

Chapter 1 | Board of Ordained Ministry Organization

“Each annual conference at the first session following the General Conference shall elect for a term of four years a Board of Ordained Ministry.” (§635)

“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.” (§635.1b)

(§635, 2016 *The Book of Discipline* details the work of the Board of Ordained Ministry)

Membership

Overall membership should include a balance of female and male members, as well as racial/ethnic members. Members are 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. Members serve a four-year term and may serve up to three consecutive terms.

CLERGY

- At least six elders and deacons
 - At least one of which is retired
 - Chairpersons of the Order of Deacons, Order of Elders and Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members
- At least two associate members or local pastors who have completed the Course of Study

LAITY – One-fifth to one-third laypersons, including diaconal ministers

Organization

Although the responsibilities and functions of BOMs are common throughout the church, BOM structure varies from conference to conference. The following suggestions may be adapted to the roles, responsibilities, contexts and resources of each annual conference.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Usually composed of the BOM chairperson, chairpersons of the Division of Deacons and Division of Elders (where they exist), chairpersons of the Order of Deacons, Order of Elders and the the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members, registrars, committee chairpersons and a Cabinet representative. The Vocational Discernment Coordinator or other officers or members may also serve on the executive committee.
- Generally, this committee meets before each BOM meeting to review the agenda and address administrative matters. In addition, they may consult with the bishop or take interim action on changes in conference relationships. The executive committee or one of its members will typically relate to other boards and agencies.

CONFERENCE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

- Required of all BOMs
- Shall consist of at least three persons, who are not district superintendents (§635.1d)
- Receives requests for involuntary discontinuance of provisional members, involuntary leave of absence, administrative location, involuntary retirement, involuntary medical leave or other such matters as may be referred to them by the board of ordained ministry. 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, §361) received from the office of the bishop (further information available in Chapter 26).

INTERVIEW TEAMS

- Interview candidates seeking provisional or full membership (generally, all board members participate in this)
- Interview candidates seeking transfer into conference membership and candidates seeking to change their conference relationship (typically assigned to the conference relations committee to make a recommendation to the BOM)
- See Chapter 9 for guidelines on the interview process

DIVISION OF DEACONS AND DIVISION OF ELDERS

- The Division of Deacons oversees the candidacy and ordination process of candidates for the Order of Deacons and may recommend changes in the conference relations of deacons.
- The Division of Elders oversees the candidacy and ordination process of candidates for the Order of Elders and may recommend changes in the conference relations of elders.
- 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. Otherwise, the Division of Elders may also assume responsibility for the support and supervision of local pastors and associate members.

PROGRAM COMMITTEES

- All program functions of the BOM, as outlined in *The Book of Discipline* or identified below should be assigned oversight by a board 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 boards, 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.
- GBHEM's Division of Ordained Ministry staff is available to provide consultative services, training and other resources in the development of the BOM program and its structure.

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 Registrar's functions.” (§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 the students attending 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 25 (Candidacy and Clergy Files) for more details (§635.3e)

Functions of the BOM

ENLISTMENT AND RECRUITMENT

- Assumes primary responsibility for the enlistment and recruitment of ministerial leadership for churches and other ministry settings with regard to the inclusive nature of the church by working in consultation with the Cabinet and GBHEM (§635.2a)
- Renews 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

- Seeks 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)
- Receives annual progress reports on all students enrolled in theological school (§635.2d)
- Requires an official transcript before recognizing an applicant's educational claims. The board may submit a transcript to GBHEM for evaluation (§635.2e)
- Guides candidates for licensed or ordained ministry who are not enrolled in theological school and who are pursuing the Course of Study (§635.2g)
- Administers the annual conference's Licensing School following a curriculum prescribed by GBHEM's Division of Ordained Ministry (see Chapter 11)

MENTORING

- Annually appoints and trains a sufficient number of mentors to work with candidates, local pastors and provisional members (in consultation with the District Superintendent and Vocational Discernment Coordinator) (§349.1, §635.2f)
- Establishes a structure for group candidacy mentoring wherever possible (§349)
- Names a Vocational Discernment Coordinator to coordinate the candidacy mentoring process (§635.1c)
- Holds an annual Orientation to Ministry program for all licensed and ordained ministry candidates (§312)

EXAMINATION, INTERVIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provides all licensed and ordained ministry candidates with a written statement on the disciplinary and Annual Conference requirements for local pastor, provisional membership and full membership (§635.2i)
- Examines applicants' potential, readiness and effectiveness for licensed and ordained ministry

- Interviews candidates and recommends approval or discontinuance to the Clergy Session
 - Annual licensing for local pastors (§635.2j)
 - Provisional and full membership for deacons or elders (§635.2j)
 - Annual recommendation for students from other denominations (§318.4)
 - Annual recommendation for clergy serving from outside the Annual Conference (§346)
- Interviews candidates and recommends approval for extension ministries or appointments beyond the local church not already delineated by *The Book of Discipline*
- Interviews applicants and recommends professional certification in the areas administered by GBHEM (§635.1c, 2u)
- Ensures confidentiality in the interview and reporting process (§635.2m)

ADMINISTERING CHANGES IN CONFERENCE RELATIONSHIP

- Interviews applicants and makes recommendations concerning changes in conference relationships. Also ensures that the changes are entered into the conference personnel files maintained by the secretary of the conference (§635.2l).
 - Administrative location (§359)
 - Discontinuance of provisional membership (§327.6)
 - Honorable location (§358)
 - Leave of absence, voluntary (§353) or involuntary (§354)
 - Local pastor reinstatement (§320.4)
 - Local pastor, full-time (§318.1) and part-time (§318.2)
 - Medical leave (§356)
 - Readmission of discontinued provisional members (§363)
 - Readmission of located persons (§365)
 - Retirement (§357)
 - Return to effective relationship from retirement (§357.7)
 - Sabbatical leave (§351)
 - Student local pastor appointment (§318.3)
 - Change either to or from less than full-time ministry (§338)
 - Transitional Leave (§353)
 - Withdrawal (§360)
- Reports any change in the conference relationship to the conference Board of Pensions in a timely manner

ADMINISTERING TRANSFERS AND RECOMMENDING APPROVAL TO THE CLERGY SESSION

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

DEVELOPING STANDARDS FOR EVALUATION

- Develops standards of effectiveness for ministerial leaders in cooperation with the Cabinet and provides a means of evaluating the effectiveness of ministerial leaders, whether ordained, licensed, certified or assigned (§635.2q)

- Interprets the high ethical standards of ordained ministry and studies matters pertaining to character (§635.2r)
- Designs and implements an in-depth personal and professional assessment process for clergy to engage in every eight years (§349.3)

PROVIDING SUPPORT SERVICES FOR MINISTERS

- Provides support services for all those in ministerial leadership (ordained, licensed, certified and assigned) for career development (§635.2o)
- Provides personal and career counseling
 - Continuing formation standards and guidelines (§334.2d)
 - Continuing education
 - Continuing spiritual growth in Christ
 - Preparation for retirement
- Gives training and guidance to local church pastor/staff parish relations committees in cooperation with the Cabinet (§635.2o)
- Plans an annual meeting for those serving in extension ministries in cooperation with the Cabinet (§344.2b)
- Serves as a liaison to retired clergy in the Annual Conference (§635.2k)
- Works with and supports 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 board's continuing formation offerings (§635.2p)

ADMINISTERING TO NEEDS FOR SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES

- Support and management for diaconal ministers (§635.2t)
- Administration of professional certifications (§635.2u)
- Reports annually to the conference a list of those certified as Lay Ministers (§635.2v)

ADMINISTERING THE MINISTERIAL EDUCATION FUND (MEF)

Priority for scholarships should be given to seminary students preparing for ordination, but may also provide for (§635.2w):

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

PARTNERING WITH GBHEM

- Interprets current legislation concerning licensed and ordained ministry
- Explains and promotes the Ministerial Education Fund (MEF)
- Promotes and observes Ministry Sunday
- Supplies a record of information, recommendations and action taken on all candidates after each session of the Annual Conference
- Promotes certification in specialized ministry careers

Relations with Other Boards, Committees and Agencies

BISHOP AND CABINET

- **Bishop** – *The Book of 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.
- **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 requests 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).
- 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.

PASTOR/STAFF PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The BOM shares in the responsibility to train and provide resources for the P/SPRC. This work includes equipping committees for enlistment, interviewing and supporting candidates for ordination or licensing as a local pastor, annually evaluating clergy performance and supporting individual continuing education programs.

DISTRICT COMMITTEE ON ORDAINED MINISTRY

District committees (dCOM) are a subcommittee of the BOM (§635.1g). It shares responsibility for enlistment, candidacy, licensing local pastors and recommending individuals for associate or provisional membership. 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 dCOM training 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.

- 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 conference's ministries.

- This representation enables the BOM to inform the conference about programs that particularly affect ordained, licensed, certified and assigned ministers (pensions, equitable salaries, insurance, etc.) and coordinate BOM meetings and programs with the conference calendar.
- In the vast majority of conferences, a professional employed by the conference coordinates many support services for ordained, licensed, certified and assigned ministry. This person generally meets regularly with the conference coordinating body and the BOM to provide balance and expertise necessary for effective ministerial 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, Conference Relations Committee chairs and those responsible for many different areas of the BOM's work.

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 17.)
- 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 attend seminary in those institutions.

COURSE OF STUDY

- Every BOM that has local pastors in Course of Study 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:
 - Maintain close contact with the local pastors
 - Understand the quality of education and procedures in the schools
 - 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. 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 to meet and organize based on the jurisdiction's needs.