

# **District Committee on Ordained Ministry Handbook**



**2024-2028**

**Virginia Conference  
The United Methodist Church**

**[www.vaumc.org/DCOMResources](http://www.vaumc.org/DCOMResources)**

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

Section 1: Membership and Organization .....3  
     BOM/DCOM Relationship .....3  
     Responsibilities .....3  
     Membership (¶666.1) .....4  
     Organization .....4  
     The District Superintendent’s Role .....4  
 Job Descriptions for Officers .....5  
     Chairperson .....5  
     Team Leader .....5  
     Registrar .....6  
     Secretary .....6  
     Board of Ordained Ministry Representative .....6  
     Mentor Coordinator for Candidacy and Local Pastor Mentors .....6  
 Minutes & Report Forms .....7  
     **A Year in the Life of a dCOM** .....9  
 Section 2 - General Interview Guidelines .....10  
     After the interview .....11  
     **Quick Reference for Interviews** .....11  
 Section 3 - Interview Guides .....14  
 Lay Supply Interview .....14  
 Certified Lay Minister Interview .....15  
 Recertification as a Certified Lay Minister Interview .....16  
 Admission for Candidacy Interview .....17  
 Certified Candidate Interview .....19  
 Renewal of Certified Candidate Interview .....21  
 Transfer of a Certified Candidate from another District or Annual Conference .....23  
 Licensed Local Pastor Interview .....25  
 Renewal of Local Pastor License Interview .....27  
 Retired Local Pastor Preaching and Presiding in Retirement .....31  
     **Recommendation for Associate Membership Interview** .....32  
 Reinstatement or Readmission Interview .....37  
 Request for Withdrawal or Involuntary Withdrawal .....39  
 Questions to Answer for the dCom Recommendation Interview .....44  
 Practice of Ministry (BOD ¶324.9 b & c) .....44  
 Personal Growth and Development (BOD ¶324.9 n & o) .....45  
     Educational Requirements for Provisional Membership .....47  
 Section 6 - Forms .....51  
 Section 7 - Checklists .....53  
 Section 8 - LLP Renewal Tracks .....56

## Section 1: Membership and Organization

### BOM/DCOM Relationship

The District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) shall be amenable to the annual conference through the Board of Ordained Ministry (§666.1). 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 full minutes pertaining to each candidate’s interview and/or discussion and the Action Report form shall be submitted to the BOM Registrar via the Center for Clergy Excellence.

### Core Values

**Whole Person:** In working with candidates and clergy, the whole person is considered, including theological knowledge, emotional intelligence, practical skill and cultural competency.

**A Changing World:** Effective ministry leadership is needed in the pulpit and far beyond it: Christ is present—and our witness is needed—in and for a rapidly changing world.

**Spiritual Discernment:** The Holy Spirit is at work in the BOM’s practice of discernment; being prepared, being prayerful, and being healthy all help the Spirit to move among us.

### Responsibilities

The District Committee on Ordained Ministry is responsible for the following actions:

1. Aid the local church in the process of enlisting persons for ordained ministry as deacon or elder or for service as a local pastor.
2. Encourage persons to enter the candidacy program.
3. Interview candidates for admission to the candidacy studies program prior to the assignment of a candidacy mentor.
4. Assign a Candidacy Mentor to newly admitted candidates.
5. Recommend for certification as a candidate for licensed or ordained ministry (Fitness for Ministry).
6. Maintain a list of all admitted and certified candidates under its care, shared annually with the Center for Clergy Excellence (§666.3).
7. Recommend candidates for licensing for pastoral ministry (Fitness for Ministry).
8. Recommend candidates for Provisional Membership prior to interviews with the Board of Ordained Ministry (Readiness for Ministry).
9. Recommend candidates for Associate Membership prior to interviews with the Board of Ordained Ministry (Fruitfulness in Ministry).
10. Recommend for readmission to conference membership prior to interview with the Board of Ordained Ministry.
11. Interview individuals seeking to transfer into the Conference from another denomination or other fellowship.
12. Examine all candidates for renewal as a certified candidate or licensed local pastor.
13. In partnership with the Annual Conference’s Lay Servant Ministries, recommend candidates for Certified Lay Minister.
14. Inform all persons interviewed of decisions and recommendations both orally and in writing (§666.12).

15. Assist the Board of Ordained Ministry in providing support for all clergy under appointment within the district (§666.13).

### Membership (§666.1)

All members shall be nominated annually by the district superintendent in consultation with the chairperson or executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry. The membership is approved by the annual conference. Interim vacancies shall be filled by the district superintendent in consultation with the chairperson or executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry. Filled vacancies shall be communicated immediately to the Center for Clergy Excellence.

Membership shall include:

- At least three professing members of local churches.
- A representative from the Board of Ordained Ministry, selected by the Board (§635.1g).
- 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.
- The district superintendent.

### Organization

The dCOM shall nominate and elect its officers at the first meeting after the Annual Conference (§666.2). All members to the committee shall be members with vote. The district superintendent and the BOM representative **cannot** serve as chair of the dCOM. Officers include:

- Chairperson
- Team Leaders
- Secretary
- Registrar(s)
- Board of Ordained Ministry Representative
- Mentor Coordinator

There shall be one dCOM per district. Each dCOM may set up multiple interview teams to accommodate the geographical size of the districts. The interview teams (Team A, Team B, Team C, etc.) shall be evenly distributed and representative of the district's diversity. Each team will have a Team Leader who will be responsible for the Feedback Form from their team. The recommendation from the teams will be presented to the dCOM for final approval. The dCOM chairperson will cosign the Feedback Form with the Team Leader.

Prior to the interview, Interview Team members should discern which questions will be asked by which members. This will ensure smooth transitions during the interview. Candidates should be prayed for at the beginning and the end of the interview. The interview space, whether in-person or virtual, should be a hospitable and welcoming environment. A worshipful centerpiece is recommended.

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.

### The District Superintendent's Role

- Receive email or letter from candidate with a statement of call and request for admission to the candidacy program. The letter will also go to the dCOM chair. This letter begins a dCOM file kept by the district office (hard copy, virtual, or both).

- The district superintendent acknowledges receipt and refers candidate to dCOM chair, forwarding the statement of call.
- If a candidate is recommended for admission to the candidacy program, district superintendent assists dCOM in assigning the candidacy mentor.
- Ensures that any paper documents from candidates or local pastors received in the district office are scanned and uploaded into its proper location.
- Fall: Presides at Charge Conference and monitors candidates seeking approval and renewal.
- Spring: Nominates District Committee on Ordained Ministry members in consultation with the Board of Ordained Ministry. The nomination report is sent to the Assistant to the Bishop.
- Spring: Reviews the Minute Questions to ensure all certified candidates and licensed local pastors associated with the district are properly listed.

## **Job Descriptions for Officers**

### Chairperson

- Ensures that each meeting of the dCOM is spiritually grounded and seeks the discernment of the Holy Spirit.
- Sets dates, location(s), and agenda for meetings. The meetings should be scheduled in accordance with timelines provided by the BOM (i.e. for associate membership and provisional membership interviews).
- The agenda is shared with the dCOM at least one week prior to the meeting. Presides at the full dCOM meetings.
- Responds to candidates with relevant information to their request.
- Coordinates with the Registrar that all the required documents are in the candidate's folder prior to an interview.
- Assigns team members to an interview team and the Team Leaders.
- Assigns a candidate to an Interview Team.
- 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.
- Communicates orally by phone and in writing to each candidate regarding the results of the interview and recommended action with a copy in the candidate's Feedback Form.
- 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.
- Empowers Team Leaders to guide the interviews.
- Sign scholarship or grant applications for certified candidates.
- Reports annually to the District Conference (§659.3).

### Team Leader

- Leads the team in interviewing assigned candidates, guiding the team in discerning who will ask which questions, and inviting team members to pray for the candidate before and after the interview.
- Assigns a note taker to record questions and their responses.

- Welcomes candidates to the interview.
- Reports the recommendation to the full dCOM.
- Writes the Feedback Form for the candidate, offering highlights from the interview as well as recommendations for areas of growth, providing a copy to the dCOM chair.

#### Registrar

- Begins a file for an individual in Basecamp when they request an interview to become an admitted candidate.
- Reviews file to ensure that all documents are appropriately submitted.
- Submits Action Report Form for candidate and uploads Feedback Form in Unity.

#### Secretary

- Reminds the dCOM that all matters discussed in the meeting are confidential.
- Records meeting minutes, which should clearly identify which candidates were interviewed and what action was taken.
- Uploads them into the dCOM Basecamp folder. Because the minutes are confidential, they should not be shared outside of the dCOM Basecamp folder or the Center for Clergy Excellence.

#### Board of Ordained Ministry Representative

- Reminds the dCOM of the Core Values.
- Reports to the dCOM any decisions that have been made by the BOM.
- Reviews the candidate's psychological assessment and medical reports, background and credit checks, and assists the dCOM in reviewing the reports by providing a summary of highlights and concerns raised prior to the interview for certified candidates.
- Ask the recommended questions from the Psychological Assessment.
- Ask any relevant questions based on the Medical Report.
- 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 Culture of Call efforts and reaching out to those who are discerning a call into ministry.

#### Mentor Coordinator for Candidacy and Local Pastor Mentors

- Coordinates with the district superintendent regarding the assignment of candidates to a candidacy mentor or mentor group. The assignment of a newly admitted candidate is done at the conclusion of the discernment to admit a candidate.
- Assign, train and resource Local Pastor Mentors.
- Offer ongoing support to registered candidacy mentors through gatherings, resources, phone calls, etc.
- Maintains a list of all mentors and their mentees, to be shared annually with the Center for Clergy Excellence. Notify the Director for Call and Candidacy of any changes mid-year.
- Recommends, with the district superintendent, 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 or clergy mentors.

## **Minutes & Report Forms**

The secretary will upload the minutes from the dCOM meeting, including notes from the interviews as well as the recommendations made, to the dCOM Basecamp folder.

The Registrator completes the Action Report Form per candidate, indicating the recommendation of the dCOM, the vote outcome, and the date of the vote to be reported in Unity. The Action Report should be submitted within 48 hours of the dCOM meeting so that the action can be recorded and subsequent steps can be taken at the conference level.

The team leader completes the Feedback Form, which will be shared with the candidate, offering highlights from the interview as well as recommendations for areas of growth. This Feedback Form is sent to the candidate with the chairperson's letter explaining the dCOM's recommendation.

Section 6 provides details and samples for the forms.

# DCOM BY THE MONTH

<p><b>August</b></p> <p>Interview candidates for Associate Members &amp; Readmission to Provisional by Sept. 1. Admission, Certified Candidates</p>	<p><b>September</b></p> <p>Interview candidates for Provisional Membership by Oct. 1. Admission, Certified Candidates CLM Interviews</p>	<p><b>October</b></p> <p>Admission, Certified Candidates. Readmission Interviews by Feb. 1. Local Pastor Interviews.</p>
<p><b>November</b></p> <p>Admission, Certified Candidates. Readmission Interviews by Feb. 1. Local Pastor Interviews.</p>	<p><b>December</b></p> <p>Admission, Certified Candidates. Readmission Interviews by Feb. 1. Local Pastor Interviews.</p>	<p><b>January</b></p> <p>Local Pastor Interviews. Recommendation for Licensing. Candidacy/Candidacy Renewal. Transfer Interviews</p>
<p><b>February</b></p> <p>Feb. 1 deadline for Readmission. LLP Interviews. Recommendation for Licensing. CLM Interviews Transfer Interviews</p>	<p><b>March</b></p> <p>LLP Interviews. Recommendation for Licensing. Candidacy/Candidacy Renewal Re-interview Associate Members</p>	<p><b>April</b></p> <p>April 15 deadline for Licensing School. LLP Interviews. Certified Candidacy/Candidacy Renewal.</p>
<p><b>May</b></p> <p>May 30 deadline for Certified Candidacy &amp; Candidacy Renewal. LLPs retiring by end of May.</p>	<p><b>June</b></p> <p>Admission, Certified Candidates.</p>	<p><b>July</b></p> <p>Elect officers Notify CCE Ensure roster is correct. Readmission to Provisional/Associate Members by Sept. 1.</p>



# A Year in the Life of a dCOM

## July – Getting Organized

- Elect officers (§666.2).
- Ensure that the dCOM membership roster is correct.
- Communicate changes and officers to the Center for Clergy Excellence.
- Set a schedule for the coming year and make note of important dates within this outline and the liturgical calendar.
- Review the list of admitted and certified candidates by their progress and status. Share any updates with the Director for Call and Candidacy.
- Confirm all admitted candidates are assigned to a Candidacy Mentor or a mentor group.
- By the end of the month, receive names of those who have applied for Associate Membership. Associate Members need to be approved by September 1.
- Receive names from the Center of Clergy Excellence of any candidates who are applying for readmission as a provisional or associate member, to be interviewed by September 1.
- 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.

## August

- Schedule interviews with those candidates who have applied for Associate Membership or who are applying to be readmitted as a provisional or associate member.
- May begin interviewing admitted or certified candidates.
- Receive names from the Center of Clergy Excellence of any candidates who are applying for Provisional Membership. These candidates need to be approved by October 1.

## September

- Schedule an interview with candidates applying for provisional membership.
- 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.
- Make note of candidates interested in becoming a licensed local pastor and encourage them to complete the certified candidate track by February.
- May receive referrals to interview Certified Lay Minister candidates.
- Begin LLP renewal interviews.

## October-April

- Admission, Certified Candidate interviews.
- Readmission interviews (candidates) need to be completed by February 1.
- May begin interviewing candidates for licensing. Candidates need to be approved by April 15 to ensure they have all the information needed regarding Licensing School.
- Renewal of Certified Candidates/License Local Pastor interviews.
- May receive referrals to interview Certified Lay Minister candidates.
- Re-interview candidates for Associate Membership.

## May-June

- All Certified candidacy and Candidacy renewal interviews should be completed by May 30.
- Note especially those potential Certified Candidates who will be applying for seminary in the fall; it can be an advantage to them for scholarships to be certified when they apply.
- All Local Pastors who are requesting retirement should be interviewed by May 30.
- Interview candidates who are home from school

## Section 2 - General Interview Guidelines

### Preparing for an interview

- Prior to scheduling an interview, the dCOM chair and the registrar will ensure that the required documents for the candidate have been received and made available to the dCOM.
- Assign candidates/local pastors to an Interview Team.
- All dCOM members should review the required documents for each candidate/local pastor to be interviewed by their Interview Team prior to the dCOM meeting.
- Team Leaders invite a member to prepare a worship centerpiece for the table.
- Allow fifteen minutes before each interview to discuss concerns and issues that need to be addressed in the interview.
- Team Leaders will guide their interview team in deciding who will ask which question. Involve all members of the committee in asking questions while the Team Leader focuses on process and time.
- The Team Leader reminds the Interview Team not to contribute information outside of the candidate's file into the interview or discernment.
- Be mindful of the distinctions between candidates on the elder track, deacon track and associate member track and ask appropriate questions.
- The Team Leader will ask a member to begin the interview with prayer and someone to close the interview with prayer.

### During an interview

- If the candidate's mentor or head of staff is a member of the dCOM, this person shall not be present for the interview.
- The Team Leader welcomes the candidate to the interview and asks members of the dCOM to introduce themselves, by name, status, and church/ministry setting.
- The Team Leader states the purpose of the interview (Admission Interview, Certification Interview, Renewal Interview, Recommendation for provisional or associate membership, etc.), what recommendation(s) the dCOM will make, tells the candidate that what is shared will be held in confidence, that the Team Leader will be monitoring time and may need to move the interview along to be good stewards of time, and that the interview will begin with prayer.
- The dCOM members use the questions from the Interview Guide.
- The candidate should do 80% 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. Feedback should not be communicated by individual committee members offering advice during the interview.
- Keep the conversation focused on the matter at hand. The Team Leader serves as the timekeeper.
- A note taker will take detailed notes of the questions and responses.

### Discussion after an interview

- The Interview Team makes a recommendation to share with the full dCOM. The Team should highlight strengths from the interview and identify areas of growth. The Team Leader completes the Feedback Form based on the discussion.

- The recommendation from the Interview Team is presented to the entire dCOM. The dCOM votes to accept or not the recommendation by the Interview Team. The vote and recommendation of the dCOM is recorded and submitted on the Action Report Form in Unity.
- The dCOM can amend or add to the recommendations for growth from the Interview Team. These should be recorded and shared with the candidate in the letter 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?

After the interview

- The *Book of Discipline* requires that the decision of the dCOM be communicated verbally and 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 dCOM chair.
- The secretary takes detailed minutes of the recommendation and discussion.
- The Chair writes a letter to the candidate explaining the recommendation. The Feedback Form from the Interview Team is sent with the letter to the candidate (see the template in Section 6). The written communication should be sent within a week of the interview.
- The Chair calls the candidate within 24 hours of the interview to let them know what the recommendation was and shares briefly highlights and recommendations for growth. The Chair explains that the candidate will receive the recommendation and the feedback in writing.
- The letter from the chair, the Feedback Form, and the Action Report form are filed in the candidate/local pastor's folder. These forms will be placed in their file at the district office and the Center for Clergy Excellence.

## Quick Reference for Interviews

Full details of requirements, criteria, and suggested questions for each interview follow in this handbook. There will be no conditional recommendations for action. With the exception of Lay Supply, an interview should be conducted only after all required documents have been received and reviewed by the dCOM.

A. Lay Supply:

dCOMs do not certify or recommend Lay Supply. However, given that Lay Supply is meant as a temporary status, it is recommended that dCOMs meet with those assigned to a church to establish a relationship and support discernment.

The interview should explore:

1. Journey of Call
2. Initial experience in ministry
3. Hopes for continued ministry as Certified Lay Minister or Certified Candidate

B. Admitted Candidate (§310.1):

1. Beginning of the discernment process
2. Expresses a call to ministry
3. *Admission Interview* after steps are completed, to be admitted into the candidacy process. Requires a recommendation and 2/3 vote by written ballot.
4. If recommended, assigned a Candidacy Mentor.

C. Certified Candidate (§310.2):

Virginia Conference, DCOM Handbook -Revised August 2024

1. Standard is Fitness for Ministry
  - a. Spiritual fitness
  - b. Psychological fitness
  - c. Physical fitness
  - d. Potential for effectiveness
2. *Certification Interview* following completion of all steps to become a Certified Candidate (requires a ¾ vote by written ballot and specification toward licensing, ordination as an elder or as a deacon).
3. Annual renewal of certified candidacy by charge conference and dCOM. A Certified Candidate can be continued as a candidate for no more than 12 years (§313.5).

D. License for Pastoral Ministry (§315)

1. The standard is Fitness for Ministry (same points as CC above).
2. Initial *recommendation* for licensing and availability for appointment requires a ¾ vote. Specify part-time (PL) or full-time (FL) eligibility if approved on the Action Report Form and the minutes.
3. Annual *renewal* of the license for pastoral ministry.
4. Annual *recommendation* for continued appointment as a retired local pastor (RL)

E. Associate Membership (§321)

1. The standard is Fruitfulness in Ministry (requires a 3/4 vote).
2. Assess areas of developing competency.
3. Review academic background.
4. Consider current practice of ministry.
5. How has the candidate's theological understanding evolved since licensing?
6. Review written responses to questions for interview papers based on *The Book of Discipline* §324.9.a-p.

F. Provisional Membership (§324)

1. The standard is Readiness for Ministry (requires a 3/4 vote).
2. Assess areas of developing competency.
3. Review academic background.
4. Consider field education experiences, internships, other practice of ministry experiences.
5. How has the candidate's theological understanding evolved since certification?
6. Review written responses to questions for interview papers based on *The Book of Discipline* §324.9.a-p.

G. Certified Lay Minister (§268)

1. Assists the pastor in congregational care and program development in the local church.
2. Works as part of a ministry team with supervision by a clergyperson.
3. Recertification required every two years by the dCOM (§268.4e). May be done annually.

H. Readmission to Conference Membership (§314.2, 320.4, 364, 365, 366)

If such a request is received, the chair will communicate with the Center for Clergy Excellence prior to scheduling an interview. A person may seek readmission or reinstatement from honorable location, administrative location, from previously withdrawing from the ministerial office, or from discontinuance/withdrawal as a certified candidate, local pastor, or provisional member.

*Reinstatement of Certified Candidates (§314.2):* Certified candidates may be reinstated by the dCOM in which they were discontinued or by another dCOM upon transfer of the certified candidate's file, including all possible documentation of the circumstances relating to the discontinuance.

*Reinstatement of Local Pastors (§320.4):* The dCOM from which their license was discontinued, may recommend to the Board of Ordained Ministry and the cabinet reinstatement. The individual shall provide evidence that they have been a member of a local United Methodist church since the time of the discontinuance or for at least one year prior to their request. A recommendation from the charge conference is required.

*Readmission to Provisional Membership (§364):* A discontinued provisional member may be readmitted to the provisional membership upon the recommendation of their dCOM, the Board of Ordained Ministry, and the Cabinet. Persons who were discontinued from another annual conference may apply to be readmitted in the Virginia Annual Conference once the Board of Ordained Ministry has obtained verification of their qualifications, and information about the circumstances relating to the discontinuance.

*Readmission after Honorable or Administrative Location (§365):* Associate members or clergy members in full connection requesting readmission after honorable location must be recommended by the dCOM, the BOM, and the cabinet after review of their qualifications, the circumstances relating to going on location, and conduct during the period of time while on location.

*Readmission after leaving the Ministerial Office (§366):* Associate members and clergy members in full connection who have left the ministerial office under the provisions of §360 may be readmitted by the Annual Conference in which they held previously such membership and to which they surrendered the ministerial office upon their request and recommendation by the dCOM, the Conference Relations Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, and the cabinet after review of their qualifications and the circumstances relating to the surrender of their ministerial office.

## Section 3 - Interview Guides

### Lay Supply Interview

When an ordained or licensed minister is not able to serve a church, a qualified and trained layperson, lay minister, or lay missionary may be assigned to do the work of ministry in that charge (§205.4). This person is accountable to the district superintendent. The dCOM is encouraged to interview those serving as lay supply in their districts to establish relationships and to provide guidance for discernment to become a Certified Lay Minister or a Certified Candidate.

Recommended Time Frame: 30 - 45 minutes

Interview Questions:

1. Tell us what excites you about your ministry.
2. Tell us how your family and friends responded to your sense of call.
3. Describe a formative church experience that has shaped your call.
4. How do you take care of yourself physically, relationally, spiritually and emotionally?
5. What spiritual disciplines do you practice on a regular basis?
6. How have these disciplines informed your call?
7. Tell us how you are/were in leadership in your local United Methodist Church?
8. What have been some key learnings or takeaways from your ministry setting?
9. Tell us what you love about The United Methodist Church.
10. As you think about living into a call from God, do you have a sense of what you are being called to - Certified Lay Minister or as a Certified Candidate headed toward licensing and perhaps ordination?

If appropriate, encourage the lay supply to use the Become a Certified Candidate checklist and to begin by reading *The Christian as Minister* or *Blessed Wrestling* and discuss with their pastor.

Action Required: None.

## Certified Lay Minister Interview

A Certified Lay Minister (§268) is a certified lay servant or lay missionary who is called and equipped to conduct public worship, care for the congregation, assist in program leadership, develop new and existing faith communities, preach the Word, lead small groups, or establish community outreach ministries, who can be assigned by a district superintendent in accordance with §419.2. A candidate for CLM is evaluated by the Annual Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries and referred to the dCOM for examination and recommendation for certification (§666.11).

### Requirements for an interview

When a candidate has completed the initial steps to become a CLM, Lay Servant Ministries will make a referral to the Director for Call and Candidacy, who will notify the dCOM chair and provide the necessary documentation.

Recommended Time Frame: 45 minutes

### Interview Questions:

1. What excites you about ministry?
2. Tell us about your call to be a Certified Lay Minister.
3. What figures from the Bible resonate most with your call?
4. What are your gifts for ministry?
5. How have you used your gifts for ministry in leadership at your local United Methodist Church?
6. How have these experiences shaped your call?
7. How do you take care of yourself physically, relationally, spiritually and emotionally?
8. What spiritual disciplines do you practice on a regular basis?
9. How have these disciplines informed your call? How have you grown spiritually?
10. Tell us what you love about The United Methodist Church.
11. What has been the most helpful learning experience from the CLM modules?
12. Share about a conflict in which you were involved and how you dealt with the situation.

Action Required: A majority vote to recommend or not recommend candidate as a Certified Lay Minister. Complete the CLM Action Report Form and submit to the Director for Call and Candidacy, who will

make recommendation to the Annual Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries, who certifies the candidate. A Feedback Form should be completed and sent to the CLM.

## **Recertification as a Certified Lay Minister Interview**

A Certified Lay Minister must fulfill the requirements for recertification as outlined in ¶268.4. The Annual Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries reviews the requirements and refers the CLM to the dCOM for a recommendation for recertification.

### Requirements prior to conducting an interview:

The Annual Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries reviews the requirements for recertification every two years and will make a referral to the Director for Call and Candidacy, who will notify the dCOM chair and provide the necessary documentation.

Recommended Time Frame: 30-45 minutes

### Interview Questions:

1. What brought you the most joy in your ministry this year?
2. How did you use your gifts for ministry in the last year?
3. What/where are your support systems? How are you making time for family and/or self-care?
4. How are you caring for yourself spiritually?
5. How are you living out your call in the church and/or community?
6. What was your greatest challenge in the past year? How did you handle it?
7. What have you learned about yourself in this past year?
8. In what areas do you see a need to grow or learn more?
9. Where do you sense God calling you?

If the candidate expresses interest in licensing or ordained ministry, provide them with the checklist to become a certified candidate. If not, celebrate the ministry of the laity and the ways God continues to call and use them in the life of the church.

Action Required: A majority vote to recommend or not recommend renewal as a Certified Lay Minister. Complete the CLM Action Report Form and submit to the Director for Call and Candidacy, who will make recommendation to the Annual Conference Committee on Lay Servant Ministries, who recertifies the candidate. A Feedback Form should be completed and sent to the CLM.



## Admission for Candidacy Interview

An individual who has experienced a call to ministry as a licensed local pastor or provisional member, first needs to be admitted into candidacy studies (§310.1). The purpose of the admission interview is for the dCOM to provide support and to listen for God's call in the individual.

### Requirements prior to conducting an interview:

The individual has completed the first six steps on the Become a Certified Candidate checklist. The dCOM chair and the registrar will ensure that the required documentation has been completed.

Recommended Time Frame: 30-45 minutes

### Interview Questions:

1. What excites you about God's call?
2. Describe an experience that was formative to your call.
3. What stories from the Bible connect to your call?
4. *Ask follow-up questions to the written call statement.*
5. How do you take care of yourself physically, emotionally, spiritually, and relationally?
6. How do you handle stress?
7. What spiritual disciplines do you practice on a regular basis?
8. How have these spiritual disciplines informed your call to ministry?
9. Tell us how your family and friends have responded to your sense of call.
10. What does it mean to you to be "called"?
11. As you think about living into your call, what does that look like to you?
12. What are the steps you are taking to live into that vision?
13. What do you love about The United Methodist Church?

Before concluding the interview, take a few moments to remind the candidate to use the Become a Certified Candidate checklist.

Action Required: A two-thirds majority vote by written ballot and recorded on the Action Report Form as:

- Granted admission to the candidacy studies program (§310.1b).
- Not granted admission to the candidacy studies program and will return for a second interview this year.
- Not granted admission to the candidacy studies program and is discontinued or withdrawn as an inquiring candidate.

If admitted, the candidate is assigned to a Candidacy Mentor or mentor group. This should be included in the Feedback Form that is sent to the candidate.

An invitation will be sent to the admitted candidate to join Unity, where they will be added to the Certified Candidate track.

## Certified Candidate Interview

A Certified Candidate has discerned their call to licensed or ordained ministry. They show evidence of fitness for ministry (§310.2).

### Requirements prior to conducting an interview:

Candidates must be admitted into the candidacy studies program and complete the Become a Certified Candidate checklist. The candidate will be able to track their progress on Unity. The dCOM chair and registrar should ensure that all requirements have been met before interviewing the candidate. If there are concerns about reading and writing skills, the dCOM may require the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) assessment.

### Criteria for certification: Fitness for Ministry

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

### Recommended Time Frame: 45 - 60 minutes

### Interview Questions:

1. What excites you about being called to ministry?
2. Share your call story. (*Listen for language describing both an internal call and confirmation of that call by the community of faith; use of biblical images*).
3. What is your understanding of your call to ministry as an elder, deacon, or licensed local pastor?
4. Describe your support system as you discern your call.
5. What is your understanding of itinerancy?
6. What do you love about The United Methodist Church?
7. How are you taking care of yourself physically, emotionally, and relationally?
8. *If the candidate has any medical concerns identified on the medical form or expanded background check, refer to the Behavioral Health Guidelines. It is appropriate for the BOM rep to ask the candidate how he/she is managing the identified health or behavioral concerns and how they could affect their health if put into a stressful ministry environment or that could hamper their effectiveness in lifelong ministry.*
9. Describe your spiritual disciplines and practices.

10. Tell us about a time when your spiritual practices were particularly life-giving. (*Look for evidence of habitual practice of meaningful spiritual disciplines. If not evident, note in feedback, and follow up at the next interview to check for evidence of growing commitment and fruitfulness in this area.*)
11. What was your experience of completing the psychological assessment and interview?
12. *The BOM rep asks the suggested questions from the psychological report, if deemed appropriate.*
13. Describe a recent leadership experience that you had in a church/campus ministry/mission environment. What did you learn about yourself?
14. Share about a time when you did not succeed at something you tried. How did you respond to that failure?
15. Tell us about a time when you found yourself in a conflict situation and how you handled it.
16. In preparation for the Candidacy Summit, you submitted your top 5 strengths from the Gallup StrengthsFinder. Tell us about your strengths and how they help you understand your leadership.

Question Bank (ask if time permits):

17. How would you describe grace to a middle school student?
18. Describe your personal experience of God.
19. What is your understanding of the kingdom of God?
20. Explain the significance of the sacraments in the life of the church.
21. Describe what an inclusive church means to you.

Encourage the candidate to continue to meet with their Candidacy Mentor as they continue the journey of answering God's call to be licensed or ordained.

Action Required: A three-fourths majority vote by written ballot and recorded on the Action Report Form as:

- Continued as an admitted candidate
- Approval as Certified Candidate (§666.6)
- Not granted certified candidate status and discontinued as an admitted candidate.

If approved, the candidate is to continue meeting with their Candidacy Mentor or mentor group. The Feedback Form should be completed and sent to the candidate.

## Renewal of Certified Candidate Interview

A Certified Candidate is to be renewed annually as they continue their progress (§313). The candidate continues to show evidence of gifts, fruits, and God's grace for the work of ministry. A certified candidate may be continued as a candidate for no more than twelve years following certification.

### Requirements prior to conducting an interview:

The candidate has submitted through unity an official transcript from the school, college, or seminary showing progress in their education in the past 12 months. A written response on service and leadership in the church with new reflections on §310.2a, showing evidence of growth and the annual recommendation of renewal by the candidate's charge conference. If the psychological assessment is over five years old, a new assessment must be completed. These items will be completed on Unity. The dCOM chair and registrar should ensure that all requirements are met before the candidate is interviewed.

Recommended Time Frame: 30 minutes

### Interview Questions:

1. Tell us about the past year as a certified candidate. If they are in school, college, or seminary, ask about their classes. If there is evidence of no progress in education, ask the candidate to share about that and what may be holding them back.
2. How has God been working in your life this year?
3. Share about a formative experience in a church or ministry setting from the past year that has impacted your call.
4. How are you balancing your life with work/school and home? How are you handling stress?
5. Share about your spiritual practices. How are these practices informing your call?
6. *If the psychological assessment is older than five years, the candidate will be asked to retake the assessment. In this case, the BOM rep should ask the recommended questions from the report.*
7. What kind of exercise program do you participate in?
8. What relationships/interests do you have beyond church and seminary communities?
9. How are you holding yourself accountable to your spiritual, physical, and relational health?
10. What are your goals for the coming year? How are you planning to accomplish these goals?

### Question Bank (ask if time permits):

11. How would you describe grace to a middle school student?
12. Describe your personal experience of God.

13. What is your understanding of the kingdom of God?
14. Explain the significance of the sacraments in the life of the church.
15. Describe what an inclusive church means to you.

Action Required:

A three-fourths majority by written ballot and recorded on the Action Report Form as:

- Recommended for renewal as a certified candidate (§313)
- Discontinued or withdrawn as a certified candidate

If approved, the candidate is to continue meeting with their Candidacy Mentor or mentor group. The Feedback Form should be completed and sent to the candidate.

## **Transfer of a Certified Candidate from another District or Annual Conference**

A certified candidate may be accepted by another district committee in the same or another annual conference (§313.4). Licensed Local Pastors cannot transfer from another Annual Conference. An LLP seeking transfer, must do so as a certified candidate.

If a certified candidate wishes to transfer to another district within the Virginia Annual Conference, the candidate should request to transfer in writing to the Director for Call and Candidacy, Rev. Dr. Jason Stanley, at [jasonstanley@vaumc.org](mailto:jasonstanley@vaumc.org). In the first interview after the transfer, the dCOM should spend some time getting to know the candidate by asking them to briefly share their call story, experiences in ministry, and which ministry track they are on.

It is possible for this interview to be combined with the recommendation for Provisional Membership or for licensing. If this is the case, use the relevant Interview Guides.

### Requirements prior to conducting an interview:

If a certified candidate wishes to transfer to the Virginia Annual Conference from another annual conference, they must first be in contact with the Center for Clergy Excellence and then complete the items on the transfer checklist. If the psychological assessment is over five years old, a new assessment must be completed. The dCOM chair and registrar should review the documentation as provided by the Center of Clergy Excellence.

Recommended Time Frame: 45 - 60 minutes

### Interview Questions for Transfer into the Annual Conference:

1. Share your call story. *(Listen for language describing both an internal call and confirmation of that call by the community of faith; use of biblical images).*
2. What is your understanding of your call to ministry as an elder, deacon, or licensed local pastor?
3. Describe your support system as you discern your call.
4. What is your understanding of itinerancy?
5. Share your reasons for requesting a transfer to the Virginia Annual Conference?
6. What do you love about The United Methodist Church?
7. *The BOM rep asks the suggested questions from the psychological report, if deemed appropriate.*
8. Describe a recent leadership experience that you had in a church/campus ministry/mission environment. What did you learn about yourself?

9. Share about a time when you did not succeed at something you tried. How did you respond to that failure?
10. Tell us about a time when you found yourself in a conflict situation and how you handled it.
11. How are you taking care of yourself physically, emotionally, and relationally?
12. *If the candidate has any medical concerns identified on the medical form or expanded background check, refer to the Behavioral Health Guidelines. It is appropriate for the BOM rep to ask the candidate how he/she is managing the identified health or behavioral concerns and how they could affect their health if put into a stressful ministry environment or that could hamper their effectiveness in lifelong ministry.*
13. Describe your spiritual disciplines and practices.
14. Tell us about a time when your spiritual practices were particularly life-giving. *(Look for evidence of habitual practice of meaningful spiritual disciplines. If not evident, note in feedback, and follow up at the next interview to check for evidence of growing commitment and fruitfulness in this area.)*

Question Bank (ask if time permits):

16. How would you describe grace to a middle school student?
17. Describe your personal experience of God.
18. What is your understanding of the kingdom of God?
19. Explain the significance of the sacraments in the life of the church.
20. Describe what an inclusive church means to you.

Action Required: A three-fourths majority vote by written ballot and recorded on the Action Report Form as:

- Approval as Certified Candidate (§666.7)
- Not granted certified candidate status.

If approved, the candidate should be assigned to a Candidacy Mentor or mentor group. The Feedback Form should be completed and sent to the candidate.



## Licensed Local Pastor Interview

A licensed local pastor is appointed to preach and conduct divine worship and perform the duties of a pastor in their appointment (§315). In order for newly licensed local pastors to be licensed and attend Licensing School, they must be approved by April 15.

### Requirements prior to conducting an interview:

To be licensed for pastoral ministry, the individual must be a certified candidate. While it is permissible for a dCOM to conduct the certified candidate and licensing interview at the same time, the chair and registrar should discern if that is the best action for the individual candidate. The candidate for licensing must complete the items on the Become a Licensed Local Pastor checklist. The chair and the registrar should ensure that all items are completed before scheduling the interview.

### Criteria for recommendation: Fitness for Ministry

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

### Recommended Time Frame: 45 - 60 minutes

### Interview Questions:

1. Tell us what excites you about ministry.
2. Tell us how you have been in leadership and ministry in your local United Methodist Church. How have these experiences informed your call to be licensed?
3. We read and watched your sermon. Tell us how you prepared for your sermon, including the resources you used.
4. How did you select the scripture you used?
5. *Ask any "I'm curious..." questions related to the sermon video.*
6. What are you doing to take care of yourself?
7. How do you understand the statement "Jesus Christ is Lord?"
8. What is your understanding of the kingdom of God?
9. Imagine that a family has come to you to baptize their infant. How will you prepare the family for the baptism?
10. *Ask any follow-up questions based on the written responses.*

11. Tell us about a time you disagreed with someone at church. How did you handle the frustration? What, if any, resolution was there to this situation?
12. How would you describe your leadership style?
13. How have you used your strengths as a leader of a ministry team?
14. Share a time when you implemented a change in your church or ministry. What came from your efforts? What did you learn about yourself or your context?

Action Required: A three-fourths majority vote (§315.2d) by written ballot and recorded on the Action Report Form as:

- Recommended for licensing as a Full-time Local Pastor (first time)
- Recommended for licensing as a Part-time Local Pastor (first time)
- Not recommended for licensing as a local pastor
- Recommended for licensing as a Student Local Pastor (applies only to a local pastor from another annual conference who is also a seminary student serving in Virginia).

A Feedback Form should be completed and shared with the candidate. If recommended, the Center for Clergy Excellence will notify the district superintendent to invite the candidate to register for Licensing School. To be licensed, the candidate will need to attend and complete all the requirements for Licensing School.

## Renewal of Local Pastor License Interview

This renewal interview happens annually. When scheduling the renewal interviews for licensed local pastors, the dCOM chair shall communicate that the LLP can complete the requirements in Unity. LLPs are to begin their Course of Study after being licensed. Full-time LLPs have eight years to complete the requirements, while part-time LLPs have twelve years. The course of study curriculum can be found here: <https://www.gbhem.org/ministry/course-of-study-curriculum/>.

During the interview, it is important to focus on the LLP's areas of strength and growth rather than spending a lot of time on the church the LLP serves. Be careful not to 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.

As of 2023, the Board of Ordained Ministry in the VAUMC has provided two paths for Local Pastors to renew their license: The Standard Process and the Modified Process. The Modified Process is for LLPs who have served five consecutive years, completed Course of Study, and are active members of a Clergy Covenant Group and/or the Fellowship of Licensed Local Pastors. Local pastors who have completed Course of Study, will be on the LLP Modified Renewal Track in Unity. All other local pastors will be on the LLP Standard Renewal Track.

### Requirements for the Standard Process of Renewal prior to conducting an interview:

To be renewed through the Standard Process, the LLP needs to complete the Unity track for their year of service, which includes written responses. The chair and the registrar should review the written responses that have been received prior to the interview, process of Course of Study (tracked in Unity), annual evaluation by S/PPRC, and the mentor report (if applicable).

### Requirements for the Modified Process of Renewal:

Those who have served five or more consecutive years and completed course of study, completed their annual charge conference pastor's narrative and continuing education forms, the annual evaluation by S/PPRC, confirmed participation in a Clergy Covenant Group and/or the Fellowship of Licensed Local Pastors, and a recommendation from the district superintendent or a DS appointed elder that provides evidence that the LLP is a pastor in good standing, then the dCOM is **not** required to interview the LLP, however, the DS, the dCOM, or the LLP can request or require an interview at any time.

Recommended Time Frame: 30 - 45 minutes

### Interview Questions:

1. What excites you about your ministry?
2. Share your vision for your church and ministry.
3. What has brought you the greatest joy this year in ministry?
4. What has surprised you the most about your ministry?

5. How are you caring for yourself? How do you get exercise, manage stress, cultivate relationships and interests beyond your ministry setting?
6. Being in ministry is challenging. Describe where you find support systems outside of the church/charge you serve.
7. In what ways have you grown spiritually this year, both personally and as a pastor? What contributed to this growth?
8. *Thank the pastor for completing the written responses and ask any follow up questions.*
9. What Course of Study classes have you taken? How have you incorporated what you have learned into your ministry?
10. How are you equipping the laity in your church?
11. What was the most difficult challenge you faced this past year as a pastor?
12. How did you handle this challenge and what did you learn from this experience?
13. You have been assigned to a mentor or a mentor group. Describe the relationship and what you have been working on with your mentor or mentor group.
14. What are your plans moving forward? Course of Study, continuing education, ordination?
15. What is the single most important thing you need to learn this coming year to grow as a pastor?
16. What questions do you have for us?

The local pastor should be encouraged to continue meeting with their mentor or mentor group.

Action Required: Majority vote to specify and recommend renewal of full time, part time or student local pastor, recorded on the Action Report Form. If a local pastor is being renewed via the Modified Process, the dCOM chair or registrar makes the recommendation and the committee approves. If there are more than one local pastor using the Modified Process, the dCOM may vote “consent calendar” style on a list of pastors. An Action Report Form is required for each pastor.

Recommended actions include:

- Recommended for renewal as a Full-time Local Pastor
- Recommended for renewal as a Part-time Local Pastor
- Recommended for renewal as a local pastor not currently appointed (MQ16)
- Recommended for renewal as a Retired Local Pastor, serving an appointment
- Discontinued as a local pastor yet renewed as a certified candidate

- Discontinued as a local pastor and as a certified candidate
- Recommended for renewal as a Student Local Pastor (a local pastor from another annual conference who is also a seminary student serving an appointment in Virginia).

A Feedback Form should be completed and shared with the local pastor. The Feedback Form should remind the local pastor that their license will need to be signed by the district superintendent annually.

### Local Pastor Reminders

A local pastor, full or part-time, is licensed for ministry one year at a time within a specific appointment to a church, charge or extension ministry (§316.1). The license must be renewed annually by the dCOM and is valid only if the local pastor is appointed (§316.3) and the license is noted and signed by the District Superintendent on the back.

RECERTIFICATION				
From To	Dates	Assignment	Signature of District Superintendent	Date Signed

It is the licensed local pastor’s responsibility to seek the District Superintendent’s signature every year. This can be done at the yearly Charge Conference, District Conference, Annual Conference, dCOM renewal meeting, or a personal visit to the District Office. The local pastor’s license gives them ministerial authority in their congregation (§316.2). Therefore, it is the local pastor’s responsibility to maintain their license and have access to it at all times.

An update to the Clergy Criteria for Emmaus and Chrysalis was provided in July 2024. You can review the updated policy here:

[https://doc.vaumc.org/Cabinet/ClergyCriteria\\_for\\_Emmaus\\_and\\_Chrysalis\\_updated2024Jul26.pdf](https://doc.vaumc.org/Cabinet/ClergyCriteria_for_Emmaus_and_Chrysalis_updated2024Jul26.pdf).

## Local Pastor Retirement Interview

A local pastor who has made satisfactory progress in the Course of Study as specified in ¶ 318.1-2 may be recognized as a retired local pastor. A retired local pastor may be appointed by the bishop to a charge and licensed upon recommendation by the dCOM without creating additional claim upon the conference minimum compensation nor further pension credit (¶320.5).

### Requirements prior to conducting an interview:

The local pastor seeking retirement should send a letter of request to the Bishop, district superintendent and the Director for Clergy Excellence. The chair and the registrar should review Course of Study and discern if “satisfactory progress in the COS” has been made. If a local pastor is projected to serve in retirement, the interview should be 30-45 minutes and include questions from the Renewal of Local Pastor License Interview.

Recommended Time Frame: 30 minutes

### Interview Questions:

1. Tell us about your greatest joy in ministry.
2. Where do you sense God calling to you while in retirement?
3. In what ways have you grown spiritually as a local pastor, both personally and as a pastor? What contributed to this growth?
4. What has surprised you the most throughout your ministry?
5. What has brought you the greatest joy?
6. What excites you about retirement?

Action Required: An Action Report Form is required recommending retirement as a Local Pastor. The minutes and the Action Report Form will be reviewed by the Retirement Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry prior to their recommendation for retirement (approved by the Clergy Session of Annual Conference). If the pastor is projected to serve in retirement, the Action Report Form should reflect both recommendation for retirement and renewal.

## **Retired Local Pastor Preaching and Presiding in Retirement**

A retired local pastor may be a pulpit supply for a congregation, however, they are not able to preside at the sacraments. A retired local pastor who has completed the Course of Study may annually request from the dCOM 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 (§316.8).

### Requirements:

- A letter of request should be submitted annually by the pastor in charge to the Bishop and chair of the dCOM.
- An interview is not necessarily required; however, recommendation by the dCOM is required annually and reported in writing to the Bishop for approval.

## **Retired Clergy Who are Serving are Required to Take Clergy Ethics Training Quadrennially**

On Monday September 12, 2022 the Executive Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry approved the action item that all retired clergy who are actively serving in the Virginia Conference UMC are required to take Clergy Ethics training quadrennially.

The rationale is that all clergy serving in the VAUMC need to be trained in clergy ethics so that they can continue to be held accountable to the highest Christian standards and learn about the most recent training on this topic as they are entrusted to care for their congregations including children and vulnerable adults.

The Center for Clergy Excellence will communicate how to participate in ethics training. Retired local pastors may contact the Center for Clergy Excellence with any questions or for more information.

## **Recommendation for Associate Membership Interview**

The local pastor will submit to the Center for Clergy Excellence their application request in June, when announced by the Center for Clergy Excellence. Upon receipt of that request, the local pastor will be placed on the “Applying for Associate Membership” track in Unity and should contact the dCOM chair to schedule an interview before September 1.

Members of dCOM can refer to the phase 1 document for Provisionals and Associates (see Section 5 of this handbook) to see the instructions the candidates are given. These instructions tell the candidates which questions to answer depending upon if they are a first-time applicant, or if they have been continued by the Board of Ordained Ministry. If they have been continued, they are required to submit an action report.

### Requirements prior to conducting an interview:

The local pastor must have completed all the necessary requirements to apply for Associate Membership (§322). The Center for Clergy Excellence will communicate to dCOM chairs who from their district has applied for Associate Membership and provide the following documentation:

1. Paragraph responses to each of the questions in the four categories as follows:
  - a. Questions for the Theology
  - b. Questions for the Practice of Ministry
  - c. Questions for the Personal Growth and Development
  - d. Questions for the Call

If the candidate was previously continued by the Board of Ordained Ministry, they may respond only to the areas they were continued in, as indicated in their feedback letter.

2. First time applicants: A writing sample consisting 12-15 pages answering the 8 questions as outlined on the application.

### Criteria for recommendation: Fruitfulness in Ministry

- Areas of competencies
- Academic background
- Consider current practice of ministry
- Review how theological understanding has evolved since licensing
- Fruitfulness in ministry will be evaluated in four areas: theology, personal growth and development, call, and practice of ministry.

### Recommended Time Frame: 60 minutes

### Interview Questions:

1. What excites you about ministry?
2. All of us are called by God. Share about your specific call to be an Associate Member and relate it to a call story from the Bible.
  - a. The candidate should be able to articulate a clear call to the ministry of an Associate Member.
  - b. Biblical imagery should be easily recalled.



3. What systems of support and self-care have you set up in your life and ministry?
  - a. The candidate should be able to share about support systems.
4. Share an example of a formative moment of ministry in your life this past year. How has this experience affected your practice of ministry?
  - a. The candidate should be able to share a formative moment in ministry and their growth in the practice of ministry.
5. Share how you understand God's means of grace in the context of our Wesleyan understanding of the sacraments of baptism and communion.
  - a. The candidate should be able to articulate God as the primary actor in both sacraments.
  - b. The candidate should be able to share about the Wesleyan concepts of infant baptism and the open table.
  - c. The candidate recalls Biblical imagery as related to each sacrament.
6. *Ask any follow up questions to the paragraph responses if not addressed in the questions above.*
7. *Thank the candidate for submitting the writing sample. If the candidate is unable to fully answer or adequately answer a question in their paper, ask them to expand upon their answer.*
8. *Ask any follow up questions that will help the candidate go beyond the scope of their paper.*
9. Do you have any questions for us?

Action Required: A three-fourths majority vote by the dCOM to recommend is recorded on the Action Report Form as:

- Recommended for annual renewal of license for ministry *[if included as part of the interview]*
- Recommended for Associate Membership
- Not recommended for Associate Membership

***For fall 2024, use the dCOM Associate/Provisional Member Action Report Form via Jotform.*** Contact Rev. Dr. Jason Stanley if you have any questions.

If a candidate is not recommended, they can be invited to reinterview between January and March.

The Feedback Form should be completed and shared with the candidate. The Action Report Form and the Feedback Form will be shared with the Board of Ordained Ministry.

## **Recommendation for Provisional Membership Interview**

The candidate will submit to the Center for Clergy Excellence their application request between July 1 and July 31. Upon receipt of that request, the candidate will be placed on the “Applying for Provisional Membership” track and should contact the chair of their district committee to schedule an interview prior October 1.

Members of dCOM can refer to the phase 1 document for Provisionals and Associates (see Section 5 of this handbook) to see the instructions the candidates are given. These instructions tell the candidates which questions to answer depending upon if they are a first-time applicant, or if they have been continued by the board. If they have been continued, they are required to submit an action report.

### Requirements prior to conducting an interview:

The candidate must have completed all the necessary requirements to apply for Provisional Membership (§324), including meeting the educational requirements. The Center for Clergy Excellence will communicate to dCOM chairs who from their district has applied for Provisional Membership and provide the following documentation:

1. Paragraph responses to each of the questions in the four categories as follows:
  - a. Questions for the Call Paper
  - b. Questions for the Theology Paper
  - c. Questions for the Practice of Ministry Paper
  - d. Questions for the Personal Growth and Development Paper

If the candidate was previously continued by the Board of Ordained Ministry, they may respond only to the areas they were continued in, as indicated in their feedback letter from the Board.

2. First time applicants: A writing sample consisting 12-15 pages answering the 8 questions as outlined on the Provisional/Associate Member Application Phase 1 document.
3. Service requirement – demonstrated gifts for ministries of service and leadership to the satisfaction of the dCOM.
4. If the district committee will also vote to renew the certified candidate or local pastor as part of this interview, see the requirements on the corresponding guidelines page.

### Criteria for recommendation: Readiness for Ministry

- Areas of competencies
- Educational requirements
- Consider the fruitfulness of candidate’s field education experiences, internships, other practice of ministry experiences
- Review how theological understanding has evolved since certification
- Readiness for ministry will be evaluated in four areas: call, theology, personal growth and development, and practice of ministry.

Recommended Time Frame: 60 minutes

Interview Questions:

1. What excites you about ministry?
2. All of us are called by God. Share about your specific call to ordained ministry as a deacon/elder and relate it to a call story from the Bible.
  - a. The candidate should be able to articulate a clear call to ministry.
  - b. The candidate has a clear understanding of their called order.
  - c. Biblical imagery should be easily recalled.
3. What systems of support and self-care have you set up in your life and ministry?
  - a. The candidate should be able to share about support systems.
4. Share an example of a formative moment of ministry in your life this past year. How has this experience affected your practice of ministry?
  - a. The candidate should be able to share a formative moment in ministry and their growth in the practice of ministry.
5. Share about how your gifts for ministry will inform your practice of ministry.
  - a. The candidate should be able to share about their gifts for ministry and envision how these gifts will contribute to their ministry.
6. Share how you understand God's means of grace in the context of our Wesleyan understanding of the sacraments of baptism and communion.
  - a. The candidate should be able to articulate God as the primary actor in both sacraments.
  - b. The candidate should be able to share about the Wesleyan concepts of infant baptism and the open table.
  - c. The candidate recalls Biblical imagery as related to each sacrament.
7. *Ask any follow up questions to the paragraph responses if not addressed in the questions above.*
8. *Thank the candidate for submitting the writing sample. If the candidate is unable to fully answer or adequately answer a question in their paper, ask them to expand upon their answer.*
9. *If they have completed CPE: What did you learn about yourself and about ministry through your CPE experience?*
  - a. The candidate should be able to share about their personal growth and growth in the practice of ministry.
10. *Ask any follow up questions that will help the candidate go beyond the scope of their paper.*
11. Do you have any questions for us?

Action Required: A three-fourths majority vote by the dCOM to recommend is recorded on the Action Report Form:

- Recommended for Provisional Elder according to ¶324.10
- Recommended for Provisional Deacon according to ¶324.10

- Recommended for annual renewal of certified candidacy *[if included as part of the interview]*
- Recommended for annual renewal of license for ministry *[if included as part of the interview]*
- Not recommended for Provisional Membership

***For fall 2024, use the dCOM Associate/Provisional Member Action Report Form via Jotform.***

Contact Rev. Dr. Jason Stanley if you have any questions.

The Feedback Form should be completed and shared with the candidate. The Action Report Form and the Feedback Form will be shared with the Board of Ordained Ministry.

## Reinstatement or Readmission Interview

### References in The 2016 Book of Discipline:

- As an admitted or certified candidate (§314.2)
- As a licensed local pastor (§320.4)
- As a provisional member (§364) or associate member
- After honorable location or administrative location (§365)
- After leaving the ministerial office to full membership as elder or deacon (§366)
- After termination by action of the annual conference (§367)

### Requirements prior to interview:

1. Upon receipt of a request from the candidate, contact the registrar: [JessieColwell@vaumc.org](mailto:JessieColwell@vaumc.org) immediately, with a copy to the bishop's office for supervisory file information.
2. The Director of Clergy Excellence in consultation with the district superintendent and/or dCOM will review the circumstances of the request. The candidate's file contents will be reviewed in relation to the requirements of *The Book of Discipline* and, depending on the circumstances, most of the following will be required to be updated and resubmitted to the dCOM:
  - 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. Biographical Form (GBHEM Form 102)
  - c. Expanded Background Report (national and county criminal search, DMV record search, consumer credit report, and social security trace)
  - d. Medical Report (GBHEM Form 103)
  - e. Candidate's Disclosure Form (GBHEM Form 114, notarized)
  - f. A satisfactory report and recommendation by their charge conference and pastor
  - g. Psychological Assessment (level to be determined by circumstances)
  - h. Work Authorization Form
  - i. Pastor Profile
  - j. Other letters of recommendation, if needed
  - k. Report of career counseling, if applicable
  - l. Additional information or report on requirements set by the Board or annual conference when discontinued or withdrawn.

Notification will be sent to the dCOM chair and/or district superintendent that the file is available.

The dCOM reviews the candidate's documents. An interview and subsequent minutes with an Action Report is required. The recommended time frame is 60 minutes and the questions used should correspond to the reinstatement request.

- For reinstatement as a certified candidate, a majority vote is a recommendation to the Board of Ordained Ministry.
- For reinstatement of local pastor status, or readmission to associate, provisional, or full membership, a majority vote is a recommendation to the Board of Ordained Ministry. This recommendation will require an interview with the Conference Relations Committee and further approval by the BOM and the Cabinet.

## **Section 4 - Withdrawal**

### **Process for Withdrawal for Clergy from the United Methodist Church in the Virginia Conference**

1. Following the procedure as outlined by *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* (§360.1) clergy must submit a written request for withdrawal from membership in The United Methodist Church to the Bishop and copy the Office of the Center for Clergy Excellence, their District Superintendent, and the Office of Pensions and Benefits.
2. Licensed local pastors will have an exit interview with the District Superintendent/District Committee on Ministry. At the time of the interview they will turn in their license. Licensed local pastors may have their license terminated by the District Superintendent/District Committee on Ministry at any time.
3. Provisional members will have an exit interview with the Board of Ordained Ministry's Conference Relations Committee. At the time of the interview they will turn in their license and certificate for provisional membership.
4. Deacons and Elders in full connection are requested to have an exit interview with the Board of Ordained Ministry's Conference Relations Committee. At the time of the interview they will turn in their license and full membership certificate.
5. If any meeting is done virtually, the clergy will be responsible for submitting their license/provisional membership certificate/conference membership certificate to the Center for Clergy Excellence. Deacons and Elders in full connection will be able to keep their ordination certificate.
6. Upon completion of the interview an action report from the Conference Relations Committee/District Superintendent/District Committee on Ministry will be written and sent to the Office of Clergy Excellence to be filed and placed in the clergy's personnel file. This action report will state the clergy's reasons for withdrawing and their plans for the future. Their membership certificate/provisional membership and commissioning certificate/license will be deposited with the conference secretary along with their written request for withdrawal.
7. All files are the property of the Annual Conference; therefore, will not be given to the clergy or transferred to another denomination (§606.9). For the same reason, copies will not be made of the files.
8. The minutes of the Annual Conference Clergy Executive Session will inform the clergy of the Virginia Conference UMC who are withdrawing to unite with another denomination.

***Approved by the Executive Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry 5/18/22***

## **Request for Withdrawal or Involuntary Withdrawal**

At any time an inquiring, admitted, certified candidate or local pastor may request withdrawal from the candidacy process. This request should be received in writing from the candidate and include their reason for withdrawal. This letter of request should then be shared among the chair of the district committee on ordained ministry, the district superintendent, and the Center for Clergy Excellence.

At any time the chair and registrar of the district committee on ordained ministry can deem that an inquiring or admitted candidate has not made satisfactory progress or has not maintained an active relationship with the dCOM and recommend to the dCOM that the candidate be discontinued. There is no annual renewal required for inquiring or admitted candidates as the expectation is for them to move into certified candidate status within 18-months of their initial request to begin the process.

1. The letter of request of withdrawal/discontinuance will be received by the office of Clergy Excellence. The office of Clergy Excellence will respond to the candidate and copy the D.S. and DCOM chair.
2. The letter of request for withdrawal should be added as a file to the candidate's basecamp folder MQ 42 by the dCOM Chair or Registrar.
3. The chair will notify the committee that a request for withdrawal or a recommendation for discontinuation will be on the agenda for the next meeting.
4. The minutes of the meeting will document the reasons for withdrawal or discontinuation and any discussion among the members. This information is crucial should the candidate wish to seek reinstatement at a later time.
5. Any correspondence sent to the candidate by the chair after the committee's decision should also be added as a file to the candidate's Basecamp folder.
6. The dCOM Registrar will complete and submit an Action Report in accordance with the committee's decision.
7. The dCOM Registrar will upload the minutes of the meeting into their basecamp folder.
8. The Center for Clergy Excellence will record the action in the Minute Questions and as appropriate in the Business of the Annual Conference.

Recommended Time Frame: 30 minutes

### Interview Questions for Voluntary Discontinuance/Withdrawal:

1. Share with us what led you to the decision to voluntarily withdraw from the Virginia Conference UMC?
2. Go through the withdrawal process and the process of readmittance to make sure the candidate is fully aware of the requirements and expectations (provide to them the information found on the Reinstatement or Readmission Interview page).

3. Share with us your observations about your ministry in the Virginia Conference and what additional support may have been helpful to you during your ministry and discernment.
4. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?
5. Would you be willing to share your plans for your next chapter?
6. *Thank them for their service!*
7. *Make sure that they turn in their license. Or if they have not brought it with them, there are plans for it to be sent to the District Superintendent.*
8. *Pray.*

### **Individuals Seeking Readmittance After Withdrawal**

Requirements prior to conducting an interview: To begin the process, a written request for readmittance stating reasons and qualifications for readmission as well as the circumstances/reasons relating to withdrawal to be sent to the Center for Clergy Excellence, copied to the Bishop and the District Superintendent of the district served during withdrawal/discontinuance.

A recommendation from the District Superintendent in the conference and the district served during the withdrawal/discontinuance process must be received. There may be additional requirements related to the person's previous conference membership. The individual should be in conversation with the Center for Clergy Excellence.

Recommended Time Frame: 30 - 45 minutes

Interview Questions:

1. Share about your journey from withdrawal to readmittance.
2. Share about how you experienced God during this process.
3. How has the process of withdrawal and readmittance changed your perspective towards The United Methodist Church?
4. Share about your systems of accountability and support.
5. If you are readmitted how will you uphold the doctrines and polity of The United Methodist Church? Please be specific.
6. Tell us about how God is calling you to serve in the Virginia Conference.

Action Required: An Action Report Form should be completed indicating the decision to reinstate.

- Certified Candidates: Requires a majority vote from the dCom

- Licensed Local Pastors, Provisional Members, Honorable and Administrative Location, Associate and Full Members: Requires a majority vote from the dCom, the CRC, and the appointive cabinet.



## Section 5 - Additional Information

### Associate Membership Application Track

#### Eligibility

Requirements prior to conducting an Associate Member interview from *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* (2016) Paragraph 322:

1. Reached the age of 40
2. Annual renewal of license for pastoral ministry with service as a full-time local pastor for 4 years (or granted equivalency)
3. Completed the 5-year Course of Study, M. Div. or Advanced course of study
4. Completed, or will complete by June 1 of the coming year, a minimum of 60 semester hours toward the Bachelor of Arts or equivalent degree in a college or university approved by the University Senate.
5. Declared their willingness to accept continuing full-time appointment.

#### Application Process

##### Phase One

1) Submit the online application to apply for phase one of Associate Membership (applications open June) at <https://vaumc.org/bomapplications/>.

- Upon submitting the application to Clergy Excellence via jotform, the applicant will receive a next steps document with information about submitting materials for their dCom recommendation interview. As outlined in the next steps document, applicants will submit a 12-15-page paper answering the questions from the BOD for the dCom recommendation interview. If applicable, an action plan will be submitted. The dCom chairs will receive these documents directly through Jotform. Clergy Excellence will also place them in the Basecamp folder in each district.

2) Receive a recommendation from the dCOM by September 1.

(If a recommendation is not received, their license must be renewed, and they can reapply the following year).

- Action required by the dCom after an interview

- a. 3/4s majority vote by the dCOM for a recommendation for associate membership.
- b. dCOM chair completes the narrative recommendation and submits report to Center for Clergy Excellence.

Upon recommendation:

- The applicant will spend one year in the residency process (two residency events).
- Attend September Residency Event, Mentor Covenant Group Retreat, and May Residency Event.
- Complete the EQi Assessment and receive three coaching sessions in 1 year of residency.
- Will be placed with a mentor and in a mentor covenant group which will focus on:
  1. Practical Theology
  2. Written Communication

3. Practice of Ministry
4. Emotional Intelligence

- Will have class check in time during residency events.

\*If the dCOM feels that the applicant may be ready to reapply within the year, they can have her/him back to interview after January 1. For this interview, the applicant would need to show how he/she incorporated the feedback of the dCom. If the dCom recommends them, they will attend the May residency event and fulfill the additional requirements above.

### **Phase Two**

3) Once 1 year of residency is complete, they will begin phase 2 of the application process.

- Applicants will apply for phase two (Applicants open July 1-July 31).
- Applicants are placed on the Unity Track for the Associate Applicants Process.
- Additional materials will be submitted as outlined in the extended application packet through the Unity track.
- Applicants will interview at the same time as provisional members (late February).

Criteria:

- Areas of competencies
- Academic Background
- Consider past and current practice of ministry
- BOM will evaluate fruitfulness in ministry in 4 areas: Theology, PG&D, Call, and Practice of Ministry

# Provisional/Associate Member Application Phase 1

**dCOMs Please note:** *The following materials include the content for the Provisional/Associate Membership Packet in Phase I. This material is provided as a resource for dCOMs so they can see the requirements for the applicant.*

\*\*\*\*

Thank you for submitting phase 1 of your application to apply for provisional or associate membership. To move forward in this process, complete the steps below:

\_\_\_\_\_ Contact the chair of your District Committee on Ordained Ministry to schedule an interview with your dCom to be completed by **October 1, 2024** to receive a recommendation for provisional or associate membership. You can find their contact information here:

District	Chair	Email
Coastal Virginia	Clark Cundiff	clarkcundiff@vaumc.org
Living Waters	Jacob Sahms	jacobsahms@vaumc.org
Mission Rivers	Beth Glass	bethglass@vaumc.org
Mountain View	Jennifer Coffey	jennifercoffey@vaumc.org
Northern Virginia	Matt Benton	mattbenton@vaumc.org
Shenandoah River	Daniel Wray	danielwray@vaumc.org
Three Notch'd	Sarah Sealand	sarahsealand@vaumc.org
Valley Ridge	Jonathan Greer	jonathangreer@vaumc.org

\_\_\_\_\_ After you have secured an interview date, submit the following information to the dCom. You must submit your materials at least one week in advance of your interview date so the committee has adequate time to review your materials.

## **Applying for the First Time**

\_\_\_\_\_ If you are applying for the first time or you have not been previously recommended by the dCom write a 12-15-page paper answering the questions below from *The Book of Discipline* (2016) paragraph 324.9 (pp. 247-248) numbers 1-8 in this document. Submit these materials through the jotform for your district (see at end of document).

## **Applying after Being Continued**

\_\_\_\_\_ If you have been continued by the Board of Ordained Ministry submit your detailed action report for the committee(s) in which you were continued, answer one question below from the committee in which you were continued, and follow the instructions below for those who have been continued (\*). Submit these materials through the jotform for your district (see at end of document). Also review the "How to Write an Action Plan" document.

### **Writing Guidelines**

1. Use inclusive language for God throughout your paper.
2. Thoroughly answer each question. Do not write more in one area and less in another.
3. Have a title page (not counted in your page count) with the following information  
“Provisional Membership 2025 or Associate Membership 2025” and your name.
4. All papers must be typed using the following attributes:
  - Font: Times New Roman, 12-point
  - Page margins: 1” on all four sides
  - Line Spacing: Double (with the exception of the “stated question” as noted below or long block quotes which should be single spaced)
  - State and number each question, as it is written, prior to answering the question.
  - *Only the question is to be single spaced.*
  - Page numbers are required, beginning with *Page 1* on the first page after the title page
  - Your name on each page, in either the header or footer area.
  - Please use endnotes in your paper, **NOT** footnotes at the bottom of the page or within the paper, to cite sources used. This includes all Scripture references. Endnotes should come *before* your bibliography.
5. A bibliography is required for your paper and should include all printed materials, web pages, audio-visual materials, seminary lecture notes, the Bible, *Book of Discipline*, all other United Methodist resources, etc. The bibliography does not count toward the required number of pages for the paper.
6. Citation Style: Use Chicago style format throughout your papers and your bibliographies. You can find an example of endnotes and bibliography here:  
[https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html).

### **dCom Criteria**

The dCom is looking for your ability to communicate your understanding of Wesleyan theology and practice of ministry. The committee is looking for a sense of the direction you will be taking to answer each question.

### **Questions to Answer for the dCom Recommendation Interview**

#### **Theology (BOD ¶324.9 a & d)**

1. Describe your personal experience of God and the understanding of God you derive from biblical, theological, and historical sources.
2. How do you interpret the statement Jesus Christ is Lord?

#### **Practice of Ministry (BOD ¶324.9 b & c)**

3. What is your understanding of evil as it exists in the world?
4. What is your understanding of humanity, and the human need for divine grace?

For those continued:

\*Sermon, if you were continued in the sermon portion, turn in the manuscript of a sermon you have preached from April 1, 2024 – October 1, 2024.

\*Teaching Plan, if you were continued in the teaching plan, answer 324.9g: How do you intend to affirm, teach, and apply Part II of the Discipline (Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task) in your work in the ministry to which you have been called?

**Personal Growth and Development (BOD ¶324.9 n & o)**

5. Describe your understanding of an inclusive church and ministry.

6. You have agreed as a candidate for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness of the gospel, and in consideration of their influence of ministers, to make a complete dedication of yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life, and to this end agree to exercise responsible self- control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, social responsibility and faithful sexual intimacy expressed through fidelity, monogamy, commitment, mutual affection and respect, careful and honest communication, mutual consent, and growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God (updated language from the vote at the 2020 postponed General Conference). What is your understanding of this agreement?

Call (BOD ¶324.9 k, l)

7. a. For provisional member applicants: Explain your understanding of the distinctive vocations of the Order of Elders and the Order of Deacons. How do you perceive yourself, your gifts, your motives, your role, and your commitments as a provisional deacon or provisional elder in The United Methodist Church?

b. For associate member applicants: Explain your understanding of associate membership. How do you perceive yourself, your gifts, your motives, your role, and your commitments as an associate member in The United Methodist Church?

8. a. For provisional member applicants: Describe your understanding of *diakonia*, the servant ministry of the church, and the servant ministry of the provisional member.

b. For associate member applicants: Describe your understanding of *diakonia*, the servant ministry of the church, and the servant ministry of the associate member.

\_\_\_\_\_ Submit your paper and action plan (if applicable) to your dCom through the link provided.

**Additional Steps After the Interview with the dCom:**

\_\_\_\_\_ If you are recommended by the dCom email Rev. Jessie Colwell at [JessieColwell@vaumc.org](mailto:JessieColwell@vaumc.org) to let her know that you have been recommended.

\_\_\_\_\_ If you are not recommended by the dCom email Rev. Jessie Colwell at [JessieColwell@vaumc.org](mailto:JessieColwell@vaumc.org) and work on the feedback given to you and reapply next year.

\_\_\_\_\_ Upon sending your recommendation email to Jessie Colwell you will be put on the track for provisional or associate membership through Unity, receive the extended application packet, and can begin working on the requirements for provisional or associate membership.

## Virginia Conference, The United Methodist Church

### Educational Requirements for Provisional Membership

One course in each area listed below must be included in graduate theological education in preparation for provisional membership in the VAUMC, and the Basic Graduate Theological Studies, noted with an asterisk \*, must equal at least 27 semester credits total. 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.

- \*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.
- A course in preaching is required by the Virginia Conference. This is required for both provisional deacon and provisional elder candidates (effective 2020).

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/or 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.

**Full on-line MDiv now accepted:** On Jan. 26, 2023, the University Senate met virtually for its first bi-annual meeting of 2023. During the meeting, the Senate voted to approve a policy change that allows United Methodist students the opportunity to engage in a fully online Master of Divinity degree program. This policy change is effective immediately for all 13 United Methodist seminaries as well as Asbury Theological Seminary

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, Rev. Jessie Colwell at [JessieColwell@vaumc.org](mailto:JessieColwell@vaumc.org).

Update from General Conference 2024: Paragraph 324.4 was updated and will go into effect January 1, 2025. It will now read: *Candidates for deacon or elder shall have completed the basic graduate theological studies in the Christian faith. These courses shall each be three (3) semester hours, or the equivalent and may be included within or in addition to a seminary degree. These basic graduate theological studies shall include courses in Old Testament; New Testament; theology; church history; mission of the church in the world; evangelism; worship/liturgy; and United Methodist doctrine, polity,* Virginia Conference, DCOM Handbook -Revised August 2024

*and history. The combined credit hours for the United Methodist studies shall be a minimum 6 semester hours, or the equivalent. Basic graduate theological studies shall not be taken pass/fail.*



# Ministers of Other Christian Denominations or Fellowships

## **Seeking Appointments in the Virginia Conference (§346.2)**

1. All requests are referred to the Board of Ordained Ministry through the Center for Clergy Excellence.
2. The Director of the Center for Clergy Excellence, works with a District Superintendent (DS) to determine whether to initiate the process for requesting an appointment as a “Minister of another Denomination” (MOD) or a “Minister of another Fellowship” (OF).
3. If recommended by the District Superintendent to proceed in the process, the personnel file for the MOD or OF is completed as required in §346.2, working through the Center for Clergy Excellence.
4. The MOD/OF is interviewed by the District Committee on Ministry (dCOM) on which the DS serves to determine if the MOD/OF has a foundational understanding of UMC theology, polity, and history found in the dCOM Handbook. If the dCOM does not believe the MOD/OF has a foundational understanding of UMC theology, polity, and history, the dCOM can assign a mentor, require courses, or recommend books to read until the MOD/OF is recommended by the DCOM to serve a UM local church.
5. Upon written recommendation by the DS and the dCOM, the Center for Clergy Excellence will schedule a meeting with the Transfer Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry.
6. Upon written recommendation by the Transfer Committee, the Board of Ordained Ministry presents its recommendations for MODs and OFs (required in §346.2) to the Cabinet during the appointment process.
7. Two years under appointment as a “Minister of another Denomination” or “Minister of Other Fellowship” is required prior to a transfer to the Virginia Conference.
8. As appropriate, the Bishop of the Virginia Conference consults with other bishops or judicatory leaders.

## **Seeking Transfer to the Virginia Conference (§347.3)**

1. The MOD/OF who has served two years under appointment in the Virginia Conference writes a letter to the Bishop of the Virginia Conference and the bishop or judicatory leader where her/his membership is held with a copy to his/her District Superintendent and the Center for Clergy Excellence requesting transfer.
2. The District Superintendent of the local church submits a narrative evaluation and recommendation to include an assessment of ministry performance, leadership skills, a Wesleyan understanding of Theology and Polity, and effectiveness in ministry, to the Board of Ordained Ministry.
3. The personnel file is updated through the Center for Clergy Excellence.
4. The MOD/OF is interviewed by the Transfer Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry. The Board presents its recommendation to the Bishop.
5. The Bishop determines if the transfer will be made.

## **Interview Questions for Those Seeking Transfer as Minister of Another Denomination/Other Fellowship**

### **Requirements prior to conducting an interview:**

To begin the process the applicant must fill out the transfer application available:  
<https://form.jotform.com/222225436278052>

Required materials submitted through the transfer application include:

- State and Expanded Background Checks
- Narrative Recommendation from District Superintendent
- ESCI-U Assessment
- Denomination Intent to Transfer
- A copy of the applicants' ordination credentials
- Statement of desire to serve in the VAUMC
- Questions to answer for the committee

### **Action Required After an Interview**


- Transfer Candidate: Requires a majority vote from the dCom and an action report sent to Clergy Excellence: <https://form.jotform.com/222374821343048>

### **Suggested Questions**

1. Share about your call to ministry.
2. Tell us why you feel called to serve in the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church and your gifts for ministry.
3. Share how you have been connected to a United Methodist Church in the past (if applicable).
4. What is your understanding of the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion? How does your understanding compare with the United Methodist teaching about the Sacraments?
5. The United Methodist Church holds that Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason are sources and norms for belief and practice, but the Bible is primary among them. What is your understanding of this theological position of the Church? How do you view the authority of the Bible?
6. United Methodist ministers are expected to dedicate themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life, and to that end agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and the knowledge and love of God. What does making this commitment mean to you?
7. How do you understand the following evangelical doctrines: (a) repentance, (b) justification, (c) regeneration, and (d) sanctification?

## Section 6 - Forms


All dCOM forms will be available either as a fillable PDF that can be uploaded into Unity or a web-based form on Unity. Members of dCOM will be able to see the various candidates and local pastors' tracks. Samples from Unity can be found below. The Feedback Form template (see page 52) will be available in dCOM Basecamp folders and online.

 Unity Web Hello dCOM Board Rep [Change your password](#) [Log off](#)

### dCOM Vote

John Doe  
Certified Candidate

*Vote requires a three-fourths majority via written ballot.*

Vote Date  

Total In Attendance

Attendance List

Yes Votes

No Votes

Abstentions

Recommendation

© 2024 - Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church. Icons by [Icons8](#)

Virginia Conference  
dCOM Feedback Form  
{INSERT DISTRICT NAME}

Name of Candidate:

Interview Team:

Interviewing for:

**Feedback on written materials**

Identified areas of improvement in the written materials:

Identified areas of strength in the written materials:

**Feedback on the oral interview**

Identified areas of strength in the oral interview:

Identified areas of improvement in the oral interview:

**Additional feedback to the candidate**

**Recommendations for growth**

*Signature, Interview Team Leader*

*Date*

## Section 7 - Checklists

1



### Path to Become A CERTIFIED CANDIDATE

- A professing member of a UMC or baptized member of campus ministry for 1 year.
- Graduation from an accredited high school or certificate of equivalency.
- Read and review *The Christian as Minister* or *Blessed Wrestling* with local pastor or campus minister.
- Pastor submits report to certify meeting with candidate.
- Write a call statement.
- Complete Biographical form 102.
- Write to DS and dCOM chair, requesting an interview to be admitted as a candidate.
- Meet with dCOM to be admitted as a candidate. If admitted, continue checklist.
- Register with General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.
- dCOM assigns a Candidacy Mentor. Meet at least 3 times using *Answering the Call*.
- Candidate is invited to Unity. (Checklist tracked in Unity).
- Prepare written responses to questions in paragraph 310.1d. Share with S/PPRC.
- Meet with S/PPRC Committee of local church (or equivalent) for recommendation.
- Charge Conference approval. Complete Declaration of Candidacy form 104.
- Prepare written responses to questions in paragraph 310.2a.

#### Questions? Contact the Center for Clergy Excellence

Jessie Colwell, Director of Clergy Excellence, [jessiecolwell@vaumc.org](mailto:jessiecolwell@vaumc.org)

Jason Stanley, Director of Call & Candidacy, [jasonstanley@vaumc.org](mailto:jasonstanley@vaumc.org)

Lyn Harding, Program Admin Coordinator, [lynharding@vaumc.org](mailto:lynharding@vaumc.org)



updated 8/1/2024



# Path to Become A CERTIFIED CANDIDATE

- Complete Candidate's Disclosure form 114, notarized.
- Expanded Background Check.
- Complete Medical Report form.
- Complete Psychological Assessment.
- Submit top 5 Gallup StrengthFinders.
- Attend Candidacy Summit.
- Candidacy Mentor Report.
- Schedule dCOM meeting.
- Interview with dCOM.
- If certified, continue meeting with Candidacy Mentor.
- Discern next step - licensed local pastor or provisional member?
- Review checklist for becoming a licensed local pastor or provisional member.
- 
- 
- 

**Questions? Contact the Center for Clergy Excellence**  
 Jessie Colwell, Director of Clergy Excellence, [jessicolwell@vaumc.org](mailto:jessicolwell@vaumc.org)  
 Jason Stanley, Director of Call & Candidacy, [jasonstanley@vaumc.org](mailto:jasonstanley@vaumc.org)  
 Lyn Harding, Program Admin Coordinator, [lynharding@vaumc.org](mailto:lynharding@vaumc.org)



*updated 8/1/2024*



# Become a Licensed Local Pastor

- 
- Be a certified candidate.

---

  - Continue meeting with Candidacy Mentor.

---

  - Prepare sermon manuscript & preaching video.

---

  - Record sermon.

---

  - Prepare written sermon description.

---

  - Prepare written responses.

---

  - Schedule dCOM meeting.

---

  - Meet with dCOM prior to April 15.

---

  - If recommended, prepare to attend Licensing School.

---

  - Attend Licensing School.

---

## **Section 8 - LLP Renewal Tracks**

Licensed Local Pastors will be able to submit their written responses for the Standard Renewal based on years of service in Unity. Below are the four renewal tracks. There are four questions for each renewal track: leadership, theology, practice of ministry, and call. This will allow the dCOM to access the LLP in these four areas each year.

### **LLP Year 1 Renewal Track**

#### **S/PPRC Evaluation**

Upload the S/PPRC evaluation.

#### **Written Responses**

Provide written responses to the questions below. Responses should be 2-3 paragraphs.

1. Describe how your church is structured for mission and ministry.
2. How do you apply United Methodist theology in your teaching?
3. In what ways have your spiritual disciplines affected your practice of leadership in ministry?
4. Describe how your call to ministry has evolved this year.

#### **Schedule a meeting with dCOM**

Contact your dCOM chair notifying them that all requirements have been submitted and request an interview.

### **LLP Year 2 Renewal Track**

#### **S/PPRC Evaluation**

Upload the S/PPRC evaluation.

#### **Written Responses**

Provide written responses to the questions below. Responses should be 2-3 paragraphs.

1. Describe leadership qualities which you demonstrate in your ministry and the strengths and weaknesses of those qualities.
2. Describe ways your congregation lives out the theology of grace.
3. How has your preaching improved since you were licensed?
4. Describe how your call has evolved this year.

#### **Schedule a meeting with dCOM**

Contact your dCOM chair notifying them that all requirements have been submitted and request an interview.



## **LLP Year 3 Renewal Track**

### **S/PPRC Evaluation**

Upload the S/PPRC evaluation.

### **Written Responses**

Provide written responses to the questions below. Responses should be 2-3 paragraphs.

1. In what ways has your theology of grace shaped your understanding of the Sacraments?
2. Describe ways you equip your congregation to offer pastoral or congregational care?
3. Describe your process for developing the order of worship and how it impacts your sermon preparation.
4. Describe how your call has evolved this year.

### **Schedule a meeting with dCOM**

Contact your dCOM chair notifying them that all requirements have been submitted and request an interview.

## **LLP Year 4+ Renewal Track**

### **S/PPRC Evaluation**

Upload the S/PPRC evaluation.

### **Written Responses**

Provide written responses to the questions below. Responses should be 2-3 paragraphs.

1. How are you making disciples of Jesus Christ?
2. Describe one way you train and empower your laity to make disciples of Jesus Christ.
3. Describe the progress you have made in Course of Study and how this education has impacted your practice of ministry.
4. Describe how your call has evolved this year.

### **Schedule a meeting with dCOM**

Contact your dCOM chair notifying them that all requirements have been submitted and request an interview.

