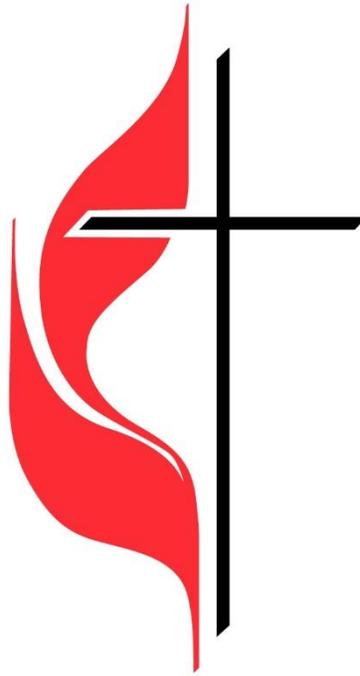


District Committee on Ordained Ministry Handbook



Great Plains
Annual Conference
2017 Edition
(for 2016-2020 Quadrennium)

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----------|
| Purpose of the Handbook | 3 |
| | |
| Section 1: The Who, What and Why of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOOM) | |
| Great Plains Board of Ordained Ministry Mission Statement..... | 4 |
| The Purpose of DCOOM..... | 4 |
| DCOOM Responsibilities..... | 4 |
| Confidentiality..... | 5 |
| DCOOM Membership and Job Descriptions..... | 5 |
| Membership requirements | |
| District Superintendent | |
| Chairperson | |
| Registrar | |
| Secretary | |
| BOOM Representative | |
| DCOOM member | |
| | |
| Section 2: The How, When and Where of the DCOOM Work | |
| Who does the DCOOM interview?..... | 7 |
| Cultural consideration..... | 7 |
| Annual timeline for DCOOM work..... | 7 |
| Interview/meeting format requirement..... | 9 |
| DCOOM Interview guidelines & best practices..... | 10 |
| DCOOM Minutes..... | 12 |
| DCOOM/BOOM Reporting forms..... | 13 |
| Fitness-Readiness-Effectiveness Interview Criteria (Chart)..... | 13 |
| | |
| Section 3: Credentialing Requirements & Interview Questions | |
| District Superintendent Assignment (DSA)..... | 16 |
| Continued DSA..... | 18 |
| Certified Lay Minister (CLM)..... | 20 |
| Continued CLM..... | 22 |
| Certified Candidate..... | 24 |
| Continued Certified Candidate..... | 26 |
| Receiving a Certified Candidate by Transfer..... | 28 |
| Local Pastor (initial approval or continued approved but not appointed)..... | 30 |
| Continued Local Pastor, mentoring required..... | 32 |
| Continued Local Pastor, in Residency..... | 34 |
| Continued Local Pastor, mentoring not required..... | 35 |
| Retired Local Pastor..... | 36 |
| Associate Membership..... | 37 |
| Provisional Membership..... | 39 |
| Other non-Methodist Denomination/Fellowship Approved for Appointment (OF)..... | 41 |
| Other Methodist/Other Denomination Transfer of Membership..... | 43 |

Section 4: Policies and Processes

Conflict of Interest..... 44
Plagiarism..... 44
UMCARES/UMCARESplus..... 45
Psychological assessment & background check..... 46
Certified Lay Ministry (education & credentialing)..... 47
Candidacy Summit..... 47
Licensing School..... 48
Course of Study..... 48
Mentoring..... 50
Residency..... 50
Ministerial Education Fund and other scholarships..... 51

Section 5: Resources

Candidacy step by step guide..... 52
Clergy credentialing flowcharts..... 55
KSAPs (Knowledge, Skills, Abilities & Personal characteristics)..... 58
Behavioral Health Guidelines..... 62
Glossary of Terms..... 70

Section 6: Appendix

General BOOM (Board of Ordained Ministry) interview information..... 78
BOOM credentialing requests (steps/requirements)
 Continued Provisional Member, Year 1..... 79
 Continued Provisional Member, Year 2..... 81
 Full Deacon..... 83
 Full Elder..... 85
 Transition between orders..... 87
 Other Changes in Clergy Relationship..... 88
 Retirement
 Less than full-time appointment
 Personal/Family leave of absence
 Transitional leave of absence
 Maternity/Paternity leave of absence
 Medical leave of absence
 Honorable Location
 Withdrawal of ordained membership
 Readmission to conference membership

Purpose of this Handbook

Greetings! Thank you for serving on one of the Great Plains Conference District Committees on Ordained Ministry (DCOOMs). Your work will shape the church, and thus, the world, for generations to come. I am so grateful for your willingness to share your gifts with God through the work of your DCOOM.

This handbook is intended to accomplish three goals:

First, we want to make your valuable work as easy as possible. When you gather to conduct an interview, you can flip to the right page in this handbook and have everything you need before you to do a thorough and careful interview.

Second, the Great Plains Conference Board of Ordained Ministry wants to ensure that all candidates are examined consistently. Using a uniform set of expectations for all candidates, local pastors, provisional elders and provisional deacons will ensure that no one is unfairly “grilled” while others get by with pleasantries and/or superficial questions. Our faith demands that we treat all people justly. A uniform set of expectations and shared practices will help us prevent favoritism or expediency from easing the process for some candidates.

Third, we want to make sure that our interviews rigorously examine all candidates, provisional elders/deacons and local pastors in the areas of Wesleyan theology, practice of ministry, their articulation of calling and how they lead a disciplined life as a follower of Jesus Christ to help determine fitness, readiness and effectiveness for licensed or ordained ministry in the Great Plains Conference.

Please join me in ensuring that our work is always just, rigorous and Wesleyan. Thank you and may the Spirit guide you in this holy task!

This document and many other DCOOM/BOOM resources are available on the Great Plains website, www.greatplainsumc.org.

Blessings,
Rev. Karen Jeffcoat
Registrar of the Great Plains Conference Board of Ordained Ministry

Section 1: The Who, What and Why of the DCOOM

The Great Plains Board of Ordained Ministry Mission Statement

As a witness to and example of Christ's ministry, the Board of Ordained Ministry shepherds those whom God has entrusted to us. We recognize each one as a gift to the church for the strengthening of the Kingdom of God on earth. We will tend to their formation and offer oversight with humble authority and a spirit of service.

1 Peter 5:1-7

Relationship between the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM) and the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOOM)

The District Committee on Ordained Ministry shall be amenable to the annual conference through the Board of Ordained Ministry (2016 Book of Discipline ¶1666). All actions are *recommendations* to the Board of Ordained Ministry and shall be reported to the Board through the submission of minutes to the Conference registrar.

The Purpose of the DCOOM

In the Great Plains Conference, the primary purpose of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, other than the responsibilities listed in ¶1666, is to serve as the entryway and initial credentialing body for all persons who are discerning and answering a call to credentialed ministry in the Great Plains Conference.

DCOOM Responsibilities (see also ¶1666)

- Oversight of all persons who have declared candidacy for licensed or ordained ministry and are pursuing the candidacy process, including maintenance of an individual credentialing file for all persons in the care of the DCOOM
- Certification of candidates for licensed or ordained ministry and annual renewal of certification
- Recommendation for licensing for pastoral ministry and annual renewal of approval for license
- Recommendation for Associate Membership prior to interviews with the Board of Ordained Ministry
- Recommendation for Provisional Membership prior to interviews with the Board of Ordained Ministry
- Recommendation for readmission to Conference Membership (may be followed with a BOOM interview)
- Recommendation for certification as a Certified Lay Minister and annual renewal of certification
- Recommendation of persons serving either temporarily or permanently in a Supply or District Superintendent Assignment (DSA) capacity and annual renewal of approval
- Recommendation and approval for appointment of persons with clergy credentials from other, non-Methodist denominations or fellowships (OF status) until completion of required UM studies classes (Doctrine, Polity & History)

Confidentiality of Work

All the work of the DCOOM carries a high level of confidentiality, from the files to our committee discussions. As a matter of trust, it is essential that DCOOM members not discuss the work of the DCOOM with anyone outside of the committee, nor share the files or documents with others.

DCOOM Membership

All members shall be nominated annually by the District Superintendent. There is no time limit for members of DCOOM. All persons named to the committee shall be members with vote. Interim vacancies are filled by the District Superintendent. The membership of the DCOOM should include:

- A member of the Board of Ordained Ministry
- At least six other clergy in the district. Where possible, the clergy shall include elders and deacons, women and ethnic minority clergy, a deacon or elder who is age 35 or younger, an associate member, and may include a local pastor who has completed the Course of Study.
- At least three professing members of local churches
- The district superintendent (who shall not be the chairperson)

DCOOM leadership is nominated by the district superintendent and elected at the first meeting following annual conference.

DCOOM Job Description/Responsibilities

District Superintendent

- Candidacy responsibilities:
 - Receives letter or email from candidate with a statement of call and request for admission to the candidacy process
 - Interviews candidate to assess readiness to enter the candidacy process:
 - If ready, enters the candidate in UMCARES on the GBHEM Candidacy & Psychological Assessment tracks and assigns the conference registrar as the Home Mentor
 - When candidate completes the UMCARES Candidacy application, adds his/her electronic signature through UMCARES
 - Presides at or assigns a presiding elder for Charge Conference interview and vote for those seeking certification as a candidate (concurrent with or after SPRC approval)
- General DCOOM responsibilities
 - Meets with DCOOM chair and registrar in late Summer to review a list of all persons relating to the DCOOM and to set tentative DCOOM meeting/interview dates for the year
 - Attends DCOOM meetings
 - Nominates DCOOM members and leaders
 - Reviews annual conference reports (Business of the Annual Conference report and Appointment List) with conference registrar and Bishop's office to verify accuracy of those listed
 - At a candidate/local pastor's request, completes the DS report that is part of the credentialing process

Chairperson

- Meets with district superintendent and DCOOM registrar in late Summer to review a list of all persons relating to the DCOOM and to set tentative DCOOM meeting/interview dates and locations for the year
- Sets the meeting agenda and presides at the meetings. Consults with conference registrar as needed about appropriate DCOOM procedures
- Ensures all DCOOM leaders are following through on their responsibilities
- Participates in the semi-annual DCOOM Exec gathering hosted by the conference registrar (prior to Orders & Fellowship and Annual Conference)

Registrar

- Maintains an individual (paper) file for all persons relating to the DCOOM for credentialing
- Communicates with persons relating to the DCOOM about interview dates and credentialing deadlines; provides initial assistance with technical problems related to credentialing requirements
- Verifies that all credentialing requirements have been met by the deadline
- Electronically sends interview materials to DCOOM members prior to a meeting (Send materials option in UMCARESplus); makes alternate arrangements for any DCOOM member who does not have email access
- Works with the district superintendent and/or chairperson to complete reports and notify candidates of DCOOM actions

Secretary (if no secretary is elected, the district superintendent, the chairperson and the registrar will make certain the assigned responsibilities are completed)

- Sends meeting notices
- Records and send minutes of the meetings to the DCOOM members, the district office and the conference registrar within fourteen days of the meeting.

Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM) Representative

- Serves as a voting member of both DCOOM and BOOM. Exchanges questions and information between the DCOOM and the BOOM.

DCOOM Member

- Attends all meetings
- Prepares for interviews by reading all assigned materials prior to the interview and by reviewing the expectations for the requested credentialing status

Section 2: The How, When and Where of the DCOOM work

Who does the DCOOM interview/approve?

Lay Ministry

District Superintendent Assignment (DSA)
Certified Lay Minister (CLM)
Certified Candidate/Continued Candidate

Licensed Ministry

Local Pastor, initial approval
Continued local pastor, mentoring required
Continued local pastor, in Residency
Continued local pastor, mentor not required (no interview generally required)
Associate membership (also requires interview/approval by BOOM)
Provisional membership (also requires interview/approval by BOOM)

Clergy from other non-Methodist denominations approved for appointment

Clergy from other Methodist and other Christian denominations requesting transfer

Readmission

- From Honorable Location, Administrative Location, those who previously withdrew from the ministerial office and from discontinuance/withdrawal as a certified candidate or local pastor
- As a certified candidate, local pastor, provisional member, follow the process outlined for that type of credentialing. If the DCOOM agrees with the request, the motion should read: "I move that [name] be reinstated as a [requested status]." [majority vote]
- Contact the Conference registrar for information relating to reinstatement or readmission for any other status including after honorable or administrative location, after leaving the ministerial office, after termination by action of the Annual Conference or after voluntary or involuntary retirement.

Cultural Considerations

Per ¶1310.2(b), the district committee "shall seek ways to consider cultural and racial/ethnic realities and language translations as candidates meet these requirements [for certification as a candidate], including interviews, psychological assessments, criminal background, and credit checks." Specific consideration will vary by candidate, however, all persons requesting a guaranteed appointment status (associate or provisional membership) will be required to submit documents and interview in English.

Annual Timeline for DCOOM work

July-early August (getting organized)

- District Superintendent, DCOOM Chair and DCOOM registrar meet to review DCOOM interview year
 - Set meeting dates, times and locations; Set dates for communication with candidates (at least 60 days before the paperwork deadline) and paperwork

deadline dates (at least 10 days before the DCOOM interview); try to accommodate bi-vocational pastors and students attending schools outside of the Great Plains area when setting interview dates/times

- Decide who is responsible for “floating deadline” tasks noted below
- Discuss and update (as needed) DCOOM membership
 - are there enough clergy or laity members; is there diversity of age, gender, race, etc.; are there enough people to complete the number of interviews needed
 - Make sure at least one member of the Board or Ordained Ministry is on the DCOOM
- Discuss and decide on a meeting format
- Review a list of all persons relating to DCOOM; provide a copy of this list to the conference registrar
 - Are there any new persons who have moved to the district?
 - Are there any persons who have moved from the district?
 - Make arrangements to transfer/receive files (as needed) with other districts, the conference registrar or archives
 - Make note of any persons who may need to be interviewed before the end of the calendar year (persons requesting associate membership or provisional membership)
 - Confirm credentialing requests for all candidates
 - Make sure to review all persons in the candidacy process and to discuss anyone who the DS knows is interested in the candidacy process

August-October

- Organizational DCOOM meeting
 - training about DCOOM procedure, interview tips, etc. to be provided for DCOOM membership (resource person is conference registrar)
 - review types of interviews/status requests and general expectations (fitness, readiness, effectiveness)
 - interview(s) may or may not happen at this meeting, but, if scheduled, should happen in the afternoon (after training)

November-December (focus on new to status/district interviews)

- Must conduct interviews for those requesting:
 - Associate or Provisional membership
 - First year District Superintendent Assignments (DSAs) and
 - First year members of other denomination (non-Methodist) approved for appointment (OF)
- May conduct interviews for those requesting:
 - Certified Candidate/Approval for license as a local pastor
 - New to District continued local pastors

January-March (focus on continuation interviews)

- Continued CLM, Continued DSA, Continued certified candidate, continued local pastor
- Readmission interviews

Late April-May

- New to status interviews, i.e. persons who attended the January Candidacy Summit
- All other not previously interviewed

Floating deadlines for Interview Season (Chairperson, registrar and/or DS)

- At least 60 days prior to an interview paperwork deadline, communicate in writing with those scheduled for an interview. Include:
 - Interview date and deadline for submission of all required materials (must be at least 10 days prior to interview date)
 - Remind candidates of the requirement to upload all materials to UMCARESplus (you might set an early deadline for materials if the candidate asks for you to upload materials – and you are willing to take that responsibility)
- Two weeks prior to an interview
 - Set interview teams (as needed in consultation with the DCOOM chair)
 - Remember to include at least one person from DCOOM of same gender/ethnicity and at least one person from a prior interview (if possible)
- One week prior to interview
 - Use UMCARESplus to send electronic links to all submitted materials
 - Remember to set an expiration date for the links
 - Remind DCOOM members to shred (printed) and/or delete (electronic) all materials following the interview
 - Psych assessment, background check and medical form will NOT be sent to interview team but WILL be available in hardcopy on the day of the interview (along with all current materials and materials from all previous years of relationship with the DCOOM)
- Within ten days after an interview
 - Communicate in writing (email is allowed) with all persons interviewed to notify and/or confirm the DCOOM action on the requested status. This must include any recommendations or requirements decided by the DCOOM.
 - Provide the Conference registrar with a copy of the minutes

Interview/meeting format requirements

Interview meetings will vary according to District needs and types of interviews but the following must be followed in creating an individual DCOOM interview schedule:

- All required paperwork/credentialing steps must be completed prior to DCOOM action on a credentialing request.
 - In consultation with the Conference registrar, a DCOOM registrar/DCOOM Executive team (DS and DCOOM officers) may elect to interview a candidate who is pending completion of a background check as long as the criminal and credit reports are available for DCOOM review.
 - A person requesting to be licensed as a local pastor may be approved for license “pending satisfactory completion of licensing school.”
- A video or technology based interview may be used by the DCOOM to meet with a candidate who is not able to be physically present for an interview. The decision on the availability and use of this format for interviews is at the discretion of the DCOOM and should be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- Interview/Meeting lengths
 - Allow at least 30 minutes pre-interview to accomplish needed DCOOM work and for registrar to provide general pre-interview information to the DCOOM (last minute team changes due to illness, candidate updates, etc.)

- Allow at least 30 minutes of preparation time after general DCOOM work but pre-interview for interview teams to plan their work and to review the psychological assessment, background check and any previous DCOOM/BOOM reports for each candidate the team will interview
- Allow at least 60 minutes (approximately 45 minutes for interview; 15 minutes for interview reporting/paperwork) for continuation of status interviews
- Allow at least 90 minutes (approximately 60 minutes for interview; 30 minutes for interview reporting/paperwork) for certification as a candidate and/or initial approval for license as a local pastor
- Allow at least two (2) hours (approximately 90 minutes for interview; 30 minutes for interview reporting/paperwork) for associate or provisional membership requests
 - DCOOMs may choose to use a “traditional” or single interview format for associate and provisional membership interviews or may model the DCOOM interview after the BOOM interview week format with three separate interviews focused on Call & Disciplined Life, Proclamation & Discipleship, and Theology & Doctrine (45 minutes each at BOOM)
- Who may/may not interview? How to arrange interview teams?
 - All members of the DCOOM may be part of an interview team, but it is recommended that neither the Registrar nor the District Superintendent participate in interviews
 - It is recommended that:
 - There be at least one lay person and one clergy person per interview team
 - At least one person from a prior interview team be part of a continuation interview for continuity
 - One or more members of the interview team “match” the candidate in gender, race/ethnicity, and language
 - All interview teams must have at least two DCOOM members; change of status interview teams must have at least three DCOOM members
 - A candidate may be interviewed by the full DCOOM, but use of interview teams is highly recommended

DCOOM Interview guidelines and best practices

Information about the Board of Ordained Ministry interview process (regional interviews and interview week) is available in the Appendix.

Guidelines for preparing for an interview

- Allow thirty minutes ahead of each interview to review the file, the written documents and the psychological assessment. Discuss concerns and issues that need to be addressed in the interview. Decide how to begin the interview. Do NOT begin with the psychological assessment.
- Decide on the most important supplemental interview questions and who will ask each question (do not have the chair or one person ask all the questions).
- Decide who on the team will serve as (1) time-keeper, (2) primary note-taker and (3) person offering prayer.

Role of the Interview Team Chair

- Welcome the candidate to the interview and introduce by name and church to the interview team/DCOOM. State the purpose of the interview (Introductory Interview, Certification Interview, Recommendation for Provisional or Associate membership, etc.).
- Ask members of the interview team/DCOOM to introduce themselves.
- Ask an interview team member to begin with a prayer.
- State the time available for the interview and inform who is the time-keeper and who is the primary note-taker.
- The chair may want to ask the first question. A possible first question might be: "Tell us about yourself, your sense of call and where God is leading you."
- Be careful to involve the members of your committee in asking the questions. After the first question, the chair should focus on process and/or time-keeping rather than asking questions.
- Close the interview with prayer.

Things to remember

- The candidate does most of the talking.
- Do not allow other committee members to answer questions or to engage in an argument or discussion with the candidate.
- This is not a therapy session.
- Recommendation/action is determined by the whole committee after the interview.
- The Discipline states that *"All persons interviewed by the district committee shall be informed of decisions and recommendations as soon as possible, both orally and in writing"* (§666.11).
- Decide how the decision of the DCOOM will be communicated orally: having the candidate wait for a decision vs. a phone call.
- Make sure that the decision and the recommendation of the DCOOM is given to the candidate in writing, following the DCOOM meeting.
- Evaluate the interview. What was effective in the interview? What would we do differently next time? Were any questions asked that were inappropriate?
- Remember the distinctions between candidates on the elder track and the deacon track and candidates for local pastor status. Ask appropriate questions.

Important Theological Reflections on the Interview Process

As excerpted from General Board of Higher Education and Ministry Board of Ordained Ministry (GBHEM BOM) Handbook, chapter 11

The community of the BOM, as part of the church, represents the Body of the Christ. In the Body of Christ community is not created or made, it is discovered and experienced. In the interview process, community is both biblical and historical. Historically, from the perspective of our Anglican heritage, the community recruited, credentialed, supported, and held accountable persons for set apart ministry. To help set some parameters for these responsibilities, Wesley asked three questions of all those discerning the call to set apart ministry (which still stand today):

1. **Do they know God as pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire nothing but God? Are they holy in all manner of conversation?**

This is the question of **grace**; it calls the community and candidate to discern together the candidate's relationship with God. So the interview should be an expression of the community's relationship to God and the understanding that all are in God's care. Interview teams and candidates join together to know and experience the nature of this relationship.

2. **Have they gifts, as well as evidence of God's grace, for the work? Have they a clear, sound understanding; a right judgment in the things of God; a just conception of salvation by faith? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?**

This is the question of **gifts**. Is there evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual? Therefore, do we see that they have gifts to offer the larger community of the church and of the world? Gifts are not isolated, but born and expressed in community.

3. **Have they fruit? Have any been truly convinced of sin and converted to God, and are believers edified by their service?**

This is the question of **effectiveness**, or in theological terms, of **faithfulness**. Have lives been changed because of their ministry? Is there evidence of the work of the Spirit in individual lives? Again, fruit is known in community.

Regarding the hospitality toward the interviewee...

When candidates come to interview with the BOM, with a body of persons who are to express the nature of the church, do they experience hospitality? Will hospitality be experienced – not in the image of a soft, sweet kindness, but an environment that invites an openness for authentic vocational discernment and Christian response? When hospitality is experienced, “the distinction between host and guest proves to be artificial and evaporates in the recognition of the new found unity” (Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, pp. 46-47). It is in hospitality that community and covenant are experienced in its authentic nature. ***It is in hospitality and covenant where truth can be shared and known.*** It is in hospitality that both guest (interviewee) and host (BOM) “can reveal their most precious gifts and bring new life to each other” (Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, p. 47).

- How do we as a board help to create space where candidates may sense the nature of the Christian community before, during, and after the interview?
- How does the interview team welcome candidates in Christian hospitality?

DCOOM Minutes

For consistency in reporting from DCOOMs, the following information should be included when submitting minutes of DCOOM meetings/actions.

[District name] District Committee on Ordained Ministry

[Date of meeting]

Members present

Basic meeting information (approval of previous minutes, other DCOOM business)

For each candidate interviewed:

- Name of Candidate (bold)
- Current status (normal) & requested status (bold)
- Education track (undergrad, COS or seminary; include name of undergraduate school/seminary)
- Interview team members (or indication interview was by complete DCOOM)
- Motion – include any additional recommendations or requirements
- Vote report (must be written ballot for certification as a candidate)

- Additional motion (if requesting certification as a candidate and approval for license in the same DCOOM interview)
- Additional vote report
- Any additional notes

District Committee/BOOM Interview Reporting Forms

An interview report should be completed and file (uploaded to UMCARES) for each interview. The interview reporting forms for DCOOM and BOOM (regional and interview week) are available on the BOOM pages of the Great Plains website, www.greatplainsumc.org/interviewmaterials. Only current interview reporting forms that use the Call, Disciplined Life, Proclamation, Discipleship, Theology and Doctrine interview areas should be used starting October 15, 2017. Previous reporting document templates (checklist and summary report) should be discarded.

Fitness-Readiness-Effectiveness Interview Criteria (Chart)

Fitness, readiness and effectiveness are a way to discuss credentialing expectations for persons at different credentialing stages. In general, basic fitness for ministry (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) is the expectation for persons entering the credentialing process. Readiness is the general expectation for persons who (1) have been credentialing for at least a year and (2) have additional ministerial experience or education that augments the basic fitness expectation. Effectiveness, reflecting continued experience and completion of required education as well as fruitful or transformational leadership, is the expectation for continued local pastors who are in the residency program and/or have completed the basic Course of Study (or have a Masters of Divinity), associate members and full members (deacon or elder). Required and suggested interview questions based on fitness, readiness or effectiveness (depending on the requested credentialing status) is included as part of the credentialing information.

The Board of Ordained Ministry Competency Team has created an “at a glance” chart for minimum fitness, readiness and effectiveness expectations in each of the interview areas (call, disciplined life, proclamation, discipleship, theology and doctrine).

Fitness-Readiness-Effectiveness Interview Expectations

| Description | | Fitness | Readiness | Effectiveness |
|--|-------------------------|---|---|---|
| <p>Call & Disciplined Life focuses on the person requesting credentialing and includes personal characteristics/abilities, understanding of call to ministry, relationships, commitment to UMC, and academic work</p> | Call | Basic understanding of gifts/abilities for ministry; ability to share their statement of call (oral & written) | Greater understanding of call & credentialing process influenced by education and/or experience in ministry | Clearly defined & articulated call that is affirmed by a demonstration of effectiveness in ministry (fruitfulness) |
| | Disciplined Life | Basic fitness (mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational) per the Behavioral Health Guidelines | Greater understanding of and lived out “wholeness” in ministry (relationships, health, boundaries, etc.) | Evidence of on-going practice of self-care; demonstration of self-awareness |
| <p>Proclamation & Discipleship focuses on the practice of ministry that invites others to enter into discipleship. At a minimum, it includes proclamation of scripture (preaching & teaching), leadership and service to others/the world. For Elders/Local Pastors it also includes a focus on the ordering of the church and administration of the sacraments. For Deacons, it also includes a focus on justice and compassion.</p> | Proclamation | Basic willingness and ability to share scripture in worship & other settings | Increasing knowledge and implementation of proclamation skills (study of scripture, proclamation) | Proclamation of the Word that invites, engages and challenges listeners to grow in discipleship |
| | Discipleship | Ability to share about personal experience(s) of discipleship such as ministerial leadership, Christian education, pastoral care and mission/outreach | Increasing education and/or practice of ministry that demonstrates a potential for effective and fruitful ministerial leadership and discipleship | Demonstrated evidence transformative leadership in ministry that invites and develops disciples with a contagious love of God |
| <p>Theology & Doctrine focuses on a United Methodist understanding scripture, God, sacraments, sin, grace, marks of the Christian life, kingdom of God, resurrection/eternal life, nature/mission of the church as well as a commitment to the United Methodist connection as it relates to the doctrinal standards set forth in Part III of the <i>Book of Discipline, 2016</i> (paragraphs 102-105).</p> | Theology | Ability to share about their personal relationship with God and basic understanding of scripture | Ability to share a deeper understanding of the work of God based on further education and experience | Integration of education and experience in theological understanding that results in greater effectiveness in ministry |
| | Doctrine | Ability to name or share about basic understandings of the UMC including sacraments and grace; why they are United Methodist | Ability to discuss in greater depth the topics of Part III Doctrinal Standards (<i>2016 Book of Discipline</i>) | Ability to communicate how doctrine/theological understanding impacts/has impacted the practice of ministry |

Section 3: DCOOM Credentialing Requirements & Interview Questions

District Superintendent Assignment (DSA) ¶205.4

General information

- Credentialing standard: Fitness for ministry; Does this person demonstrate a fitness (mental, emotional, physical & spiritual) for ministry?
- Assigned in limited (1/4 time) or temporary (completing requirements for certification as a candidate/local pastor, CLM or OF) capacity with supervision by a clergy person specified in the DSA agreement
- Initial interview occurs within five (5) months of start of assignment (background check & psychological assessment reports must be completed): annual paperwork/interview required for continuation (2 year time limit on temporary DSA status)

Possible motion

- "I move that [name] be approved for assignment by the District Superintendent." [majority vote]

Interview & credentialing requirements

Pre-assignment: managed by DS and BOOM registrar

- Background check authorization
- Safe Gatherings certification
- Verification of DSA agreement & assignment of supervising pastor
- photo in UMCARES profile

Within 5 months post-assignment: managed by DSA

- Completed background check
- Completed psychological assessment
- Application
- DS Report
- Sending Pastor Report
- DSA questions (1-3 pages)
 - Describe, briefly, your family situation and your support system.
 - Describe your assignment to or involvement in a local church as well as your activities beyond the local church such as district or conference work, church camps, outreach, etc.
 - Describe your physical and emotional health. What do you do to take care of yourself?
 - What are your goals in ministry for the year ahead?

DCOOM interview (min. 45 minutes)

Required interview questions:

- Discussion of any flags raised in the psychological assessment and/or background check. Use the Behavioral Health Guidelines for general standards/expectations.
- Tell us about your personal faith journey. How had God brought you here today?
- Tell us about a ministry experience you have had since starting as a District Superintendent Assignment. What excites you about ministry? What concerns you about ministry?
- How would you describe your understanding of God, Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit?
- What gifts, skills and abilities do you bring to your role as a District Superintendent Assignment? What are your growing edges?

Suggested interview questions:

- How is it with your soul? What are your plans for the future...personally...for the church?
- Share about your devotional life. How are you growing spiritually?
- What 2-3 characters in the Bible inform or reflect your own spiritual life/journey? Do you have a favorite Bible passage? If so, what is it and why?
- What do you do to take care of yourself physically?
- Tell us more about your family and/or support system.
- What is your understanding of the mission of the church?
- What is your experience with The United Methodist Church?
- If you are discerning a call to licensed or ordained ministry, what are the next steps for you to live into that call?
- How would you summarize the teachings of Jesus? How do you describe the Good News of Jesus to your congregation?

Continued District Superintendent Assignment (DSA) ¶205.4

General information

- Credentialing standard: Fitness; Does this person demonstrate a fitness (mental, emotional, physical & spiritual) for ministry?
- ¼ time DSAs may request to continue as a DSA indefinitely. ½ time to full-time DSAs must transition to CLM or Certified Candidate/Local Pastor status within 2 years (from the start of the assignment).

Possible motion

- “I move that [name] be approved for continued assignment by the District Superintendent” [majority vote]

Annual Interview & credentialing requirements

- Application
- SPRC leadership assessment (use the Conference document), most recent
- DS report
- Supervising pastor report
- Sermon visit/evaluation by a member of the DCOOM/BOOM and/or UM clergy (may upload a video of a sermon to YouTube for DCOOM to evaluate)
- Annual Questions (1-3 pages)
 - Describe, briefly, your family, noting any recent changes in your family or its circumstances.
 - Describe any continuing education events completed or other progress in academic studies by summarizing content and reporting hours in attendance.
 - Describe your assignment to or involvement in a local church as well as your activities beyond the local church such as district or conference work, church camps, outreach, etc.
 - Describe your physical and emotional health. What do you do to take care of yourself? Report any changes in your health or any ongoing concerns.
 - Share about your devotional life? How are you growing spiritually?
 - What are your goals in ministry for the year ahead? What are the outcomes from your prior year goals?

DCOOM interview (min. of 30 minutes)

Required interview questions:

- Review and discuss any flags raised in a previous interview/paperwork
- At this time, what do you feel is the nature of your call to ministry?
- Share about a conflict situation in which you have been involved and how you dealt with it.
- How have you experienced the presence of God in your ministry?
- Briefly describe your ministry setting and the work you are doing. What are some highlights from the past year? Where do you feel your ministry needs to be strengthened?

Suggested questions:

- How is it with your soul?
- What are your plans for the future...personally...for the church?
- Share about your devotional life. How are you growing spiritually?

- Do you have a favorite Bible passage? If so, what is it and why?
- What do you do to take care of yourself physically, emotionally, relationally?
- What is your understanding of the mission of the church?
- What excites you about ministry? What is your passion? What are your challenges?
- What is your experience with The United Methodist Church?
- How would you summarize the teachings of Jesus? How do you describe the Good News of Jesus to your congregation?
- What resources do you use (who do you contact) when you have questions? Who do you work with to provide the sacraments (baptism & communion) or to officiate for a wedding?

Certified Lay Minister (CLM) ¶268

General information

- Credentialing standard: Fitness-Readiness; Does this person articulate a call from God?
- Assigned in a limited capacity to either a church/charge or to a ministerial team with supervision by a clergyperson specified in the CLM agreement
- Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministry (CCLSM) acts on the DCOOM credentialing recommendation; CLM status is not granted until the CLM candidate is approved by the CCLSM.
- Specific information about the Great Plains CLM process (educational and credentialing) is in the LSM Handbook (in process)

Possible motion

- “I move that [name] be recommended for certification as a lay minister.”

Interview & credentialing requirements

- Background check authorization form
- Completed background check
- Completed psychological assessment
- Safe Gatherings certification
- Documentation of CLM classes completed/verification from DS of completion of introductory module
- CLM application
- Biographical information
- Sending pastor recommendation/report
- DS recommendation/report
- Verification of CLM supervisory agreement if starting an assignment
- CLM questions - written response (3-5 pages)
 - Describe your physical and emotional health. What do you do to take care of yourself? Report any ongoing concerns.
 - Briefly, share about your personal journey of faith. Describe an experience that shaped your Christian life.
 - Briefly share about your leadership experiences in the local church as well as your activities beyond the local church such as District or Conference work, church camps, outreach, etc. What are the fruit of the ministries in which you are involved?
 - Share about your devotional life. How are you growing spiritually?
 - What gifts, skills and abilities do you bring to certified lay ministry?

DCOOM interview (min. of 45 minutes)

Required interview questions:

- Discussion of any flags raised in the psychological assessment and/or background check. Use the Behavioral Health Guidelines for general standards/expectations.
- Tell us about your personal faith journey. Tell us about how God has brought you here today. Briefly describe an experience that shaped your Christian life.
- What excites you about ministry? What concerns do you have about being in ministerial leadership as a CLM?

- How would you describe your understanding of God, Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit? How do you describe the Good News of Jesus to your congregation?
- What gifts, skills and abilities do you bring to your role as a Certified Lay Minister? What are your growing edges?

Suggested interview questions:

- How is it with your soul?
- What are your plans for the future...personally...for the church?
- Share about your devotional life. How are you growing spiritually?
- What 2-3 characters in the Bible inform or reflect your own spiritual life/journey? Do you have a favorite Bible passage? If so, what is it and why?
- What do you do to take care of yourself physically?
- Tell us more about your family and/or support system.
- What is your understanding of the mission of the church?
- How would you summarize the teachings of Jesus? How do you describe the Good News of Jesus to your congregation?
- What is your experience with The United Methodist Church?
- What are the next steps for you if approved for Certified Lay Minister status?

Continued Certified Lay Minister (CLM) ¶268

General information

- Credentialing standard: Readiness-Effectiveness (evidence of fruitful ministry); Does this person demonstrate a fruitfulness in ministry?
- Assigned in a limited capacity to either a church/charge or to a ministerial team with supervision by a clergy person specified in the CLM agreement
- Although the Book of Discipline indicates recertification every two years, the Great Plains practice is for annual recertification

Possible motion

- "I move that [name] be continued as a certified lay minister" [majority vote]

Annual interview & credentialing requirements

- Safe Gatherings certification
- Application
- Annual Report (use form designated by CCLSM)
- Continuing education report
- SPRC leadership assessment (completed by assigned church); only required if assigned
- DS report
- Supervising pastor report – only if assigned as CLM
- Sending pastor report – only if not assigned as CLM
- If responsible for worship, sermon visit/evaluation by a member of the DCOOM/BOOM and/or UM clergy (may upload a video of a sermon to YouTube for DCOOM to evaluate)
- Written questions
 - Describe, briefly, your family, noting any recent changes in your family or its circumstances.
 - Describe your physical and emotional health. What do you do to take care of yourself? Report any changes in your health or any ongoing concerns.
 - Share about your devotional life. How are you growing spiritually?
 - What excites you about ministry?
 - What is happening in the life of the congregation (home congregation if not assigned) as a result of your leadership? What fruit is being born?
 - What are your goals in ministry for the year ahead? What are the outcomes from your prior year goals?

Annual DCOOM interview (min. of 30 minutes)

Required interview questions:

- Review and discuss any flags raised in a previous interview, previous or current paperwork.
- How have you experienced the presence of God in your ministry?
- Briefly describe your ministry setting and the work you are doing. What are some highlights from the past year? What fruit is being born?
- Where do you feel your ministry needs to be strengthened?
- What resources do you use (who do you contact) when you have questions? Who do you work with to provide the sacraments (baptism & communion) or to officiate for a wedding?

Suggested questions:

- How is it with your soul?
- What are your plans for the future...personally...for the church?
- Do you have a favorite Bible passage? If so, what is it and why?
- What do you do to take care of yourself physically? Emotionally? Spiritually? Relationally?
- Share about a conflict situation in which you have been involved and how you dealt with it.
- What is your understanding of the mission of the church?
- How would you summarize the teachings of Jesus? How do you describe the Good News of Jesus to your congregation?
- What excites you about ministry? What is your passion? What are your challenges?

Certified Candidate ¶310

General Information

- Credentialing standard: Fitness (spiritual, physical, psychological) and potential for effectiveness; Does this person demonstrate fitness for ministry? Does this person demonstrate the potential for transformational leadership?
- May request approval for license as a local pastor in the same interview with no additional paperwork requirements
 - Note: DCOOM approves a candidate for license; Bishop grants a license for pastoral ministry upon appointment
- Initial interview follows completion of all steps for certification; annual paperwork/interview required for continuation; maximum of 12 years as a certified candidate

Possible motions

- For certification:
 - “I move that [name] be certified as a candidate for licensed or ordained ministry.”
[individual written ballot; ¾ majority vote]
- If also requesting approval for license as a local pastor:
 - “I move [Name] be recommended for license as a local pastor, that s/he be listed in the Conference Journal as eligible for appointment, and that the Bishop award the license as local pastor to him/her is and when s/he is appointed [3/4 majority vote]
 - Choose one:
 - “[Name] is exempt from licensing school through completion of more than 1/3 of a M.Div. degree.”
 - “[Name] is approved pending satisfactory completion of licensing school.”

Interview & credentialing requirements

- Verification of baptized participant or professing member for at least one year
- Written request to DS to start candidacy
- Safe Gathering certification
- Candidacy Summit attendance
- Candidacy mentor report with KSAPS
- Theological Statement/Statement of Call - Suggestion to provide to SPRC before SPRC approval; Additional (new) questions for theological statement:
 - Describe the most formative experience of your Christian life.
 - How is God calling you to licensed or ordained ministry and what role does the church have in your call?
 - How do you understand the orders of elder, deacon or licensed ministry? Where does your call fit into these orders?
 - Describe your support system. How might your personal relationships affect your future ministry?
- SPRC approval
- Charge Conference recommendation following written ballot with 2/3 approval
 - SPRC recommendation is a prerequisite
- Background check authorization form
- Completed psychological assessment

- Completed background check
- Notarized Disclosure/Highest ideals statement
- Medical report
- Biographical information
- Application
- DS Report
- Supervising pastor report (if serving as DSA)
- Transcripts for all education (high school or equivalency and higher)

DCOOM interview (min. one hour)

If candidate is also requesting to be approved for license as a local pastor, use required and suggested questions from both the Certified Candidate and License Local Pastor guides

Required interview questions:

- Discussion of any flags raised in the psychological assessment and/or background check. Use the Behavioral Health Guidelines for general standards/expectations.
- Tell us about your personal faith journey. Briefly describe an experience that shaped your Christian life.
- How has the candidacy process affirmed that your call is to licensed or ordained ministry? To which credential/order are you feeling called and why? If the call is to ministry as an Elder, share your understanding of itinerancy. How will itinerancy be different from your current situation? Are there limits to your willingness to itinerate?
- What are your gifts for ministry? What is an example of fruit that has come from your gifts?
- What is your understanding of grace? How would you describe your understanding of God, Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit?

Suggested interview questions:

- How is it with your soul?
- How has the community of the church affirmed your understanding of your call to licensed or ordained ministry?
- Describe a recent leadership experience that you had in a church/campus ministry/mission environment. What results came from your leadership? What was most challenging? What was most fulfilling? What did you learn about yourself?
- How are you caring for yourself spiritually, physically, emotionally and relationally? What does your support system look like?
- Describe your devotional/worship life. What do you find most meaningful? Least meaningful?
- Who has been influential in your Christian journey and how have they influenced you?
- What excites you about ministry? What is your passion? What concerns do you have about answering your call to licensed or ordained ministry?
- What is your understanding of the mission of the church?
- The church is sometimes known as the “body of Christ.” What does that mean for you?
- What has been your experience of The United Methodist Church?
- Share about a conflict situation in which you have been involved and how you dealt with it.
- If currently in seminary, share about your classes and what you are learning.
- Share your understanding of the process you will need to follow in order to make progress toward licensing or ordination.

Continued Certified Candidate ¶313

General information

- Credentialing standard: Increasing fitness/potential for effectiveness or fruitful leadership
- Continued Certified candidate status is only requested/approved if no other status is requested/granted
- Maximum of 12 years as a certified candidate
- Students who are serving as local pastors while completing an undergraduate or graduate (seminary) degree are considered clergy and are not to be continued as certified candidates – even if on an ordination track

Possible motions

- “I move that [name] be continued as a certified candidate for licensed or ordained ministry.” [majority vote]
- “I move that [name] be discontinued as a certified candidate, effective [date], for reasons that include [state reason(s) for discontinuance/withdrawal].” [majority vote]

Annual interview & credentialing requirements

- Safe Gatherings certification verification
- Charge Conference recommendation
- Mentor report
- Application
- DS report
- Sending pastor report
- Transcript documenting studies (unofficial is allowed)
- Continuing Candidate questions (max 7 pages)
 - Briefly describe your family, noting any changes in the last year and the joys and/or concerns you'd like to share with the DCOOM.
 - Reflecting on the past year, how has your call to licensed or ordained ministry been reaffirmed?
 - Describe your work/involvement in your local church and/or UM ministry setting this past year. How have you displayed evidence of gifts, fruits, and God's grace for the work of ministry? How are you involved in the community in general?
 - How are you progressing in your studies in preparation for licensed or ordained ministry? What courses, readings, and/or educational opportunities have strengthened your ministry? What progress have you made in undergraduate studies, seminary and/or other educational programs?
 - Describe your physical and emotional health. What do you do to take care of yourself? Report any changes in your health or any ongoing concerns.
 - Share about your devotional life. How are you growing spiritually?
 - How have you grown theologically since you last met with the DCOOM?
 - If the DCOOM made specific recommendations and/or requirements in your last interview, how have you addressed these recommendations and/or requirements in the last year?
 - What are your plans for the coming year?

DCOOM interview (min. 45 minutes)

Required interview questions:

- Follow up on any previous DCOOM/BOOM recommendations or requirements.
- Follow up on the submitted written questions as needed/desired.

Suggested questions:

- How is it with your soul?
- What were some of your frustrations in ministry this year?
- What is your understanding of the mission of the church?
- What have you read that has been helpful for your spiritual life?
- For seminary students, share about your seminary classes/experience.
- What 2-3 characters in the Bible emulate/reflect your own spiritual life or journey?
- Share about a conflict situation in which you have been involved and how you dealt with it.

Transfer Certified Candidate ¶313.4

General information

- Credentialing standard: Fitness-Readiness; potential for effective/fruitful leadership; Does this person demonstrate fitness for ministry? Does this person demonstrate the potential for transformational leadership?
- This track is only for certified candidates or local pastors transferring candidacy/being appointed to Great Plains from another Conference; Declared candidates (not yet certified) must complete the Great Plains certified candidate process

Possible motions

- If candidate is requesting to only transfer certified candidate status
 - “I move that [name] be received from [Conference] as a certified candidate. [majority vote]
- If the candidate is requesting to be approved for license as a local pastor
 - “I move [Name] be recommended for license as a local pastor, that s/he be listed in the Conference Journal as eligible for appointment, and that the Bishop award the license as local pastor to him/her is and when s/he is appointed [3/4 majority vote]
 - Choose one:
 - “[Name] is exempt from licensing school through prior completion of a school in [Conference].”
 - “[Name] is exempt from licensing school through completion of more than 1/3 of a M.Div. degree.”
 - “[Name] is approved pending satisfactory completion of licensing school.”

Interview & credentialing requirements

- Transferring candidate must talk with DS and request to start the transfer process; must complete GP certification process if a declared candidate
- DS communicates with BOOM registrar who initiates a UMCARES transfer request
- Transferring candidate requests credentialing files be sent to BOOM registrar (if not in UMCARES)
- BOOM registrar will check credentialing file for background check, psychological assessment, disclosure statement, theological statement and DCOOM approval; Candidate will need to complete GP process for any missing documents; DCOOM approval may be verified through the sending Conference Journal

BOOM registrar assigns transfer candidacy track in UMCARES; Track steps include:

- Application
- Written questions based on transferring status/request - continued candidacy questions for Certified Candidate transfer; Local Pastor questions for those requesting approval for license

DCOOM interview (min. 45 minutes)

Required/suggested interview questions:

- For transfer as a certified candidate, use the interview questions on the “Continued Certified Candidate” track

- For transfer and approval for license as a local pastor, use the interview questions on the “Local Pastor: Initial request for approval” track
 - If currently serving as a local pastor in another Conference, may also use the interview questions on the “Continued Local Pastor: mentoring required” track

Local Pastor, initial request for approval ¶315

General information

- Credentialing standard: Fitness (spiritual, physical, psychological), potential for effectiveness, demonstrates qualities of transformational leadership; Does this person demonstrate fitness for ministry? Does this person demonstrate the potential for transformational leadership?
- For use only (1) if already a certified candidate at time of request, (2) currently approved for license but not appointed or (3) requesting reinstatement of approval for license as a local pastor (previously discontinued/withdrawn as a local pastor)
- DCOOM approves a candidate for license; Bishop grants a license for pastoral ministry upon appointment

Possible motions

- For the current certified candidate requesting approval for license
 - “I move that [name] be recommended for license as a local pastor, that s/he be listed in the Conference Journal as eligible for appointment, and that the Bishop award the license as local pastor to him/her if and when s/he is appointed.” [3/4 majority vote]
 - Choose one
 - “[Name] is exempt from licensing school through completion of more than 1/3 of a M.Div. degree. “
 - “[Name] is approved pending satisfactory completion of Licensing School.”
- For someone who is currently approved for license but not appointed
 - “I move that [name] be recommended for continued listing in the Conference Journal as eligible for appointment and license as a local pastor.” [majority vote]
 - Please note in the minutes if licensing school has previously been completed, more than 1/3 of an M.Div. has been complete or if licensing school attendance is required
- For someone requesting reinstatement of approval for license
 - “I move that [name] be recommended for reinstatement of approval for license as a local pastor, that s/he be listed in the Conference Journal as eligible for appointment, and that the Bishop award the license a local pastor to him/her if and when s/he is appointed.” [majority vote]
 - Please note in the minutes if the DCOOM is requiring licensing school participation

Interview & credentialing requirements:

- Verification of certification as a candidate
- Safe Gatherings certification verification
- Psychological Assessment on file (and less than seven years old)
- Background check on file (and less than seven years old)
- Notarized disclosure form on file (and less than seven years old)
- Medical Report on file (and less that seven years old)
- Biographical information
- Application
- DS Report

- Transcript (if not already on file)
- Reinstatement only step -Answer (1) Why discontinued/withdrawn? and (2) What has changed/why requesting reinstatement?
- Written answers (3-5 pages):
 - What does being a pastor mean to you?
 - What is the meaning and significance of the Sacraments?
 - Talk about the nature of the Kingdom of God and then use a Biblical parable to illustrate one aspect of the Kingdom.
 - What is your understanding of the Wesleyan concept of divine grace?
 - After receiving an appointment, how will you discern and implement God's vision for your ministry setting?

DCOOM interview (min. 45 minutes)

Required interview questions:

- What are the two sacraments recognized by the United Methodist Church? What is your understanding of the sacraments?
- What is your understanding of grace?
- What does being a pastor mean to you?

Suggested interview questions:

- Briefly share about your call to licensed or ordained ministry.
- Tell us about your preaching experience(s) – speaking and listening.
- Who, what and/or where are your support systems? Share a bit about your devotional life.
- How are you or how do you plan to integrate your personal and professional responsibilities?
- Tell about a time when you disagreed with someone in church. How did resolution occur?
- What do you know about your leadership style? What are your strengths as a leader?
- If in seminary or about to attend seminary, share about your classes.
- Briefly share your understanding of the next steps – educational and credentialing – if you are approved for license and appointed as a local pastor?

Continued Local Pastor, mentoring required ¶319

General information

- Credentialing standard: Readiness to Effectiveness; Demonstration of increasing qualities as a fruitful transformation leader; Does this person demonstrate increasing qualities of a fruitful transformational leader?
- Eff. 7/1/17 – Mentoring is required until (1) completion of educational requirements (COS or M.Div.) and (2) five years of service (incl. part-time)
 - LP who has completed education but not service requirement may request release of mentoring requirement (DS, Call Chair & Competency Chair approval); after five years of service but still completing educational requirements, LP may choose from the GP mentor group option, identify an individual mentor (DS & Registrar notified/approval), participate in a Clergy Community of Practice (CCOP) or another approved (by the Call Team Chair/Registrar) plan

Possible motions

- “I move that [name] be recommended for continued approval for licensing as a local pastor.” [majority vote]
- “I move that [name] be discontinued for license as a local pastor, effective [date], for reasons that include [list reason(s) for discontinuance/withdrawal].” [majority vote]

Annual interview & credentialing requirements:

- Safe Gatherings certification verification
- Biographical information update
- Most recent Clergy Leadership Assessment form SPRC & Self
- Mentor Report
- DS Report
- Transcript documenting progress in studies
- Sermon
 - Video (YouTube), transcript/manuscript, and Worship Bulletin (or order of worship) from same service as sermon
- Written questions, answer all (1-3 pages)
 - Describe briefly your support system and/or family situation. Are there any special changes to share with the DCOOM/BOOM?
 - How are you progressing in your studies (undergraduate degree, Course of Study or Masters of Divinity degree)? What courses, readings and/or educational opportunities have strengthened your ministry? Have you participated in any other continuing education? If so, name the program(s) and share a brief description of what you learned.
 - Briefly describe your activities beyond the local church, such as in your community, in District or Conference work, church camps, outreach, etc.
 - Describe your physical and emotional health. Report any changes in your health or any ongoing concerns.
 - What are your plans in ministry for the coming year?
- Written questions, answer at least 4 (3-5 pages)
 - How are you using the distinctive Wesleyan emphases and characteristics of The United Methodist Church to lead your church in making disciples of Jesus Christ?

- Describe leadership qualities which you demonstrate in your ministry and the strengths and weaknesses of those qualities.
- Describe some of the ways your congregation lives out the theology of grace.
- How has your preaching improved since you were licensed? How have you achieved this improvement?
- Describe some of the ways you lead your congregation in offering pastoral care.
- Describe some ways that, in partnership with laity you make disciples of Jesus Christ, and train and empower these disciples to produce tangible fruits of love of God and love of neighbor.

DCOOM interview & approval (min. 45 minutes)

Required interview questions:

- What was the most difficult challenge you faced as a local pastor this past year and how did you meet it? What did you learn from the challenge and your response? How do you feel you have grown from the experience?
- What are you doing to grow your church and to reach new people for Christ? How are you working to deepen people's faith?
- How do you apply United Methodist theology/doctrine in your preaching and teaching?
- What is your current educational strategy (i.e. Course of Study, seminary, undergrad)? What courses have you completed since your last interview? What are your plans for the coming year? What do you understand as the "next steps" in your credentialing process?

Suggested interview questions:

- How is it with your soul? How are you caring for your soul? How are you caring for yourself?
- Describe your support system. How is it working for you?
- How has your call been shaped/challenged/affirmed in the past year?
- What does following Jesus mean to you and how do you live it out?
- How do you equip the laity of your congregation/charge? Can you give some specific examples?
- What was the greatest joy you experienced in ministry in the past year? Why?
- Share about your practice of preaching. How has your preaching changed since you were first licensed? What brought about the change?
- What does baptism mean to the church? How do you understand your role in baptism?
- What does communion mean to the church? How do you understand your role in communion?
- If you could only keep four stories about Jesus, which would you choose? Why?
- How do you understand the authority of the Bishop and District Superintendent in your ministry?
- What boundaries are important in working with parishioners and others whom you serve? Have you found yourself in a situation that was questionable? If so, how did you address it?
- What is the single most important thing you need right now to become a better pastor? Why?
- How are you integrating your personal and professional responsibilities? Do you experience tension between family/self and church expectations of your work, your time or your identity?

Continued Local Pastor in Residency Program ¶319

General information

- Credentialing standard: effectiveness; transformational leader in the ministry context; Does this person demonstrate increasing qualities of fruitful transformational leadership?
- Two-year Residency program required for all full-time local pastors not immediately pursuing the alternative educational route (Advanced Course of Study) for ordination as an elder; invitation is extended to part-time local pastors, but participation is not required
- Annual paperwork/interview while completing Residency

Possible motions

- “I move that [name] be recommended for continued approval for licensing as a local pastor.” [majority vote]
- “I move that [name] be discontinued for license as a local pastor, effective [date], for reasons that include [list reason(s) for discontinuance/withdrawal].” [majority vote]

Annual interview & credentialing requirements

- Safe Gatherings certification verification
- Biographical information
- Application
- Residency Report
- DS report
- Curriculum evaluation (first year of Residency only)
- Written questions (3-5 pages)
 - Describe briefly your support system and/or family situation. Are there any special changes to share with the DCOOM/BOOM?
 - Briefly describe your activities beyond the local church, such as in the community, in district or conference work, church camps, outreach, etc.
 - Describe your physical and emotional health. Report any changes in your health or any ongoing concerns.
 - Share about your devotional life. How are you growing spiritually?
 - What was the greatest joy you experienced in ministry during the past year? Why do you feel this was so?
 - What was your greatest challenge in ministry during this past year? Why do you feel this was so?
 - What are your plans in ministry for the coming year?

DCOOM interview (min. 45 minutes)

Consult the required and suggested interview questions for “Continued Local Pastor, mentoring required.” This is a transitional time for the local pastor as s/he moves from completion of Discipline required education and Great Plains required service/mentoring/interview requirements to the “Continued Local Pastor, mentoring not required” category.

Continued Local Pastor, mentoring not required ¶319

General information

- Credentialing standard: effectiveness; transformational leader in the ministry context
- Has consistently demonstrated effectiveness; has completed all educational requirements; has served at least five (5) years as a local pastor in Great Plains
 - An exemption to the service requirement may be requested by the local pastor with approval of request required from DS, BOOM Call Chair and BOOM Competency Chair; submit written request to BOOM registrar
- Minimal annual paperwork; no interview required although an interview may be appropriate during the first year of appointment in a new district or if problems are identified by the DS or local pastor; annual approval by DCOOM

Possible motions

- "I move that [name] be recommended for continued approval for licensing as a local pastor." [majority vote]
- "I move that [name] be discontinued for license as a local pastor, effective [date], for reasons that include [list reason(s) for discontinuance/withdrawal]." [majority vote]

Annual credentialing requirements:

- Safe Gatherings certification verification
- Application
- Written questions
 - Describe briefly your support system and/or family situation. Are there any special changes to share with the DCOOM/BOOM?
 - Briefly describe your activities beyond the local church, such as district or conference work, church camps, outreach, etc.
 - Describe your physical and emotional health. Report any changes in your health or any ongoing concerns.
 - Share about your devotional life. How are you growing spiritually?
 - What courses, readings, and/or educational opportunities have strengthened your ministry? What continuing education have you completed in the past year? Name the program(s) and share a brief description of what you learned.
 - What was the greatest joy you experienced in ministry during the past year? Why do you feel this was so?
 - What was your greatest challenge in ministry during this past year? Why do you feel this was so?
 - What are your plans in ministry for the coming year?

DCOOM approval; interview not required but may be requested by LP, DS or DCOOM (most common when a change of appointment means a district change but may be when DS identifies problems in ministry setting)

Recommendation to DCOOM: create a DCOOM team of 3-5 DCOOM members to review written work prior to DCOOM vote

Retired Local Pastor ¶320.5

RL or Retired Local Pastor status is a technical term reserved for local pastors who have been approved for retirement and are current with their studies at the time of retirement (made adequate progress as defined by Great Plains and/or completed the basic Course of Study). RL status allows retired local pastors who are not serving an appointment to retain voice, but not vote, at Annual Conference. RL status also allows an appointed pastor to request a limited license for a retired local pastor to assist with ministerial duties, including sacraments, in the church where the retired local pastor is a member.

Local pastors who are serving in retirement, unless qualifying for RL status, will continue as either full-time or part-time local pastors. If a local pastor who was not eligible at the time of retirement for RL status but becomes current with required studies while serving in retirement, the local pastor may request to be listed as a Retired Local Pastor (RL).

Associate Membership ¶322

General information

- Credentialing standard: effectiveness; fruitfulness in different ministry contexts; transformational leader; Does this person demonstrate fruitfulness in ministry?
- Review academic background (basic Course of Study or Masters of Divinity from an approved theological school plus at least 60 semester hours of undergrad education)
- Consider current practice of ministry and assess areas of developing competency; How has theological understanding developed since licensing?
- If approved, will interview with BOOM using same paperwork; if denied/deferred, must be approved for continued license for ongoing credentialing (by DCOOM if denied/deferred by DCOOM; by BOOM if denied/deferred by BOOM) or be discontinued

Possible motions

- "I move that [name] be recommended for election to associate membership." [$\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote]
- "I move that [name] be recommended for continued approval for license as a local pastor." [majority vote]
- "I move that [name] be discontinued for license as a local pastor, effective [date], for reasons that include [list reason(s) for discontinuance/withdrawal]." [majority vote]

Interview & credentialing requirements:

- Book of Discipline basic requirements: 40 years old; 4 years of full-time service or part-time equivalent; willingness to accept full-time appointment; agreement to highest ideals
- Transcript documenting (1) completion of COS or M.Div. (includes Basic Graduate Theological Studies classes), if not already on file and (2) completion of at least 60 semester hours of undergraduate education at an accredited school, if not already on file
- Safe Gatherings verification
- Psychological assessment; update if more than seven years old
- Background check; update if more than seven years old
- Medical report; if more than seven years old
- Application
- Most recent Clergy Leadership Assessment from SPRC & Self
- DS report
- Sermon
 - Video (YouTube); transcript/manuscript; Worship Bulletin/order of service from same service as sermon
- Completion of 2 years of GP Residency (starting with 2017 COS graduates), previous graduates must complete GP Yr 1 Residency or 2 years of Residency program in a predecessor GP conference
- Doctrinal questions (use adapted provisional questions in ¶324.9)
- Ministry questions (3-5 pages):
 - Describe briefly your support system and/or family situation. Are there any special changes to share with the DCOOM/BOOM?
 - Briefly describe your activities beyond the local church, such as in the community, in district or conference work, church camps, outreach, etc.

- Describe your physical and emotional health. Report any changes in your health or any ongoing concerns.
- Share about your devotional life. How are you growing spiritually?
- What was the greatest joy you experienced in ministry during the past year? Why do you feel this was so?
- What was your greatest challenge in ministry during this past year? Why do you feel this was so?
- What are your plans in ministry for the coming year?

DCOOM interview, using all submitted materials (min. 60 minutes)

BOOM interview (if recommended by DCOOM)

Required interview questions:

- Share your specific call to associate membership. What is your understanding of the specific responsibilities and privileges that come with associate membership?
- Are you and your family fully itinerant? If not, do you understand that you are not guaranteed a full-time appointment?
- How do you understand the mission of the church? What have you done to lead your congregation/charge in reaching new people and developing disciples for Christ? What have you done personally?

Suggested interview questions:

- Questions related to the submitted material, i.e. sermon, theological responses, assessments, etc. – particularly if the material is unclear or incomplete)
- What have you learned about yourself through participation in the Residency program? Note: persons who completed Course of Study prior to July 1, 2013 were not required to participate in the Great Plains Residency program.
- Paul talks about coming to a “sober judgment” of ourselves (Romans 12:3, NRSV). What is your “sober judgment” of your gifts and growing edges? How have you used your gifts and compensated for your growing edges in your ministry?
- How has your ministerial education and experience helped you address the deeper theological questions like suffering in your preaching and teaching?
- How do you understand the saving work of Jesus Christ? The work of the Holy Spirit?
- What is your understanding of the specifically Wesleyan understanding of grace?
- Describe your ethic for ministry. What values are most important for you? In addition to scripture, what “sources of authority” do you use to guide your ministry?
- How do you understand the covenant connection? How have you experienced the connection?
- How do you care for yourself – emotionally, mentally, spiritually, physically? Share about your understanding of boundaries in ministry.
- How do you prepare persons of different ages and abilities to understand about baptism and communion?
- What is your administrative or leadership style? What are the strengths and challenges associated with this style or styles of leadership?
- Share your understanding about the differences in ministry between local pastors, associate membership, deacons and elders. How do you see/understand these different types of ministry working together?

Provisional Membership ¶324

General information

- Credentialing standard: Readiness in the areas of Call/Disciplined Life, Proclamation/Discipleship and Theology/Doctrine; Does this person demonstrate a potential for a ministry of fruitful and transformation leadership?
- Review academic background; Persons certified as candidates on or after July 1, 2017, must be in final year of completing educational requirements; persons certified as candidates prior to July 1, 2017 must meet the education requirements for provisional membership according to the 2016 Book of Discipline ¶324.
- Consider field education experiences, internships and other practice of ministry experiences (volunteer or credentialed) to assess developing areas of competency; how has theological understanding evolved/developed since certification?
- If approved, will interview with BOOM using same paperwork; if denied/deferred, will need DCOOM approval of alternative status (continued certification as a candidate or approval for license) or be discontinued; if denied/deferred by BOOM, will need BOOM approval for alternative status

Possible motions

- “I move that [name] be recommended for election to provisional membership, commissioning and license for the ministry of a Deacon.” [$\frac{3}{4}$ majority]
- “I move that [name] be recommended for election to provisional membership, commissioning and license for the ministry of an Elder.” [$\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote]
- “I move that [name] be continued as a certified candidate for licensed or ordained ministry.” [majority vote]
- “I move that [name] be recommended for [approval/continued approval] for licensing as a local pastor.” [majority vote] Include licensing school information as needed
- “I move that [name] be discontinued [as a candidate/for license as a local pastor] effective [date], for reasons that include [list reason(s) for discontinuance].” [majority vote]

Interview & credentialing requirements:

- Certified candidate for one year (defined as one year by the time of commissioning)
- Official transcript(s) documenting educational requirements per status request - must be in final year of educational requirements with graduation before July 1 of the commissioning year (sent to BOOM registrar)
- Safe Gatherings certification
- Certificate of good health - update if more than seven years old
- Background check - update if report is more than seven years old
- Psychological assessment - update if more than seven years old
- Notarized statement - update if more than seven years old
- Application
- Biographical information
- Autobiographical statement
- DS report
- Supervising pastor report (if applicable)
- Sermon (video, manuscript/transcript & bulletin/order of worship)
- Curriculum evaluation

- Service setting report
- Doctrinal questions ¶324.9

DCOOM interview, using all submitted materials (min. 60 minutes)

BOOM interview, if recommended by DCOOM

Required interview questions:

- All of us are called by God into the “priesthood of all believers.” Why do you feel you are called into ordained ministry? Share your specific call to ordained ministry. What is your understanding of the meaning of ordination?
- What leadership have you taken in the local church (as a lay person or local pastor)? Share about some formative experiences you’ve had while leading in the local church.
- Why are you United Methodist? Or, for persons transferring from other Methodist or other Christian denominations, why do you want to be a clergy member of the UMC?
- Is there a different standard of holy living required for the ordained clergy (as compared to licensed clergy or laity)? Explain your answer.
- Is your family supportive of your desire to be a UM pastor? If seeking commissioning as a provisional elder, will you (and your family) willingly and obediently itinerate at the direction of the bishop and cabinet? What do you understand are the possible consequences of limiting your availability for itinerancy?

Suggested interview questions:

- Questions related to the submitted material, i.e. sermon, theological responses, assessments, etc. – particularly if the material is unclear or incomplete)
- What have you learned about yourself through your seminary experience?
- At this point, the Board is looking for “readiness” for ministry. Based on your current educational and practical/ministry experiences why you think or feel that you are “ready” for provisional membership.
- What do you anticipate will be among your greatest joys and greatest challenges as you experience being appointed as a provisional member?
- Distinguish between the specific types/forms of ministry of the local pastor, deacon and elder.
- In what ways have you grown in your understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ since you were certified as a candidate or first approved for appointment as an OE/OF?
- If recommended for provisional membership, what do you understand to be the next steps as you move towards ordination/full membership?
- Describe your ethic for ministry. What values are most important for you? In addition to scripture, what “sources of authority” do you use/anticipate using to guide your ministry?
- How do you understand the covenant connection? How have you experienced the connection?
- How do you care for yourself – emotionally, mentally, spiritually, physically? Share about your understanding of boundaries in ministry and ways you protect your boundaries.
- How has your theology changed since you have started your formal theological education?
- What would you anticipate including in a thematic sermon for Pentecost? Trinity Sunday?

Other non-Methodist Denomination/Fellowship Approved for Appointment

¶346.2

General information

- Credentialing standard: Readiness for service in the UMC; Effectiveness in past service in another denomination; has this person demonstrated effectiveness in previous service settings?
- OF clergy must meet with DCOOM within five months of start of appointment (or the next scheduled DCOOM interview). OF clergy will meet annually with DCOOM until completion of UM studies (generally 1-2 years or a total of 2-3 interviews).
- Following completion of UM studies, the DS will certify to the BOOM registrar that the OF continues to be Safe Gatherings certified and is meeting at least annually with the DS for supervision.

Possible motion

- "I move that [name], credentialed and in good standing in [other Christian denomination/fellowship], be recommended to serve an appointment in the Great Plains Conference." [majority vote]

Interview & credentialing requirements for initial credentialing:

District Superintendent will work with BOOM registrar to receive "" requirements prior to the start of the appointment.*

- *Safe Gatherings certification
- *Copy of credentials
- *Assurance of Christian faith and experience (certification of good standing in denomination and recommendation of Great Plains clergyperson)
- *Agreement with and support of UM doctrine, discipline and polity
- Current certificate of good health
- Background check
- Psychological assessment
- Notarized statement
- Application
- Biographical information
- Transcripts documenting college and seminary work

DCOOM interview (min. 45 minutes)

Interview & credentialing requirements while completing UM studies:

- Safe Gatherings certification
- Application
- SPRC report
- DS report

DCOOM interview (min. 30 minutes)

Required interview questions:

- First year: What has brought you to appointed service in the Great Plains Conference of The United Methodist Church? What differences have you experienced compared to your denomination? What similarities?

- Ongoing years: What have you learned from your UM studies class(es)? What do you understand to be your next step(s) in credentialing?

Suggested interview questions:

- What is your understanding of some of the unique characteristics of the UMC?
- What does your support system look like? How do you care for yourself physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually?
- What has been your greatest joy and greatest challenge in ministry? Why?
- Consider other questions listed on the “Continued Local Pastor, mentoring required” page

Other Methodist/Other Denomination transfer ¶347

General information

- Credentialing standard: Readiness for service in the UMC; Effectiveness in past service in another denomination
- Must consult with District Superintendent for episcopal willingness to receive transfer before starting the credentialing requirements.
- Other Methodist/Other Denomination clergy will only be received as a provisional member or local pastor (depending on educational equivalence). BOOM registrar, in consultation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, will determine educational equivalence.
- DCOOM (for local pastor and provisional member transfers) and BOOM (for provisional member transfers) will consider the transfer request and recommendation/approval of local pastor or provisional member status only after (1) the bishop has indicated a willingness to receive the OE/OF clergyperson by transfer and (2) the BOOM registrar has verified educational equivalence.

DCOOM should use the “Continued Local Pastor, mentoring required” information for persons requesting to be received as a local pastor.

DCOOM should use the “Provisional Membership” information for persons requesting to be received as provisional members.

If either DCOOM or BOOM discern that an OE/OF clergyperson is not ready for transfer, the clergyperson may be continued in the current OE/OF status.

Section 4: Policies and Processes

Conflict of Interest/Recusal

The guidelines set for the Board of Ordained Ministry shall also govern the DCOOM work.

Great Plains Board of Ordained Ministry Guidelines for Information Sharing and Recusal

Purpose Statement and pre-assumptions:

- In the BOOM interviews, our desire is to have the maximum pertinent information shared with the Board, presented with integrity and fairly for all parties
- When there is any information to be shared outside of the information the whole Board has on a candidate, that can result in advantage or disadvantage for the candidate.
- Any information shared must be shared with professionalism and integrity.
- We would prefer full participation of Board members in both discussion and voting on candidates, but recusal is an option.

Guidelines

- If one shares information at interviews that is not in the candidate file, one must first disclose their relationship with the candidate. The Board may request elaboration of the relationship and the circumstances of the information being shared.
- Any information to be shared must be substantive, fact-based, empirical and relevant to the process of becoming clergy and as to the role of clergy.
- New information shall not be shared after the interview unless the candidate has an opportunity to respond.
- If a Board member feels they cannot fairly evaluate a candidate based on the information they have, they shall voluntarily recuse themselves.
- If a Board member is a family member of a candidate, they will recuse themselves.

Note: For these guidelines, recusal means to remove oneself from the discussion of and voting on a candidate by leaving the room.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism constitutes the copying of others' work and submitting it in as your own. Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Candidates are responsible for ensuring accurate citation of all non-original work that is included in submitted documents – including work previously published by the candidate in a different document/source.

Plagiarism may include (but is not limited to):

- Submitting someone else's work as your own, in whole or in part
- Copying sentences or ideas from someone else without giving credit (citation)
- Failing to identify a quote with quotation marks
- Providing incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- Changing words but essentially copying the sentence structure or general idea of a source without providing credit
- Copying so many words or ideas from a source (or sources) that it comprises the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not

(All the above is adapted from: <http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/what-is-plagiarism>)

Actions of plagiarism will not be tolerated and may result in the denial of the requested status and/or discontinuance.

Process to identify plagiarism

The Great Plains Board of Ordained Ministry uses plagiarism software to check submitted documents for possible plagiarism. Any document submitted to a District Committee or Board of Ordained Ministry may be checked with this software. At a minimum, candidates requesting:

- Provisional Membership and Commissioning
- Associate Membership and Recognition
- Full Membership and ordination as a Deacon or Elder

will have their sermon, Bible study (if required for requested status) and theological questions submitted to identify duplication.

The Board of Ordained Ministry Registrar will oversee the submissions and provide initial interpretation of results. Identified duplication may be deemed benign (such as the use of common phrases, i.e. “scripture, tradition, reason, and experience” or repetition of a Disciplinary question in a response) or problematic (such as substantial duplication of a sermon illustration or theological/scriptural interpretation without citation).

At the Board level, review of the submitted document and identified duplication will be automatic when a document contains more than 20% total duplication. The Registrar will complete the initial review of the identified duplication and report findings to a review team composed of members of the Board’s Competency Team. The review team will determine which reports need referral to the appropriate BOOM Interview Team and/or Board of Ordained Ministry for further conversation with the candidate, response and/or action.

Approved by Board of Ordained Ministry October 2016

UMCARES/UMCARESplus

UMCARES (United Methodist Candidacy and Record Entry System) is a software database used by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) to track the credentialing (candidacy) progress of an individual and/or for the psychological assessment process (for Conferences that use GBHEM for the psychological assessment). As soon as a person becomes a Declared Candidate, their contact information is entered into UMCARES by the District Superintendent or their designee.

UMCARESplus is an expansion of the basic system used by the Great Plains Conference to track candidates and digitally store credentialing related information for all levels of credentialing that involve the DCOOM or BOOM using Conference based credentialing tracks.

UMCARES/UMCARESplus includes the GBHEM tracks of Candidacy, Psychological Assessment and Psychological Assessment (Non-Trad/Retake). Effective July 1, 2017, it will also include Great Plains specific tracks such as GP Certified Candidate, GP Continued Candidate, GP Local Pastor, GP Associate Member, etc. Some or all of the Great Plains tracks may be linked to a specific credentialing year, i.e. GP 2017-2018 Continued Candidate. Each Track has designated Steps, outlining tasks which must be completed. It is the responsibility of the person seeking credentialing to ensure the steps are completed. Specific directions for each track and step are in

UMCARES/UMCARESpplus. Consult the Help section of UMCARES/UMCARESpplus for tutorials and “How to...” information.

UMCARESpplus replaces www.pathwaystoministry.com as the Great Plains credentialing tracking and document storage system. All information submitted in Pathways is located in UMCARESpplus in a historical track.

Psychological Assessment & Background Check

All persons seeking credentialing through the Great Plains Conference are required to complete a psychological assessment and background check. The only exceptions are persons from other Conferences or other Methodist denominations (OE status) who seek to be approved for appointment and do not intend to transfer their credentials to the Great Plains Conference. Persons from other Methodist denominations who wish to transfer to Great Plains must complete the background check and psychological assessment processes.

Both the background check and psychological assessment processes start with the submission of the Great Plains authorization form to the Conference registrar who oversees both processes. A fee is assessed by the Great Plains Board of Ordained Ministry to cover a portion of the cost of these documents. The remaining cost is covered by the Board of Ordained Ministry’s budget.

The Great Plains Conference uses the Behavioral Health Guidelines from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in evaluation of the background check and psychological assessment. If any flags or issues are identified, the Conference registrar will communicate the issue(s) with the District Superintendent and the DCOOM registrar.

Psychological Assessment

The Great Plains Conference uses the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and UMCARESpplus in the completion of the psychological assessment. The psychological assessment report is based on information provided by the candidate in a Personal Data Inventory, references named by the candidate, completion of a GBHEM provided testing packet and an interview with the Ministry Assessment Specialist (MAS). Currently the testing packet consists of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory 2 (MMPI-2), 16 PF Basic Interpretative Report (16 PF) and an Incomplete Sentences Blank (ISB).

Persons seeking to be certified as a candidate who are not currently assigned as a District Superintendent Assignment, normally complete testing as part of a Candidacy Summit. All other persons (DSA, CLM, OF, etc.) complete testing with a proctor assigned by the conference registrar (usually in consultation with the District Superintendent). All steps in the UMCARESpplus psychological assessment track must be completed before the Conference registrar will request the testing packet.

The conference registrar receives the final report from the designated MAS. A copy of the report is provided to the candidate, uploaded to UMCARESpplus and shared with the District Superintendent and DCOOM registrar. A completed report will take a minimum of four weeks to complete – and may take much longer depending on the candidate’s responsiveness.

Background Check

The Great Plains Conference uses the services of Oxford Document Management for the background check process. The Conference registrar submits an initial request to Oxford Documents Management who sends an information packet to the candidate. A completed report provides 15 years of information (or back to age 18) and includes a national criminal background check, a credit check, a vehicle records check and references requested from past employers and educational institutions. Oxford Documents sends the completed report to the conference registrar who provides a copy to the candidate, uploads a copy to UMCARESplus and shares a copy with the DS and DCOOM registrar.

A completed report may take up to three months from the time the candidate submits information to Oxford Document Management – or longer if information is incomplete or the candidate has resided outside the United States.

Certified Lay Ministry (education & credentialing)

(From the Great Plains CLM Manual) The primary intent for the Certified Lay Minister (CLM) at its inception was to serve as a congregational leader in smaller churches as part of a ministry team under the supervision of a clergy person. CLMs may preach the word and guide the program ministry and mission of a congregation. However, CLMs may provide leadership in many other contexts and have responsibility for other expressions of mission and ministry, both within the congregation and in the community, district, or annual conference. While CLMs can provide the essential guidance and pastoral leadership and services necessary for effective mission and ministry in churches, they are not intended to replace clergy, but rather to work beside them and with them as part of a team ministry. As such, they do not wear clerical robes or stoles, and they do not have sacramental authority (such as serving Communion or performing baptisms).

The educational program for Certified Lay Ministers is overseen by Congregational Excellence staff. CLM credentialing is primarily overseen by the District Committees on Ordained Ministry although final approval for CLM status rests with Lay Servant Ministries.

Someone may apply to participate in the CLM education program without ever seeking credentialing or CLM status. However, someone seeking to be assigned as a CLM must complete both the educational and credentialing requirements. To be listed in the Business of the Annual Conference (BAC) report, the CLM must be approved by DCOOM and have successfully completed all required CLM courses. While completing the CLM classes, a CLM may be assigned and listed in the Ministerial Directory & Appointment List when certified/approved by DCOOM.

Candidacy Summit

The Candidacy Summit is a two-day retreat that kick starts the candidacy process. It is an opportunity for discerning candidates to (1) connect with others who are exploring and starting the licensing or ordination process; (2) learn about different types of clergy credentialing and the options for licensed/ordained ministry; and (3) prepare for service to God through the UMC. Most participants will also complete the testing that is part of the required psychological assessment and begin the required background check. During the Summit, discerning candidates are assigned to candidacy mentoring groups and complete specific mentoring sessions. The Summit represents a commitment from the discerning candidate and from the church that both are serious about discerning God's call for a discerning candidate's life and taking their place in the leadership of the United Methodist Church. The Candidacy Summit will be held twice a year (June and January).

Licensing School

Licensing School is an intensive course designed to prepare people called to serve in pastoral ministry. Licensing School focuses especially on the pastoral behaviors, practices, and theological framework necessary to enable people to thrive as pastoral leaders under appointment in the United Methodist Church. The 2016 Book of Discipline ¶315.2(c) requires persons who are approved for license to either complete the studies for license (Licensing School) or have 1/3 of a Masters of Divinity degree completed. A DCOOM may require a candidate to attend Licensing School even if 1/3 or more of an M.Div. degree is completed.

Before registration, a student must (1) be certified as a candidate and approved for license as a local pastor by their District Committee on Ordained Ministry or (2) be serving as a District Superintendent Assignment (DSA) and on a certified candidacy credentialing track. If neither requirement is met, a student may not register or participate in Licensing School.

The Great Plains Licensing School is currently offered only in a two-week format. Week 1 is offered in June. Week 1 may be offered in January if minimum registration numbers are met. Week 2 is offered at the end of July. Both weeks must be completed in the same calendar year to retain eligibility for a license for pastoral ministry. Contact the Conference registrar for more information.

Course of Study

The Course of Study (COS) is prescribed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry – Division of Ordained Ministry (¶ 1421.3d). It includes License School and the Five-Year Basic Course of Study. In prescribing the COS, the Division of Ordained Ministry is responsible for developing curriculum, purpose and learning goals; providing resources; establishing, maintaining, and evaluating License Schools and Course of Study Schools (COS); keeping central records on all students, and reporting on student progress to each Board of Ordained Ministry every year.

Curriculum

The Basic Five-Year Course of Study is a year-round experiential and classroom learning process. This process assumes cooperation between the instructors in the Course of Study Schools and the clergy mentors in the annual conferences. Each Regional Course of Study School shall offer all 20 courses of the Basic Five-Year COS and shall seek to meet the needs of both the full-time and part-time local pastors. Normally courses are to be taken in the sequence prescribed by the curriculum. At a minimum, students are expected to take first year courses in the first year of study and fifth year courses in the final year of study.

Regional Course of Study Schools

Regional Course of Study Schools are established by the Division of Ordained Ministry at locations central to the student populations, taking into consideration such factors as availability of United Methodist theological school faculty, library resources, dormitory space, the density of student populations, etc. Full time local pastors shall attend one of the approved Regional Course of Study Schools.

Extension Schools for Part-Time Local Pastors

Some local pastors serve churches on a part-time basis. Some of them are bi-vocational and are unable to attend a Regional Course of Study School. In such cases, where numbers make it sustainable, The Division of Ordained Ministry authorizes a Regional School to have an Extension site. These classes are available in a week end format.

Hybrid and Online Classes

Most of the basic Course of Study classes are available in an online format through the GBHEM's Division of Ordained Ministry. Some Course of Study schools are also exploring the possibility of online courses. By Discipline, no more than one-half of the classes may be taken in this format. ¶322.1(3) For more information, please download Form 110 from the Forms Library.

<http://www.gbhem.org/education/licensing-and-course-study/resources-forms>

Some schools are also developing or offering classes in a hybrid format – part online and part in-person. These classes are considered “in person.”

From: <http://www.gbhem.org/education/licensing-and-course-study>

Great Plains Course of Study policies

Adequate progress in studies is a requirement for continuation of a license as a local pastor (2016 BOD ¶319). Course of Study is required (and scholarships available) only when someone approved for license is under appointment (and granted a license).

- For local pastors who are completing an undergraduate or seminary degree, adequate progress means completing a sufficient number of courses each year to graduate within the time frame set by the school (usually eight years).
- For local pastors who are completing the Course of Study, adequate process is contingent on the percentage of the appointment.
 - ¼ time local pastor – one class per year
 - ½ time local pastor – two classes per year
 - ¾ time local pastor – three classes per year
 - Full-time local pastor – four classes per year
- Four classes is the maximum number of Course of Study classes that can be completed in an academic year. An exception of one additional class in a year may be requested by a student. Such a request may be granted by the COS school on a case by case basis, only after approval of the request by the District Superintendent and Conference Registrar, the director of the COS school and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Local pastors who reach mandatory retirement age who (1) are still appointed and (2) have not yet completed the Basic Course of Study may continue with Course of Study classes, but will no longer be required to participate in Course of Study.

Transcript evaluation for Course of Study/Advanced Course of Study Equivalency

Graduate level education may be evaluated for equivalency credit for the Course of Study and/or Advanced Course of Study requirements. Undergraduate coursework will be considered for an equivalency evaluation in the Great Plains if the education was completed as part of a ministry degree program at a United Methodist school located in the Great Plains Conference. Course work completed at a UM school outside the Great Plains Conference may be considered for an equivalency evaluation at the discretion of the Board's Competency Team.

Upon a candidate's request for an evaluation, the conference registrar will submit an official transcript or transcripts (provided by the candidate) to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry Division of Ordained Ministry following the guidelines set by GBHEM (currently detailed at <http://www.bomlibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/TranscriptEvaluationGuidelines.pdf>). In general, the Board of Ordained Ministry will abide by the equivalency decision made by GBHEM, but evaluation of “credit from schools outside the United States or credit for some institutions not

listed by the University Senate may require further consultation with the conference Board of Ordained Ministry” (GBHEM Transcript Evaluation Guidelines).

Mentoring

Mentoring in the Great Plains UMC takes a variety of different forms. Building a relationship, sharing information, facilitating growth and challenge, modeling for ministry and creating space for discernment are a few of the roles that a mentor may play. Most of the formal mentoring that takes place in the Great Plains UMC does so under the direction of the Board of Ordained Ministry and the Office of Clergy Excellence with group mentoring the norm. The different types of mentoring include: Candidacy Summit mentoring; Preparation for Ministry and Practice of Ministry groups for continuing certified candidates and local pastors required to be in a mentoring relationship; and Residency mentoring. The mentoring requirement may be fulfilled through participation in a Clergy Community of Practice (CCOP) or in an approved alternative mentoring format (approved by the DS and the chairs of the BOOM Call and Competency teams). A request for an alternative mentoring format should be sent to the Conference registrar.

Residency Program

Since 2013, the Great Plains Residency program has included the following participants:

- Commissioned Deacons following the completion of education requirements for full connection.
- Commissioned Elders following the completion of education requirements for full connection.
- Full Time Local Pastors upon completion of Course of Study (Residency Year 1 only); starting in 2017, full-time local pastors will complete 2 years of the Residency program; part-time local pastors are invited to participate but participation is not required
- TiM Associates

The Great Plains Conference Residency Program is a two-year retreat model focused on developing greater knowledge and capacity in spiritual formation/discernment, leadership skills/effectiveness, theological integration, communication, navigating change, self-care and pastoral care.

Year 1 includes a series of five retreats (Sunday evening-Tuesday noon/Wednesday noon for the first retreat) that are scheduled between September-April. Core models and methods in Year 1 include:

- Process Communication Model (Core Competency Model and Advanced Model for Conflict Resolution): PCM® is a comprehensive model of communication with the underlying purpose of teaching skills to connect, engage, motivate and resolve conflict with different personality types in the congregation. PCM is used to help pastors create more compelling communication, engage a wider audience, craft more engaging worship environments, facilitate increased participation, recognize and respond to sabotage behavior in themselves and others and anticipate deep existential issues in pastoral care.
- Social-Emotional Learning, Self-Efficacy and Positive Psychology: Best practice research from these fields are applied to help pastors bring more positive energy, leverage diversity, individualize their approach and meet rapidly changing worship needs. Rather than relying on duty, tradition and old habits to drive participation, residents learn new approaches that inspire, build confidence and engage the whole person.

- Theological Application and Integration: Application assignments, activities and exercises help participants take new skills and understandings directly into their ministry and learn from their own context as well as from others in the program.
- Drama Triangle: Developed by Dr. Stephen Karpman in the 1970s, this model of conflict offers a simple and powerful framework for understanding dysfunctional congregational dynamics and interpersonal relationships.
- Cycle of Compassionate Change: Developed by Next Element, the Cycle of Compassionate Change offers a comprehensive framework, with metrics, to guide pastors towards self-awareness and more open, resourceful and persistent strategies for reducing drama. As a systems-change model, this methodology is practical, tangible and immediately applicable.
- Coaching: Residents may choose to receive personal coaching with the qualified trainer. Coaching sessions can be used to resolve personal or congregational conflict, strengthen marriages or parenting relationships, focus on a personal or ministry goal, create new communication materials unique to a ministry setting, or in other ways the resident might find beneficial. Setting up systems for accountability and asking for help from professionals and peers are essential components for life-long effectiveness in ministry modeled in class and experienced through coaching

Year 2 includes 3 retreats and a one-day gathering (prior to Orders & Fellowship). The focus for Year 2 is ongoing reflection and growth in Year 1 learnings as well as interaction with expert speakers covering a variety of practical topics. In the past, topics have included visioning, time-management, stewardship and more.

Cost of the Residency program is primarily covered through the use of Ministerial Education Funds and BOOM budget. Participants are asked to contribute \$500 in the first year and \$250 in the second year. The Residency Program retreats will meet all of your continuing education requirements. Participants are expected to attend each of the retreats and the Residency coordinator highly recommends arranging for back-up funeral coverage and back-up plans for sick family members or unforeseeable events. If personal illness or emergencies cause a participant to be absent, that person will be invited to participate again the following year.

Ministerial Education Fund and other scholarships

Scholarships for persons completing Course of Study, Advanced Course of Study or seminary classes (at a University Senate approved seminary) are eligible for scholarships administered by the Great Plains Board of Ordained Ministry (www.greatplainsumc.org/boomscholarships). Course of Study, Advanced Course of Study and seminary work (first graduate theological degree) are eligible for Ministerial Education (MEF) funds. There is additional scholarship money available through the Great Plains Seminary Trust Fund. See the webpage for more detailed information and a link to the application(s).

Also on the scholarship webpage is information about the Pass the Torch scholarship administered by the Great Plains retired clergy. Other scholarships are available through the Nebraska United Methodist Foundation (<http://www.numf.org/scholarships/>) and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (<http://www.gbhem.org/loans-and-scholarships> for undergrad/seminary students or <http://www.gbhem.org/sites/default/files/Form%20116%20Part-time-Scholarship-02-2016.pdf> for ACOS, professional certification, deacon alternative track, transferring clergy UM classes).

Section 5: Resources

Candidacy Step by Step Guide

The licensed or ordained ministry is recognized by the United Methodist Church as a called out and set apart ministry. Therefore, it is appropriate that those persons who present themselves as candidates for licensed or ordained ministry be examined regarding the authenticity of their call by God to set apart ministry. This document is to be used as a guide to becoming a certified candidate.

Step 1: Prior to Candidacy Summit

Those beginning candidacy for licensed or ordained ministry shall:

- Contact a clergy person in your ministry setting, another United Methodist clergy person or your District Superintendent.
- Read and discuss *The Christian as Minister* with her or him.
- Be a member of a UMC or a baptized participant of a recognized UM campus ministry or other UM ministry setting for one (1) year.
- Attend interview with District Superintendent.
- Interview Date: ____/____/____
- Send a letter by email to your District Superintendent and copy the DCOOM registrar, indicating the following:
 - Completion of *The Christian as Minister* and email address and / or phone number of clergy person
 - Name and contact information of your ministry setting (local church / campus ministry, etc.)
 - Involvement in your ministry setting
 - Statement of call
 - Request for entrance into Candidacy Process
- After receiving the letter from the candidate, the District Superintendent will invite the candidate to the candidacy process through UMCARES (GBHEM online systems) and assign Conference Registrar (registrar@greatplainsumc.org) as mentor for UMCARES.
- Add candidacy@gbhem.org to your contact list / address book.

Step 2: Candidacy Summit Registration

Due Dates: approximately June 1 (for June Summit) or December 1 (for January Summit)

- Register for Great Plains Candidacy Summit, including payment of \$250.00 registration fee to the conference registrar. Where possible, the local church or ministry setting is encouraged to assist candidates with the expense of candidacy.
- Respond to email UMCARES invitation.
- Complete the following steps in the "Candidacy" track
 - Candidacy Application Form
 - District Superintendent Signature
 - Mentor Signature
 - Administration Fee
 - Request Hardcover Candidacy Guidebook
- Complete the following steps in the "Psychological Assessment" track

- MAS selection (by geography)
 - David Bowman (Wichita, KS); Matthew Hutt (Scottsbluff, NE); Michael Luebbert (Omaha, NE) or Andrew Schauer (Topeka, KS)
- Release of Information
- Personal Data Inventory
- Personal / Professional References

Prepare for Summit Mentoring Group (Complete prior to Candidacy Summit)

- Form a Prayer team – invite a 3 to 5 person team to pray for you during this journey
- Read 1 Samuel 3; Esther 1-4, 8; Acts 9:1-31 and Candidacy Guidebook pgs 16-19
- Write your call story. (2 page maximum)
- Read Candidacy Guidebook chapter 1 (pages 11-21) for first mentoring session; Read Candidacy Guidebook chapter 2 (pages 23-33) for second mentor session
- Additional steps may be determined as plans for the Candidacy Summit are finalized.

Step 3: Candidacy Summit Attendance (June or January)

The Candidacy Summit is a common ministry preparation experience for the purpose of building collegiality and understanding among the varieties of ministry for candidates. After completion of the Candidacy Summit, the candidate will have a maximum of five (5) years to become a certified candidate.

The Candidacy Summit will include:

- An Orientation to Ministry, including laity, deacons, elders, local pastors, extension ministries, etc.
- Complete Psychological Assessment testing
- Assignment of candidate to a Summit Mentor and a Summit Mentor Group. (Mentor Groups will be assigned primarily by geography and technology will be utilized for students attending college or seminary out of state.)

Step 4: Post-Candidacy Summit Mentoring Sessions

- Meet with Summit Mentor Group for three (3) meetings to cover Exploring Candidacy Curriculum.
- Mentoring Group Session – Date: ____/____/____
- Mentoring Group Session – Date: ____/____/____
- Mentoring Group Session – Date: ____/____/____
- Meet one-on-one with Mentor to prepare for DCOOM.
- Meeting Date: ____/____/____

Psychological Assessment

- Respond to the contact initiated by the MAS to schedule an appointment to discuss the results of your Psychological Assessment Report. The MAS will contact the candidate to set the appointment after receiving the scored testing documents and at least 3 of the 4 references listed in the Personal / Professional Reference step in UMCARES.
- Date: ____/____/____
- After the appointment, the assessor will send the Psychological Assessment Report to the Conference Registrar who will provide a copy to you, your District Superintendent and your DCOOM registrar.

Step 5: Preparation for DCOOM Certification Interview

Step 5 may be completed before or after Steps 3 and 4.

- Contact clergy person in your ministry setting to schedule a meeting of the pastor-parish relations committee or equivalent body specified by DCOOM.
 - PPRC Meeting Date: ____/____/____
- Complete and email Theological Statement/Statement of Call to the clergy person, PPRC Chair, DCOOM Registrar and Conference Registrar.

PPRC or body specified by the DCOOM

- Recommended (*Pastor shall contact the DS to request a special session of the charge conference and schedule a meeting at your church or ministry setting to request approval.*)
 - Complete and submit Declaration of Candidacy or Continued Candidacy for Licensed or Ordained Ministry and Approval of the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee or Equivalent Body.
- Not recommended (*Staff Parish Chair contacts the District Superintendent*)

Charge Conference or body specified by the DCOOM

- Recommended by 2/3 majority vote on a written ballot (*Candidate contacts the DCOOM Registrar requesting Certification Interview.*)
 - Complete and submit **Form 02** – Approval of the Charge Conference for Candidacy and Continued Candidacy.
- Not recommended

Step 6: Application for DCOOM Interview

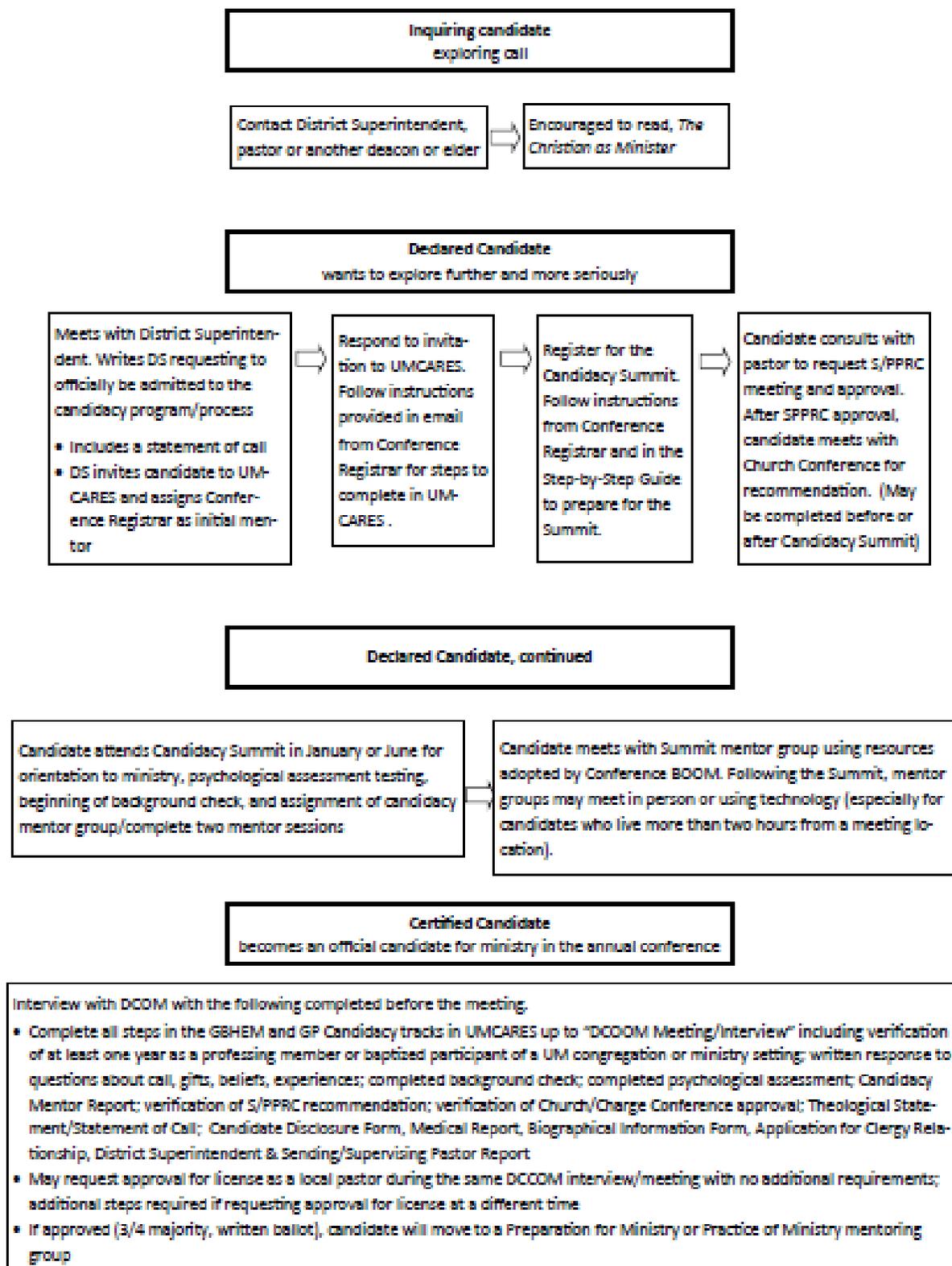
- Complete all steps/submit all forms and documents listed in the Great Plains Certified Candidate track in UMCARES up to the DCOOM Interview step. Candidate may request approval for License as a local pastor during the same interview (questions for both certification and license will be asked but there will be no additional paperwork or UMCARES track).

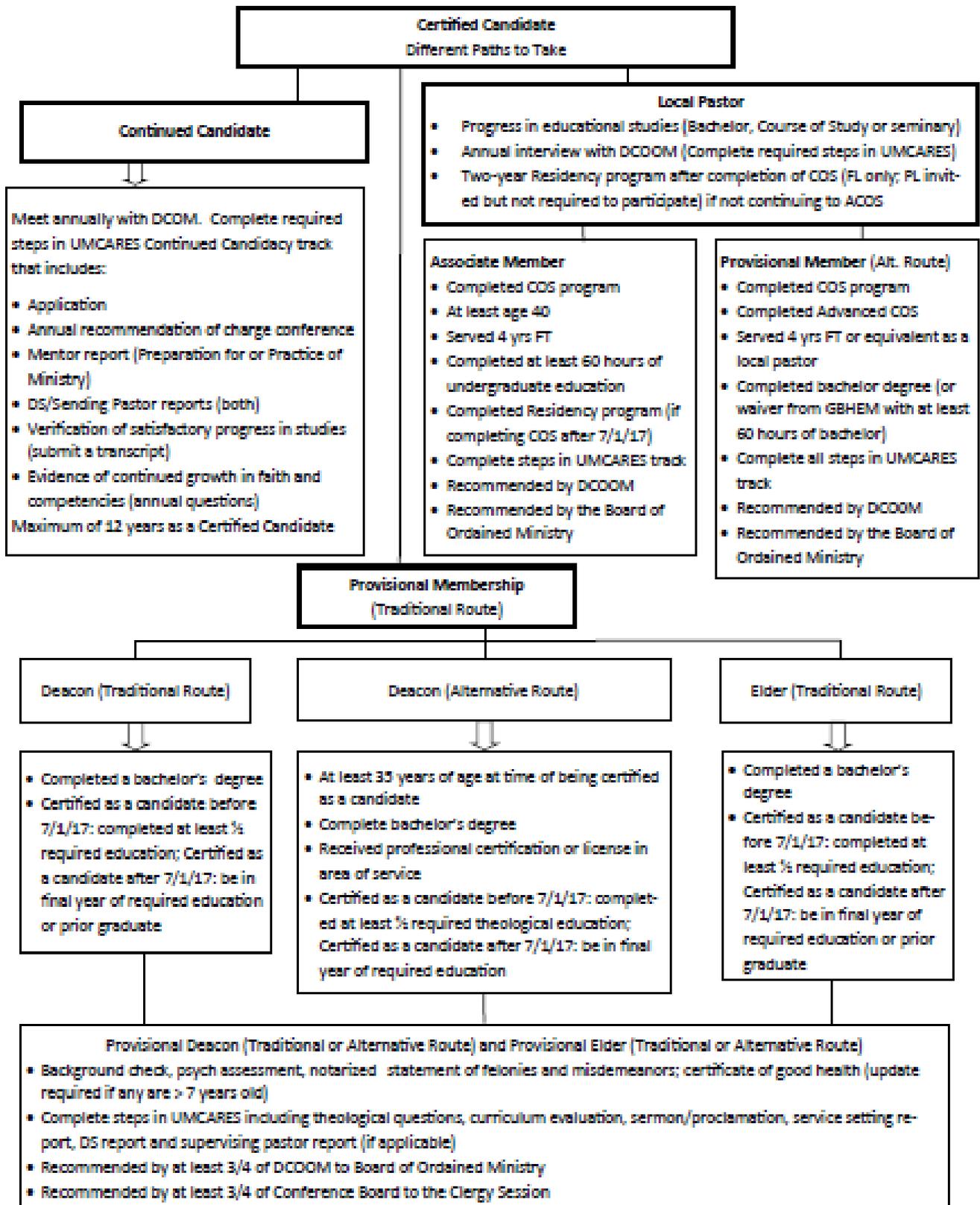
Step 7: DCOOM Interview

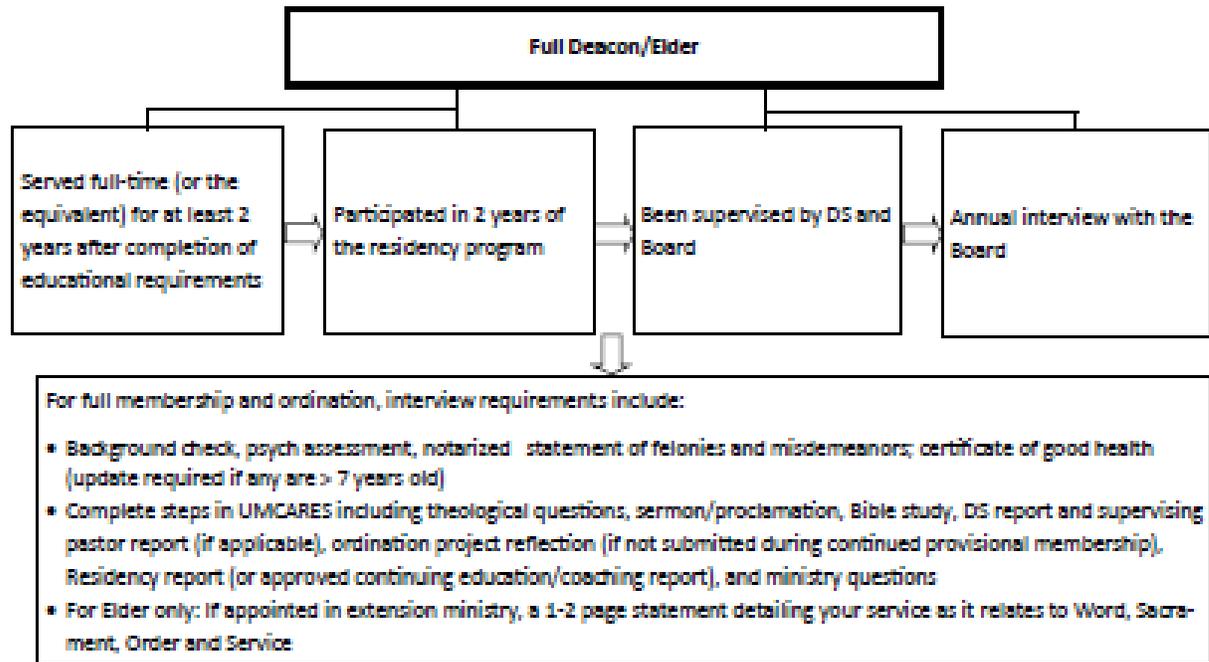
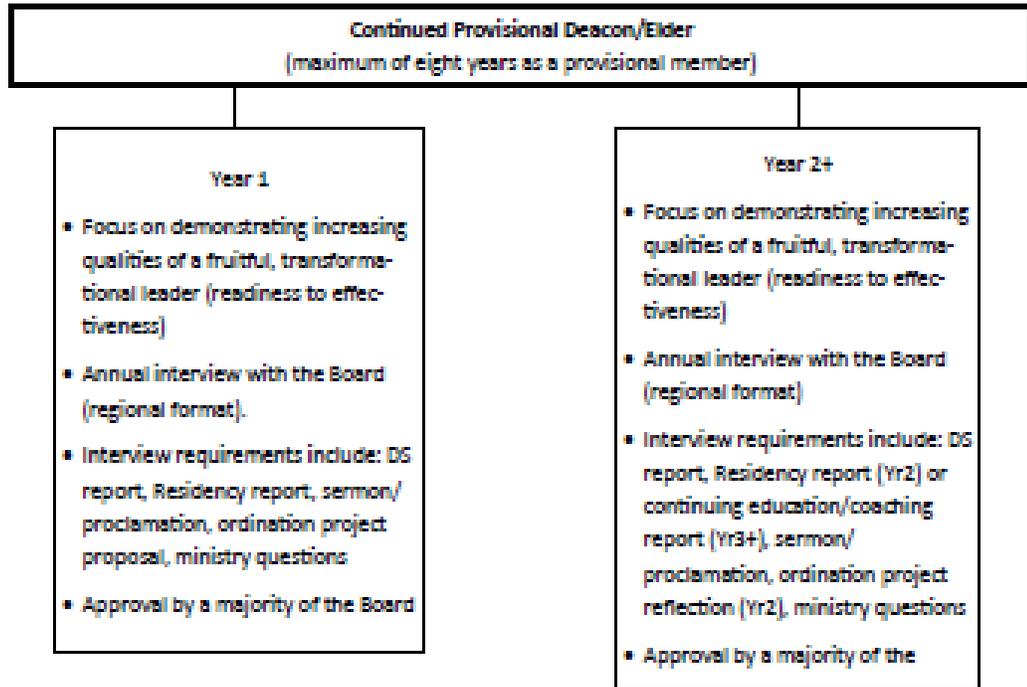
- DCOOM interview will not be scheduled until all requirements for certification as a candidate have been completed.
- A $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote and written ballot are required for one of the following:
 - Certify as a candidate (Yes; ¶310.2)
 - Delayed (Not yet; specific focus areas may be assigned.)
 - Discontinue (Discontinued from the candidacy process.)
- After the interview, meet with the DCOOM registrar or district superintendent to discuss next steps.

Credentialing Flowcharts

Great Plains Process for Licensed and Ordained Ministry







***Basic Graduate Theological Studies (required courses for all deacons and elders)**

- | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| ▪ Old Testament | ▪ Church history | ▪ Worship/liturgy | ▪ UM polity |
| ▪ New Testament | ▪ Mission of church in the world | ▪ UM doctrine | ▪ UM history |
| ▪ Theology | ▪ Evangelism | | |

KSAPs (Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, Personal Characteristics)

The Board of Ordained Ministry of the Great Plains Conference uses four major areas – Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Personal Characteristics to help candidates identify their strengths and growing edges for effectiveness in credentialed ministry in the Great Plains Conference. This information is adopted from “Focus Group Results” by Richard P. DeShon which was part of a multi-year study on clergy effectiveness in The United Methodist Church. A copy of the document is available at:

http://www.gbhem.org/sites/default/files/documents/bom/bom_jobanalysisdeshton_0.pdf.

Definitions for KSAPs

Knowledge: defined as an organized set of principles and facts applying to general domains

- *Administration* – Knowledge of the principles involved in the organization and coordination of people and resources.
- *Calling to Ministry* – The ability to experience, identify, and understand the inner urge to pursue the pastorate as a vocation.
- *Church History* – Knowledge of the history and development of the local church.
- *Clerical* – Knowledge of administrative procedures and systems, such as managing files and records, designing forms, using a computer, sending emails, and searching the internet.
- *Community Demographics* – Knowledge of the demographics of the community in which the local church exists and of the issues important to the people of those demographics.
- *Community History* - Knowledge of the history and culture of the community in which the local church exists.
- *Counseling Principles* – Knowledge of principles, methods, and procedures for diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of physical and mental dysfunctions, and for career counseling and guidance.
- *Management Principles* – Knowledge of the principles involved in motivating, developing, and directing people as they work.
- *Psychology* – Knowledge of human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral and affective disorders.
- *Sociology* – Knowledge of group behavior and dynamics, societal trends and influences, human migrations, ethnicity, and cultures.
- *Theology and Scripture* – Knowledge of philosophy about the existence and nature of God, religion, and Biblical text.
- *Training Principles* – Knowledge of principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training results.
- *United Methodist Church Doctrine* – Knowledge of the written body of teachings of The United Methodist Church.

Skills: developed capacities that facilitate learning or the more rapid acquisition of knowledge

- *Active Learning* – Seeking and rapidly integrating new information to improve current and future problem-solving and decision-making.
- *Active Listening* – Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.

- *Calling to Ministry* – The ability to experience, identify, and understand the inner urge to pursue the pastorate as a vocation.
- *Conflict Management* – Handling complaints, settling disputes, and resolving conflicts.
- *Decision Making* – Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
- *Discernment* – The capacity to know God’s will through the haze of one’s motives, the motives of others, and events that may appear to be important but are actually trivial or irrelevant.
- *Exegetical Skill* – Communicating the meaning of Scripture and other religious documents in a manner that is comprehensible to others.
- *Goal-Setting and Feedback* – Establishing long-range objectives, specifying the strategies and actions to achieve them, and providing feedback about progress toward them.
- *Motivating Others* – Relating to others in a way that inspires them to want to do their best to complete a desired course of action.
- *Multitasking* – Performing two or more tasks simultaneously or rapidly switching attention between tasks.
- *Negotiation* – Working with others to arrive at a mutually agreeable resolution to a problem.
- *Oral Communication* – Composing and delivering information through verbal interactions in a manner that others understand.
- *Problem Solving* – Identifying problems and integrating information to formulate solutions.
- *Public Speaking* – Effective communication of a message to a group of individuals using the spoken word.
- *Social Perceptiveness* – Being aware of others’ reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
- *Spiritual Disciplines* – Use of the spiritual disciplines to facilitate spiritual growth.
- *Teaching* – Identifying the educational needs of others and providing effective instruction to improve their knowledge or skills.
- *Teamwork* – Accomplishing tasks directly by working as a member of a team or indirectly by helping members of a team to cooperate and efficiently coordinate actions and decisions.
- *Time Management* – Managing one’s own time and the time of others to efficiently accomplish goals.
- *Written Communication* – Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the reader.

Abilities: enduring attributes of the individual that influence performance

- *Adaptability* – The capability to adjust actions in relation to new situations, others’ actions, or changes in the environment.
- *Attention to Detail* – Tendency to be careful about detail and thorough in completing work tasks.
- *Authenticity* – Tendency to consistently behave in a fashion that is consistent with one’s values, principles, and beliefs; to experience a sense of meaning or purpose underlying behavior; and to show vulnerability when appropriate.
- *Autonomy* – Tendency to develop one’s own ways of doing things, guiding oneself with little or no supervision, and depending on oneself to get things done.

- *Balance* – Tendency to maintain a balance of important life activities related to profession, self, family, and friends.
- *Calling to Ministry* – The ability to experience, identify, and understand the inner urge to pursue the pastorate as a vocation.
- *Cooperation* – Tendency to be pleasant with others and display a good-natured, cooperative attitude.
- *Dependability* – Tendency to be reliable, responsible, dependable, and fulfilling obligations.
- *Empathy* – Tendency to be aware of, understanding of, and sensitive to other people's experiences and emotions.
- *Initiative* – Tendency to take on responsibilities and challenges to accomplish goals.
- *Integrity* – Tendency to adhere to a strict moral or ethical code with a special emphasis on being honest to oneself and others.
- *Learning Orientation* – Tendency to develop one's competence through expanding one's ability and mastering challenging situations.
- *Leadership* – Willingness to lead, take charge, and provide opinions and direction when necessary to accomplish goals.
- *Openness* – Tendency to be receptive to ideas and people that are different from oneself.
- *Passion* – Tendency to experience and express enthusiasm in daily activities and interactions with others.
- *Patience* – Tendency to cope with pain, troubles, difficulties, or hardship, without complaint or ill temper.

Personal Characteristics: personality, interests, experience

- *Achievement Orientation* – Tendency to establish and maintain personally challenging goals and exert effort toward achieving them.
- *Attention to Detail* – Tendency to be careful about detail and thorough in completing work tasks.
- *Authenticity* – Tendency to consistently behave in a fashion that is consistent with one's values, principles, and beliefs; to experience a sense of meaning or purpose underlying behavior; and to show vulnerability when appropriate.
- *Autonomy* – Tendency to develop one's own ways of doing things, guiding oneself with little or no supervision, and depending on oneself to get things done.
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Behavioral Health Guidelines (provided by GBHEM)

In the process of selecting candidates for ministry District Committees on Ordained Ministry (DCOOM) and Boards of Ordained Ministry (BOOM) must discern each potential candidate's "gifts, evidence of God's grace, and usefulness" (Paras. 301.2 and 666.9). 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 DCOOMs and BOOMs
- to assist BOOMs in establishing their own standards
- to provide a vehicle for BOOMs 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.

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.
- 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.

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 over-involvement) 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 candidate's 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? (Eye-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 non-prescribed 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

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.

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.

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.

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.

Glossary of Terms

All ¶¶ numbers are from the *Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016*.

Annual Conference: A geographical area and organizational term. Defines a region that includes all UM churches and ministries in that area. Most clergy serving churches in that area are provisional, licensed or ordained members of that conference. Members of the annual conference meet yearly to approve business, set the budget, and promote ministry programs and other items of interest to the members. Each church also has a number of laypersons (equal to the number of their clergy or at least one) who vote on governance and policy for that conference. The annual conference votes to commission provisional clergy members, to ordain deacons and elders and to license local pastors for pastoral ministry. The bishop appointed to that conference presides over the annual meeting and all matters affecting the ministry of that annual conference (¶11, ¶601-¶657).

Associate Members: Licensed local pastors who have reached age 40, completed at least four years of full-time service as a local pastor and the five-year Course of Study and have been approved by the board of ordained ministry. They are not ordained, but are available for full-time service and are guaranteed an appointment as clergy to a local congregation within the annual conference. Associate members have voice and vote in every matter except those pertaining to ordination, ordained clergy and voting for delegates to Jurisdictional and General Conference (¶321-¶323).

Bishop: During a jurisdictional conference session, bishops are elected from among the elders, by lay and clergy delegates. Bishops oversee and supervise one or more annual conferences and meet with other bishops to lead The United Methodist Church. Bishops commission and ordain deacons and elders and appoint licensed local pastors, deacons and elders from the annual conference in which they lead. They are authorized to "guard the faith, order, liturgy, doctrine and discipline of the church" and to "lead all persons entrusted to their oversight in worship, in the celebration of the sacraments, and in their mission of witness and service in the world." Bishops elected in the U.S. serve in that capacity until retirement and remain on the Council of Bishops after retirement (¶401-¶403). The Bishop of the Great Plains Annual Conference is Bishop Ruben Saenz, Jr.

Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM): Each annual conference has a Board of Ordained Ministry consisting of deacons, elders, licensed local pastors or associate members, and laypersons who are appointed to that board by the bishop. The board recruits, nurtures and supports those in an annual conference who are seeking and preparing for ordained or licensed ministry and evaluates whether or not they have the gifts and grace for ministry and are ready to serve. The board is the "credentialing" body for clergy in an annual conference and is also responsible for continuing formation programs for clergy and for matters relating to changing conference relationships and clergy conduct (¶635).

Book of Discipline (BOD): The book of law for The United Methodist Church that determines how the church governs itself. It includes historical information, doctrinal standards, laws and policies that can only be changed by the General Conference. After each General Conference session it is updated and reprinted based on decisions made by delegates of the General Conference session.

Book of Worship (BOW): The basic handbook for worship services that reflects the theology of The United Methodist Church. It contains the order of services, the liturgy for Holy Communion (referred to as Word and Table), Baptism, marriage, funerals, healing and many other types of worship services. It also contains blessings, prayers and resources for weekly worship services and special celebrations.

Cabinet: The bishop and district superintendents when meeting as a body. Each annual and missionary conference has a Cabinet.

Call, Call Story, or Calling: A specific experience or set of decisions, circumstances or other type of encouragement that lead an individual to believe that God has asked her or him to enter ministry. Many clergy will refer to being "called" to preach or serve. During the candidacy process, candidates for licensed or ordained ministry will be asked to write and/or talk about how they have discerned God's calling in their lives and how and where they believe God is calling them to serve.

Campus Minister or University Chaplain: Campus ministers and university chaplains serve on college campuses across the United States and around the world. Some work in United Methodist campus ministry units (sometimes called Wesley Foundations). Some work in cooperation with other denominations in ecumenical campus ministries. Others are chaplains at United Methodist-related colleges and universities. Ministry with students is an important part of the work, but these ministers are also concerned with faculty, staff and administration—in other words, they work with the whole campus. Some campus ministers and chaplains are ordained deacons and elders. Others are laypeople who have received training for ministry on campus.

Candidacy/Candidacy Process: A discerning and preparatory period of time and the process by which those wishing to serve as licensed local pastors, deacons or elders apply, prepare and are evaluated by their annual conference to serve on behalf of The United Methodist Church (§310-§314).

Candidacy Mentors: Ordained deacons, elders, associate members or full-time local pastors who have completed the Course of Study, who have been trained to provide guidance to candidates. They are assigned to lead mentoring groups, typically made up of up to 8 candidates. These mentors assist the candidate in understanding the process and further discerning their call as they work to become certified as candidates (§310.1b, §311).

Candidate: A person who is seeking recommendation or is enrolled in the candidacy process and wishes to serve as a licensed local pastor, deacon, or elder.

Certified Candidate: Someone who is enrolled in the candidacy process; has been approved by their local ministry setting; has submitted requested information to the district committee on ministry; and has been interviewed, and approved to continue the process of moving toward licensing or ordination (§311).

Chaplain: Chaplains and pastoral counselors are elders, deacons or local pastors who engage in ministries of pastoral care in specialized settings. Endorsed chaplains and pastoral counselors are appointed to prisons, hospitals, the armed forces and counseling centers where they serve people in difficult places outside the local church (§1421.5).

Charge Conference: This refers to a meeting of the local church that includes every member of the church's governing body (such as a church council) as well as clergy appointed to serve that church. It meets at least once a year, usually in the fall, to review church goals and objectives, elect new church leaders, set clergy salaries, and recommend and continue persons for candidacy (§246). The charge conference may be convened as a church conference which extends the vote to all professing members of the local church present at a church conference meeting (§248).

Clergy: Commissioned and ordained deacons and elders; associate members and licensed local pastors serving under the full or part-time appointment of a bishop (§142).

Clergy Mentor: An ordained deacon, elder, associate member, or full-time local pastor who has completed the Course of Study, who has been trained to provide guidance to (1) local pastors completing educational requirements or (2) provisional deacons or elders during the provisional period. They assist local pastors and provisional members in the process as these persons further discern their call and grow in effectiveness/fruitfulness in ministry.

Course of Study (COS): Refers to prescribed classes taken by licensed local pastors for ministry preparation. Part-time and full-time local pastors attend the Course of Study while serving local churches. The full course takes at least five years to complete (four classes per year) (§318-§320).

Deacon: Deacons are persons called by God, authorized by the church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of Word, Service, Compassion and Justice to both the community and the congregation in a ministry that connects the two. Deacons devote themselves to the ministry of the Word, which includes sharing, teaching, and modeling the word of God. Additionally, deacons are called to a lifetime of servant leadership, serving both the congregation and the world. A deacon is called to serve all people, particularly the poor, the sick, and the marginalized, and to equip and lead the laity in ministries of compassion, justice, and service. The deacon's leadership role exemplifies Christian

discipleship, equips and supports all baptized Christians in their ministry, and connects the church's worship with its service in the world (§328-§331).

Deaconess and Home Missioner: Deaconesses (laywomen) and home missionaries (laymen) are professionally trained persons who have been led by the Holy Spirit to devote their lives to Christ-like service under the authority of the Church. They are approved by the General Board of Global Ministries and commissioned by a bishop. They have a continuing relationship to The United Methodist Church through the General Board of Global Ministries. Deaconesses and home missionaries are available for service with any agency or program of The United Methodist Church. Deaconesses and home missionaries may also serve in other than United Methodist Church agencies or programs, provided that approval is given by the board in consultation with the bishop of the receiving area (§1913-§1918).

Discern: Synonymous with "decide." However, it carries an underlying assumption that the decision (generally to serve in ministry) is made with considerable thought, prayer, study and attention to God's call in one's life.

District: One of several smaller geographic areas within a conference. Each church in an annual conference is also part of a district. Each district is supervised by at least one district superintendent. The number of districts in an annual conference varies depending on the size of the annual conference.

District Committee on Ministry (DCOOM): An extension of the Board of Ordained Ministry that evaluates, certifies and recommends to the board of ordained ministry all those who apply to become licensed or ordained or request continued certification or licensing. The committee conducts annual interviews to certify candidates, recommend candidates for provisional membership and license all local pastors serving within the district (§310-§314, §666).

District Superintendent (DS): An elder appointed to serve as supervisor of the churches within a geographical area of an annual conference, called a district. They serve as extensions of the bishop's authority and supervise clergy serving within that district (§419-§425).

Elder: Elders are persons called by God, authorized by the church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order and Service. Like all baptized Christians, elders are committed to a lifetime of service, although this service manifests itself in different ways than deacons or the laity. The elder embodies, or brings to life, Christ's teachings in servant ministries and servant leadership and gives pastoral leadership in ordering the life of the congregation for service. Elders devote themselves to the ministry of the Word, which includes primary responsibility for preaching and teaching the Word of God (§332-§336).

Endorsement: Endorsement is the process to ensure that pastoral counselors and prison, hospital or military chaplains are qualified and prepared to appropriately represent the denomination in their ministry setting (§1421.5).

Episcopal: Refers to something relating to a bishop. For instance, an "episcopal area" is the area under the supervision of a particular bishop.

Extension Ministry: Refers to elders who serve in ministry outside of a local church setting. It includes such settings as conference administration, chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, teaching, etc. The bishop must appoint the elder to that position, although this typically happens at the elder's request and through consultation with the bishop (§343- §345).

Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members: The Fellowship provides mutual support for its members for the sake of the life and mission of the church. All licensed local pastors and associate members shall be members of and participate in the Fellowship (§323).

Full Connection: An ordained deacon or elder serves in "full connection" to an annual conference, as a member of that annual conference. This means that their life and work is amenable to the annual conference and that they are supported by and accountable to that annual conference. Ordained members in full connection have voice and vote in all matters related to the annual conference, to the clergy of that conference, to the general conference, and constitutional amendments of the UMC.

General Conference: The international gathering and business meeting of the United Methodist denomination. It convenes once every four years, in a different location. There may be no more than 1000 delegates (half are ordained, half are laypersons) with the specific number set prior to each General Conference representing each annual and central conference. This body decides on petitions to change the Book of Discipline. It is the only body authorized to make decisions and speak on behalf of The United Methodist Church (§8, §501-§511).

Itinerate: Indicates that an ordained elder, associate member, or full-time local pastor will agree to serve where the bishop appoints them. This system of appointments is referred to as itinerancy.

Jurisdiction: A group of annual conferences within a geographical region in the United States. There are five jurisdictions in the U.S. (North Central, Northeast, South Central, Southeast, and Western). The Jurisdictional Conference meets every four years after General Conference and consists of representatives from each annual conference in that region. The conference's primary responsibility is to elect bishops for their jurisdiction (§512-§537). Great Plains is part of the South Central Jurisdiction.

Layperson: A member of a local church. In The United Methodist Church laypersons are responsible for leadership in all levels of the denomination – from the local church, to the district, to the annual conference, Jurisdictional Conference and General Conference. Laypersons are also involved at all levels of decision-making about candidates for licensed and ordained ministry.

Licensed Local Pastor (LLP): Someone who is not ordained as an elder or deacon but is appointed to preach, conduct worship and perform the duties of a pastor in a particular setting. In order to meet the requirements, a person must complete licensing school and receive an appointment to serve. Licensed local pastors must meet educational requirements (most often through attending the Course of Study) and meet with the DCOOM annually for approval and eligibility for continued licensing. Licensed local pastors are not required to earn a Master's of Divinity or to itinerate, are not guaranteed an appointment and usually serve smaller congregations (§316).

Ministerial Assessment Specialist (MAS): A psychologist or other approved mental health professional approved by GBHEM to review and complete psychological assessments for candidates and clergy as required. The Great Plains BOOM contracts with four psychologists located in different areas of the Conference to provide easier access for candidates to complete the assessment re

Ministerial Education Funds (MEF): Scholarship money made available annually to seminary students who are attending University Senate approved schools. MEF scholarships are also available to Course of Study students and OF ministers completing the UM studies requirements.

Ordained Ministry: The specific ministry of deacons and elders who have been ordained by a bishop to serve in The United Methodist Church (§301-§304).

Order of Deacon/Order of Elder: A covenant community within the church to mutually support, care for, and hold accountable its members for the sake of the life and mission of the church. These orders, separately or together, seek to respond to the spiritual hunger among clergy for a fulfilling sense of vocation, for support among peers during this stressful time of change in the Church, and for a deepening relationship with God. All ordained persons upon election to full membership in the annual conference shall be members of and participate in an order appropriate to their election (§ 306).

Ordination: Performed by the historic laying-on of hands by the bishop. This signifies that the church affirms and continues its apostolic ministry through these persons - empowered by the Holy Spirit. Those ordained commit to living and proclaiming the whole gospel. Persons may be ordained as deacons or elders. Deacons are ordained to the ministries of Word and Service. Elders are ordained to the ministries of Word, Sacrament, Order and Service (§301-§304).

Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee (PPRC or SPRC): The committee in each local congregation that assists clergy and staff members in setting priorities for leadership and service to the church. Responsible for evaluating all candidates for licensed or ordained ministry from that congregation. To begin the candidacy process one of the first steps is for a candidate to be approved by this committee and by the charge conference of his or her local congregation. Candidates then apply to their district superintendent and DCOOM to continue the candidacy process (§ 258.2).

Polity: Refers to the rules and traditions of the UMC. It includes the Book of Discipline, history, practices, and beliefs of the denomination.

Professional Certification: The church's recognition that an individual has met the required academic standards, experience, and continuing study necessary to achieve and maintain professional excellence. Persons may receive professional certification in one of the following areas: business administration, camping and retreat ministries, children's ministry, Christian education, communications, evangelism, music ministry, older adult ministry, spiritual formation, or youth ministry. Laypersons and clergy can receive professional certification and studies are available for undergraduate or graduate students. Para-professional certification is available for those who do not hold a Bachelor's degree.

Provisional Membership: The step in the ordination process between certified candidacy and ordination. Once someone has been commissioned they serve as a provisional member of the annual conference. Those applying for ordination as deacons or elders must first serve as a provisional member for a minimum of two years (full-time or the part-time equivalent) following completion of educational requirements. After completing the requirements for provisional membership a person may apply for ordination and full membership in the annual conference. Provisional membership is completed when a person is ordained a deacon or an elder, or a decision is made not to proceed toward ordination and provisional membership is ended (§§ 324-327).

Seminary or Theological School: Term for post-graduate school of theology. These schools educate and prepare people for ministry. They offer a wide variety of classes, from ancient languages, to urban ministry, to church history and Biblical studies. The United Methodist Church supports 13 theological schools and seminaries, and students preparing for ordination must graduate from an institution that is approved by the University Senate of the UMC.

University Senate: The senate is an elected body of professionals in higher education created by the General Conference to determine which schools, colleges, universities, and theological schools meet the criteria for listing as institutions affiliated with The United Methodist Church. Students preparing for ordination must complete their educational requirements at an institution approved by the University Senate (§§ 1414-18).

Vocation: 1. a particular occupation, business, or profession; calling. 2. a strong impulse or inclination to follow a particular activity or career. 3. a divine call to God's service or to the Christian life. 4. a function or station in life to which one is called by God: the religious vocation; the vocation of marriage.

Section 6: Appendix

General Information about Board of Ordained Ministry Interview Practices

- The Board of Ordained Ministry interviews all persons approved by a DCOOM for provisional or associate membership (or approved for transfer and reception as a provisional member) during Interview Week. During this week, the Board will also interview all persons requesting full membership. Interviews for continued provisional membership will take place during “regional” interviews as described below.
- Interview Week takes place during the last week of January and/or the first week of February. For the foreseeable future, Interview Week will take place in Topeka, KS. Board members meet on Monday to accomplish general Board work and to prepare for the interviews as interview and discernment teams. It is possible for the Board to interview up to 48 candidates on Tuesday-Wednesday of that week. If there are more than 48 candidates, interviews will also take place on Thursday. The Board will act on the requests on Thursday-Friday with candidates notified by phone after the Board has adjourned. A detailed letter including information from each interview team is sent within two weeks.
- Interview Week Format: Candidates interviewed during Interview Week will meet with three different interview teams of 3-4 members each that together make up a Discernment Team of 9-12 members. The interviews teams focus their work on the areas of Call & Disciplined Life, Proclamation & Discipleship and Doctrine & Theology. Candidates complete the three interviews in either morning or afternoon time periods. The Discernment Team meets each day of interviews after all interviews are completed to share information and make a recommendation to the Board.
- Regional Interviews: Current provisional members who are requesting continuation of their provisional status will complete their interviews in a regional interview format – meeting with a small group of Board members in a location that is reasonably close. This interview will normally take place during January at a time and place set by the interview team leader. The Board registrar assigns candidates to regional interview teams based on location and/or format of the interview, i.e. a video interview is often set for provisional members that are not located in the Great Plains Conference (attending school out of area or appointed in a different conference). The regional team provides a report to the Board which acts on the continuation requests during Interview Week. Regional interview candidates are notified of the Board’s action by individual email following the Interview Week adjournment with a detailed letter following within two weeks.

Board of Ordained Ministry Credentialing Requests (steps/requirements)

Continued Provisional, Year 1 ¶326

General Information

- Credentialing standard: Demonstration of increasing qualities as a fruitful transformation leader
- Will interview for continuation of provisional member status in a regional interview format
- If certified as a candidate prior to July 1, 2017, may be completing educational requirements. If so, Residency and Ordination Project Proposal requirements are deferred until completion of educational requirements

Possible motions

- I move that [name] be recommended for continuance as a provisional member.
[majority vote]
- I move that [name] be discontinued as a provisional member.
 - If discontinuance is involuntary, then ¶327.6 requires that the provisional member will be advised of the right to a fair process hearing before the committee on conference relationship (CRC).
 - ¶327.6 also provides that a discontinued provisional member may be approved for license as a local pastor in accordance with the requirements of ¶316.)

Interview & credentialing requirements

- Safe Gatherings
- Application
- SPRC report
- DS report and, if applicable, supervising pastor report
- Residency report (if education is completed)
- Sermon (video, manuscript/transcript, bulletin/order of worship)
- Ordination project proposal (reviewed by a separate team) (if education is completed)
- Ministry questions (3-5 pages)
 - Describe briefly your support system and/or family situation. Are there any special changes to share with the DCOOM/BOOM?
 - Briefly describe your activities beyond the local church, such as in the community, in district or conference work, church camps, outreach, etc.
 - Describe your physical and emotional health. Report any changes in your health or any ongoing concerns. What are your spiritual discipline practices?
 - What was the greatest joy you experienced in ministry during the past year? Why do you feel this was so?
 - What was your greatest challenge in ministry during this past year? Why do you feel this was so?

- Is there anything else that you would like to share with the Board?

Regional BOOM interview

Required interview questions:

- Follow up on any areas identified in the provisional membership interview as needing growth or further development.
- What has been your greatest surprise, to date, about ministry as a provisional member?
- How has your call to ministry as a deacon or elder been affirmed or challenged in your first year as a provisional member?
- How have you grown or developed as an effective leader in the past year? Provide specific examples.
- What have you learned about proclamation of the Word in your first year as a provisional member?
- What is your timeline for requesting full membership and ordination? What are you doing to meet this timeline?

Suggested interview questions:

- If participating in Residency, what have you learned about yourself through the Process Communication Model or Leading Out of Drama? How have you started to utilize this learning in your ministry setting?
- How do you stay connected to your clergy colleagues beyond the mandatory participation events (like Residency or Orders & Fellowship)?
- What are you most excited about with your ordination project?
- Tell about a time when a boundary was in danger of being crossed. What happened? Why?
- What are you doing to reach new people for Christ and/or to grow your ministry setting?
- How are you caring for yourself? Your family?
- What is the single most important thing you need right now to become a more effective minister/provisional member?
- How do you integrate United Methodist theology/doctrine into your proclamation (preaching and/or teaching)?

Continued Provisional Member, Year 2+ ¶326

General information

- Credentialing standard: Demonstration of increasing qualities as a fruitful transformation leader
- Will interview for continuation of provisional member status in a regional interview format
- If certified as a candidate prior to July 1, 2017, may have completed educational requirements in the first year of provisional membership and just starting Residency. If so, the Residency report and Ordination Project Proposal requirements will be completed in the first year following completion of educational requirements. The ordination project reflection will be submitted the next year (either continuation or full membership request).
- If two years of Residency are completed, the candidate will move to a coaching relationship and submit a coaching report in lieu of a residency report.

Possible motions

- I move that [name] be recommended for continuance as a provisional member. [majority vote]
- I move that [name] be discontinued as a provisional member.
 - If discontinuance is involuntary, then ¶327.6 requires that the provisional member will be advised of the right to a fair process hearing before the committee on conference relationship (CRC).
 - ¶327.6 also provides that a discontinued provisional member may be approved for license as a local pastor in accordance with the requirements of ¶316.)

Interview & credentialing requirements

- Safe Gatherings
- Application
- SPRC report
- DS report/supervising pastor report
- Residency report (Yr 2 after completing education); continuing ed/coaching report (Yr 3 and on)
- Sermon (video, manuscript/transcript, bulletin/order of worship)
- Ordination project reflection (only Year 2 after completing education), reviewed by regional team
- Ministry questions (4-6 pages)
 - Describe briefly your support system and/or family situation. Are there any special changes to share with the DCOOM/BOOM?
 - Briefly describe your activities beyond the local church, such as in the community, in District or Conference work, church camps, outreach, etc.
 - Describe your physical and emotional health. Report any changes in your health or any ongoing concerns. Spiritual discipline/formation
 - What was the greatest joy you experienced in ministry during the past year? Why do you feel this was so?

- What was your greatest challenge in ministry during this past year? Why do you feel this was so?
- What are your plans in ministry for the coming year?
- What is your plans for moving to a full membership request?
- If previously deferred for full membership, what actions have you taken/are you taking to address the identified deficiencies?

Regional BOOM interview

Required interview questions:

- Follow up on any areas identified in the provisional membership interview as needing growth or further development.
- What has been your greatest surprise, to date, about ministry as a provisional member?
- How has your call to ministry as a deacon or elder been affirmed or challenged in your first year as a provisional member?
- How have you grown or developed as an effective leader in the past year? Provide specific examples.
- What have you learned about proclamation of the Word in your first year as a provisional member?
- What is your timeline for requesting full membership and ordination? What are you doing to meet this timeline?

Suggested interview questions:

- If participating in Residency, what have you learned about yourself through the Process Communication Model or Leading Out of Drama? How have you started to utilize this learning in your ministry setting?
- How do you stay connected to your clergy colleagues beyond the mandatory participation events (like Residency or Orders & Fellowship)?
- What are you most excited about with your ordination project?
- Tell about a time when a boundary was in danger of being crossed. What happened? Why?
- What are you doing to reach new people for Christ and/or to grow your ministry setting?
- How are you caring for yourself? Your family?
- What is the single most important thing you need right now to become a more effective minister/provisional member?
- How do you integrate United Methodist theology/doctrine into your proclamation (preaching and/or teaching)?

Full Deacon ¶330

General information

- Credentialing standard: effectiveness in the ministry of a deacon connecting the church and the world; fruitfulness in ministry

Possible motions

- I move that [name] be recommended for election to full membership and approved for ordination as a deacon. [3/4 majority vote]
- I move that [name] be recommended for continuance as a provisional member. [majority vote]
- I move that [name] be discontinued as a provisional member.
 - If discontinuance is involuntary, then ¶327.6 requires that the provisional member will be advised of the right to a fair process hearing before the committee on conference relationship (CRC).
 - ¶327.6 also provides that a discontinued provisional member may be approved for license as a local pastor in accordance with the requirements of ¶316.)

Interview & credentialing requirements

- Safe Gatherings
- Current psychological assessment (updated document required if more than 7 years old)
- Current background check (updated document required if more than 7 years old)
- Current health report (updated document required if more than 7 years old)
- Application
- Update of theological statement (candidacy), biographical information (annual), and autobiographical statement (provisional membership)
- SPRC report (or equivalent)
- DS report
- Supervising pastor report, if applicable
- Sermon (video, manuscript/transcript, bulletin/order of worship); may be a proclamation related to the ministry setting
- Ordination project reflection (if not previously submitted), reviewed by Proclamation & Discipleship interview team
- Bible study (book or books of the Bible)
- Residency report or continuing ed/coaching report
- Theological questions ¶330.5
- Two years of full-time appointment (or the part-time equivalent)
- Two years of the Residency program or approved alternate
- Ministry questions (3-5 pages)
 - Describe briefly your support system and/or family situation. Are there any special changes to share with the DCOOM/BOOM?
 - Briefly describe your activities beyond the local church, such as in the community, in District or Conference work, church camps, outreach, etc.

- Describe your physical and emotional health. Report any changes in your health or any ongoing concerns. Spiritual discipline/formation
- What was the greatest joy you experienced in ministry during the past year? Why do you feel this was so?
- What was your greatest challenge in ministry during this past year? Why do you feel this was so?
- What are your plans in ministry for the coming year?
- If previously deferred for full membership, what actions have you taken/are you taking to address the identified deficiencies?

BOOM interview (3 teams: Call/Disciplined Life, Proclamation/Discipleship, and Theology/Doctrine)

Full Elder ¶335

General information

- Credentialing standard: effectiveness in the ministry of an elder; fruitfulness in ministry; transformational leadership

Possible motions

- I move that [name] be recommended for election to full membership and approved for ordination as a deacon. [3/4 majority vote]
- I move that [name] be recommended for continuance as a provisional member. [majority vote]
- I move that [name] be discontinued as a provisional member.
 - If discontinuance is involuntary, then ¶327.6 requires that the provisional member will be advised of the right to a fair process hearing before the committee on conference relationship (CRC).
 - ¶327.6 also provides that a discontinued provisional member may be approved for license as a local pastor in accordance with the requirements of ¶316.)

Interview & credentialing requirements

- If appointed beyond the local church, submit 1-2 pages detailing your service (voluntary or paid) including the proclamation of the word, administration of the sacraments and the short-term or long-term ordering of the community of faith.
- Safe Gatherings
- Current psychological assessment (updated document required if more than 7 years old)
- Current background check (updated document required if more than 7 years old)
- Current health report (updated document required if more than 7 years old)
- Application
- Update of theological statement (candidacy), biographical information (annual), and autobiographical statement (provisional membership)
- SPRC Ministerial Leadership report
- DS report
- Supervising pastor report, if applicable
- Sermon (video, manuscript/transcript, bulletin/order of worship)
- Ordination reflection (if not previously submitted), reviewed by Proclamation & Discipleship interview team
- Bible study (book or books of the Bible)
- Residency report or continuing ed/coaching report
- Theological questions ¶335(8)
- Two years of full-time appointment (or the part-time equivalent)
- Two years of the Residency program or approved alternate
- Ministry questions (3-5 pages)
 - Describe briefly your support system and/or family situation. Are there any special changes to share with the DCOOM/BOOM?

- Briefly describe your activities beyond the local church, such as in the community, in District or Conference work, church camps, outreach, etc.
- Describe your physical and emotional health. Report any changes in your health or any ongoing concerns. What are your spiritual discipline/formation practices.
- What was the greatest joy you experienced in ministry during the past year? Why do you feel this was so?
- What was your greatest challenge in ministry during this past year? Why do you feel this was so?
- What are your plans in ministry for the coming year?
- If previously deferred for full membership, what actions have you taken/are you taking to address the identified deficiencies?

BOOM interview (3 teams: Call/Disciplined Life, Proclamation/Discipleship, and Theology/Doctrine)

Transitioning between Orders

As a Provisional Member ¶309

- Write to BOOM and inform the DS & Bishop of the intention
- Interview with the BOOM to articulate & clarify their call (interview may be with Conference Relations Committee (CRC) at BOOM's discretion)
- Fulfill academic & service requirements for the transitioning order
- Two years of full-time service (or the part-time equivalent) fulfilling qualifications of transitioning order (may request that BOOM consider/approve current/prior service as meeting this requirement)

Transitioning as a Full Member (deacon or elder) ¶309

- Complete 2 years (no more than eight) under appointment while licensed for ministry of order transitioning to by either (1) taking a leave of absence from current order to be licensed in transitioning order or (2) complete a Conference Relations Committee (CRC) interview to determine if the service requirement has been met through current service/appointment that has demonstrated effectiveness & fruitfulness in ministry (in consultation with Bishop/DS)
- Application
- If deacon to elder, indication of understanding and agreement with itineracy (¶333); if elder to deacon, indication of understand and agreement to appointment as it relates to deacons (¶331)
- If service evaluation is requested and not approved, must have annual BOOM interview (regional format) and submit answers to written questions during completion of service requirement
 - Describe briefly your support system and/or family situation. Are there any special changes to share with the DCOOM/BOOM?
 - Briefly describe your activities beyond the local church, such as in the community, in District or Conference work, church camps, outreach, etc.
 - Describe your physical and emotional health. Report any changes in your health or any ongoing concerns. Spiritual discipline/formation
 - What was the greatest joy you experienced in ministry during the past year? Why do you feel this was so?
 - What was your greatest challenge in ministry during this past year? Why do you feel this was so?
 - What are your plans in ministry for the coming year?
- When interviewing with BOOM for final interview (timing dependent on CRC service evaluation), candidate will only interview with the Call & Discipline Life and the Proclamation & Discipleship interview teams
 - Must submit a 3-5 page document that articulates the call to ministry of the order transitioning to and the rational for the request, i.e. what has changed/how has your call developed since the original ordination.
 - May be asked to submit a proclamation sample, i.e. sermon, to demonstrate effectiveness in proclaiming the Word related to the transitioning order

Other Changes in Clergy Relationship

Retirement ¶357

- Mandatory retirement is required for all clergy members who will reach age 72 on or before July 1.
- Consult with the benefits office to determine eligibility for retired status and applicable paragraph
 - ¶357.2(a) with 20 years of service
 - ¶357.2(b) with 30 years of service or at age 62
 - ¶357.2(c) with 40 years of service or at age 65
- In all cases, the clergy person shall submit a written request for retired status to the bishop, the cabinet and the BOOM (chairperson and registrar) at least 120 days prior to the effective date of the retirement. The written request should include the effective date for the retirement and whether the clergy person wishes to continue in an appointed status while in retirement.

Appointment of Full Elder, Provisional Elder or Associate Member to part-time service ¶338.2

- If at the request of the clergy member, the clergy person shall submit written request at least 90 days prior to the next annual conference session to the bishop, the district superintendent, the Board of Ordained Ministry chairperson and BOOM registrar for action. Exceptions to the 90-day deadline shall be approved by the cabinet and BOOM executive committee.
- If based on a limitation of itineracy, the clergy member shall present a written declaration of limited itineracy to the bishop and BOOM chairperson prior to annual conference. Less than full time service may be granted, but is not guaranteed.
- If based on missional purposes/bishop-initiated, the clergy person must be notified at least 90 days prior to final termination of the current appointment.

Voluntary Personal or Family Leave of Absence ¶353

- To request leave:
 - Submit a written request at least 90 days prior to annual conference to the bishop, the district superintendent, the BOOM chairperson and the BOOM registrar that includes:
 - A statement of the specific reason(s) for the leave
 - Identification of a charge conference within the bounds of the Great Plains Conference where membership will be held while on leave of absence
 - Completion of an interview with the Conference Relations Committee
 - Approval of the bishop and BOOM
- For each successive year of leave, completion of the Annual Report (GBHEM Form 108 <http://www.bomlibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Updated-Form-AA-108-Leave-of-Absence-Report.pdf>).
- To request to end the leave of absence and return to active service:

- Submit a written request at least six months prior to annual conference to the bishop, the district superintendent, the BOOM chairperson and the BOOM registrar that includes:
 - A statement of how the circumstances leading to the request have been alleviated or resolved
- Completion of an interview with the Conference Relations Committee
- Interim requests to start or end personal or family leave of absence may be granted by the BOOM executive committee in consultation with and approval of the bishop and cabinet

Voluntary Transitional Leave ¶353

- A transitional leave of absence may be requested/granted for up to 12 months if:
 - a full or provisional deacon needs to seek an appointable position
 - a provisional or full elder or an associate member needs to transition between an extension ministry and a local church appointment (or the reverse)
- Written request for transitional leave should be submitted to the bishop, the district superintendent, the BOOM chairperson and the BOOM registrar and should include the specific reasons for the request.
- During transitional leave, the clergyperson should provide quarterly reports to the bishop and BOOM of their efforts to obtain an appointable position.

Maternity/Paternity Leave ¶355

- Available to any local pastor, provisional member, associate member or full member
- Submit a written statement to the bishop, the district superintendent, BOOM chairperson and BOOM registrar that includes the anticipated leave dates (start and end) as well as details of the ministerial coverage arranged in consultation with the S/PPRC.
- Requires action by the bishop, cabinet and BOOM executive committee

Medical Leave ¶356

Consultation with the benefits office will be necessary to ensure that all steps related to medical leave are completed since this is a joint credentialing/benefits decision

Honorable Location ¶358

- Written request submitted to the BOOM chairperson and BOOM registrar that includes the reason(s) for the request to discontinue service in the itinerant ministry.
- Verification of good standing

Withdrawal of ordained membership ¶360

- Whether to unite with another denomination or from the ordained ministerial office, submit a written request to the bishop, the district superintendent, the BOOM chairperson and the BOOM registrar indicating the reasons for the request and the effective date of the withdrawal.

- Must submit membership (either) and ordination (from the ordained office only) certificate(s) with the notice/request
- If withdrawal is under complaint(s) or charges, a note of “withdrawn under complaint” or “withdrawn under charges” shall be made on the submitted credentials (membership and ordination certificates)
- May have an exit interview with the Conference Relations Committee

Readmission to Conference Relationship shall be governed by the requirements set forth in the applicable paragraph in the *Book of Discipline, 2016* unless otherwise provided in the DCOOM Handbook

- Readmission or provisional membership ¶364
- Readmission after honorable or administrative location ¶365
- Readmission after leaving the ministerial office ¶366
- Readmission after termination by action of the annual conference ¶367
- Readmission after involuntary retirement ¶368