Foundational Aspects of Formation of Spiritual Directors (Revised 2026)

The following foundational aspects of formation for the ministry of spiritual direction are listed as a guide for interviews of applicants for membership of the Association of Christian Spiritual Directors. They will therefore be of interest to those who are in formation for the ministry of Spiritual Direction. Fuller guidelines can be accessed at: https://spiritualdirection.au/formation-programs *The intention has not been to create an exclusive or exhaustive list of criteria for membership. Rather, interviewers will use those descriptions with discernment, and with awareness that Spiritual Direction is more than simply a set of skills.*

Practical Skills	**Personal Development**	**Professional Development**	**Spiritual Traditions**
Development of: ***Basic*** ● Communication/reflective inquisitive question asking skills ● Capacity to listen empathetically and sensitively ● A Contemplative Stance ● Understanding of Emotions ● Contracting ● Confidentiality, hospitality and mutual respect ***Commitment to ongoing skills development, for example*** ● Dream work ● Interactive Drawing Therapy (IDT) ● Focusing ● Working with images/metaphors ● Guided imagination ● Facilitating ritual ***Practicum*** ● 2-3 ongoing directees ● Monthly supervision ● Use of verbatims, case studies etc. ● Usually over 2 years or 200 contact hours.	Evidence of: ● Significant life experience ● encourage a contemplative attitude with a commitment to prayer ● Ability to reflect on one's own life and ministry ● Understanding of and commitment to the process of personal transformation ● Sustained experience of receiving regular spiritual direction. ● Value Supervision	Evidence of: ● Biblical and theological literacy at an informed lay level ● Awareness of varying models of spiritual direction ● Clear grasp of the role of spiritual director and the differences between therapy, counselling, supervision and spiritual direction. ● Appropriate director-directee relationships ● Implementation of professional boundaries, ethical practice and contracting. ● Awareness of psychological aspects of spiritual Direction, including personality differences, (counter-) transference, sexuality, when to refer. ● Adherence to a *Code of Ethics* and Safeguarding principles	Exploration of Spirituality: ***Familiarity with the traditions of:*** ● Contemplative spirituality ● Directed Retreats ● Lectio Divina ● Discernment ● Forms of prayer ● Spiritual journey ● Faith Development ● Images of God Some insights into contemporary Spirituality, e.g. ● Creation spirituality ● Issues of Justice ● Spirituality of Aotearoa

Undergirding all this Commitment to:

- Inclusiveness – Ecumenical, Theological, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Language…
- Tangata Whenua, Treaty of Waitangi and multi-cultural awareness
- Respectful and ethical practice
- Contemplative spirituality
- Creating an openness and hospitality within their own interior life
- Willingness to journey into the mystery of life

Some insights into contemporary Spirituality, e.g.

- Creation spirituality
- Issues of Justice
- Spirituality of Aotearoa