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PROFESSIONAL CHAPLAIN COMPETENCIES

ALL competencies described below apply to board certified, provisional certified and associate certified chaplains.

[Competency Writing Guide for Certification Candidates](#)

Section I: Theory of Pastoral Care Competencies

- TPC1: Articulate a theology of spiritual care that is integrated with a theory of pastoral practice
- TPC2: Incorporate a working knowledge of psychological and sociological disciplines and religious beliefs and practices in the provision of pastoral care.
- TPC3: Incorporate the spiritual and emotional dimensions of human development into the practice of pastoral care.
- TPC4: Incorporate a working knowledge of ethics appropriate to the pastoral context.
- TPC5: Articulate a conceptual understanding of group dynamics and organizational behavior.

Section II: Identity and Conduct Competencies

- IDC1: Function pastorally in a manner that respects the physical, emotional, and spiritual boundaries of others.
- IDC2: Use pastoral authority appropriately.
- IDC3: Identify one's professional strengths and limitations in the provision of pastoral care.
- IDC4: Articulate ways in which one's feelings, attitudes, values and assumptions affect one's pastoral care.
- IDC5: Advocate for the persons in one's care.
- IDC6: Function within the Common Code of Ethics for Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors, Pastoral Educators and Students.
- IDC7: Attend to one's own physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.
- IDC8: Communicate effectively orally and in writing.
- IDC9: Present oneself in a manner that reflects professional behavior, including appropriate attire and personal hygiene.

Section III: Pastoral Competencies

- PAS1: Establish, deepen and end pastoral relationships with sensitivity, openness and respect.
- PAS2: Provide effective pastoral support that contributes to well-being of patients, their families and staff.
- PAS3: Provide pastoral care that respects diversity and differences including, but not limited to culture, gender, sexual orientation and spiritual/religious practices.
- PAS4: Triage and manage crises in the practice of pastoral care.
- PAS5: Provide pastoral care to persons experiencing loss and grief.
- PAS6: Formulate and utilize spiritual assessments in order to contribute to plans of care.
- PAS7: Provide religious/spiritual resources appropriate to the care of patients, families and staff.
- PAS8: Develop, coordinate and facilitate public worship/spiritual practices appropriate to diverse settings and needs.
- PAS9: Facilitate theological reflection in the practice of pastoral care.

Section IV: Professional Competencies

- PRO1: Promote the integration of pastoral/spiritual care into the life and service of the institution in which it resides.
- PRO2: Establish and maintain professional and interdisciplinary relationships.
- PRO3: Articulate an understanding of institutional culture and systems and systemic relationships.
- PRO4: Support, promote and encourage ethical decision-making and care.
- PRO5: Document one's contribution of care effectively in the appropriate records.
- PRO6: Foster a collaborative relationship with community clergy and faith group leaders.

Competency Writing Guide for Certification Candidates

Professional Chaplain Competencies

These competencies are practice-based. The candidate should write to the competencies with the intention of demonstrating his/her skills as a chaplain.

Section I. Theory of Pastoral Care Competencies

Chaplaincy is done in professional settings. In such settings, the professional chaplain needs to be able to clearly state the beliefs and theory behind the practice. This block of competencies provides the opportunity for the candidate to present his or her understanding of why professional chaplains do what professional chaplains do.

TPC1: Articulate a theology of spiritual care that is integrated with a theory of pastoral practice.

Religious people have a belief system, a theology. What are the basics of that? What is the human condition? How is the transcendent related to this situation? What is the chaplain's pastoral role with regard to the above? Why is this an appropriate response? Why is it important and effective?

TPC2: Incorporate a working knowledge of psychological and sociological disciplines and religious beliefs and practices in the provision of pastoral care.

Psychology and sociology inform what professional chaplains believe and how professional chaplains practice. What are the psychological and sociological insights that influence and support what we do as professional chaplains?

TPC3: Incorporate the spiritual and emotional dimensions of human development into the practice of pastoral care.

The stages of human development effect how professional chaplains practice chaplaincy care. Chaplains don't practice the same way with a child as they do with an adult. Chaplains adapt when working with people in the variety of stages of life. What are those differences and how do professional chaplains adapt practices in light of those differences?

TPC4: Incorporate a working knowledge of ethics appropriate to the pastoral context.

Professional chaplains all have an ethical system that informs practice. What is it? Some might describe a "Beneficence vs. Nonmaleficence" model. Others might use a "Situational Ethics" or other model. This competency is found in the Theory (TPC) block and needs to be answered as such. Professional chaplains are not concerned with which is the "right" system of ethics. This isn't about what particular actions are ethical and what are not. This competency is about the ability of the candidate to briefly describe his/her ethical system and what that means for his/her practice.

TPC5: Articulate a conceptual understanding of group dynamics and organizational behavior.

This is an opportunity for the candidate to describe his/her understanding of how people interact in group settings and how they act in larger, organizational settings. It recognizes that people interact differently based on the setting and can change the way chaplaincy is provided.

Section II: Identity and Conduct Competencies

Self-understanding and the use of the self are the centering dynamic of this block of competencies.

IDC1: Function pastorally in a manner that respects the physical, emotional, and spiritual boundaries of others.

How are the above named boundaries identified? What is done to ensure that they are respected?

IDC2: Use pastoral authority appropriately.

What is the authority that comes with the role of chaplain? How might it be used in chaplaincy care?

IDC3: Identify one's professional strengths and limitations in the provision of pastoral care.

The candidate can describe perceived strengths and his/her contribution to chaplaincy. The description of limitations can provide information on how s/he adapts, manage, or "work around" the limitations.

IDC4: Articulate ways in which one's feelings, attitudes, values, and assumptions affect one's pastoral care.

The candidate can provide concrete examples of how his/her personal worldview influence his/her ministry. How does the candidate's story influence who s/he is as a chaplain?

IDC5: Advocate for the persons in one's care.

Patients sometimes need an advocate. The candidate will address how s/he advocates for the person/s in his/her care when necessary.

IDC6: Function within the Common Code of Ethics for Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors, Pastoral Educators, and Students.
The code is supplied in the certification packet. The candidate needs to be able to demonstrate familiarity with it and affirm the incorporation of it in his/her practice. This is essentially professional ethics.

IDC7: Attend to one's own physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.
How does the chaplain refresh him/herself and provide good self-care?

IDC8: Communicate effectively orally and in writing.
It is an essential need to communicate on a professional level in a professional setting. Candidate will demonstrate this in written materials and in the communication with the certification committee. This is an **observed competency**.
No writing needed.

IDC9: Present oneself in a manner that reflects professional behavior, including appropriate attire and personal hygiene.
This is an **observed competency**. No writing needed.

Section III: Pastoral Competencies

The pastoral competencies are best addressed when accompanied with professional experiential examples.

PAS1: Establish, deepen, and end pastoral relationships with sensitivity, openness, and respect.
What are the essentials for having good pastoral relationships, focusing on how they begin, how they are sustained and, finally, how to acknowledge the conclusion?

PAS2: Provide effective pastoral support that contributes to well-being of the person in one's care.
The key words here are "effective" and "well-being." How does the chaplain assess what is "effective," and what does "well-being" mean in the variety of service situations the chaplain encounters?

PAS3: Provide pastoral care that respects diversity and differences including, but not limited to, culture, gender, sexual orientation and spiritual/religious practices.
How does the chaplain demonstrate pastoral functioning in diverse settings and the openness to serve all people where they are?

PAS4: Triage and manage crises in the practice of pastoral care.
How does the chaplain triage, establish priorities, in the face of a crisis. How does s/he manage the event to provide the most effective care?

PAS5: Provide pastoral care to persons experiencing loss and grief.
How does the chaplain attend to the grieving in a variety of settings, both formal and informal?

PAS6: Formulate and utilize spiritual assessments in order to contribute to plans of care.
Articulate how the chaplain assesses the spiritual needs of those in his/her care. What type of spiritual assessment tool is used? In addition, the chaplain needs to explain how the spiritual assessment adds value to the plan of care for the patients as well as to the interdisciplinary team.

PAS7: Provide religious/spiritual resources appropriate to the care of patients, families and staff.
What are the religious/spiritual resources, and how does the chaplain use them in his/her practice?

PAS8: Develop, coordinate and facilitate public worship/spiritual practices appropriate to diverse settings and needs.
How does the chaplain use worship as a resource in his/her community and lead in ways that affirms all people of the organization's diverse milieus?

PAS9: Facilitate theological reflection in the practice of pastoral care.
How does the chaplain assist those in his/her care to reflect on the meaning of their situation as well as offer them opportunities to assess how their beliefs help and/or hinder the wholeness/healing process of their situations?

Section IV: Professional Competencies

This block of competencies addresses the chaplain's skills in serving as a professional in and among other professionals and the departmental role in chaplaincy.

PRO1: Promote the integration of pastoral/spiritual care into the life and service of the institution in which it resides.

How does the chaplain understand and function in the life of the organization s/he serves? What does the chaplain do to integrate his/her department toward the benefit or mission of the organization?

PRO2: Establish and maintain professional and interdisciplinary relationships.

The chaplain represents one discipline in a pool of many disciplines in his/her setting. How does the chaplain attend to these professional relationships? What is the chaplain doing to build and edify these professional relationships?

PRO3: Articulate an understanding of institutional culture and systems and systemic relationships.

Different types of institutions develop different types of cultures. For example, the internal culture and mission of a state facility is likely to be different from that of a religious-based institution. That culture is often represented by the internal systems that are established. What are the pillars of the institutional culture in which the chaplain serves, and how does the role and daily functions of the chaplain support or challenge these pillars?

PRO4: Support, promote and encourage ethical decision-making and care.

What is the chaplain's role and function in promoting ethical decision-making and care in his/her particular setting?

PRO5: Document one's contribution of care effectively in the appropriate records.

How is the chaplain effectively using documentation? To demonstrate this competency, examples are to be provided at the end of each verbatim.

PRO6: Foster a collaborative relationship with community clergy and faith group leaders.

How does the chaplain function as a liaison between the organization s/he serves and the local religious community?