



NOTICE OF MOTION: ADOPTION OF A POLICY ON DUAL AFFILIATION

The following motion, moved by the CBAC Council Executive and the Board of Ministerial Standards and Education, will be brought to the assembly at the annual business meeting, August 7, 2026, at Oasis:

That the CBAC Assembly adopt the proposed policy on Dual Affiliation (as outlined below), to be included in the Ministerial Professional Standards. This new standard would be added to "Section 3: Code of Ethics" as a new section. Credentialed pastors will be given one year, as of August 7, 2026, to comply or apply for an exception, as outlined in the new policy.

Note: The Ministerial Professional Standards Document can be accessed on the password-protected section of the [CBAC website](https://atlanticbaptist.ca/members/#eligibility). - <https://atlanticbaptist.ca/members/#eligibility>

In this document, you will find:

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1. Rationale for the Ministerial Professional Standards Policy on Dual Affiliation

As the Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada (CBAC), we value cooperation within the broader body of Christ, as seen in partnerships over the years and in the establishment of events such as the ONE Conference. God is at work through many denominations, networks, and ministry organizations, and we celebrate partnerships that advance the mission of Jesus locally, regionally, and globally. CBAC pastors regularly engage in meaningful collaboration with partners, para-church organizations, ecumenical initiatives, and interdenominational networks, and we are thankful for the good that comes from working together in this way.

At the same time, the CBAC has an ongoing responsibility to provide clarity, accountability, and denominational integrity for the benefit of our churches, pastors, and partnerships. Therefore, the proposed Ministerial Professional Standards Policy on Dual Affiliation is being brought forward. This policy confirms that CBAC-credentialed pastors shall hold formal affiliation with only one Association of Churches, as defined in the policy, while also outlining a clear and fair process for requesting exceptions in limited and carefully considered circumstances.

This policy is not being introduced to restrict cooperation, diminish pastoral calling, or undermine local church autonomy. Rather, it seeks to address growing areas of confusion and inconsistency by clarifying expectations that, in many respects, are already embedded in our current practices. It seeks to help churches in the calling of pastors by helping them understand the alignments and loyalties of those they are calling as leaders.

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Clarity of Pastoral Identity and Accountability

Local churches and congregations deserve clarity regarding the denominational identity (Association of Churches), alliances, and accountability of their pastoral leadership. When a pastor holds formal affiliation, membership or credentials with more than one Association of Churches, questions can arise about where primary loyalty resides, which body's ethical standards apply, and who ultimately holds responsibility for credentialing, discipline, support and oversight.

This policy does not limit a local church's freedom to call the pastor of its choosing. Rather, it ensures that when a church calls a CBAC credentialed pastor, that pastor's denominational alignment is clear and consistent. This clarity strengthens congregational confidence and trust, particularly in areas related to pastoral ethics, theological commitments, and denominational responsibilities.

Clear alignment also allows the CBAC and the Board of Ministerial Standards and Education (BMSE) to apply ministerial standards fairly and consistently, without ambiguity about expectations or responsibility.

Consistency with Existing Practice

While this policy may feel new in its wording, the principles behind it are not new. The CBAC, through the BMSE, already does not permit new candidates for credentialing to hold dual credentials. Similarly, our current regulations state that when a CBAC ordained pastor accepts a call to serve in a church outside the CBAC, they are expected to transfer their credentials to that denomination or Association of Churches.

The proposed policy clarifies and consistently extends this existing principle to all credentialed pastors, rather than applying it only at certain stages of ministry. In doing so, it brings coherence to expectations that are already part of our CBAC shared practice.

Denominational Integrity and Theological Cohesion

The CBAC's Ministerial Professional Standards and governing core documents¹ articulate a shared statement of faith, ethical framework, and understanding of pastoral leadership. Formal dual affiliation with another Association of Churches introduces the possibility of competing or conflicting expectations around doctrine, pastoral practice, governance, and discipline.

This policy does not assume ill intent, nor does it suggest that other denominations or Associations of Churches lack faithfulness or integrity. Rather, it recognizes that each Association of Churches carries its own theological emphases, governance structures, and accountability mechanisms. Asking pastors to align formally with one Association of Churches protects the cohesion of our pastoral leadership and allows the CBAC to maintain a clear and faithful presence in churches and communities.

Affiliation and Credentials

This policy intentionally addresses both dual credentialing and dual affiliation of CBAC credentialed pastors. Holding formal membership in another denomination or Association of

¹ e.g. Basis of Union, Bylaws, Assembly Resolutions, and Ministerial Policies

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Churches raises the same concerns as holding dual credentials. In both cases, questions arise regarding accountability, oversight, and denominational loyalty for the pastor.

Formal affiliation goes beyond cooperation, partnership or mutual learning. It represents a structural and theological alignment with a second church body or denomination, one that may exercise responsibility in credentialing, discipline, marriage authorization, or pastoral leadership. When such alignment exists alongside CBAC credentialing, it can create confusion for congregations, complicate governance, and weaken the CBAC's ability to uphold its Ministerial Professional Standards with clarity and consistency.

At the same time, the CBAC continues to affirm and encourage cooperation across denominational or Association of Churches lines. Pastors are free, and often encouraged, to partner with para-church organizations, networks, and ministries that support their calling and local context. These partnerships remain fully appropriate and valued. The distinction this policy makes is not between cooperation and isolation, but between partnership and formal affiliation with another Association of Churches.

Preventing Division and Protecting Trust

The CBAC's Ministerial Professional Standards already call pastors to refrain from behaviour that may be divisive within a congregation or the CBAC (Ministerial Professional Standards 3.3.3). While dual affiliation is not inherently divisive, it can unintentionally create divided loyalties or organizational ambiguity, particularly if affiliations are not well understood or clearly communicated.

This policy serves as a preventive measure, establishing a single, clear line of accountability that protects both pastors and congregations from misunderstanding, conflict, or uncertainty.

Supporting Our Shared Mission

CBAC pastors are called not only to serve their local churches, but also to participate actively in the life and mission of their CBAC Association and the CBAC as a whole. Dual affiliation can, over time, dilute that engagement or create competing expectations around time, energy, and leadership.

Requiring singular formal affiliation strengthens unity and reinforces our shared responsibility for the mission God has entrusted to us together as Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada.

Responding to an Evolving Context

As our world becomes increasingly interconnected, pastors are becoming more mobile, and ministry networks are becoming more complex. In this evolving context, clarity around affiliation is helpful. This policy helps ensure consistency, integrity, and coherence in our ministry practices while remaining open to collaboration and ecumenical engagement.

Respecting Autonomy and Association

This policy fully respects congregational autonomy. Churches retain the freedom to call pastors, shape ministry, and discern God's leading in their local context. At the same time, the CBAC,

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through the BMSE, has a legitimate and clearly defined responsibility to set expectations for those who voluntarily seek CBAC ministerial credentials.

The policy also includes a thoughtful and pastoral exception process, recognizing that rare circumstances may warrant flexibility. These exceptions will be reviewed carefully, transparently, and periodically, ensuring alignment with CBAC identity and ongoing Kingdom value.

By adopting this Ministerial Professional Standards Policy on Dual Affiliation, the CBAC seeks to uphold accountability, theological faithfulness, and healthy pastoral relationships, while promoting unity, clarity, and trust across our family of churches and ministries.

This policy is offered as a careful clarification, shaped by experience and practice, and grounded in a desire to serve our churches and pastors well, now and into the future.

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2. Proposed Dual Affiliation Policy to be added as a new section 3.3.6 in CBAC Ministerial Professional Standards (Note: Change the current “Relationship to Community” to 3.3.7.)

The Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada (CBAC) recognizes the value of cooperation with a wide variety of ministry organizations for the purpose of advancing the Kingdom of God. CBAC Pastors are encouraged to engage in such partnerships with para-church organizations, networks, and ministries that support their local and regional church contexts.

However, for the purposes of clarity and denominational integrity, the CBAC determines that all credentialed pastors shall hold affiliation or membership with only one Association of Churches as defined below. A CBAC credentialed pastor must not simultaneously be credentialed by or formally affiliated (e.g. hold membership) with another body that meets the criteria of an Association of Churches, unless an approved exception is granted as set out below.

An **Association of Churches** is defined as an organization that demonstrates one or more of the following:

1. The authority to issue or maintain clergy credentials.
2. The authority to act as a signing body for government departments for the issuing of a marriage license.
3. The authority to discipline clergy.
4. The expectation to receive an allocation of assets from a church upon its dissolution.

Policy Application

1. Credentialed CBAC pastors found to hold dual credentials or membership with another Association of Churches could be subject to a formal complaint to the Board of Ministerial Standards and Education (BMSE).
2. Exceptions may be granted by the BMSE upon written application. The application must:
 - o Be submitted to the Executive Minister and BMSE.
 - o Include proof of alignment with CBAC's core documents (e.g., Basis of Union, Bylaws, Assembly Resolutions, and Ministerial Policies).
 - o Demonstrate how the dual affiliation is of ongoing Kingdom value to the CBAC pastor and church.
 - o Be renewed every five years or upon request by the BMSE.

This policy is intended to preserve theological alignment, pastoral accountability, and organizational consistency within the CBAC.

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3. Frequently Asked Questions

Ministerial Professional Standards Policy on Dual Affiliation

Why is this policy being introduced?

This policy is being introduced to bring clarity, consistency, and integrity to how the CBAC credentials and relates to its pastors. As ministry contexts have become more interconnected and pastors more mobile, situations of dual affiliation have become more common. While often entered into with good intentions, dual affiliation can create confusion around accountability, theological alignment, and denominational responsibility. We want to allow for healthy partnerships and interconnectedness, while providing clarity about appropriate limits so there is no confusion around denominational alliance and accountability.

This policy reflects a careful and proactive effort to clarify expectations that already exist in our regulations and long-standing practice, and to apply them consistently across our CBAC family.

Why does the policy include membership (affiliation), not just credentials?

Formal membership or affiliation with another denomination or Association of Churches raises the same core concerns as holding dual credentials.

When a pastor is formally affiliated through membership with more than one Association of Churches, it can become unclear which body holds primary accountability, which standards apply in cases of ethical concern, which denomination or Association of Churches the pastor is representing to their congregation and community, and where the pastor's primary alliances lie.

For these reasons, the policy addresses both credentials and formal affiliation, recognizing that both function as expressions of alignment and authority, with an Association of Churches.

Does this policy discourage partnership, cooperation, or Christian unity?

No. In fact, the CBAC strongly encourages partnership and cooperation across the body of Christ.

CBAC pastors are free, and often encouraged, to collaborate with: partners, para-church organizations, interdenominational networks, ecumenical initiatives, and other Christian ministries that serve their local or regional context and ecumenical support groups.

The policy makes a clear distinction between Kingdom cooperation and formal affiliation with another denomination or Association of Churches. Partnership does not require membership or credentialing in another denomination or Association of Churches. This policy affirms collaboration while maintaining clarity around formal alignment and accountability. Unity in Christ is strengthened, not weakened, when roles, responsibilities, and lines of accountability are clear.

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What should I do if I am a pastor who is currently dually affiliated?

If you currently hold dual credentials or formal affiliation (membership) with another Association of Churches, do not panic. This motion includes a clear pastoral transition process. If the policy is adopted, credentialed pastors will be given one year to bring their affiliation into alignment with the policy or apply for an exception.

As per the policy, exceptions may be granted where the Association of Churches you are affiliating with can be shown to have clear alignment with CBAC identity and demonstrated Kingdom value.

The CBAC Executive Minister and BMSE are committed to walking with pastors personally and pastorally through this process.

Are pastors being forced out of the CBAC?

No. This policy is not about removing pastors. It is about clarifying expectations for those who choose to hold CBAC credentials. The goal is alignment, not exclusion. The goal is clarifying what it means to hold CBAC credentials.

Why is the CBAC doing this now?

A few factors make this an appropriate time to clarify this standard. We see increased denominational and global mobility among pastors, which we celebrate, but it signals that it is a good time to clarify denominational and Association of Churches affiliations. In addition, there is growing complexity in credentialing, marriage authorization, and governance, so we are aiming to bring clarity to our credentialed pastors now. This policy builds on existing regulations and long-standing practice. By addressing it now, the CBAC is acting proactively, thoughtfully, and transparently.

Does this affect local church autonomy?

No. Local churches remain fully autonomous in calling a pastor. This policy applies only to CBAC credentialing, which pastors voluntarily seek and hold. It clarifies what it means to be a CBAC-credentialed pastor. It does not interfere with congregational decision-making. This ministerial standard applies to the CBAC relationship with the pastor, not the local church.

Why is this policy being placed in the Ministerial Professional Standards?

Affiliation and accountability are matters of professional and ethical responsibility. The Ministerial Professional Standards exist to protect pastors, congregations and the integrity of our family of churches together as the Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada. Placing this policy within the standards reflects its importance to pastoral identity, accountability, and trust.

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What if a church is dually affiliated, but not their pastor? Or their pastor is not credentialed with the CBAC?

This policy applies only to pastors who hold CBAC credentials. It does not apply to churches.

Congregations remain free to discern whom they call to serve as pastor, whom they invite to preach or teach, and how they engage in partnerships beyond the CBAC.

If a church is dually affiliated, or if a pastor serving in a CBAC church does not hold CBAC credentials, this policy does not apply. The policy addresses the expectations and accountability of credentialed CBAC pastors only, and respecting local church autonomy does not seek to regulate congregational decisions or relationships.

What is the heart behind this policy?

To assist our local churches, we aim to provide clarity and written guidance on expectations for credentialed pastors. We are seeking unity, not uniformity and faithfulness, not fear. The CBAC continues to believe that we are stronger when we walk together clearly, honestly, and with shared commitment to God's mission here in Atlantic Canada. This policy is one step in caring well for our pastors, churches, and future.