

Muslim Endorsement Council, Inc.

Endorsement Manual and Application



A National Standard-Bearer for Islamic Chaplaincy

Revised September 10, 2024 (Rabbi Al-Awal 1446)

Muslim Endorsement Council, Inc.
(MEC)

<https://muslimendorsementcouncil.org/>

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A National Standard Bearer for Islamic Chaplaincy

Endorsement Manual and Application Muslim Endorsement Council, Incorporated

Established 1431 AH / 2010 CE Board of Directors
President: Chaplain Shazeeda Khan
Vice-President: Chaplain (Imam) Salahuddin Muhammad, D. Min
Treasurer: Chaplain Rafael Lantigua
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Sulayman Nyang PhD, Chaplain Melody Rashada, Imam Haazim Rashed, Elmar Shakir

Islamic Centers who approved the document formalizing MECC (now MEC) as of March 27, 2010 (Rabi Al-Akhir, 1431):

Al-Aziz Islamic Center, Islamic Association of Central Connecticut, Islamic Center of CT, Islamic Center of
Greater Hartford, Islamic Center of New London, Islamic Center of UConn, Islamic Center of Wallingford,
Masjid Al-Islam, Masjid Esa-Ibn-Mariam,
Muhammad Islamic Center of Greater Hartford, New Africa Learning Center,
New Haven Islamic Center (West Haven), Shoreline Islamic Center (Branford),
United Muslim Masjid Inc. (Masjid Rahman),
Baitul Mukarram Masjid of Greater Danbury, Inc.

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Vision:

To maintain, reinforce, and improve quality standards of spiritual care for people in public and private institutions.

Mission:

To provide a structure and process for the official endorsement and support of Muslim chaplains based on Islamic and pastoral principles and to establish a national standard for such endorsement to develop consistency and integrity in the field of Islamic chaplaincy. MEC serves to manifest the Qur'anic enjoinder and Prophetic traditions of consultation and consensus as also practiced by the four rightly guided caliphs. It strives to represent the diversity within the Muslim community in the United States.

History:

For more than 15 years before the establishment of the Muslim Endorsement Council of Connecticut (MECC) Inc., Connecticut Islamic prison chaplains and volunteers would meet to discuss establishing a support group for Islamic chaplains and their clients. Such an effort coalesced in March of 2006 when several Muslim leaders in the state of CT in cooperation with the Muslim Coalition of Connecticut (MCCT) decided to look at the issue by establishing a chaplaincy sub-committee. With the advice and support of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR-CT), the International League of Muslim Women - CT Chapter, the Islamic Council of New England (ICNE), the New England Council of Masajid, and the New England Muslim Sisters Association (NEMSA), MECC was established in March 2010 (Rabi Al-Awwal 1431). MECC changed its name to the Muslim Endorsement Council Inc (MEC) in February 2020 (Jumada Al-Akhirah 1441).

Highlights

1. The committee attempted to contact every Islamic center in CT. It ultimately contacted more than 70% of the approximately 42 centers then.
2. The committee contacted the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. (ACPE), and began encouraging CT Muslims to get clinical pastoral education training.
3. The committee held several statewide meetings where the leadership of the Islamic centers was invited to give feedback and advice on the issue of endorsing chaplains. The Islamic centers elected an endorsing body board in March 2010 (Rabi Al-Awal 1431), establishing the Muslim Endorsement Council of Connecticut, Inc. (MECC).

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4. MECC was incorporated in March 2011, applied for, and ultimately received federal 501(c) 3 tax-exempt status. In the interim, Masjid Al-Islam Inc. in New Haven CT served as the fiduciary agent for MECC.
5. In September 2010, some of the members of the original group saw the need for the establishment of a Muslim-American seminary. After consulting Muslim academics, national Muslim organizations, and some non-Muslim entities, the decision was made to try to establish a Muslim American seminary as a separate but related initiative that ultimately became the Islamic Seminary Foundation (ISF).
6. MECC initiated and organized the National Shura and Best Practices on Chaplaincy and Muslim Seminary Workshops that was held on March 5, 2011, at Yale University. It was a successful effort to broaden the Muslim and non-Muslim input into these projects as well as increase the Muslim community's knowledge about the processes of establishing an endorsement entity and a seminary. The National Shura was subsequently convened at Yale University in March annually with MEC as a co-presenter.
7. In the period from 2011 to 2019, MECC became an official endorser for the CT Department of Corrections and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. MECC also began the process of becoming an official endorser with the Department of Defense. As a result, MECC was increasingly becoming recognized as a national endorsing body. Therefore, MECC began conversations with national organizations in 2015 with a view to broadening the understanding of endorsement and fulfilling its mission to establish a national standard for such endorsement. Such conversations were held with the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) and Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA). Other organizations such as Hadi Initiative and the Association of Muslim Chaplains (AMC) subsequently joined in the conversation around in 2018/2019.
8. The discussions later led MECC to enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with AMC in early 2020. The MOU entailed placing a member of AMC on the board of MECC, including adding a member of AMC to the interview procedure of future endorsement candidates of MECC and uniting in the encouragement of endorsees to become board-certified chaplains and further their pursuit of Islamic knowledge through accredited institutions. Also, to reflect the refocused effort to advance endorsement on a national level, MECC changed its name to the Muslim Endorsement Council Inc. (MEC) and expanded its board composition to cover not just Connecticut but the entire United States.

MEC is looking forward to the future growth of Muslim chaplains with a renewed commitment to be the national standard bearer for endorsement, consistency, and integrity in the field of Islamic chaplaincy.

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Definitions

Islamic chaplaincy: is the field of spiritual care and counseling utilizing pastoral care guidelines and methodologies from an Islamic paradigm.

Muslim chaplain: A Muslim chaplain is a person who serves in public and private settings such as the community, corrections, education, healthcare, and the military from the Qur'anic and Prophetic paradigm and catering to the unique institutional context, to facilitate the provision of Islamic worship and other services such as:

- Providing spiritual and religious guidance and education
- Facilitating individual and communal prayer
- Coordinating religious rites
- Developing effective working relationships with Muslims and people of other faiths
- Responding to emotional and spiritual crises of Muslims and people of other faiths
- Catering to the religious needs of Muslim congregations
- Assisting in shaping religiously inclusive institutional policies
- Protecting the religious rights of Muslims and people of other faiths

Endorsement: Endorsement is an official declaration by MEC that a man or woman meets the Council's standards for serving in a specialized setting of Islamic chaplaincy. In general, endorsement is a process whereby a faith tradition certifies that a person has the requisite attitudes, competencies, formal learning, skills and faith community's support needed to facilitate the delivery of services to members of that faith tradition and people of other faiths in public and private institutions.

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Code of Ethics **Preamble**

The Muslim Endorsement Council (MEC) Inc. hereby affirms that all persons who wish to be endorsed by this body should follow a code of ethics that is firmly rooted in the Qur’anic-based principles and ideas as reflected in the life example of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). As Allah says in the Qur’an, the English meaning of which is:

“Let there arise out of you a band of people, inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong; They are the successful ones (Qur’an, Ali-Imran, 3:104 – Abdullah Yusuf Ali translation)

Further, an authenticated report attributed to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), says on the authority of Abu Ruqayyah Tameen Ibn Anas ad-Daaree (May Allah be pleased with him):

“The Deen (religion) is Naseeha (advice/sincerity). We said, ‘to whom?’ He, (Peace be upon him) said “To Allah and his Book and His Messenger, and to the leaders of the Muslims and the common folk.” (Reported by Muslim).

Further, the Muslim Endorsement Council publishes this code of ethics for the express purpose of making explicit to persons whom it endorses as Muslim chaplains that they must conduct themselves in a way that is firmly rooted in ideals that reflect deep Islamic principles. In addition, MEC also abides by the “Common Code of Ethics for Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors, Pastoral Educators and Students” as published by the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC). The common code is appended to this document (Appendix) and can be found on the APC website.

MEC also hereby adopts this revised version of a pledge and code of ethics from the Islamic Society of North America’s (ISNA) “The Covenant and Code of Ethics” as part of its operational practice:

The MEC Pledge and Code of Ethics

I, as a Muslim chaplain, pledge to serve Allah (God) in accordance with sound Islamic principles: service to humanity, sincere advice, equity, respect for human dignity, and justice; I will obey the Islamic teachings, love the Compassionate God with all my heart and soul, and serve the people who seek my help, counsel, and advice with compassion, sincerity, and integrity. To affirm this commitment, I will abide by the “MEC Pledge and Code of Ethics” for chaplains by faithfully supporting its principles and purposes. As further affirmation of my commitment, I pledge to hold myself and my fellow Muslim chaplains accountable for all public actions set forth in this Code of Ethics.

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Competency and Learning

- I look to the Qur'an, the Prophetic model, authentic traditions, and established scholarly opinions to promote spirituality, goodness, compassion, and justice. I will do my best to relate Islamic values and teaching to my daily activities.
- I recognize my responsibility to read, understand, and follow the MEC Pledge and Code of Ethics established by the MEC Board.
- I am committed to continuing my Islamic and professional education to be better equipped to serve people and perform my duties. I will maintain high standards of educational and professional competence and will actively strive to develop my knowledge and skills as a Muslim chaplain.
- I recognize the boundaries of my competence and will refer questions and matters that fall outside my religious and professional competency to others. I will seek the advice of the MEC Board in matters that have implications for the larger Muslim-American community.

Personal Integrity, Development, and Trust

- My lifestyle and work ethic will reflect my Islamic faith.
- I will actively pursue my Islamic faith development and enrichment.
- I will maintain self-discipline as a Muslim in such ways as establishing regular prayers and practicing required acts of worship, endeavoring to maintain wholesome family relationships, and engaging in educational and recreational activities that promote professional and personal development. I will seek to maintain good health habits.
- I will hold in trust Islamic traditions and practices, and pledge not to exploit my authority and position to advance my own interest at the expense of others.
- I will show love for and fear for Allah (God) in my life and work as I strive together with my colleagues to preserve the dignity, maintain the discipline, and promote the integrity of the chaplaincy profession.
- I recognize the special authority granted to me as an endorsed chaplain. I will never use that authority granted to me in ways that violate the personhood of another human being, religiously, emotionally or sexually. I will only use my office to promote the best interests of those under my care.
- I will accurately report my professional qualifications and affiliations.

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General Attitude and Relationships

- I understand as a Muslim chaplain in a multi-religious society that I must work alongside chaplains of other faith traditions as well as with Muslims with views of Islam that are different from mine. In promoting a fair and pluralistic environment, I will seek to ensure equity of treatment and the well-being of those entrusted to my care.
- I will promote dialogue rather than monologue in my teaching and counsel, understanding that the nature of counsel and advice is interactive, done with people rather than to people. I will invite engagement with others in my care, rather than passive receptivity, by asking for and listening to feedback.
- I will strive to understand and recognize the diverse cultural backgrounds of the people soliciting or receiving my counsel and advice. I will not condone or engage in discrimination based on age, color, culture, disability, ethnic group, gender, race, religion, marital, or socio-economic status.
- I recognize my Islamic obligation to refrain from any sexual relationship outside the institution of marriage and will not engage in sexual intimacies with persons or their family members seeking my counsel and assistance. I will avoid situations that might lead to a sexual relationship or result in sexual harassment.

Professional Relationships

- I will work collegially with chaplains of other faiths, as well as with Muslims with views of Islam that are different from mine, and respect their beliefs and traditions along with the beliefs of those whom I counsel and serve.
- As a supervisor, I will respect the practices and beliefs of each chaplain under my supervision. In recognition of their right to believe and practice their religion, I will exercise care not to require of them any service or practice in violation of their faith tradition.
- I will seek to support all colleagues in ministry by building constructive relationships wherever I serve, both with the staff where I work and with colleagues throughout the institution where I work.
- I will defend my colleagues against unfair discrimination based on age, color, culture, disability, ethnic group, gender, race, religion, marital or socio-economic status.

Confidentiality and Privileged Information

- I will adhere to the federal and state-mandated policies in place at the institutions where I serve.
- I will follow the policies of my employing institution regarding confidentiality and sharing private information about those whom I serve.

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Handling of Complaints

- I will report any corrupt or unethical behaviors that I personally witness to both MEC, and to the appropriate institutional authorities.
- I further understand that by following the Qur'anic injunctions, MEC will not entertain an accusation or complaint against me on the basis of hearsay. All formal complaints must be supported by testimony or written evidence.
- I understand that in the event a formal complaint supported by written or verbal evidence is filed against me with MEC, a task force will be appointed to verify the information, interview me, and report its findings to the MEC Board.
- I will maintain professional integrity with my colleagues, MEC and the agency I work for in handling formal complaints through the established due processes of MEC and the agency.
- I realize and agree that MEC has the right to withhold and revoke endorsement from a person who has violated this code of ethics.
- I understand that should MEC find that I have violated this code of ethics and revoke my endorsement the institution or agency where I work shall be informed of such action by MEC.

The Duty to Maintain Endorsement Relationship with MEC

- I am responsible for communicating any change in my address, telephone number, email address, and all other contact information to MEC.
- I am also responsible for communicating any change in my personal, marital, professional, legal, and immigration status to MEC.
- I will communicate any professional and academic achievements such as certificates, degrees, continuing education, promotions, and civic and community involvement to MEC.

Equivalency

In some cases, a candidate may be approved for endorsement based on a minimum of 10 years of longevity in the field of chaplaincy. In these situations, chaplains are often qualified for endorsement due to their career in the field. In these cases, chaplains may request in writing to be endorsed based on work experience. The rationale for the waiver of each of the five competencies listed below must be explicitly stated. Such a candidate must submit all other documentation as required in this manual.

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MEC Endorsement Appeal Process

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the MEC Board's decision regarding his/her application for endorsement, the applicant may file an appeal.

- The appeal must be filed by email to info@mec-usa.org within 15 calendar days from the date the MEC Board issued its decision.
- The appeal must be in the form of a 1-3-page double-spaced statement in 12-point font with unlimited exhibits explaining the reasons for the appeal. The exhibits must not include any documents that were previously provided to MEC as part of the initial application for endorsement.
- There is also a \$25 fee which must be paid electronically within the same 15 calendar days of the appeal filing.
- Upon receipt of the appellant's statement and fees, the MEC Board will appoint a three-person appeal panel.
At least one of the panel members will be a person who has worked in the applicant's area of specialty. The appeal panel will not include any persons from the panel who conducted the oral interview and assessed the appellant's competencies and eligibility for endorsement.
- The appeal panel will conduct a hearing with the appellant within an additional 15 days to evaluate the appellant's reason(s) for appeal, review the recommendations of the interview panel, and provide a report of its findings and recommendations to the MEC board for final determination.
- The board will inform the appellant within 30 days of its decision. This decision is final.

Application Process

MEC Endorsements and Benchmarking Process

Professional chaplaincy started in the Christian faith tradition, taking Christian institutional structures as its starting point. It is critically important that a process for assessing and endorsing current Muslim chaplains be instituted as soon as possible. In attempting to build a Muslim chaplaincy endorsement model, we look first to the primary sources of Islamic understanding for most Muslims (i.e. the Qur'an and the authenticated traditions of Prophet Muhammad, (Peace be upon him)); to the Professional Chaplain Competencies as published by the Board of Chaplaincy Certification Inc., an affiliate of the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) (see their document at the APC website); and to the endorsement processes of other faith traditions. MEC employs a seven-step process in assessing chaplaincy candidates. Data gathered during this inaugural process will be used to develop a more comprehensive model of endorsement for future Muslim chaplains.

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1. The candidate submits an application package to MEC by email (scanned and sent to info@mec-usa.org) or by U.S. Postal Service mail to PO Box 8224 New Haven, CT 06530
2. The application package is reviewed for completeness.
3. The candidate is notified within 30 days whether the application package is complete or not.
4. Upon notification of completion of the application package, an interview with the candidate will be scheduled within 30 days.
5. A three-person panel appointed by the MEC Board of Directors will conduct an oral interview with each candidate to assess whether he or she has the competencies attested to in the application. At least one of the panel members must be a person who has worked in the candidate's area of specialty. After the interview, within 30 days, the panel will make a written recommendation to the MEC board for approval or denial.
6. The Board of Directors of MEC will make a final determination as follows:
 - (a) Approval of chaplaincy endorsement. In some instances, the Board may require applicants to meet certain conditions to maintain their endorsement.
 - (b) Deferral of chaplaincy endorsement wherein the Board may require further information from the applicant prior to making a final decision.
 - (c) Denial of chaplaincy endorsement. If the applicant is denied, the Board will provide a written rationale for the denial. The applicant may reapply at any future time.
7. A letter of decision will be sent to the candidate within 30 days.

Note: Candidates may withdraw their applications at any time during the process. However, the \$150.00 application fee is non-refundable.

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Application Requirements

Endorsement by MEC requires that the following items and written documentation be submitted and followed by an oral interview. Please keep in mind that the written documents will be used in the oral interview. There are 10 required sections to a completed endorsement application. They are listed below.

Application requirements for Distinctive Religious Group Leader & Non-Chaplain Lay Leaders can be found on the MEC Distinctive Religious Group Leader (DRGL) / Non-Chaplain Lay Leaders application (page 25).

1. An updated professional resume.

2. An autobiography.

The candidate will prepare an autobiographical essay, of no more than seven (7) pages, double-spaced with 12-point font, highlighting the following:

- a. Family and religious life story including significant life-changing events
- b. Significant events shaping one's interest and ability to provide services and represent Islam in public
- c. Religious leadership experiences, Islamic community involvement and personal philosophy of religious leadership
- d. Personal code of ethics for religious leadership
- e. Personal applications of Islam to daily life
- f. Life experience that has prepared the candidate to serve as a chaplain

3. Five competency statements. These statements, double-spaced with 12-point font, should *list* the candidate's teachers, education, expertise, experiences and accomplishments in the following areas:

I. Qur'anic Literacy

Candidates must demonstrate a working knowledge of the Qur'an. Demonstration of said competency may include but is not limited to:

- A. Reading / Reciting the Qur'an in Arabic with Tajweed
- B. Memorization
- C. Familiarity with scholarly interpretations of Qur'an
- D. Ability to apply the Qur'an to everyday situations in the US and in the context of chaplaincy engagement

II. Prophetic Theory and Praxis

Candidates must demonstrate familiarity with the entire biography of Prophet Muhammad, (Peace be upon him), and the applicability of his life example. Demonstration of said competency may include but is not limited to:

- A. Ability to recall and discuss major events in the life of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him)
- B. Basic knowledge of hadith and their impact on the Muslim practice of Islam.
- C. Ability to apply the Prophetic example to current everyday situations in the United States
- D. Sound knowledge of the basic Fiqh of Islamic worship (Islamic pillars, practice and ritual)

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III. Cross Cultural Capability

Candidates must demonstrate the necessary interpersonal skills for working effectively with Muslims and people of other faiths from various cultural backgrounds, as well as with both males and females. Demonstration of said competency may include but is not limited to:

- A. Self-awareness and insight regarding one's own biases
- B. Basic working knowledge of the major cultural groups that the chaplain is likely to encounter in his or her chosen field of chaplaincy
- C. Effective conflict resolution skills

IV. Facilitation Skills

Candidates should be able to demonstrate the consistent ability to counsel and "connect" with people in a sensitive, open, respectful way. Demonstration of said competency may include but is not limited to:

- A. Providing effective support that contributes to the well-being of persons who request their help
- B. Providing support to and/or referrals for persons experiencing loss and grief
- C. Developing, coordinating, and facilitating public worship/spiritual practices as appropriate

V. Professional Theory and Practice

Candidates should be able to promote and integrate chaplaincy as a professional discipline into the life of the institution where they function. Demonstration of said competency may include but is not limited to:

- A. Establishing and maintaining professional and interdisciplinary relationships inside and outside of institutions in which they function
- B. Articulating an understanding of institutional culture and systems especially when it comes to ethical decision-making
- C. Demonstrating an ability to effectively document interactions within the institutions where they work

4. Proof of graduation from an institution of higher education in the areas of Islamic Studies, Islamic Chaplaincy, and/or a related field. MEC will evaluate each candidate's program of study on a case-by-case basis. Certificates, transcripts and copies of diplomas can be submitted as proof of one's formal education. Candidates without a formal course of study in the field of Islamic studies must apply for an equivalency waiver as noted in Equivalency above.

5. Proof of at least one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education training as provided by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) or the College of Pastoral Supervision & Psychotherapy (CPSP); or demonstration of equivalent training; or supervised clinical experience in counseling and pastoral care. In all cases, appropriate documentation must be provided to MEC. Candidates without Clinical Pastoral Education training must apply for an equivalency waiver.

6. Statement of any voluntary chaplaincy work experience (if applicable). This statement should be provided by the candidate's supervisor. The signed Volunteer Reference and Certification Form should be sent directly to MEC from the supervisor by email or snail mail. (see form on page 32)

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- 7. Notarized letter of accountability for ethical conduct** (see form on page 31).
- I. The candidate should attach a statement, sworn before a notary public, specifying that:
 - A. No religious body, employer, or professional organization has filed a civil or criminal complaint against the candidate for unethical conduct, nor is such a complaint pending, nor has one been previously settled.
 - B. The candidate has never resigned or been terminated from a position, nor negotiated a settlement with an employer, for reasons related to unethical conduct.
 - II. If the above cannot be certified:

The candidate should provide an account of the complaint(s) including the forum, charges, and outcome. He or she must provide contact information for people involved in the process and written authorization for these individuals to give a full accounting to MEC representatives. Each situation will be evaluated on its own merits by MEC. Prior complaints are not an automatic bar to endorsement. Information obtained will not be shared outside of MEC. MEC has the right to accept or deny an applicant according to the judgment of the review panel and the MEC Board.
 - III. The candidate should sign, date, and also provide the Background Check Authorization/ Release of Liability form included in this manual on page 30.
- 8. Two References.**
- I. The candidate should send the Reference Forms (pages 33 and 36) to the following appropriate persons:
 - a. Community Religious Leader / Local Imam / MEC-endorsed chaplain (pages 35-37)
 - b. Muslim professional peer / Muslim peer working in Islamic chaplaincy (pages 38-40)
 - II. The completed Reference Forms should be directly emailed or mailed from the recommenders to info@mec-usa.org or PO Box 8224 New Haven, CT 06530
- 9. A copy of birth records and proof of citizenship, permanent residency, or work authorization forms.**
- 10. Non-refundable application and processing fee of \$150.00 made payable to “Muslim Endorsement Council, Inc.**

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Appendix

Common Code of Ethics for Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors, Pastoral Educators and Students
Hereinafter referred to as Spiritual Care Professionals

This document is one of four foundational documents affirmed by the constituent boards of the Council on Collaboration on November 7, 2004, in Portland, Maine. Collectively, these documents establish a unified voice for the six organizations that have affirmed them and describe what it means to these organizations to be a professional pastoral care provider, pastoral counselor, or educator. The four documents are:

- Common Standards for Professional Chaplaincy
- Common Standards for Pastoral Educators/Supervisors
- Common Code of Ethics for Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors, Pastoral Educators and Students
- Principles for Processing Ethical Complaints

The membership of the participating groups represents over 10,000 members who currently serve as chaplains, pastoral counselors, and clinical pastoral educators in specialized settings as varied as healthcare, counseling centers, prisons, or the military. The complete documents and information about each of the collaborating groups can be found on the following websites:

Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) www.professionalchaplains.org
 American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC) www.aapc.org
 Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) www.acpe.edu
 National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) www.nacc.org
 National Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC) www.najc.org
 Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education (CAPPE/ACPEP) www.cappe.org

For more information on the foundations of professional pastoral care see “Professional Chaplaincy: Its Role and Importance in Healthcare” available at <http://www.professionalchaplains.org/professionalchaplain-services-resources-reading-room-hc-role.htm>.

The Code of Ethics for Spiritual Care Professionals:

- gives expression to the basic values and standards of the profession;
- guides decision-making and professional behavior;
- provides a mechanism for professional accountability; and
- informs the public as to what they should expect from Spiritual Care Professionals.

Preamble

Spiritual Care Professionals are grounded in communities of faith and informed by professional education and training. They are called to nurture their personal health of mind, body, and spirit and be responsible for their personal and professional conduct as they grow in their respect for all living beings and the natural environment. When Spiritual Care Professionals behave in a manner congruent with the values of this code of ethics, they bring greater justice, compassion, and healing to our world. Spiritual Care Professionals:

- affirm the dignity and value of each individual;
- respect the right of each faith group to hold to its values and traditions;
- advocate for professional accountability that protects the public and advances the profession;
- respect the cultural, ethnic, gender, racial, sexual orientation, and religious diversity of other professionals and those served and strive to eliminate discrimination.

Website: <https://muslimendorsementcouncil.org/>

Email: info@mec-usa.org Phone #: 646-369-6791

PO Box 8224 New Haven CT 06530

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A National Standard Bearer for Islamic Chaplaincy

1.0 Ethical Principles in Relationships with Clients

Spiritual Care Professionals understand clients to be any counselees, patients, family members, students or staff to whom they provide spiritual care. In relationships with clients, Spiritual Care Professionals uphold the following standards of professional ethics.

Spiritual Care Professionals:

- 1.1 Speak and act in ways that honor the dignity and value of every individual.
- 1.2 Provide care that is intended to promote the best interest of the client and to foster strength, integrity and healing.
- 1.3 Demonstrate respect for the cultural and religious values of those they serve and refrain from imposing their own values and beliefs on those served.
- 1.4 Are mindful of the imbalance of power in the professional/client relationship and refrain from exploitation of that imbalance.
- 1.5 Maintain relationships with clients on a professional basis only.
- 1.6 Avoid or correct any conflicts of interest or appearance of conflicting interest(s).
- 1.7 Refrain from any form of sexual misconduct, sexual harassment or sexual assault in relationships with clients.
- 1.8 Refrain from any form of harassment, coercion, intimidation or otherwise abusive words or actions in relationships with clients.
- 1.9 Safeguard the confidentiality of clients when using materials for educational purposes or written publication.
- 1.10 Respect the confidentiality of information entrusted to them by clients when communicating with family members or significant others except when disclosure is required for necessary treatment, granted by client permission, for the safety of any person or when required by law.
- 1.11 Understand the limits of their individual expertise and make referrals to other professionals when appropriate.

2.0 Ethical Principles in Relationships between Supervisors/Educators and Students

Spiritual Care Professionals respect the integrity of students using the power they have as supervisors/educators in responsible ways.

Spiritual Care Professionals:

- 2.1 Maintain a healthy educational environment free of coercion or intimidation.
- 2.2 Maintain clear boundaries in the areas of self-disclosure, intimacy and sexuality.
- 2.3 Provide clear expectations regarding responsibilities, work schedules, fees, and payments.
- 2.4 Provide adequate, timely, and constructive feedback to students.
- 2.5 Maintain a healthy respect for the personal growth of students and provide appropriate professional referrals.
- 2.6 Maintain appropriate confidentiality regarding all information and knowledge gained in the course of supervision.

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3.0 Ethical Principles in Relationships with Faith Community

Spiritual Care Professionals are accountable to their faith communities, one another, and other organizations.

Spiritual Care Professionals:

- 3.1 Maintain good standing in their faith group.
- 3.2 Abide by the professional practice and/or teaching standards of the state/province, the community, and the institution in which they are employed. If for any reason a Spiritual Care Professional is not free to practice or teach according to conscience, the Spiritual Care Professional shall notify the employer, his or her professional organization, and faith group as appropriate.
- 3.3 Do not directly or by implication claim professional qualifications that exceed actual qualifications or misrepresent an affiliation with any institution.

4.0 Ethical Principles in Relationships with Other Professionals and the Community

Spiritual Care Professionals are accountable to the public, faith communities, employers, and all professional relationships.

Spiritual Care Professionals:

- 4.1 Promote justice in relationships with others, in their institutions, and in society.
- 4.2 Represent accurately their professional qualifications and affiliations.
- 4.3 Exercise good stewardship of resources entrusted to their care and employ sound financial practices.
- 4.4 Respect the opinions, beliefs, and professional endeavors of colleagues and other professionals.
- 4.5 Seek advice and counsel from other professionals whenever it is in the best interest of those being served and make referrals when appropriate.
- 4.6 Provide expertise and counsel to other health professionals in advocating for best care practices.
- 4.7 Seek to establish collaborative relationships with other communities and health professionals.
- 4.8 Advocate for changes in their institutions that would honor spiritual values and promote healing.
- 4.9 Provide other professionals with chart notes where they are used that further the treatment of the clients or patients, obtaining consent when required.
- 4.10 Communicate sufficient information to other care team members while respecting the privacy of clients.
- 4.11 Ensure that private conduct does not impair the ability to fulfill professional responsibilities or bring dishonor to the profession.
- 4.12 Clearly distinguish between statements made or actions taken as a private individual and those made as a member or representative of one of the cognate organizations.

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5.0 Ethical Principles in Relationships with Colleagues

Spiritual Care Professionals engage in collegial relationships with peers, other chaplains, local clergy and counselors, recognizing that perspective and judgment are maintained through consultative interactions rather than through isolation.

Spiritual Care Professionals:

- 5.1 Honor all consultations, whether personal or client-related, with the highest professional regard and confidentiality.
- 5.2 Maintain sensitivity and professional protocol of the employing institution and/or the certifying organization when receiving or initiating referrals.
- 5.3 Exercise due caution when communicating through the internet or other electronic means.
- 5.4 Respect each other and support the integrity and well-being of their colleagues.
- 5.5 Take collegial and responsible action when concerns about or direct knowledge of incompetence, impairment, misconduct or violations against this code arise.
- 5.6 Communicate sufficient information to other care team members while respecting the privacy of clients.

6.0 Ethical Principles in Advertising

Spiritual Care Professionals engage in appropriate informational activities that educate the public about their professional qualifications and individual scopes of practice.

Spiritual Care Professionals:

- 6.1 Represent their competencies, education, training, and experience relevant to their practice of pastoral care, education, and counseling in an accurate manner.
- 6.2 Do not use any professional identification (business cards, letterhead, Internet or telephone directory, etc.) if it is false, misleading, fraudulent, or deceptive.
- 6.3 List and claim as evidence only degrees and certifications that are earned from educational institutions and/or training programs recognized by the certifying organizations of Spiritual Care Professionals.
- 6.4 Ascertain that the qualifications of their employees, supervisees, and students are represented in a manner that is not false, misleading, fraudulent, or deceptive.
- 6.5 Represent themselves as providing specialized services only if they have the appropriate education, training, or supervised experience

7.0 Ethical Principles in Research

Spiritual Care Professionals engaging in research follow guidelines and applicable laws that strive to protect the dignity, privacy, and well-being of all participants.

Spiritual Care Professionals:

- 7.1 Engage only in research within the boundaries of their competence.

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- 7.2 In research activities involving human participants, are aware of and ensure that the research question, design, and implementation are in full compliance with ethical principles.
- 7.3 Adhere to informed consent, including a clear and understandable explanation of the procedures, a description of the risks and benefits, and the duration of the desired participation.
- 7.4 Inform all participants of the right to withdraw consent and to discontinue involvement at any time.
- 7.5 Engage in research while being sensitive to the cultural characteristics of participants.
- 7.6 Maintain the confidentiality of all research participants and inform participants of any limits of that confidentiality.
- 7.7 Use any information obtained through research for professional purposes only.
- 7.8 Exercise conscientiousness in attributing sources in their research and writing thereby avoiding plagiarism.
- 7.9 Report research data and findings accurately.

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MEC ENDORSEMENT APPLICATION

1 of 5

Endorsement Application must be filled out completely

Date: _____

Name: _____
First Middle Last

Aliases or legal names you have been known by before _____

Social Security Number: _____ Gender: M F Birthdate (mm/dd/yyyy) _____

Address: _____
Street City and State Zip Code

Home #: _____ Cell #: _____ Work #: _____

Email Address: _____

Ethnic/Racial/National Origin (Optional): _____ Birthplace: _____

First Language: _____ Citizenship (name country): _____

How long have you practiced Islam? (Include months/years): _____

Did you convert/revert to Islam, if so, When: _____

Do you have family members who are Muslim? If yes how many: _____

Driver's license number: _____ Driver's license State: _____

Islamic religious institution affiliation (place of worship):

Leader of your Islamic religious institution _____

How do you identify? Sunni Shia' Ibadi Thahiri

Which School of Thought do you adhere to?

Hanafi Maliki Shafi' Hanbali Ja'fari Zaydi Ibadi Thahiri

Which Qira'at do you recite from? Hafs Warsh

Please state your reason(s) for seeking endorsement: _____



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Education

List high schools, colleges, seminaries, universities, Islamic studies, counseling or chaplaincy programs attended:

Name & Address of Institution	Dates (From)	Dates (To)	Graduated? (if applicable)	Degree/Certification

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State licensure

Give state of licensure, type of license, license number, and date of expiration:

Marital Status: Single Married Spouse Deceased Divorced

If married or have been married list dates and names of all spouses:

If married, what is your spouse’s faith orientation? _____

Your Children (name and ages):

Present Occupation: _____

Position: _____ Location: _____

Professional Religious leadership experience (Including paid or volunteer years and specific dates):

Institution/ Organization	Address	Position	Dates	Supervisor/ Contact No.

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Chaplaincy position or type of chaplaincy endorsement desired:

- Community (e.g. Masjid, Police, Fire) Corrections Education Healthcare Military
- Other (Specify) _____

Name of employing institution for chaplaincy where you work or are applying to:

Name _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Five competency statements. These statements, double-spaced in 12-point font, should *list* the candidate's teachers, education, expertise, experiences, and accomplishments in the following areas:

I. Qur'anic Literacy

Candidates must demonstrate a working knowledge of the Qur'an. Demonstration of said competency may include but is not limited to:

- A. Reading / Reciting the Qur'an in Arabic with Tajweed
- B. Memorization
- C. Familiarity with scholarly interpretations of the Qur'an
- D. Ability to apply the Qur'an to everyday situations in the US and in the context of chaplaincy engagement

II. Prophetic Theory and Praxis

Candidates must demonstrate familiarity with the entire biography of Prophet Muhammad, (Peace be upon him), and the applicability of his life example. Demonstration of said competency may include but is not limited to:

- A. Ability to recall and discuss major events in the life of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him)
- B. Basic knowledge of hadith and their impact on the Muslim practice of Islam.
- C. Ability to apply the Prophetic example to current everyday situations in the United States
- D. Sound knowledge of the basic Fiqh of Islamic worship (Islamic pillars, practice and ritual)

III. Cross-Cultural Capability

Candidates must demonstrate the necessary interpersonal skills for working effectively with Muslims and people of other faiths from various cultural backgrounds, as well as with both males and females. Demonstration of said competency may include but is not limited to:

- A. Self-awareness and insight regarding one's own biases
- B. Basic working knowledge of the major cultural groups that the chaplain is likely to encounter in his or her chosen field of chaplaincy
- C. Effective conflict resolution skills

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IV. Facilitation Skills

Candidates should be able to demonstrate the consistent ability to counsel and “connect” with people in a sensitive, open, respectful way. Demonstration of said competency may include but is not limited to:

- A. Providing effective support that contributes to the well-being of persons who request their help
- B. Providing support to and/or referrals for persons experiencing loss and grief
- C. Developing, coordinating and facilitating public worship/spiritual practices as appropriate

V. Professional Theory and Practice

Candidates should be able to promote and integrate chaplaincy as a professional discipline into the life of the institution where they function. Demonstration of said competency may include but is not limited to:

- A. Establishing and maintaining professional and interdisciplinary relationships inside and outside of institutions in which they function
- B. Articulating an understanding of institutional culture and systems especially when it comes to ethical decision-making
- C. Demonstrating an ability to effectively document interactions within the institutions where they work

I understand that failure to present information truthfully on this application will be grounds for the denial or revocation of MEC Endorsement.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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Which School of Thought do you adhere to?

Hanafi Maliki Shafi' Hanbali Ja'fari Zaydi Ibadi Thahiri

Which Qira'at do you recite from? Hafs Warsh

Current Title/ Position: _____

Name of Current Organization/ Institution: _____

Address of Organization/ Institution: _____

Dates Attended: _____

Unit/Assignment: _____ Rank/Pay Grade: _____ Service Branch: _____

Military Installation: _____ Active Duty/ Civilian: _____

Education

List high schools, colleges, seminaries, universities, Islamic studies, counseling or chaplaincy programs attended:

Name & Address of Institution	Date (From)	Date (To)	Graduated? (if applicable)	Degree/Certification

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State licensure

Give state of licensure, type of license, license number, and date of expiration: _____

Marital Status: Single Married Spouse Deceased Divorced

If married or have been married list the dates and names of all spouses:

If married, what is your spouse’s faith orientation? _____

Your Children (name and ages):

Professional Religious leadership experience

(Including paid or volunteer years and specific dates):

Institution/ Organization	Address	Position	Dates	Supervisor/ Contact No.

Why are you interested in becoming a Distinctive Religious Group Leader / Non-Chaplain Lay Leader?



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How do you perceive working with the Muslim chaplain at the institution? If your institution does not have a Muslim chaplain, how do you perceive working with chaplains of other faith groups? (Please provide examples if you have experience in this area)

What are your perceptions of the DRGL’s role, responsibilities, and duties as a part of the total ministry team on the institution?

Identify three personal strengths as a potential Distinctive Religious Group Leader.

Identify three personal weaknesses as a potential Distinctive Religious Group Leader. How could you work to overcome this area?

Explain your knowledge of the Qur’an (Reading/Reciting the Qur’an in Arabic with Tajweed/Memorization/ Familiarity with scholarly interpretations of the Qur’an/Ability to apply the Qur’an to everyday situations in the US and the context of chaplaincy engagement).



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Explain your knowledge of Ahadith/Fiqh/Seerah, and your ability to apply it within the American

I understand that failure to present information truthfully on this application will be grounds for the denial or revocation of the MEC Endorsement.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Email to: info@mec-usa.org

Please either scan and email the completed form to info@mec-usa.org or mail it to PO Box 8224 New Haven, CT 06530



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Muslim Endorsement Council (MEC) Background Check Authorization/ Liability Waiver

Candidate Authorization and Consent for Release of Information

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

I, the undersigned candidate, do hereby certify that the information provided by me for the purpose of the attached endorsement application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any false statement provided by me will be considered as cause for possible denial of endorsement. All results of the research into my background will be proprietary and kept confidential. The information obtained will not be provided to any parties that are not part of the endorsement process.

This Authorization and Consent for Release acknowledges that MEC may now conduct a verification and/or screening of any criminal history, or record information pertaining to me that may be in the files of any Federal, State, or Local criminal justice agency in any state, territory, possession, or jurisdictional area of the United States of America, or other nations or countries. I understand that MEC will check the references provided, and may, if necessary, check my previous employment, and education. I acknowledge by my signature below that endorsement by MEC is contingent upon satisfactory background verification. *A past criminal history will not automatically result in endorsement being denied.*

I have read and understand this release and consent, and authorize the background search. I authorize persons, current and former employers, and other organizations and agencies to provide all information that may be requested. I hereby release all of the persons and agencies providing such information from any and all claims and damages connected with their release of any requested information. I agree that any copy of this document is valid as the original.

I do hereby agree to forever release and discharge MEC Inc., their agents, and their associates, to the full extent permitted by law from any claims, damages, losses, liabilities, costs, and expenses, or any charge or complaint filed with any agency arising from the retrieving and reporting of this information. According to the Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, I am entitled to know if my endorsement application was denied based on information obtained by MEC and to receive upon written request, a disclosure of the public record information and of the nature and scope of the background screening report.

Applicant's Full Name (print): _____ **Email** _____

Social Security Number: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____

Current Street Address: _____

City: _____ **State & Zip:** _____

Phone Number: _____ **State Driver's License # or Identification Card #:** _____

Date: _____

Signature (must be signed by the applicant) _____

Adapted from the Baptist General Convention of Texas

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Muslim Endorsement Council (MEC)

Notarized Accountability Letter for ETHICAL CONDUCT

I, _____ hereby certify that:

- (a) No complaint against me for unethical conduct has been filed, pending, or settled in a religious body, civil, criminal, employment, or another professional organization’s forum.
- (b) I have never resigned, been terminated, or negotiated a settlement from a position for reasons related to unethical conduct.
- (c) I am not currently an abuser of legal/illegal drugs or other intoxicants

Under penalty of perjury, I hereby swear that the information contained in this affidavit is true and accurate.

Endorsement Candidate’s Signature

Date

Sworn to and subscribed before me this _____ day of _____, 2_____

Notary Signature

My Commission expires _____

Notary Seal

If this document is scanned and sent by email, it must also be sent by mail to PO BOX 8224 New Haven, CT 06530

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Volunteer Reference and Certification Form

1 of 1

_____ is applying for endorsement by the Muslim Endorsement Council (MEC) as a chaplain and has given your name as a reference for certifying their volunteer chaplaincy work. We appreciate your prompt response to the following questions, and we assure you that all information we receive will be treated confidentially. References are essential in determining the qualifications and character of an applicant. Please complete the entire questionnaire. Please do not alter the form in any way.

Immediate family members are not acceptable as a volunteer reference certifier. Please indicate:

1. How long have you personally known the candidate?

2. Check which best describes the candidate’s volunteer roles:

- Imam Dawah Chaplain Counselor
- Professor Teacher Other: _____

3. How long was the candidate a volunteer?

From _____(mm/yyyy) to _____(mm/yyyy)

4. Is the candidate effective in this religious work?

5. How could he/she become (even) more effective?

6. What is your relationship with the candidate?



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7. Does the candidate work well with others?

8. How does the candidate deal with conflict situations?

9. Is the candidate living an exemplary Muslim life? Explain.

10. Describe the candidate's strengths

11. Describe the areas in which the candidate needs to improve upon

12. Provide an example or two demonstrating good leadership in the candidate's religious work.

13. What is your opinion of the candidate's preparedness for religious leadership work?



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14. What is your opinion of the soundness of the candidate’s understanding of Islamic belief and practice?

15. Do you believe the candidate is qualified for religious leadership? Explain.

16. In what area would the candidate benefit from further religious and professional education?

17. Do you see the candidate as someone you would hire, have as a leader in your congregation, or like to work with as a colleague?

18. Additional Comments:

Name (Print): _____

Organizational Affiliation: _____

Signature: _____

Occupation: _____

Phone Number: _____

Date: _____

Email: _____



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Muslim Endorsement Council, Inc. (MEC)
Community Religious Leader / MEC-endorsed chaplain confirming that the applicant was either born
Muslim or has taken Shahadah and is now practicing Islam
Reference form

_____ is applying for endorsement by the Muslim Endorsement Council, Inc. (MEC) as a chaplain and has given your name as a reference. We appreciate your prompt response to the following questions, and we assure you that all information we receive will be treated confidentially. References are very important in determining the qualifications and character of an applicant. Please complete the entire questionnaire. Please do not alter the form in any way. Immediate family members are not acceptable as references and to qualify as a reference, you must have known the applicant for at least one year.

Please indicate: What type of reference do you consider yourself to be?

Indicate one. Professional Personal

1. How long have you personally known the candidate?
2. What is your relationship with the candidate?
3. Check which best describes the candidate's time given to Islamic religious work:

Full-time Part-time (Average Hours Weekly_____)

4. Check which best described the candidate's religious leadership:

Imam Dawah Chaplain Counselor

Professor Teacher Other: _____

5. How long has the candidate been in Islamic Religious Leadership? _____

6. Is the candidate effective in this religious work? _____

7. How could he/she become (even) more effective?

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8. Does the candidate work well with others?

9. How does the candidate deal with conflict situations?

10. Is the candidate living an exemplary Muslim life?

Explain

11. Describe the candidate's strengths.

12. How would you describe the candidate's ability to communicate effectively with others and convey information clearly as required?

13. Describe the areas in which the candidate needs to improve upon

14. Provide an example or two demonstrating good leadership in the candidate's religious work.



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15. What is your opinion of the candidate’s preparedness for religious leadership work?

16. What is your opinion of the soundness of the candidate’s understanding of Islamic belief and practice?

17. Do you believe the candidate is qualified for religious leadership? Explain

18. In what area do you think that the candidate would benefit with further religious and or professional education?

19. Do you see the candidate as a person that you would hire, have as a leader in your congregation or like to work with as a colleague?

Additional Comments:

Name (Print): _____ Organizational Affiliation: _____

Signature: _____

Occupation: _____ Cell: _____

Date: _____ Email: _____

Please email the completed form directly to info@mec-usa.org or mail to PO Box 8224 New Haven, CT 06530

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Muslim Endorsement Council, Inc. (MEC)
Muslim professional peer or a Muslim peer working in Islamic chaplaincy
Reference form

_____ is applying for endorsement by the Muslim Endorsement Council, Inc. (MEC) and has given your name as a reference. We appreciate your prompt response to the following questions, and we assure you that all information we receive will be treated confidentially. References are essential in determining the qualifications and character of an applicant. Please complete the entire questionnaire. Please do not alter the form in any way. Immediate family members are not acceptable as references and qualify as a reference.

- 1- How long have you known the candidate? _____
- 2- In what capacity do you know the candidate? _____

From your perspective and to the best of your knowledge:

1. How would you evaluate the candidate's pastoral care interventions?

2. What would you say the candidate's strengths in pastoral care are?

3. In what area(s) would you say the candidate needs to improve in his/her spiritual intervention competencies?

4. Describe how the candidate handles situations in which his personal beliefs conflict with those he cares for?

5. What is your assessment of the candidate's self-awareness abilities?



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6. What is your assessment of the candidate's situational awareness abilities?

7. Describe the candidate's ability to provide spiritual support to individuals and families from underserved communities or minority religious and non-religious faiths.

8. Does the candidate have any language barrier issues?

9. How would you describe the candidate's ability to communicate effectively with others and convey information clearly as required?

10. Describe the candidate's ability to adapt and work with different demographic groups.

11. How does the candidate deal with conflict situations?

12. Does the candidate demonstrate empathy appropriately?



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13. How does the candidate deal with difficult engagements?

Additional Comments:

Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____

Occupation: _____

Date: _____

Organizational Affiliation: _____

Cell: _____ Email: _____

**Please email the completed form directly to info@mec-usa.org
or mail it to PO Box 8224 New Haven, CT 06530**



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Special thanks to the following entities that provided advice, consultation, and support during the 3-year process that led to the creation of the original template of this document:

The Association of Muslim Chaplains (AMC), Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR)

Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences (GSISS)

Institute of Muslim Mental Health (IMMH), International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT)

International League of Muslim Women - New England Chapter

Islamic Council of New England (ICNE)

Islamic Center of New London (ICNL)

Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA)

Islamic Relief-USA

Islamic Social Services Association-USA (ISSA-USA)

Islamic Seminary Foundation (ISF)

Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)

Manhattanville College Department of World Religions

Masjid Al-Islam (MAI)

Muslim American Society (MAS) – Freedom

Muslim Alliance in North America (MANA)

New England Council of Masajid

New England Muslim Sisters Association (NEMSA)

Yale University- Chaplain's Office

In addition, MEC would like to thank the many people currently working in the field of Islamic chaplaincy for their advice and support.

Website: <https://muslimendorsementcouncil.org/>

Email: info@mec-usa.org Phone #: 646-369-6791

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