



Spiritual Care Australia

Credentialing Levels

Level One: Supervised Practitioner

Able to provide spiritual care to others under supervision from a Level 2, 3 or 4 Certified Member

A Level 1 Spiritual Care Practitioner at the beginning of their practice, is likely still to be studying to become an practitioner and/or is gaining experience in delivering spiritual care through a reflective practice model. (usually 1-2 years depending upon prior experience). Level one practitioners are under the direct supervision of an experienced, independent Spiritual Care Practitioner to whom they report, and who is ultimately responsible for all their interactions with clients.

A Spiritual Care Practitioner at this level gains experience in:

- using both explicit and implicit comprehensive spiritual assessment models;
- forming a clear rationale for why one course of care was chosen over another;
- writing spiritual care notes that communicate relevant details to the multidisciplinary team.

They are able to demonstrate appropriate practice through description and definition, and are becoming confident in using assessment tools. They demonstrate an emerging capacity to identify a relevant theory and framework that can enrich each Spiritual Care encounter, and guide their engagement with clients.

In addition to students, there are two types of early or emergent practitioners who are initially assessed at this level:

- those who are new to Spiritual Care and moving from a different field (including traditional ministry/preaching/teaching ministries), who need to become proficient in both scaffolding a Spiritual Care conversation and using Reflective Practice skills;
- those who already have reflective practice skills from social work, counselling, psychologist, spiritual direction, or supervision. These applicants can demonstrate the soft skills of reflective practice, but need to become proficient in the art of scaffolding a Spiritual Care conversation.



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Credentialing Levels

Level Two: Independent Practitioner

An experienced practitioner, able to independently provide spiritual care to others, and give guidance to Level 1 Spiritual Care Practitioners

A Level 2 Spiritual Care Practitioner is a proficient practitioner who is able to manage complex care situations themselves, and understands when to seek guidance or clarification from others, including managers and mentors. This person may be highly experienced, but has, for whatever reason, not entered into a formal managerial role. Many highly skilled practitioners prefer to remain at this level, feeling that their vocation is primarily to do with direct engagement with clients, rather than oversight and management of other Spiritual Care Practitioners.

A Spiritual Care Practitioner at this level is a professional resource to their organisation who:

- works cooperatively with the multidisciplinary teams, understanding the boundaries between spiritual care and physical, medical, social, mental care and specific religious care;
- provides spiritual care in-services to other units and departments;
- represents Spiritual Care to the organisation on committees and working groups.

They are able to demonstrate aptitude at this level by providing examples of complex care that demonstrate an ability to compare and contrast appropriate theories and frameworks, and are able to clearly provide examples that show both the limits and possibilities of practice.

At this level, a practitioner will be competent in scaffolding a Spiritual Care conversation and using Reflective Practice skills. They may also be proficient in explaining Spiritual Care to others, represent Spiritual Care in other institutional settings, and exhibit high-level Spiritual Care skills. In the latter case, they may be qualified to apply for a Level 3 position should it arise, but (as noted above) not all Level 2 Spiritual Care Practitioners will pursue the path of a recognised management role (i.e. Level 3). This is in no way a reflection of their skill or competence, but may be a result of a deliberate choice to remain on the "front lines" of client engagement.



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Credentialing Levels

Level Three: Senior Practitioner

A skilled practitioner, who supervises others in their provision of spiritual care and acts in a managerial role

A Level 3 Spiritual Care Practitioner has been appointed to a formal managerial role within an organisation. They are responsible for ensuring issues of compliance, staffing and professional development requirements are met for those on their team.

A Spiritual Care Practitioner working at this level contributes to the expertise and thought leadership of the organisation, drawing on evidence-based, peer-reviewed literature and practices providing on-going training for Spiritual Care Practitioners, and education about spiritual care for others within the organisation.

They are able to demonstrate the use of peer-reviewed, evidence-based practice to further the profession of Spiritual Care and provide leadership within an organisation. They demonstrate supervision and management of other Spiritual Care Practitioners in a manner that is empowering and enabling of those under their direction.

An example of a Level 3 Senior Practitioner may be an experienced Spiritual Care Practitioner who now manages a team of Spiritual Care Practitioners for a not-for-profit agency that works across several sectors, including health, corrections, and residential aged care. Management responsibilities include managing 14 chaplains and a volunteer team, organising their annual retreats, communicating information regarding their salary packages, coordinating training and professional development, professional supervision, advocating for an ethos of spiritual care to be incorporated into the business model, and representing chaplaincy to the fundraising division of the agency.

A further example of a Level 3 Spiritual Care Practitioner is drawn from the education and training sector. Such a practitioner is an expert regarding the subject matter and practice in the field of spiritual care, involved in spiritual care course development and delivery within an educational institution or facilitating and supervising trainees in a Clinical Pastoral Education Centre.

It should be noted that 'Senior' here refers to the role in which an spiritual care practitioner is employed – that is, specifically in a management role in which they oversee a team of spiritual care practitioners – rather than to age or length of service.



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Credentialing Levels

Level Four: Strategic Leadership

An industry recognised leader in Spiritual Care Practice, able to provide expert guidance in Spiritual Care governance, advocacy and praxis at a regional/national and/or sector-wide level

A Level 4 Spiritual Care Practitioner is engaged in directing, advising and nurturing the practice of Spiritual Care across a broad geographical area, sector-wide and/or national level. They may be involved in the development of best-practice programmes in Spiritual Care education. They represent Spiritual Care through their participation on advisory boards, development panels and government committees. They are actively engaged in networking with heads of organisations, sector leaders and relevant government authorities.

Spiritual Care Practitioners working at this level are leaders of Spiritual Care organisations, designing and delivering professional Spiritual Care education at a national level, and advisory roles on councils or editorial boards at regional, state, national and international levels.

They are able to analyse and evaluate the provision of Spiritual Care, including factors that could help or hinder Spiritual Care provision on a sector wide and national level. They are able to create professional, evidence-based programs training others in the delivery of Spiritual Care at the level of professional accreditation. They have demonstrated exercise of transformative leadership within the organisation and sector, with appropriate references and referrals to support their claims.

Finally, there is no degree or course that leads directly to certification as a Level 4 Spiritual Care Practitioner. This is because accreditation at this level is not only about experience or basic skills, but about managing complex relationships, concepts, policies and structures. Spiritual Care Practitioners at this level must therefore display not only their own understanding of Spiritual Care, but demonstrate the breadth and depth of the impact of their leadership, and the esteem in which they are held by others for their capacity to lead change and manage culture.