

BOARD of ORDAINED MINISTRY
The Entrance Committee

A Policy for the Candidacy Examination Process
for Provisional and Full Membership

A Vision for the New England Conference: Transformed by the Holy Spirit, united in trust, we will respond to God's call to proclaim Christ boldly to the world.

CRITERIA:

According to the standards for entrance into the Certified and Ordained Ministry of the United Methodist Church, "fitness is the foundation on which competence, readiness and effectiveness are developed." The candidacy process assumes that the call of a candidate has been examined at the District Committee level. Consequently the candidacy process at the Board level focuses on "fitness". While competence is developed throughout the candidate's study, supervision and reflection, **READINESS** for ministry is the criteria for Provisional membership; **EFFECTIVENESS** is the criteria for ordination as a Deacon or Elder and Full membership in the Annual Conference. (see the Candidacy Guidebook for a further discussion of the relationship of Fitness, Competency, Readiness and Effectiveness.)

[I] PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP:

READINESS: Potential - the candidate can demonstrate fundamental personal and academic resources to grow sufficiently from professional experience under supervision.

In the Board's examination procedure, the candidate must:

- Give evidence of his/her faith
- Be articulate in his/her understanding of the distinction between conversion and call
- Recognize that ministry requires a spiritual center (a love of God, neighbor, and self) as well as learned skills
- Be able to articulate a Wesleyan theology of grace, and his/her own experience of grace
- Give evidence of clarity about his/her call to ministry in the UMC, particularly in relation to ministry as a calling vs. a career.
- Demonstrate an aptitude, temperament, and sufficient desire to be engaged in transformational ministry.
- Demonstrate an ability to reflect biblically and theologically* including use of the quadrilateral (see definition for theological reflection below).
- Have completed required and fundamental studies including at least one unit of CPE (CPE for those on Elder's Track)
- Demonstrate having reflected upon his/her own life story and can frame his/her life in a context using theological language.
- Have addressed his/her own family system in terms of its impact on his/her call and ministry.
- Demonstrate a basic ability to formulate worship, to preach and to teach (Elder's track)
- Give evidence of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Show that s/he has reflected on the itinerant system.

- Have begun to develop a self-conscious awareness of leadership styles in light of his/her own.
- Demonstrate a willingness to continue to learn, grow and improve pastoral practice.
- Demonstrate an understanding of, and commitment to, the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church.

AND: Give evidence of self-disciplined work habits; a self directed and disciplined spiritual life, including self-care.

REQUIRED MATERIALS for EXAMINATION:

- Thorough and cumulative recommendation/report from DCOM.
- Written assessment by candidacy Mentor.
- Psychological assessment within last 7 years.
- Physical examination within 2 years.
- Written theological autobiography verbalizing its relevance to ministry.
- A theological paper on selected items as outlined in candidates' checklist
- An exegesis of a passage from Scripture.

ANNUAL PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP REVIEW:

Because the Candidacy Guidebook stresses the importance of supervision in the Provisional membership years ("Your admission as a [probationary] member of the Annual Conference means that you are competent (READY) to practice ministry UNDER SUPERVISION of a clergy mentor"), the BOM must insist on a strong mentoring program. Supervising mentors must be held accountable for their work with Provisional members.

As part of that Supervisory emphasis, the Annual Provisional Membership Review will be seen as a significant part of a comprehensive review towards evaluating the candidate's effectiveness for Ordination and Full Membership. The candidate's theology is expected to be integrated with and integral to all of the material (written, verbal, reported, etc.) being used in the examination.

(1) In each year of provisional membership, as the review team assesses the candidate's development, the candidate will be required to reflect on how his/her ministerial call and professional development has been shaped by a different theological issue (stewardship, evangelism, pastoral care, social justice, professional ethics) using a case study.

(2) At each review, the candidate must demonstrate attention to the areas recommended for improvement from the previous year. The materials from each review year must be readily available to each review team.

(3) An annual report by the candidate's supervisory mentor must be in the review team's packet.

(4) Each year, the BOM shall provide a "learning module" on the theological issue to be discussed either at that review or the year following.

[II] FULL MEMBERSHIP:

EFFECTIVENESS: Actual - The candidate will be able to demonstrate effective pastoral ministry at various essential tasks of ministry.

In the Board's examination procedure, the candidate must demonstrate a mastery of all previous requirements and:

- Demonstrate the integrity between personal piety and social justice ministry in his/her personal and professional life.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the Wesleyan practice of Holy Communion.
- Demonstrate a commitment to the connectional system.
- Demonstrate the ability to assess the local church in its internal and civil community context and plan/act appropriately.
- Demonstrate an understanding of and a commitment to transformational servant leadership.
- Demonstrate a commitment to being a life-long learner.
- Demonstrate the ability/willingness to seek out and employ appropriate help and resources in his/her ministry.
- Demonstrate the ability to reflect biblically and theologically on his/her on-going ministry.
- Demonstrate the ability/willingness to work on areas of skills, which do not come naturally to the candidate (stretching places).
- Demonstrate the ability/willingness to respond appropriately to supervision. (DS, SPRC, Mentor)
- Demonstrate and provide evidence of vocational growth during years of provisional membership.
- Demonstrate that the candidate has a working knowledge of 21st Century culture, technology, and learning styles, including the use of image in religious experience.
- Demonstrate membership development and evangelism, including such items as new member nurture, confirmation, Baptismal practice, and outreach into the community of the un-churched. (For Elder's Orders)
- Demonstrate that s/he has developed a personal, pastoral and social ethic, and, in particular, that s/he has taken training in anti-racism and white privilege.
- Demonstrate Christian love for the people they are appointed to serve
- Demonstrate an understanding and practice of boundaries
- AND: Give evidence of self-disciplined work habits; a self-directed and disciplined spiritual life and self-care.

REQUIRED MATERIALS for EXAMINATION:

- Psychological assessment within last 7 years.
- One page document on Stewardship and Missiology.
- A thorough and cumulative recommendation/assessment/written report from District Superintendent (when the D.S. is not familiar with the candidate, the D.S. should consult with the previous D.S. in order to adequately report and assess growth).

- Multiple insights from the local church or ministry site (Chairs of SPR, Finance, Education, and Church Council committees; and Lay Leader).
- An assessment from cluster and/or ecumenical colleagues.
- A Sermon and a Bible Study each of which has been preached/taught (video of entire worship service) (Elder's Orders)
- A Peace and Justice Ministry piece which s/he has offered (Deacon's Orders)
- A list of statistical figures from the Conference Journal, and a reflection on how this data represents his/her understanding and practice of transformational ministry. (Elder's Orders)
- A one to two page case study, which deals with an event, experience, or opportunity where the candidate has personally facilitated transformational ministry.

A DEFINITION OF "THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION" (for purposes of evaluating Readiness for and Effectiveness in ministry.)

Theological reflection is the process of thinking about the meaning of one's life in light of the Christian story. It is the way in which we integrate how we live with what we believe about who God is and what God does in our lives, in creation, in the church and in the world. For purposes of the BOM, then, Theological Reflection has to do with the candidate's capacity (a) to consciously and critically bring to bear in the practical dimensions of ministry the resources of the Christian faith (with particular attention to the use of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral); (b) to articulate the ways in which theology and practice interact (shapes, reinforces, changes); and (c) how they are/are not integrated and the implications of that integration.