

Board of Ordained Ministry
The New England Annual Conference
The United Methodist Church

Guidelines for the Examination Process

Assumptions: It is assumed BOM members:

- Have read all the materials sent to them and have made appropriate notes.
- Have listened to or viewed any audio or video material.
 (NOTE: It is the responsibility of the Candidate to provide materials that are legible and DVDs that are of good technical quality).
- Have considered the Candidate's material with the appropriate "Evaluation Criteria" (see pages 3 – 9).
- Have been in prayer for the Candidates, for themselves, the BOM and the examination and decision-making process.

(Letters of reference and DCOM recommendations (provisional membership Candidates) will be reviewed and summarized in light of the Transformational Leadership criteria by one member of each exam team prior to the exam.)

Examination Teams:

- Examination Teams will gather prior to the examination to receive instructions and room assignments, to set up the rooms in a comfortable and appropriate manner, and to prepare for the Examination.
- The BOM Registrar will provide the Candidate's file to the Team. The Team will agree on the way in which the file will be reviewed (Chairperson of the Team? One person on the Team assigned to read, etc.).
- The Team will determine how the file will be used (flag issues, materials that appear inconsistent with the way Candidate presents self, etc).
- For Provisional Membership, a Team will examine only Candidates in one category (Autobiography, Theology, etc.).
- For Full Membership, one Examination Team will examine a Candidate in all categories of the examination.

Examination Preparations:

- The Examination Team will make sure the room is set up in a way that is conducive for the examination and which will help put the Candidate at ease.
- After the Examination Team members have become acquainted, the Teams should make assignments of responsibilities: (a) a timekeeper, (b) a note-taker, (c) a team member to lead the Candidate to the examination room, (d) someone who will open with prayer. The Team may invite the Candidate to close the examination with prayer, making sure to invite the Candidate to offer the prayer in his/her language of choice.
- Using the criteria of Readiness for Provisional Membership Candidates and Effectiveness for Full Membership (NOTE: see the Document "A Policy for the Candidacy

Examination Process...” passed by the BOM 2/05 and revised 4/08 for definitions of Readiness and Effectiveness), team members will begin to share general impressions of strengths and concerns arising out of the Candidate’s materials. This sharing provides the Team with areas that it might focus on during the examination.

➤ The Team then:

- Develops key questions it would like to ask
- Decides upon an appropriate first question (an open-ended question that relates to the Candidate’s strength)
- Assigns to specific Team members some of the questions developed earlier by the Team
- Agrees on the order and sequence of questions
- Makes sure 5-10 minutes is provided to the Candidate at the end of each examination session to ask questions, amplify a response to an earlier question, and/or elaborate on prepared material not discussed
(NOTE: The above are suggested guidelines; other appropriate questions may arise during the course of the examination)
- Following a Full Membership examination session, the Team may reach consensus about clarifying or follow-up questions (if any) for the Candidate when s/he returns for the next session with the Team.

➤ After the final examination session, the Team reviews its impressions of the Candidate’s responses, the effectiveness of the Candidate’s engagement with the Team, the strengths and concerns raised by the written and taped material and the way these are viewed in light of the Examination discussion, the overall ability of the Candidate to reflect theologically, and all of this in light of “The Evaluation Criteria” (pages 3-9). The Team then draws conclusions about the recommendations it would make to the full Board regarding the Candidate’s qualifications. The Examination Team should then complete the Examination Team Report Form, listing:

- Its recommendation “qualified” or “not qualified”
- Candidate’s strengths
- Candidate’s growing edges
- How the Candidate demonstrates or shows potential for transformational leadership
- Recommendations for further work
NOTE: Try not to list more than 3 or 4 points for each of the categories. A legible copy should be given to the Registrar as soon as possible and certainly before the reporting session.

Paragraph references are from 2008 Book of Discipline

Criteria for Evaluation: Autobiography

Integrating:

1. The Candidate is self-aware and willing to examine self realistically.
2. The Candidate's descriptions of "vocation," "self," and "ordination to Word, Order, Sacrament, and Service" fit together. In the case of Deacon, the Candidate's description of Word and Service fit together. The Candidate effectively communicates a passionate commitment to live his/her call in the present and in the future (§335.b.1).
3. The Candidate discusses his/her personal gifts for ordained ministry, his/her strengths and weaknesses and posits solid strategies for change (§335.c.3).
4. While describing all/various experiences, including crises and the most difficult situations, the Candidate evinces a basic trust in God strong enough to allow for pastoral care in the vast majority of situations s/he may encounter in ministry.
5. The Candidate incorporates personal suffering into self-understanding so as to enhance empathy, personal growth and his/her theological understanding of suffering and grace.
6. The Candidate has incorporated a theology of stewardship of time and resources into his/her personal life.
7. The Candidate cultivates habits that contribute to physical and emotional health, and effectively balances work with Sabbath and rest (§335.a.6).
8. The Candidate will be able to write about and articulate the relationship between his/her conversion to Christ and the call to ordained ministry.

Relating:

9. The Candidate knows self to be justified by faith, describing a strong, maturing personal relationship with the Trinity.
10. The Candidate evidences strong love/reverence in expressed feelings toward others, effectively integrates vocation and personal relationships and evidences integrity in all personal relationships (§335.a.6).
11. The Candidate demonstrates the ability to minister to all persons without regard to race, color, national origin, social status or disabilities (§335.c.4).
12. The Candidate participates in peer relationships in a way that fosters emotional health and spiritual growth.
13. The Candidate demonstrates both deep reflection and personal experience in describing the theological value of *koinonia*.
14. The Candidate effectively gives evidence of a deep personal commitment to peace and justice ministries (§335.c.6).

Effecting:

15. The Candidate articulates clearly how God has effected change in his/her life and participates in his/her everyday life. The Candidate has clear ideas of how God can best use him/her in ministry.
16. The Candidate can articulate how his/her personal life affects his/her ministry.

17. The Candidate participates with openness and anticipation of learning in both annual evaluations with the SPRC and with the D.S. (§334.2.b.) (While Deacons meet annually with the D.S., they may not be evaluated annually by an SPRC.)
18. The Candidate is aware of our Conference's continuing education policy and expects continued growth in vocational competence and effectiveness (§334.2.d).
19. The Candidate has goals for personal spiritual growth, a vision of spiritual self in the future within the context of a theology of sanctification.
20. The deacon Candidate shall indicate when and how he/she participates in professional development in his/her specialized field.

General Questions for the Exam Team to Consider (Autobiography):

1. How has the Candidate experienced God, and how has that experience influenced his/her call to ministry? Is there a Biblical character or story that best describes his/her experience of God?
 2. Make sure that the Candidate has clarity about the relationship of conversion and call in his/her life. Can they write about and articulate that relationship?
 3. Does the Candidate love God and does the Candidate exhibit a healthy love of self and genuine love of the people with whom he/she works and ministers?
 4. What evidence does the Candidate exhibit throughout the examination process that he/she has a true passion for ministry, that he/she is redeemed with a growing, joyful relationship to God in Christ, and that he/she is sustained by the spiritual disciplines?
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Criteria for Evaluation: Theology and Ethics / Case Study

Integrating:

1. The Candidate's general theological framework is comprehensive, consistent and Wesleyan.
2. The Candidate can explain both **how** the quadrilateral informs his/her theology and **why** each of the four parts is important to a comprehensive theology both for spiritual growth and effective pastoral care.
3. The Candidate's images of God are sufficiently powerful to assure a strong, growing spiritual life on the front lines (§335.a.1).
4. The Candidate has a doctrine of humanity and an understanding of sin that is realistic and broad enough to allow for adequate pastoral care (with help, if necessary) in any situation (§335.a.2).
5. The Candidate has a sound and well-developed Christology, an internalized knowledge of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and a soteriology in line with his/her thinking on question # 4 (§335.a.3).
6. The Candidate has a strong Sacramental theology (§335.a.7).

Relating:

7. The Candidate's ethics are well thought through and comprehensive, reflecting deep care for others.
8. The Candidate articulates solid and comprehensive concepts of peace and justice in both his/her theology and understanding of community and shows evidence of experience in such ministries (§335.c.6).
9. The Candidate offers a cogent theological explanation of the nature of pastoral care and of the role of the pastoral caregiver. The Candidate understands that all pastoral conversations are of a confessional nature (§335.c.5).
10. The Candidate is fully aware of the nature and subtlety of boundary issues and can identify situations where either boundary issues or spiritual inexperience would suggest that the Candidate as pastor seek peer support or supervision.
11. The Candidate can articulate and incorporate in his/her life the concept of "servant leadership" and evinces a solid theology of both lay and ordained ministries.
12. The Candidate appreciates the covenantal bond of UM clergy (Elders and Deacons), the ethics involved in this bond, and the ways we support each other's ministry.

Effecting:

13. The Candidate can communicate effectively both orally and in writing (§335.7).
14. The Candidate shows an appreciation of God's power in working through the Church.
15. The Candidate has a strong ecclesiology, integrated with sense of self/vocation that includes the nature, purpose, history of the Church, and its relationship to other religions (§335.a.8).
16. The Candidate can explain, within the context of his/her ecclesiology, the value of the following aspects of our denomination life: connectionalism, itinerancy, apportionments, and authority, and is committed to the disciplinary understanding of each of them (§335.c. 1 and 2).
17. The Candidate recognizes the importance and uses of visioning and situational analysis in ministry.
18. The Candidate can articulate a vision of the future of the UMC in a changing world and sees self in a servant-leader role relative to that vision.
19. The Candidate has a strong eschatology and/or theology of the Realm of God, theologies of resurrection and of eternal life, all adequate to effective ministry relative both to personal salvation and to justice ministries, particularly among the marginalized (§335.a.9).
20. The Candidate articulates theologically and owns the role of church administrator (other roles?) in local church (not applicable to Deacons).

General Questions for the Exam Team to Consider (Theology/Doctrine):

Is the Candidate grounded in Wesleyan theology, specifically in his/her understanding of Wesley's definition of grace? What is his/her personal experience of grace, and is he/she able to share the meaning of grace with others, i.e. how is grace expressed in his/her own life?

Case Study (full membership):

How does the Candidate understand and practice "transformational ministry"?

Criteria for Evaluation: Proclamation of the Word

Candidates for Provisional or Full Membership in the *Order of Elder*: Sermon Manuscript

Integrating:

1. The Candidate can analyze how listening to and/or reading sermons has affected his/her spiritual growth.
2. The Candidate can describe roles for the Holy Spirit, the preacher and the listener in the act of preaching.
3. The Candidate appreciates the discipline of exegesis, and effectively incorporates exegetical insights in the sermon.
4. The sermon preaches the Gospel and links it to contemporary experience with integrity and depth.
5. The sermon is organized in a manner that is easy to follow. The Scripture text remains central and is allowed to shine forth.
6. The sermon is theologically sound, cohesive, and consistent both with the general theology of the Candidate **and** with a theology informed by the entirety of Hebrew/Christian scripture.
7. The Candidate has a carefully reflected position on the use (or non-use) of the lectionary.
8. Here and/or elsewhere the Candidate demonstrates the ability to use standard English grammar, syntax, and punctuation. (This question is designed primarily for those Candidates whose first language is English.)

Relating:

9. In the sermon, the Candidate addresses the spiritual needs of that congregation.
10. The Candidate is sensitive to the power of the words spoken from the pulpit and can recognize the dangers of ill-considered communication, personal agendas and demagoguery.
11. The Candidate evidences growth in his/her ability to deal with positive and negative feedback to sermons.

Effecting:

12. The sermon invites a contemporary response to God's word – a call to commitment, reflection and action.
13. The sermon reflects the Candidate's personal faith in God's power to effect change and transformation.
14. The Candidate demonstrates the ability to use appropriate and effective rhetorical devices, and perhaps also ways to communicate scriptural insights in non-verbal or non-traditional ways.

General Questions for the Exam Team to Consider (Sermon preparation):

1. How does the Candidate go about the preaching task (length of time and method of preparation)?

2. What resources are used in sermon and worship preparation?
3. How does the Candidate personally arrive at the insights around which the sermon is built and integrated into the design of the worship service?
4. How does the Candidate typically choose the text used for sermon emphasis (does the Candidate use the lectionary, or a thematic approach)?
5. Does the Candidate include teaching/interpretation of the Sacraments? In what ways?
6. How does the Candidate experience/encounter the Holy Spirit in sermon/worship preparation?



Candidates for Full Membership in the *Order of Deacon*: Choice of Sermon Manuscript OR an alternative creative expression (in a medium of the candidate's choosing that can be reproduced and distributed to exam team members) demonstrating how he/she witnesses to the "Gospel of Jesus Christ" in his/her particular setting.

1. The Candidate shall articulate how scripture is central to and integrated into his/her ministry. How does the Candidate experience/encounter the Holy Spirit in his/her work?
2. The Candidate owns his/her role of "servant-leader" with grace and authority.
3. The Candidate shows awareness of the immediate needs of the world and can relate these needs to the Church, in his/her place of appointment.
4. Does the material/method chosen by the Candidate to express how he/she witnesses to the Gospel demonstrate the integration of his/her understanding of the role of a deacon with the practice of his/her work as a deacon?

Criteria for Evaluation: Sermon Delivery and Worship Leadership

Integrating:

1. The Candidate describes meaningfully the role of worship in his/her own spiritual journey.
2. The Candidate can articulate the role and expectations of an elder "servant-leader" as worship leader and owns that role with grace and authority.
3. The Candidate can articulate a meaning for each act of worship included in the bulletin and can explain the absence of any traditional act of worship that may be omitted from that order of worship.

Relating:

4. The Candidate evinces respect for the congregation during worship and demonstrates an understanding of psychological and spiritual developmental processes so that the worship experiences can be tailored appropriately.
5. The Candidate shows awareness of the immediate needs of the congregation during the service (i.e., preoccupation with a crisis, the temperature in the sanctuary).

6. The Candidate can articulate a theoretical relationship between worshipers and leader during worship.
7. The Candidate can respond openly and helpfully to all sorts of congregational expectations of worship and both negative and positive feedback.
8. The Candidate relates in worship to children, youth, older people and those with special needs in a way helpful to their development of faith, hope and love.

Effecting:

9. The Candidate sees the possibilities of the worship dynamic to change lives and can describe worship that is “effective”.
10. The Candidate employs rhetorical and artistic devices that enhance worship.
11. The Candidate can discuss the values of the various degrees of formality of ritual in relation to the effectiveness of worship.
12. The Candidate has a sense of the history and ecumenical varieties of worship that will add both perspective and possibility to the Candidate’s creation of and leadership in worship.

General Questions for the Exam Team to Consider (Sermon delivery):

1. How does the Candidate experience/encounter the Holy Spirit in preaching and worshipping?
2. Is the Candidate able to bring people into the living presence of God with a response of adoration, thanksgiving, and praise?

Criteria for Evaluation: Bible Study

Integrating:

1. The Candidate can articulate the impact of Scripture on his/her own spiritual journey.
2. The Candidate shows evidence of continuing reflection on how his/her life experiences influence his/her interpretation of Scripture.
3. The Candidate can articulate the spiritual value of exegesis, and has evidenced a skillful engagement of the Scriptures as a means of grace.
4. The Bible Study exhibits effective exegetical skills also by revealing the historical, cultural and theological contexts of the biblical texts to create contemporary insights and applications.

Relating:

5. The Candidate can articulate theologically the role of teacher as servant-leader and own that role with grace and authority.
6. The Candidate shows a clear understanding of the complementary role of clergy and laity in reflection on Scripture and spiritual discernment.

7. The Candidate demonstrates a grasp of group dynamics and an ability to “read” the needs of both individuals and the group.

Effecting:

8. The Candidate understands Scripture as change-agent, transforming lives and raising up disciples and its power to challenge and change the whole Church.
9. The Bible Study evinces clear goals, both realistic and visionary.
10. The Candidate uses pedagogical techniques appropriate and effective for attaining goals.

General Questions for the Exam Team to Consider (Bible Study):

1. Ask the Candidate to comment on their ability to derive insight from the text used in the study.
 2. What is the purpose of Bible Study, in the context of “transformation”?
 3. Did the Candidate encounter/experience the Holy Spirit in the Bible Study process? If so, where, and in what way?
 4. (For full membership elder Candidates) Based on the written summary of the evaluations of the Bible Study by the study participants, how will the Candidate approach the next study?
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Throughout the Exam Process:

Throughout the entire exam process (for Candidates at all levels), Board exam team members will be attempting to determine whether the Candidate has the potential for (Provisional Members) or is exercising effectively (Full Members) “transformational leadership” in both the theory and practice of ministry.

For example:

1. Is the Candidate able to assess the pastoral situation (context, history, data, etc.) and adapt appropriately?
2. Does the Candidate lead in evangelism and social outreach in a way that includes his/her own personal practice with a strategic understanding of the way the laity is incorporated?
3. Does the Candidate have the ability and commitment to meet regularly and prayerfully with individuals and families of the parish and those with special pastoral needs?
4. In what ways does the Candidate have the ability to use theological/Biblical language, ideas, and imagery to practically impact the lives of individuals and the church community (e.g., worshipful work as a way to structure committee meetings)? Can the Candidate interpret Scripture and the theology of the church, applying these practically to teaching and preaching?