

PROFESSIONAL BODY SERVICES

ANOCC's is still in the process applying for professional body registration according to the requirements that the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008 have set for professional bodies.

DEFINING PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATIONS

The first task of a professional body is to defining professional designations that are recognised by the professional body and the profession in general. Another word for “designation” is a “professional category”. ANOCC has defined four main levels of designations or professional categories, namely:

1. General Christian Ministry practitioner
2. Senior Christian Ministry practitioner
3. Professional Christian Ministry Practitioner
4. Christian Ministry Specialist Practitioner

Note: ANOCC does not define designations by using terms churches use for their church offices (such as pastor, bishop, reverend, etc). The reason is that different churches may have different views of what the relationship between an office and a professional body designation should be. For example: some churches may allow a pastor or bishop to be on the practitioner level, while another church may require a pastor or bishop to be on the professional or specialist level. The relationship between professional body designation and a church's own offices is a matter to be decided by participating churches. The professional body does not interfere with the church's ruling on this.

IDENTIFYING TRAINING STANDARDS (QUALIFICATIONS) THAT APPLY TO THE DIFFERENT DESIGNATIONS

The second task of a professional body is to identify the training standards (qualifications) that apply to the different designations. This is done in close cooperation with partnering churches, ministries and training institutions

Note: Find out more about the training requirements for the four designations recognised by ANOCC. For a summary of the required qualifications, see the document ANOCC awarding of Designations document.

ANOCC does not interfere with the confessional content of training provided by churches or other ministry institutions. The professional body sets broad guidelines in terms of the occupational profile that teaching and training should lead to, and in terms of good teaching and training practice. Partner institutions (churches, ministries, training institutions) determine the contents of training in terms of their own confessional position, culture, etc.

Determining alternative requirements that apply to the different designations

The third task of a professional body is to determine alternative requirements or an alternative route that apply to the different designations. **This is valid for pastors / persons in ministry who do not have the required SAQA recognised ministry qualification to be awarded a designation, but who have years of ministry experience.**

For this ANOCC does “Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) towards a professional designation”. For a summary of how “RPL into a designation” is applied, see the document ANOCC awarding of Designation documentation

Note: RPL into a designation differs from “RPL into a qualification”. “RPL into a qualification” is done by training institutions - in this case the result of a successful RPL process leads to access to higher level studies, or the awarding of credits towards a qualification. “RPL into a designation” is done by professional bodies and leads to the awarding of a designation even if the person does not have the formal qualifications normally required for the designation.

DEFINING GENERAL GUIDELINES ON ETHICS AND DISCIPLINE

Another task of a professional body is to provide guidance on professional requirements in terms of **good practice, ethical standards** and **disciplinary practice**. This is done in close cooperation with churches and ministries. (Ethical standards as defined by ANOCC are described in the Ethical Code and disciplinary processes are described in the Disciplinary Code.

Linked to this is to assist churches and ministries with a route for the public to lodge complaints where affiliates / designated persons act in contravention of the ethical codes or codes of good practice. When complaints are received, steps will be taken according to the disciplinary processes as agreed with church and ministry partners. The relevant processes are as described in the Disciplinary Code.

Note: Where partner churches and ministries do have their internal requirements in terms of good practice, ethical standards and disciplinary practice, these are recognised by ANOCC via a Memorandum of Understanding entered into by the parties. Where a church or ministry does not have its own ethical and/or disciplinary code, ANOCC provides the relevant services as a support service to churches or ministries. Providing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) services to affiliates, churches and ministries.

FACILITATING CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) SERVICES

ANOCC as a Professional body is to facilitating Continued Professional Development (CPD) services to affiliates, churches and ministries.

Note: Persons who are affiliated with ANOCC are required to earn 20 CPD credits every year in order to maintain the status of affiliate (“remain in good standing”). Where a person has been awarded a designation based on the relevant qualification, he or she may **randomly** select any CPD course or programme, as long as the minimum requirements are met. A person who has been awarded a designation through RPL, that is, without the relevant qualification, is expected enrol for a **structured** CPD programme as recognised by ANOCC.

FACILITATING CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) SERVICES

A related function of a professional body is to facilitating **bridging programmes** to support the RPL process for affiliates, churches and ministries. There is a large number of pastors in our communities who did not have the opportunity to receive formal, accredited training in the past. A strategy for bridging courses and structured CPD courses provides the opportunity for such pastors to catch up on formal training in an effective manner without having to leave their ministries.

Professional bodies and professional qualification

Professional institutions are much more than a source of 'letters after your name'. They can help you in your career both before and after you graduate.

Professional institutions are the societies and associations that promote and further a career and the people who practice in it. You may already be aware of professional bodies and institutions because they accredit your degree course.

This is one of a range of important activities they undertake to protect their profession's reputation, its practitioners and the general public.

Professional bodies: their role in your future career

In some professions, for example accountancy, surveying and in many areas of engineering, a professional qualification can be essential to practice. The relevant professional body will set the formal route for qualification, covering examinations and assessment, competence and experience required, and standards for professional ethics.

If you join a graduate training programme that is accredited by a professional body, that institution will have assessed the employer to ensure that you receive the training, range of experience and support needed to give you every chance to qualify.

Once you have letters after your name you will need to maintain your standards to keep them. Your professional institution will then provide guidance to make sure you sustain your competence and continue to develop professionally through accredited courses, e-learning and other methods for gaining experience, knowledge and skills.

Benefits of belonging if you're a student

You don't have to wait until you are employed to benefit from the resources and knowledge base of a professional body. Many offer student memberships. For free, or a very low annual membership fee, student membership to a professional body can be great value in kick-starting your career.

Making connections and building a network of peers and experts is one of the biggest benefits of being in a professional association.

The benefits:

- **ANOCC:** being a student member of a professional body not only looks good on your CV, but also shows a level of early commitment to a career area, particularly if you get involved in the association's activities.
- **Advice:** you can find out more about what working in the profession involves and find out more about the process for qualifying.
- **Information and resources:** you're likely to get regular news updates, and many professional institutions disseminate key information and knowledge through publications and journals, online services and events.
- **Peer and professional networks:** you'll have the opportunity to meet and network with like-minded students and experienced professionals through special interest groups, regional branch activities and student-focused services.

- **Lobbying:** professional bodies work to represent all their members' interests in their relationship with the media and the government.

Why Pursue a Career in Ministry and Theology?

- Ministry and theology programs teach learners how to: educate others about their faith; help congregation members improve their lives; and give others the power to overcome challenges related to relationships, substance abuse, and emotional trauma.
- The ideal candidates for careers in ministry and theology possess deep faith, empathy, and conviction that they can use a religious foundation to make the world a better place. Ministry and theology students skills related to counseling, resolving conflict, and working with people from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Ministry and Theology Career Outlook

- Although ministry and theology professionals typically do not earn enormous salaries, they also rarely enter the field for the money. They feel called to the work, motivated by helping others find their faith. However, experienced ministry professionals can earn competitive salaries.
- The following table provides salaries for several different ministry and theology professions.

Skills Gained With a Ministry and Theology Degree

- Christian ministry covers many elements of the human experience. Consequently, ministry and theology graduates need several skills to serve their communities, including counseling, education, communication, leadership, and conflict resolution.
- Most programs offer courses in these areas, along with internships that allow students to develop these skills organically. In some schools, ministry students preach in chapel services or teach in local churches as part of their training.

Ministry and Theology Career Paths

- Ministry majors can select a concentration to prepare for a specific career path. In addition to concentration coursework, ministry programs typically include core courses in the Bible and theology.
- By contrast, theology programs rarely include concentrations, as these degrees often prepare students for doctoral work. At the doctoral level, students tend to focus on their own research interests.
- While available concentrations vary, the following section describes some of the options ministry students can select at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels.

How to Start Your Career in Ministry and Theology

- Most ministry and theology careers require at least an associate degree for entry-level positions. Completing a bachelor's or master's degree opens up even more opportunities.
- Individuals with a bachelor's can start as associate pastors, often working under the guidance of a senior pastor. Associate pastors lead group counseling sessions and conduct readings during services. They sometimes deliver sermons.
- Graduates with a master's typically work as senior pastors and lead congregations. They may serve each congregation for a short period of time before moving to a new location or remain in one church for many years.

How to Advance Your Career in Ministry and Theology

After earning their degree, ministry and theology students can advance their careers through professional certifications or licensure, continuing education, and networking. Read on to learn more about each of these opportunities.

Certifications and/or Licensure

Certifications are optional credentials that demonstrate individuals' skills, while licenses are mandatory to work in certain careers. Church and ministry careers rarely require licensure. However, counselors may need a state-issued license, depending on their workplace and exact job requirements.

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry offers a professional certification available to associate and senior pastors and licensed or ordained church leaders. Candidates must have leadership experience in the United Methodist Church.

The youth ministry professional certificate offers courses focused on working with young people; teaching the Biblical faith; and understanding the social, mental, and emotional development of youth.

The General Sunday School Division of the Division of the United Pentecostal Church International provides a Sunday school teacher certification that enhances candidates' teaching skills and boosts their knowledge of the word of God.

Continuing Education

Pastoral ministry certificate programs provide valuable skills in areas such as Christian leadership, youth ministry, counseling, catechism and evangelism, and Bible studies. Although admission requirements vary, many programs accept students with only a high school diploma.

Ministry and theology professionals can also explore free online courses, including those offered through the Christian Leaders Institute. The institute offers more than 100 courses using a donation-based model.

Additionally, grants and fellowships offer opportunities to explore new areas of ministry and theology. These programs also build participants' leadership skills. The Forum for Theological Exploration offers several fellowships each year.

Next Steps

Keeping your skills sharp and continuing to grow your knowledge are key to advancing in ministry and theology. Next steps may include the following:

- Completing continuing education units in order to maintain your certifications and learn new tools and techniques for helping others through faith.
 - Networking with other ministry and theology professionals.
 - Getting involved in ministry and theology professional organizations.
- Professional development in this field takes many forms. Consider all options as you look to build and continually improve upon your skills.

How to Switch Your Career to Ministry and Theology

Professionals who want to switch their career to ministry and theology may already have the education they need to make the transition. Individuals who hold a bachelor's or master's degree in education, counseling, or social work often find that their degrees transfer well into ministry.

If you hold a bachelor's degree in an unrelated major, such as business or economics, you can pursue a master's degree in theology or ministry to bolster your knowledge and move into more senior roles within churches.

Although just about anyone can move into ministry from a different profession, teachers, social workers, counselors, and nonprofit leaders are the most common career changers.