

# **POLICIES OF THE BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY**

## **North Georgia Annual Conference**

### **A. GENERAL POLICIES<sup>1</sup>**

#### **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 of Ordained Ministry 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) ¶635.2r<sup>2</sup>.
- 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. (updated 10/2018)

#### **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 members the retreat interviews. (updated 10/2018)

#### **5. Completion of Application Files:**

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

The Board expects all candidates:

- a. To take responsibility to read the instructions from The Board carefully
- b. To insure 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 of Ordained Ministry requests psychological testing, a psychiatric evaluation or the like, for any minister in full connection, The Board shall assume all the cost.

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

<sup>2</sup> 2016 BOD, page 416 and 476.

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

**7. BOM Confidentiality**

No recording or electronic broadcast of the BOM meeting is allowed. At the discretion of a Chairperson, of the BOM or BOM sub-Committee, participation at full board meetings may include alternate media options. At the discretion of the Chairperson, votes may be taken by e-mail. The BOM secretary shall report the results of electronic votes at the next meeting of the BOM. (adopted 10/2018)

## **B. CERTIFIED CANDIDATES**

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

- a. During the group mentoring process, candidates are asked to provide their district committee on ordained ministry with a psychological evaluation produced by Dr. Anne Imhoff, PhD., LLC, licensed psychologist. Her office is located at 6340 Sugarloaf Parkway, Suite 200, Duluth, GA 30097. To make an appointment please contact her office manager, Ms. Cynthia Daniels at 678.843.5913 or 678.924.9260.
- b. Candidate should begin by calling Ms. Cynthia Daniels to make arrangements for the evaluation. This evaluation must be completed before the candidate meets with the district committee on ordained ministry (dCOM). Please note that Dr. Imhoff's appointment slots often book up several weeks in advance, so it is in your best interest to call for an appointment approximately 2 months before you need the report to arrive at your dCOM.
- c. The evaluation process takes 4-5 hours all together. You may want to bring a snack. Also the offices are sometimes cooler than some people find comfortable, so a light jacket/layers are recommended. Your psychological evaluation will include some computer-based personality testing and a clinical interview.
- d. After your appointment, Dr. Imhoff will write a report, summarizing your interview, supporting documentation, and all of the test data. The report is then sent to The Center for Clergy Excellence (CCE) for review by the psychological assessment committee (PAC) of the BOM. The PAC recommendation and psychological assessment is then sent to your district superintendent. It generally takes 3 weeks from the time you have your interview to the time your district committee on ordained ministry receives your report and the PAC's recommendation. The evaluation will become part of your candidacy file, and it will be available to the dCOM and to The Board of Ordained Ministry. It will be one of several sources of data used by those bodies charged with recommending persons for credentials for ministry in The United Methodist Church.
- e. The cost of the psychological evaluation is subsidized by The North Georgia Conference of the UMC; however, a portion (\$500.00) must be paid by the candidate. If this cost is overly burdensome, your home church may be able to assist you with the cost. Please feel free to discuss this with your district superintendent. Your portion of the cost must be paid in full prior to start of your appointment by cash, check, or money order. Credit card payment is not accepted. Cancellation is a minimum of 48 hours prior to appointment and candidates not providing that will be charged \$650 for their evaluation, and payment in full will be required before being able to reschedule.
- f. If you do not make your appointment well in advance of when it is needed by the district committee on ordained ministry, Dr. Imhoff may be able to make a special "rush" dispensation. However, there will be an additional fee of \$100 (rush fee). This will be negotiated based on your particular circumstances and Dr. Imhoff's scheduling availability. If you are in need of a rushed evaluation, please explain your circumstances to Ms. Cynthia Daniels.

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

- a. Persons seeking certification as candidates for ordained ministry shall provide the district committee on ordained ministry with an Identity and Criminal Background Report. During the meeting with the district superintendent the candidate shall be advised of this requirement and given instructions for obtaining the report. Based on the report their shall be one of the following statements placed in the candidates file:
  1. A notarized statement detailing any convictions for felony or misdemeanor or written accusations of sexual misconduct or child abuse
  2. A notarized statement certifying that this candidate has neither been accused in writing nor convicted of a felony, misdemeanor, and any incident of sexual misconduct or child abuse. (updated 10/2018)
- b. The financial cost of the Identity and Criminal Background Report shall be the responsibility of the candidate.
- c. When the district superintendent receives the report, it shall be entered into the applicant's file for when she/he interviews with district committee on ordained ministry.
- d. If an individual's report reveals that he/she has a criminal record, the district superintendent shall inquire of the applicant the circumstances of each criminal incident revealed in the report, and shall communicate to him/her the policies and procedures that shall be followed. The district superintendent shall advise the district committee on ordained ministry (dCOM) of the facts contained in the report and of the applicant's comments regarding these facts. The dCOM shall review this history with the applicant prior to any vote to certify the applicant's candidacy for ordained ministry.
- e. This report shall be in the hands of the district superintendent before the candidate undergoes the psychological evaluation. If an individual has a criminal background, this information shall be conveyed to the psychologist prior to the evaluation.
- f. If a district committee on ordained ministry certifies the candidacy of an applicant with a criminal background and this person is appointed to serve in a local church before being ordained, the facts of the criminal incident shall be fully revealed to the staff-parish relations committee of the church to which the individual is being appointed.
- g. When candidates are eligible to apply for provisional membership their interview materials will need to include an updated report. The original one will not be accepted. The district office will assist candidates with this requirement and forward this report to The Center for Clergy Excellence. It shall be included in the candidate's file when he/she is interviewed by The Board of Ordained Ministry and will be considered in BOM discussions.

Summary: Since every individual's situation is unique, it is not advisable to lay down blanket guidelines for dealing with individuals with criminal backgrounds. However, sound judgment would indicate that the level of reform and conversion might be indicated by the number of criminal incidents, the nature of the crime, the length of time that the applicant has led a responsible, law-abiding life between the criminal incident and the present, and the committee's assessment of the applicant's personal integrity and

trustworthiness. Violent, abusive, and dishonest behaviors are often deeply ingrained in the personality. When there is a choice between affirming an individual's reformation and protecting a congregation, district committees on ordained ministry shall err on the side of protecting a congregation.

3. **Financial Status:** The following is required of all candidates for commissioning and ordination.
  - a. A current credit report with a minimum FICO Credit Score of 640 is the established minimum expectation. All credit reports must be obtained from [www.myfico.com](http://www.myfico.com) with the Equifax option. However, if a candidate's credit score does not meet the established minimum expectation, candidate is to provide additional information using the balance sheet/income statement form provided by dCOM and The Board of Ordained Ministry.
  - b. If balance sheet/income statement is submitted, debt/income ratios must satisfy established minimums.
  - c. Credit reports of candidates that fail to satisfy the established credit score and/or ratios will be referred to the credit advisory task force for review.
  - d. Task force will review all referred credit reports and return a list of questions for the dCOM to ask candidates during interview process.
  
4. **Time Requirement:**

A candidate must be a certified candidate for one year before the district committee on ordained ministry (dCOM) may recommend the candidate to The Board of Ordained Ministry for provisional interviews (§324.1<sup>3</sup>). The minimum of one year of certification begins on the date the dCOM certifies the candidate.
  
5. **Transcript Evaluation for Course of Study**

No undergraduate work can be applied to the Course of Study. Only work completed at the master's level at a school that is a member of the Association of Theological Schools and the Commission on Accrediting can be applied to Course of Study. Only courses completed at a University Senate approved school can be applied to Advance Course of Study. (added and adopted 10/2017)
  
6. **Certified Candidates under Pastoral Appointment:**
  - a. Certified candidates who have met the requirements for and have been approved and appointed as local pastors shall be accountable to the district in which they serve. The district committee on ordained ministry (dCOM) shall be responsible for securing and maintaining records, including the transfer of candidacy.
  - b. Certified candidates under appointment as local pastors must receive annual approval of the dCOM as long as they are under appointment as local pastor. This replaces the required annual approval of the home church charge conference for persons who have been approved as local pastors.
  
7. **Transfer of Candidacy from another Annual Conference:**

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<sup>3</sup> 2016 BOD, page 245.

A person who is a certified candidate for ordained ministry, or who is in the candidacy process in another annual conference, may have his or her candidacy transferred to a district committee on ordained ministry (dCOM) in the North Georgia Annual Conference with the approval of the receiving dCOM.

**8. Candidates Deferred from Provisional Membership:**

- a. Deferred candidates reapplying for provisional membership remain accountable to the district committee on ordained ministry (dCOM) that initially recommended them unless an appointment is received in another district. In the event of appointment in another district, their candidacy **for provisional membership** will be maintained by the previous dCOM unless the candidate self-defers. In the case of self-defer the candidacy is transferred to the new district and dCOM and in that case there shall be a recommendation to The Board of Ordained Ministry from the district in which the candidate is serving. There shall be consultation between the two district superintendents and the dCOMs. (updated 10/2018)
- b. When deferred candidates for provisional membership are required to have mentors, candidates will be referred to the appropriate district committee on ordained ministry for assignment and follow up.

**C. DISTRICT COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

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

The Conference Board of Ordained Ministry recommends that all members of The Board in a particular district serve on that district committee on ordained ministry (dCOM). One member of The Board will be designated by The Board as the official liaison between The Board and the dCOM.

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

A three-quarters vote of the district committee on ordained ministry is required for each candidate recommended to The Board of Ordained Ministry.

**3. Declaration of Orders**

The candidate sent forward by the district committee on ordained ministry is to be identified as seeking provisional membership to become a deacon or as one seeking to become an elder.

**D. PROVISIONAL MEMBERS**

**1. Psychological Evaluation:**

- a. Those seeking provisional membership shall secure a psychological evaluation provided by the ministerial assessment specialist of The Board of Ordained Ministry, unless they received an evaluation at the time of certification as candidates. The expense shall be shared by The Board and the candidate.
- b. If the psychological evaluation administered during the candidacy process is more than four years old, on December 31 of the year the candidate meets with the district committee on ministry to be recommended to The Board, an additional evaluation will be required for each provisional candidate before meeting with The Board for recommendation to the annual conference. There shall be no exceptions. The cost of this evaluation is the responsibility of the candidate. The Board may require an additional evaluation of any candidate regardless of how many years have passed since the first evaluation. In such cases, the candidate will pay \$150 and The Board will pay the remainder of the cost. The results of all psychological evaluations must be in the candidate's file when he/she appears before The Board.

**2. Financial Status:**

- a. A current credit report with a minimum FICO Credit Score of 640 is the established minimum expectation. All credit reports must be obtained from [www.myfico.com](http://www.myfico.com) with the Equifax option. However, if a candidate's credit score does not meet the established minimum expectation, the candidate is to provide additional information using the balance sheet/income statement form provided by The Board. Balance sheet/income statement is submitted, debt/income ratios must satisfy established minimums.

- b. Credit reports of candidates that fail to satisfy the established credit score and/or ratios, but who have been recommend by dCOM must include the following 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 as a result of the consultation with the task force.
  - 3. Letter from the task force stating they have worked with the candidate, and how they view the work of the candidate towards recommendations that have been suggested. (updated 10/2018)

**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. In order to be considered for provisional membership, all candidates must have completed all of 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 Conference Board of Ordained Ministry determines the number of hours candidates in that conference are allowed to take online (University Senate Guidelines Appendix A, Working Rules of the Commission on Theological Education, page 43). (updated 10/2018)

- c. In addition to the academic requirements of ¶324.4a all candidates for deacons or elders orders in The North Georgia Conference must complete at least one course in homiletics and one course in theology, which are in a classroom for academic credit. You may have additional courses in each of these areas online, but you must have one homiletics and one theology course in the standard classroom setting. (updated 10/2018)
- d. When a seminary in which a United Methodist student is enrolled and attending classes ceases to be an approved institution by the University Senate during the course of the student's studies toward a degree, the student shall complete degree work by the end of five years from the date of the withdrawal of institution's University Senate approval. A student is expected to make regular and appropriate progress toward completion of the master of divinity or equivalent degree (for deacon track students). "Regular and appropriate progress" assumes that a student is taking classes every term. Five years will be the maximum time for completing a degree and for the student to be classified as a graduate of an approved school. Exceptions may be considered upon written request to the registrar of The Board of Ordained Ministry. The final decision will be made by the Executive Committee of The Board of Ordained Ministry.

**6. Recommendations for Provisional Membership:**

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

**7. Categories for Provisional Interview:**

The Board shall have three categories of provisional candidates: (a) "Approved by Board and recommended to Clergy Session for election" (b) "Deferred Due to Deficiencies", and (c) "Denied". Those "Deferred" may be appointed to serve as local pastors, but may not be received into provisional membership. Persons on elder track who are deferred would be available for full time appointment. All "Approved" Candidates" not received into provisional membership will continue in the "Approved" status, and will be accountable to their district committee on ordained ministry. They will need the recommendation of the dCOM in order to come before The Board of Ordained Ministry

again for consideration for provisional membership. They will not be required to resubmit their papers and other materials, except as specifically directed by The Board.

**8. Deferment for Provisional Membership:**

- a. A candidate for provisional membership who is "Deferred" remains accountable to the district committee on ordained ministry (see B.7 above), and must receive the recommendation of the committee in order to be considered again by The Board of Ordained Ministry. (update 10/2018)
- b. A candidate for provisional membership who is "Deferred" due to information from the psychological evaluation shall have a new psychological evaluation or counseling with a BOM appointed psychologist before reapplication to The Board. When The Board requires more thorough testing, such requirement must be documented and specified on the candidate's Action Report by official action of The Board.
- c. The interview team shall prepare specific recommendations/requirements for candidates who are "Deferred" before the candidate is presented to the full BOM, and before The Board vote. These recommendations/requirements shall be adopted or amended by the full BOM.
- d. The presenter of a candidate who is "Deferred" shall: (1) carefully review recommendations/requirements with the candidate; (2) contact any support personnel (counselors, supervisors, etc.) and inform them of expectations (written reports, guidance, etc.).
- e. The registrar shall inform, in writing, the district superintendent and the chairperson of the district committee on ordained ministry of a candidate's status of deferred and any recommendations and/or requirements.
- f. Candidates reapplying for membership after having been deferred shall submit such papers or materials as determined by The Board of Ordained Ministry to be appropriate and needed.
- g. All deferred candidates shall appear before the Called and Disciplined Life Committee. The committee will review the candidate's revised autobiographical statement and any changes in the candidate's life. All deferred candidates shall also appear before the Leadership Committee to revise goals. (11/2016 point g added and adopted)

**9. Appeal of Board decision:**

An appeal to the decision of The Board of Ordained Ministry regarding a person's eligibility for provisional 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 or school transcripts or background report.

**10. Place of Provisional Service:**

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

**11. Provisional Period Service Requirements:**

- a. Provisional Elder: Candidates approved by the BOM and elected to provisional membership by the clergy session shall make themselves available to be appointed by the resident bishop to a local church or approved extension ministry appointment. Full time appointments are normative for provisional members but in some cases, provisional members may be appointed to increments of less than full time service. Less than full time service anytime during the provisional residency period requires the addition of an extra year of provisional time before becoming eligible for election to full connection and ordination.
- b. Provisional Deacon: Candidates for provisional deacon status may be commissioned if the cabinet approves an appointment to either half-time service or more. They must be under the supervision of a full connection deacon or elder during the provisional period. Provisional deacons in appointments beyond the local church and on-site supervision by a full connection deacon or elder must write to the extension ministry committee and describe their supervisory structure and have it approved in order for the year to meet the provisional expectations. For example, a provisional deacon may have supervision not on-site but accessible by close communication with monthly face to face meetings. The appointment must include compensation. If a person serves part-time during any portion of the provisional period, one additional year will be required before becoming eligible for ordination and full connection.

**12. Full Time Employment:**

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

**13. Eligibility for Ordination as a Student for an Advanced Degree while working Part Time:**

Upon recommendation of The Board of Ordained Ministry, a provisional member in a graduate program (**PhD or ThD**) and serving part-time under appointment shall be able to equate less than full-time to the requirement of full-time service for the three-year provisional requirement. The part-time appointment must meet the requirement of the policy on "Place of Provisional Service" (point 11 above).

**14. Residency in Ministry (RIM) Group Participation**

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

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

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

**15. Service Before Transfer:**

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

## **E. CANDIDATES FOR FULL CONNECTION**

### **1. Psychological Evaluation**

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

### **2. Financial Status:**

- a. A current credit report with a minimum FICO Credit Score of 650 is the established minimum expectation. All credit reports must be obtained from [www.myfico.com](http://www.myfico.com) with the Equifax option. However, if a candidate's credit score does not meet the established minimum expectation, the candidate is to provide additional information using the balance sheet/income statement form.
- b. Full connection candidates with a FICO score below 650 are to submit a balance sheet/income statement to The Center for Clergy Excellence for the credit advisory task force consideration as a part of their full connection materials by the submission deadline for inclusion in the full connection packet and BOM interview consideration.
- c. When the balance sheet/income statement is submitted, debt/income ratios must satisfy established minimums. Credit reports of candidates that fail to satisfy the established 650 credit score and/or ratios will be referred to credit advisory task force for review. The task force will review all referred credit reports and balance sheet/income statements and return a list of questions for BOM to ask candidates during interview process.

### **3. Substance Abuse:**

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

### **4. Application for Full Connection 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.

### **5. Recommendations for Full Connection Membership:**

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

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

The Board shall have three categories of full connection candidates: (a) "Approved by BOM for election by Clergy Session", (b) "Deferred Due to Deficiencies", and (c) "Discontinuance". 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 of Ordained Ministry again for consideration for full connection membership.

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

- a. A candidate for full connection membership who is “Deferred” due to information from the psychological evaluation shall have a new psychological evaluation or counseling with a BOM appointed psychologist before reapplication to The Board. When The Board requires more thorough testing, such requirement must be documented and specified on the candidate's Action Report by official action of The Board.
- b. The interview team shall prepare specific recommendations/requirements for candidates who are “Deferred” before the candidate is presented to the full BOM, and before The Board vote. These recommendations/requirements shall be adopted or amended by the full BOM.
- c. The presenter of a candidate who is “Deferred” shall: (1) carefully review recommendations/requirements with the candidate; (2) contact any support personnel (counselors, supervisors, etc.) and inform them of expectations (written reports, guidance, etc.).
- d. The registrar shall inform, in writing, the district superintendent and the RIM group leader of a candidate's status of deferred and any recommendations and/or requirements.
- e. Candidates reapplying for membership after having been deferred shall submit such papers or materials as determined by The Board of Ordained Ministry to be appropriate and needed.
- f. All deferred candidates shall appear before the Called and Disciplined Life Committee. The committee will review the candidate’s revised autobiographical statement and any changes in the candidate’s life. All deferred candidates shall also appear before the Leadership Committee to revise goals. (11/2016 point f added and adopted)

**8. Appeal of Board decision:**

A request for reconsideration of a decision of The Board of Ordained Ministry 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 or 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.

## **F. 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 District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) and The Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) 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. (added and adopted 3/2018)

## **G. EXTENSION MINISTRIES**

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

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

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

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

## **H. CONFERENCE RELATIONS**

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

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

## **I. MINISTERIAL EDUCATION FUND**

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

- a. An applicant must be related to a charge conference in one of the twelve districts within the North Georgia Annual Conference, or a UM campus ministry in the North Georgia Annual Conference.
  - b. An applicant must be an inquiring candidate, registered inquiring candidate, or certified candidate for ordained ministry in the North Georgia Annual Conference and be enrolled in a school approved by the University Senate of The United Methodist Church and be enrolled in a program pursuing degree goals in keeping with the requirements for the ordination one is seeking.
    1. Inquiring Candidate will have met with their District Superintendent and be registered to attending the next available Candidacy Summit (January and July annually). An Inquiring Candidate is only eligible for funding for one semester.
    2. Registered Inquiring Candidate will have attended a Candidacy Summit and started the group mentoring process. Registered Inquiring Candidates are eligible for funding up to two semesters and should be making progress during that time period to become a certified candidate. If a request is made by the applicant, DS and dCOM then special consideration will be granted for a third semester of funding.
    3. Certified Candidates will need to continue to be in conversation with their dCOM and DS and awaiting recommendation from the dCOM to interview with The Board of Ordained Ministry. Certified Candidates may receive funding for both undergraduate and seminary degrees.
    4. Certified Candidates who have completed their theological education but have missed a required course, and will need to complete a course post-graduation will be considered for funding if funds are available.
  - c. Students enrolled in seminary courses must maintain a 'C' average to continue receiving funding. If a student has an average below a 'C' it is recommended that the district superintendent and/or the dCOM chair have a conversation with the student regarding their grades. They should determine if there are/were special circumstances they may have been unaware of which created a difficult situation for the student to finish the semester with a satisfactory grade point average. If the district superintendent feels there are special circumstances that would justify excusing the student from this policy he/she must advise The Center for Clergy Excellence in writing stating those circumstances.
- 2. No grants shall be made for training beyond the Master of Divinity or equivalent degree.**
- 3. Criteria for approving applications for grants:**
- a. Conditions described in "1" above
  - b. The maximum scale adopted by The North Georgia Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (item "6" below)
  - c. Completed application by the appropriate date
  - d. The endorsement form from the school registrar

- e. The recommendation of the district superintendent
- f. The resources in the Ministerial Education Fund
- g. Maintaining a “C” average in college or seminar studies
- h. Personal interview, if required, with the MEF committee

**4. Deadlines for Applications:**

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

**5. Maximum Grant Amounts:**

- a. Seminary (MDiv or BGTS for Deacons): \$3,000 per semester for full time students.
- b. Course of Study/Licensing School: \$250 per course
- c. Undergraduate degrees: \$1,000 per semester for full time students
- d. The maximum any applicant may receive for college and seminary shall be \$26,000. The MEF committee may exceed these limits in cases of extreme need or when balances in or projections for the Ministerial Education Fund make larger loans feasible. Part time applications will be prorated based on the number of enrollment hours, \$250 per hour.

**6. Course of Study**

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

## **J. TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS**

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

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

### **2. The Board of Ordained Ministry will assign a full connection mentor in the order to which the clergy person is transitioning. A report from the mentor shall be received at the full connection interview.**

- a. The following is for deacons transitioning to elders only.
  1. Deacons changing to elders shall receive an appointment (in a ministry appropriate to the order to which they are transitioning) by the cabinet or continue as a deacon until an appointment is available.
  2. Deacons transitioning to elders may be granted a license for pastoral ministry if an appointment is available.
  3. Upon completion of the two-year period the deacon must participate in the elder interview process with The Board of Ordained Ministry and submit the following paper work according to the schedule established for full connection interviews:
    - a. Demonstration of effectiveness in ministry as required of all candidates
    - b. A current sermon preached on an assigned text in the context of corporate worship with a congregation
    - c. Written responses to questions 1, 2, 12, 13 from Section C: the Called and Disciplined Life
    - d. Letters of references as required of all candidates
    - e. Final transcript verifying the completion of the M.Div. degree at a University Senate approved seminary, and any additional requirements of The North Georgia Conference. (added 10/2018)
- b. The following is for elders transitioning to deacon only.
  1. Elders changing to deacons shall receive an appointment (in a ministry appropriate to the order to which they are transitioning) by the cabinet or continue as an elder until an appointment is available.
  2. Elders transitioning to deacons will not have sacramental rights during the transition
  3. Upon completion of the two-year period the elder must participate in the deacon interview process with The Board of Ordained Ministry and submit the following paper work according to the schedule established for full connection interviews:

- a. Demonstration of effectiveness in ministry as required of all candidates
- b. Present a Deacon Video Project in their area of ministry
- c. Written responses to questions 1, 2, 12, 13 from Section C: the Called and Disciplined Life
- 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 of Ordained Ministry through the Committee on Local Pastors and Transfers shall approve all full-time local pastors upon recommendation of the district committee on ministry (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 pastor. These documents, along with a written recommendation by the district superintendent and the chair of the district committee 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 B of this document) shall also apply to full-time Local Pastors.

**L. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP**

Candidates for associate membership shall be evaluated by the district committee on ordained ministry and The Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, according to the requirements for associate membership established in the Book of Discipline. 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 certified candidates (Section B of this document) shall also apply to 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 district committee 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 district committee shall include in its recommendation to The Conference Board of Ordained Ministry 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 district committee who does not meet the 4 year full time service requirement of ¶ 322.1 must be interviewed by The Board of Ordained Ministry Committee on Local Pastors 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 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 determines there is not part time service equivalent to 4 years of full time service, the candidate continues under the supervision of the district committee.

## **M. TRANSFER POLICIES**

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

UM Clergy in provisional or full connection membership in an annual conference may request transfer of their membership to North Georgia. Consultation regarding transfer begins at the initiative of the resident bishop through the chairperson of The Board of Ordained Ministry. The person seeking transfer shall be interviewed by The Board of Ordained Ministry's Committee on Local Pastors and Transfers at the next scheduled meeting following the request. The Committee shall make a recommendation to the Executive Committee of The Board of Ordained Ministry. Recommendations for transfer require the approval of the clergy session.

It is recommended that clergy from other annual conferences serve at least two years under episcopal appointment in The North Georgia Conference prior to receiving approval of the clergy session for transfer.

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

Ordained clergy with credentials in another denomination that wish to serve under appointment or to have their credentials recognized and transfer to The North Georgia Conference must have the recommendation of district superintendent and the district committee on ministry (dCOM) in the district where they reside.

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

The dCOM must receive the results of a psychological evaluation, criminal background check and credit report before recommending persons to have their credentials recognized and/or transferred into the conference. These documents, along with a written recommendation by the district superintendent and the chair of the district committee must be submitted to the registrar of The Board at least four weeks prior to the individual being interviewed by The Board.

Upon approval of The Board, clergy with credentials from another denomination may be appointed while retaining those credentials. A minimum of two years of service under appointment in North Georgia is required before the person is eligible for transfer.

Written responses to a series of questions supplied by The Board must be submitted prior to seeking approval from The Board to serve under appointment. Persons seeking to transfer shall submit to the same process as certified candidates seeking approval for provisional membership in the annual conference.

All conditions of the policies for psychological evaluation, identity and criminal background reports, and credit reports for certified candidates (Section B of this document) shall also apply to all persons seeking conference membership.

**N. CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT** (updated and adopted 3/2018)

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