

Candidacy Handbook

For those seeking Certified Candidacy in the United Methodist Church

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**The Oklahoma Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church
Board of Ordained Ministry**

Preface

It is hoped that this handbook will be helpful to the ministry of those who give their time and effort to the work of District Committees on Ministry. Your work is appreciated.

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Opening

Thomas Jefferson once was asked about a rule that seemed irrational to the person asking Jefferson about it. Jefferson replied that whether a rule was irrational or not did not matter. What mattered was that there was a rule. Jefferson went on to explain that without a rule to follow two things happened. First, no one knew where he or she stood and how to proceed. Second, the absence of a rule left the whole process to the whims of the leader. In this dCOM Handbook is an attempt to clarify the rules by which the dCOM and those who come before the dCOM are to proceed. Without such clarity, no one really knows where he/she stands. The person's condition is left to the whims of others. This is not an acceptable situation.

There are several other reasons why this handbook is needed. For instance, we may think that the *Discipline* of the United Methodist Church is all we need. But, the *Discipline* is at times seemingly contradictory. The *Discipline* is also intentionally written to allow the individual Annual Conferences room to develop their own unique ways of doing things. Accordingly, we are forced by necessity to develop a set of guidelines and rules for how the Oklahoma Conference BOM and dCOM will function.

Finally, one critical thing needs to be kept in mind in the midst of these necessary guidelines and rules. Everyone who comes before the BOM or the dCOM should be treated with respect and grace and valued as a brother or sister in Christ. Even "no" can be said to someone in a spirit of encouragement and love.

THE EXPECTATIONS OF SPIRITUAL LEADERS IN THE OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE

God's call to ministry is inherent in each person's baptism. All baptized believers have spiritual gifts to be used for the work of the body and for the glory of God. Some are called to be spiritual leaders in the faith community. Spiritual leaders invite and equip others to become disciples of Christ Jesus and to live out that discipleship in tangible ways. The call for leaders is always a call to service, never to status or position or for personal validation. In our denomination, this call to service may be expressed through certified, licensed, or ordained ministry. Each ministry is vital to the life and health of the Church.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Ordained Ministry to assist persons in the discernment of their call to spiritual leadership, to guide persons in responding to their call, and to evaluate these persons in regard to their readiness for spiritual leadership. Throughout a discernment and training

process, the Board of Ordained Ministry seeks to evaluate and encourage ministerial candidates in the areas of fitness, readiness, and effectiveness.

FITNESS

Spiritual leaders believe in the Triune God as revealed in scripture and can speak authentically to the personal and corporate meaning of the basic Christian confession that Jesus is Lord. United Methodist leaders in the Oklahoma Conference are in harmony with the teachings of the church in the Wesleyan tradition, such as the Wesleyan perspective on grace, the significance of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and the experience and hope of the Reign of God. In addition, an evaluation of fitness for ministry must include a discussion of the candidate's knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics. Fitness for ministry includes:

- An awareness of the work of the Holy Spirit within one's personal life
- An ability to communicate clearly
- A sound moral character
- Psychological and emotional wellness
- Personal characteristics such as adaptability, creativity, intelligence, trust in God, authenticity, willingness to cooperate with others, dependability, integrity, leadership, and self-control.

READINESS

Spiritual leaders have a passion for ministry and the discipline to work hard and complete necessary tasks. Spiritual leaders:

- Are able to articulate their call from God to service.
- Practice effective stewardship of life. They practice self-care as well as care for others. They give attention to sound financial stewardship. They seek to maintain physical fitness and good health practices. They practice spiritual disciplines and continue to mature in their faith and commitment to Christ.
- Uphold the connectional polity of the church, recognizing and supporting the corporate mission of the larger body.
- Are committed to a vision of God's reign.
- Are growing in their understanding and practice of theology and scripture, United Methodist doctrine, oral communication, written communication, conflict management, time management, administrative skills, and ability to multi-task.

EFFECTIVENESS

Spiritual leaders make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Effective spiritual leaders:

- Have an ability to communicate the faith theologically, ethically, and biblically within the Wesleyan tradition as demonstrated in preaching, teaching, and congregational leadership.

- Have the ability to discern and assist in the cultivation of the spiritual gifts in others, as well as an ability to motivate others to use their spiritual gifts for ministry within the church.
- Will practice disciple making through: 1) being responsible for their individual role in the ministries of the church, 2) giving the church opportunities to participate in the ministry of the Gospel, and 3) calling and inspiring the church to participate in those ministries such as evangelism and mission, justice ministries, care and support ministries, and spiritual formation ministries.
- Will help the church in its work of growing in worship attendance, professions of faith, and financial stewardship.
- Demonstrate a profound inner-sense of calling to ministry. Such a calling bears fruit in terms of transformed lives.

**These marks of fitness, readiness, and effectiveness serve as the guideline for the District Committee on Ministry and the Board of Ordained Ministry for the evaluation of ministerial candidates.

BUILDING SPIRITUAL LEADERS

It is the responsibility of the church to build spiritual leaders in order to be faithful to our mission “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” This responsibility lies in three distinct areas: the local church, the district Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM), and the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM). Every baptized Christian is blessed with spiritual gifts and is called to be a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Some are called out of the people of God for particular and unique forms of ministry: Certified Lay Minister, Local Pastor, commissioned or Ordained Deacon, and commissioned or Ordained Elder. A process of spiritual discernment is to take place not only in those seeking to investigate their calling but also within the local church (through the Staff Parish Relations Committee and Charge Conference), the dCOM, and the BOM. At each of these levels, interviewers are encouraged to discern evidence indicative of the nature of each candidate’s calling. It is not the responsibility of these bodies to determine who may or may not serve (for all are called to serve), but rather to determine what is the optimal place of service for each candidate. Active service as a lay person in a local church is in no way a negation of the authenticity of God’s calling to service in a person’s life. It is, however, the responsibility of the local church, dCOM, and BOM to discern the fitness, readiness, and effectiveness which is required of those who would seek to serve as licensed or ordained ministers in the life of the church.

Understandably, a local church is often excited and proud to have someone from their body sense a call to ministry. However, the local church may be too quick to move that person forward in the journey toward licensed or ordained ministry. Unless a significant discernment process is followed within the local church, a person may be placed into ministry settings that are not appropriate for them, or they may be turned down by the dCOM or BOM after they have expended a significant amount of time and money. Therefore, it is necessary for the local church not only to hear a person’s call, but also to witness evidence of this call in the early stages of his/her candidacy. Having a clear understanding of the candidate’s fitness for ministry will enable local churches to make good decisions regarding the service and ministry potential for each candidate.

It is fundamentally important that both the local church and the District Committee on Ordained Ministry take seriously the work of discerning each candidate's call in determining their suitability for licensed and ordained ministry. Persons who are not ready or fit for these forms of Christian service should not be moved forward in the process. Persons who do exhibit fitness for ministry should be highly encouraged. It is our prayer that local churches, District Committees on Ordained Ministry, and the Board of Ordained Ministry will continue to help those called by God to become strong spiritual leaders who will help us be faithful to our mission "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." (*The Book of Discipline, 2016, ¶120*)

DISCERNMENT OF CALL

We believe that the discernment of the call to licensed or ordained ministry is a spiritual process involving the individual, the local church, the District Committee on Ordained Ministry and the Board of Ordained Ministry. All are partners in discerning the nature of each person's calling. All are called to ministry, but not all are called to licensed or ordained ministry within the church. There are many areas of service within God's church and all are important.

THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

The Church's mission is to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." The local church plays a vital role in the discernment of God's calling for ministry. The local church is entrusted to help every believer discover his/her gifts and the best "fit" for those gifts in the life of the church.

In discerning the nature of each person's call to ministry, there will be some who experience a call to the ministry of the licensed and ordained. Here a deeper level of discernment needs to take place. A person may have gifts similar to those who are certified, commissioned or ordained ministers, but may not have an authentic calling to this form of Christian service. Others may be sensing a strong calling to this form of ministry but may not have a particular set of gifts which will enable them to be effective as spiritual leaders in the United Methodist Church. Or, the person may have certain gifts, but may not be effective because of the presence of psychological or emotional difficulties. The local church, not the dCOM or the BOM, provides the best site for this level of spiritual discernment of fitness for ministry to take place.

While we celebrate an individual's sense of call to ministry, we also recognize that all Christians are called to ministry. Therefore, local churches need to help potential candidates for licensed or ordained ministry in their discernment of call by looking at the issues of fitness, readiness, and effectiveness. No one is expected to be a finished product at this level, but some evidence is usually there and discernable by the local church. This process of discernment begins when an individual seeks to respond to God's call and shares this with his/her home pastor. Together, they read through the book, *The Christian as Minister*, discussing the nature of ministry and the candidate's experience of call.

The candidate comes before the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee for examination and recommendation to Charge Conference. Wesley's historic questions of ministerial candidates (paragraph 310, *The United Methodist Book of Discipline*) should be used to guide the interview. At issue is not the presence of call, but the nature of God's calling upon the person's life. The committee is asked to

prayerfully enter into the discernment process with the candidate regarding their fitness, readiness, and effectiveness for ministry.

If there is no clear evidence of fitness for ministry, or if there are other concerns raised regarding the potential effectiveness of the individual in the work of a licensed or ordained minister, the SPRC should not recommend this person to the Charge Conference. Saying “no” at this level does not negate the authenticity of the person’s call, but may redirect the person to a more appropriate expression of ministry. The SPRC may offer specific suggestions regarding areas of service. When candidates are approved by the SPRC of their home church, they should be fully encouraged to continue preparing for ministry. The SPRC recommends the candidate to the Charge Conference for approval.

Finally, the local church’s Charge Conference has the responsibility to recommend that Certified Candidates be recertified annually. Please note that this responsibility is no longer required once the person is serving as a local pastor because the individual will be under the direct supervision of the District Superintendent. However, if the candidate is no longer appointed as a local pastor, he/she turns in the ministerial license and returns to the status of Certified Candidate. In this case, the Charge Conference of the local church must again recommend the individual to the dCOM for recertification.

GOALS FOR THOSE SEEKING CERTIFICATION

- To thoroughly reflect upon one’s call from God to service, and to identify the gifts and graces related to the call, and to engage in discussion with others about the call.
- To be familiar with the Oklahoma Conference expectations of spiritual leaders in the categories of fitness, readiness, and effectiveness.
- To complete the Disciplinary and Conference requirements for certification.
- To serve as a spiritual leader within the local church and/or in a District, Conference, or extension ministry setting.

GOALS FOR THE DISTRICT COMMITTEE ON ORDAINED MINISTRY

- To clarify with the candidate and with local churches the Oklahoma Conference expectations of spiritual leaders in the categories of Fitness, readiness, and effectiveness.
- To identify early in the process potential problems or issues that may or will prevent eventual certification, licensing, or ordination.
- To encourage those who exhibit evidence of fitness, readiness, and effectiveness for ministry to continue to pursue the call to spiritual leadership within the church.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS

Certified Candidacy Interview – Fitness (Abilities and Personal Characteristics)

1. Tell us about an incident in your life where you struggled with integrity. *This should help you discern whether the candidate has a presence of authenticity, self-awareness, and openness. At least two out of three of these should be present in the candidate.*
2. Give us an example of a time when your faith has been tested. What did you learn from it? How have you grown in your faith because of it?
3. Who is Jesus Christ to you, personally?
4. Describe your call from God into Christian servant-hood. What form of service is God calling you to do (lay, licensed, ordained)? How do you know?
5. How do you interact with/be in ministry with Christians who are very different from you theologically (e.g., if you believe in the literal interpretation of scripture, how do you minister with people who don't have that same belief?)
6. What are you doing to nurture your own faith and discipleship?
7. What gifts for servant ministry do you have? Which ones do you use most? Which ones do you need to improve? What would you like to learn?
8. How do you keep yourself healthy ...
 - Physically?
 - Spiritually?
 - Emotionally?

Local Pastor Licensing/Provisional Member Recommendation Interviews – Readiness (Knowledge and Skills)

1. Describe how you would go about creating an annual budget proposal for your congregation. *This should help you discern whether the candidate has a presence of a comprehensive approach which is well thought out and clearly described. At least two out of three of these should be present in the candidate.*
2. How do you practice stewardship of the gifts God has entrusted to you? What financial stresses or obligations do you have? How will you need to adjust your standard of living if you become a full-time servant?
3. What is the role of baptism in the United Methodist Church? If a parent asked you to perform an infant dedication how would you respond? If you were asked to re-baptize someone what would you do?

4. Describe your understanding of the connectional nature of The United Methodist Church. How do you support the connection? How do you explain it to others?
5. Tell us your foundational beliefs about
 - God
 - Jesus Christ
 - The Holy Spirit
 - Redemption
 - Forgiveness
 - Grace
6. What does the statement “Jesus Christ is Lord” mean to you?
7. *For those seeking a recommendation for Commissioning and Provisional Membership great care should be taken to prepare them for their interview before the BOM. Emphasis should be on some of the key questions in par. 324.9.*

Local Pastor Continuance and Renewal of License Interviews – Effectiveness

Areas of effectiveness should be emphasized for Local Pastors who have some experience as Local Pastors.

1. Imagine that we are members of your congregation. Describe a goal you want the church to adopt. Explain it to us so that we see the vision, are inspired by it, and accept the goal as our own. *You should feel clarity about the goal, are inspired, and want to take ownership. At least two out of three of these should be present in the candidate.*
2. How many professions of faith have you had in your church this year?
3. How is your worship attendance?
4. Who are you personally discipling?
5. Tell us about someone in the past year who has been transformed by your ministry.
6. What is a disciple? How can you tell if someone is growing as a disciple?
7. What are a couple of things a servant minister should do to help someone grow as a disciple?
8. Describe an experience of helping another person grow in faith or wrestle with a faith/moral issue. What did you do? How did the other person react? What did you learn?

KEY WORDS TO KNOW

Associate Member (§321 - §322)

Conference relationship available to persons who have reached forty years of age, have served as full-time local pastors at least four years, completed the five-year Course of Study, studies for license as a local pastor, completed a minimum of sixty semester hours toward the Bachelor of Arts or an equivalent degree in a college or university listed by the University Senate. They must also be recommended by the dCOM and the conference Board of Ordained Ministry, declared their willingness to accept continuing full-time appointment and satisfied the conference regarding their physical, mental, and emotional health.

Candidacy Mentor

A deacon or elder in full connection or local pastor who has completed the Course of Study assigned by the dCOM to an Exploring Candidate to support and guide them through *Answering the Call – Candidacy Guidebook* and candidacy process and until the candidate is approved for local pastor or elected to provisional membership.

Professional Certification (certified)

The church's recognition that an individual has met the required standards for academic training, experience, and continuing study necessary to achieve and maintain professional excellence in a particular area of ministry such as Christian education, music, youth ministry, evangelism, camp/retreat ministry, spiritual formation, older adult ministry, or church business administrator. Information and details about this process and these careers can be found at the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry website: www.gbhem.org/certification/index.html. Information about the church business administrator process can be found at www.umacba.org.

Candidacy Certification (certified candidate) (§310 - 314)

Candidacy phase when requirements for Inquiring and Exploring Candidate have been met.

Commissioning (commissioned minister) (§315)

The credentialing of provisional deacons and elders. The act of the church that publicly acknowledges God's call and response, talents, gifts and training of the candidate. The church invokes the Holy Spirit as the candidate is commissioned to be a faithful servant leader among the people, to lead the church in service, to proclaim the Word of God and to equip others for ministry.

Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM)

The body responsible for credentialing provisional/commissioned ministers, local pastors, and full connection deacons and elders.

Course of Study

The basic theological education program of the Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. It is provided for those who are licensed as local pastors who are unable to attend an approved seminary. Participants in the program should have completed candidacy for ordained ministry, the studies for license as a local pastor, and have been approved/recommended for

license by the dCOM and conference Board of Ordained Ministry. In order to receive scholarship funds from the Oklahoma Conference the Local Pastor Registrar must have the most recent dCOM Action Report for the Local Pastor desiring those scholarship funds.

Deacon (§328 - 331)

Persons called by God, authorized by the Church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of Word and Service to both the community and the congregation.

Diaconal Minister

Persons called to specialized ministries of service, justice, and love within local congregations and in the wider world. Their focus of service is through a variety of ministries, such as administration, education, evangelism, music, health ministries and community development - to the local congregation and the wider community. Diaconal Ministers are laypersons. No new candidates have been accepted since 1/1/97. This category has been superseded by the ordained deacon.

District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM)

The body that oversees, cares for, and evaluates candidates for ministry through the Inquiry, Exploring and Certified Candidate phases, and is also responsible for maintaining a relationship with local pastors.

Elder (§332 - 336)

Persons who are ordained to a lifetime ministry of Service, Word, Sacrament, and Order; authorized to preach and teach the Word of God, to administer the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, and to order the life of the Church for mission and ministry.

Exploring Candidate

In the second step or phase in the candidacy process for ordained deacon, elder, or local pastor, a mentor is assigned. The candidate and mentor work through *Answering the Call – Candidacy Guidebook* and the candidate's continued discernment of their call to ministry.

Full Connection

The relationship of ordained deacons and elders to the Annual Conference. They have completed the process for ordination, including educational requirements, and have been elected to full membership in the annual conference.

Inquiring Candidate

The first step in the candidacy process for ordained deacon, elder, or local pastor. The candidate's home church minister works with the candidate in reading and discussing *The Christian as Minister* and *The Ministry Inquiry Process (Optional)*.

License for Pastoral Ministry (§315 - 320)

Credential given to a local pastor when he or she is appointed as pastor of a local church.

Local Pastor Licensing School

The studies are the first exposure for most candidates to the practice of ministry. Public worship, pastoral care for spiritual formation, organization of a parish for nurture and mission, and educational ministries in the church are the major areas of concern covered in the eighty-hour school. The candidate must be approved by the dCOM for licensing as a local pastor before attending Licensing School. The candidate must attend the school before being approved by the clergy session of the annual conference and being appointed as a local pastor. Upon completion of seminary commissioned elders and deacons must attend three days of licensing school.

Local Pastor

Persons who are licensed and appointed to preach, conduct divine worship, and perform the duties of a pastor but are not ordained as elders.

Ordination (ordained)

The church affirms and continues the apostolic ministry through persons empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Provisional Membership (¶324 - 327)

Conference relationship of commissioned ministers (deacons and elders) who are on trial in preparation for membership in full connection in the annual conference as deacons and elders. During that three-year period, they are Residents in Ministry under the care of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and participants in the RIM program. Provisional members may vote at annual conference on all matters except constitutional amendments, election of General/Jurisdictional delegates, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.

Provisional Process (Residency Program)

The three-year provisional process is an interactive residency program designed to assist provisional members in growing in effectiveness for ministry, assessing growth, and weaving the fabric of covenant within the conference. The four components of the provisional process include supervision, continuing theological development, mentoring, and covenant groups.

Residency Education

The Oklahoma Conference three-year program for provisional/commissioned ministers. This three-year module system is designed to give provisional members the skills necessary for effective ministries.

CANDIDATE AND dCOM RESPONSIBILITIES PRIOR TO THE INITIAL INTERVIEW FOR CANDIDACY CERTIFICATION

dCOM will ensure that the requirements of an Inquiring Candidate (§310), a Beginning Candidacy (§310.1.a-c), and a Declaring Candidate (§310.1.d-e) have been met.

At this point, Candidate shall have:

1. Contacted the pastor of the local Church, another Deacon or Elder, or the District Superintendent.
2. Reviewed *The Christian as Minister* and *Ministry Inquiry Process (optional)* with a home pastor or clergy person.
3. Been a professing member in good standing of The United Methodist Church or a baptized participant of a recognized United Methodist campus ministry or other United Methodist ministry setting for a minimum of one (1) year.
4. Graduated from an accredited high school or certificate of equivalency.
5. Applied to the District Superintendent in writing for admission to the Candidacy Program and have been assigned a Candidacy Mentor or Mentoring Group by the DS/dCOM. Included a brief Statement of Call (1-2 pages) with application.
6. Completed UMCARES/Plus Enrollment with \$75 payment.
7. Completed Background Check and Consumer Credit Check with report received by dCOM Registrar.
8. Completed a Psychological Assessment.
9. Completed beginning stages of Candidacy with Candidacy Mentor(s) including reviewing the document The Expectations of Spiritual Leaders in the Oklahoma Conference.
10. Provided a Statement of Call, responded to *Wesley's Questions for the Examiner* found in §310 for interview by Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee in Local Church or equivalent.
11. Been recommended by Charge Conference or equivalent as specified by Submitted Form 104, indicating recommendation by the candidate's home church charge conference, equivalent body as specified by the district committee on ordained ministry, receiving a 3/4 vote.
12. Submitted Form 102 (Personal Data Inventory) to dCOM Chair to be placed in file.
13. Submitted Form 103 (Medical Report) to dCOM Chair to be placed in file.
14. Submitted a notarized Form 114 (Candidate's Disclosure Form) to dCOM Chair to be placed in file.
15. Submitted responses to *Behavioral Health Questions* found on the Conference website.

The dCOM shall have received:

1. The "Home Pastor Discernment Tool for those Considering Vocational Ministry" (Pastor of the body referring person to dCOM)
2. The "Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee Discernment Tool for those Considering Vocational Ministry" (S/PPRC responsible for recommending candidate to appropriate Charge Conference or appropriate setting.)
3. The "District Superintendent Discernment Tool for those Considering Vocational Ministry."
4. Written report from the mentor(s) indicating completion of the candidacy studies.
5. All District Committees on Ministry in the Oklahoma Conference shall use the standard Behavioral Health Guideline document. This document is summarized from the Behavioral Health Guidelines developed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. This form shall be included in the file for all candidates for ministry before they are certified.

Candidate will have attended the Call to Ministry Retreat in September and have been assigned to a mentor, to a District Candidacy Mentoring Group or enrolled in the Part-time Local Pastor Academy

**Note: Scholarship information form should be available for those approved for certification and dCOM shall encourage Certified Candidates to attend a United Methodist Seminary (§311.2.e).
(See okumc.org/forms)**

Documents to be copied and distributed to committee members at least 2 weeks prior to interview:

Form 102 (Personal Data Inventory)

Mentor Report

Written response to statements in §310.2a&d

Psychological Assessment (recommendation section only)

Statement of Call to Ministry

Action Required

Individual written ballot, three-fourths majority required to certify.

- “dCOM Action Report to the BOM Registrar”
- Action Outline 01 to Candidate’s District File.
 - Criteria:
 - Spiritual fitness
 - Psychological fitness
 - Physical fitness
 - Potential for effectiveness
 - Evidence of Fitness, Readiness, and Effectiveness

RENEWAL OF CERTIFIED CANDIDATE (annually)

Requirements prior to interview

1. Annual recommendation of the candidate's home church charge conference in file.
2. Biographical Information Form submitted (annually).
3. A written report from the candidacy mentor in file.
4. Completed "Interview Form for Local Pastors and Certified Candidates."
5. An updated official transcript from the school, college, or seminary.
6. If the candidate is in a field education program in seminary, a copy of the field education report (called by various titles at different schools) or a written report from the supervisor in that setting.
7. If the candidate is **not** in college, seminary, or a ministry setting, ***a letter from the local church's pastor as to the candidate's involvement in the local church.***
8. Form 114, Candidate's Disclosure Form if not appointed.

Documents to be copied and distributed to committee members at least 2 weeks prior to Interview:

Mentor Report

Completed "Interview Form for Local Pastors and Certified Candidates"

Written report from supervisor or from local church pastor (if applicable)

Action Required

Written individual vote with three-fourths majority required to renew.

Action Outline #2 to Candidate's District File

"dCOM Action Report to the BOM" Sent to Candidacy Registrar

INITIAL LICENSING FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY (Local Pastor)

Requirements prior to interview

(Documents must be submitted one month prior to interview)

1. Certification as a candidate for ministry (see requirements for Candidacy Certification).
2. Submit two copies of a sermon manuscript and video (DVD or Digital format).
 - a. Length of the sermon shall be minimum of 5 pages, double spaced
 - b. Candidate may choose any scripture
 - c. On a separate sheet of paper respond to the following:
 1. What is the sermon title?
 2. What is the sermon text?
3. Has the sermon been preached?
 4. Write a one sentence purpose statement for this message.
 5. What do you want the hearers to do as a result of this message?
 6. What is your personal evaluation of the sermon?
3. Please read “Part II—Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task” in the United Methodist Book of Discipline. Then, in consultation with mentor, prepare and submit written responses to the following questions (3-5 pages in total):
 - a. What is your understanding of Prevenient Grace, Justifying Grace, and Sanctifying Grace? (you may want to refer to “John Wesley: Holiness of Heart and Life” at <http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/wesley> and look specifically at the section entitled: “John Wesley and God’s Grace.”) How have you witnessed this grace of God at work in someone’s life?
 - b. What is the meaning and significance of the sacraments of baptism and communion? Do you agree with the teaching on the sacraments found in our Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith? Why or why not?
 - c. Which parable or teaching of Jesus best illustrates your understanding of God’s kingdom? Why? How will your understanding of God’s kingdom affect the way you care for and lead your local church?

Documents to be distributed to committee members at least 2 weeks prior to Interview:

Sermon—Manuscript and Video (DVD or Digital Format)

#2c from above – for all members of the dCOM

#3 from above – for all members of the dCOM

Action Required

Majority vote with recommendation required to specify full time local pastor, part time local pastor, or student appointed as a local pastor. Once voted, the candidate will have to register for and complete Licensing School, if not having participated in the Bi-Vocational Pastors Academy.

“dCOM Action Report to the BOM Registrar” sent to the BOM Local Pastor Registrar.

Criteria:

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

The Candidacy Process

The Candidacy Process in the Oklahoma Conference

Prior to Initial Meeting with the District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) the Candidate will fulfill the requirements of the Inquiring Candidate (§310), Beginning Candidacy (§310.1.a-c), and Declaring Candidate (§310.1.d,e):

1. The Candidate reads *The Christian as Minister* and *Ministry Inquiry Process (optional)* with his/her local church pastor, another ordained deacon or elder, or district superintendent. This resource is available from your district superintendent or Cokesbury.
2. The Candidate must be a professing member in good standing of The United Methodist Church, or a baptized participant of a recognized United Methodist campus ministry or other United Methodist ministry setting, for a minimum of one (1) year.
3. The Candidate must submit a letter to his/her district superintendent, with a copy to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry Registrar, describing his/her sense of call to the ministry of a licensed or ordained pastor. The DS/dCOM will assign a Candidacy Mentor. *
4. The Candidate will receive the document, "Expectations of Spiritual Leaders in the Oklahoma Conference."
5. The Candidate will find the Biographical Information Form (Form 102), the notarized Candidate's Disclosure Form 114, and the Background Check Authorization Form on the Conference website. The Biographical Information Form and Candidate's Disclosure Form are submitted to the dCOM Chair. These must be accomplished and/or submitted at least one month prior to the interview.



For a Person to be Certified as a Candidate for Licensed or Ordained ministry, he/she must:

6. Be a graduate from high school or equivalency.
 - The DS "Invites" the candidate, who receives an email invitation and will register as a candidate for ministry through UMCARES/Plus, an on-line interactive web site at <https://umcares.org>.
 - Review the enrollment process outlined on this site. Once the registration is confirmed by the district superintendent and mentor (on line), the Candidate will receive an email notification.
 - He/She must pay the \$75 fee. Once the fee is received, he/she will download or be mailed the Candidacy Guidebook *Answering the Call – Candidacy Guidebook*.
7. The Candidate will initiate the first meeting with the Candidacy Mentor. *
8. The Candidate will study the Candidacy Guidebook with the Candidacy Mentor. The mentor should be listening and looking for the signs of Fitness, Readiness, and Effectiveness delineated in the expectations document and should discuss these expectations with the Candidate. *
9. Complete the Psychological Assessment Process
10. The Candidate will submit responses to Wesley's historic questions in §310 and interview with the Staff-Pastor/Parish Relations Committee. S/PPRC will use "Expectations of Spiritual Leaders in the Oklahoma Conference" as the primary discernment tool. After approval of the candidate by the

SPPRC, he/she meets with the charge conference and receives 3/4 written vote of the Charge Conference (Declaration of Candidacy Form, signed by district superintendent or presiding elder).

11. To gain a better understanding of the Fitness, Readiness, and Effectiveness the Candidate brings to ministry, the dCOM will ask for the following:
 - a) a completed discernment report (Pastor Discernment Tool for those Considering Vocational Ministry) from his/her home pastor (pastor of the body referring the person to the dCOM)
 - b) a completed observation report from his/her Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee (S/PPRC Discernment Tool for those Considering Vocational Ministry)
12. The Candidacy Mentor will complete a report regarding the time together (which the Candidate must sign) and submit it to the chair of the dCOM.



Interview for Certification as a Candidate for Licensed or Ordained Ministry.

13. Approval for certification requires a ¾ written ballot. The Candidate will be informed of the results in person and by letter.



Following Certification:

14. The Candidacy Mentor completes the dCOM Approval Report for Certified Candidacy (form 113) at UMCARES and copies the Candidacy Registrar of the Oklahoma Annual Conference.
15. The Candidate will meet with the Candidacy Mentor *to discuss interview and results of meeting with the district Committee. The Candidacy Mentor* and candidate work together to develop a plan for education.
16. Certified candidacy is renewed annually by the Charge Conference and district Committee on Ordained Ministry. An annual interview with the dCOM is required. The following documents must be submitted to the dCOM each year for the Candidate to be recertified: __mentor's report, __updated Biographical Information Form, __educational transcripts, __candidate's plan for education, __and a 3-5 page report from the candidate indicating educational progress, service in the church (if applicable), and growth in spiritual maturity (Fitness, Readiness, Effectiveness).
17. The Candidate must meet with the Candidacy Mentor * at least annually. An annual report from the mentor is required.
18. A Certified Candidate must meet each year with the dCOM to be approved for recertification. Required for this action are (a) a completed interview form, (b) a completed mentor's report, *and (c) a letter of recommendation from the District Superintendent or guide.



License for Pastoral Ministry:

19. If it is the Candidate's desire to serve a church as a "local pastor," he/she must receive the License for Pastoral Ministry. (This interview may be conducted on the same day as the certification interview.)
20. With all material to be received at least one month prior to the interview, the candidate must submit the following:
 - A. Submit two copies of a sermon manuscript, in addition to a DVD or digital copy.
 1. Length of the sermon shall be a minimum of 5 pages, double spaced.
 2. Candidate may choose any scripture.
 3. On a separate sheet of paper respond to the following:
 - a. What is the sermon title?
 - b. What is the sermon text?
 - c. Was the sermon preached?
 - d. Write a one sentence purpose statement for this message.
 - e. What do you want the hearers to do as a result of this message?
 - f. What is your personal evaluation of the sermon?
 - B. Submit written responses to the following questions (minimum of 3 and maximum of 5 pages total for all questions, typed and double spaced):
 - a. What is the meaning and significance of the Sacraments?
 - b. Talk about the nature of the Kingdom of God and then use a Biblical parable to illustrate one aspect of the Kingdom.
 - c. What is your understanding of the Wesleyan concept of divine grace?
 - d. How will you discern and implement God's vision for your ministry setting?
21. The Candidate must submit the Medical Form (Form 103) after it is completed by an accredited physician.
22. The Candidate will interview with the dCOM (§315.2.c) and may be recommended to the Board of Ordained Ministry for licensing as a local pastor.



Following Licensing:

23. The Candidate will be appointed a Clergy Mentor with whom he/she is to meet at least quarterly until the Candidate has completed the Basic Course of Study.
24. The Candidate must enroll in and complete the Local Pastor's Licensing School (if not participating in the Part-Time Local Pastor's Academy) or have completed one-third of their seminary education at a University Senate accredited school.
25. The license to preach is granted only to those who have received an appointment to serve as a local pastor. (*Candidates who no longer are serving under an appointment must return their license to the District Superintendent.* (§320.1))
26. Full-time local pastors shall complete the Basic Course of Study, with a maximum of eight years to complete. (§319.3)
27. Part-time local pastors shall complete the Basic Course of Study, with a maximum of twelve years to complete. (§319.3)
28. Students appointed as local pastors must be enrolled in a college, university, or seminary approved by the University Senate and must be making adequate annual progress in their educational program. (§318.3)
29. Licensed local pastors shall meet annually with the dCOM to be continued in their status as local pastors. Required for this action are (a) a completed local pastor's interview form, (b) a completed Clergy Mentor's report, (c) a letter of recommendation by his/her district superintendent or guide, and (d) a current transcript indicating progress in the Course of Study.



Requirements for Recommendation for Provisional Membership:

30. Undergraduate requirement: The Candidate must hold a bachelor's degree from a college or university recognized by the University Senate, have been a certified candidate for at least one year, and have demonstrated gifts for ministry and service (to the satisfaction of the dCOM) to be eligible for recommendation to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry for Provisional Membership (BOM). (¶324.1-2)
31. Graduate Requirements: The Oklahoma Conference requires candidates for Provisional Membership to have completed at least one-half of the educational requirements for an MDiv degree (or Master's Degree for Deacon candidates) at a United Methodist seminary or theological school recognized by the University Senate with required classes in Old Testament; New Testament; systematic theology; church history; mission of the church in the world; evangelism; worship/liturgy; and United Methodist doctrine, polity and history. These classes must be completed before the BOM examination for Provisional Membership.
32. An official transcript must be provided as well as a plan for completing their degree
33. The Candidate must submit to the dCOM answers in writing to the questions found in Par. 324.9a-p at least one month prior to the interview. The written answers must be deemed to be acceptable by the dCOM in order for the candidate to be recommended to BOM for Provisional Membership.



Interview with the dCOM for Recommendation for Provisional Membership:

34. The Candidate will interview with the dCOM regarding written answers and readiness for ministry. The vote to recommend must pass by a ¾ majority.
35. **NOTE:** The evaluation of the dCOM of the responses to the questions in ¶324.9 is a *preliminary* exam for the purposes of: 1) determining if the candidate is ready to be sent to the BOM for a more in-depth exam, and 2) helping the candidate to deal with areas where he/she has a lack of understanding or needs to rework their theology. If the dCOM refers the person to the BOM, this *preliminary* exam should *not* be construed as a guarantee that, after a more extensive exam by the BOM, the candidate will be automatically approved.
36. If approved, the Candidate will be contacted by the Registrar of the Board of Ordained Ministry regarding the requirements and deadlines in order to be examined by the BOM for Provisional Membership and Commissioning.



Alternative Route for Local Pastors seeking Recommendation for Provisional Membership (and ultimately ordination as Full Member Elders): ¶324.6

Local Pastors must have:

1. reached 40 years of age;
2. shall have a bachelor's degree (§ 324.3)
3. satisfied all requirements in ¶324.1-2, 7-14 of the 2016 Book of Discipline;
4. completed the five-year Course of Study for ordained ministry, of which no more than one-half may be taken by correspondence or Internet; up to one-half of Course of Study may be online courses;
5. completed an Advanced Course of Study consisting of thirty-two semester hours of graduate theological study offered by a seminary recognized by the University Senate or its equivalent as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry that shall include United Methodist history, doctrine, polity, and preaching. It is *highly preferred* that the course for Advanced Course of Study be taken at a United Methodist seminary.
6. Inform the chair of the dCOM that you wish to enter the ordination process.
7. completed steps 35-41 above.
8. Persons who have a minimum of 60 hours of Bachelor's credits may petition the Board of Ordained Ministries executive committee for the granting of a waiver of the requirement for a completed Bachelor's degree. This waiver (cf. § 324.3) is based solely on the *mission of the Annual Conference*. It will not be granted for personal problems, unexpected life circumstances, etc.

Psychological Assessment Process

*Board of Ordained Ministry
Oklahoma Annual Conference United Methodist Church*

1. For the Psychological Assessment Process to begin, the candidate's District Superintendent must issue an invitation to the candidacy process or retesting through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's (GBHEM's) United Methodist Candidacy and Record Entry System (UMCARES) A trained mentor will be assigned.
2. The candidate will receive an email with instructions to login to their UMCARES portal, Select <Mentors and Tracks> and proceed to the <Psychological Assessment Track>.
3. Before selecting an MAS (Ministerial Assessment Specialist) the candidate is to contact Connie Barnett @ 405-530-2006 to receive authorization to proceed.
4. The candidate will have submitted an Online Candidacy/Guidebook Fee of \$75.00 or be asked to submit a Psych Assessment Re-Test Fee of \$40.
5. Once the fee has been submitted the candidate will complete the Release of Information form online, sign electronically and <SUBMIT>
6. The candidate will complete the Personal Data Inventory (PDI) and Personal/Professional Reference List (PPRL) online and <SUBMIT>. (It is vital that the candidate inform their references that their name is being submitted as a reference. Failure of any to complete the reference will delay the clinical interview.
7. The assigned Mentor will download ancillary testing materials, and <SUBMIT> request for the remainder of the testing packet to be sent to assigned Mentor. Candidate and assigned Mentor arrange date and time for testing. The mentor mails the Psych Assessment Packet to GBHEM and ***the Candidate contacts the Office of Clergy Development to:***
 - Initiate Background Screening
 - Receive Application to Proceed for Clinical Interview
 - Acquire an Authorization Code (needed to proceed for the clinical interview) and contact information.
8. GBHEM scores tests and mails psych assessment file to selected Ministerial Assessment Specialist:
9. The candidate will contact the Ministerial Assessment Specialist (MAS) to schedule a clinical interview. The candidate fee of \$200 is to be paid directly to the MAS. Other costs are borne by the Annual Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.
10. Once the clinical interview has been conducted, a report will be prepared by the MAS. Copies will be sent to the candidate and the Annual Conference Psychological Assessment Officer who will forward the report to the appropriate District Committee on Ordained Ministry Registrar.

Please direct questions to:

Rev. Charles L. Nordean
Director of Clergy Development
1501 NW 24th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73106-3635

Phone: 405-530-2007
E-Mail: cnordean@okumc.org

Additional Information Concerning the Psychological Assessment Process

The psychological assessment process consists of 4 written testing instruments and an autobiographical questionnaire. The purpose of the psychological assessment is to screen for mental health and emotional fitness for ministry. Currently, the testing instruments include: the MMPI-2, the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator (Step II), the 16 Personality Factors test, and a Sentence Completion test. One of these tests, The Myers-Briggs, is completed in the office of the MAS. The other three written tests are proctored by the candidates mentor or by another person assigned by the dCOM. The Autobiographical Questionnaire is done through a personal interview with the Ministerial Assessment Specialist.

Psychological Assessment interviews are scheduled throughout year. The Candidate is responsible for making his/her own appointment with the Ministerial Assessment Specialist. Upon completion of all tests and interviews, a report (with observations and recommendations) is prepared by the Ministerial Assessment Specialist and sent to the candidate and the Conference Psychological Assessment Officer who, after review, forwards it along with personal observations to the appropriate dCOM Registrar. The person serving on the District Committee on Ministry as the Candidacy Registrar will also serve as the psychological assessment officer for the District Committee on Ministry. (BOM Policy)

The dCOM Registrar, upon receiving their copy, should email the Psychological Assessment Officer to confirm that they have received the report and to discuss any possible issues that should be raised during the dCOM interview. A summary of the report, not a written copy, will be shared with the dCOM in preparation for their interview with the candidate. A copy of the report will be kept in the candidates dCOM file and at the appropriate time will be transferred to the proper registrar of the Conference Board. Documentation of concerns raised by the dCOM during their follow-up with the candidate and all recommendations and their fulfillment or lack thereof, needs to be included in the candidate's file. The Psychological Assessment Reports are the property of the Board of Ordained Ministry and its District Committees on Ordained Ministry.

Coordination With Psychological Assessment Officer

The Psychological Assessment Officer will review the report and, at the appropriate time, place the report with Conference files of the Board of Ordained Ministry. If the Psychological Assessment Officer, or the dCOM registrar, has questions or concerns regarding a candidate's psychological report, they will consult with each other and with the chair of the dCOM. The Psychological Assessment Officer is also authorized to consult with the Ministerial Assessment Specialist.

Cost to Candidate and Request for 2nd Opinion

The cost to the candidate to proceed with the psychological assessment is \$200.00. The remaining cost is borne by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Costs for travel and lodging are the responsibility of the candidate.

Candidates wishing to appeal the report of the psychological assessment specialists shall first contact their District Committee on Ministry chairperson. Then that chairperson will work with the Board of Ordained Ministry's Psychological Assessment Officer on a case by case basis as is needed. The raw data from the

written tests remains with the MAS. The raw scores can be released to a clinical specialist of the candidates choosing upon request and proper signature of release.

Any additional costs of the appeal will be the responsibility of the candidate (for example, additional interviews with the psychologists, further written assessments, etc.). All costs for “second opinions” will be the responsibility of the candidate.

RETESTING POLICY

PLEASE NOTE:

For candidates seeking certified candidacy and for certified candidates seeking provisional membership and commissioning, any psychological assessment, criminal background check and credit report older seven (7) years will require retesting and an additional rescreening.

District Committees on Ordained Ministry and/or the Board of Ordained Ministry reserve the right to request testing at any stage of candidacy when circumstances warrant.

The candidate will be asked to complete all the testing process outlined above. They will be invited as a “Non-Traditional” Candidate.

Candidates requiring the re-testing for Psychological Assessment before provisional membership and commissioning must complete this requirement in time for the report to be in their file at the time all other written material is due. Please allow at least four to six weeks for this process.

FORMS

Forms available at:

okumc.org/bomforms



BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

Oklahoma Annual Conference
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Candidate's District File Content Checklist

Date file begun _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (with area code) _____ email address _____

- ___ Contact Pastor, read *The Christian as Minister* and complete the MIP
- ___ Apply to DS in writing and provide a Statement of Call (1-2 pg) ¶310.1d)
- ___ Candidate Invited to set up account in UMCARES (Date: _____)
- ___ Complete Exploration of Candidacy (Answering the Call: *Candidacy Guidebook*)
- ___ Request recommendation from S/PPRC and written responses to ¶310
- ___ Biographical information report (Form 102)
- ___ Declaration of candidacy for ordained ministry and charge conference recommendation (Form 104)
- ___ Written response to statements found in ¶310.2a and d
- ___ Candidacy mentor _____
- ___ Candidacy mentor's report with completion of candidacy studies
- ___ Psychological assessment report and background check
- ___ Medical information report (Form 103)
- ___ Behavioral Health Questions Response
- ___ Home Pastor's Observation Report
- ___ SPRC Observation Report
- ___ Academic progress documents (HS or equivalent, college, seminary)
- ___ dCOM Form 113 recording (online)
- ___ Form 114 (notarized)
- ___ Vote of certification recorded in UMCARES: Date _____
- ___ dCOM Form 117 Local Church support for Candidacy
- ___ Certification reviewed Date _____
- ___ Date _____
- ___ Date _____
- ___ Date _____
- ___ Letter of recommendation to Board of Ordained Ministry for Provisional Membership toward Deacon's or Elder's orders
- ___ File sent to BOM Registrar

Available at: okumc.org/bomforms



HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CHURCH SUPPORT FOR CANDIDACY

Form 117

¶313.2 – A candidate preparing for ordained ministry shall ... provide a report as to whether his or her local church is supporting them spiritually and financially (see ¶246.8) ... The report of local church financial support may be used by the district superintendent to express gratitude for this support or encourage a local congregation to improve its basic care for those it recommends.

Candidate: _____

Conference: _____ District: _____

Local Church Membership: _____

Other Ministry Setting (if not a member of local church): _____

Financial Support

___ The above named local church has supported the candidate financially in the previous year.

___ The above named local church has not supported the candidate financially in the previous year.

How has the local church supported the candidate financially? (Include the amount of financial support provided to the candidate.)

gghem
facebook.com/gghem

gghem.org
1001 19th Avenue, South
Nashville, TN 37217

Available at: okumc.org/bomforms



BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

Oklahoma Annual Conference
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Home Pastor Discernment Tool For Those Considering Vocational Ministry

(To be submitted to the District Committee on Ministry
and with the application for Candidacy Group Mentoring)

Name of Ministry Candidate _____

Name of Church or Ministry Setting: _____

Date(s) of Pastoral Discussion: _____

The Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) of the Oklahoma Annual Conference has stated: *The role of the pastor and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) of every congregation is to lead individuals through a discernment process of identifying clarifying, and understanding his or her calling for ministry, whether in the general ministry of the church, licensed ministry, or ordained ministry.* Therefore, the BOM encourages every congregation to be on the lookout for potential ministers, to preach about being called into ministry, and to have on hand both *Ministry Inquiring Process* and *Christian as Minister* as resources for those exploring the possibilities and options for ministry. **Because this is such a weighty matter, the pastor and the SPRC must know the individual well enough to recommend him/her, or not, and, further, to give the person opportunities to try different ministry settings in the local church where their giftedness can be evidenced and refined.**

We recognize that all Christians are called by God to be in transformational ministry in the world as they are gifted. Ordination and licensing are particular callings by God recognized by the Church's conferring of authority in vocational ministry. When a member of your congregation is seeking validation of a perceived calling, the SPR is encouraged to spend time in prayer, reading The Book of Discipline, Chapter Two, ¶¶ 301-305, and using this discernment tool to help them clarify their ministry calling.

These questions are to be completed in a conversation or in a series of conversations with the candidate. Please answer all the questions as completely as you can. A signed copy must be submitted to the district superintendent's office before an appointment can be set with the person pursuing vocational ministry. You are also encouraged to use this as a springboard to further conversations. Keep in mind, the answers submitted in this tool are your evaluations, which are shared confidentially with the district superintendent.

CALLING

A calling into representative ministry is understood as the initiative of God's grace to choose certain persons to lead the church. Those in representative ministry may serve as ordained elders or deacons,

licensed local pastors, or certified lay ministers. Ministry settings may include the local church, chaplaincy, higher education, or other settings.

Your responsibility as the pastor is to help the individual understand and articulate his/her internal sense of calling, specifying how his/her ministry is to be expressed. At the same time, there is to be an external calling—a confirmation by the Church that clarifies whether they are being called to representative ministry, or not.

Can this person clearly profess his/her faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and acknowledge the Bible as God's Word?

How did this person recognize God's prompting them to explore ministry as a vocation?

Can this person's calling be fulfilled through a lay leadership role

Explain to this person the requirements and authority of the various expressions of ministry in the United Methodist Church.

Ordained ministry as an elder--¶302

Elders lead God's people to grow in faith and love, with most serving as pastors in charge of local congregations through Word (preaching and teaching), sacrament, order, and service. They can also serve as chaplains, teachers, or pastoral counselors.

Ordained ministry as a deacon--¶302

Deacons lead God's people into ministry to the world through Word (teaching and may include preaching), service, compassion, and justice, often in specialized ministry. Some deacons serve in churches in roles such as ministers of Christian education or music. Many serve beyond the local church in settings such as social service, education, health, or public advocacy organizations.

Licensed local pastor--¶315

Local pastors, either part time or full time, are licensed to serve as a congregation's pastor, with responsibilities for preaching, administering the sacraments, providing pastoral care, and administrative leadership. They do this while pursuing theological education through an approved seminary or in the Course of Study.

Certified Lay Minister--¶271

The certified lay minister serves as the leader of a small congregation, preaching the Word, providing a care ministry to the congregation, assisting in program leadership, and being a witness in the community for the growth of the missional nature of the church and the promotion of the United Methodist connection.

Lay Servant--¶266

A lay servant is committed to the local congregation, becoming well-informed of the scriptures and the doctrine, heritage, organization, and life of the United Methodist Church. He/she receives special training to develop skills in witnessing to the Christian faith through spoken communication, church and community leadership, and care-giving ministries. This individual gives leadership, assistance, and support to the mission and ministry of the church.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Spiritual maturity refers to more than what an individual knows or does; spiritual maturity is the imitation of Christ evidenced in the character, mindset, and actions of the individual. Leaders in the Church are expected to have grown and continue to grow in the love and knowledge of Christ.

How does this person exhibit spiritual maturity?

How does this person exhibit spiritual maturity?

What examples have you witnessed in this person which uphold the highest ideals and behaviors of a follower of Christ?

How would you describe this person's theological depth?

Does this person express any misgivings about the doctrines and practices of the United Methodist Church?

Other comments:

ATTRIBUTES AND GIFTEDNESS

Ministry is Christ-centered within a community of faith. Therefore, those in ministry must be comfortable in social settings and have relational skills in both public and private occasions.

What social and relational skills have you seen this person exhibit which will be necessary for ministry?

How does this person evidence emotional stability in his/her life?

How does this person demonstrate written, oral, interpersonal, and organizational communication skills necessary for ministry?

Other comments:

EXPERIENCE AND FRUITFULNESS

Every person is shaped by past experiences. Take time to reflect on how experiences evidence potential for ministry as well as equip him/her for ministry.

In what ways has this person shown the ability to articulate his/her faith, to tell his/her story?

How has this person effectively led or participated in your congregational/ministry setting?

Administration

Pastoral care

Spiritual formation

Worship

Describe a ministry this person has initiated.

How has this person experienced stability and success in previous employment?

How will this person's previous vocational experience contribute to his/her ministry?

INVESTMENT

Because of the spiritual, emotional, and time stresses, ordained ministry can put a strain on family dynamics, more than most imagine, until they have entered full-time ministry. For Elders, add to this the demands of itinerant ministry, relating at the direction of the Bishop according to the needs of the mission field.

Have you explained to this person the lifestyles which are inevitable for clergy life? What was the response?

If this person is considering ordination, how is he/she prepared to meet the financial demands of a seminary education?

The Bishop asks those about to be ordained a series of historic questions (BOD ¶1336), including “Are you in debt so as to embarrass yourself in your work? This question takes on significance in the realization that a seminary education can cost upward of \$75,000. Local pastor and certified lay minister are options with much less weighty financial requirements.

Does this person understand that he/she can attend only a UMC approved seminary?

If this person does not seek to be in full-time ministry, is he/she willing to be bi-vocational?

What is this person’s current educational background?

The ordination process is a significant time commitment for the completion of education, residency, and then gaining an experience base for effective ministry. Please help him/her consider this obligation in relation to their potential years of ministry.

Is this person ready for:

4 years of undergraduate studies (if not completed)

2-4 years of full-time graduate studies (depending on whether elder or deacon) or a minimum of 5, maximum 12 years for Course of Study (for local pastors)?

3 years of residency after commissioning?

Additional years of active ministry to develop an experience base for effective ministry?

How many potential years of ministry does this person foresee after ordination or receiving credentials?

What is this person's response to the time involved?

Other comments:

DECISION

When have you prayed for and about this person's call to vocational ministry?

Do you believe this person is called by God to vocational ministry in the United Methodist Church?

Can you envision this person serving as a colleague? Why or why not?

Can you envision this person serving as your family's pastor? Why or why not?

What type of ministry setting would best suit this individual?

Pastor

Printed

Signed



BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

Oklahoma Annual Conference
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee Discernment Tool For Those Considering Vocational Ministry

(To be submitted to the District Superintendent
And to the District Committee on Ministry)

Name of Ministry Candidate: _____

Name of Church: _____

Date of SPRC discussion: _____

The Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) of the Oklahoma Annual Conference has stated: *“The role of the pastor and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) of every congregation is to lead individuals through a discernment process of identifying clarifying, and understanding his or her calling for ministry, whether in the general ministry of the church, licensed ministry, or ordained ministry.”* Therefore, the BOM encourages every congregation to be on the lookout for potential ministers, to preach about being called into ministry, and to have on hand both *Ministry Inquiring Process* and *Christian as Minister* as resources for those exploring the possibilities and options for ministry. **Because this is such a weighty matter, the pastor and the SPRC must know the individual well enough to recommend him/her, or not, and, further, to give the person opportunities to try different ministry settings in the local church where their giftedness can be evidenced and refined.**

We recognize that all Christians are called by God to be in transformational ministry in the world as they are gifted. Ordination and licensing are particular callings by God recognized by the Church’s conferring of authority in vocational ministry. When a member of your congregation is seeking validation of a perceived calling, the SPRC is encouraged to spend time in prayer, reading The 2016 Book of Discipline, Chapter Two, ¶¶ 301-305, and using this discernment tool to help them clarify their ministry calling.

These questions are to be completed during a called or regular meeting of the SPRC as you share in a time of holy conferencing with the individual. Please answer all the questions as completely as you can. Notice that some questions are to be answered by the candidate while others are to be used by the SPRC (in confidential conversation following the interview) to evaluate this person’s potential and fitness for ministry. First, complete the “Ask the candidate questions.” Then have the candidate sign this tool before your confidential conversation in the absence of the candidate. The signature affirms that the candidate’s responses are appropriately reflected in the document. Finally, complete the “SPRC evaluation” sections and move to your final decision.

Upon charge conference approval, a copy signed by the pastor, S/PPRC Chair, and the candidate must be sent to the district office before the candidate proceeds to the next step of the process.

CALLING

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Your responsibility as the S/PPRC is to understand the nature of representative ministry in the UMC and to help the individual understand and articulate his/her internal sense of calling, specifying how his/her ministry is to be expressed. At the same time, there is to be an external calling—a confirmation by the Church that clarifies whether they are being called to representative ministry, or not.

ASK THE CANDIDATE:

What does it mean that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior?

How is the Bible essential for your faith?

How do you understand your call to ministry? And how do you see your call lived out specifically within the United Methodist Church?

Is that Call best lived out as a lay person or as clergy?

Are you prepared to represent the United Methodist Church? Are there any beliefs or practices of the United Methodist Church with which you are currently struggling?

What is your understanding of the requirements and authority of the various expressions of representative ministry in the United Methodist Church?

Ordained ministry as an elder--¶302

Elders lead God’s people to grow in faith and love, with most serving as pastors in charge of local congregations through Word (preaching and teaching), sacrament, order, and service. They can also serve as chaplains, teachers, or pastoral counselors.

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A lay servant is committed to the local congregation, becoming well-informed of the scriptures and the doctrine, heritage, organization, and life of the United Methodist Church. He/she receives special training to develop skills in witnessing to the Christian faith through spoken communication, church and community leadership, and care-giving ministries. This individual gives leadership, assistance, and support to the mission and ministry of the church.

S/PPRC EVALUATION

Does this person have a clear understanding of their faith and of their calling? Why or why not?

SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Spiritual maturity refers to more than what an individual knows or does; spiritual maturity is the imitation of Christ evidenced in the character, mindset, and actions of the individual. Leaders in the Church are expected to have grown and continue to grow in the love and knowledge of Christ.

ASK THE CANDIDATE

What is your faith and church background?

How do you live out your faith?

How do you talk about God with your friends?

What is your favorite/most compelling characteristic of God? Why?

S/PPRC EVALUATION

How does this person exhibit spiritual maturity?

What examples have you witnessed in this person actions which uphold the highest ideals and behaviors of a follower of Christ?

ATTRIBUTES AND GIFTEDNESS

Ministry is Christ-centered within a community of faith. Therefore, those in ministry must be comfortable in social settings and have relational skills in both public and private occasions.

ASK THE CANDIDATE

Tell us about the most important personal relationship you have with another person.

What gifts do you bring to a life of ministry?

S/PPRC EVALUTATION

What social and relational skills have you seen this person exhibit which will be necessary for ministry?

How does this person evidence emotional stability in his/her life?

How does this person demonstrate written, oral, interpersonal, and organizational communication skills necessary for ministry?

EXPERIENCE AND FRUITFULNESS

Every person is shaped by past experiences. Take time to reflect on how experiences evidence potential for ministry as well as equip him/her for ministry.

ASK THE CANDIDATE

What experiences in your life will help you most in ministering to others?

Tell us about ministries you have led or have had significant involvement in.

S/PPRC EVALUATION

In what ways have you seen a caring and empathetic heart in this person?

How has this person effectively led in your congregation's ministries (classes, worship, mission work, etc.) and governance (committees)?

How has this person experienced stability and success in previous employment (if applicable)?

INVESTMENT

Because of the spiritual, emotional, and time stresses, ordained ministry can put a strain on family dynamics, more than most imagine, until they have entered full-time ministry. For Elders, add to this the demands of itinerant ministry, relating at the direction of the Bishop according to the needs of the mission field.

ASK THE CANDIDATE

How are you prepared and how have you prepared your family for the lifestyles which are inevitable for clergy life?

How are you prepared to meet the financial demands of seminary (if applicable)?

The Bishop asks those about to be ordained a series of historic questions (BOD ¶336), including “Are you in debt so as to embarrass yourself in your work? This question takes on significance in the realization that a seminary education can cost upward of \$75,000. Local pastor and certified lay minister are options with much less weighty financial requirements.

What is your current educational background?

The ordination process is a significant time commitment for the completion of education, residency, and then gaining an experience base for effective ministry. Please help him/her consider this obligation in relation to their potential years of ministry.

Are you ready for:

4 years of undergraduate studies (if not completed)

2-4 years of full-time graduate studies (depending on whether elder or deacon) or a minimum of 5, maximum 12 years for Course of Study (for local pastors)?

3 years of residency after commissioning?

Additional years of active ministry to develop an experience base for effective ministry?

How many potential years of ministry do you foresee after ordination or receiving credentials?

what are your thoughts about the time involved?

S/PPRC EVALUATION

How do you perceive this person’s preparedness to pursue his/her calling?

Candidate:

Printed

Signed

DECISION

Before a formal vote is taken, please give the following questions diligent consideration.

When have you prayed for and about this person's call?

Do you believe this person is called by God to representative ministry (either as ordained or licensed)?

Do you believe that this person's call can be certified by the Church?

Can you envision this person serving as a pastor in the United Methodist Church (preaching, teaching, visiting hospitals, comforting a mourning family, leading a church or ministry)? Why or why not?

Can you envision this person as pastor to your family? Why or Why not?

What type of ministry or ministry setting would best suit this person?

Is this the proper time for this person to move forward in the candidacy process, or should he/she do further preparation and reflection?

SPRC CHAIR

PASTOR

Printed

Printed

Signed

Signed

Candidacy Mentor's Report for Candidacy Certification Interview

Date: _____

Candidate's Name _____

Candidacy Mentor's Name _____

1. Please describe the candidate's growth and development (new insights, new understandings about the nature and requirements of licensed and ordained ministry, discernment of call, etc.) during the mentoring process.

2. In the document, "The Expectation of Leaders in the Oklahoma Conference," candidates' usefulness for ministry is evaluated according to Fitness, Readiness, and Effectiveness. Please share what you have discerned about the candidate in these areas:

A. Fitness: _____

B. Readiness: _____

C. Effectiveness: _____

3. Which track toward ministry is the candidate seeking?

_____ Licensed Local Pastor

_____ Ordained Elder

_____ Ordained Deacon

4. Do you believe that this form of ministry is the best fit for this candidate's call to service? Explain.

Candidacy Mentor's Signature

Candidate's Signature

Candidacy Mentor's Report for Candidacy Recertification Interview

Date _____

Candidate's Name _____

Candidacy Mentor's Name _____

1. How often did the candidate meet with you this year? _____

2. Describe the educational plan the candidate has developed with you. _____

3. When will the candidate complete his/her education (i.e., completion of the Course of Study or Master of Divinity degree)? _____

4. Have you discerned growth and development in this candidate this year? Describe. _____

5. What growing edges do you perceive in this candidate's ministry? How have you been addressing them? _____

Annual Interview Form for Local Pastors and Certified Candidates

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Home Church: _____

I am ultimately seeking to become: _____ A Full Member Elder
_____ A Full Member Deacon
_____ A Licensed Local Pastor
_____ An Associate Member

Please reread the document, "Expectations of Spiritual Leaders in the Oklahoma Conference." Then, on a **separate page** complete the following:

Fitness

1. Describe an experience from this past year that evidenced spiritual growth in you.
2. Describe your service in the church over the past year.
3. How are you modeling the faithful practice of spiritual disciplines?

Readiness

1. How do you continue to sense God's call into Christian service?
2. How are you keeping yourself healthy: physically? emotionally? spiritually?
3. What kinds of sacrifices do you anticipate or have you made in becoming a licensed or ordained clergy person in the United Methodist Church? Which will be or continue to be the most difficult for you?

Effectiveness

1. What does effectiveness in ministry look like to you? What will be necessary for you to accomplish this?
2. Describe one area of service in the local church that has borne fruit through your leadership.
3. What are a couple of things a servant minister should do to help someone grow as a disciple?

Personal

1. Have there been any significant changes in your personal situation? (e.g., marriage, job, finances, etc.) If so, describe the changes.
2. Has there been any significant change in your health? If so, describe the changes.
3. Has there been any significant change affecting your family or close friends that is affecting you at this time? If so, describe the changes and how you are being affected.

Education

1. What progress have you made in your education plan? What **required** courses remain to be taken?
2. If enrolled in the Course of Study, how much have you completed? (one course completed equals .25, such that each two-week course of study equals .50 and each four-week course of study equals 1.0)
3. When do you plan to complete your education?
4. Describe any issues or concerns affecting your educational progress.

Is there anything else going on in your life that the dCOM needs to know about?



HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FORM Form 102

Name: _____
First Middle Last

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Cell Phone: (____) _____ Other Phone: (____) _____

Sex: Male Female Birth Date: _____

E-mail: _____

Ethnic Origin:

Asian

African American/Black

Hispanic/Latino

Other:

American Indian

White/Caucasian

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

Conference: _____ District: _____

Local Church: _____

Church Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Briefly describe your involvement in your local church, such as your leadership positions, groups you enjoy, church activities, etc.

Available at: okumc.org/bomforms



HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MEDICAL SUMMARY REPORT OF MINISTERIAL CANDIDATE Form 103

Candidate's Name: _____

To the Board of Ordained Ministry:

Please indicate here, the name/address of the board officer who will receive this report.

Name: _____

Address: _____

CONSENT FOR THE RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION - COMPLETED BY CANDIDATE

Candidate Name: _____ Birth Date: _____

I hereby authorize and direct _____ (physician) to disclose to the _____ (annual conference) Board of Ordained Ministry the following information with regard to the records of _____ (candidate) for the purpose of evaluation by The United Methodist Church for entrance into ministry.

I, the undersigned, understand that I may revoke this consent at any time except to the extent that action has been taken in reliance upon it. This consent will expire sixty (60) days after the date treatment is terminated unless another date is specified.

I understand that the information requested may be disclosed from records whose confidentiality is otherwise protected by federal as well as state law. Any of the above requested information may include results of alcohol/drug (substance) abuse and/or diagnosis and treatment of psychological disorders, as well as HIV status.

To the party receiving this information: This information has been disclosed to you from records whose confidentiality is protected by federal law. Federal regulations (42 CFR Part 2) prohibit you from making any further disclosure of it without the specific written consent of the person to whom it pertains, or as otherwise permitted by such regulations. A general authorization for the release of medical or other information is not sufficient for this purpose.

Signature of Candidate

Date

Witness

Date

gghem
facebook.com/gghem

gghem.org
1001 19th Avenue, South
Nashville, TN 37213

Available at: okumc.org/bomforms



HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY CHARGE CONFERENCE OR EQUIVALENT BODY RECOMMENDATION Form 104

I hereby declare my candidacy for licensed or ordained (circle one) ministry in The United Methodist Church and request the support and recommendation of the Charge Conference or equivalent body as specified by the district committee on ordained ministry for certification as a candidate for:

Order of Deacons: _____ Order of Elders: _____ License as Local Pastor: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____
(Signature of the Declared Candidate)

CHARGE CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATION (or equivalent body)

Let those who consider recommending persons for candidacy as ministers in The United Methodist Church ask themselves the following questions which were first asked by John Wesley at the third conference of Methodist preachers in 1746 (*The Book of Discipline*, ¶310).

Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire nothing but God? Are they holy in all manner of conversation?

Have they gifts, as well as evidence of God's grace, for the work? Have they a clear, sound understanding; a right judgment in the things of God; a just conception of salvation by faith? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?

Have they fruit? Have any been truly convinced of sin and converted to God, and are believers edified by their service?

Believing that _____ is called of God and is a suitable candidate for licensed or ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church, _____ (the recommending body) recommends him/her for certification as a candidate to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry. In making this recommendation, we attest to the fact that the declared candidate has been a professing member in good standing of The United Methodist Church or a baptized participant of a recognized United Methodist campus ministry or other United Methodist ministry setting for a minimum of one (1) year, has graduated from an accredited high school or received a certificate of equivalency, and has received by written ballot a two-thirds vote of this body.

Name: _____ Date: _____
(Signature of authorized elder, district superintendent, or bishop)

Conference: _____ District: _____

Twitter: @gbhem
Facebook: facebook.com/gbhem

Web: gbhem.org
Address: 1001 19th Avenue, South
Nashville, TN 37213

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Candidacy/Conference Relations Forms, 2017-2020

Available at: okumc.org/bomforms



HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH APPLICATION FOR CLERGY RELATIONSHIP TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Name: _____
First Middle Last

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Cell Phone: (____) _____ Other Phone: (____) _____

E-mail: _____ Birth Date: _____

Being fully persuaded that God has called me to be a minister of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, I hereby request affirmation of that call by The United Methodist Church through the granting of a clergy relationship to the annual conference. The relationship for which I am applying is:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Pastor | <input type="checkbox"/> Provisional Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student Local Pastor | <input type="checkbox"/> Provisional Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time | <input type="checkbox"/> Deacon in Full Connection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time | <input type="checkbox"/> Elder in Full Connection |

While I am applying for this relationship to the annual conference, I am also applying for:

- License for Pastoral Ministry
- License for the Ministry of the Deacon
- Ordination as a Deacon
- Ordination as an Elder
- Recognition of orders granted by another denomination

Signature _____ Date _____

An application for membership in full connection is to be sent to the registrar of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

An application for license as a local pastor, associate membership, or provisional membership is to be sent both to the district Committee on Ordained Ministry and the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Information on required documentation is located on the next page.

	gghem		gghem.org
	facebook.com/gghem		1001 19th Avenue, South Nashville, TN 37213

www.bomlibrary.org
Candidacy/Conference Relations Forms, 2017-2020

Available at: okumc.org/bomforms

Registration for the January 2017 term of Online Basic Course of Study has ended. Our next term will be August 2017 and enrollment will open on June 1st, 2017.

We hope to be offering:
122: Theological Heritage I
221: Bible II
321: Bible III

If you have any questions, please send an email to cos@gbhem.org

ENROLLMENT FORM
STUDIES IN UNITED METHODIST HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND POLITY

Discipline ¶1324.4a

Name _____
Last First Middle

Address _____
Street City State Zip

Home Phone (_____) _____ Office Phone (_____) _____

E-mail Address _____

Conference _____ District _____

Date of Birth _____ PID# _____
(New Students e-mail cos@gbhem.org to receive your PID#)

Seminary _____
Name of School Date of M.Div. or equivalent degree

Please check which course you are applying for:

Enrollment approved for	United Methodist History	_____
Correspondence:	United Methodist Doctrine	_____
	United Methodist Polity	_____
Online:	United Methodist Polity	_____

Fee enclosed: _____ (The fee is \$250 per correspondence course or \$300 for course Online)
Refunds are available only within 30 days.

Written material must be submitted to the Course of Study Office within ONE YEAR of Registration.

Signature of registrar of Conference Board of Ordained Ministry Date

Address _____
Street City State Zip

The Course of Study for Ordained Ministry
General Board of Higher Education & Ministry
The United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 340007
Nashville, TN 37203-0007

Available at: okumc.org/bomforms

A program of independent study in United Methodist history, doctrine, and polity for candidates who are theological school graduates lacking seminary credit in these areas is provided and administered by the Division of Ordained Ministry.

PROCEDURES FOR PURSUING THE STUDIES

The applicant for enrollment in this independent study of one or more of the three units submits and enrollment form signed by the chairperson or registrar of his/her annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry. If the candidate has credit for one or more of the units of study on the basis of seminary courses, a transcript from the seminary is required. All courses in history, doctrine, and polity offered in non-United Methodist seminaries shall be certified by the Division of Ordained Ministry in accordance with the *Discipline*.

Upon receipt of the enrollment form the student will be sent a syllabus and a bibliography for each unit. Completed material is to be sent to the following address:

The Course of Study for Ordained Ministry
General Board of Higher Education & Ministry
The United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 340007
Nashville, TN 37203-0007

Students have 12 months from the time of application to complete a course in United Methodist studies. The written material should be received in Nashville by April 1 if credit is expected at the annual conference session. Any Board of Ordained Ministry may specify an earlier date if they so choose. There is fee of \$250 per course for correspondence or \$300 for online which should accompany the enrollment form.



HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
CANDIDATE'S DISCLOSURE FORM - ¶324.12
Form 114**

Please complete and print this form. Then sign it in the presence of a Notary. Return the form to:

Have you ever been:

- 1. convicted of a felony? ___ No ___ Yes
- 2. convicted of a misdemeanor? ___ No ___ Yes
- 3. accused in writing of sexual misconduct or child abuse? ___ No ___ Yes

If you answered *yes* to any of these questions, please explain.

If you are required by this disclosure form to disclose any written accusations or convictions for felony, misdemeanor or any incident of sexual misconduct that you dispute or believe should be explained in any way, you have an opportunity at this time to include any additional information that you believe might be helpful or important regarding the disclosure. Any relevant additional information should be provided in a response statement attached to the form. (Note: It would be preferable if this response statement could be included right on the disclosure statement; however, we realize there are space limitations on forms and thus you might need to request that the statement be attached. Please indicate if pages are attached.)

I hereby certify that the information provided on this form is true and accurate.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Subscribed and sworn this _____ day of _____

Notary Public _____

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ggbhem.org
1001 19th Avenue, South
Nashville, TN 37213

www.bomlibrary.org
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