

CHAPTER 1

Board of Ordained Ministry Organization

For more information visit www.gbhem.org/bom.

Each annual conference at the first session following the General Conference shall elect for a term of four years a board of ordained ministry (BOM). This board shall be directly amenable to the annual conference. . . . The annual conference council on finance and administration shall recommend adequate administrative funds for the board and its staff in light of its workload. (¶635.1, b)

Membership of the Board

Members shall be nominated by the presiding bishop after consultation with the chairperson of the board, the executive committee, or a committee elected by the board of the previous quadrennium, and with the cabinet. . . . An elected board member may serve a maximum of three consecutive four-year terms.

The board shall provide orientation for new members, including distribution of any available written guidelines (¶635.1a, h).

Include in the membership (¶635.1)

- At least six ordained elders and deacons
- Two-thirds of the elders are to be graduates of theological schools listed by the University Senate
- At least two associate members or full-time local pastors who have completed the Course of Study
- One-fifth to one-third laypersons, including diaconal ministers
- At least one retired ordained deacon or elder
- At least one ordained clergyperson in extension ministry
- At least one ordained clergyperson 35 or younger
- A district superintendent named by the bishop to represent the cabinet
- Chairpersons of the Orders of Deacons and Elders and the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members
- Membership should include a balance of female and male members as well as racial/ethnic members

Organization of the Board

This board shall organize by electing from its membership a chairperson, registrars, and such other officers as it may deem necessary. A vocational discernment coordinator may be named to coordinate the candidacy mentoring process. The board shall designate its executive committee, which shall include elders, deacons, and laity. The board

shall organize in such manner as to care for its responsibilities, including the needs of certified persons, diaconal ministers, local pastors, deacons, and elders.... The board may include in its organization a division of deacons and a division of elders (§635.1c).

The board shall select from its own membership an official representative to serve as a member of each district committee on ordained ministry, which shall function as subcommittees of the board (§635.1g).

Board of Ordained Ministry Registrars

The board shall elect a registrar and such associate registrars as it may determine; one such associate registrar to be given responsibility for candidacy, including giving leadership to the training and guidance of mentors in each district. A staff executive may be named by the board to fulfill the functions of registrar (§635.3).

- Keep full personnel records for all candidates under the care of the board (§635.3a).
- Forward an acknowledgment of transfer to the pastor of the local church in which each newly elected provisional and associate member held membership (§635.3b).
- Keep a record of students' standing in the Course of Study (§635.3c).
- In the case of a provisional member's discontinuance or termination of local pastor status, file a copy of the circumstances with the bishop's office (§635.3d).
- Keep the personnel records of ministerial candidates on behalf of the annual conference using the guidelines provided by the General Council of Finance and Administration. See Chapter 27 for more details (§635.e).

Board of Ordained Ministry Committees

Although the responsibilities and functions of BOMs are common throughout the church, BOM structure varies from conference to conference. The following suggestions concerning the executive committee, conference relations committee, interview teams, and program committees may be adapted to the role, responsibilities, context, and resources of each annual conference.

Executive Committee

This committee is usually composed of the BOM chairperson, chairpersons of the divisions of deacons and elders (where they exist), chairpersons of the Orders of Deacons, Elders, and the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members, registrars, committee chairpersons, and a cabinet representative. The vocational discernment coordinator or other officers may also serve on the executive committee. The executive committee generally meets before each BOM meeting to review the agenda and address administrative matters.

Occasionally, the executive committee consults with the bishop on matters of transfer or takes interim action on changes in conference relationships. Typically, the executive committee or one of its members relates to other boards and agencies.

Conference Relations Committee

Each annual conference board of ordained ministry shall establish a conference relations committee of at least three persons to hear requests for discontinuance of provisional members, involuntary leave of absence, administrative location, involuntary retirement, or other such matters as may be referred to them by the board of ordained ministry. District superintendents shall not serve on the conference relations committee (§635.1d).

A conference relations committee is required for all boards. This committee reviews requests for changes in conference relationship and serves a critical role in the request for an involuntary status change (Administrative Fair Process, §363) received from the office of the bishop. Chapter 29 details the work of the conference relations committee.

Interview Teams

One of the board's major responsibilities is to interview candidates for provisional and conference membership and

changes in conference relationship. Guidelines for the interview process are in Chapter 11. All board members generally participate in interviews for provisional or full membership. Transfers into conference membership and conference relationship interviews are typically assigned to the conference relations committee.

Divisions of Deacons and Elders

The division of deacons oversees the candidacy process of candidates for the Order of Deacons and recommends changes in the conference relations of deacons.

The division of elders oversees the process of candidates for the Order of Elders and recommends changes in the conference relations of elders. The division of elders also assumes responsibility for the support and supervision of local pastors and associate members.

Some BOMs have a division of local pastors and associate members. Although such a division is not common practice, it can be useful in conferences that have a large number of local pastors and associate members.

Program Committees

All program functions of the BOM, as outlined in the *Discipline* or identified below should be assigned to a BOM member. The personnel and resources of the BOM and the significance of the program responsibility determine whether or not a committee is also necessary. In smaller BOMs, some of these functions may be combined under one person or committee for the sake of efficiency. In larger boards, the program functions may require many committees to accomplish the work. The staff of GBHEM's Division of Ordained Ministry is available to provide consultative services, training, and other resources in the development of the BOM program and its structure.

Functions of the BOM

Enlistment and Recruitment

- Assume primary responsibility for the enlistment and recruitment of candidates for ordained and licensed ministry, with regard to the inclusive nature of the church, by working in consultation with the cabinet and GBHEM (§635.2a).
- Renew a culture of call in the church by giving strategic leadership to annual conferences, districts, congregations, campus ministries, camps, and other appropriate ministries, especially among youth and young adults (§635.2b).

Theological Education

- Request information from theological schools about the personal and professional qualities of all applicants for provisional membership or of a provisional member, with their consent (§635.2c).
- Receive annual progress reports on all students enrolled in [theological school](#) (§635.2d).
 - Require an official transcript before recognizing an applicant's educational claims. The board may submit a transcript to GBHEM for evaluation (§635.2c).
 - Guide candidates for licensed or ordained ministry who are not enrolled in theological school and who are pursuing the [Course of Study](#) (§635.2g).
 - Administer the annual conference's [Licensing School](#) following a curriculum prescribed by GBHEM's Division of Ordained Ministry. See Chapter 13.

Mentoring

- Annually appoint and train a sufficient number of mentors in each district, in consultation with the district superintendent and vocational discernment coordinator to work with candidates, local pastors, and provisional members (§349.1, §635.2f)
- Establish a structure for group candidacy mentoring wherever possible (§349.1).
- Name a vocational discernment coordinator to coordinate the candidacy mentoring process (§635.1c).
- Hold an annual Orientation to Ministry program for all licensed and ordained ministry candidates (§312).

Examinations, Interviews, and Recommendations

- Provide all candidates for licensed and ordained ministry a written statement on the disciplinary and annual conference requirements for the local pastor, provisional, and full membership (§635.2i).
- Ensure confidentiality in the interview and reporting process (§635.2m).
- Examine applicants' potential, readiness and effectiveness for licensed and ordained ministry (§635.2h).
- Interview candidates and recommend approval or discontinuance to the clergy session including
 - Annual appointment as local pastors (§635.2j).
 - Ordination as deacons or elders (§635.2j).
 - Annual recommendation of students from other denominations (§318.4).
 - Annual recommendation of clergy from other denominations (§346.1).
- Recommend approval for extension ministries or appointments beyond the local church not already delineated by the *Book of Discipline*; appointment is the prerogative of the bishop and the cabinet (§344.1d, §635.2t).
- Interview and recommend applicants for professional certification in the areas sponsored by GBHEM (§635.1c, 2v).

Changes in Conference Relationship

- Interview applicants and make recommendations concerning changes in conference relationships. Keep a record of the changes and the reasons for them. Place a copy in the permanent records of the annual conference maintained by the secretary of the conference (§635.2l).
- Report in a timely manner any change in the conference relationship to the conference board of pensions (§635.2aa).
 - Administrative location (§361)
 - Discontinuance of provisional membership (§327.6)
 - Honorable location (§360)
 - Leave of absence, voluntary (§355) or involuntary (§356)
 - Local pastor reinstatement (§320.4)
 - Local pastor, full-time (§318.1) and part-time (§318.2)
 - Medical leave (§358)
 - Readmission of discontinued provisional members (§366)
 - Readmission of located persons (§367)
 - Retirement (§359)
 - Return to effective relationship from retirement (§359.7)
 - Sabbatical leave (§352)
 - Student local pastor appointment (§318.3)
 - To or from less than full-time ministry (§338)
 - Transitional Leave (§354)
 - Withdrawal (§362)

Transfers

- From other annual conferences or Methodist denominations (§635.2n; §347.1, 2)
- From other denominations (§347.3)

Standards and Evaluation for Effectiveness

- Develop standards of effectiveness for clergy in cooperation with the cabinet, and provide a means of evaluating the effectiveness of ministers in the annual conference (§635.2r).
- Interpret the high ethical standards of ordained ministry and study matters pertaining to character (§ 635.2s).

Support Services

- Provide support services for the ordained minister's career development (§635.2o).
 - Personal and career counseling
 - Continuing formation standards and guidelines (§334.2d)
 - Continuing education
 - Continuing spiritual growth in Christ
 - Preparation for retirement
- Give training and guidance to local church pastor/staff parish relations committees in cooperation with the cabinet (§635.2o).
- Plan an annual meeting for elders in extension ministries in cooperation with the cabinet (§344.2b).
- Serve as a liaison to retired clergy in the annual conference (§635.2k).
- Work with and support the Order of Deacons, the Order of Elders, and the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members, including receiving reports, offering financial support, and coordinating their activity with the continuing formation offerings of the board (§635.2p, q).

Care and Administration of Specialized Ministries

- Care for the administration of [professional certification](#) in the areas of Camp/Retreat Ministries, Children's Ministry, Christian Education, Collegiate Ministry, Evangelism, Ministry with Persons with Disabilities, Ministry with the Poor, Music Ministry, Older Adult Ministry, Spiritual Formation, Urban Ministry, and Youth Ministry (§635.2n).
- Continue to fulfill the governance responsibilities for diaconal ministers (§635.2u).
- Report annually to the conference a roster of all those certified as Lay Ministers (§635.2w).

Administer the Ministerial Education Fund (MEF), giving priority to scholarships for seminary students preparing for ordination, but also providing for (§635.2x)

- Enlistment
- Basic professional educational aid
- Continuing formation
- Ethnic ministry and language training
- Professional growth

Partner with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (§635.2y)

- Interpret current legislation concerning licensed and ordained ministry.
- Explain and promote the Ministerial Education Fund.
- Promote and observe Ministry Sunday.
- Supply a record of information, recommendations, and action taken on all candidates after each session of the annual conference.
- Promote [certification in specialized ministry](#) careers.

Relations with Other Boards, Committees, and Agencies

BOMs relate to many institutions, boards, committees, and agencies that affect its agenda and organization.

Bishop and cabinet: The BOM shares many responsibilities with the cabinet, such as addressing involuntary status changes through Administrative Fair Process. Although the bishop names a cabinet representative to the BOM, that representative has a limited role to play when the cabinet initiates a recommendation for an involuntary change in conference relationship. When such a change is called for, the cabinet representative may present the argument for change, but may not participate in the deliberations or decisions of the BOM (see Judicial Council Decisions [917](#) and [950](#)). Additionally, whenever the BOM deliberates and votes on the involuntary discontinuance of provisional membership, cabinet members shall not be present (Judicial Council Decision [917](#)).

The *Discipline* provides for consultation between the bishop and BOM on a number of matters, including BOM membership, transfer into the annual conference, ad interim decisions on leave of absence, and appointments to extension ministries. Open lines of communication among the bishop, BOM, and cabinet are critical to effectively address their mutual concerns. For some conferences, a yearly joint meeting of the BOM executive committee and cabinet is an effective way to address these concerns. Others may use a retreat setting or a joint standing committee. Each conference should look at the options in light of its own experience and context to decide how these relationships should be built into the structure.

Committee on Pastor/Staff Parish Relations (P/SPRC): The BOM shares the responsibility of training and providing resources for the committees on pastor/staff relations. This work includes equipping committees for enlistment, interviewing and supporting candidates for ordination or license as a local pastor, annually evaluating clergy performance, and supporting individual continuing education programs.

District Committee on Ordained Ministry: The district committee is a sub-committee of the BOM (§635.1g). It shares responsibility for enlistment, candidacy, licensing local pastors, and recommending individuals for provisional membership and commissioning. The importance of a close working relationship between the BOM and the dCOM is underlined by the fact that the BOM is required to assign a representative to each dCOM. Annual training of dCOMs is essential for effective personnel work in the conference and maintaining consistent standards for candidacy throughout the conference. See Chapter 2 for information about the dCOM.

Conference Board of Pensions and the Joint Committee on Medical Leave: The BOM communicates with the Board of Pensions on issues related to the pre-retirement programs, medical leave, retirements, pension claims, records, and support systems for retirees. One member of the BOM is a liaison to the conference retirees. BOM communication with the Board of Pensions happens primarily through the chairperson and registrar. In addition to this general liaison responsibility, there may be a Joint Committee on Medical Leave that reviews requests to enter and exit medical leave and makes recommendations to the cabinet, BOM, and Conference Board of Pensions (§652).

Council on Finance and Administration: The BOM works with the conference Council on Finance and Administration to provide support for its responsibilities of ministerial enlistment, training, and support systems for personal and professional growth.

As a service agency of the conference, the administrative budget of the board shall be a claim on the operating budget of the annual conference (§635.4). This budget includes meeting expenses, office expenses, travel, postage, phone, etc.

Additionally, concern for the promotion of the Ministerial Education Fund is shared with the GCFA, since the methods of promoting the fund, and the amount contributed may be influenced or controlled by this body.

Annual Conference Agencies: Although the BOM is not a program agency, it may be represented on a council or other body that coordinates the ministries of the conference. This representation enables the BOM to inform the conference about programs that particularly affect licensed and ordained ministry in the conference (pensions, equitable salaries, insurance, etc.) and coordinate BOM meetings and programs with ministries on the conference calendar.

In a growing number of conferences, a professional employed by the conference coordinates many support services for licensed and ordained ministry. This person generally sits on both the conference coordinating body and the BOM to provide balance and expertise necessary for effective clergy support. For those conferences, it is a helpful

addition to the BOM and conference structure. Conferences may want to consider this option and can consult with GBHEM for more information and communication with others that have developed this staff position.

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry: The BOM relates directly to GBHEM through the chairperson, registrar(s), and those responsible for many different areas of the BOM's work.

The Division of Ordained Ministry (DOM) has two ministry teams: Clergy Formation and Clergy Life.

Those responsible for recruitment, enlistment, candidacy mentoring, candidacy, local pastors, and conference relations relate to the Clergy Formation Team.

Those responsible for education, provisional membership, extension ministries, endorsement, clergy mentoring, continuing formation, certification in specialized ministries, support systems, supervision, and clergy effectiveness relate to the Clergy Life Team.

Theological Schools and Seminaries: The BOM is responsible for the support of United Methodist theological education, both in guiding candidates and promoting the Ministerial Education Fund. See more information in Chapter 19.

The BOM may also need to relate to non-UM theological schools that have been approved by the University Senate if candidates from that annual conference are attending seminary in those institutions.

Course of Study Schools: Every BOM which has local pastors in a Course of Study School is invited to visit the school and participate in an annual board of advisors or board of managers meeting. When a BOM sends its students to more than one school, it may wish to participate in more than one board meeting. Such visitation and representation enables a BOM to: (1) maintain close contact with the local pastors; (2) understand the quality of education and procedures in the schools; and (3) recommend policy changes to strengthen the Course of Study program and increase the effectiveness of education for local pastors.

Jurisdictional Committees on Ordained Ministry: General Conference has created an optional committee on ordained ministry within the jurisdictions of our denomination. In jurisdictions which have chosen to establish this or any similar structures, BOMs are called upon to participate fully in the work and deliberations of those bodies. The jurisdictional committee is free to set its own agenda and will likely address a variety of needs.

For more information visit www.gbhem.org/bom.