

POLICIES OF THE BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

North Georgia Annual Conference

A. GENERAL POLICIES¹

1. Lay Members of The Board:

Laypersons, including diaconal ministers, who serve on The Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, shall have both voice and vote on all business matters of The Board, including matters of clergy ordination, character, and conference relations. These same privileges are extended to them at the clergy executive session of the annual conference.

2. Executive Committee:

The Executive Committee of The Board shall be comprised of the elected officers and the cabinet representative(s). The chair of the Order of Deacons, the chair of the Order of Elders, and the chair of the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members shall be members of The Board and its executive committee.

3. Ethical Standards:

- a. The Board is to interpret the high ethical standards of ordained ministry set forth in the Discipline and to study matters pertaining to character (§605.7) ¶635.2r².
- b. When dealing with a traumatic life situation, persons should consider self-deferring for that year. Traumatic life situations may include but are not limited to divorce, severe illness, recent grief experience, or other situations that impact one's life. Board members who are in the same situations should consider recusing themselves for that current season of the year.

4. Lodging at Board Meetings:

The Board will pay the single occupancy rate for overnight rooms for all board members and candidates during the interview retreats. A candidate's family members are asked not to attend the interview retreat with the candidates. Additionally, BOM requests that members do not bring family to the retreat interviews.

5. Completion of Application Files:

The Board will consider only candidates whose files are complete, in the registrar's office, by the assigned deadline.

The Board expects all candidates:

- a. To take responsibility to read the instructions from The Board carefully
- b. To ensure that their files are complete by the deadline.

6. Board Responsibility for Required Testing or Therapy:

- a. The Board has some responsibility for ministers in full connection. Therefore, if for any reason The Board requests psychological testing, a psychiatric evaluation, or the like, for any minister in full connection, The Board shall assume all the cost.

¹ 2016 The Book of Discipline specific guidelines for The Board of Ordained Ministry ¶635, pages 471-478.

² 2016 BOD, page 416 and 476.

- 1 b. The Board has no responsibility for financing the therapy or other requirements
2 placed upon candidates or provisional members unless such therapy is required by
3 The Board. Candidates for ministry pay for their own psychotherapy and any
4 additional psychological testing unless it is required by The Board.
5

6 **7. BOM Confidentiality**

7 No recording or electronic broadcast of the BOM meeting is allowed. At the discretion of
8 a chairperson, of the BOM or BOM sub-Committee, participation at full board meetings
9 may include alternate media options. At the discretion of the Chairperson, votes may be
10 taken by e-mail. The BOM secretary shall report the results of electronic votes at the next
11 meeting of the BOM.
12

13 **B. DISTRICT COMMITTEE ON ORDAINED MINISTRY**

14 **1. Board Members on District Committees:**

15 The Conference Board of Ordained Ministry recommends that all members of The Board
16 in a particular district serve on that DCOM. One member of The Board will be designated
17 by The Board as the official liaison between The Board and the DCOM.
18

19 **2. District Committee Recommendations to The Board of Ordained Ministry:**

20 A three-quarters vote of the DCOM is required for each candidate recommended to The
21 Board.
22

23 **3. Declaration of Orders**

24 The candidate sent forward by the DCOM is to be identified as seeking provisional
25 membership to become a deacon or become an elder.
26

27 **C. CANDIDACY AND CERTIFICATION**

28 **1. Psychological evaluation before certification as a candidate:**

- 29 a. During the group mentoring process, candidates are asked to provide their DCOM
30 with a psychological evaluation produced by Dr. Anne Imhoff, PhD., LLC, licensed
31 psychologist. Her office is located at 6340 Sugarloaf Parkway, Suite 200, Duluth, GA
32 30097. To make an appointment please contact her office manager, Ms. Cynthia
33 Daniels at 678.637.7170.
34 b. Candidate should begin by calling Ms. Cynthia Daniels to make arrangements for the
35 evaluation. This evaluation must be completed before the candidate meets with the
36 DCOM. Dr. Imhoff's appointment slots often book up several weeks in advance, it is
37 in the candidate's best interest to call for an appointment approximately 2 months
38 before the report needs to arrive at DCOM.
39 c. The evaluation process takes 4-5 hours all together. Candidates may bring a snack
40 and are encouraged to dress in layers for their own comfort to accommodate varying
41 office temperatures. The psychological evaluation will include some computer-based
42 personality testing and a clinical interview. The General Board of Higher Education
43 and Ministry has allowed psychological evaluations to be conducted virtually through
44 a secure tele-health platform. At the time of this writing (2021), Dr. Imhoff has
45 agreed to see clients virtually.

- 1 d. Following the appointment, Dr. Imhoff will write a report, summarizing the
2 interview, supporting documentation, and all of the test data. The report is then sent
3 to The Center for Clergy Excellence (CCE) for review by the psychological
4 assessment committee (PAC) of the BOM. The PAC recommendation and
5 psychological assessment are then sent to the district superintendent. It generally
6 takes three (3) weeks from the interview until the district office receives the report
7 and the PAC's recommendation. The evaluation will become part of the candidacy
8 file, and it will be available to the DCOM and to The Board. It will be one of several
9 sources of data used by those bodies charged with recommending persons for
10 credentials for ministry in The United Methodist Church.
- 11 e. The cost of the psychological evaluation is subsidized by The North Georgia
12 Conference of the UMC; however, a portion (\$500.00) must be paid by the candidate.
13 If this cost is overly burdensome, please feel free to discuss this with your pastor
14 and/or district superintendent. The cost must be paid in full prior to start of the
15 appointment by cash, check, or money order. Credit card payments are accepted, but
16 a 2% processing fee is added by the processing company. The full cost of the
17 assessment plus the processing fee comes to a total of \$510. Only the amount being
18 paid by credit card is subject to the 2% fee, and each payment made by a credit card
19 is subject to the 2% fee. Cancellation is a minimum of 48 hours prior to appointment
20 and candidates not providing that will be charged \$650 for their evaluation, and
21 payment in full will be required before being able to reschedule.
- 22 f. Dr. Imhoff may be able to make a special "rush" dispensation. However, there will be
23 an additional fee of \$100 (rush fee). This will be negotiated based on the candidate's
24 particular circumstances and Dr. Imhoff's scheduling availability. Candidates who
25 need a rushed evaluations must explain their circumstances to Ms. Cynthia Daniels.

26
27 **2. Identity and Criminal Background Reports:**

- 28 a. Persons seeking certification as candidates for licensed and ordained ministry shall
29 provide the DCOM with an Identity and Criminal Background Report. During the
30 meeting with the district superintendent the candidate shall be advised of this
31 requirement and given instructions for obtaining the report. Based on the report, one
32 of the following statements placed in the candidate's file:
- 33 1. A notarized statement detailing any convictions for felony or misdemeanor or
34 written accusations of sexual misconduct or child abuse
 - 35 2. A notarized statement certifying that this candidate has neither been accused in
36 writing nor convicted of a felony, misdemeanor, and any incident of sexual
37 misconduct or child abuse.
- 38 b. The financial cost of the Identity and Criminal Background Report shall be the
39 responsibility of the candidate.
- 40 c. When the district superintendent receives the report, it shall be entered into the
41 applicant's file for when the candidate interviews with the DCOM
- 42 d. If an individual's report reveals that candidate has a criminal record, the district
43 superintendent shall inquire of the applicant the circumstances of each criminal
44 incident revealed in the report and shall communicate to the candidate the policies
45 and procedures that shall be followed. The district superintendent shall advise the
46 DCOM of the facts contained in the report and of the applicant's comments regarding

1 these facts. The DCOM shall review this history with the applicant prior to any vote
2 to certify the applicant's candidacy for ordained ministry.

- 3 e. This report shall be in the hands of the district superintendent before the candidate
4 undergoes the psychological evaluation. If an individual has a criminal background,
5 this information shall be conveyed to the psychologist prior to the evaluation.
- 6 f. If a DCOM certifies the candidacy of an applicant with a criminal background and
7 this person is appointed to serve in a local church before being ordained, the facts of
8 the criminal incident shall be fully revealed to the staff-parish relations committee of
9 the church to which the individual is being appointed.
- 10 g. When candidates are eligible to apply for provisional membership their interview
11 materials will need to include an updated report. The original one will not be
12 accepted. The district office will assist candidates with this requirement and forward
13 this report to The Center for Clergy Excellence. It shall be included in the candidate's
14 file when the candidate is interviewed by The Board and will be considered in BOM
15 discussions.

16
17 Summary: Since every individual's situation is unique, it is not advisable to lay down
18 blanket guidelines for dealing with individuals with criminal backgrounds. However,
19 sound judgment would indicate that the level of reform and conversion might be
20 indicated by the number of criminal incidents, the nature of the crime, the length of time
21 that the applicant has led a responsible, law-abiding life between the criminal incident
22 and the present, and the committee's assessment of the applicant's personal integrity and
23 trustworthiness. Violent, abusive, and dishonest behaviors are often deeply ingrained in
24 the personality. When there is a choice between affirming an individual's reformation and
25 protecting a congregation, the DCOM shall err on the side of protecting a congregation.
26

27 **3. Financial Status:**

- 28 a. A current credit report with a FICO Credit Score of 640 is the established minimum
29 expectation. All credit reports must be obtained from www.myfico.com with the
30 Equifax option. However, if a candidate's credit score does not meet the established
31 minimum expectation, the candidate is to provide additional information using the
32 balance sheet/income statement form provided by the Center for Clergy Excellence.
33 When the balance sheet/income statement is submitted, debt/income ratios must be
34 satisfied.
- 35 b. Credit reports of candidates that fail to satisfy the established credit score and/or
36 ratios will be referred to the credit advisory task force for review.
 - 37 1. The credit advisory task force will review all referred credit reports and return a
38 list of questions for the DCOM to ask candidates during the interview process.
 - 39 2. The candidate will be assigned to a member of the task force.

40 **4. Time Requirement:**

41 A candidate must be a certified candidate for one year before the DCOM may
42 recommend the candidate to The Board for provisional interviews (§324.1³). The
43 minimum of one year of certification begins on the date the DCOM certifies the
44 candidate.
45

³ 2016 BOD, page 245.

1
2 **5. Transcript Evaluation for Course of Study**

3 No undergraduate work can be applied to the Course of Study. Only work completed at
4 the master's level at a school that is a member of the Association of Theological Schools,
5 and the Commission on Accrediting can be applied to Course of Study. Only courses
6 completed at a University Senate approved school can be applied to Advance Course of
7 Study.
8

9 **D. CERTIFIED CANDIDATES**

10 **1. Certified Candidates under Pastoral Appointment:**

- 11 a. Certified candidates who have met the requirements for and have been approved and
12 appointed as local pastors shall be accountable to the district in which they serve. The
13 DCOM shall be responsible for securing and maintaining records, including the
14 transfer of candidacy.
15 b. Certified candidates under appointment as local pastors must receive annual approval
16 of the DCOM as long as they are under appointment as local pastor. This replaces the
17 required annual approval of the home church charge conference for persons who have
18 been approved as local pastors.
19

20 **2. Transfer of Candidacy from another Annual Conference:**

- 21 a. A person will affiliate with a congregation within the bounds of the North Georgia
22 Annual Conference and eventually join that congregation as a part of the transfer
23 process.
24 b. A person who has started the candidacy process in another annual conference may
25 have their candidacy process transferred to a district in the North Georgia Annual
26 Conference after meeting with the district superintendent, completing a new
27 background check, and receipt of files from the previous district. The district
28 superintendent and the Center for Clergy Excellence will determine if the completion
29 of group mentoring has been satisfied in the previous conference or if the person must
30 complete the entire group mentoring process in North Georgia before being eligible to
31 interview for certification. The candidate must receive approval from the Staff Parish
32 Relations Committee and the Charge Conference of their new church to continue
33 towards certification, in addition to satisfying all DCOM requirements.
34 c. A person who is a certified candidate for ordained ministry in another annual
35 conference may transfer their certification to the North Georgia Annual Conference
36 with the approval of the receiving DCOM. After meeting with the district
37 superintendent and affiliating with a congregation within that district in North
38 Georgia. This shall include an interview with the receiving DCOM, a review of all
39 records from the sending district, and updated criminal background and credit report,
40 and a review of the psychological assessment completed in the sending conference. If
41 the assessment is more than four years old a new one would be required before
42 meeting with DCOM. Once approved by DCOM for transfer the candidate would
43 officially transfer their membership to the congregation where they had previously
44 affiliated their membership. The candidate would need to receive the
45 recommendation of the new Charge Conference annually.
46

1 **3. Annual Renewal of Certification**

2 All certified candidates are required to annually receive recommendation by the charge
3 conference and meet with DCOM to renew their certification. Failure to do so may result
4 in the termination of certification.
5

6 **4. Certified Candidates Deferred from Provisional Membership**

- 7 a. Deferred candidates reapplying for provisional membership remain accountable to the
8 DCOM that initially recommended them unless an appointment is received in another
9 district. In the event of appointment in another district, their candidacy **for**
10 **provisional membership** will be maintained by the previous DCOM unless the
11 candidate self-defers. In the case of self-defer the candidacy is transferred to the new
12 district and DCOM and in that case there shall be a recommendation to The Board
13 from the district in which the candidate is serving. There shall be consultation
14 between the two district superintendents and the DCOMs.
15 b. When deferred candidates for provisional membership are required to have mentors,
16 the Center for Clergy Excellence will work with The Board to secure those mentors
17 and notify the candidate in writing.
18

19 **E. CANDIDATES FOR PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP**

20 **1. Psychological Evaluation:**

- 21 a. Those seeking provisional membership shall secure a psychological evaluation
22 provided by the ministerial assessment specialist of The Board unless they received
23 an evaluation at the time of certification as candidates. The expense shall be shared
24 by The Board and the candidate.
25 b. If the psychological evaluation administered during the candidacy process is more
26 than four years old, when the candidate meets with the DCOM to be recommended to
27 The Board or will be more than four years old at the time of BOM interviews, an
28 additional evaluation will be required of the provisional candidate before being
29 eligible to meet with The Board to receive recommendation to the annual conference.
30 There shall be no exceptions. The cost of this evaluation is the responsibility of the
31 candidate. The Board may require an additional evaluation of any candidate
32 regardless of how many years have passed since the first evaluation. In such cases,
33 the candidate will pay \$150, and The Board will pay the remainder of the cost. The
34 results of all psychological evaluations must be in the candidate's file when the
35 candidate appears before The Board.
36

37 **2. Financial Status:**

- 38 a. A current credit report with a FICO Credit Score of 640 is the established minimum
39 expectation. All credit reports must be obtained from www.myfico.com with the
40 Equifax option. However, if a candidate's credit score does not meet the established
41 minimum expectation, the candidate is to provide additional information using the
42 balance sheet/income statement form provided by The Board. Balance sheet/income
43 statement is submitted, debt/income ratios must be satisfied.
44 b. A candidate who has been recommended by DCOM, but whose credit report does not
45 satisfy the minimum established credit score and/or ratios, shall submit the following
46 documentation:

1. Letter from the candidate explaining the financial situation and plan for improving their score.
2. Letter from DCOM stating they have consulted with the candidate, recommended the candidate to the credit advisory task force, and worked with the candidate to improve their score based on the consultation with the task force.
3. Letter from the credit advisory task force stating they have worked with the candidate, and how they view the work of the candidate towards recommendations that have been suggested.

3. Application for Provisional Membership:

The form to apply for provisional membership shall, among other questions, include questions pertaining to Citizenship, Social Security number (if applicable) Green Card number (if applicable) Residency Card (if applicable) and the status of the card.

4. Medical Report:

All persons seeking approval for provisional membership shall submit the results, on the form provided, of a complete physical examination by a licensed physician within the previous year.

5. Educational Requirements:

- a. To be considered for provisional membership, all candidates must have completed all their required studies, including United Methodist studies, before the annual conference session at which they will be received and commissioned (§324.4a). All candidates who are first approved as certified candidates after July 2010 will be required to have a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university, in addition to the required graduate studies before they can be commissioned. Exceptions to the bachelor's degree requirement after July 2010 may be considered by the BOM via written request to the BOM and The Center for Clergy Excellence, and would be considered according to the criteria of §324.3 undergraduate requirement.
- b. United Methodist Studies
 1. All studies in United Methodist history, doctrine, and polity must be completed for academic credit from an educational institution approved by the University Senate. The courses may be taken in an interactive class on-line through the internet from United Methodist University Senate approved theological seminaries. Courses taken by correspondence will not be accepted.
 2. Persons transferring from other denominations must have completed United Methodist Studies before admission to provisional membership in The North Georgia Conference.
 3. Candidates for ordination in The United Methodist Church cannot take all of their seminary classes online. University Senate guidelines state that credit for online education for United Methodist students will only be granted for classes taken at one of the 13 United Methodist theological schools or at Asbury Theological Seminary. All United Methodist seminaries and Asbury Theological Seminary are allowed to offer up to two-thirds of the Master of Divinity degree as distance education, with one-third of the degree required to be campus-based. The Annual

1 Conference Board of Ordained Ministry determines the number of hours
2 candidates in that conference are allowed to take online (University Senate
3 Guidelines Appendix A, Working Rules of the Commission on Theological
4 Education, page 43).

- 5 c. In addition to the academic requirements of ¶324.4a, all candidates for deacons or
6 elders orders in The North Georgia Conference must complete at least one course in
7 homiletics and one course in theology, both of which must be in a classroom for
8 academic credit. You may have additional courses in each of these areas online, but
9 you must have one homiletics and one theology course in the standard classroom
10 setting.
- 11 d. When a seminary in which a United Methodist student is enrolled and attending
12 classes ceases to be an approved institution by the University Senate during the
13 student’s studies toward a degree, the student shall complete degree work by the end
14 of five years from the date of the withdrawal of the institution’s University Senate
15 approval. A student is expected to make regular and appropriate progress toward
16 completion of the Master of Divinity or equivalent degree (for deacon track students).
17 “Regular and appropriate progress” assumes that a student is taking classes every
18 term. Five years will be the maximum time for completing a degree and for the
19 student to be classified as a graduate of an approved school. Exceptions may be
20 considered upon written request to the registrar of The Board. The final decision will
21 be made by the Executive Committee of The Board.

22
23 **6. Recommendation Letters for Provisional Membership:**

24 The recommendations shall include a letter from the district superintendent, and if the
25 candidate works in a church or extension ministry, a letter from one's immediate
26 supervisor or Senior Pastor of the church where the candidate serves. If appointed to a
27 local church, a letter from staff-parish relations committee chairperson is required.
28 Provisional candidates will also need two seminary recommendations, one from a faculty
29 advisor, and one from the field education office. The Center for Clergy Excellence may
30 give a waiver in extenuating circumstances, such as the candidate being over 10 years
31 removed from the seminary. Candidates will not have access to the content of Letters of
32 Recommendation without prior consent of the writer.

33
34 **7. Categories for Provisional Interview:**

35 The Board shall have three categories of provisional candidates: (a) “Approved by Board
36 and recommended to Clergy Session for election,” (b) “Deferred Due to Deficiencies,”
37 and (c) “Denied.” Those "Deferred" may be appointed to serve as local pastors. All
38 “Approved Candidates" not received into provisional membership will continue in the
39 “Approved” status and will be accountable to their DCOM. They will need the
40 recommendation of the DCOM in order to come before The Board again for
41 consideration for provisional membership. They will not be required to resubmit their
42 papers and other materials, except as specifically directed by The Board.

1 **8. Deferment for Provisional Membership:**

- 2 a. A candidate for provisional membership who is "Deferred" remains accountable to
3 the DCOM (see D-4a) and must receive the recommendation of the committee in
4 order to be considered again by The Board.
5 b. A candidate for provisional membership who is "Deferred" due to information from
6 the psychological evaluation shall have a new psychological evaluation or counseling
7 with a BOM appointed psychologist before reapplication to The Board. When The
8 Board requires more thorough testing, such requirement must be documented and
9 specified on the candidate's Action Report by official action of The Board.
10 c. The interview team shall prepare specific requirements for candidates who are
11 "Deferred" before the candidate is presented to the full BOM, and before The Board
12 vote. These requirements shall be adopted or amended by the full BOM.
13 d. The reviewer of a candidate who is "Deferred" shall: (1) carefully review
14 requirements with the candidate; (2) inform the candidate they will receive a letter
15 with specific details from the Center for Clergy Excellence within two weeks.
16 e. The registrar shall inform, in writing, the district superintendent and the chairperson
17 of the DCOM of a candidate's status of deferred and any recommendations and/or
18 requirements. The registrar will contact any support personnel and inform them of
19 expectations for each deferred candidate.
20 f. Candidates reapplying for membership after having been deferred shall submit such
21 papers or materials as determined by The Board to be appropriate and needed.
22 g. All deferred candidate interviews shall include Called and Disciplined Life and
23 Leadership Development. Candidates will update their autobiographical statement
24 and revise their leadership goals and be prepared to discuss these items during the
25 interview.
26

27 **9. Appeal of Board decision:**

28 An appeal to the decision of The Board regarding a person's eligibility for provisional
29 membership may be made only when it can be proven to the satisfaction of the BOM
30 Executive Committee that The Board had inaccurate information on the credit report,
31 medical report, psychological evaluation, ~~or~~ school transcripts or background report.
32

33 **F. PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP**

34 **1. Place of Provisional Service:**

35 Provisional service may be rendered in (a) a local church or (b) an extension ministry in a
36 setting approved by the Extension Ministry Committee of the BOM and appointed by the
37 resident Bishop. Proper supervision, by a district superintendent shall be provided in
38 either setting.
39

40 **2. Provisional Period Service Requirements:**

- 41 a. Provisional Elder: Candidates approved by the BOM and elected to provisional
42 membership by the clergy session of the Annual Conference shall make themselves
43 available to be appointed by the resident bishop to a local church or approved
44 extension ministry appointment. Those seeking an appointment to extension ministry
45 shall complete the BOM application for extension ministry setting approval. Those
46 serving in extension ministry must be under the supervision of a full connection elder

1 or deacon during the provisional period. Full time appointments are normative for
2 provisional members, but in some cases, provisional members may be appointed to
3 increments of less than full time service. Less than three fourths status anytime during
4 the provisional residency period requires the addition of an extra year of provisional
5 time before becoming eligible for election to full connection and ordination.

- 6 b. Provisional Deacon: Candidates approved by the BOM and elected to provisional
7 membership by the clergy session of the Annual Conference shall identify their
8 setting for ministry and charge conference to be appointed by the resident bishop.
9 Candidates for provisional deacon status may be commissioned if the cabinet
10 approves an appointment to quarter-time service or more. Those seeking an
11 appointment to extension ministry shall complete the BOM application for extension
12 ministry setting approval. They must be under the supervision of a full connection
13 deacon or elder during the provisional period. The appointment should include
14 compensation. Less than three fourths status anytime during the provisional residency
15 period requires the addition of an extra year of provisional time before becoming
16 eligible for election to full connection and ordination.
- 17 c. In appointments where ministerial/contextual circumstances result in service less than
18 three fourths status, an exception to this policy may be granted upon written request
19 of the provisional member to The Board. This request should be sent to the chair of
20 The Board.

21
22 **3. Full Time Employment:**

- 23 a. "Full-time service shall mean that the person's entire vocational time, as defined by
24 the district superintendent in consultation with the pastor and the committee on
25 pastor-parish relations, is devoted to the work of ministry in the field of labor to
26 which one is appointed by the bishop" (2016 Book of Discipline, ¶338.1). Therefore,
27 provisional members who wish to pursue further academic credit must first have the
28 approval of the pastor-parish relations committee, the district superintendent, and the
29 Executive Committee of The Board.
- 30 b. Full time post-master's degree work will not count towards the required provisional
31 period.

32
33 **4. Eligibility for Ordination as a Student for an Advanced Degree while working Part**
34 **Time:**

35 Upon recommendation of The Board, a provisional member in a graduate program
36 **(PhD or ThD)** and serving part-time under appointment shall be able to equate less
37 than full-time to the requirement of full-time service for the three-year provisional
38 requirement. The part-time appointment must meet the requirement of the policy on
39 "Place of Provisional Service" (point 1 above).

40
41 **5. Residency in Ministry (RIM) Group Participation**

- 42 a. New Provisional Members are to be informed of the requirement of RIM Group
43 participation and the definition of full-time service under supervision.
- 44 b. Supervision for Provisional Members serving outside the bounds of the Annual
45 Conference in either a local church or an Extension Ministry appointment shall be
46 assigned an Elder/Mentor in lieu of participation in a RIM year and at the discretion

1 of The Board shall be expected to participate in the RIM Group and mentoring
2 process of the Conference in which they are appointed. Annual reports/evaluations
3 shall be sent to The Board.

- 4 c. Communication between the Provisional Member and the Mentor must be close and
5 frequent enough for the Mentor to evaluate the Provisional Member's readiness for
6 admission to Full Connection and ordination.
- 7 d. The Board may choose to waive participation in a RIM Group for persons who are
8 transferring from another denomination if they have served under appointment in
9 North Georgia for at least three years. Participation in a RIM Group is mandatory for
10 all other Provisional Members.
- 11 e. More than one absence from RIM meetings and/or provisional continuing education
12 events in any one-year will result in an automatic one-year extension of the
13 provisional period. In cases of extenuating circumstances, a committee consisting of
14 the RIM Group Leaders, Director of The Center for Clergy Excellence, BOM Chair,
15 and Chair of BOM Committee on Residency, may grant an exception to this policy
16 upon written request of the provisional member. This request should be sent to the
17 Director of The Center for Clergy Excellence for consideration. Failure to notify a
18 RIM Group Leader in advance of an absence will result in an automatic one- year
19 extension of the provisional period.

20
21 **6. Service Before Transfer:**

22 Provisional Members from another conference must serve at least one year under
23 appointment in The North Georgia Conference immediately prior to applying for
24 ordination and Full Connection in North Georgia.

25
26 **G. CANDIDATES FOR FULL CONNECTION**

27 **1. Psychological Evaluation**

28 Provisional members shall be required to have a free follow-up session with a Board
29 appointed psychologist during the year prior to applying for full connection. A report
30 from the psychologist will be required at the full connection interview.

31
32 **2. Financial Status:**

- 33 a. A current credit report with a minimum FICO Credit Score of 640 is the established
34 minimum expectation. All credit reports must be obtained from www.myfico.com
35 with the Equifax option. However, if a candidate's credit score does not meet the
36 established minimum expectation, the candidate is to provide additional information
37 using the balance sheet/income statement form and a written statement regarding their
38 financial situation to the Center for Clergy Excellence. The written statement should
39 include the financial history of the candidate (and spouse if applicable) for the last
40 three years and include any hardships that might have caused the score. Any work the
41 candidate has been doing to improve their score should also be provided.
- 42 b. The Center for Clergy Excellence and the BOM Chair will review the submitted
43 information and consult with a member of the credit advisory task force.
- 44 c. After reviewing all the submitted materials, the BOM Chair in conjunction with the
45 task force and Center for Clergy Excellence will discern if the request should be

1 presented to the Executive Committee for review. The Executive Committee will
2 receive the information from the Chair for consideration and recommendation.
3

4 **3. Substance Abuse:**

5 Any candidate who discloses or is discovered to have engaged in substance abuse shall,
6 as a condition of his or her after-care program, be required to participate in random drug
7 testing, before being approved for ordination.
8

9 **4. Application for Full Connection Membership:**

10 The form to apply for full connection membership and ordination shall, among other
11 questions, include questions pertaining to Citizenship, Social Security number (if
12 applicable) Green Card number (if applicable) Residency Card (if applicable) and the
13 status of the card.
14

15 **5. Recommendation Letters for Full Connection Membership:**

16 The recommendations should include a letter from the candidate's district superintendent,
17 senior pastor if serving as an associate, the staff-parish relations committee chair person,
18 and if the candidate works in an extension ministry, a letter from the supervisor.
19 Candidates will not have access to the content of Letters of Recommendation without
20 prior consent of the writer.
21

22 **6. Categories for Full Connection Interview:**

23 The Board shall have three categories of full connection candidates: (a) "Approved by
24 BOM for election by Clergy Session," (b) "Deferred Due to Deficiencies," and (c)
25 "Discontinuance."
26

27 **7. Deferment for Full Connection Membership:**

- 28 a. A candidate for full connection membership who is "Deferred" due to information
29 from the psychological evaluation shall have a new psychological evaluation or
30 counseling with a BOM appointed psychologist before reapplication to The Board.
31 When The Board requires more thorough testing, such requirement must be
32 documented and specified on the candidate's Action Report by official action of The
33 Board.
- 34 b. The interview team shall prepare specific recommendations/requirements for
35 candidates who are "Deferred" before the candidate is presented to the full BOM, and
36 before The Board vote. These recommendations/requirements shall be adopted or
37 amended by the full BOM.
- 38 c. The reviewer of a candidate who is "Deferred" shall: (1) carefully review
39 requirements with the candidate; (2) inform the candidate they will receive a letter
40 with specific details from the Center for Clergy Excellence within two weeks.
- 41 d. The registrar shall inform, in writing, the district superintendent and the RIM group
42 leader of a candidate's status of deferred and any requirements. The registrar will
43 contact any support personnel and inform them of expectations for each deferred
44 candidate.
- 45 e. Candidates reapplying for membership after having been deferred shall submit such
46 papers or materials as determined by The Board to be appropriate and needed.

- f. All deferred candidate interviews shall include Called and Disciplined Life and Leadership Development. Candidates will update their autobiographical statement and participate in a follow-up session with the BOM appointed psychologist and be prepared to discuss these items during the interview.
- g. Those who are “Deferred” may be placed in RIM group for a fourth year and given direction on specific requirements before they can come before The Board again for consideration for full connection membership.

8. Appeal of Board decision:

A request for reconsideration of a decision of The Board when a candidate is not approved for full connection membership may be made only when it can be proven to the satisfaction of the BOM Executive Committee that The Board had inaccurate information on the credit report, medical report, psychological evaluation, school transcripts, or background report. When the recommendation is for discontinuance, the candidate shall be advised by the Registrar of the right to a fair process hearing as defined by the Book of Discipline.

H. INTERVIEWS FOR CERTIFICATION, COMMISSION, AND ORDINATION

The process of Candidacy, Commission, and Ordination is a path that seeks to develop the individual called of God into a fit, ready, and effective clergyperson. The DCOM and The Board are committed to working with the individual in developing their skills and gifts for service in The United Methodist Church.

It is the belief of the DCOM and the BOM that after three attempts to pass either the DCOM or the BOM the inquirer or candidate or provisional will need to reassess the call of God upon their ministry and vocation. The DCOM or the BOM would encourage another path for living out that call other than ordained ministry.

After 3 attempts to pass the DCOM or the BOM the individual will not be eligible to interview any longer nor able to apply for membership in the North Georgia Annual Conference. The DCOM or BOM will provide career counseling as requested. It is our hope that the counseling will aid the individual to a place and way to fulfill God’s call upon their lives.

I. TEAM D POLICIES

Team D is a small team consisting of selected officers of the BOM that works in special cases to offer pastoral care and mentoring to those whose process is delayed by action of the BOM or by their own action or life events.

Any person who self-defers for full connection interviews shall appear before Team D. The candidate remains under the care of the BOM from Commissioning until Ordination, and the annual meeting with the BOM is a requirement on candidates.

Any person who has been approved for commissioning by the BOM but not yet appointed shall appear before Team D. This person must receive renewal by the BOM every year. Although the BOM has changed its policies so that all candidates approved

1 are recommended to the clergy session for commissioning, there may still be extenuating
2 circumstances when a person may not to be appointed.

3
4 Any person who is discovered near to the time of the interviews or during the interviews
5 to be “not properly before the BOM” shall meet with Team D.
6

7 Team D may recommend to the Full Board either continuance of a candidate or
8 denial/discontinuance of a candidate.
9

10 **J. EXTENSION MINISTRIES**

11 **1. Criteria for Extension Ministry Appointments:**

12 The Board may approve the setting for an extension ministry appointment when the
13 application for Extension Ministry for an Elder or a Deacon has been submitted to the
14 BOM Committee on Extension Ministry. The application shall be submitted in advance
15 of clergy seeking to be appointed to the setting by the resident Bishop.
16

17 **2. An Extension Minister's Accountability to the Annual Conference:**

- 18 a. An extension ministry report shall be sent to the bishop, registrar of The Board, and
19 extension ministry committee chairperson once each quadrennium. Annual
20 evaluations from the place of service shall be submitted other years.
21 b. An annual written statement by the district superintendent in the area where ministry
22 is performed, affirming a healthy relationship with The United Methodist Church
23 shall be sent to the bishop, registrar of The Board, and the extension ministries
24 chairperson.
25 c. Verification of an accountability structure within the field of service given annually.
26 This may be a written statement issued by the institution for which the minister works
27 or by their supervisor.
28

29 **K. CONFERENCE RELATIONS**

30 **1. Readmission after Surrender of Ministerial Credentials:**

31 Those seeking readmission to the Annual Conference and restoration of credentials after
32 surrender of ministerial orders must be recommended to the Annual Conference by the
33 DCOM of the District in which they surrendered their credentials, The Board, and the
34 Cabinet, in order to begin the process of compliance with the requirements of the 2016
35 Book of Discipline (§364-368).
36

37 **L. MINISTERIAL EDUCATION FUND**

38 **1. Grants for students preparing for membership in the North Georgia Annual
39 Conference:**

- 40 a. An applicant must be related to a charge conference in one of the eight districts
41 within the North Georgia Annual Conference, or a UM campus ministry in the North
42 Georgia Annual Conference.
43 b. An applicant must be a registered inquiring candidate, certified candidate for ordained
44 ministry, or licensed local pastor in the North Georgia Annual Conference and be
45 enrolled in a school approved by the University Senate of The United Methodist

1 Church and be enrolled in a program pursuing degree goals in keeping with the
2 requirements for the ordination one is seeking.

- 3 1. Registered Inquiring Candidates will have attended a Candidacy Summit and
4 started the group mentoring process. Registered Inquiring Candidates are eligible
5 for funding up to two semesters and they should be making progress during this
6 time towards become a certified candidate. If a request is made by the applicant,
7 district superintendent and DCOM then special consideration will be granted for a
8 third semester of funding.
- 9 2. Certified Candidates/Local Pastors will need to receive annual renewal from their
10 DCOM, while awaiting recommendation from the DCOM to interview with The
11 Board for provisional status. Certified Candidates may receive funding for both
12 undergraduate and seminary degrees.
- 13 3. Certified Candidates/Local Pastors who have completed their theological
14 education but have missed a required course and need to complete a course post-
15 graduation will be considered for funding if funds are available.
- 16 c. Students enrolled in seminary courses must maintain a 'C' average to continue
17 receiving funding. If a student has an average below a 'C' it is recommended that the
18 district superintendent and/or the DCOM chair have a conversation with the student
19 regarding their grades. They should determine if there are/were special circumstances
20 they may have been unaware of which created a difficult situation for the student to
21 finish the semester with a satisfactory grade point average. If the district
22 superintendent feels there are special circumstances that would justify excusing the
23 student from this policy, the district superintendent must advise The Center for
24 Clergy Excellence in writing stating those circumstances.

25
26 **2. No grants shall be made for training beyond the Master of Divinity or equivalent**
27 **degree.**

28
29 **3. Criteria for approving applications for grants:**

- 30 a. Conditions described in "1" above
- 31 b. The maximum scale adopted by The North Georgia BOM (item "5" below)
- 32 c. Completed application by the appropriate date
- 33 d. The endorsement form from the school registrar
- 34 e. The recommendation of the district superintendent
- 35 f. The resources in the Ministerial Education Fund
- 36 g. Maintaining a "C" average in college or seminary studies
- 37 h. Personal interview, if required, with the MEF committee

38
39 **4. Deadlines for Applications:**

40 Applications for grants are required each semester and must be received by The Center
41 for Clergy Excellence no later than August 1st (July 1st for returning students) for the fall
42 semester, November 15th for the Winter/Spring semester, and April 15th for the summer
43 semester. The MEF committee shall hold firmly to these deadlines! It is the applicant's
44 responsibility to see that the application is in on time and completed!

1 **5. Maximum Grant Amounts:**

- 2 a. Seminary (MDiv or BGTS for Deacons): \$4,000 per semester for full time students.
3 b. Course of Study \$300 per course
4 c. Undergraduate degrees: \$1,000 per semester for full time students
5 d. The maximum any applicant may receive for college and seminary shall be \$32,000.
6 The MEF committee may exceed these limits in cases of extreme need or when
7 balances in or projections for the Ministerial Education Fund make larger loans
8 feasible.
9 e. Part time applications will be prorated based on the number of enrollment hours, \$300
10 per hour.

11
12 **6. Course of Study**

- 13 a. Funding for Course of Study is administered through The Center for Clergy
14 Excellence.
15 b. Students must make at least a grade of ‘C’ for each course in which they are enrolled.
16 If the student fails to make a C grade in a course, the next time the student enrolls to
17 retake that course they shall not be eligible for a scholarship. If the student enrolls in
18 any other course, they will be eligible to receive a scholarship.
19 c. It is recommended that the district superintendent and/or the DCOM chair have a
20 conversation with the student regarding their grade to determine if there are/were
21 special circumstances they may have been unaware of which created a difficult
22 situation for the student to finish the course with a satisfactory grade. If the district
23 superintendent feels there are special circumstances that would justify excusing the
24 student from this policy, the district superintendent must advise The Center for
25 Clergy Excellence in writing stating those circumstances. Unless a letter from the
26 district superintendent is in the student’s file, a future Course of Study scholarship for
27 the failed course for the student will not be available.

28
29 **M. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS**

30 **1. The procedure for joining an order through changing of orders:**

- 31 a. Provisional members may request to change their ordination track⁴ by notifying the
32 chairperson of The Board and the registrar of The Board in writing and stating the
33 reason for requesting the change, including the emerging sense of their call. The
34 Committee on Changes in Status and Orders must approve the request to transition to
35 another order. Provisional members must serve at least two years doing the work of
36 the order in which they wish to be received in full connection.
37 b. A member in full connection may request The Board's permission to change orders⁵.
38 The member must:
39 1. Write the chairperson and registrar of The Board and state the reason why the
40 member wishes to change orders including an emerging sense of call.
41 2. Meet the educational requirements of the new order.
42 3. Must serve a two-year period in the order being sought before appearing before
43 The Board to seek final approval of the change of orders.

4 2016 BOM: ¶326.4

5 2016 BOM: ¶309.2-3

- 1 c. The following is for deacons transitioning to elders only.
- 2 1. Deacons changing to elders shall receive an appointment (in a ministry
- 3 appropriate to the order to which they are transitioning) by the cabinet or continue
- 4 as a deacon until an appointment is available.
- 5 2. Deacons transitioning to elders may be granted sacramental authority by the
- 6 bishop if an appointment is available.
- 7 3. The Board will assign a full connection mentor in the order to which the clergy
- 8 person is transitioning. A report from the mentor shall be received at the full
- 9 connection interview
- 10 4. Upon completion of the two-year period the deacon must participate in the elder
- 11 interview process with The Board and submit the following paper work according
- 12 to the schedule established for full connection interviews:
- 13 a. Demonstration of effectiveness in ministry as required of all candidates
- 14 b. A current sermon preached on an assigned text in the context of corporate
- 15 worship with a congregation
- 16 c. Written responses to the following questions:
- 17 1. How has the experience of ministry shaped your understanding of your
- 18 vocation as an ordained deacon or elder?
- 19 2. How has the practice of ministry affected your understanding of the
- 20 expectations and obligations of the itinerant system? Share your
- 21 understanding of what it means to “offer yourself without reserve to be
- 22 appointed and to serve as the appointive authority may determine”
- 23 (335c1).
- 24 d. Letters of references as required of all candidates
- 25 e. Final transcript verifying the completion of the M.Div. degree at a University
- 26 Senate approved seminary, and any additional requirements of The North
- 27 Georgia Conference.
- 28 d. The following is for elders transitioning to deacon only.
- 29 1. Elders changing to deacons shall receive an appointment (in a ministry
- 30 appropriate to the order to which they are transitioning) by the cabinet or continue
- 31 as an elder until an appointment is available.
- 32 2. Elders transitioning to deacons will not have sacramental rights during the
- 33 transition
- 34 3. The Board will assign a full connection mentor in the order to which the clergy
- 35 person is transitioning. A report from the mentor shall be received at the full
- 36 connection interview
- 37 4. Upon completion of the two-year period the elder must participate in the deacon
- 38 interview process with The Board and submit the following paper work according
- 39 to the schedule established for full connection interviews:
- 40 a. Demonstration of effectiveness in ministry as required of all candidates
- 41 b. Present a Deacon Video Project in their area of ministry
- 42 c. Written responses to the following questions:
- 43 1. How has the experience of ministry shaped your understanding of your
- 44 vocation as an ordained deacon or elder?
- 45 2. Do you offer yourself to be appointed by the bishop to a service ministry
- 46 (330c1)?

- d. Letters of references as required of all candidates
- e. Final transcript verifying the completion of any additional requirements of The North Georgia Conference at a University Senate approved school.

K. FULL TIME LOCAL PASTORS

The Board through the Committee on Local Pastors and Transfers shall approve all full-time local pastors upon recommendation of the DCOM. The DCOM must receive the results of a psychological evaluation (not more than 4 years old), updated criminal background check and credit report before recommending persons to be approved as full-time local pastors. These documents, along with a written recommendation by the district superintendent and the S/PPRC Chair of the local congregation, must be submitted to the registrar of The Board at least four weeks prior to the individual being interviewed by The Board.

Written responses to questions provided by The Board shall be submitted to The Board four weeks prior to being interviewed for full-time local pastor status. All conditions of the policies for psychological evaluation, identity and criminal background reports, and credit reports for certified candidates (Section C of this document) shall also apply to full-time Local Pastors.

L. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Candidates for associate membership shall be evaluated by the DCOM-and The-Board, according to the requirements for associate membership established in the Book of Discipline.⁶ These requirements include giving satisfactory answers in a written doctrinal examination to the questions required for candidates for provisional membership.

All conditions of the policies for psychological evaluation, identity and criminal background reports, and credit reports for provisional member candidate (Section E of this document) shall also apply to those seeking associate membership. Candidates for associate membership shall submit written responses to questions provided by The Board in accordance with the deadlines for the BOM interviews.

Whenever a DCOM recommends for associate membership a candidate who does not meet the 4-year full time service requirement of ¶322.1 of The Book of Discipline, the DCOM shall include in its recommendation to The Board the rationale for why the candidate’s part time service is equivalent to 4 years of full-time service pursuant to ¶ 322.2.

A candidate for associate membership recommended by the DCOM who does not meet the 4-year full time service requirement of ¶ 322.1 must be interviewed by The Board’s Committee on Local Pastors and Transfers for the purpose of evaluating the candidate’s service records for equivalency pursuant to the provisions of ¶ 322.2. If the Committee on Local Pastors and Transfers determines there is part time service equivalent to 4 years of full-time service, the candidate may continue through the process for becoming an associate member. If the Committee on Local Pastors and Transfers determines there is

⁶ 2016 BOM ¶322, pages 242-244

1 not part time service equivalent to 4 years of full-time service, the candidate continues
2 under the supervision of the DCOM.
3

4 **M. TRANSFER POLICIES**

5 **1. Policy for Transfers of Clergy who are Members of Other Annual Conferences**

6 UM Clergy in provisional or full connection membership in an annual conference may
7 request transfer of their membership to North Georgia. Consultation regarding transfer
8 begins at the initiative of the resident bishop through the chairperson of The Board. The
9 person seeking transfer shall be interviewed by The Board's Committee on Local Pastors
10 and Transfers at the next scheduled meeting for transfer requests.
11

12 Clergy transferring from another annual conference shall be required to serve at least two
13 years under episcopal appointment in The North Georgia Conference. This two-year
14 process begins with an initial meeting with and approval of the Committee on Local
15 Pastors and Transfers. A second interview will be required for approval and
16 recommendation to the BOM, and if approved a recommendation from BOM to the
17 Clergy Executive Session. Provisional clergy seeking to transfer must participate in the
18 North Georgia Conference Residency in Ministry program and participate in NGA full
19 connection interviews. Additionally, they will have a member of the BOM serve as a
20 Covenant Sponsor* during this time.
21

22 The clergy person will be required to present the following to the Committee on Local
23 Pastors and Transfers for consideration of transfer:

- 24 a. Letter of recommendation from the District Superintendent
 - 25 • This will be required at the initial interview and again at the final interview.
- 26 b. Letter of recommendation from the SPRC Chairperson
 - 27 • This will be required at the initial interview and again at the final interview.
- 28 c. An Autobiographical Statement
- 29 d. Updated background and credit check
 - 30 • The district office will assist with processing the NGA required Trak-1
 - 31 background check. The Center for Clergy Excellence will provide directions
 - 32 for obtaining the appropriate credit report.
- 33 e. A copy of their permanent and supervisory files from their home conference.
- 34 f. A psychological assessment that is less than five years old, this can be from the home
- 35 conference or complete with NGA Ministerial Assessment Specialist.
- 36 g. A letter of recommendation from the Covenant Sponsor will be required at the final
- 37 interview.
38

39 The candidate will meet with the committee for approval or non-approval. The committee
40 will inform the BOM Executive Committee of their action for the BOM to have final
41 approval and presentation to the Clergy Executive Session of the Annual Conference.
42

43 * Each candidate seeking to transfer their annual conference membership or
44 denomination credentials will be assigned a Covenant Sponsor to work with them during
45 their transfer period. The goal is to provide a resource to those transferring by assisting
46 them in connecting within the annual conference in a variety of ways. The Candidate

1 will meet quarterly with the Covenant Sponsor who will encourage them in their
2 ministry, help them connect with others in the conference, and provide prayer and
3 support. The Covenant Sponsor will be asked to provide a recommendation for the
4 candidate prior to the final interview session. Those in the provisional period will not be
5 assigned an additional Covenant Sponsor but their Residency in Ministry leaders will
6 serve in this role and will be asked to provide a letter of recommendation prior to the
7 final interview.
8

9 **2. Policy for Transfers of Clergy with credentials from another denomination**

10 Ordained clergy with credentials in another denomination who wish to serve under
11 appointment or to have their credentials recognized and transfer to The North Georgia
12 Conference must have the recommendation of the district superintendent and the DCOM
13 in the district where they reside or serve.
14

15 At the initial point of expressed interest, a full connection member of the annual
16 conference shall be assigned by the district superintendent to serve as mentor to any
17 clergyperson of another denomination seeking to serve an appointment or to transfer.
18 This mentor shall submit an annual report to the DCOM.
19

20 The DCOM must receive the results of a psychological evaluation, criminal background
21 check and credit report before recommending persons to have their credentials
22 recognized and/or transferred into the conference. These documents, along with a written
23 recommendation by the district superintendent and the S/PPRC Chair of the local
24 congregation must be submitted to the registrar of The Board at least four weeks prior to
25 the individual being interviewed by the Committee on Local Pastors and Transfers.
26

27 Upon approval by the Committee on Local Pastors and Transfers they will be
28 recommended to The Board for provisional interviews. After approval by the BOM
29 clergy will participate in Residency in Ministry and return to the BOM for full connection
30 interviews. Clergy will retain their credentials from another denomination until their
31 credentials and ordination are approved and transferred. A minimum of three years of
32 service under appointment in North Georgia is required before the person is eligible for
33 transfer.
34

35 **N. CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT**

- 36 1. Individual Clergy are responsible for working with the Staff Parish Relations Committee
37 in their local church to plan and implement courses of continuing education for the
38 Quadrennium. It is the responsibility of the clergy themselves to record and report annual
39 CEUs on their Charge Conference forms, to ensure that the total of 6.0 required CEUs is
40 completed each Quadrennium.
41
- 42 2. The Director of The Center for Clergy Excellence/Board of Ordained Ministry Registrar
43 in consultation with The Board Chairperson act as the final authority in granting the
44 number of CEUs for student learners and for teachers, according to the General Board of
45 Higher Education and Ministry guidelines and the Academy of Continuing Education

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19

guidelines and polices. Members of the BOM will help determine suitability of courses, given their impact on mission and ministry.

3. Continuing Education Units will be offered to student learners based on contact hours at a ratio of 10 hours to 1.0 CEU.
4. Teachers will be awarded CEUs based on contact hours as well at the same ratio. (Please note that GBHEM guidelines prohibit an instructor from earning credits for teaching the same course more than one time in a given Quadrennium.)
5. Certificates of completion, with a specifically stated amount of CEUs, will be issued by the sponsoring body within The North Georgia Conference, or by an approved agency beyond NGA. These records will be included in the Conference database eBridge along with annual review documentation with the support of the District Administrative Assistants.
6. The Director of The Center for Clergy Excellence and Assistant Director will provide oversight and assistance in tracking CEUs beyond the normal procedures listed above.