



## **Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service Committee on Catholic Education**

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### **USCCB Subcommittee Approves Revised Certification Standards and Competencies for the Catholic Campus Ministry Association**

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**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – At its recent bi-annual meeting, the [Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service](#) of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) voted to approve revised standards and competencies for the [Catholic Campus Ministry Association \(CCMA\)](#). The newly-approved standards will be the basis by which CCMA can offer multiple pathways to certification for lay ecclesial ministers, consecrated laity, priests, and deacons who serve in the role of *Catholic campus minister* at colleges and universities throughout the country.

In granting approval, the subcommittee indicated that the revised standards conform to best practices for ministerial formation and that the CCMA is equipped to both promote and implement the process for certification outlined in their certification handbook.

Most Rev. Gerald F. Kicanas, Bishop Emeritus of Tucson, and Chairman of the Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service, praised the comprehensive effort involved in achieving this milestone. “The leadership of CCMA has worked diligently to develop newly-revised certification standards that aid in the preparation of those ministering in our colleges and universities. Campus ministry requires competent and well-formed ministers grounded in human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral abilities. CCMA’s certification standards and procedures encourage those competencies.”

The recently-approved CCMA standards reflect the best practices for ministry formation that are highlighted in the 2005 statement [Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry](#) and rooted in [Empowered by the Spirit](#), the 1985 U.S. bishops’ pastoral letter on campus ministry. The working groups and committees accounted for changes in the landscape of Catholic campus ministry, and considered trends documented in the 2017 [A National Study on Catholic Campus Ministry](#).

Certification is a formal process through which the CCMA is able to evaluate key skills of a campus minister based on the four dimensions of ministry formation identified in *Co-Workers*: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral. The evaluation is based on the candidate’s own assessment, and those of his or her peers within the CCMA. Certification for specialized ministry roles is strongly encouraged, as it facilitates life-long growth for the minister and is an important accomplishment which may be used by an (arch)bishop or his delegate to affirm the professional competence of a minister, or to authorize him or her for particular service in the Church. Additionally, certification is a valuable credential that Catholic colleges and universities may

consider when seeking qualified candidates for campus ministry positions.

Three distinct committees of the CCMA collaborated over a period of two years, to complete the revised standards and certification procedures. “We believe that the diligent work of the committees collaborating and consulting in this process has contributed to the success of this revision,” said Michael St. Pierre, Ed.D., Executive Director of the CCMA.

“The revision process engaged campus ministers who serve in the field and dialogue with other professional associations such as the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC). The CCMA’s process brought fruitful conversation about ministerial preparedness and the complexity of campus ministry in its many forms,” said Barbara McCrabb, Assistant Director for Higher Education for the USCCB. “The CCMA has articulated the need for a high standard of pastoral practice in the university environment. In doing so, they have set a course for formation and life-long learning as missionary disciples,” she added.

The approval of these revised standards by the subcommittee continues a long-standing relationship of the CCMA with the USCCB, dating back to 1986 and the subcommittee’s predecessor body, the USCCB Commission on Certification and Accreditation (CCA). For more information on the work of the subcommittee, and a list of arch/dioceses and national organizations with approved certification standards, please visit [www.usccb.org/certification](http://www.usccb.org/certification).

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