (for Students) or on the Spiritual Formation Training and Resources page (for mentors).

UNDERSTANDING

Mentoring is a holistic intentional strategy designed to guide a student in meeting their personal growth objectives. Mentors and students meet together in 6-8 meetings for a total of 10 hours per year. This is a one-year covenant, which includes liaising with the Formation Director of the student. However, no personal material is shared apart from that which is noted in the Duty of Care and Disclosure section of this Covenant.

REQUIRED HOURS

10 hours of face-to-face contact per year

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Mentor Responsibilities

- (a) Read the ACOM Spiritual Formation Mentor Handbook
- (b) Agree to adhere to the confidentiality guidelines set out in this handbook
- (c) Share your life-story with the Student
- (d) Assist the Student in setting goals
- (e) Attend to the Student, listening to their journey and progress towards goals
- (f) Report the detail of the Student's attendance to the Formation Director when required
- (g) Complete the Student Development Chart and return to the Formation Director when required (Optional for Learning Cohort Students).
- (h) Close the Mentoring relationship at the end of the required hours

2. Student Responsibilities

- (a) Begin the mentoring relationship with a willingness to grow and share
- (b) Share your life-story with the Mentor
- (c) Set personal growth goals for the year
- (d) Attend each session, sharing and updating on progress towards goals
- (e) Complete the Student Development chart (if required) prior to the Student Interview and email to your Formation Director.

MENTORING ATTENDANCE LOG								
	SESSION 1	SESSION 2	SESSION 3	SESSION 4	SESSION 5	SESSION 6	SESSION 7	SESSION 8
Mentoring Times								
Hours of Attendance								

CONFIDENTIALITY, PRIVACY, DUTY OF CARE AND DISCLOSURE POLICIES

It is understood that the mentoring relationship is an opportunity to exercise confidentiality between the Mentor and Student so that an environment of honesty, transparency, vulnerability and growth is promoted.

While Mentors are expected to report to the Student's Formation Director concerning the Student's attendance and general progress of the relationship, the Student's Formation Group Director will not be privy to the students personal sharing without the permission of the Student.

Disclosure by the Mentor may occur if the Mentor has concerns about the Student's progress in mentoring and asks permission to share these concerns with the Student's Formation Director or the Learning Cohort Coordinator. The purpose of such disclosure would be to support the co-ordination of further growth measures for the student.

In some circumstances, keeping information confidential may result in harm to the student or others. At times, keeping of certain information confidential is also unlawful and/or immoral. Formation Directors, Mentors and Learning Cohort Coordinators assume Duty of Care and Disclosure by virtue of their personal work with students. Circumstances in which information supplied by students may be disclosed are outlined below. This list of circumstances is indicative rather than exhaustive.

- a) A Mentor may disclose to the student's Formation Director or Learning Cohort Coordinator, without permission from the Student, issues that compromise ACOM's reputation or the integrity of its training. The Mentor will normally seek to inform the Student of such disclosure before doing so.
- b) If it appears that a crime or breach of regulations has been committed by the Student, the Mentor will take up the matter with the Student with a view to student self-disclosure. If the Student does not cooperate, then the Mentor will break the confidentiality of the Student and disclose appropriately to the Formation Director or other appropriate authority.
- c) If it appears that a child is in danger, the Mentor may initially take up the matter with the Student with a view to immediate self-disclosure. If the Student is not open to appropriate action, then the Mentor must break the confidentiality of the

Student and disclose appropriately to the Formation Director or other appropriate authority.

- d) In the case of obvious or suspected psychiatric illness the mentor is expected to consult the Formation Director in order to secure appropriate help for the Student.
- e) It is a Duty of Care on the part of the Mentor to ensure proper processes are established in cases of demonstrated or potential:
 - Sexual abuse of the student
 - Inappropriate sexual behaviour by the student
 - Non-clinical depression and similarly serious psychological states
 - Significant unresolved conflict in the life of the student likely to lead to harm to the Student and/or others

Note that Mentors do not have to provide care themselves, but should ensure, in consultation with the Formation Director, that the Student has adequate care structures to manage and solve problems they face. Mentors may suggest counselling, confidants or other support structures for the student.

AGREEMENT

- We agree to adhere to these responsibilities and requirements.

Signature:
/

Date: /

STUDENT

Signature:
/

Date: /

MENTOR