

District Committee On Ordained Ministry

DCOM Handbook



2016

**Virginia Conference
The United Methodist Church**

www.vaumc.org/DCOMResources

Table of Contents (Click on the title or page number to link to that page)

Membership and Organization.....	3
BOM/DCOM Relationship.....	3
Responsibilities.....	3
Membership.....	3
One Year in the Life of a District Committee on Ordained Ministry	4
Job Descriptions for Officers	5
District Superintendent	5
Chairperson.....	5
Secretary	6
Registrar	6
Board of Ordained Ministry Representative.....	6
Mentor Coordinator for Candidacy and Local Pastor Mentors	6
Online Document Sharing - Pathways	7
Interview Guidelines	8
General Interview Guidelines	8
Quick Reference for Interviews	10
Action Report Form.....	10
Admission Interview	12
Certification Interview	13
Renewal of Certified Candidacy – Annual Interview.....	15
Accepting a Certified Candidate from Another District or Annual Conference	16
Licensing Interview	17
Renewal of Local Pastor License– Annual Interview.....	19
Retired Local Pastors (<i>2012 Book of Discipline</i>)	21
Course of Study, Basic Five-Year Curriculum.....	22
Certified Lay Minister Interview	23
Recertification as a Certified Lay Minister – Annual Interview.....	24
Reinstatement or Readmission Interview	25
Recommendation for Associate Membership.....	26
Recommendation for Provisional Membership	28
Educational Requirements for Provisional Membership.....	29
Appendix of Forms and Instructions.....	31
Becoming a Certified Candidate.....	32
Three Tracks to Conference Full Membership & Ordination.....	34
Recommendation of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.....	35
Recommendation of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.....	36

Membership and Organization

BOM/DCOM Relationship

The District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM) shall be amendable to the annual conference through the Board of Ordained Ministry (§666). All actions are *recommendations* to the Board of Ordained Ministry and shall be reported to the Board through the “Action Report Form” by the DCOM Registrar. The Action Report Form and minutes pertaining to each candidate are emailed to the BOM Registrar.

Responsibilities

The district committee on ordained ministry is responsible for the following actions:

1. Admission interview of candidates for admission to the candidacy studies program prior to the assignment of a candidacy mentor.
2. Recommendation for certification as a candidate for licensed or ordained ministry (Fitness for Ministry).
3. Recommendation for licensing for pastoral ministry (Fitness for Ministry).
4. Recommendation for Associate Membership prior to interviews with the Board of Ordained Ministry (Effectiveness in Ministry).
5. Recommendation for Provisional Membership prior to interviews with the Board of Ordained Ministry (Readiness for Ministry).
6. Recommendation for readmission to conference membership prior to interview with the Board of Ordained Ministry.

In addition, the district committee on ordained ministry shall aid the local church in the process of enlisting persons for ordained ministry as deacon or elder or for service as a local pastor, encourage persons to enter the candidacy program, and maintain a list of all candidates under its care.

Membership

All members shall be nominated annually by the district superintendent in consultation with the chairperson or executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry and approved by the annual conference.

- A representative from the Board of Ordained Ministry, named in consultation with the Board of Ordained Ministry.
- At least six other clergy in the district. The clergy shall include elders and deacons, and where possible, women and ethnic minority clergy, a deacon or elder who is age 35 or younger, an associate member, and may include a local pastor who has completed the Course of Study.
- At least three professing members of local churches.
- The district superintendent.
- All persons named to the committee shall be members with vote.
- Interim vacancies are filled by the district superintendent.
- Officers are nominated by the district superintendent and elected at the first meeting following annual conference

One Year in the Life of a District Committee on Ordained Ministry

July – Getting Organized

- DCOM Committee Membership: Is everyone using Pathways? Is the membership roster correct?
- Set a schedule for the coming year and make note of important dates
- List and review candidates
- Confirm all admitted candidates are in a mentor group (or assigned to a mentor)
- List and review local pastors and local pastor mentoring groups in light of appointment changes
- Discuss recruiting/enlistment strategies for receiving those who are sensing God's call.

Late Summer/Early Fall – Provisional and Associate Interviews

- Schedule an interview with candidates applying for associate and provisional membership *Candidates who apply for the application packet will be placed on the appropriate membership track in Pathways. They will need to apply before they interview with you, however they cannot continue in the application process without your recommendation.*
- Interview candidates for associate and provisional membership. *Committees are encouraged to complete associate and provisional interviews, with notification of your action to the candidate, by October 1.*
- For action taken on associate and provisional membership, the narrative recommendation from the district chair is extremely important to the Board of Ordained Ministry. Respond in detail to each question on the Recommendation report form, included in the appendix of this handbook. The Center of Clergy Excellence should receive this narrative report (via Pathways) by November 1.
- Other interviews (Admission, Certified Candidacy) as the schedule allows. Note especially those potential Certified Candidates who will be applying for seminary in the winter; it can be an advantage to them for scholarships to be certified when they apply.

Fall/Winter

The Center of Clergy Excellence should receive the narrative recommendation for provisional and associate membership candidates November 1. Upload the file to Pathways.

- Admission interviews
- Certified candidacy interviews
- Place those interested in pursuing licensing on the Licensing track in Pathways
- Interview candidates who are home on break from school in December or January
- Readmission interviews (for provisional or full membership readmission) should be completed by Feb. 1 so that the BOM may also interview and take action.

Winter/Spring

- Local Pastor Renewal interviews
- Recommendation for Licensing interviews – review sermon video and required paper
- Certified candidacy and renewal interviews
- Licensing School Registration deadline is May 1
- All Certified candidacy and Candidacy renewal interviews should be complete by the end of May

Summer

- Interview candidates who are home from school

Job Descriptions for Officers

District Superintendent

- May receive email or letter from candidate with a statement of call and request for admission to the candidacy program (The letter may also go to the DCOM chair).
- The district superintendent acknowledges receipt and refers candidate to DCOM chair, forwarding or scanning/emailing the statement of call.
- If candidate is recommended for admission to the candidacy program, district superintendent assists DCOM in assigning the candidacy mentor. DS goes to the UMCARES website (<https://www.umcares.org/login.aspx>) to enter the candidate's name, email address, and mentor. The candidate will receive an email to register. Once that is done, the DS will receive an email to "sign off" on this candidate.
- Ensures that any paper documents from candidates or local pastors received in the district office are scanned and uploaded into Pathways by the district office secretary.
- Fall: Presides at Charge Conference and monitors candidates seeking approval and renewal.
- Spring: Nominates District Committee on Ordained Ministry members and leaders—members reported to Cabinet Dean and leaders reported to Center for Clergy Excellence.
- Spring: Reviews the Minute Questions to ensure all certified candidates and licensed local pastors associated with the district are properly listed.

Chairperson

- Sets date and location for meetings.
- Sets the agenda and presides at the meetings.
- Following receipt of an email or letter from a potential candidate (directly or through the DS), responds to the candidate with information about setting up their account in Pathways, with a copy to the DCOM Registrar. Also refers the candidate to the Center for Clergy Excellence Candidate and Seminary Students website: www.vaumc.org/Candidacy.
- Schedules *Admission Interviews* for candidates requesting admission to the candidacy program and schedules *Certification Interviews* with candidates who have completed the candidacy program and submitted all required documents. These interviews should be scheduled in a timely fashion. Reminds the candidate that all documents must be submitted via Pathways no less than one week prior to the interviews—Chair may require that documents be submitted farther in advance.
- Emails each candidate regarding the results of the interview and recommended action with a copy in the candidate's Pathways account.
- Assists the DCOM mentor coordinator and district superintendent in assigning candidacy mentors.
- Completes the Narrative Recommendation Form for Provisional and Associate Membership, included in the appendix of this handbook, for submission to the Board of Ordained Ministry.
- Ensures that all DCOM leaders are following through on their responsibilities.
- Ensures that the DCOM interviews candidates at the appropriate time with the appropriate documents received and reviewed.

Secretary

- Records and distributes minutes of the meetings to the DCOM members and to Center for ClergyExcellence@vaumc.org.
 - At the top of each page of minutes, include the district name and date of the meeting.
 - Begin a new page for each individual-- Keep all discussion and the resulting action regarding one individual together in the minutes.
 - Include a page number on each page.
- Keeps a file of all DCOM minutes (in the district office)—the BOM Registrar ensures that a copy of minutes related to an individual person goes into that person's Pathways file.

Registrar

- When notified by the chair of the DCOM, sets up the candidate in Pathways (<https://www.pathwaystoministry.com>) and sends the invitation to the candidate to register and set up their account.
- Marks as complete each step in Pathways as documents are uploaded by the candidate or the district office. Uploads into Pathways any documents emailed to the registrar and marks that step as complete.
- Uses the Action Report Form to record all actions. Scan and email to the BOM Registrar (ClergyExcellence@vaumc.org) immediately after the district committee meeting. The Action Report Form can be found in this handbook and on the DCOM Resource page of the conference website.
- Ensures that all documents are appropriately in the candidate's or local pastor's Pathways account prior to an interview.

Board of Ordained Ministry Representative

- Reviews the psychological assessment report on candidates when uploaded into Pathways by the Center for Clergy Excellence (see guidelines) and assists the DCOM in reviewing the report prior to the interview for certified candidacy
- Reviews the Expanded Background Report on candidates when uploaded into Pathways by the Center for Clergy Excellence and assists the DCOM in reviewing the report prior to the interview for certified candidacy.
- Exchanges questions and information between the DCOM and the Board of Ordained Ministry.
- Assists in training members of the DCOM.
- Leads the DCOM in connecting with Call Culture efforts and reaching out to those who are discerning a call into ministry.

Mentor Coordinator for Candidacy and Local Pastor Mentors

- Coordinates with the DCOM chair and district superintendent regarding the assignment of candidates to candidacy mentor groups.
- Offer ongoing support and updating of registered candidacy mentors (through gatherings, resources, phone calls, etc.).
- Train and resource Local Pastor Mentors.
- With the district superintendent, recommend full connection clergy, associate members, and full time local pastors who have completed the Course of Study to be trained by the Board of Ordained Ministry as registered candidacy mentors.

Online Document Sharing - Pathways

Pathways to Ministry is a secure, web-based file management software program owned by The United Methodist Church. Pathways is a document sharing tool for active candidates, local pastors, and certified lay ministers as they relate to the DCOM. Required documents, written materials, and forms for each conference relationship are detailed in Pathways. These documents, written materials, and forms are uploaded into a candidate's Pathways account for access and review by all members of the DCOM prior to action being taken. **No paper candidate files are maintained by the DCOM, as all documentation should be uploaded to Pathways.**

Each user is responsible for keeping their profile in Pathways up to date with current contact information. The DCOM Registrar is responsible for creating and maintaining the candidate, local pastor, and certified lay minister accounts on their district, and for placing each candidate/local pastor on the appropriate "track".

The Center for Clergy Excellence and BOM Registrar are responsible for creating and managing accounts for district committee members and for uploading the Action Report Form to Pathways and updating the conference relationship status according to the action taken.

Instructions for DCOM Members using Pathways:

(These can also be found on the DCOM resource page of the Clergy Excellence website).

Step 1:

DCOM Chair notifies DCOM regarding which candidates are to be interviewed at the next meeting.

Step 2:

DCOM members login to Pathways

<https://www.pathwaystoministry.com/login.aspx>

Step 3:

From the top menu, click on "Find People"; if needed, use the search function to find a specific candidate. Note that the system uses official first names—searching for "Bob" may not get you to "Robert"

Step 4:

Click on the name of the candidate or local pastor

Step 5:

Click on "Files" in the menu bar under the candidate's name

Step 6:

Open the files that you want to review; DCOM members have access to all documents for every candidate and local pastor related to the district. Candidates only have access to files they have uploaded to Pathways or received a paper copy of by mail.

Step 7:

To exit, click on "Log Out" from the menu at the top of the screen

Interview Guidelines

General Interview Guidelines

Preparing for an interview

- All DCOM members should review all documents in Pathways for each candidate/local pastor to be interviewed prior to the DCOM meeting.
- Decide on the size of the interview group. DCOM can subdivide for most interviews and then report back a recommendation to total committee for final decision.
- Video conference interviews should be offered for those candidates who are living out of the area—*after* at least one in-person interview between that candidate and the committee.
- Allow fifteen minutes before each interview to discuss concerns and issues that need to be addressed in the interview.
- Decide on the most important questions and who will ask each question (do not have the chair or one person ask all the questions).
- Decide how to begin the interview. Do not begin with the psychological assessment.
- Remember the distinctions between candidates on the elder track and the deacon track. Ask appropriate questions.
- Decide how long the interview will be.

During an interview

- If the mentor is a member of the DCOM, the mentor shall not be present for the interview.
- The candidate does most of the talking.
- Do not allow other committee members to answer questions or to engage in an argument or discussion with the candidate or each other during the interview.
- Keep the conversation focused on the matter at hand.

Discussion after an interview

- Recommendations should be determined by the whole committee after the interview, and must be put in writing. Feedback should not be communicated by individual committee members offering advice during the interview.
- The *Book of Discipline* requires that the decision of the DCOM be communicated in writing to the candidate/local pastor following the interview. Do not have the candidate wait in the building after the interview for this decision. Let them know when they can expect to hear from the chair.
- Evaluate the interview. What was effective in the interview? What would we do differently next time? Were any questions asked that were inappropriate?

Role of the Chair

- Make sure, prior to scheduling an interview, that the necessary documents for a particular candidate have been uploaded into Pathways.
- Welcome the candidate to the interview and introduce by name and church/campus ministry setting to the DCOM. State the purpose of the interview (Admission Interview, Certification Interview, Renewal Interview, Recommendation for provisional or associate membership, etc.)
- Ask members of the DCOM to introduce themselves.
- Ask someone on the DCOM to begin with a prayer.
- State the time available for the interview and be the time-keeper.

- The chair may want to ask the first question. A possible first question might be: “Tell us about yourself and your sense of call toward ministry.”
- Be careful to involve the members of your committee in asking the questions. After the first question, the chair should focus on process and time-keeping rather than asking questions.
- Ask someone on the DCOM to close with prayer.

Quick Reference for Interviews

A. Certified Candidate Standard: Fitness for Ministry

- Spiritual fitness
- Psychological fitness
- Physical fitness
- Potential for effectiveness

Interviews are required at these points:

1. *Admission Interview* following completion of all steps to become an Admitted Candidate
2. *Certification Interview* following completion of all steps for certification (3/4 vote)
3. Annual *renewal* of certified candidacy

B. License for Pastoral Ministry Standard: Fitness for Ministry (same points as CC above)

- Initial recommendation for licensing and conference relationship (Specify part-time (PL) or full-time (FL) eligibility if approved)
- Annual renewal of the license; annual approval for appointment for a retired local pastor (RL)

C. Readmission to Conference Membership

Upon such a request, Chair communicates with the Center for Clergy Excellence prior to any interviews.

1. From honorable location
2. From administrative location
3. From those who previously withdrew from the ministerial office
4. From discontinuance/withdrawal as a certified candidate, local pastor, or provisional member.

D. Provisional Membership Standard: Readiness for Ministry (3/4 vote)

- Assess areas of developing competency
- Review academic background
- Consider field education experiences, internships, other practice of ministry experiences
- How has theological understanding evolved since certification?
- Review bullet responses to questions for provisional papers and the writing sample.

E. Associate Membership Standard: Effectiveness in Ministry

- Assess areas of developing competency
- Review academic background
- Consider current practice of ministry
- How has theological understanding evolved since licensing?
- Review bullet responses to questions for provisional papers and the writing sample.

F. Certified Lay Minister

- Assists the pastor in congregational care and program development in the local church
- Works as part of a ministry team with supervision by a clergyperson
- Annual recertification required

Action Report Form

All votes (action) taken by the district committee are to be reported to the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry Registrar on the Action Report form. Email this report to ClergyExcellence@vaumc.org soon after the meeting so that the action can be recorded and subsequent steps can be taken at the conference level. More than one action for one candidate may be noted on a single form—e.g., both certified candidacy and licensing as a local pastor may be recommended at the same time.

**VA Conference District Committee on Ordained Ministry
Action Report to the BOM Registrar**

District _____ Date _____ Vote Count _____

Candidate's Full Name _____

The following action(s) were taken during this meeting [check all that apply]:

- 1. _____ Discontinued as an inquiring candidate. *Minutes to include discussion for historical reference.*
- 2. _____ Accepted from another conference/district as: ___an admitted or ___ a certified candidate (§310)
- 3. _____ Granted or _____ not granted admission to the candidacy studies program (§310.1b)

Mentor: _____ *DS to enroll and assign in UMCARES*

- 4. _____ Continued as an admitted candidate and will return for another certification interview
- 5. _____ Discontinued as an admitted candidate. *Minutes to include discussion for historical reference.*
- 6. _____ Granted or _____ not granted certified candidacy status according to §666.6 (3/4 vote)
If not granted certified status, this action assumes they are discontinued as an admitted candidate.

Received Certification as a Candidate for: ___ Order of Deacon ___ Order of Elder
 ___ Local Pastor ___ Chaplain

- 7. _____ Recommended for renewal as a certified candidate (§313)
- 8. _____ Discontinued as a certified candidate (§314.1). *Minutes to include discussion for historical reference.*
- 9. _____ Recommended _____ not recommended for licensing for pastoral ministry (§315) and eligible to attend Licensing School if projected for an appointment as a:
 - a. _____ Full-time local pastor (§318.1)
 - b. _____ Part-time local pastor (§318.2)
 - c. _____ Student local pastor (§318.3) from _____ Annual Conference
- 10. _____ Recommended for renewal as a licensed local pastor (§319) and eligible for appointment as a:
 - a. _____ Full-time local pastor (§318.1)
 - b. _____ Part-time local pastor (§318.2)
 - c. _____ Student local pastor (§318.3) from _____ Annual Conference
 - d. _____ Retired local pastor, serving an appointment (§320.5)
 - e. _____ Not currently appointed (Minute Question 20; §315)
- 11. _____ Recommended as Retired Local Pastor, either entering or returning to retirement (§316.8)
- 12. _____ Discontinued as a local pastor (§320.1). *Minutes to include discussion for historical reference.*
- 13. _____ Recommended or _____ not recommended for associate membership (§322.1)*
- 14. _____ Recommended or _____ not recommended for provisional deacon (§324.10) (3/4 vote)*
- 15. _____ Recommended or _____ not recommended for provisional elder (§324.10) (3/4 vote)*

**A narrative recommendation from the DCOM Chair is also required; report due to the BOM November 1
Mark renewal of candidacy or licensing as appropriate above if a second interview for renewal will not be held.*

- 16. _____ Recommended or _____ continued as a Certified Lay Minister (§271)
CLM Assignment _____

Relating to becoming a Certified Candidate

Relating to Licensing as a Local Pastor

Other Recommendations

Signature of DCOM Chair or Registrar

Admission Interview

Introductory Interview for Admission to Candidacy Studies

Requirements prior to interview

1. A professing member in good standing of The United Methodist Church or a baptized participant of a recognized United Methodist campus ministry or other United Methodist ministry setting for a minimum of one year.
2. Graduation from an accredited high school or certificate of equivalency.
3. Review of *The Christian as Minister* and *Understanding God's Call: A Ministry Inquiry Process* with a clergyperson, if needed.
4. Call statement and request for admission to candidacy studies program.
5. Biographical Form 102
6. State Criminal and Sex Offenders Background Check

Suggested Questions

- Tell us about how God has brought you here today. What is it that has drawn you toward ministry?
- What have been some of your experiences in the life of the church or in a ministry setting? Which were most formative to your calling? Which did you find challenging?
- What character(s) or stories from the Bible do you identify with? Tell us more about this.
- What are some of the ways that you care for yourself physically, relationally, spiritually and emotionally?

If issues such as obesity are noted, this is a good time to talk frankly about how it may affect future ministry and how to build greater health in preparation for the demands of lifelong ministry.

- What do you do to keep physically active? How do you deal with stress?
 - Do you have access to (and do you participate in) annual medical checkups?
 - Which spiritual disciplines do you practice on a regular basis?
 - How have these disciplines informed your calling?
 - Tell us how your family and friends have encountered your sense of call.
- What does it mean to you to be “called”? As you think of a future living into a call from God, what does that look like to you? What are the steps you are taking to live into that vision? (This is a good time to explain the process and how the DCOM is here to guide and support).

Action Required

Consensus or majority vote of the district committee on ordained ministry to recommend that the candidate be admitted to the candidacy program and assigned a registered candidacy mentor. The committee could recommend delay of admission and assignment of a mentor and recommend more involvement in a local church. DCOM registrar emails the Action Report Form to the BOM Registrar.

Certification Interview

Certified Candidacy Interview for Ordained or Licensed Ministry

Requirements prior to interview

1. Expanded Background Report
2. Medical Report (Form 103)
3. Candidate's Disclosure Form (Form 114, notarized)
4. Form 104, indicating recommendation by the candidate's home church charge conference (or equivalent body as specified by the district committee on ordained ministry), receiving a 2/3 vote.
5. Written report from the mentor indicating completion of the candidacy studies and verification of attendance at a minimum of three meetings with mentor/mentor group.
6. Verification of attendance at Candidacy Summit
7. Psychological Assessment
8. If there is a concern about reading and writing skills, could require the TAB test

Criteria:

- Spiritual fitness
- Psychological fitness
- Physical fitness
- Potential for effectiveness

Suggested Questions

- **Required to ask the questions in ¶310.2d.**
- **For elder track candidates, cabinet and BOM have requested that questions about itinerancy be asked at this stage.**
- Tell us about your call to ministry. (*Listen for language describing both an internal call and confirmation of that call by the community of faith; use of biblical images; knowledge of the differences in orders of ministry, and a growing sense of where the candidate is called within the orders.*)
- Describe a recent leadership experience that you had in a church/campus ministry/mission environment. What results came from your leadership? What was most challenging? What was most fulfilling? What did you learn about yourself?
- Tell us about a time when you found yourself in a conflict situation, and how you handled it.
- Tell us a time when you did not succeed at something you tried. How did you respond to that failure?
- How are you taking care of yourself physically, emotionally, and relationally? (*If the candidate has any medical issues identified on the medical form, refer to Behavioral Health Guidelines for guidance. It is appropriate to ask a candidate how he/she is managing weight, hypertension, diabetes, or any other condition that could affect their health if put into a stressful ministry environment or that could hamper their effectiveness in lifelong ministry.*)
- Describe your devotional/worship life. Tell us about a time when your spiritual practices were particularly life-giving for you. (*Look for evidence of habitual practice of meaningful spiritual disciplines. If not evident, note in feedback, and follow up at next interview to check for evidence of growing commitment and fruitfulness in this area.*)
- What was your experience of completing the psychological assessment and interview? Ask questions suggested on the psychological report, if deemed appropriate.

- If the candidate has had theological training (seminary or other coursework), ask basic theological questions concerning grace, the kingdom of God, the sacraments. (*Listen for use of biblical images, including OT when appropriate.*)
- If the candidate has completed field education and/or CPE, ask questions integrating their experience with their theological understanding and self-awareness, such as:
 - What is one thing that you learned about yourself in (CPE/Field Education) that surprised you?
 - What aspect of your theology was challenged/changed/confirmed in your CPE/Field Education experience?
 - What leadership and/or relational skill have you identified as needing continued growth through your experience of CPE/Field Education? What plans do you have to address this?

Action Required

Individual written ballot, three-fourths majority of the district committee on ordained ministry to recommend that the candidate be certified. DCOM Registrar emails the Action Report Form to the BOM Registrar.

Renewal of Certified Candidacy – Annual Interview

Requirements prior to interview

Note: The district committee chair shall notify the candidate regarding what is required. Once a candidate is certified, the formal mentor relationship ends and no further mentor report is required.

1. Annual recommendation of the candidate's home church charge conference or equivalent body as determined by the DCOM.
2. An official transcript from the school, college, or seminary
3. A written report from the candidate on service and leadership in the church with reference to ¶310.2a (i.e. growth in these areas since certification)

This interview may be conducted via video conference if the candidate is in school or ministry far away.

Suggested Questions

- Tell us how God has been working in your life this past year.
- How are you balancing your life with work/school, home and self?
 - Work: Assuming that some income is needed, how is the candidate meeting this need while going to school? If in a ministry setting, ask how the work is forming God's call for him/her. Identify any stressors related to income. If not working professionally in a church setting, ask about their worship community.
 - (If applicable) School: What classes have you taken this past year that have been particularly meaningful to you? How have you incorporated any of your courses in your ministry setting (paid position or as a lay member)? Have any lessons challenged you theologically? Have any surprised you?
 - Home: If married, ask about how the marital relationship is going and what attention is being given to growing the marriage. If children are involved, ask how parenting is going and how the children adapting to the change in family dynamic as the candidate moves toward the work of ministry. If single, ask questions around friends and family support.
 - Self: In what ways are you tending to your spiritual life (homework or sermon prep doesn't count). Do you participate in annual medical checkups? How are you attending to the needs found in these medical reports? What kind of exercise program do you participate in? What relationships/interests do you have beyond church/seminary communities? How do you hold yourself accountable to spiritual, physical and relational health?
- Follow up to Psychological Report: Identify the suggested follow up questions from the psychological report and ask questions specific to findings. The purpose here is to find how the candidate has responded to the findings and how s/he has attended to areas of growth.
- What are your goals for the year ahead? How are you incorporating those goals into your plan for the coming year?
- If the candidate has had the opportunity to take classes in theology, basic theology questions are appropriate as determined by the DCOM.

Action Required

Individual written ballot, three-fourths majority of the district committee on ordained ministry to recommend that the candidate be renewed. DCOM registrar emails the Action Report Form to the BOM Registrar.

Accepting a Certified Candidate from Another District or Annual Conference

The 2012 Book of Discipline, ¶313.4

A person who is a certified candidate or who is in the candidacy process may have her or his status or studies accepted by another district committee in the same or another annual conference.

1. Contact the Center for Clergy Excellence (ClergyExcellence@vaumc.org) immediately upon receipt of a request.
2. If from another annual conference, the candidate requests of his/her district committee that his/her file be sent to the Center for Clergy Excellence, P. O. Box 5606, Glen Allen, VA 23058 or emailed to ClergyExcellence@vaumc.org.
3. The file must include all of the items required by the Virginia Conference for certification as a candidate, listed as follows:
 - a. Call statement
 - b. Biographical Form (GBHEM Form 102)
 - c. Criminal and Sex Offenders Background Check
 - d. Expanded Background Report (national and county criminal search, DMV record search, consumer credit report, and social security trace)
 - e. Medical Report (GBHEM Form 103)
 - f. Candidate's Disclosure Form (GBHEM Form 114)
 - g. Record of the Charge Conference approval
 - h. Psychological Assessment
 - i. Written response to ministry questions
 - j. Mentor Report
 - k. Verification of certification as a candidate
 - l. Annual renewal of candidacy, if applicable.

For a **licensed local pastor**, all preceding items plus

- m. Documentation of licensing (copy of the license)
 - n. Annual renewal of the license for pastoral ministry
 - o. Transcripts (seminary or Course of Study) if applicable
 - p. Transcripts of undergraduate education if applicable
 - q. Recommendation from the current district superintendent.
4. The District Committee on Ordained Ministry reviews the candidate's documents.
 5. An interview is required prior to acceptance of candidacy.
 6. If the candidate is certified and is requesting local pastor status, the district committee makes a recommendation regarding licensing by the Virginia Conference. Licensing is dependent upon the person receiving an appointment in the Virginia Conference.
 7. The action is reported by the DCOM Registrar to the BOM Registrar on the Action Report Form.

Licensing Interview

Recommendation to be Licensed for Pastoral Ministry (Local Pastor)

Requirements prior to interview

1. Certification as a candidate for ministry (see requirements for Candidacy Certification).
2. Submit two copies of one sermon on DVD or a weblink where the sermon may be viewed online (YouTube, Vimeo, etc.) Submit sermon manuscript on Pathways.
 - a. When establishing a setting for preaching your sermon, it is not necessary for it to be in a Sunday morning worship service. For example, candidate can gather friends in a chapel, speak at a mid-week service or a nursing home—candidate simply must preach before a gathered group.
 - b. Length of the sermon shall be 10 to 15 minutes only.
 - c. Candidate may choose any scripture.
 - d. In a separate document, candidate responds to the following:
 1. What is the sermon title?
 2. What is the biblical text for the sermon?
 3. When and where was the sermon preached?
 4. Write a one sentence purpose statement/focus for this message.
 5. What do you want the hearers to do or be as a result of this message?
 6. After viewing the video, what is your personal evaluation of your sermon and preaching?
3. Submit written responses to the following questions (minimum of 3 and maximum of 5 pages total for all questions, typed and double spaced):
 1. What is the meaning and significance of the Sacraments?
 2. Talk about the nature of the Kingdom of God and then use a Biblical parable to illustrate one aspect of the Kingdom.
 3. What is your understanding of the Wesleyan concept of divine grace?
 4. How will you discern and implement God's vision for your ministry setting?

Criteria:

- Spiritual fitness
- Psychological fitness
- Physical fitness
- Potential for effectiveness

Suggested Questions

- Tell us about how you went about preparing the sermon that you submitted. How did you select the scripture for your sermon?
- What resources are helpful to you in preparing for worship and preaching?
- Explore further the responses the candidate gave in the paper related to sacraments, Kingdom of God and God's vision for ministry.
- How will you prepare a family for the baptism of an infant?
- Tell us about a time when you served as a leader of a team. What do you know about your leadership style and strengths?
- Tell us about a time when you disagreed with someone in church. How did resolution occur? How do you typically deal with frustration?
- Tell us about a time when you implemented a change in your church. What came from your efforts? What did you learn about yourself or your context?

Action Required

Majority vote of the district committee on ordained ministry to specify and recommend full time local pastor, part time local pastor, or student* local pastor. Once voted, the candidate will have to register for and complete Licensing School. DCOM registrar emails the Action Report Form to the BOM Registrar. If not recommended, the Action Report should indicate renewal as a certified candidate.

* “Student local pastor” is applied only to those students from another annual conference who are not part of the candidacy studies program in VA.

Renewal of Local Pastor License– Annual Interview

Requirements in Pathways prior to interview

Note: The district committee chair shall notify the local pastor regarding what is required.

1. Copy of the annual evaluation by P/SPRC
2. Transcripts from undergraduate school, Course of Study or Seminary
3. Written Mentor Report (if applicable)
4. Written responses to the questions below (minimum of 3 and maximum of 5 pages, typed and double spaced, for all questions per year):

Year 1 - Leadership

- What are the local church committees required by the *Book of Discipline* and what is the function of each? How is your church structured for mission and ministry?
- How are you using the distinctive Wesleyan emphases and characteristics of The United Methodist Church to lead your church in making disciples of Jesus Christ?
- Describe leadership qualities which you demonstrate in your ministry and the strengths and weaknesses of those qualities.

Year 2 - Theology

- How do you apply United Methodist theology in your teaching?
- Describe ways your congregation lives out the theology of grace.
- In what ways has your theology of grace shaped your understanding of the Sacraments?

Year 3 - Practice of Ministry

- How has your preaching improved since you were licensed?
- In what ways have your spiritual disciplines affected your practice of leadership in ministry?
- Describe ways you lead your congregation in offering pastoral care?
- Bring a recent worship bulletin and be prepared to talk about your order of worship.
- Describe ways that, in partnership with laity, you make disciples of Jesus Christ, and train and empower these disciples to produce tangible fruits of love of God and love of neighbor.

Year 4 and beyond

- In years 4 and 5, talk with the local pastor about how they apply their education to their ministry setting.
- For those who have completed COS or M.Div., track continuing education requirements and review progress.
- Written responses to questions only as required individually by the DCOM.

Suggested Questions

- Review the responses to the questions above.
- Focus on the candidate's areas of strength and areas for growth rather than spending a lot of time on what is going on or not going on in their church. Be careful to not spend the time evaluating the church/charge but keep the focus on the local pastor and his/her role, skills, self-growth and pastoral identity.
- What/where are your support systems? How are you making time for family and/or self-care?
- What were your goals or objectives for personal or professional growth last year? What did you do toward accomplishing these goals and how well did it work?
- How are you caring for your health? How do you get exercise, manage stress, cultivate relationships and interests beyond your ministry setting?

- How do you equip laity in your church? Share some specific examples.
- What are your plans for the future? Continuing education plans? Plans for ordination or associate membership?
- What was your Course of Study focus last year? Did you find it helpful/useful? What changes or improvements to your practice of ministry can you identify as a result of the Course of Study?
- In what ways have you grown spiritually in the past year, both personally and as a pastor? What do you feel were the causes of this growth?
- What was the most difficult challenge you faced as pastor this past year and how did you meet it? What did you learn from it? How do you feel you have grown as a result of it?
- Talk about your pastoral appointment? Has it been what you expected when you felt called to become a local pastor? In what ways have you been surprised? In what ways have you been affirmed that you are properly responding to God's call in your life.
- What is the single most important thing you need at this point in time to become a better pastor?
- What was the greatest joy you experienced in the past year? Why do you feel this was so?
- How do you integrate your personal and professional responsibilities? Do you experience tensions between family/self and church expectations of your work, your time or your identity?

Action Required

Majority vote of the district committee on ordained ministry to specify and recommend renewal of full time, part time or student local pastor. DCOM registrar emails the Action Report Form to the BOM Registrar.

Retired Local Pastors (*2012 Book of Discipline*)

¶320.5 Retirement of local pastors and status

5. Retirement of Local Pastor—A local pastor who has made satisfactory progress in the Course of Study as specified in ¶ 318.1 or .2 may be recognized as a retired local pastor. Retirement provisions for local pastors shall be the same as those for clergy members in ¶ 358.1, .2, .4, with pensions payable in accordance with ¶ 1506.5a. Retired local pastors may attend annual conference sessions with voice but not vote. A retired local pastor may be appointed by the bishop to a charge and licensed upon recommendation by the district committee on ordained ministry without creating additional claim upon the conference minimum compensation nor further pension credit.

- In Virginia, an initial recommendation regarding “satisfactory progress in the COS” for retirement is required by the DCOM. An interview is required.
- An Action Report is submitted to the Center for Clergy Excellence.
- A recommendation by the Retirement Committee of BOM is also required.
- For licensing and appointment as a retired local pastor, an annual interview and recommendation by the DCOM is required (and reported on an Action Report form).

¶316.8 Retired local pastors serving in the local church where they hold membership

8. Local pastors who have completed the Course of Study may upon retirement annually request from the District Committee of Ordained Ministry and the bishop a license to continue to serve in the local church where they hold membership for the purpose of providing sacramental rites of baptism and Holy Communion, at the request of the appointed pastor.

- Requires the annual request by the pastor in charge to the bishop and district committee on ordained ministry
- Requires annual approval by the DCOM and bishop
- An interview is not necessarily required; however, recommendation by the DCOM is required (and reported on an Action Report form).

Course of Study
Basic Five-Year Curriculum
 (Provisional Approval August 8, 2013)

FOCUS	Year One- Foundation	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five- Integrative
Bible	121 Bible I: Introduction	221 Bible II: Torah & Israel's History	321 Bible III: Gospels	421 Bible IV: Prophets, Psalms & Wisdom Lit	521 Bible V: Acts, Epistles & Revelation
Theology	122 Theological Heritage I: Introduction	222 Theological Heritage II: Early Church	322 Theological Heritage III: Medieval- Reformation	422 Theological Heritage IV: Wesleyan Movement	522 Theology in the Contemporary Church
Congregational Life	123 Formation & Discipleship	223 Worship & Sacraments	323 Congregational Care	423 Mission	523 Evangelism
Pastoral Identity	124 Transformative Leadership	224 Administration & Polity	324 Preaching	424 Ethics	524 Theological Reflection: Practice of Ministry

Certified Lay Minister Interview

The 2012 Book of Discipline, ¶271

In order to enhance the quality of ministry to small membership churches, expand team ministry in churches and in deference to an expression of gifts and evidence of God's grace associated with the lay ministry of early Methodism, the certified lay minister... shall preach the Word, provide a care ministry to the congregation, assist in program leadership, and be a witness in the community for the growth, missional and connectional thrust of The United Methodist Church as part of a ministry team with the supervision and support of a clergy person.

Requirements prior to interview

1. Must be a certified lay servant or a person with equivalent training (if not a certified lay servant, contact the Center for Clergy Excellence).
2. Made application in writing, including detailed statement as to reasons for application and evidence of how their service in the local church has demonstrated appreciation of the history, polity, doctrine, worship and liturgy of The United Methodist Church, to the district committee on ordained ministry.
3. Written recommendation of the district superintendent.
One cannot request the status of a certified lay minister unless the district superintendent is willing to assign the certified lay minister to a ministry position.
4. Biographical Form (Form 102)
5. State Criminal and Sex Offenders Background Check
6. Expanded Background Report
7. Written recommendation by the pastor of the local church where he/she holds membership.
8. Vote of the church council or charge conference (included in recommendation by the pastor).
9. Verification of completion of courses relevant to his/her assignment including preaching and exegesis, the care of the congregation, etc.

Suggested Questions

- Tell us about your journey of faith.
- Tell us about your leadership experiences in the local church.
- Tell us how your service in your local church has demonstrated your appreciation of the history, polity, doctrine, worship and liturgy of The United Methodist Church. (This is a required question from the *Book of Discipline*.)
- Share about your devotional life. How are you growing spiritually?
- Tell us about your personal strengths...your areas of growth.
- What have you read that has been helpful in your spiritual life?
- What 2-3 characters in the Bible resonate with your own spiritual life/journey?
- Talk about your family.
- Talk about positive and negative relationships in your life.
- What are the most stressful aspects of ministry for you?
- What do you do to take care of yourself physically?
- Share a conflict situation in which you have been involved and how you dealt with it.
- Share a leadership experience you have had this year.

Action Required

Majority vote of the district committee on ordained ministry to recommend candidate as a Certified Lay Minister. DCOM registrar emails the Action Report Form to the BOM Registrar.

Recertification as a Certified Lay Minister – Annual Interview

Requirements prior to interview

Note: The district committee chair shall notify the certified lay minister regarding what is required.

1. Written recommendation with a ministry review by the church council or charge conference from the congregation of which he/she is a member, and if different, the congregation where assigned.
2. Verification of satisfactory completion of an approved continuing education event (at least 1 CEU or equivalent).
3. Written recommendation of the district superintendent.
One cannot request the status of a certified lay minister unless the district superintendent is willing to assign the certified lay minister to a ministry position.
4. Interview and recommendation of the district committee on ordained ministry.

Suggested Questions

- Share several highlights of your ministry this year.
- Tell us about your leadership experiences.
- What were some of your frustrations in ministry this year?
- What are your plans for the future for yourself and for the church?
- Share about your devotional life. How are you growing spiritually?
- Tell us about your personal strengths...your areas of growth.
- What are you doing to avoid burnout?
- What are your goals for the year ahead?
- What have you read beyond the Bible this year that has been helpful in your spiritual life?
- Talk about your family.
- Talk about positive and negative relationships in your life.
- What are the most stressful aspects of ministry for you?
- What do you do to take care of yourself physically?
- Share a conflict situation in which you have been involved and how you dealt with it.
- Share a leadership experience you have had this year.
- Are you considering licensed or ordained ministry? If not, why not?

Action Required

Majority vote of the district committee on ordained ministry to recommend renewal as a Certified Lay Minister. DCOM registrar emails the Action Report Form to the BOM Registrar.

Reinstatement or Readmission Interview

- As an admitted or certified candidate
- As a licensed local pastor
- As a provisional member or associate member
- After leaving the ministerial office to full membership as elder or deacon
- After honorable location or administrative location
- After termination by action of the annual conference

Requirements prior to interview

1. Immediately contact the Center for Clergy Excellence (ClergyExcellence@vaumc.org) for detailed instructions.
2. Contact the Bishop's Office for supervisory file information.
3. Depending on the circumstances, most of the following will be required (to be determined by the Director of Clergy Excellence in consultation with the district superintendent):
 - a. A written request by the candidate on his/her reasons and qualifications for readmission and a statement on the circumstances relating to their discontinuance or withdrawal
 - b. File documents related to the reasons for discontinuance or withdrawal
 - c. Biographical Form (Form 102)
 - d. Criminal and Sex Offenders Background Check
 - e. Expanded Background Report (national and county criminal search, DMV record search, consumer credit report, and social security trace)
 - f. Disclosure Form (Form 114)
 - g. Work Authorization Form
 - h. Medical Report Form 103
 - i. Psychological Assessment (particular one to be determined)
 - j. Pastor Profile
 - k. A satisfactory report and recommendation by their charge conference and pastor
 - l. Other letters of recommendation, if needed
 - m. Report of career counseling, if applicable
 - n. Additional information or report on requirements set by the Board or annual conference when discontinued or withdrawn.

Suggested Questions

Questions would be determined based on the nature of the discontinuance or withdrawal.

Action Required

- For reinstatement as a certified candidate, majority vote which is a recommendation to the Board of Ordained Ministry.
- For readmission to local pastor status, associate, provisional, or full membership, majority vote which is a recommendation to the Board of Ordained Ministry (which will require an interview with the Conference Relations Committee) and Cabinet.
- DCOM registrar emails the Action Report Form to the BOM Registrar.

Recommendation for Associate Membership

Requirements prior to interview

1. Annual renewal of license for pastoral ministry with service as a full time local pastor for four years
2. Reached the age of 40
3. Completed the five year Course of Study
4. Completed a minimum of sixty semester hours toward the Bachelor of Arts or equivalent degree in an accredited college or university.
5. Declared their willingness to accept continuing full-time appointment.
6. If this is also the interview for local pastor continuance, see the requirements on that page.

Criteria:

- Areas of competencies
- Academic background
- Consider current practice of ministry
- Review how theological understanding has evolved since licensing
- Effectiveness in ministry will be evaluated in three areas: theology, vocation and leadership, and practice of ministry.

Suggested Questions

- Candidate will write papers for the BOM and be interviewed in three areas: Theology, Vocation and Leadership, and Practice of Ministry (including worship and teaching), and candidate will submit bullet point answers to those questions to the DCOM, along with a writing sample from one of the Theology questions. Those bullet points are an excellent source of questions and discussion with the candidate.
- All of us are called by God. Share about your specific call to associate membership. Why are you seeking the conference relationship of associate membership?
- How has your theology changed since you have been in the Course of Study?
- Where/what are your support systems?
- What did you learn about yourself and about ministry through the CPE experience (if completed)?
- Questions that integrate candidate's theology/Course of Study educational experiences with their practice of ministry.

Action Required

- Majority vote; DCOM registrar emails the Action Report Form to the BOM Registrar
- DCOM Chair completes the narrative recommendation and submits this report to the Board of Ordained Ministry (via Pathways).
- If not recommended, the Action Report should indicate the appropriate recommendation for renewal as a licensed local pastor.

The following page is an excerpt from the Application for Associate Membership; included here for your reference.

Associate Membership – Effectiveness in Ministry

District Committee on Ordained Ministry Recommendation

Once the Center for Clergy Excellence has received your application form, you will be placed on the “Applying for Associate Membership” track in Pathways. The information you need relating to your DCOM interview can be found on that track in Pathways. For your convenience, the requirements and further explanation are below.

The Board of Ordained Ministry reviews candidates in the following three major areas for associate membership: Theology, Vocation and Leadership, and Practice of Ministry.

In preparation for your meeting with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, please **submit the following via Pathways** prior to your interview. If you are returning to the Board of Ordained Ministry, only respond to the areas you are required to resubmit.

1. Write 1 or 2 "bullet" responses to each of the questions in the three categories as follows:
 - Questions for the Theology Paper
 - Questions for the Vocation and Leadership Paper
 - Questions for the Practice of Ministry Paper

These "bullet answers" will, of course, not be comprehensive, lengthy or reflective of the nuanced way you would answer each question. Each bullet would only be a sentence or two in length. The committee would only like a sense of the direction you will be taking to answer each question.

2. In addition, write a 200 word response to one of the questions in the **Theology Paper**. You may choose which question to answer, and you need not provide "bullets" for that one question. Again, 200 words may or may not reflect the depth and nuance you will be providing to the Board of Ordained Ministry. The goal for this is to get a fair assessment of your writing style.

Recommendation for Provisional Membership

Requirements prior to interview

1. Certified candidate or licensed local pastor for at least one year prior to desired election to provisional membership. (Annual renewal of certified candidacy or license for pastoral ministry if certified for longer than one year.)
2. Service requirement – demonstrated gifts for ministries of service and leadership to the satisfaction of the DCOM
3. Met the educational requirements of the VA Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (which include the educational requirements in ¶324) including an undergraduate degree (For those applying under ¶324.6, reached 40 years of age, completed the 5 year Course of Study, and 32 semester hours of graduate theological study – specific courses are required in VA – and met the educational requirements of the VA Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. See the “Three Tracks to Full Conference Membership & Ordination” in the Appendix of this Handbook.)
4. If this is also the interview for candidacy renewal or local pastor continuance, see the requirements on those pages.

Criteria:

- Note areas of developing competencies
- Consider the fruitfulness of candidate’s field education experiences, internships, other practice of ministry experiences
- Review how theological understanding has evolved since certification.
- Review carefully educational requirements (note that a bachelor’s degree is required with exceptions granted only by the Board of Ordained Ministry). Contact the Center for Clergy Excellence with any questions
- Readiness for ministry will be evaluated in four areas: call, theology, personal growth and development, and practice of ministry.

Suggested Questions

- Candidate will write papers and be interviewed in four areas: Call, Theology, Personal Growth and Development, and Practice of Ministry.
- All of us are called by God. Share about your specific call to ordained ministry?
- Questions that would integrate their theology with their practice of ministry.
- Questions that make the connection between their seminary/Course of Study education and their practice of ministry.
- How has your theology changed since you have been in seminary/Course of Study?
- Where/what are your support systems?
- What did you learn about yourself and about ministry through the CPE experience?

Action Required

- Three-fourths majority vote; DCOM registrar emails the Action Report Form to the BOM Registrar
- DCOM Chair completes the narrative recommendation and submits this report to the Board of Ordained Ministry (via Pathways).
- If not recommended, the Action Report should indicate the appropriate recommendation for renewal as a certified candidate or licensed local pastor.

Board of Ordained Ministry
Virginia Conference, The United Methodist Church

Educational Requirements for Provisional Membership

One course in each area listed below from the *Discipline* must be included in graduate theological education in preparation for provisional membership in the United Methodist Church. Please note: the Virginia Conference requires completion of all educational requirements prior to commissioning and provisional membership. In addition, completion of an undergraduate bachelor's degree is required prior to any graduate theological course work.

- Old Testament
- New Testament
- Theology
- Church history
- Mission of the church in the world
- Worship/liturgy
- Evangelism
- A minimum of two semester or three quarter hours in each of the fields of United Methodist history, doctrine, and polity.
- For candidates on the elder track, a course in preaching is required by the Virginia Conference.

In addition to the above requirements, the Virginia Conference Board of Ordained Ministry requires that all candidates for ordination complete **at least ½ unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) by the application deadline for ordination as a deacon or elder and full membership in the conference**. The Board strongly encourages completion of CPE prior to provisional membership. CPE must be taken at a CPE site that is accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE). Online CPE programs are not accepted.

The Virginia Conference Board of Ordained Ministry strongly encourages completion of United Methodist doctrine prior to applying for provisional membership. The Board recommends courses in Christian education and systematic theology for all candidates.

The Virginia Conference Board of Ordained Ministry allows **up to 1/2 of all course work** to be completed through distance education, with no more than 1/3 of the course work to be completed by fully asynchronous methods. The United Methodist Church allows online courses to be taken only at one of the 13 official United Methodist seminaries or Asbury Theological Seminary. Distance education includes all correspondence, online and hybrid courses in which the students and faculty are not in the same physical location. "Asynchronous" courses are those in which students and faculty are neither in the same physical location nor online at the same time.

Although each seminary has the responsibility to designate which basic courses meet the core requirements and advise students of these courses, the conference Board of Ordained Ministry will have the final authority to approve academic studies. Questions should be addressed to the Registrar, Meredith McNabb at MeredithMcNabb@vaumc.org.

The following page is an excerpt from the Application for Provisional Membership; included here for your reference.

Provisional Membership – Readiness for Ministry

District Committee on Ordained Ministry Recommendation

Once the Center for Clergy Excellence has received your application form, you will be placed on the “Applying for Provisional Membership” track in Pathways. The information you need relating to your DCOM interview can be found on that track in Pathways. For your convenience, the requirements and further explanation are below.

The Board of Ordained Ministry reviews candidates in the following four major areas for provisional membership: Call, Theology, Personal Growth and Development, and Practice of Ministry.

In preparation for your meeting with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, please **submit the following via Pathways** prior to your interview. If you are returning to the Board of Ordained Ministry, only respond to the areas you are required to resubmit.

1. Write 1 or 2 "bullet" responses to each of the questions in the four categories as follows:
 - Questions for the Call Paper
 - Questions for the Theology Paper
 - Questions for the Practice of Ministry Paper
 - Questions for the Personal Growth and Development Paper

These "bullet answers" will, of course, not be comprehensive, lengthy or reflective of the nuanced way you would answer each question. Each bullet would only be a sentence or two in length. The committee would only like a sense of the direction you will be taking to answer each question.

2. In addition, write a 200 word response to one of the questions in the **Theology Paper**. You may choose which question to answer, and you need not provide "bullets" for that one question. Again, 200 words may or may not reflect the depth and nuance you will be providing to the Board of Ordained Ministry. The goal for this is to get a fair assessment of your writing style.

Appendix of Forms and Instructions

Becoming a Certified Candidate

This document mirrors the steps in Pathways and is a useful tool for discerning candidates only.

All instructions and forms required toward Certified Candidacy, can be found in Pathways and are not included in this Handbook.

- Biographical Form (GBHEM #102)
- State Criminal and Sex Offenders Background Check
- Charge Conference Recommendation (Completed through EVC)
- Expanded Background Check
- Medical Report Form (GBHEM #103)
- Candidates Disclosure Form (GBHEM #114)
- Psychological Assessment Request Form

Three Tracks to Conference Full Membership & Ordination

Use this quick reference chart to compare Disciplinary requirements.

Recommendation of the DCOM for Provisional Membership

In addition to the Action Report Form, the Chair completes this narrative recommendation form. This information is extremely important to the Board of Ordained Ministry. Respond in detail to each question on the Recommendation report form. The deadline for the Center of Clergy Excellence to receive this narrative report (via Pathways) is November 1.

Recommendation of the DCOM for Associate Membership

In addition to the Action Report Form, the Chair completes this narrative recommendation form. This information is extremely important to the Board of Ordained Ministry. Respond in detail to each question on the Recommendation report form. The deadline for the Center of Clergy Excellence to receive this narrative report (via Pathways) is November 1.



Becoming a Certified Candidate for Licensed or Ordained Ministry

For information and questions, contact the chair of your District Committee on Ordained Ministry. Your District Office can help you connect with that chairperson, and information is also available at www.vaumc.org/ClergyExcellence under “Candidates and Seminary Students”

1. Contact a United Methodist clergyperson to discuss your sense of call toward ministry. You may wish to review *The Christian as Minister* and *Understanding God’s Call: A Ministry Inquiry Process*, available from www.cokesbury.com.
2. Be a professing member in good standing of The United Methodist Church or a baptized participant of a recognized United Methodist campus ministry or other United Methodist ministry setting for a minimum of one year.
3. Be a graduate from high school or high school equivalency. Make plans for meeting the academic requirements of the ministry/order to which you are called—information is available at the website above.
4. Send an email to the chair of your District Committee on Ordained Ministry with a copy to your district superintendent, describing your sense of call and apply for admission to the candidacy program. A roster of DCOM Chairs is available at www.vaumc.org/ClergyExcellence under “Candidates and Seminary Students”
5. You will receive an email from the Pathways to Ministry website, the online file management website that the VAUMC uses for candidacy information. Follow the instructions for registering and setting up your account. Look for an email from this address: noreply@PathwaystoMinistry.com.
6. Following the instructions in Pathways, complete the following two documents at least one month prior to your *Admission Interview*:
 - Form 102, Biographical Form (formerly Personal Data Inventory)
 - State Criminal and Sex Offenders Background Check.
7. Meet with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry for the *Admission Interview*. Communicate with your DCOM chair to schedule this interview; most DCOMs meet monthly or every other month.
8. Following the interview, if recommended for admission into the candidacy program, the DCOM chair will send you an email with the name and contact information of your candidacy mentor. If not recommended for admission at this time, the chair will send you an email outlining the reasons of the committee and any next steps.
9. Enroll as a candidate with The United Methodist Church through the UMCARES system. As an admitted candidate, you will receive an email from notifications@umcares.org (put this in your safe senders list) with a link to <https://www.umcares.org>. Please register there immediately. Once your district superintendent and your mentor have “electronically signed” your application, you will receive another email with a link to the website to pay the \$75 registration fee. Once the fee is received, you can download or receive by mail the Candidacy Guidebook. At this point, you will no longer need to use the UMCARES system. You will follow your journey on the Pathways web site.
10. Contact your mentor to begin a period of discernment. You will work through discernment and candidacy material with your mentor, either with a group or individually. At least 3 meetings with your mentor/mentor group are required prior to certification. However, you may meet as many times as needed. The hope is that you will complete this discernment journey and become certified within 12 to 18 months.
11. Make a reservation to attend one Candidacy Summit held annually in January and July. Check www.vaumc.org/ClergyExcellence for registration details.

12. Meet with and receive the written recommendation from your local church or equivalent ministry setting:
 - a. Contact your pastor to make these arrangements.
 - b. Submit to your Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee a written statement on your call to ministry and be prepared to be interviewed in light of Wesley's historic questions in ¶310.1d in the Book of Discipline.
 - c. Interview with the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee or equivalent body specified by the DCOM,
 - d. After approval by the S/PPRC, meet with the charge conference (or another body specified by the DCOM) and receive 2/3 approval vote (Form 104 will be signed by the district superintendent or the presiding elder).

13. Complete the following additional requirements. Forms and instructions are on the Pathways website:
 - a. Expanded Background Check Authorization Form: mail the completed form to the Center for Clergy Excellence (P.O. Box 5606, Glen Allen, VA 23058) with a check for \$65 payable to The Virginia Conference. This background check includes a consumer credit check, county and national criminal checks, and a Department of Motor Vehicles check.
 - b. Medical Report Form 103: mail completed form to your district office.
 - c. Candidate's Disclosure Form 114: mail notarized form to your district office.
 - d. Psychological Assessment: Complete and submit the form "Request for the Psychological Assessment." A copy of your report will be mailed to you and the Center for Clergy Excellence. The VAUMC pays for half the cost of the assessment; your cost is \$175. You do not need to submit your report to the district office.
 - e. On the Pathways website, follow the instructions to submit your responses to the following(¶310.2a):
 - the most formative experience of your Christian life
 - God's call to licensed or ordained ministry and role of the church in your call
 - your beliefs as a Christian
 - your gifts for ministry
 - your present understanding of your call to ministry as elder, deacon or a licensed local pastor
 - your support systems
 - In addition, the material written for the P/SPRC (see #12 above) is also submitted.
 - f. Make sure your candidacy mentor submits his or her report. Your local church pastor or candidacy mentor remains available until licensing or commissioning, but no further reporting or meetings are required from the mentor once you are certified.

14. When you have completed the above, contact the chair of your DCOM to request an interview for certification as a candidate. All documents must be received at least one month prior to the *Certification Interview*. Be prepared to respond to questions in ¶310.2a and d.

15. Meet with the district committee on ordained ministry for the *Certification Interview*. You will be notified by the chair in writing regarding the results of the interview and any next steps.

16. Certified candidacy is renewed annually by your Charge Conference and your District Committee on Ordained Ministry. An annual interview with the DCOM is required and transcripts of all educational progress shall be submitted in addition to other items the DCOM may require.

Seeking Provisional Membership—Commissioning and Ordination:

One year as a Certified Candidate and completion of educational requirements is required prior to provisional membership and commissioning. The application for provisional membership is available annually from July 1 to September 1, on the Center for Clergy Excellence webpage at www.vaumc.org/BOMApplications. The interview committee papers and other documents for provisional membership are due in early January.

Seeking Licensing as a Local Pastor:

If you are seeking licensing for pastoral ministry, the requirements for licensing are available on the Pathways website. You will need to contact your district superintendent regarding appointment. A recommendation for licensing may be pursued at the same time as certification.

Three Tracks to Conference Full Membership & Ordination

(2012 Book of Discipline, ¶324)

Course of Study Track for Elder ¶324.6

- High School Education
- Must be 40 years of age
- Bachelor's Degree
- Basic COS (5 year)
- Advanced COS (32 hours, including UM doctrine, polity, history courses)
- Provisional Membership (3 years full time)
- Full Membership and Ordination as Elder

Professional Certification Track for Deacon ¶324.5

- High School Education
- Must be 35 years of age at time of certified candidacy
- Bachelor's Degree
- Professional Certification (10 semester hours)
- Basic graduate theological studies (24 semester hours)
- Provisional Membership (3 years full time)
- Full Membership and Ordination as Deacon

Seminary Track for Elder or Deacon ¶324.4

- High School Education
- Bachelor's Degree
- M.Div. Degree for elder or deacon track
OR for deacon track, other graduate theological degree/
or graduate degree and basic graduate theological studies (24 semester hours)
- Provisional Membership (3 years full time)
- Full Membership and Ordination as Elder or Deacon

Provisional Membership – Readiness for Ministry

Recommendation of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry

Name of Candidate _____

- Provisional Membership, deacon track
- Provisional Membership, elder track

One requirement is an interview and recommendation with a ¾ vote of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry. This interview and vote shall be completed after July 1 of the year of application. In addition, the Board is requesting a narrative evaluation report on this candidate.

Please complete the information requested below and upload this form with your narrative evaluation to the candidate's Pathways account by **November 1**.

Narrative Evaluation

Attach to this form a **narrative evaluation** using the questions below, identifying strengths for ministry and areas of growth. If you have concerns about the candidate's ability to understand, believe in, and support the doctrines, polity, and programs of the United Methodist Church, consider carefully whether to recommend this candidate.

1. Give a summary of the district committee on ordained ministry's history with candidate or file background.
2. Describe the candidate's strengths and areas for growth in the following areas:
 - Call
 - Theology
 - Practice of Ministry
 - Personal Growth and Development
3. Write a summary statement about this candidate with specific observations.

Vote

Number of DCOM members _____

Number present and voting _____

Number voting for recommendation _____

Number voting against recommendation _____

Chair, DCOM _____ Date _____

Associate Membership – Effectiveness in Ministry

Recommendation of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry

Name of Candidate _____

Associate Membership

One requirement is an interview with and recommendation of the District Committee on Ordained Ministry. This interview and vote shall be completed after July 1 of the year of application. In addition, the Board is requesting a narrative evaluation report on this candidate.

Please complete the information requested below and upload this form with your narrative evaluation to the candidate's Pathways account by **November 1.**

Narrative Evaluation

Attach to this form a **narrative evaluation** using the questions below, identifying strengths for ministry and areas of growth. If you have concerns about the candidate's ability to understand, believe in, and support the doctrines, polity, and programs of the United Methodist Church, consider carefully whether to recommend this candidate.

1. Give a summary of the district committee on ordained ministry's history with candidate or file background.
2. Describe the candidate's strengths and areas for growth in the following areas:
 - Theology
 - Practice of Ministry
 - Vocation and Leadership
3. Write a summary statement about this candidate with specific observations.

Vote

Number of DCOM members _____ Number present and voting _____

Number voting for recommendation _____ Number voting against recommendation _____

Chair, DCOM _____ Date _____