

HANDBOOK

District Committees on Ordained Ministry (dCOM)

**Illinois Great Rivers
Conference**

Revised October 17, 2006

**Structure of the
District Committee on
Ordained Ministry
(dCOM)**

Structure of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM)

I. Membership

- A. Election (**The 2004 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church**, ¶663)
Nominated annually by the district superintendent in consultation with the chairperson or executive committee of the conference board of ordained ministry (boom).
Approved by the annual conference.
- B. Composition of the dCOM (**2004 Book of Discipline**, ¶663)
1. A representative from the conference board of ordained ministry named by the board after consultation with the district superintendent, who may be named chairperson.
 2. The district superintendent.
 3. At least six other clergy in the district, including women and ethnic clergy;
 - i. The committee shall include elders in full connection; wherever possible
 - ii. deacons in full connection; and
 - iii. at least one elder who has completed the course of study
 4. At least three members of local churches shall be members with vote, except on matters prohibited by ¶33, Article II, in the Constitution.
- C. Number of members
The dCOM may have a membership of sixteen - twenty members.
- D. Length of term
1. Members are elected for four year terms. Attention should be given to maintaining diversity and inclusiveness.
 2. There may be four classes with four to five members in each class.
 3. Members may be elected to two terms of four years each.
- E. Vacancies
Interim vacancies may be filled by the district superintendent.

II. Officers of the dCOM and Their Duties

Each dCOM shall include the following officers and duties. Officers are elected at the first meeting following the annual conference session. (**2004 Book of Discipline** ¶663.2)

- A. Chairperson
- to ensure the members of the committee are properly trained
 - to call regular meetings of the dCOM and see that notices are sent informing each member of the time, place, and agenda
 - to be in touch with candidates/mentors regarding meetings

- to work with district registrar in planning the agenda for each meeting
- to preside over meetings or appoint a temporary chair
- to make sure the committee understands the scope of its duties and fulfills them with care
- to maintain a close liaison with the conference board of ordained ministry, the boom registrar, and other officers or committee chairpersons who must regularly share information from the dCOM
- to work with other chairpersons of district committees in the conference to ensure consistent use of procedures
- to assign a mentor to each exploring candidate (in consultation with the District Superintendent)
- the dCOM chairperson contacts and recruits the contingency mentor -- The chair sends a letter to the candidate informing him/her who will be the contingency mentor. The candidate is also informed that it is their responsibility to contact the contingency mentor to set up an appointment (taking a copy of the letter) to begin that work.
- to assign a mentor to local pastors who have not completed the Course of Study

B. Vice Chairperson

- to preside at meetings when the chairperson is unavailable
- any other duties as assigned by the chairperson

C. Recording Secretary

- to take the minutes of the meeting. They should contain the name of candidates interviewed, action/voting taken, any contingencies assigned.
- to distribute copies of the minutes to committee members and to the boom registrar
- to conduct correspondence and business necessary for the efficient functioning of the committee as directed by the chairperson.

D. Registrar

I. Candidates for Licensed or Ordained Ministry.

1. Maintain files on all candidates for licensed or ordained ministry. The **Candidate's File Checklist** will serve as the guide for minimum file contents. Continue to use this checklist if the candidate is a local pastor who is moving through the process to elder/full connection.
2. Maintain **Annual Update Forms** for all candidates.
3. Maintain **Annual Action Reports** for all candidates.
4. Receive copies of the candidate's materials at the certification, renewal of certification, local pastor, continuance of local pastor, associate membership, and probationary level, to be distributed to appropriate members of the dCOM.
5. Send out the appropriate forms to candidates when needed.
6. Make available to dCOM members the materials needed prior to meetings and candidate interviews.
7. Attend all meetings of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.

8. Send follow up letters to all candidates following any interview. The letter should contain an affirmation of their strengths and all specific information about contingencies assigned to the candidate at the interview including area/issues of concern, deadline for completing the contingency, name of contingency mentor, how to get in touch with that person, kind of report expected, and a reminder about approximate time to appear again before the committee. A copy is also sent to the candidacy mentor, dCOM chair, and district superintendent. For information to be included in the contingency report see pages 14-18. Include appropriate Report page with the letter to the contingency mentor.
9. When a candidate's application for associate membership or probationary membership is recommended by the dCOM to the conference board of ordained ministry, the registrar will send the candidate's complete file to the BOM registrar/administrative assistant. The dCOM is no longer responsible for the candidate. The dCOM registrar will keep a complete copy of all files sent to the BOM registrar/administrative assistant until notified that they have been received.
10. Maintain a list of candidates and their mentor. An updated list of certified mentors is provided by the boom registrar.
11. Maintain a candidate database for their district.

II. Licensed Local Pastor

1. Maintain the files of all licensed local pastors serving in the district. This includes full time, part time, student local pastors, and local pastors not currently under appointment. This file is a continuation of the local pastor's candidacy file with **The File Checklist** as the guide for the minimum contents.
2. The registrar receives from the local pastor annual reports on his/her progress in the Course of Study until completed. Transcripts from Course of Study will come to the BOM registrar/administrative assistant the following year by the end of February who then sends it to the dCOM registrar. When the Course of Study is completed the BOM registrar/administrative assistant may receive reports on Advanced Course of Study classes completed or any other educational studies. They will be sent to the dCOM registrar. Other reports to be received include the **Annual Update Form**.
3. Maintain list of licensed local pastors and their mentor. Local pastors will have a mentor until they have completed the Course of Study.
4. A local pastor who becomes an associate member of the annual conference no longer has a relationship with the dCOM.

III. Transfers from other denominations

1. After completing the process with the Bishop's Office transfers are interviewed by the conference board of ordained ministry and the cabinet. Clergy transferring from another denomination shall follow the same application process as any other candidate applying for local pastor or

- probationary membership.
2. The clergy person must serve at least two years as a local pastor prior to seeking probationary member relationship.
 3. They must complete all of the requirements of ¶335 before being admitted into full conference membership.

III. Executive Committee

A. Membership

The dCOM executive committee is composed of the following:

- dCOM chairperson
- vice chairperson
- district superintendent
- registrar
- secretary
- a lay person
- and other individuals as designated by the chairperson to maintain diversity.

B. Responsibilities

1. to assist the dCOM in making decisions between regular meetings of the dCOM.
2. to serve as an interim dCOM to review the work of candidates applying for local pastor, associate membership, or probationary membership who are assigned contingencies.

Main Functions of the District Committee on Ministry

Interview for Certified Candidate (§310 - 314)

I. Purpose of the Candidacy Interview

Fitness and potential effectiveness are basic to the purpose of the candidacy interview. Interest inventories, psychological assessments, and lifestyle issues are dealt with here. Exploration of the candidate's call to ministry happens in this interview. The substance of this interview provides background for reference to a person's call in later interviews. Only when **unresolved or new fitness issues** emerge, or the candidate later questions his or her calling, would it be necessary to include **fitness** as a focus at the probationary or full connection membership interviews.

- Ask about the way in which the candidate relates to God and understands the call to ordained ministry.
- Listen for how the candidate expresses his/her understanding of him/herself and how they relate to this call from God.
- Have the candidate describe their plans for continuing in the educational preparation for licensed or ordained ministry.

Candidates for certification should not be evaluated either in terms of the development of skills for ministry or of demonstrated effectiveness. **Fitness and the potential for effectiveness** are the criteria which are to be used in the certification interview.

II. Requirements:

- A. Recommendation by home church charge conference
- B. High School graduate or equivalent
- C. Member of The United Methodist Church for 2 years, with leadership given at least one year. (See §311.1a for special requirement regarding affiliate members of a local church.)
- D. Completed candidacy studies (***Candidacy Guidebook***) through Unit 18 with an authorized candidacy mentor as evidenced by a written report from the candidacy mentor.
- E. Written response to statements found in §311.3 and Personal Data Inventory
- F. Completed psychological assessment and evaluation.
- G. Completed medical report
- H. Completed background Check
- I. Interview with the dCOM.

III. Material to be Reviewed

Every committee member should have received copies of the questions, mentor's report, psychological summary, background check and Personal Data Inventory. Also provided should be the written responses providing evidence of understanding and

expectation concerning the following found in the **Candidacy Guidebook**, pages 176 - 177 letters b, c, and e.

- The most formative experiences of your Christian life;
- God's call to ordained ministry and the role of the church in your call;
- Reflect on your year's experience in leadership in the congregation;
- Your future usefulness as a minister in The United Methodist Church;
- Your personal beliefs as a Christian;
- Your personal gifts for ministry;
- How your personal relationships may affect your future ministry;
- Submit a written response providing evidence of understanding the ministry of deacon and the ministry of the elder within The United Methodist Church.
- Provide other information as may be required for determining gifts, evidence of God's grace, fruit, and demonstration of the call for the ministry of deacon or elder.

IV. Lifestyle Statement

And agree for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness of the gospel, and in consideration of their influence as ministers, to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life as set forth in ¶102 - ¶104, and ¶160 - ¶166 of **The 2004 Book of Discipline**. To this end agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and the knowledge and love of God.

*In addition, the **Book of Discipline** states, "While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. Since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, self-avowed practicing homosexuals* are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church." (¶304.3)*

**"Self-avowed practicing homosexual" is understood to mean that a person openly acknowledges to a bishop, district superintendent, district committee on ordained ministry, board of ordained ministry, or clergy session of the annual conference that the person is a practicing homosexual.*

Page 177, **Candidacy Guidebook**, 2004 edition. General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

V. Voting/Decisions for Certified Candidate

- A. There will be a written ballot with a three-fourths majority needed for approval.
- B. Possible decisions:

1. To Recommend as a certified candidate. Contingencies may be assigned. *(Candidate must complete contingencies before making application for probationary status or local pastor. **Contingency mentor's report should be sent to the candidate, district registrar, and dCOM chair.**)*

2. Not At This Time. Contingencies will be assigned. The committee would like for the candidate to do some more work before recommending for Certified Candidate. They will make specific suggestions for work and name someone with whom to do that work.
(Contingencies should be completed and reported on at the next meeting with the dCOM. [Unless given a different deadline by the dCOM]. **Contingency mentor's report should be sent to the candidate, district registrar, and dCOM chair.**)

3. Do Not Recommend. The district committee on ordained ministry does not believe that the candidate's call to licensed or ordained ministry matches the call as it is understood by the Illinois Great Rivers Conference of The United Methodist Church.
Options available to the candidate:
 - To explore their call to be a lay member of a congregation.
 - To explore their call to licensed or ordained ministry with another annual conference or denomination.
 - To wait two years and begin the process over again.

The Role of the Mentor in the Interview Process

I. For the Certification Interview

If a member of the dCOM is the mentor for a candidate to be interviewed, the mentor temporarily relinquishes the role of dCOM member. As the candidate's mentor he/she leaves the meeting as the committee prepares for the interview.

- The mentor waits with the candidate to be called into the room for the interview.
- The mentor sits silently with the candidate.
- The role is supportive, but not an advocate for the candidate.
- At the conclusion of the interview the mentor stays in the room; the candidate leaves. The mentor is therefore available to answer questions.
- The mentor does not vote.
- The mentor should be available later to talk with the candidate and answer the candidate's questions but not interpret the committee's decision.
- The mentor brings to the meeting the **dCOM Approval Report for Certified Candidate for Ordained Ministry (Form 113)** to be filled out at the conclusion of the vote and signed.

Staff and family members of the candidate should excuse themselves from the room, interview, discussion, and voting.

II. For all other interviews (renewal of certification, local pastor, renewal of local pastor, associate membership, and probationary membership).

Mentor, staff members, family members of the candidate should excuse themselves from the room, interview, discussion, and voting. Also if this person is your pastor.

Interview for Renewal as a Candidate

I. Purpose of the Candidacy Renewal Interview

Fitness and potential effectiveness continue to be the purpose of this interview.

- Have the candidate again explain their call to ministry and how God's call to ministry continues to be reinforced and supported
- Review their educational progress
- Review how they are functioning in ministry at the present time
- Have the candidate again share with the interview team his/her ministry goals

The dCOM must renew the certified candidacy status of each candidate annually (§312) or the candidate is automatically decertified (§313.1). The candidate may be reinstated by the dCOM in which they were discontinued (§313.2).

II. Requirements:

- A. Annual recommendation of the candidate's home church charge conference.
- B. Evidence that the candidate's gifts, graces, and fruits continue to be satisfactory (dCOM interview, **Annual Action Report, Annual Update Form**, etc.). **Annual Update Form** filled out by candidate and signed by candidate and mentor.
- C. Evidence that the candidate is making satisfactory progress in the required studies.
 - Candidate preparing for probationary membership shall present annually to the dCOM a transcript from their college or school
 - In fulfillment of the educational requirements a candidate preparing for local pastor will attend and complete licensing school for pastoral ministry and/or present a transcript of their COS/COS Extension School coursework

III. Material to be Reviewed

Every member of the dCOM should receive a copy of the **Annual Update Form**.

IV. Voting/Decisions for Renewal of Certified Candidate

- A. There will be a written ballot with a three-fourths majority needed for approval.
- B. Possible decisions:
 1. To Recommend. Contingencies may be assigned. **(Contingency mentor's report should be sent to the candidate, district registrar, dCOM chair. All previous contingencies must be completed before applying for local pastor or probationary membership.)**

2. Not to Renew Candidacy. (§313, ***Book of Discipline***) The district committee on ordained ministry does not believe that the candidate's call to licensed or ordained ministry matches the call as it is understood by the Illinois Great Rivers Conference of The United Methodist Church or the candidate has failed to complete previously assigned contingencies.

Options available to the candidate:

- To explore their call to be a lay member of a congregation.
- To explore their call to licensed or ordained ministry with another annual conference or denomination.
- To wait two years and begin the process over again.

Annual Candidate Update Form

Interview for License as a Local Pastor (§315 - 320)

I. Purpose of this interview

To determine the candidate's **fitness and readiness** for licensing for pastoral ministry. Local pastors are persons not ordained as elders who are appointed to preach and conduct divine worship and perform the duties of a pastor.

II. Requirements

- A. High school graduate or equivalent
- B. Certification as a Candidate for Ministry
- C. Completed Licensing School for Pastoral Ministry

III. Work to Be Reviewed.

- A. All written work has been reviewed by the appropriate review team, areas of interest/concern are noted in preparation for questions/discussion in the interview.
- B. Every dCOM member shall have a copy of the **Personal Data Inventory** and **psychological assessment summary**.
- C. Also to be reviewed: **medical report, background check, Disclosure Form** by registrar of dCOM.
- D. Transcripts, reports of mentor.

IV. Voting/Decisions for Licenced Local Pastor

- A. There will be a written ballot with a two thirds majority needed for approval.
- B. Possible decisions:
 1. To Recommend to the clergy session they be a local pastor. All previous contingencies must be completed.
 2. Not At This Time. The committee would like for the candidate to do some more work before recommending for local pastor. They will make specific suggestions for work and name someone with whom to do that work.
(Contingencies should be completed and reported on at the next meeting with the dCOM. [Unless given a different deadline by the dCOM].
Contingency mentor's report should be sent to the candidate, district registrar, and dCOM chair.)
 3. Do Not Recommend. The district committee on ordained ministry does not believe that the candidate's call to licensed or ordained ministry matches the call as it is understood by the Illinois Great Rivers Conference of The United Methodist Church. The candidate is discontinued as a Certified Candidate.
Options available to the candidate:
 - To explore their call to be a lay member of a congregation.
 - To explore their call to ordained or licensed

ministry with another annual conference or denomination.

- To wait two years and begin the process over again.

If the dCOM votes Not At This Time for a candidate applying for local pastor there will be contingencies assigned and a mentor(s) to work with the candidate in those areas. The dCOM will continue to check on the progress made in completing the contingencies as the candidate continues to meet annually for renewal of certification.

The Local Pastor

Local pastors are persons not ordained as elders who are appointed to preach and conduct divine worship and perform the duties of a pastor.

Because of the licensing, appointive process, and three categories of local pastor there are some key understandings we often stumble over.

A certified candidate for ordained ministry may apply at anytime for the local pastor status. The candidate requests the application for local pastor from the dCOM Registrar. There are four areas of work/competence to be demonstrated: theology, leadership, personal growth, and proclamation. The district committee should look for an actively growing Christian who participates in the life of the church attending Bible study opportunities and other study settings that give them exposure to new ideas and groups with whom to talk and articulate their faith. Most will lack any experience in preaching.

When the dCOM votes to recommend a candidate be approved for local pastor they must attend the Licensing School before the clergy session of the annual conference can vote to approve their status as local pastor. Licensing School is held for two weeks in mid-July each year at Illinois Wesleyan University. To obtain an application contact Dr. Dennis Powers (101 E. Watson St., PO Box 267, Forrest, IL 61741-0267, 815-657-8638, forrestumc@route24.net) or go to the License School website for more information www.license2preach.net). The Southeastern Jurisdiction also offers a licensing school in Spanish through Candler School of Theology.

When the candidate has attended the Licensing School, been approved by the clergy session of the annual conference, and has an appointment they will be Licensed for Pastoral Ministry. When there is no appointment for the local pastor they do not have a license. Technically full time local pastors not under appointment are not able to attend Course of Study, unless a dCOM specifically makes this a requirement of their continued/possible appointability.

All full time local pastors who have an appointment are eligible to enroll in and attend the Course of Study. All part time local pastors, whether under appointment or not, are eligible to enroll in and attend the Illinois Great Rivers Course of Study Extension School. Information about this school may be obtained by contacting Rev. Howard Sallee (Route 106 East, PO Box 224, Hull, IL 62343-0224, 217-432-1901, hwsallee@adams.net). There is a time limit for completing the Course of Study (eight years for local pastors in a full time appointment and twelve years for local pastors in a part time appointment). The time constraints do not begin until the local pastor has an active license serving in an appointment.

Local pastors will be assigned a mentor by the dCOM that they will work with until they complete the Course of Study. They will be asked to fill out a **Candidate Update Form** and have a yearly interview with the dCOM to continue their status as local pastor. They may be assigned contingencies.

Local pastors who have completed the Course of Study will meet annually with dCOM (probably as a group) for fellowship and to see if there are concerns. The local pastor may request an interview with the dCOM. The dCOM chair and district superintendent may require an interview with the dCOM if they deem it necessary.

Student Local Pastor

There are occasions when a student enrolled in school is needed to serve an appointment. The following procedure will be followed in order for the student to receive the status of Student Local Pastor.

If the person is a

1. certified candidate meeting all requirements of ¶315,
2. has attended and successfully completed the Licensing School,
3. is enrolled in a University Senate approved school (undergraduate or seminary)
4. is recommended by the district superintendent,

Student local pastors must be enrolled in the Ministerial Pension Plan. The student local pastor is not eligible for the Comprehensive Protection Plan or the conference health insurance program in that a student local pastor appointment is a part-time appointment.

Licensing School for Pastoral Ministry

These studies are the first exposure for most candidates to the practice of ministry. Public worship, preaching, history and theology, pastoral care for spiritual formation, organization of a parish for nurture and mission, and educational ministries in the church are the major areas of concern covered in the eighty hour school. The candidate must be approved by the dCOM for licensing as a local pastor and be a certified candidate. The candidate must attend the School before being approved by the clergy session of the annual conference and being appointed as a local pastor.

Course of Study

It is a basic theological education program, designed and overseen by the Division of Ordained Ministry of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, provided for those who are licensed as local pastors (full time or part time) who are unable to attend an approved seminary. Participants in the program should have completed candidacy for ordained ministry, the studies for license as a local pastor, and have been approved/recommended for license by the dCOM and conference board of ordained ministry.

Course of Study Extension School

It is a condensed version of the basic theological education program, designed and overseen by the Division of Ordained Ministry of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. This weekend school experience is made available to part time local pastors whose secular employment or life situation prevents them from attending the regional Course of Study School. Only with approval from the dCOM and the Director of the Extension School can a full time local pastor attend. Participants in the program should have completed candidacy for ordained ministry, the studies for license as a local pastor, and have been approved/recommended for license by the dCOM and conference board of ordained ministry.

Interview for Local Pastor Continuance (§319)

Local Pastors who have not completed the Course of Study will be assigned a mentor until the completion of the Course of Study. They will have an annual personal interview with the dCOM. They will complete annual the **Annual Candidate Update Form**.

For **Local Pastors who have completed the Course of Study** a formal interview is not required. It is recommended that the committee have an informal fellowship time (breakfast/lunch) for these folks with an opportunity to thank them for the work they do and an opportunity for the local pastors to lift up any concerns that they have. **A personal interview with the dCOM may be requested by the local pastor. An interview may be required if deemed necessary by the district superintendent and the dCOM chairperson.**

I. Requirements:

- A. Evidence of satisfactory progress in the Course of Study, COS Extension School, in college, or in seminary (§319) until they have completed Course of Study (in eight years for full time local pastors and in twelve years for part-time local pastors, §319.3).
- B. Annual evaluation of the Staff Parish Relations Committee (optional) or pastor's report to the charge conference.
- C. Recommendation of the district superintendent.

II. Material to be reviewed.

Everyone should receive **Local Pastor Annual Update Form**.

III. Voting/Decisions

- A. To continue as a local pastor (§319). A vote to continue may carry contingencies.
- B. To discontinue as a Local Pastor (§320). The district committee on ordained ministry does not believe that the candidate's call to licensed or ordained ministry matches the call as it is understood by the Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church.
 - Options available to the candidate:
 - To explore their call to be a lay member of a congregation.
 - To explore their call to ordained or licensed ministry with another annual conference or denomination.
 - To wait two years and begin the process over again.

Interview for Associate Membership (¶321 - 323)

I. Purpose of the Interview

Determination of **readiness** for commissioning to full-time ministry. Associate members of the annual conference are in the itinerant ministry of the Church and are available on a continuing basis for appointment by the bishop. They offer themselves without reserve to be appointed (and to serve as their superiors in office shall direct). They shall be amenable to the annual conference in the performance of their ministry and shall be granted the same security of appointment as probationary members and members in full connection.

II. Requirements

- A. Reached age forty
- B. Served four years as full-time local pastor
- C. Completed the five-year Course of Study for ordained ministry in addition to the studies for license as a local pastor
- D. Completed a minimum of sixty semester hours toward the Bachelor of Arts or an equivalent degree in a college or university listed by the University Senate
- E. Been recommended by the dCOM and the conference board of ordained ministry
- F. Declared their willingness to accept continuing full-time appointment
- G. Satisfied the board regarding their physical, mental, and emotional health
- H. For the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness to the Christian gospel, and in consideration of his/her influence as a clergy member of the annual conference, be willing to make a complete dedication of himself/herself to the highest ideals of the Christian life; and to this end agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and the knowledge and love of God

III. Work to Be Reviewed

- A. Written work for the dCOM that include at least these areas: theology, leadership, personal growth, proclamation. All work has been reviewed by the appropriate review team, areas of interest/concern are noted in preparation for questions/discussion in the interview.
- B. Also to be reviewed and in the file: **a background check, psychological assessment summary, yearly Disclosure Forms, Annual Candidate Updates and Annual Action Reports** by registrar of dCOM.
- C. Transcripts, reports of contingency mentors.

IV. Voting/Decisions for Associate Membership

- A. There will be a written ballot with a three-fourths majority needed for approval. The ballots are to be attached to the Interview Team Report.
- B. Possible decisions:
 - 1. To Recommend to the conference board of ordained ministry. All previous contingencies must be completed.
 - 2. Not At This Time. There will be contingencies assigned. The work is not ready for the conference board. Contingencies are assigned including a mentor. **Contingency mentor's report should be sent to the candidate, district registrar, and dCOM chair.**
 - 3. Do Not Recommend. The candidate continues as a local pastor.

If the conference board votes NATT for a local pastor applying for associate membership there will be contingencies assigned and a mentor(s) to work with the local pastor in those areas. The dCOM monitor the local pastor's work and process and will be check on the progress made in completing the contingencies at the annual meeting with the dCOM for renewal of local pastor status.

Interview for Probationary Membership (§324 - 327)

I. Purpose of the Interview - Readiness for Ministry

Determination of **readiness** for commissioning to full-time ministry is the purpose of a probationary interview following candidacy.

Areas of developing competency are noted. Attention should be given to the applicant's academic background, theological statement, and seminary reports on field education experiences or internships which indicate readiness for ministry. Although the development of skills for the performance of ordained ministry will be an ongoing concern for the candidate and church, persons applying for probationary membership should be evaluated on the basis of whether or not they are fit for ordained ministry and are developing the skills to be effective.

II. Requirements

- A. Minimum of 1 year certification previous to probationary membership.
- B. Each candidate shall have demonstrated his or her gifts for ministries of service and leadership to the satisfaction of the dCOM.
- C. Completion of a bachelor's degree from a college or university recognized by the University Senate. See §324.3 for exceptions.
- D. Completed a minimum of twenty four semester hours of graduate theological studies in the Christian faith including Old Testament; New Testament; theology; church history; mission of the church in the world; evangelism; worship/liturgy; and United Methodist doctrine, polity and history. These courses may be included within or in addition to a seminary degree.
- E. A candidate for ordination as an elder shall have completed one half of the studies toward a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent, including one half of the basic graduate theological studies from a seminary listed by University Senate.
- F. A candidate for ordination as a deacon shall have:
 - 1. Completed one half of the studies of a master's degree from a United Methodist seminary or one listed by the University Senate,
 - OR
 - 2. Received a master's degree in the area of the specialized ministry in which the candidate will serve, and completed one half of the basic graduate theological studies, in a context which will provide formation as a United Methodist deacon in full connection within a cohesive program developed by the seminary and approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, documented by a record of completion from that school
- G. For candidates on the deacon track following professional certification alternate route see §324.5.

- H. For local pastors fulfilling requirements for probationary membership see ¶324.6.

III. Work to Be Reviewed

- A. Written work for the dCOM that include at least these areas: theology, leadership, personal growth, proclamation. All work has been reviewed by the appropriate review team, areas of interest/concern are noted in preparation for questions/discussion in the interview.
- B. Also to be reviewed and in the file: **a background check, psychological assessment summary, yearly Disclosure Forms, Annual Candidate Updates and Annual Action Reports** by registrar of dCOM.
- C. Transcripts, reports of contingency mentors.

IV. Voting/Decisions for Probationary Membership

- A. There will be a written ballot with a three-fourths majority needed for approval. The ballots are to be attached to the Interview Team Report.
- B. Possible decisions:
1. To Recommend to the conference board of ordained ministry. All previous contingencies must be completed.
 2. Not At This Time. There will be contingencies assigned. The work is not ready for the conference board. Contingencies are assigned including a mentor. **Contingency mentor's report should be sent to the candidate, district registrar, and dCOM chair.**

If the candidate is on the elder track is the dCOM willing to recommend this person to the conference board for licensing as a local pastor.

3. Do Not Recommend (discontinued). The district committee on ordained ministry does not believe that the candidate's call to licensed or ordained ministry matches the call as it is understood by the Illinois Great Rivers Conference of The United Methodist Church or they have failed to complete previously agreed upon contingencies.

Options available to the candidate:

- To explore their call to be a lay member of a congregation.
- To explore their call to ordained or licensed ministry with another annual conference or denomination.
- To wait two years and begin the process over again.

If the conference board votes Not At This Time for a candidate applying for probationary membership there will be contingencies assigned and a mentor(s) to work with the candidate in those areas. The dCOM will monitor the candidate's work and process and

will check on progress made in completing the contingencies as the candidate returns for renewal of certification or continuance as a local pastor.

If the conference board votes Not At This Time for a candidate that applied for probationary elder the board may confer local pastor status. The candidate will continue to meet annually with the dCOM for continuance of local pastor status. This relationship continues until the conference board recommends the candidate for probationary membership and commissioning.

Contingency

A contingency is additional work or an experience assigned to a candidate by the district committee on ordained ministry or the conference board on ordained ministry. The contingency may be assigned to strengthen the work of the candidate or help them prepare for the next step in this ministry process. Contingencies will also be assigned when the quality of the work presented to the dCOM or conference board does not meet the expectations of those bodies.

The candidate will receive a letter from the body assigning the contingency. There will be details about the kind of contingency, areas of concern and issues to be focused on, number of sessions or meetings. In most cases the assigning body will also assign a contingency mentor. In some cases a contingency may not require a mentor but will require a self report written by the candidate.

When a contingency mentor is assigned the mentor will direct the work as assigned by the body requiring the work. The contingency may require a one on one directed study or a meeting with several folks. Other kinds of contingencies may include an additional Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) experience, theology weekend, preaching seminar, previewing a video (or series), speech class, assignment of a particular class before graduation from seminary, counseling either one on one or in a group setting, AA, ACOA, or any number of other options.

Completed contingencies will require either a written report from the contingency mentor or written self report from the candidate directed to the body that assigned the report.

If a contingency is assigned by the dCOM the contingency mentor's report or self report and copies of it should be sent to the candidate, registrar and chair person of the dCOM making the assignment. A copy of the report should be placed in the candidate's file. The contingency should be completed before appearing before the dCOM again, unless the committee has given a different deadline (i.e., before completing seminary). All contingencies must be complete before applying for local pastor or probationary membership.

Report of the Contingency Mentor

Here is the information that the dCOM wants in the report from the contingency mentor:

1. Was the candidate fully engaged in the process?
2. Did the candidate claim ownership of the issues outlined?
3. What evidence was there that the candidate made progress in the areas of concern?
Why or why not?
4. What issues are left to be addressed?
Are these unfinished or new issues uncovered in this process?
5. How (what methods) were the issues addressed? Describe the content/structure/reading/video

Self Report of the Candidate

When a candidate is assigned a self report of contingency work it should contain the following information:

1. How and when did you do the work?
2. Reflect on how that experience at the time and now relates to the areas of concern noted by the dCOM or conference board.
3. What's different now? Where have you grown in relation to the areas of concern lifted up? What has been the result of having done this work.

Key Words to Know

Key Words to Know

1. Associate Member (§321 - §323.)

Conference relationship available to persons who have reached forty years of age, have served as full time local pastors at least four years, completed the five year Course of Study, studies for license as a local pastor, completed a minimum of sixty semester hours toward the Bachelor of Arts or an equivalent degree in a college or university listed by the University Senate. They must also be recommend by the dCOM and the conference board of ordained ministry, declared their willingness to accept continuing full-time appointment and satisfied the conference regarding their physical, mental, and emotional health.

Associate members who meet all of the provisions of §322.4 and §324.6 may apply to the Conference Board for Full Membership.

2. Candidacy Mentor

A deacon or elder in full connection or local pastor who has completed the Course of Study assigned by the dCOM to an Exploring Candidate to support and guide them through ***The Candidacy Guidebook*** and candidacy process and until the candidate is approved for local pastor or elected to probationary membership.

3. Professional Certification (certified)

The church's recognition that an individual has met the required standards for academic training, experience, and continuing study necessary to achieve and maintain professional excellence in a particular area of ministry such as Christian education, music, youth ministry, evangelism, camp/retreat ministry, spiritual formation, older adult ministry, or church business administrator

4. Candidacy Certification (certified candidate) (§310 - 314)

Candidacy phase when requirements for Inquiring and Exploring Candidate have been met.

5. Commissioning (commissioned minister) (§316, 317)

The credentialing of probationary deacons and elders. The act of the church that publicly acknowledges God's call and response, talents, gifts and training of the candidate. The church invokes the Holy Spirit as the candidate is commissioned to be a faithful servant leader among the people, to lead the church in service, to proclaim the Word of God and to equip others for ministry

6. Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM)

The body responsible for credentialing probationary/commissioned ministers, local pastors, and full connection deacons and elders.

7. Course of Study

The basic theological education program of the Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. It is provided for those who are licensed as local pastors who are unable to attend an approved seminary. Participants in the program should have completed candidacy for ordained ministry, the studies for license as a local pastor, and have been approved/recommended for license by the dCOM and conference board of ordained ministry.

The approved COS Schools for the Illinois Great Rivers Conference are Garrett Evangelical Seminary and St. Paul's School of Theological Studies. A candidate must receive BOM approval to attend a COS School other than these two.

8. Deacon (§328 - 331)

Persons called by God, authorized by the Church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of Word and Service to both the community and the congregation.

9. Diaconal Minister

Persons called to specialized ministries of service, justice, and love within local congregations and in the wider world. Their focus of service is through a variety of ministries, such as administration, education, evangelism, music, health ministries and community development - to the local congregation and the wider community. Diaconal Ministers are lay persons. No new candidates have been accepted since 1/1/97. This category has been superceded by the ordained deacon.

10. District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM)

The body that oversees, cares for, and evaluates candidates for ministry through the Inquiry, Exploring and Certified Candidate phases. Also responsible for maintaining a relationship with local pastors.

11. Elder (§332 - 336)

Persons who are ordained to a lifetime ministry of Service, Word, Sacrament, and Order; authorized to preach and teach the Word of God, to administer the

sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, and to order the life of the Church for mission and ministry.

12. Exploring Candidate

The second step or phase in the candidacy process for ordained deacon, elder, or local pastor. A mentor is assigned. The candidate and mentor work through the *Candidacy Guidebook* and the candidate's continued discernment of their call to ministry.

13. Full Connection

The relationship of ordained deacons and elders to the Annual Conference. They have completed the process for ordination, including educational requirements, and been elected to full membership in the annual conference.

14. Inquiring Candidate

The first step in the candidacy process for ordained deacon, elder, or local pastor. The candidate's home church minister works with the candidate in reading and discussing *The Christian as Ministers* and helps the candidate clarify and understand their calling from God..

15. License for Pastoral Ministry (§§315 - 320)

Credential given to a local pastor when he or she is appointed as pastor of a local church.

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16. Licensing School for Pastoral Ministry

These studies are the first exposure for most candidates to the practice of ministry. Public worship, preaching, history and theology, pastoral care for spiritual formation, organization of a parish for nurture and mission, and educational ministries in the church are the major areas of concern covered in the eighty hour school. The candidate must be approved by the dCOM for licensing as a local pastor before attending Licensing School. The candidate must attend the School before being approved by the clergy session of the annual conference and being appointed as a local pastor.

17. Local Pastor

Persons who are licensed and appointed to preach, conduct divine worship, and perform the duties of a pastor but are not ordained as elders.

18. Ordination (ordained)

The church affirms and continues the apostolic ministry through persons empowered by the Holy Spirit.

19. Probationary Membership (§324 - 327)

Conference relationship of commissioned ministers (deacons and elders) who are on trial in preparation for membership in full connection in the annual conference as deacons and elders. During that three year period they are Residents in Ministry under the care of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and participants in the RIM program.

Probationary members may vote at annual conference on all matters except constitutional amendments, election of General/Jurisdictional delegates, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.

20. Residents in Ministry (RIM)

The Illinois Great Rivers Conference three year program for probationary/commissioned ministers.

The Role of the Minister in the Candidacy Process

The Role of the Minister in the Candidacy Process

I. Inquiring Candidate

1. Any deacon, elder, or local pastor who has completed the Course of Study may be the guide for this stage - Inquiring Candidate. However, it would really be helpful for the candidate's minister to be the guide. You know this person best and will best be able to facilitate the study and help with a decision.
2. Work through ***The Christian as Minister*** book with persons exploring their call to ministry. It may take several months to complete this reading and discussion. Chapter two is very important. The purpose of the reading, discussion, and interviews in this book and time together is to explore all forms of ministry. The purpose is not to convince every person exploring a call to service/ministry that ordained ministry or the elder track is the only option.

Chapter four offers guidelines for the minister and chapter five for the staff parish relations committee.

3. This book is required reading and study before moving to the next step.
4. The purpose of this time is not to convince every person exploring a call to service/ministry that ordained ministry or the elder track is the only option. It's okay if the candidate decides that there are really a lot of great opportunities for me for ministry that do not call for ordination. We need great, called, committed lay people in the local church to do the work of ministry.
5. If the decision is to pursue the local pastor or ordination track do not contact the Board of Ordained Ministry Registrar. The next step is for the candidate to write the district superintendent and request an appointment to get acquainted, talk about the candidate's call to ministry, and make arrangements for the background check. At this point your job is finished. A mentor will be assigned by the chair of the district committee on ordained ministry.

II. Exploring Candidate

1. Interview with the Staff Parish Relations Committee.
 - i. When the candidate has completed unit 18 in the ***Candidacy Guidebook*** he/she will be preparing for an interview with the local church staff parish relations committee and a recommendation from the charge conference. The candidate will talk with you about setting up a time for this staff parish relations committee interview.
 - ii. It would be helpful to work with the staff parish relations committee on chapter five of ***The Christian as Minister*** book prior to the interview. They need time to digest the questions and prepare for the

interview. Chapter five contains questions and the kind of information that the committee should be looking for in interviewing the candidate. This is not a rubber stamp interview. The time together should be taken seriously. The candidate has spent months preparing for this time and exploring his or her call.

- iii. The issue for the committee is **fitness for ministry**. The committee should solicit comments and responses from members regarding fitness for ministry. Is this a person that you would welcome as the minister of your church?
 - iv. This is the first opportunity for the candidate to be examined regarding fitness for ministry. The committee may decide that this person is more suited to be a lay person. That's okay. It is better to reach this decision now. It is not helpful for the candidate to be passed onto the charge conference (and then to the district committee) when your committee clearly has questions about the candidate's fitness for ministry.
 - v. At the conclusion of the interview the committee will decide whether to recommend the candidate to the charge conference. If the committee decides not to recommend, someone needs to be ready to share the decision and discussion with the candidate. Information and help for redirecting the candidate's call should be made available.
2. Charge Conference Interview/Recommendation
- i. Make arrangements with the district superintendent to hold a charge conference at a time that is convenient for him or her.
 - ii. Suggestions for the content of this interview are also found in Chapter five of ***The Christian as Minister*** and ¶310 of ***The 2004 Book of Discipline***. The charge conference will vote to recommend or not to recommend this person to the district committee on ordained ministry. This recommendation requires a written ballot and approval of 2/3's of those present at the charge conference. (¶311.2b).
 - iii. Hopefully this will be a time of celebration and recognition for the candidate and the work he or she has done.

III. Paperwork

Following the charge conference meeting and voting you will need to complete **The United Methodist Church Recommendation or Renewal for Candidacy for Ordained Ministry Studies**. Form 1 or the first page must be completed and signed by the presiding Elder, District Superintendent or Bishop. The candidate completes the second personal information page. The candidate is responsible for sending it to the Registrar of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.

IV. Renewal

The staff parish relations committee and charge conference must annually recommend renewal of the candidate's status.

Role of the Staff Parish Relations Committee

Role of the Staff Parish Relations Committee

The local church staff parish relations committee shares with the minister the responsibility for enlistment, guidance, and support of candidates for ordained ministry as well as other forms of ministry. See the 2004 Book of Discipline ¶247.8 and ¶259.9. *The Christian as Minister* is another helpful resource for this committee.

“There are some whom God calls for ordained ministry from the people of the church. The SPRC is charged with the responsibility of discerning those whom God has called to represent Christ’s ministry in the name of the church. This discernment is done with prayer and under guidance of the Holy Spirit. The SPRC has responsibility for the recruitment of persons who evidence God’s claim upon them for ordained ministry, the examination of candidates for their calls from God and the evidence of gifts, and the recommendation of these candidates to the charge conference. When the charge conference votes to recommend a candidate for ordained ministry, the congregation assumes care and support of the candidate through the years of preparation for ministry. The care and support may include continued prayer by individuals and during services of worship, cards and care packages during years of education, opportunities for worship leadership, financial support, and other forms of encouragement.” (2000 Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation: Pastor-Parish Relations, page 33).

When someone presents himself/herself to the minister as seeking certification as a candidate for ordained ministry this committee has the first opportunity to meet with the candidate and plays a significant role in the furthering of this person’s call to ministry. It is the responsibility of this committee to interview the candidate, examining a call to ministry, and decide whether to recommend the candidate to the charge conference. The candidate has already been meeting with a mentor assigned by the district committee on ordained ministry for at least a year and working through *The Candidacy Guidebook*.

Chapter five of *The Christian as Minister* gives suggestions for preparing for the interview and the kind of questions and information that the committee should be looking for. This is a crucial first step for the candidate and for the church. This should not be a perfunctory, rubber stamp interview. The church needs persons for ordained ministry who are truly called by God for ordained ministry. At this stage in the candidate’s journey we are not looking for great theological answers but for a sense of being called by God and a sense of the person’s fitness/readiness for ministry. Is this a person that I would like to have as the pastor of my church? The committee may consider making this the only item on their agenda or to devote a large block of time to the purpose of interviewing the candidate.

Using the suggestions from the *Book of Discipline*, ¶310 and ¶311.2a and *The Christian as Minister* the committee is seeking to discern the candidate’s fitness/readiness for

ministry. The committee should prepare itself ahead of time by reading and studying the questions. They should also seek responses and recommendations from the congregation regarding the candidate.

At the conclusion of the interview the committee will need to vote either to recommend or not recommend this person to the charge conference. If strong concerns or issues are raised about the candidate's fitness for ministry seek further clarification or decide that perhaps this person is better suited to be a lay person in the local church. The committee may vote not to recommend this person. If so, there are important issues of confidentiality that need to be observed as well as support to be given to the candidate.

If the committee votes to recommend this person to the charge conference the minister will make arrangements for that date. The chairperson and minister may want to work together in planning this meeting. Suggestions are found in *The Christian as Minister*. A charge conference that has only this agenda item can be a time of great celebration and focus on the candidate, on God's call, and the ministry, work, and support of the congregation. The form **The United Methodist Church Recommendation or Renewal for Candidacy for Ordained Ministry Studies** is used to report certification.

If the district committee on ordained ministry votes to certify the candidate there will be an annual renewal of this certification by both the staff parish committee and the district committee on ordained ministry. The staff parish committee is responsible for annual review and recommendation to the charge conference.

Behavioral Health Guidelines for Boards of Ministry

Behavioral Health Guidelines for Boards of Ministry

In the process of selecting candidates for ministry District Committees on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) and Boards of Ordained Ministry (BOM) must discern each potential candidate's "gifts, evidence of God's grace, and usefulness" (Paras. 301.2 and 663.8, see also Para 605.6, 2004 Discipline). The constant pastoral concern for both the Church and candidates is to maximize effectiveness in ministry (on the positive end of the continuum) and minimize ineffectiveness and harm to all involved, both now and in the future.

These mental and behavior health guidelines seek to describe the boundaries of healthy functioning, beyond which distortions of health become serious problems for the church and its ministry as well as for the person involved. The central question is how experiences impact a person's inner being or spirit and how a person's inmost spirit transforms behavior patterns (I Cor. 13, Romans 12). Concern about a person's mental and emotional status and behavioral patterns, including mental processing, emotional states, identity, personal boundaries, and responses to stress, are part of our pastoral concern in selecting candidates.

Since our ministries are treasures of God in earthen vessels (2 Cor 4:7), we seek to discern how human vessels can be refined and strengthened in order to be more durable and useful in the ministry of Christ in the world. Where negatives exist, can they be sufficiently healed and transformed with the available resources to enable a candidate to incarnate love in ministry? Where positives exist, can they be used to strengthen trust, enable safety, and express grace and love in relationships without giving in to temptations and distortions?

To address these concerns, the Division of Ordained Ministry's Advisory Committee on Psychological Assessment offers the following *Behavioral Health Guidelines* as a resource in candidacy selection. **As the title suggests, these are general guidelines rather than hard-and-fast regulations.** They relate to behavioral health issues, broadly defined, that our Committee believes are critical to effectiveness in ministry and the avoidance of misconduct. Our primary purposes in this effort:

- to guide and advise dCOMs and BOMs
- to assist BOMs in establishing their own standards
- to provide a vehicle for BOMs to raise questions about standards
- to flag areas of concern

Our Committee proposes standards in the categories listed below, along with brief rationales explaining our sense of their importance. Most candidates will meet these standards immediately, but some may evidence critical behaviors or conditions that would require further exploration. Questions are provided to facilitate this exploration. If the results continue to raise concerns, the Board or Committee may need to take some action, such as postponement of the candidacy process (for further exploration or remediation) or, in serious cases, permanent disqualification. Each recommendation or guideline requires interpretation on a case-by-case basis.

The Advisory Committee on Psychological Assessment welcomes feedback regarding these guidelines. Address correspondence to: Candidacy Assessment Office, Division of Ordained Ministry, P. O. Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007.

Behavioral health Guidelines for Boards of Ordained Ministry Page 2 of 2

Definitions:

Category: A general area of concern.

Standard: A minimum requirement necessary to address the area of concern.

Rationale: An explanation of the standard.

Critical Behavior: A specific behavior or condition that indicates the standard has not been met.

Exploratory Question: A recommended question which may assist in assessing whether a critical behavior does indeed violate the standard.

Recommendation: A decision recommended when exploratory questions indicate that a standard is not met.

Category: Physical Health

Standard: The candidate demonstrates no obvious physical health concerns.

Rationale:

Neglect of physical health is known to impair function in pervasive ways. Responsible preventive health care maximizes the functional abilities of the individual and minimizes the health care costs to the annual conference.

The physical health concerns listed below may have a strong psychological component, and may reflect psychological disorders.

Critical behaviors: (considered in cultural context)

Morbid obesity (Body weight 100 lbs or more above maximum ideal weight)

Markedly underweight (body weight at least 15% or more below the candidate's healthy minimum weight)

An un-treated, chronic, medical condition such as hypertension, diabetes, etc.

Non-compliance with prescribed medical treatment for any condition

Exploratory Questions:

How do you evaluate your overall physical health?

What steps do you take to care for your physical health?

When was your last medical checkup?

Do you have any current or chronic health problems?

If so, what steps are you taking to care for yourself?

How does your physical health impact your ability to be an effective minister?

Recommendations:

Candidates should be able to articulate their plans for physical health care. Candidates with medical problems should demonstrate medical consultation and cooperation with treatment plans.

Category: Management of personal finances

Standard: The candidate is not in debt so as to embarrass the Church.

Rationale:

While this may not, on the surface, seem to be a behavioral health issue, personal financial management has to do with general maturity, including the ability to set priorities, maintain discipline and delay gratification. Difficulties in this area raise concerns about judgment and impulse control.

Critical behaviors:

The candidate has been reported to a credit bureau for nonpayment.

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The candidate has a history of a personal bankruptcy.

The candidate has had money judgments filed against him/her.

Exploratory Questions:

Describe the history (sequence) of your difficulties.

Are there extenuating circumstances? (Possible mitigating circumstances: major medical expenses, divorce. NOTE: Business failures and unemployment are not necessarily mitigating conditions, but require further exploration.)

Recommendation:

If the candidate has a history of having been reported to the credit bureau, then three years of a good credit history is recommended. If the candidate has a history of a personal bankruptcy, then five years of good credit is recommended. If the candidate has a history of money judgments, then it is recommended that the judgments be satisfied prior to continuance.

Category: Mental Illness

Standard: The candidate has no current or recurring disqualifying psychological impairment.

Critical behaviors:

The candidate has received a diagnosis of bipolar disorder, schizophrenia or any other psychotic disorder.

The candidate has received a diagnosis of a personality disorder.

The candidate has been hospitalized for psychiatric treatment.

The candidate has been prescribed psychiatric medications (including antidepressants and anxiolytics)

The candidate has attempted suicide.

Exploratory Questions:

Describe the history (sequence) of your treatment for your difficulties.

What specific potential vulnerabilities do these difficulties create for your ministry, and how do you see yourself protecting both yourself and the people you would serve?

Would you be willing to authorize communication between those who have treated you and this committee?

Recommendation:

The more severe the psychiatric impairment, the more important the need for direct consultation with the treating mental health practitioners. The Board may wish to bring in its own mental health consultants in order to evaluate the candidate's situation.

The candidate has a history of remission from any moderately-to-severely impairing conditions for not less than five years without necessity for psychiatric hospitalization, though treatment may continue.

The candidate has a history of responsible management of any mildly-to-moderately impairing conditions for not less than five years, and has an effective treatment program in place.

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Category: Alcohol abuse/dependence

Standard: The candidate demonstrates no present abuse or dependence upon alcohol.

Rationale:

Alcohol abuse (short-term intoxication) and/or *alcohol dependence* (chronic overinvolvement) are mental disorders known to impair functioning in pervasive ways. Candidates who suffer from these disorders will have greatly limited effectiveness and are at much greater risk for professional misconduct.

Critical behaviors:

a history of drinking to the point of intoxication

a history of arrest for driving while intoxicated

a history of an arrest for public intoxication

complaints by family or others regarding the candidates use of alcohol

Exploratory Questions:

The “CAGE” questions below may be helpful: two or more “yes” answers predicts alcoholism with about 75% accuracy.

1. Have you ever felt you should **C**ut down on your drinking?
2. Have people **A**nnoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
3. Have you ever felt bad or **G**uilty about your drinking?
4. Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover? (**E**ye-opener)

Where there is a history of alcohol use, the following questions may be helpful:

Are you currently abstinent, and if so for how long?

If you are abstinent, how and why were you able to become abstinent?

What are you currently doing to maintain abstinence? (Possible answers: Alcoholics Anonymous, outpatient chemical dependency counseling, other counseling)

Recommendation:

Consider requiring a minimum of one year’s sobriety prior to certification for candidacy.

If *any* of the critical behaviors are recent (within five years), then consider requiring a formal “substance abuse evaluation” by a certified chemical dependency treatment specialist.

If there is clear evidence of alcohol dependence *at any time*, then consider requiring participation in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or equivalent program and continued involvement in such a program for not less than five years prior to certification for candidacy.

Category: Chemical abuse/dependency

Standard: The candidate demonstrates no present abuse or dependence upon either nonprescribed pharmacologic agents or prescribed medications.

Rationale:

Chemical abuse and/or dependence are mental disorders known to impair functioning in pervasive ways. Candidates who suffer from these disorders will have greatly limited effectiveness and are at much greater risk for professional misconduct.

Critical behaviors:

any use of illegal or non-prescribed substances, including but not limited to marijuana, cocaine, hashish, hallucinogens, sedatives, amphetamines or other stimulants.

misuse of prescribed pharmacological agents of any type

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Exploratory Questions:

What is your history of chemical abuse or dependency?

Are you currently abstinent, and if so for how long?

If you are abstinent, how and why were you able to become abstinent?

What are you currently doing to maintain abstinence? (Possible answers: Narcotics Anonymous, outpatient chemical dependency counseling, other counseling)

Recommendation:

If the history reveals occasional and/or experimental use limited to an *adolescent* period, then consider requiring not less than five years of sobriety prior to certification for candidacy.

If the history reveals any *adult* use of illegal substances, or any misuse of prescribed pharmacological agent, then consider requiring a formal chemical dependency assessment from a credentialed chemical dependency treatment specialist. A period of not less than five years of sobriety prior to certification for candidacy would also be appropriate.

Category: Legal (general)

Standard: The candidate shall be respectful of the law and evidence legal responsibility in personal habits.

Rationale:

This may not, on the surface, appear to be a behavioral health issue, but similar issues around maturity, discipline, and judgment come into play. In addition, one's approach toward the law often is a barometer of one's respect for authority generally, and unresolved authority issues may significantly hamper clergy effectiveness.

Critical behaviors:

More than three moving violations (traffic) within the preceding three years

An arrest or conviction for any misdemeanor

An arrest or conviction for any felony

Note: "Conviction" includes a "no contest" plea without admission of guilt, deferred adjudication and/or probation.

Recommendation:

Candidates may have no more than three moving violations (traffic) within the preceding three years.

A history of arrest for any misdemeanor or felony requires investigation of the circumstances of the arrest including review of the offense (police) report. Results of the investigation may require an appropriate period without history of difficulty or further arrest prior to certification for candidacy or continuance.

A history of conviction for any felony is, under most circumstances, permanently disqualifying.

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Category: Family Violence

Standard: The candidate has a history of resolving family conflict in a nonviolent manner.

Critical behaviors:

Any report or complaint (against the candidate) of family violence.

Any history that a law enforcement unit has been called to the candidate's residence because of his/her behavior.

Any report or complaint (against the candidate) to protective services for inappropriate treatment of children or adults.

Any history of protective orders against the candidate.

Recommendation:

The candidate shall ordinarily have not less than three years without reports as described. The presence of any critical behaviors requires an investigation into the facts and circumstances and an appropriate period may be required prior to certification for candidacy or continuance. The candidate shall acknowledge his/her behaviors and may have entered into family counseling or other appropriate treatment.

Category: Divorce or Infidelity

Standard: If the candidate has been divorced, or if there is evidence of infidelity, the candidate must have done sufficient exploratory and reparative work to demonstrate and/or articulate the impact of the health of married life on quality of ministry.

Critical behaviors:

A divorce in the past three years

A history of having been married more than twice

A history of infidelity

Exploratory Questions:

If a recent divorce:

What steps have you taken to understand the nature of your own contribution to the dissolution of the marriage?

What steps have you taken to move yourself through a healthy grief process?

If multiple marriages:

What steps have you taken to identify and deal with any dysfunctional patterns in intimate relationships?

In either case:

Have you maintained fidelity in marriage? If not, what steps have you taken to understand your actions and decisions so as to safeguard current or future marriage covenants?

Recommendation:

If there is a recent divorce (within 2-3 years), then the candidate should be able to articulate any dysfunctional patterns in intimate relationship and have taken steps to safeguard current or future marriage covenants..

If there is insufficient evidence that sufficient exploratory or reparative work has been done, the Board may wish to recommend or require a course of psychotherapy and/or other conditions, such as a delay of one year.

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Category: Sexual Misconduct

Standard: The candidate has no history, or complaints, of sexual misconduct or charges of sexual harassment having been brought against him/her. See addendum for definitions.

Rationale:

Candidates must model in their personal life and behavior a healthy and sacred view of sexuality so as not to misuse the clerical office.

Critical Behaviors

A history of complaints or charges (either formal or informal) of sexual harassment

A history of improper sexual conduct

Exploratory Questions

Have you ever had a complaint or charge (either formal or informal) of sexual harassment or misconduct brought against you? (If so, describe the circumstances.)

What steps have you taken to insure that the behavior does not occur in the future?

Recommendations

Consider further assessment.

The Board of Ministry should explore in an interview with the committee the steps the candidate has taken to identify and understand and deal with the psychological vulnerabilities that contributed to the behavior, and what safeguards the candidate has put into place to guard against the possibility of similar behavior in the future.

The candidate should have no evidence of sexual misconduct for a minimum of three years.

A candidate must articulate a plan to insure that such behavior is unlikely to recur. This plan may include intensive psychotherapy and/or ongoing supervision, or other conditions required by the Board.

Category: Legal - Sex related crimes

Standard: The candidate shall have no history that poses risk of sexual harassment, sexual assault to adults or children, nor history of any sex-related offense.

Critical behaviors:

Treatment for any sex-related crime.

Arrest , conviction, or written accusation for any sex-related crime.

Written allegations of any sex-related crime

Recommendation:

If the candidate has committed a sex-related crime, he or she should be permanently disqualified. Certainly the candidate is entitled to be considered innocent until proven guilty, so a written accusation or arrest alone is not sufficient for disqualification, but either one would raise significant questions which the Board would need to explore in depth.

The recommendation for permanent disqualification reflects the massive legal exposure an Annual Conference would take on were it to place in ministry a known sex offender. Behind that reality, however, is the awareness that currently available treatments for such offenses are of limited utility, with high rates of recidivism.

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for Psychological Assessment March, 2005 GBHEM-Division of Ordained Ministry ADDENDUM

Definitions of Improper Sexual Conduct 1. Sexual harassment Includes solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal

conduct consisting of a single intense or severe act, or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts, by a candidate toward another individual, that are sexual in nature and occur whether in connection with the candidate's clerical activities or personal life, and that are unwelcome, offensive, or create a hostile environment for the affected individual.

2. Sexual impropriety

Sexual impropriety is deliberate or repeated comments, gestures, or physical acts of a sexual nature that include but are not limited to:

- a) behavior, gestures or expressions which may reasonably be interpreted as inappropriately seductive or sexually demeaning,
- b) making inappropriate comments about an individual's body,
- c) making sexually demeaning comments to an individual,
- d) making comments about an individual's potential sexual performance,
- e) in a counseling relationship, requesting details of a person's sexual history when not clinically indicated for the type of consultation,
- f) requesting a date,
- g) initiating conversation regarding the sexual problems, preferences, or fantasies of either party,
- h) kissing of a sexual nature,
- i) sharing or displaying pornographic material with another person.

3. Deviant sexual behaviors

Deviant sexual behaviors include, but are not limited to, behaviors such as pedophilia, exhibitionism, or other paraphilias, and preoccupation with pornographic materials for sexual stimulation and gratification.