

Policy Name:	Pastoral Distinction				
Section #:		Section Title:		Issued:	November 2020
Approval Authority:			Adopted:		Reviewed:
Accountable Executive:	Lead Pastor		Revised:	January 2021	
Accountable Department:	Senior Leaders		Contact:	Lead Pastor	

Purpose

God has called Riverwood Church Community into existence to help people journey towards full devotion to Jesus Christ. Riverwood is a growing community of people who are gifted with the various spiritual gifts to work together to bring the life transforming Gospel to these people. Coming from various backgrounds and experiences, this army of volunteers serves gladly, but needs leadership and organization. To that end, Riverwood calls and appoints leaders who will focus their ministries to lead and guide God's people to effectively grow in their faith and in their service to God's kingdom.

Policy Statement

The following policy defines how people will be raised up, developed, and qualified as pastors. All candidates for pastoral distinction will be required to meet the prerequisites laid out within this policy before they may be recognized or referred to as a pastor.

Policy Application

New Hires

Ministry leaders that are hired by Riverwood may begin their work here with the designation as 'pastor' if

- (a) they have a completed a Bible School or Seminary degree from a recognized school; (b) the role they are hired for is designated as a 'pastoral' role; and
- (c) they present a strong reference and recommendation, based on previous employment as a pastor, from their previous church.

Existing Staff

On-staff ministry leaders can be affirmed and granted pastoral distinction if they qualify by completing the following process.

Prerequisites for staff to begin the process include that

- (a) they have been on staff (part time or full time) with Riverwood for a minimum of one year; (b) they have completed a Bachelor level education or its equivalent;
- (c) they have the recommendation and encouragement of the Lead Pastor to do so; and

(d) they have a job description and role at Riverwood that is 'pastoral' in nature.

The process for those completing a Bible College/Seminary degree while on staff or for current staff without a Bible College/Seminary degree will be as follows:

- (a) The Lead Pastor will receive a written request from the candidate for pastoral distinction.
- (b) The Pastoral Distinction Committee will be formed by the Lead Pastor to process the assignments and conduct an interview and assessment.
- (c) Qualified candidates will meet the prerequisites listed above.
 - (i) If no Bachelor level education has been completed, the Pastoral Distinction Committee may take into consideration other education, life and ministry experience, maturity and proven ministry effectiveness in lieu of a degree.
- (d) Qualified candidates will research and write two papers.
 - (i) A *Personal Philosophy of Ministry* paper. This paper will be approximately 4-6 pages, double-spaced, and will outline the candidate's personal, driving values and passions when it comes to their approach to ministry and what Biblical source has influenced this value. This paper does not need to be theologically complete, but must be a fair representation of the candidate's approach to ministry.
 - (ii) A short paper on *The Meaning and Role of a Pastor*. This paper will be approximately 2- 3 pages, double spaced.
- (e) Qualified candidates will research, write and preach two full sermons in a church service context with evaluation of effectiveness by the Pastoral Distinction Committee.
- (f) Qualified candidates will take time to review and re-affirm with a signature the Riverwood distinctives (statement of faith, vision, values, code of conduct, or any other such document).
- (g) Qualified candidates will provide the Pastoral Distinction Committee (via the Lead Pastor) a completed package including the two papers, sermons and the signed affirmation.
- (h) Qualified candidates will be invited to present their papers to the Pastoral Distinction Committee for review and response in an interview setting.
- (i) The Pastoral Distinction Committee will then come to a decision as to whether the candidate is affirmed and recommended for the pastoral distinction, or if there are areas that need to be worked on before this distinction can be granted.

Note: The decision to grant the pastoral distinction is at the discretion of the Pastoral Distinction Committee. Any denial will come with a written explanation and a path-to acceptance if one is available.
- (j) Qualified candidates that are approved by the Pastoral Distinction Committee will be asked to participate in a moment of public recognition, commissioning and celebration in a subsequent worship service and in front of the Riverwood family.

Responsibilities

Lead Pastor

The Lead Pastor will

- (a) make all staff aware of the Pastoral Distinction Policy and the process outlined therein; and (b) form and convene the Pastoral Distinction Committee as required.

policies are subject to amendment. All

The Pastoral Distinction Committee will

- (a) review all aspects of the application of each candidate; and
- (b) make a recommendation as to the granting of pastoral distinction to each candidate.

Candidates for Pastoral Distinction

The candidate will

- (a) make a written request to the Lead Pastor to begin the process for pastoral distinction.

Definitions

"Pastoral Distinction Committee" - a committee formed by the Lead Pastor for the purpose of assessing a candidate for pastoral distinction. The committee will be composed of the Lead Pastor, an elder and at least two Covenant Community Members.

Note: In the unique Grandfathered situation outlined under the Anti-Nepotism Policy, where the candidate is a family member of the Lead Pastor, an additional Elder will replace the Lead Pastor on this committee.

Consequences of Non-Compliance

The process of granting Pastoral Distinction requires that the Pastoral Distinction Committee act in a way that follows the standards of ethical behaviour expected of Riverwood leaders. Any concerns arising out of this process may be addressed using Riverwood's Complaints Mechanisms Policy.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Candidates for Pastoral Distinction may expect that the details of their application and its outcome will remain confidential. Disclosure of these details will be allowed only

- (a) with the express consent of the candidate;
- (b) to allow for the accurate assessment of a candidate's suitability (eg. while preaching the requisite sermons); or
- (c) upon successful completion of the process.