

ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS PRACTITIONERS (ACRP)

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION OF PASTORS AND OTHER LEADERS IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

1. WHAT IS PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION?

Professional registration with the *Association of Christian Religious Practitioners (ACRP)* provides *independent recognition of your training, ministry competence and experience in ministry*. It also *testifies to the fact that you commit yourself to the work standards and ethics* expected from religious leaders and persons in Christian ministry. (For some background information on who ACRP is, see Section 6 below.)

Some formal churches have their own professional registration processes, but many do not have this. ACRP was established in cooperation with the *SA Qualifications Authority (SAQA)* in terms the *National Qualifications Framework Act (67 of 2008)* to provide an independent professionlisation service to all pastors and other ministry leaders who need formal, professional recognition.

2. HOW IS RECOGNITION OF TRAINING, COMPETENCE AND EXPERIENCE IN MINISTRY GIVEN?

Upon registering with ACRP, a certificate of registration is issued to the pastor or person in ministry.

ACRP has *five levels of professional registration and recognition*. A persons who is registered on a lower level of recognition can work towards a higher level through further training and through longer professional involvement.

The levels of registration are:

Level 1: **“Affiliate of ACRP”**: For many pastors this will be the entry point to registration. Registration on this level confirms that a person has been registered with ACRP as a pastor or person in ministry¹. It also confirms that he or she (a) subscribes to the ACRP *Code of Ethics* and *Code of Discipline*, and (b) participates in the *Continued Professional Development (CPD)* programme for pastors and other persons in ministry. A pastor or person in ministry may apply for this level even without any formal qualification. He or she must just provide confirmation that they are involved in ministry and that they do their work in an ethical manner.

Level 2: **“Religious practitioner”**: This level of registration confirms all the things that are valid to an Affiliate of ACRP (Level 1), but it also testifies that the person has achieved a certain level of training and/or experience. The following are required to be registered on this level: an accredited NQF Level 2 ministry qualification; or Matric with 3 years *proven*

¹ The *ACRP Ministry Profile* provides an overview of the kind of things included under “Christian ministry” - See Annexure 1.

ministry experience (RPL²); or no qualification but with five years ministry experience proven through RPL.

Level 3: **“Advanced religious practitioner”**: This level of registration confirms all the things that are valid to an Affiliate of ACRP (Level 1), but it also testifies that the person has achieved a higher level of training and/or experience. The following are required to be registered on this level: an accredited ministry qualification on NQF Level 4 (Matric equivalent), or similar knowledge and competence gained through *proven* non-formal training and work experience over a longer period of time (proven through RPL).

Level 4: **“Religious professional”**: While this level of registration confirms all the things that are valid to Level 1, it also confirms that the person has achieved an even higher level of training and/or experience. The following are required to be registered on this level: an accredited NQF Level 5, 6, 7 or 8³ ministry qualification or comparable knowledge and competence gained through *proven* non-formal training and work experience over yet a longer period of time (proven through RPL).

Level 5: **“Religious professional”**: This level of registration also confirms all the things that are valid to Level 1. It furthermore confirms that the person has achieved a higher level of training and/or experience. The following are required to be registered on this level: an accredited NQF Level 9 or 10⁴ ministry qualification or comparable knowledge and competence gained through proven non-formal training and work experience over yet a longer period of time (proven through RPL).

3. WHAT ARE THE PROFESSIONAL BODY SERVICES PROVIDED BY ACRP

The professional body services provided by ACRP to its affiliates and to churches and ministries are as follows:

- a. **Identifying existing SAQA accredited qualifications**, presented by training providers (universities, private seminaries, Bible schools) etc that are valid for the different levels of registration (designation).
- b. **Developing new, SAQA accredited qualifications** for levels where accredited qualifications do not exist.
- c. **Identifying training providers** who will present these qualifications, guide them to be ready to present the qualifications and to apply to SAQA / QCTO for accreditation.

² RPL stands for *Recognition of Prior Learning*. RPL is normally applied where a person does not have the relevant formal qualification, but he or she has gained a lot of ministry experience and has perhaps also completed some courses that were not accredited or recognised by SAQA. For RPL into the professional level (called a “designation”), a person will have to submit a portfolio of evidence of ministry work he or she has done and of (non-accredited) courses completed. A competence test will be involved, and bridging courses may be needed.

³ An accredited NQF Level 5 qualification is Matric plus 1 year (eg, a CHE accredited Higher Certificate in ministry or the QCTO accredited NQF Level 5 ministry qualification). NQF Level 6 is matric plus two years (eg, a CHE accredited Advanced Certificate in ministry or a CHE accredited two year diploma). NQF Level 7 is a Bachelors degree. NQF Level 8 is an Honours degree.

⁴ An accredited NQF Level 9 qualification is a CHE accredited Masters degree in ministry, and NQF Level 10 is a Doctorate.

- d. **Managing assessment** (examination) and **recording of marks**, etc.
- e. Providing a basic **scope of practice, ethical code and disciplinary code** for religious practitioners on all levels.
- f. Helping pastors and ministry leaders who did ministry work in the past but without formal qualifications to obtain recognition for the work they did before (**Recognition of Prior Learning, RPL**). Through RPL pastors and ministry leaders can be awarded the SAQA recognised professional designations - based on work experience even though the pastor / ministry leader does not have a formally accredited qualification.
- g. Providing **Continued Professional Development (CPD)** services to pastors and ministry leaders, so they can continue improving their professional skills, and grow towards higher levels of professional designation.
- h. **Cooperate with churches, denominations, church networks, fraternals and other ministry organisations** who want to use these services, to implement all of the above.

4. HOW DOES A PERSON OR ORGANISATION BECOME AFFILIATED TO ACRP?

- a. Pastors and other ministry leaders become an affiliate (“member”) of ACRP **by completing and submitting the application form**. The form is available from the ACRP website, or can be obtained by contacting the ACRP office.

The initial application is only to become affiliated with ACRP (Level 1 in Paragraph 2 above). From there ACRP will guide the applicant to continue to apply for the relevant level of designation that fits his or her position best.

- b. Churches, denominations, church networks, fraternals and other ministry organisations who want to use the ACRP services and have their members affiliated with ACRP, can enter into an **Memorandum of Agreement (MoA)** with ACRP. It is suggested that a meeting be arranged with a representative of ACRP to discuss the nature of such an agreement, and how it can be implemented.

5. WHAT DOES IT COST?

ACRP’s money to pay its personnel and facilities comes from affiliation fees.

- a. The fee structure for pastors and other persons in ministry who still enroll during 2017 is as shown in the table below. Group discounts can be negotiated with churches, denominations, church networks, fraternals and other ministry organisations who register their members, employees etc.

Category	Once off registration fee	Monthly affiliation fee
Non-designated Affiliation	R170	R20
Religious practitioner	R170	R20
Advanced religious practitioner	R170	R30
Religious professional	R170	R40
Religious specialist	R170	R50

- b. Institutional partnership fees (fees paid by churches, denominations, church networks, fraternal and other ministry organisations) will be negotiated on an *ad hoc* basis with those involved.

6. WHO IS ACRP?

ACRP was established by representatives of a wide group of ministry professionals from churches and from the ministry training and counselling professions. It was established as service to the churches and Christian ministries in South Africa and other African countries. It was done on the suggestion of officials of the SA Qualifications Authority (SAQA), who indicated that there was a need to establish a professional body for religious professionals in terms of the National Qualifications Framework Act (Act No. 67 of 2008).

ACRP is registered with the *SA Qualifications Authority (SAQA)* as a professional body for religious professionals. The registration was done in terms of the *National Qualifications Framework Act*. Its registration number with SAQA is PB0000110. The organisation is also registered with CIPC as a Non-Profit Company, registration number NPC 2015/319357/08.

ACRP consists of three professional councils, namely:

- a. The ***Council for General Ministry Practitioners (CGMP)***: This is the Council within ACRP where for pastors and other persons in “general ministry” register to.
- b. The Council for Pastoral and Spiritual Counselling (CPSC): This is the Council for persons who specialise in pastoral counselling.
- c. The ***Council for Ministry Training Practitioners (CMTP)***: This is the Council for persons who specialise in ministry training.

When a person applies for affiliation, he or she has to decide which of the three councils fits his or her professional position best. A persons may also register with more than one of the councils.

7. CONTACT

Application forms can be obtained from the ACRP website, www.acrpafrica.com. Forms can also be requested from the ACRP office at info@acrpafrica.com, or by calling Doreen Sibuya at 073 557 4716 (landline 012 430 2216).

Churches, denominations, church networks, fraternal and other ministry organisations who want to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with ACRP will be assisted to register its members as ACRP affiliates. The ACRP secretary, Dr JP (Hannes) van der Walt should be contacted for this (e-mail dexia@mweb.co.za, copy info@acrpafrica.com, or phone 082 643 2562).