



The Presbytery of Denver



Committee on Preparation for Ministry

Policy Manual

*Approved by CPM: January 10, 2017
Assembly: January 24, 2017*

Part I: Presbytery Policies

1.0: Foundational Principles

In accordance with G.2.0607 and the By-Laws of the Presbytery of Denver, the mission of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry is to prepare competent and qualified candidates for ordination to the office of Teaching Elder on behalf of the Presbytery of Denver.

A. The Guiding Principles & Values

1. God's call applies to all Christians. The Call to the Ministry of Teaching Elder is but one of the forms that the Call of God is expressed.
2. Discerning the Call to Teaching Elder is an ongoing process and is accomplished in a Covenant relationship between the Candidate, Home Church and Presbytery.
3. It is the responsibility of the Inquirer/Candidate to initiate and complete all requirements for ordination.

B. Policies Regarding the Authority and Accountability of Committee on Preparation for Ministry:

1. Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall not cause or allow conditions or practices that are illegal, unsafe, unethical or contrary to the Constitution of the PCUSA or the policies of the Presbytery of Denver.
2. Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall not present a candidate for ordination to the Presbytery unless:
 - a. It endorses the candidate as fit for ordination
 - b. The candidate is prepared and willing to affirm the questions for ordination as listed in Book of Order
 - c. All the requirements for ordination as listed in these policies have been met.

C. Governance

1. Quorums:
 - a. At any regular Committee on Preparation for Ministry meeting, a minimum of 5 committee members must be present in order to conduct consultations and make necessary decisions.
 - b. Subcommittees authorized by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry to conduct consultations on behalf of the committee may comprise less than 5 members.
2. Consultations:
 - a. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry may authorize a subcommittee of Committee on Preparation for Ministry to conduct any type of consultation with an inquirer or candidate.

- b. Inquirers and candidates shall submit all written material two weeks in advance of the date the Inquirer/Candidate is scheduled to meet with the committee. Failure to do so may mean rescheduling the individual's meeting with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, at the moderator's discretion and as the Committee on Preparation for Ministry calendar permits.
 - c. The Goals Letter shall constitute the report of the consultation.
 - d. A copy of the report shall be forwarded to the Inquirer/Candidate, church of care, Session Liaison, and Committee on Preparation for Ministry Liaison
- 3. The date used to determine the beginning of any Committee on Preparation for Ministry process shall be the date the Committee on Preparation for Ministry takes action regarding an inquirer or candidate, not the date reported to the presbytery assembly.
- 4. Communication:
 - a. Communication between an inquirer or candidate and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry normally starts by contacting the Committee on Preparation for Ministry Liaison.
 - b. Inquirer/Candidate's who are students in seminary shall inform their Committee on Preparation for Ministry Liaisons of their schedule of academic coursework and grades within 30 days of receiving them.

2.0: Education & Training

A. Theological Education (see G-2.0607)

- 1. **Documentation:** It is the responsibility of the Inquirer/Candidate (Inquirer/Candidate) to provide documentation showing fulfillment of the following requirements from approved institutions, agencies and schools.
- 2. **Exceptions:** Any differences between the below requirements and actual coursework must be approved in advance by Committee on Preparation for Ministry.
- 3. **Full Graded Credit:** All classes will be taken for full graded credit unless Committee on Preparation for Ministry grants permission for exceptions to take an occasional class on a pass/fail basis; unless the class is only offered on a pass/fail basis.
- 4. **Required Coursework:** Regardless of the curriculum of a particular theological institution, coursework shall include
 - a. **BIBLICAL STUDIES**
Introduction to Old and New Testaments, biblical studies
(Semester system: four courses/ Quarter system: six courses)
 - b. **LANGUAGE AND EXEGESIS**
 - i. Hebrew and Greek (Semester system: one class for each/ Quarter system: one class for each)

- ii. Exegesis of the old and new testaments using Hebrew and Greek texts (Semester system: one class for each/Quarter system: one class for each)

- c. PRACTICAL THEOLOGY to include
 - i. Spiritual formation
 - ii. Reformed worship and sacraments
 - iii. Homiletics/preaching
 - iv. Christian education
 - v. Pastoral care and counseling
 - vi. Christian social ethics
(Semester system: one class each/ Quarter system: one class each)
- d. SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY
Including courses that address Reformed Theology with writings of Calvin
(Semester system: two classes/ Quarter system: three classes)
- e. CHURCH HISTORY
To include a full span of the history of the Christian church with emphasis on the Reformation and Reformed Tradition
(Semester system: two classes/ Quarter system: three classes)
- f. POLITY AND REFORMED CONFESSIONS
To include study in the Book of Order and Book of Confessions
(Semester system: two classes, study of each required/ Quarter system: two classes, study of each required)

B. Supervised Field Education (see G-2.0606)

All supervised field education will be done in cooperation and with the approval of Committee on Preparation for Ministry. If supervised field education is not completed through the Inquirer/Candidate's seminary, then the Inquirer/Candidate will be responsible for developing this experience for him/herself with the approval of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

- 1. Normally, a Supervised Field Education assignment may not take place in the Inquirer/Candidate's church of care and any exceptions must have prior approval of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

2. An Inquirer/Candidate may not take a field education assignment that involves solo pastoral or Temporary Supply responsibilities without prior approval of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

C. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

As part of preparation for ordination, Inquirer/Candidate shall complete one unit of supervised Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in an ACPE certified program, or its equivalent, as approved by Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

3. 0: Evaluation & Assessment

A. Psychological Evaluation

1. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry uses the psychological evaluation as one tool for assessment of an individual, normally prior to the Inquiry phase.
 - a. A supplemental evaluation may be determined beneficial by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry during the course of care, but requests to “retake” the psychological evaluation will not be approved by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.
 - b. Psychological evaluations will be administered by a service approved by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.
2. The cost of an Applicant’s psychological evaluation shall be shared equally between the Applicant, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry and the Applicant’s home church.
 - a. The church of care may pay for all or part of the Applicant’s share of the expense of the psychological evaluation.
 - b. The Presbytery will reimburse applicants for the cost of travel, lodging and food, and other costs related to the psychological evaluation, up to an amount set by Committee on Preparation for Ministry.
 - c. If a supplemental evaluation is required by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, the full costs will be paid by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.
3. If the Committee on Preparation for Ministry Moderator determines there are issues in an Inquirer/Candidate’s psychological evaluation that need to be reported to the entire committee, such issues will be reported to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry prior to the next scheduled meeting with the Inquirer/Candidate. If copies of the psychological evaluation are distributed to the entire Committee on Preparation for Ministry for review, such copies will be destroyed after that review.

4. Inquirer/Candidate's may request to review their psychological evaluation with the CPM Moderator before it is seen by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry as a whole and prior to their next meeting with the committee following completion of the psychological evaluation.
5. Psychological evaluations are shared outside the bounds of Denver Committee on Preparation for Ministry only with the permission of the inquirer/candidate.

B. Standard Ordination Exams (see G-2.0607d & G-2.0610)

1. **Exceptions:** The Presbytery may not grant requests for alternate method of assessment before a candidate has failed to receive a satisfactory grade on two attempts on any particular exam, unless the inquirer or candidate has a disability that affects the person's test-taking ability. Determination of disability will be documented by a person or persons selected by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall report the rationale for granting the exception; approval shall be by three-fourths vote of the presbytery. The exception shall be noted in the minutes of presbytery.
2. **Alternate Means of Assessment:** Upon the approval of Presbytery, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry may appoint a special committee of three Ruling or Teaching Elders to conduct an examination of the candidate. The special committee shall consult with the appropriate PC(USA) office regarding an appropriate alternative exam or examination process and conduct the examination. The examination will require approximately the same time to complete as would the standard exam. The results of the exam shall be reported to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry and shall inform the recommendations of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry on future steps toward ordination.
3. **Oral Component:** In accordance to the provisions and policies of the Office of Preparation for Ministry, a Candidate may request an Oral Component to their standard ordination exams.
4. The **Bible Content Exam** must be taken during Inquiry Phase. If it has been taken, Inquirers may be considered for Candidacy even if Bible Content Exam has not yet been passed.

C. Length of Time Under Care

The entire process of preparation for ministry will normally be completed in five years or less. If the Committee on Preparation for Ministry determines that an Inquirer/Candidate has not made substantial progress

towards ordination for a period of three years, it may initiate action to discontinue him/her from the process.

4.0- Confidentiality & Record Retention

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall maintain a system that ensures the proper storage and disposition of the records appropriate to the ordination process.

A. Records Retention

1. Documents fulfilling the constitutional requirements of the PC(USA), including forms, essays, ordination exams, academic transcripts;
2. Documents fulfilling the requirements of Denver Presbytery, including psychological evaluation reports, CPE evaluation reports, field education reports, background check reports, presbytery misconduct statements and attestations; and
3. Minutes, correspondence and incidental materials resulting from the work of the committee.
4. Signed disposition authorization forms, letters from Inquirer/Candidates authorizing Denver Committee on Preparation for Ministry to release records, and records regarding disposition of specific Inquirer/Candidate files

B. Confidentiality

1. Private information (e.g. financial means, social security number, etc.) shall be kept at Presbytery Office under the care of the Stated Clerk. Files are available only to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry Moderator and officers of the Presbytery. Committee on Preparation for Ministry Secretary and Committee on Preparation for Ministry members may have access through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry Moderator.
2. The proceedings of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry remain confidential unless information about a particular inquirer/candidate is requested by the presbytery, session or the Inquirer/Candidate, and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry deems it necessary and beneficial to the process to release the information. Inquirers/candidates shall be consulted regarding the release of confidential information.
3. Psychological evaluations will not be shared outside the bounds of Denver Committee on Preparation for Ministry unless permission is granted by the inquirer/candidate.
4. Information about the preparation for ministry process, including general public knowledge about particular Inquirer/Candidates, is not considered confidential and may be shared between the committee and others.