



Certification

in Specialized Ministries in The United Methodist Church

Urban Ministry



Educational Requirements

Individuals seeking professional certification in urban ministry in The United Methodist Church must meet the standards set by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's Division of Ordained Ministry. These include successful completion of five (5) certification courses relating to urban ministry. Persons are certified by their conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) in cooperation with GBHEM.

Courses are designed to provide graduate academic experience for persons to qualify them for certification. Other requirements for certification include personal and church qualifications and experience in the area of urban ministry as determined by GBHEM.

The five (5) courses include theories and methods of teaching the Bible, exploration of the pedagogical and theological bases for ministries, and equipping persons as disciples for the transformation of the world. Courses also include an understanding of The United Methodist Church, its structure, curriculum, and resources.

Each course must be offered for no less than two (2) semester (or equivalent quarter) hours of graduate academic credit. All certification courses must be taken at a United Methodist seminary or approved graduate schools. Exceptions may be made for other seminaries on the University Senate-approved list in consultation with an annual conference BOM and GBHEM.

Three of the five courses may be taken online.

Candidates may participate in more than one course each year. A maximum of ten (10) years is allowed for the certification studies in ministry careers. Two years' experience working in specialized area is required for certification. Experience is defined as a contractual agreement with supervision, accountability, evaluation, and continuing education in a specialized ministry area. Sufficient experience is approved by the annual conference BOM and may also require pre-approval.

Core Competencies for certification in Urban Ministry

1. A biblical understanding of the nature of the city and its relevance to contemporary society.
2. Ability to develop and administer a program that builds Christian community and seeks to bridge differences with creative positive connections.
3. An understanding of the cultural dynamics of urban life and the significance of the presence of the church in the community.
4. Skill in determining the needs of the community and how to build partnerships to respond to those needs.
5. Understanding of the United Methodist tradition and Wesleyan heritage as a presence in urban life.



Required Courses for Urban Ministry

1. **FOUNDATION COURSE: ENGAGING THE BIBLE IN THE URBAN MINISTRY SETTING:** An exploration of the nature of the city in the Bible and its role in congregations and communities. Particular themes will be explored in their various biblical contexts and in relation to the contemporary world.
2. **FOUNDATION COURSE: PRACTICAL THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY IN THE URBAN SETTING:** An overview of theological issues, basic theological concepts and practical theology methods. The course explores ways of engaging theology, context, and practice in Christian community development and organizing.
3. **URBAN COMMUNITY:** This class provides students opportunities to enhance their affinity for ministering in urban settings. It will provide immersion experience in urban settings including an examination of the cultural dynamics of urban life and the church, students will be encouraged to develop approaches that bridge those differences and create positive connections.
4. **Congregations and Communities as Partners in Urban Ministry:** Students will examine best practices used by congregations and community groups that have successfully launched and grown ministries in urban settings. An elective course will meet this requirement such as a course in Health-Related Ministries, or At-Risk Youth, or Children living in Poverty, or Prison Ministry, or Housing or Living With the Poor or Community Organizing.

5. **United Methodist Studies:** Understanding of and grounding in United Methodist doctrine and polity, and the practice of ministry. The course may include a study of doctrine, general rules, social principals, and polity of the UMC as found in the Book of Discipline; historical issues in UMC polity (organization and structure of contemporary United Methodism).

GBHEM may accept the two (2) courses in Bible and theology required for other areas of certification as meeting the requirements for urban ministry certification when these courses have been taken within the past 10 years and a special assignment related to urban ministry is completed in consultation with GBHEM.

Should I seek Professional or Paraprofessional Certification?

Professional certification is available to persons with an undergraduate degree and graduate credit courses at a United Methodist seminary, approved graduate schools, or students graduating from a United Methodist-related college, where they have completed the required courses in an area of specialization and served two years in a specialized ministry area.

Paraprofessional certification is available to persons who may not have an undergraduate degree and are working in areas of specialized ministry. Paraprofessional certification does not carry academic credit and is designed for persons seeking training in a specialized ministry as a worker or volunteer.



General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

The United Methodist Church
Division of Ordained Ministry
PO Box 340007
Nashville, TN 37203-0007

615-340-7375

E-mail: certification@gbhem.org

Web site: www.gbhem.org/certification