

Upper New York Annual Conference Board of Ordained Ministry Policy Manual

Part A: Policies related to commissioning and ordination process

1. Provisional Membership:

Provisional membership begins at commissioning (para 325). Provisional membership may continue for up to 8 years (para 327), but within the 8 years it must include at least 2 years (or equivalent) full-time service under appointment after completion of educational requirements (para 326). It is during the (at least) 2 year period **after** completion of educational requirements (also referred to as the **Residency Period**) that participation in the **residency program** takes place, and the mission project must be completed.

Board of Ordained Ministry contacts: Provisional Division Chair (residency program); Board Registrar (records and requirements).

2. Educational Requirement for Provisional Membership:

Any candidate seeking Provisional membership must have completed **one half (1/2) of the educational requirements before the interview** session.

Board of Ordained Ministry contacts: Standards and Qualifications Division Chair; Board Registrar

3. One year Certified Candidacy Required before Provisional Membership:

A Candidate seeking Commissioning/Provisional Membership needs to have been a Certified Candidate one full calendar year before the date of commissioning.

4. District Committee Recommendation for Provisional Membership application:

Candidates for Commissioning and Provisional Membership must be recommended by their District Committee on Ministry (dCOM) before making application to the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM). Since the initial application to BOM is made in the fall, and pastors are sometimes moved mid-summer, the Board makes this provision for dCOM recommendations:

If a candidate is recommended for commissioning by a dCOM for Commissioning and Provisional Membership in the UNYAC in the same calendar year and prior to an appointment change to a new district, the recommendation, if received by the stated deadline, will be accepted by the BOM. The candidate is required to meet with dCOM relating to their new appointment by December 31st of that same calendar year.

(Approved by UNY BOM, September 2014)

5. Length of Provisional period:

Candidates for Ordination as either Deacon or Elder will be eligible to apply for ordination after a minimum of 2 years full-time service under appointment as a provisional member. The 2-year time frame begins after all educational requirements have been completed.

Board of Ordained Ministry contacts: Provisional Division Chair (residency program); Board Registrar (records and requirements).

5a. Residency Program participation in Residency Period:

Provisional Members are encouraged to participate in all Provisional Retreats and are **required** to attend a minimum of three (3) retreats within the first two (2) years of Provisional Membership and at least one per year after that.

5b. Residency Program participation for Transfer from one Order to another:

Persons seeking a transfer of Order (Deacon to Elder or Elder to Deacon), shall submit a written request to the Bishop and to the BOM (BOD ¶309.2), and shall participate alongside Provisional Members in the UNY Provisional Residency Program in community for formation and guidance. They must meet the requirements for the Order into which they are transferring. They will be assigned a mentor from the Order into which they are transferring.

6. Psychological Evaluation Process (new process as of 7/1/2015)

1. When candidate/mentor/dCOM determine that the candidate is ready for testing, the DCOM issues an application with a letter of instructions to their candidate.
2. The candidate completes the form, signs it, and sends it to the Board's Psych Assessment Officer, along with the candidate's portion of the fee, \$300, in a check made out to Upper New York Conference. The Psychological Assessment officer acknowledges receipt of the application and fee, and provides contact information for the Ministerial Assessment Specialist (MAS).
3. The candidate contacts the MAS to begin the process of assessment. Assessments are offered in three locations of the Upper New York Conference two times per year in each of 3 locations, eastern, central and western NYS.
4. The MAS sends instruments to complete prior to interview; conducts additional testing in office and sends further instruments with the candidate to complete at home.
5. Upon completion and return of the take home portion of the assessment, the MAS scores, interprets and provides a report on the data.
6. This report is sent to the candidate for his/her records. S/he may give copies of this report to whomever s/he wishes.
7. The MAS makes an interview appointment via SKYPE with the candidate at which time s/he reviews the report. The MAS takes notes of the review; yet does not change the report.

8. The Psychological Assessment officer receives the psychological assessment report, and sends a copy to the District Office to be put in the candidate's personnel file.
9. The District Office makes the report available to the member of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry who is designated as the reviewer of the report. The report is kept in the candidate's personnel file at the district office until the candidate is moved on through commissioning, is discontinued, or withdraws.
10. The completed evaluation with the attached follow up interview is valid for an indefinite period of time. In the event that it seems necessary to retest a candidate, a follow-up interview is made with the MAS. Generally there is no extra cost for this follow-up assessment interview.

NOTE: For persons who are interviewing for a status change, psychological assessment reports completed prior to July 1, 2015, under the former process will no longer be valid after 5 years. Subsequent psychological evaluations will also require an application and a \$300 fee. Contact the psychological assessment officer for the Upper New York. Board of Ordained Ministry for an application.

Board of Ordained Ministry contact: Psychological Assessment Officer, Registrar

7. Background checks:

Background checks for candidates for ministry, candidates for certification in specialized ministries, and for those transferring in to the Upper New York Conference are conducted and reviewed by the Background Check Officer.

Cost of Background Checks: Candidate pays \$80 and BOM pays any remaining balance. Procedure for initiating a background check can be found on the UNYAC web site, Board of Ordained ministry section.

Board of Ordained Ministry contact: Background Check Officer

7a: Background checks less than 5 years old:

Background checks for all applying for Provisional, Full or Associate membership in the UNY Annual Conference must be dated no more than five (5) years prior to the October 1 application deadline.

Documentation must be in the file of the DCOM or the BOM registrar by October 1 in order for a BOM interview to take place the following spring.

Board of Ordained Ministry contact: Background Check Officer, Board Registrar

8: Medical form less than 2 years old:

The medical form for a candidate to be interviewed for Commissioning and Provisional Membership or Ordination and Full Membership, **MUST be dated within two (2) years** prior the October 1 application deadline. Documentation of a medical form newer than 2 years old must be in the file of the DCOM or the BOM registrar by October 1 in order for an interview to take place the following spring.

Board of Ordained Ministry contact: Board Registrar

9. Ministry Setting Interview for ordination candidates:

All candidates coming to BoM for Ordination interviews must have a **Ministry Setting interview** no longer than six (6) months before the BOM Ordination Interview.

Board of Ordained Ministry contact: Board Registrar

10. Provisional Deacons, supervision:

A Provisional Deacon seeking a Missional Appointment in a local congregation must be supervised by an ordained Elder or Deacon in full connection, who is present within that local congregation (*Book of Discipline* 331.5)

11. Procedure for seeking policy exceptions:

Any Exceptions to Board policy for Provisional Candidates coming before the Board for ordination as Deacon, Elder or Associate Member must be approved by vote of the Full Board by December 1 of the year prior to ordination interviews. All requests for any exceptions to the Board policy for Provisional Candidates must be accompanied by a letter of support from the District Superintendent and the Mentor.

Board of Ordained Ministry contact: Standards and Qualifications Division Chair, or Board Chair

12. A Policy Note regarding Distance Learning and educational requirements:

The Upper New York BOM considers synchronous distance interactive learning presentation courses are equivalent to face-to-face courses, and distinct from “online” courses.

13: Required Mission Project for Ordination Candidates:

13a: **MISSION PROJECT GUIDELINES** For Candidates Seeking **Full Membership and Ordination, Order of Deacon and Order of Elder**

Provisional members applying for full membership in the Upper NY Annual Conference and ordination as a Deacon or Elder in the United Methodist Church are required to participate in a mission project. The UNYAC Mission Project requirement fulfills the mandate for ordination as set forth in the *Book of Discipline* (2016) in paragraphs 330.4(4) for Deacon and 335(7) for Elder. This requirement must be completed during your provisional period, and the report must be submitted by the UMCares Plus Deadline Date of the year candidates come for the ordination interview.

There are four basic requirements for your mission project:

1. It must be at least 5 days in length, not including travel. Please pay close attention to the levels of immersion described later in this document as you select your mission project.
2. It must take place during the time you are a provisional member.
3. After completing the mission work, you must give a presentation to a group, either within or outside your local church congregation.
4. You must write a report, which is due by the UMCares Plus Deadline Date of the year candidates come for the ordination interview.

Your report should include the following items:

- Describe the nature of the mission project in which you took part. (Please limit this section to no more than 2 paragraphs.) Reflect on how this experience did or did not meet your expectations.
- Why did you choose this particular mission experience? What factors went into your decision?
- Describe a theological issue you encountered through your participation in this project. What resources helped you reflect on this theological issue?
- Describe the cultural context in which you have been in mission. How is it different from your own?
- Describe any significant cross-cultural learning that resulted from your participation in this experience.
- What familiar experiences do you notice in the lives of folks you encountered?
- How has your being in that place impacted the lives of those you encountered?
- How has your being in that place impacted your own life? How are you different? What changes will you make because of this experience?
- What effect did your participation in this mission project have on your understanding of faith and ministry?
- How did your experience impact the way that you understand God and Humanity?

- How has your experience impacted the way that you will behave toward others?
- How will your experience impact the way that you lead people in Christian ministry?
- How did you or will you bring your congregation or ministry setting into this experience?

The Board of Ordained Ministry recognizes three possible levels of immersion in your mission experience:

1. A completely cross-cultural international mission project working with people of a different ethnic background who speak a different language. Some examples are: a VIM (Volunteers-in-Mission) trip, a medical mission trip.
2. A significantly cross-cultural domestic mission project working with people who are of a different ethnic background, who may or may not speak English. Some examples are: missions work in a Native American community, missions work in an inner-city setting outside of UNY Conference.
3. A minimally cross-cultural local mission project working with people from a different ethnic or economic background who live in or near the bounds of our annual conference. Some examples are: Red Bird mission trip, missions work in an inner-city setting inside UNY Conference. This option is provided and intended for those with limiting life circumstances.

That said, the Board also encourages you to stretch yourself. Be creative. Open yourself to doing the work that the Holy Spirit is calling you to do. Allow for the possibility of a life-changing experience.

If you have any questions, please contact the Chair of the Division of Standards and Qualifications of the UNY Board of Ordained Ministry.

13 b. MISSION PROJECT GUIDELINES For Candidates Seeking Associate Membership

Local Pastors applying for Associate Membership in the Upper NY Annual Conference are required to participate in a mission project. The project must be completed and the report submitted by the UMCares Plus Deadline Date of the year the candidate comes for the Associate Membership interview.

There are four basic requirements for your mission project:

1. It must be at least 5 days in length, not including travel. Please pay close attention to the levels of immersion described later in this document as you select your mission project.
2. It must take place within the two years prior to your interview for Associate Membership.
3. After completing the mission work, you must give a presentation to a group, either within or outside your local church congregation.
4. You must write a report, which is due by the UMCares Plus Deadline Date of the year candidates come for the ordination interview.

Your report should include the following items:

- Describe the nature of the mission project in which you took part. (Please limit this section to no more than 2 paragraphs.) Reflect on how this experience did or did not meet your expectations.
- Why did you choose this particular mission experience? What factors went into your decision?
- Describe a theological issue you encountered through your participation in this project. What resources helped you reflect on this theological issue?
- Describe the cultural context in which you have been in mission. How is it different from your own?
- Describe any significant cross-cultural learning that resulted from your participation in this experience.
- What familiar experiences do you notice in the lives of folks you encountered?
- How has your being in that place impacted the lives of those you encountered?
- How has your being in that place impacted your own life? How are you different? What changes will you make because of this experience?
- What effect did your participation in this mission project have on your understanding of faith and ministry?
- How did your experience impact the way that you understand God and Humanity?
- How has your experience impacted the way that you will behave toward others?
- How will your experience impact the way that you lead people in Christian ministry?
- How did you or will you bring your congregation or ministry setting into this experience?

The Board of Ordained Ministry recognizes three possible levels of immersion in your mission experience:

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3. A minimally cross-cultural local mission project working with people from a different ethnic or economic background who live in or near the bounds of our annual conference. Some examples are: Red Bird mission trip, missions work in an inner-city setting inside UNY Conference. This option is provided and intended for those with limiting life circumstances.

That said, the Board also encourages you to stretch yourself. Be creative. Open yourself to doing the work that the Holy Spirit is calling you to do. Allow for the possibility of a life-changing experience.

If you have any questions, please contact the Chair of the Division of Standards and Qualifications of the UNY Board of Ordained Ministry.

Part B: Policies related to Clergy Status

1. Honorable Location:

Clergy on Honorable Location (2012 BOD Paragraph 359.2) are required to report yearly to the UNY BoM and to their designated charge conference. Per Discipline, the Board of Ordained Ministry *may* recommend termination of orders after 2 consecutive years of failure to submit a report. Those clergy on Honorable Location who have not reported for more than five (5) years will be removed from Honorable Location, and their orders terminated.

2. Leave of Absence:

For persons requesting to **enter** Voluntary Leave of Absence status: An interview will be granted to determine and document the reasons for making the request, and the clergy person's goals for the use of that time. The District Superintendent should be present for the interview.

For clergy members requesting to **return from** Voluntary Leave of Absence status to return to active service: An interview will be granted to determine and document how the circumstances leading up to the Leave of Absence have been alleviated or resolved, how the goals for the Leave of Absence have been met, and the scope of growth during the Leave of Absence. The District Superintendent should be present for the interview. The interview will be conducted by an ad hoc committee of Board members, arranged by the Status Division of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

3. Extension Ministry appointment requests:

The BOM is responsible for approving the appropriateness of setting for an Extension Ministry (while the Cabinet actually makes the appointment.) The BOM requires a written request for Extension Ministry setting approval, including:

- Start date, full-time or specified percentage of time;
- How this position will help you fulfill your calling to ordained or licensed ministry, and the mission of the Church;
- A job description from the extension ministry site that indicates the chain of supervision, expectations, frequency & method of evaluation;
- If extension ministry is to be combined with a local church appointment, documentation should name the appointment and percentage of time in each setting.

Such letter of request is to be copied to the Bishop, Dean of the Cabinet, Board Chairs, and Chair of Status Division of UNY BOM.

4. Persons seeking Certification in Specialized Ministries:

For those seeking certification in specialized ministries, the Board requires the same psychological exam, boundaries training, and background check as for candidates for membership. The Board will pay the same proportion of the fees as for candidates for membership.

PART C: Policies related to Clergy Education:

1. **Continuing Education:** All active Upper New York Conference Clergy not attending school are expected to engage in Yearly Continuing Education of at least 20 contact hours / 2 CEUs. As BOOM budget allows, and based on demonstrated need Continuing Ed grants will be offered up to a maximum of \$1500 per quadrennium to any active clergy person, and to retired persons appointed to a church.

Forms and contact: Application form is available on the conference web site, and is to be returned to the BOM Continuing Education Fund Officer .

2. **Seminary Aid:** Full time students in a 3-year Masters degree program leading to credentials of an elder or deacon: up to \$7000 per year with a maximum of \$21,000
Part-time students in a Masters degree program leading to credentials as a deacon or elder: up to \$3000 per year with a maximum of \$21,000
Aid will be offered as the BOM budget allows and according to demonstrated need.
Forms and contact: Application form is available on the conference web site, and is to be returned to the BOM seminary aid officer.

3. Course of Study financial support policy

For students attending any residential or extension Course of Study Program

- UNY BOM will reimburse \$125 for each course completed with the grade of “C” or higher upon submission of a grade report form and Course of Study invoice
- ½ of the remainder shall be paid by the Local Pastor
- ½ of the remainder shall be paid by reimbursement to the pastor by the Local Pastor’s church appointment (to be included as part of Accountable Reimbursement Plan in compensation plan document presented at appointment or church conference).

The Board of Ordained Ministry will reimburse Course of Study correspondence courses at the rate of \$50.00 per course upon receipt of a transcript showing a grade of “C” or better upon submission of a grade report form and Course of Study invoice. **Course of Studies Aid** can be accessed by contacting the BOM Administrative Assistant.

4. Doctoral Studies:

For those pastors engaged in advanced studies for a DMin or PhD, aid will be offered as the BOM budget allows and according to demonstrated need as follows: \$500 per semester with a maximum of \$3000. Applications are available on the conference web site.

5. Continuing Education funding for Provisional Members fulfilling BOM Requirements:

The Upper New York Board of Ordained Ministry will extend grant support through the Continuing Education Grant program at the rate of up to 50% (exceeding the typical 1/3 limit) of the cost of any **educational program** (beyond the seminary degree) **that the BOM requires of a provisional member** to qualify for ordination (the \$1500 cap per person per quadrennium on grants from MEF Continuing Ed funds still applies).

Board Contact: Continuing Education Fund Officer

PART D: Training and Education required of all UNYAC pastors

UNYAC Clergy Boundaries Ethics Training Requirement Adopted November 2014 by UNY Board of Ordained Ministry

Every clergy person in any active status or relationship with the Annual Conference whose appointment is set or approved by the Bishop, every person serving as a supply pastor (assigned by the District Superintendent) and retired clergy performing ministerial functions, shall be required to attend and complete a seminar on Clergy Boundaries (sexual, relational, social, related to itinerancy, etc.), once every five years. Any person appointed, assigned, or serving as an interim pastoral leader is required to attend and complete a seminar on Clergy Boundaries within the first year of active service.

(Adopted by UNY BOM, November 2014)

Updated February 2015