

Section 3 • The Candidacy Process

CHAPTER 8

Candidacy and Candidacy Forms

For more information contact GBHEM's director of Candidacy, Mentoring, and Conference Relations, candidacy@gbhem.org or 615-340-7374.

The licensed and 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. (¶310)

An Overview

- Candidacy is a vocational decision-making process, developed by GBHEM in consultation with the [General Board of Discipleship](#) and the [General Board of Global Ministries](#).
- Candidacy for licensed and ordained ministry is the first formal step toward annual conference membership and ordination as a deacon or an elder, or for licensing for pastoral ministry in the UMC.
- Candidacy begins when the potential candidate inquires about ministry and continues until that person is commissioned as a provisional member or is approved, appointed, and licensed as a local pastor. Candidacy also ends if a person withdraws from candidacy or is denied by the dCOM or BOM.
- [Forms needed](#) by candidates, charge conferences, dCOMs and BOMs related to candidacy are linked at the end of this chapter and posted on the GBHEM website.

Basic Candidacy Resources

- [The Christian as Minister: An Exploration Into the Meaning of God's Call](#) – Provides a discussion on the call to ministry and the many ways to serve in the UMC. It is based on the concept of servant ministry and servant leadership presented by the Council of Bishops and affirmed by the General Conference.
- [Understanding God's Call: A Ministry Inquiry Process](#) - Designed for Christians to explore with someone else (such as a pastor, mentor, campus minister or other trusted guide) how faith and vocation are related in one's faith journey, cultural context, the Bible and Christian tradition, and the world's needs. Available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).
- [Fulfilling God's Call: Guidelines for Candidacy](#) – An exploratory and procedural study completed through participation in a candidacy mentoring group or through conversations with a candidacy mentor. Candidacy mentors are trained through the BOM and assigned by the dCOM in consultation with the district superintendent and vocational discernment coordinator. Available in English and Spanish through the online candidacy system upon registration for candidacy.

- Even though these resources are no longer required by the *Book of Discipline*, they are helpful tools in exploring a call to ministry. They outline disciplinary requirements for ordination or licensing and include recommendations to help candidates make faithful, informed decisions.

The Candidacy Process

The basic requirements for candidacy are listed in ¶310-¶314. The first stage in inquiry may include reading [The Christian as Minister](#) or other BOM-approved resource. The candidate enters into an exploratory study with the guidance of a candidacy mentor or participation in a candidacy mentoring group.

The candidate and the candidacy mentor should agree to a covenantal relationship when first meeting in order to work together through the discernment process. The covenant should consider mutually agreed-upon confidentiality to share in discernment of call, gifts, and life experience; and to explore together the forms of ministry the candidate feels called to pursue. In conferences where group candidacy mentoring has been established, candidates will covenant with a candidacy mentoring group in much the same way.

The 2012 General Conference approved and encouraged the use of a vocational discernment coordinator to coordinate the candidacy mentoring process (¶ 635.1). The coordinator may be a volunteer or paid position, depending on an annual conference's needs. See more about the candidacy mentoring process in Chapter 5.

Those beginning candidacy must meet the following conditions (¶310.1)

- Be a professing member in good standing of the UMC or a baptized participant of a recognized UM campus ministry or other UM ministry setting for a minimum of one (1) year.
- In special circumstances, the dCOM may authorize other UM ministry settings to serve in the role of the local church for the purpose of recommending candidacy, and specify the persons or bodies that will serve in the roles of pastor, S/P-PRC, and charge conference.
- Write to the district superintendent, include a statement of call, and request admission to the candidacy process. Ask for assignment of a candidacy mentor, and request registration in candidacy with GBHEM through the district superintendent.
- Study the candidacy resources adopted by the conference BOM.
- Write a statement of call. Through the pastor or someone equivalent - specified by the dCOM - the candidate requests a meeting of the S/P-PRC (or equivalent body specified by the dCOM) to consider the writing, and to recommend that person for candidacy.
- Be interviewed by the S/P-PRC in light of Wesley's historic questions (¶310.1d).
- Following a meeting with and recommendation by the S/P-PRC, meet with the charge conference (or body specified by the district committee), for recommendation to the dCOM for certification. The charge conference's recommendation shall be by written ballot with two-thirds approval of the charge conference present.
- Graduated from an accredited high school or received a certificate of equivalency. Use [Form 104](#) for the charge conference recommendation. See forms at the end of this chapter or on the [GBHEM website](#).

Those seeking to become certified will (¶310.2)

- Request to meet with the dCOM.
- Prepare a written response to information requested in ¶310.2a.
- Complete and release required psychological reports, criminal background, and credit checks.
- Provide other information as the dCOM requires.
- Agree to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life as set forth in the UM Social Principles.

- Be interviewed by the dCOM in light of the mentor's report, candidate's written response to the questions, psychological assessment report, and background checks. The dCOM may invite candidacy mentors to accompany candidates to the certification meeting.
- Receive a three-fourths majority approval of dCOM members present. Vote must be completed by written ballot (¶666.6).
- To ensure the recorded completion of candidacy, the certified candidate's qualification for GBHEM scholarships, and seminary receipts of MEF funding, the decision about certification recommendation must be recorded in the online candidacy system following the dCOM decision.

Continuation of Candidacy

- Orientation to Ministry (sponsored by the BOM) is required for all candidates for licensed and ordained ministry. Attendance at the orientation and becoming a certified candidate may be sequential or concurrent (¶312). See Chapter 6 for more details.
- An individual may continue under the supervision of the dCOM as a certified candidate for 1-12 years until becoming a provisional member of the annual conference, receiving an appointment as a local pastor, or withdrawing or being discontinued from candidacy for licensed or ordained ministry (¶314, ¶324.1).
- During this time, candidates continue to work with candidacy mentors who monitor the candidates' educational, spiritual, and vocational goals.

Flexibility and Circumstances

Although there is an order to decisions about candidacy - moving from the candidate and mentor to the P/S-PRC and charge conference, and then to the dCOM - there is flexibility in arranging the way each candidate discerns vocational call. Some candidates already have made most of their vocational decisions and are preparing for ordination as a deacon or an elder through college or seminary studies. Others may be deciding how they are called to pursue ministry as a second career, may be entering candidacy with English as a second language, or may be discerning the different orders of ordained ministry.

It is important to consider background, experience, education, training, and circumstances, and to allow flexibility to move through the candidacy process (¶310.2b). Most candidates will likely meet with a mentor before being recommended as a candidate by the P/S-PRC and the charge conference (or equivalent bodies). However, other candidates may receive a charge conference recommendation before applying for candidacy through the district superintendent. District committees can be flexible with the order in which a candidate moves through the beginning stages of candidacy, provided that the requirements of ¶310 are complete prior to certification by the dCOM.

Goals of Candidacy

For the Candidate

- Explore the vocational options of lay, licensed, and ordained ministry in the UMC, and understand personal and professional ministry development needed in order to reach decisions that best express a faithful response to God's call.
- Respond to God's call in a way that is faithful to the candidate's gifts and grace, while partnering with the annual conference to discern ways to serve in ministry.

For the Annual Conference and UMC

- Provide the environment and opportunity to discern God's call.
- Offer thoughtful resources and settings to examine and affirm personal and vocational gifts and choices, whether for lay, licensed, or ordained ministry.
- Enable the church to provide pastoral care to candidates and their families, friends, and ministry settings.

- Examine the calling, grace, gifts, and potential effectiveness of those who present themselves as candidates for lay, licensed, or ordained ministry.
- Enlist, assess, encourage, and recommend effective candidates and clergy leaders to serve the UMC.

Candidacy Forms

[Form 102: Biographical Information Form](#)

[Form 103: Medical Form](#)

[Form 104: Declaration of Candidacy](#)

[Form 105: Application for Clergy Relationship](#)

[Form 109: Theological School Recommendation](#)

[Form 112: Request for Psychological Assessment Packet](#)
(SAMPLE ONLY. MUST BE COMPLETED ONLINE IN OCAS)

[Form 113: District Committee Certified Candidate Approval Form](#)
(SAMPLE ONLY. MUST BE COMPLETED ONLINE IN OCAS)

[Form 114: Candidacy Disclosure Form](#)

[Form 115: Candidacy Renewal](#)

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