

POLICIES
BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY
OKLAHOMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
November 28, 2007 edition

Policy Number 1:

The full Board of Ordained Ministry has the right to discuss with members of the examination team reasons for their vote on a candidate.

Revised and Adopted September 19, 2006

Policy Number 2:

Interview material must be complete. If one piece of the required material is missing, BOM will not interview.

Adopted April 11, 2000

Policy Number 3:

It is the responsibility of the candidate to do the work and follow through to make sure all required paperwork and documents are in their files.

Policy Number 4:

BOM members are required to read only the first twenty-eight (28) pages of the doctrinal questions. Candidates will be examined only on first twenty-eight (28) pages. Responses to the doctrinal questions and other required materials (except for the worship bulletin) are to be submitted in 12 point font and double spaced.

Adopted February 21, 2003

Policy Number 5:

No BOM member may serve as a coach for one of the Probationary Peer Groups.

Policy Number 6:

Coaches for Probationary Peer Groups will only share attendance records with the Board of Ordained Ministry and shall maintain confidentiality within the Probationary Peer Group. Probationary Peer Groups will meet at least quarterly within the conference year and review the material provided by the Probationary Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry. Unless otherwise assigned by the Board of Ordained Ministry, Probationary Peer Group Coaches will serve as the Clergy Mentors to the Commissioned Elders and Deacons in their group as per paragraph 349.1b of the 2004 *Book of Discipline*. Eligible clergy to serve as Probationary Peer Group Coaches must be

certified by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry as Clergy Mentors (paragraph 349).

Adopted September 19, 2006

Policy Number 7:

A local Pastor serving under their own credentials (preparing for Recognition of Orders) may meet with the Probationary Peer Groups. This does NOT fulfill the probationary member requirement.

Revised and adopted September 9, 2000

Policy Number 8:

The seminary guidelines of the Oklahoma Conference Board of Ordained Ministry shall be in accord with the standard set by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Presently the GBHEM allows for a maximum of one-third of the course work to taken on-line for an MDiv. degree. If and when the GBHEM should so change its policy, the Oklahoma Conference BOM will adopt accordingly.

Revised and adopted September 19, 2006

Policy Number 9:

Recommendations from the District Committees on Ordained Ministry to the Board of Ordained Ministry for a candidate to apply for probationary membership are for commissioning at the next occurring annual conference. If the candidate fails to apply or meet the deadlines of the Board of Ordained Ministry or if the candidate is not approved by said Board for Commissioning, the candidate must reapply for recommendation from the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.

Revised and Adopted September 19, 2006

Policy Number 10:

Person who go through separation or divorce may have their probationary period extended by one year.

Revised and Adopted October 25, 2007

Policy Number 11:

Enrollment in Licensing School can come only through the District Superintendent. Only certified candidates for ministry will receive a license after completion of licensing school and upon appointment by the cabinet.

Revised and adopted September 19, 2006

Policy Number 12:

United Methodist History, Doctrine, Polity, Worship and Evangelism shall be taken at a University Senate approved institution or in an educational setting approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Revised and adopted September 19, 2006

Policy Number 13:

Records of transitions due to exiting procedures for clergy shall be the job of the appropriate registrar (elder, deacon or local pastor). Such records shall be kept so they may be drawn upon should the clergy seek re-appointment.

Revised and adopted September 19, 2006

Policy Number 14:

All persons commissioned as Elders or having their orders recognized and coming under probationary status shall attend the next offered Oklahoma Conference Local Pastor's Licensing School. Those commissioned elders will only be required to attend three days for acculturation to the policies and procedures unique to the Oklahoma Conference. Those being recognized as probationary elders serving under Recognition of Orders will be required to attend five days for said acculturation as well as studying United Methodist topics and taking the Total Adult Basic Education test. The occurrence of the three and five day periods are to be determined and communicated annually by the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Revised and adopted September 19, 2006

Policy Number 15:

Candidates who are in seminary outside the bounds of the Oklahoma Conference must seek permission from the Board of Ordained Ministry Psychological Assessment officer in order to be allowed to take the psychological tests of the Conference in which they reside. If approved, the Oklahoma Conference will accept those tests and the costs of the tests will be paid for by our Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. If there are Conferences whose psychological testing is not compatible to the Oklahoma Conference standards, additional testing may be required.

Revised and adopted September 19, 2006

Policy Number 16:

Local Pastors shall not serve as members of the District Committee on Ministry, since the DCOM is responsible for supervision of Local Pastors and is one of the credentialing bodies for Local Pastors.

Adopted March 12-13, 2001

Policy Number 17:

The “Christian as a Minister” and the “Ministry Inquiry Process” shall both be used as a person seeks to become a certified candidate within the Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Adopted October 13, 2005

Policy Number 18:

Service Requirement: Each candidate shall have a minimum of one year in a service setting as determined by the district committee on ordained ministry as a condition for probationary membership and commissioning. This required service may be concurrent with academic study, provided there is adequate mentoring and supervision in the theology and practice of servant leadership. A service setting shall be in a position approved by the bishop and cabinet in the conference where the candidacy relationship is held, even if the service setting is outside the bounds of the Annual Conference.

1. One year of internship can serve to meet 1 year of the service requirement if it is approved.
2. The service setting must be approved by the Bishop and the Cabinet in the Conference where membership is held.
3. The dCOM will submit annually the names and service settings of candidates for approval by the Cabinet
4. An Oklahoma Service Setting Compliance Form, signed by the District Committee on Ministry registrar and district superintendent, must be included in the candidate’s permanent file to document compliance with the disciplinary service setting requirements.
5. An approved supervised ministry program can be used to meet this requirement, if it is certified by the academic institution. (1 semester-1/2 year of credit; 2 semesters-1 year of credit.)
6. An approved Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program can meet this service requirement. 1 academic year of CPE will equal 1 year of service setting.
7. Any supply appointment by the Cabinet shall also meet this requirement.
8. Work in Christian Education or other program ministry can meet this requirement if certified by the Supervisory Pastor and the dCOM. (20 hours per week minimum for 2 semesters shall be equivalent to 1 year of service. One summer shall be equivalent to ½ year.)
9. The Candidate must establish an active relationship with The United Methodist Church for their service to be effective.

Revised January 25, 2007

Policy Number 19:

Person(s) serving as Local Pastor(s) wanting to transfer to the Oklahoma Annual Conference will transfer their candidacy for ordained ministry from their previous district to the Oklahoma district. The District Committee on Ordained Ministry will approve their license as a Local Pastor. The DCOM will work with the appropriate BOM officers to insure accurate records, i.e., psychological assessment officer, local pastor registrar, etc.

Adopted May 11, 2001

Policy Number 20:

Guidelines for Non-Attendance at Sexuality in the Workplace Seminars:

1. Cases shall be decided on an individual basis
2. Individuals shall submit their rationale for non-attendance to the Conference Relations Committee in writing at least ten (10) days before their scheduled appointment with the Conference Relations Committee.
3. The Conference Relations Committee may recommend to the Board of Ordained Ministry that an extension be granted if sufficient reason is evident (i.e., lengthy person illness, a lengthy illness of an immediate family member, new to the Oklahoma Conference; crowded schedules will not be considered a sufficient reason).
4. When an extension is not recommended by the Conference Relations Committee and the Board of Ordained Ministry, the Board will forward the individual's name to the Cabinet with a recommendation for beginning the process for Administrative Location for ordained clergy and discontinuation for local pastors.

Amended November 28, 2007

Policy Number 21:

Policy on the Transfer of Orders

Any ordained Deacon who would seek to transit from Order of Deacon to Order of Elder shall serve as a local pastor for a minimum of two (2) years.

Any ordained Deacon transitioning to Order of Elder shall be assigned to the Conference Relations Committee for annual check-in and final order transfer.

There will be a maximum time limit of eight (8) years to complete the transitioning from Order of Deacon to Order of Elder, and two (2) years to complete the transitioning from Order of Elder to Order of Deacon.

The time limit requirement for completion of written papers shall be the same as it is for all candidates appearing before the Examination Teams of the Board.

Requirements to be completed for transferring from:

Deacon to Elder ---

1. Sermon in video and manuscript form
2. Written responses to *The Book of Discipline* doctrinal questions
3. Examination/interview with Conference Relations Committee

Elder to Deacon ---

1. Theological rationale for a prospective place of employment/service
2. Written responses to *The Book of Discipline* doctrinal questions
3. Examination/interview with Conference Relations Committee

Please refer to Ministry Interpretation Handbook 2004 edition pages 51-52 and to the BOD 2004 paragraph 309.2 for further information

Adopted March 24, 2003

Policy Number 22:

Sexual Ethics Policy for Church Professionals of the Oklahoma Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church

Statement of Policy

Church Professionals of the Oklahoma Annual conference shall not engage in sexual abuse, sexual harassment or sexual misconduct.

Theological Foundation

All persons are created by God. God intends all persons to have worth and dignity in their relationships. We are one connected body, and when one part of the body is injured physically, emotionally or spiritually, the entire body is rendered less than God intended. Misconduct of a sexual nature of any kind violates a person's wholeness and is an unjust use of status and power and a sinful behavior against God and one another. The Scripture witnesses to a God who brings about justice, mercy and grace. The Church is called to express God's love in concrete actions of compassion and healing for all God's people.

Definitions

1. Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse means unwanted physical conduct of a sexual nature, sexual contact or sexualized behavior and may include, by example, touching, fondling, other physical contact and sexual relations.
2. Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual advance or demand, either verbal or physical, that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating or coercive. Sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship rather than as an exclusively sexual issue. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination on the bases of gender.

3. Sexual Misconduct: Sexual misconduct means a chargeable offense within the meaning of Paragraph 2702 of the *Book of Discipline*
4. Church Professional: A Church Professional shall include Full, Associate and Probationary ministerial members of the Annual Conference, ordained deacons, and elders, diaconal ministers and local pastors, in both the effective and retired relationships, and other persons serving the Conference or any local church under appointment of the Bishop or under the supervision of the District Superintendent, including persons keeping their membership in another annual conference or in another denomination and persons holding orders issued by these annual conferences while on Honorable or Administrative Location.

Implementation

Church Professionals and local churches of the Annual Conference shall be provided a copy of this policy and shall be offered training information to assist in the understanding and implementation of this policy. This policy shall be published annually in the Annual Conference Journal.

Making a Complaint

Persons who have knowledge of possible violations of this policy by a church Professional may report the same to any church Professional, any District Superintendent, or the Bishop. Upon any complaint, the Conference will take action in accordance with the provisions of the current *Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church.

Local Church Policies

The Annual Conference recommends that local churches adopt a local church sexual harassment policy.

Attendance

Any person under appointment/assignment in the Oklahoma Annual Conference must attend one Sexual Ethics in the Workplace seminar per quadrennium as outlined by the Cabinet policy.

Amended November 28, 2007

Policy Number 23:

Changing Tracks of Ministry during Probationary Membership

The following policy is recommended by the GBHEM. It is not legislation and is not presently in *The Book of Discipline 2000*.

Changing tracks after commissioning:

1. Probationary member should apply in writing to the Board and confer with his/her district superintendent.
2. Board will interview the probationer focusing on his/her call to ministry and how the change relates to their call.

3. Board will require two (2) years probation serving under the license in that order; i.e. pastoral ministry license for the ordination of an elder or license to ministry of a deacon.
4. The probationer may do two modules within a given year in order to have the process completed within three years.
5. Board will assign a mentor from the new order to which the probationer is changing.
6. Board MAY require additional education for licensing; i.e. specialization for deacon or education or licensing school for elder.
7. Board recommends acceptance into the order the probationer is seeking ordination following the board's process of a commissioned person who is seeking ordination and full connection.

Adopted May 20, 2004, point 4 added October 13, 2005

Policy Number 24:

“Recognition of Orders” A Policy Statement of Receiving and Granting Recognition of Clergy Orders to Persons from Other Christian Denominations

The following policy is presented so as to provide a concise guide for anyone seeking to enter the practice of ordained clergy in The United Methodist Church through the “recognition of orders.”

The definitive paragraphs in *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2004* are 346-348. Whereas paragraphs 305-345 define the meaning of ordination in The United Methodist Church, paragraphs 346-348 give the complete account of all referenced requirements which are to be met in order for “recognition of orders” to be granted. These paragraphs are the full context from whence the following “policy” of The Oklahoma Annual Conference Board of Ordained Ministry is written.

In accordance with paragraph 347.3a clergy may be received as either a “probationary members or local pastors” depending upon one’s level of completed education as required by paragraph 335 and 347.3. The requirements include the following:

(a) graduation with a Bachelor of Arts or equivalent degree from a college or university listed by the University Senate, or demonstrated competency equivalence through a process designed in consultation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; (b) graduation with a Master of Divinity degree from a school of theology listed by the University Senate, or its equivalent as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; or (c) met the education requirements of ¶ 324.6 for local pastors; (d) educational requirements in every case shall include a minimum of two semester or three quarter hours in each of the fields of United Methodist history, doctrine, and polity; provided that a candidate may meet the requirements by undertaking an independent study program provided and administered by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (See ¶ 1421.3d);

Prior to admission as probationary members, they shall provide evidence of completion of courses in United Methodist history, doctrine, and polity as defined in ¶ 335 as well as Evangelism (¶ 324.6d).

In addition to the above requirements as identified by The Book of Discipline 2004, anyone who would present themselves to be received as either a “probationary member or local pastor” shall 1) respond to a written and oral doctrinal examination as administered by the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. The examination questions shall be those as listed in paragraph 324.9; and 2) provide the Board of Ordained Ministry a written statement (150 words maximum) indicating why one is seeking to serve out their calling to ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church.

One’s recognition as a “probationary member or local pastor” will be determined once they have submitted all required documentation to verify their ordination credentials, satisfied the requirements of paragraph 347.3a, and met with the Executive Committee of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry to respond to the written and oral doctrinal inquiries as listed in the paragraph immediately above.

A district superintendent or the chairperson of a district Committee on Ministry can assist in scheduling this interview.

Once all requirements are met, the Board of Ordained Ministry may then make recommendation to the clergy members in full connection at the next meeting of the executive session of the annual conference. NOTE: One’s reception as probationary member or local pastor is contingent upon the approval of the executive session of the annual conference.

Once entry status is determined, a person received as a local pastor shall relate to their district Committee on Ministry until probationary membership is achieved. A person received as a probationary member shall relate to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

Revised and adopted September 19, 2006

Policy Number 25:

Following an approved vote for certification of candidacy, each District Committee on Ministry will be responsible for giving an Oklahoma Conference Board of Ordained Ministry scholarship information sheet to the certified candidate.

Adopted May 19, 2005

Policy Number 26:

Local Pastors will not receive Conference funds if the Local Pastor registrar does not have a current action report from his/her respective district.

Adopted October 13, 2005

Policy Number 27:

The Oklahoma Conference Board of Ordained Ministry will use the Discipline under which date the candidate or probationer was certified in dealing with a candidate or probationer's procedure.

Adopted October 13, 2005

Policy Number 28:

The Board of Ordained Ministry will scholarship individuals coming in under recognition of orders at the same rate we do seminary students for United Methodist history, doctrine, polity and evangelism for a maximum of 12 hours.

Adopted February 16, 2006

Policy Number 29:

United Methodist clergy receiving appointments in the Oklahoma Conference while maintaining membership in another conference (§ 346.1) shall be extended voice while they remain under appointment in Oklahoma.

Adopted May 16, 2006

Policy Number 30:

During the candidacy process, in order to be certified or commissioned, a candidate's medical exam, psychological tests, criminal background and/or credit checks must be less than five years old. If the tests or checks are older than five years, the candidate must retake the test and/or background check in question prior to certification or recommendation for commissioning. All individuals who became certified candidates after January 1, 2005 must have a credit check on file. Those certified before this date do not need a credit check in their file (see policy number 27).

Revised November 28, 2006

Policy Number 31:

In order to receive scholarship funds from the Oklahoma Conference, a candidate must be certified.

Adopted September 19, 2006

Policy Number 32:

Starting in January of 2008, the rate for Oklahoma Conference scholarships will be as follows: Eligible full time Oklahoma students at United Methodist seminaries receive \$1700 per semester; eligible full time Oklahoma students at United Methodist approved seminaries receive \$1250 per semester; eligible part time students receive \$100 per credit hour at United Methodist or United Methodist approved seminaries. Local Pastors enrolled in Course of Study courses are eligible for \$175 per class.

Amended November 28, 2007

Policy Number 33:

All individuals, certified or commissioned, not under appointment will need to provide Form 114 to the District Committee on Ministry (those certified) or the Board of Ordained Ministry (those commissioned) on a yearly basis until they come under appointment. Date to return form to proper agency will be determined by the District Committee on Ministry or the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Adopted November 28, 2006

Policy Number 34:

The person serving on the District Committee on Ministry as the Candidacy Registrar will also serve as the psychological assessment officer for the District Committee on Ministry.

Adopted February 13, 2007

Policy Number 35:

The Board of Ordained Ministry may issue grants for continuing education for members of the Oklahoma Conference. The Education Committee shall designate among its membership a Registrar for continuing education. The registrar is to confer annually with the Treasurer of the Board of Ordained Ministry to determine the amount of carryover funds for continuing education purposes and to publish the amount available. Stipend amount may vary due to availability of funds. Eligibility of continuing education stipends shall be to those Elders and Deacons in Full Connection or to Full-time Local Pastors who have completed the Course of Study, beginning and advanced. The salary of the applying clergy is to be \$40,000 or less for consideration. Grants may also be made to events for which at least 1.5 clergy CEU's are issued. Each clergy person with the above qualifications is eligible to receive one grant per quadrennium.

Adopted August 16, 2007

Policy Number 36:

All District Committees on Ministry in the Oklahoma Conference shall use the standard Behavioral Health Guideline document developed by the North District Committee on Ministry. This document is summarized from the Behavioral Health Guidelines

developed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. This form shall be included in the file for all candidates for ministry before they are certified.

Adopted August 16, 2007

Policy Number 37:

Policy on Stoles. The stole is to signify the office of an ordained clergy person. Elder stoles are to be worn only by ordained elders in full connection or probationary elders ordained in another denomination and in the process of proceeding toward full connection. Deacon stoles are only to be worn by ordained deacons in full connection. Ordained ministers on honorable location may wear their appropriate stoles following consultation with the pastor in charge. Local pastors and commissioned ministers serving in the Oklahoma Conference of the United Methodist Church may not wear the stole until they are ordained. The language and meaning of this policy is derived from the “Services for the Ordering of Ministry in the United Methodist Church” which was adopted by the 2004 General Conference.

Adopted August 16, 2007 and revised October 25, 2007