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The Presbytery of Florida Committee on Preparation for Ministry

Policies

The purpose of the preparation for ministry process of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is to provide the best possible leadership for the church by assuring that persons called to the ministry of Word and Sacrament receive the fullest personal and professional preparation for this office.

This process involves congregations, sessions, theological institutions, persons considering the ministry of Word and Sacrament, and presbyteries.

It is the responsibility of Florida Presbytery to:

- provide effective means of testing and validating the calls of those seeking to become ministers of Word and Sacrament,
- provide them nurture, guidance, and oversight,
- bring to active candidacy those with appropriate abilities and oversight, and
- approve them as ready to receive a call to the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, provided that all requirements for ordination have been met to the satisfaction of the presbytery,
- ordain them to the ministry of the Word and Sacraments following a presbytery-approved call, if so requested by the calling presbytery.

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry to oversee the inquiry/candidacy process in Florida Presbytery. To this end, the Presbytery approves the following policies for the CPM:

1. **Book of Order:** In addition to the provisions below, all the requirements of the *Book of Order* shall apply. "Shall," "should," and "may" in these policies are used as defined in the Preface to the *Book of Order*.
2. **Contact the CPM Early:** Those considering the ministry of Word and Sacrament should be in conversation with their session and the CPM *before attending seminary*.
3. **Endorsement for Inquiry:** Sessions should meet in person with members applying to become inquirers and should review the written Application for Enrolling as an Inquirer (Form 1) before endorsing any applicant.
4. **Psychological Assessment:** Those applying to become inquirers shall undergo a psychological evaluation designed to assist the CPM. This evaluation should take place before applicants attend seminary. The evaluation will be conducted by counselors or counseling centers approved by the CPM, and the written report of the evaluation shall become a part of the application for inquiry. The CPM will not ordinarily conduct an interview with an applicant for inquirer until a written psychological evaluation has been received by the CPM. The CPM will not receive any applicant as an inquirer absent the psychological evaluation.

5. **Seminaries:** Inquirers and candidates under care of Florida Presbytery should attend seminaries affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for the first theological degree unless they can make a compelling case for exception from this requirement.
6. **Costs:** Costs for an applicant's travel, lodging and fees for psychological evaluation should be shared by the applicant, the applicant's home session, and the Presbytery. Costs to inquirers and candidates for annual consultations and meetings of Presbytery shall likewise be shared by the inquirers or candidates, their home sessions, and the Presbytery.
7. **The Stages of the CPM Process (G-14.0400)** The inquiry stage of the preparation process is for exploration and assessment by both the inquirer and the CPM. Enrollment of an applicant as an inquirer by no means guarantees that the inquirer will be recommended for enrollment as a candidate. Candidacy is likewise not a guarantee of ordination, even if a candidate has passed the written ordination examinations.
8. **Endorsement for Candidacy:** Sessions should meet in person with inquirers applying to become candidates and should review the written Application for Enrolling as a Candidate (Form 2) before endorsing any applicant.
9. **Clinical Pastoral Education:** Inquirers and candidates shall undergo at least one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education in the course of their theological education, unless a compelling case can be made for exception from this provision. The CPM must approve any exception in advance. Candidates and inquirers must arrange for their supervisors' reports regarding CPE or approved alternative experience to be submitted to the CPM.
10. **Responsibility to Communicate:** It is the responsibility of inquirers and candidates to take the initiative to secure approval for ordination examinations, permission to serve as a student intern without direct supervision (G-14.0307), permission to circulate a personal information form, etc. The CPM is not responsible for missed deadlines when inquirers or candidates do not make timely applications.
11. **Annual Reports:** Inquirers and candidates shall provide a written report to the CPM annually (G-14.0421) and shall meet annually with the CPM for consultation. All written materials must be submitted to the CPM in advance. The CPM will inform inquirers and candidates of deadlines.
12. **Personal Information Forms:** Candidates may circulate their Personal Information Forms only upon successful examination by the CPM as certified ready to receive a call.
13. **Requirements for Ordination Exams:** Students must be candidates and must have completed two years of theological education in order to take the written ordination examinations with the exception of the Bible Content Examination, which should be taken in the first year of seminary. Candidates must satisfy the CPM that they have had adequate supervised experience in the practice of ministry in order to be certified to take ordination examinations. CPE experience alone will not ordinarily be considered sufficient to meet this requirement. (G-14.0431).

14. **All Written Exams Should be Taken at Once:** With the exception of the Bible Content Exam, which should be taken in the first year of seminary, candidates should take all the written ordination exams in the same sitting, unless a compelling case can be made for taking fewer. The Chair of the CPM is authorized to approve or deny applications to take all, or fewer than all, of the ordination exams.
15. **Preaching:** Candidates shall preach a sermon before the CPM as part of its examination for readiness to receive a call.
16. **Reformed Theology:** Candidates should be prepared to address at least the following in the examination for readiness to receive a call, with special attention to the place of these topics in the Reformed tradition.
 - Authority of Scripture
 - Doctrine of God: Trinity, Creation, Sovereignty, Providence
 - The Human Condition: Sin, Election, Covenant Life
 - Jesus Christ: Incarnation, Atonement, Salvation
 - Holy Spirit: the Work of the Holy Spirit, Mission of the Church
 - Worship and Sacraments
 - Doctrine of the Church: The Great Ends of the Church
 - Stewardship

Proposed for adoption at the April 26, 2011 meeting.