



Steps into Certification

in Specialized Ministries in The United Methodist Church Standards and Requirements • Professional, Undergraduate, and Paraprofessional

CERTIFICATION OF QUALIFIED PEOPLE IN specialized ministries in The United Methodist Church demonstrates a level of competency and standards set by the denomination. These standards include faith formation, academic training and experience, membership in The United Methodist Church, and continuing study in the area of specialization.

The church's need for individuals who can serve to the best of their ability makes certification by The United Methodist Church increasingly important.

Three Tracks for Certification in The United Methodist Church

- Professional
- Undergraduate
- Paraprofessional

Each track is available in ten areas of specialized ministry: camp/retreat ministry, children's ministry, Christian education, collegiate ministry, evangelism, ministry with people with disabilities, ministry with the poor, music ministry, older adult ministry, spiritual formation, urban ministry, and youth ministry.

Professional Certification _____ ■■■

Professional certification is the United Methodist Church's recognition that an individual has been called, made a commitment to serve and has fulfilled the required standards for academic training, experience, and continuing study to serve with excellence in an area of specialized ministry.

Professional certification provides biblical and theological training, knowledge of The United Methodist Church structure and resources, skill development, support, and accountability.

Professional certification is available to lay persons, ordained deacons and elders, diaconal ministers, and local pastors who have an undergraduate degree and take certification courses at graduate level credit and meet GBHEM's education requirements.

Enrollment _____ ■■■

To enroll for the Professional Certification in Specialized Ministries in The United Methodist Church:

1. Download enrollment form from www.gbhem.org/certification and complete.
2. Send copies to annual conference BOM and Certification Office of DOM at GBHEM.
3. Annual Conference & GBHEM will approve for certification funds.
4. Register for classes at seminary.
5. Complete scholarship application form on www.gbhem.org/certification and submit to seminary financial office.



Certification Requirements

1. Recognized Christian character, personal competence, integrity, and commitment to the church's total ministry and mission.
2. Ability to relate to people, to work with volunteers and staff and to function with emotional maturity and sound judgment.
3. Demonstrated leadership, ability to integrate theory and practice, an understanding of, and commitment to the church's ministry.
4. A member of The United Methodist Church for at least one (1) year before enrolling in the certification process. Courtesy certification may be granted to Pan-Methodist members at the approval of GBHEM.
5. Knowledge of The United Methodist Church's structure, polity, resources, program, and mission.
6. Psychological assessment and background check is required prior to certification.
7. Two years of supervised experience in the specialized area of ministry is required at the time of certification. Supervised experience must be approved by the annual conference BOM and shall be defined as a contractual agreement with supervision, accountability, evaluation, and continuing education.
8. Educational Requirements:
 - A graduate degree (a master's degree, doctor of ministry, doctorate in theological studies, master of divinity, master of theological studies). The degree must include a concentration in the area of specialization and a course in United Methodist studies (a minimum of 15 semester hours or equivalent quarter hours). The degree must also be from a University Senate-approved seminary or a graduate degree from a United Methodist-related college or university where the DOM has approved the graduate program for certification.

OR

 - **A Bachelor's Degree and Graduate Courses** – a bachelor's degree plus five (5) graduate certification courses in the area of specialization including United Methodist studies courses must be taken at a UM Senate approved seminary or from a UM-related college or university where DOM has approved the graduate degree for the fulfillment of the requirements for certification.

9. There should be an expressed commitment to continuing education that includes a planned program to enrich both personal and professional growth. Such a program shall include:
 - 1) reading; 2) study – individual and group learning events; 3) participation in professional, community, denominational, and ecumenical groups; 4) renewal of spiritual life; and 5) evaluation by the immediate supervisor.
10. Be a member of a group or association related to the area of specialization.

Application Process for Professional Certification

When all the course work is completed, send Form 323790, *Application for Professional Certification* to your annual conference BOM. Send a copy of the application with a copy of your transcripts to the Certification Office, Division of Ordained Ministry, GBHEM, PO Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007.

Upon receipt of your application,

1. The Certification Office of GBHEM will:
 - Verify that the educational requirements have been met
 - Examine transcripts
 - Verify employment experience and church membership.
2. Your annual conference BOM will:
 - Contact the three references given in the application, asking for their evaluation on the form HE4012 prepared by GBHEM
 - Administer a psychological assessment and background check
 - Schedule an interview
 - Verify your local church membership, abilities, skills experience, and leadership position in chosen field
 - Make a recommendation to the annual conference BOM concerning certification.
3. If the application is approved by the annual conference BOM, a certificate will be sent by GBHEM to the annual conference BOM for presentation during the next annual conference session.

The annual conference BOM will keep a record of all certified persons, their areas of certification, and publish names annually in the conference journal. When certified people transfer from one annual conference to another, his/her records are forwarded to the new annual conference BOM.

Biennial Review and Renewal

The continuing validity of certification is dependent upon a biennial review and renewal by the certified person. Form *HE4004 Biennial Review and Renewal for Professional/Paraprofessional Certification* prepared by GBHEM and is available from the annual conference BOM or at www.gbhem.org/certification.

1. Form HE4004, must be completed every other year (even years) regardless of the year of entrance and sent to the annual conference BOM.
2. The annual conference BOM will make renewal status recommendations to the annual conference and inform GBHEM
3. Evaluation of certified people should be completed by their supervisor.
4. Renewal of certification is permissible for certified persons currently not serving in a United Methodist setting, or unemployed, but who wish to keep their certification valid.



To maintain certification, the person is expected to actively participate in his/her area of ministry.

5. Certification is valid for as long as the individual wishes, provided all requirements are fulfilled and the biennial review is updated.
6. The annual conference BOM may withhold certification renewal for a valid cause, subject to the right of the individual to appeal to the annual conference.
7. Certified people may give up their status upon written notification to the annual conference BOM. If through oversight or neglect, the conference fails to act in the matter of biennial renewal of certification, the status of the person should not be jeopardized, and the conference should act quickly to correct the deficiency.
8. If certification is allowed to lapse by failure of the certified person, the person must then meet the current standards in force to be recertified.

Conference Transfer

When a certified person moves to another annual conference, the certified records are transferred to the new annual conference.

The transferring person shall write to the new conference BOM requesting a transfer of his/her certification status from the former conference and shall send a copy of the request to the former conference.

The new conference BOM shall review the request and upon approval, ask the former conference to transfer the file.

Undergraduate Certification

Undergraduate certification is available by taking an undergraduate degree at one of the United Methodist-related colleges with programs that have been approved by GBHEM. After completing two years' employment in the area of specialized ministry, and with at least two years' membership in The United Methodist Church, application should be made to GBHEM on *Form 323790, Application for Professional Certification* that can be downloaded from www.gbhem.org/certification. A copy should be sent to the certification registrar of the applicant's annual conference BOM. In both instances, copies of transcripts should be sent with the application.

To request additional information on United Methodist-related colleges with approved undergraduate programs, go to the GBHEM Web site at www.gbhem.org/certification.

The process for application for certification and renewal are the same as the professional certification.

Paraprofessional Certification

Paraprofessional certification is available to persons who may not have an undergraduate degree and are working in areas of specialized ministry. Paraprofessional certification courses do not carry academic credit.

This certification is designed for those seeking training in a specialized ministry as a worker or volunteer. Those seeking paraprofessional certification should complete a program approved by GBHEM.

These programs are available through some jurisdictions, annual conferences, colleges, and seminaries. See www.gbhem.org/certification for approved programs.

Enrollment

Enrollment for the Paraprofessional Certification Studies in Ministry (para4065), found on the Web site www.gbhem.org/certification must be completed and sent to the student's annual conference BOM and the Division of Ordained Ministry at GBHEM. The annual conference may want to meet with the student before they begin their studies. The student must:

- Complete enrollment form
- Send to annual conference BOM and GBHEM
- Register for paraprofessional certification program.

Certification Requirements

1. Recognized Christian character, personal competence, integrity, and commitment to the church's total ministry and mission.
2. Ability to relate to people, to work with volunteers and staff, to function in the role with emotional maturity and sound judgment.
3. Demonstrated leadership, ability to integrate theory and practice, an understanding of and commitment to the church's ministry.
4. A member of The United Methodist Church for at least one (1) year before enrolling in the certification process. Courtesy certification may be granted to Pan Methodist members at the approval of GBHEM.
5. Knowledge of The United Methodist Church's structure, polity, resources, program, and mission.
6. Psychological assessment and background check is recommended prior to paraprofessional certification.
7. Two years of supervised experience in the specialized area of ministry is required at the time of paraprofessional certification. Supervised experience must be approved by the annual conference BOM and shall be defined as a contractual agreement with supervision, accountability, evaluation, continuing education.
8. Applicants must have completed a course of work approved by GBHEM. (Information on approved programs can be obtained from the conference offices or on www.gbhem.org/certification).
9. An expressed commitment to continuing education that includes a planned program to enrich both personal growth and growth in the area of specialized ministry.
10. Be a member of a group or association related to the area of specialization, if possible.



Application Process for Paraprofessional Certification

When the approved program is completed, send form para4066, Application for Paraprofessional Certification, with a copy of certificate of completion of approved program to your annual conference BOM and a copy of the application and certificate of completion of approved program to Certification Office, Division of Ordained Ministry, P.O. Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007.

Upon receipt of your application

1. The Certification Office of GBHEM will
 - verify the completion of approved program
 - verify ministry experience
 - church membership.
2. Your annual conference BOM will:
 - contact the three references given in the application, asking for their evaluation on the forms prepared by GBHEM
 - may schedule a psychological assessment and background check
 - Schedule an interview
 - Verify your local church membership, abilities, skills, experience, and leadership position in your chosen field
 - Make a recommendation to the annual conference BOM concerning your certification.
3. If the application is approved by the annual conference BOM a paraprofessional certificate will be sent by GBHEM to the annual conference BOM for presentation during the annual conference session

The annual conference BOM will keep a record of all paraprofessional certified persons and the areas of their specialized ministry and publish their names annually in the conference journal.

The continuing validity of paraprofessional certification is dependent upon a biennial review and renewal by the certified person. The forms for this purpose are prepared by GBHEM and are available from the annual conference BOM or on www.gbhem.org/certification.

Biennial Review and Renewal

1. Form HE4004, *Request for Review and Renewal of Professional/Paraprofessional Certification* must be completed every other year (even years) regardless of the year of entrance and sent to the annual conference BOM.
2. The annual conference BOM will make renewal status recommendations to the annual conference and inform GBHEM.
3. Evaluation of paraprofessional certified people should be completed by their supervisor.
4. Renewal of paraprofessional certification is permissible for certified people currently not serving in a United Methodist setting, but who wish to keep their paraprofessional certification valid. To maintain paraprofessional certification, the person is expected to actively participate in his/her area of ministry.

5. Paraprofessional certification is valid for as long as the individual wishes, provided all requirements are fulfilled and the biennial review is updated.
6. The annual conference BOM may withhold paraprofessional certification renewal for a valid cause, subject to the right of the individual to appeal to the annual conference.
7. Paraprofessional certified people may give up their status upon written notification to the annual conference BOM. If through oversight or neglect, the conference fails to act in the matter of biennial renewal of paraprofessional certification, the status of the person should not be jeopardized, and the conference should act quickly to correct the deficiency.
8. If paraprofessional certification is allowed to lapse by failure of the certified person, the person must then meet the current standards in force to be recertified.

Conference Transfer

When a certified person moves to another annual conference, the paraprofessional certified records are transferred to the new annual conference.

The transferring person shall write to the new conference BOM requesting a transfer of his/her paraprofessional certification status from the former conference and shall send a copy of the request to the former conference.

The new conference BOM shall review the request and upon approval, shall notify the former conference board that will send the paraprofessional certified person's accumulated file to the new conference.

For a list of approved paraprofessional programs, send an e-mail to certification@gbhem.org or visit our Web site at www.gbhem.org/certification.



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