



Certification

in Specialized Ministries in The United Methodist Church

Ministry with the Poor



Educational Requirements

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

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

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

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

Three of the five courses may be taken online.

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

Core Competencies for certification in Ministry with the Poor

1. An understanding of the Bible as the church's book of faith and life and the Bible's teachings on ministry with the poor.
2. Ability to lead and administer a program that seeks to bridge the differences between middle and low income people with creative positive connections.
3. An understanding of asset-based ministry, methods to develop partnerships, and principles of social entrepreneurship.
4. Skills in relationship building and forming communities.
5. Understanding of United Methodist traditions and a Wesleyan understanding of the importance of ministry with the poor.



Required Courses for Ministry with the Poor:

1. **ENGAGING THE BIBLE IN CONGREGATION AND COMMUNITY:** An exploration of the nature of the Bible and its role in congregations and communities. Particular themes will be explored in their various biblical contexts and in relation to the contemporary world. Particular attention will be given to approaches to engaging the Bible as the church's book of faith and life.
2. **THEOLOGY AND PRACTICES OF MINISTRY:** An overview of theological issues, basic theological concepts and practical theology methods. The course explores ways of engaging theology, context, and various practices of ministry by drawing upon the discipline of practical theology.
3. **BEING WITH THE POOR:** This class provides students opportunities to enhance their affinity for ministering to the poor. As they study the difference between middle- and low-income persons, students will be encouraged to develop approaches that bridge those differences and create positive connections.
4. **CONGREGATIONS AND COMMUNITIES AS PARTNERS IN MINISTRY WITH THE POOR:** While examining best practices used by congregations and community groups that have successfully launched and grown ministries with the poor, students will learn to identify community-based assets, develop partnerships, and implement principles of social entrepreneurship.

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

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

Should I seek Professional or Paraprofessional Certification?

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

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



General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

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

615-340-7375

E-mail: certification@gbhem.org

Web site: www.gbhem.org/certification