



Category 2 Remit

Study Guide for Remit 7: Candidacy Pathway

Approved by the 42nd General Council 2015

Between February 2016 and 17 February 2017, each presbytery will formally be asked in a category 2 remit to approve the implementation of the Candidacy Pathway.

This is the question to be voted on:

Does the presbytery agree that:

- (a) the seven-phase Candidacy Pathway policy as set out in Appendix "A" as approved by the 42nd General Council 2015 be implemented; and
- (b) the Basis of Union be amended to reflect this change?

Summary

This remit proposes replacing the current process for becoming a member of the Order of Ministry (ordained or diaconal minister) with a new, more flexible process. The Candidacy Pathway allows those who feel called to ordered ministry to enter the process at different phases and use resources that suit their life experiences, personality, and context.

Since 2011, three Conferences have been testing the Pathway in pilot projects. They have found that supporting a separate process for becoming a designated lay minister is onerous and unnecessary. The General Council authorized the development and implementation of a similar seven-phase pathway for designated lay ministers that may be undertaken entirely or in part at the same time as the pathway to ordered (ordained and commissioned) ministry.

Each Conference can develop a Candidacy Pathway suited to its own context, provided its pathway is grounded in the Core Values and Principles of the Candidacy Pathway, the seven phases, the Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership, and the United Church's Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel.

Background

The current process for a layperson becoming a member of the Order of Ministry is found in *The Manual*, chapter H. The phases or concepts of the Candidacy Pathway are present in some form in the current process. The major differences are the flexibility of the pathway and the membership requirements.

The current process consists of sequential steps that must happen in a certain order, and the requirement of 24 months of membership in the United Church before beginning discernment for ministry.

While there are seven phases in the Candidacy Pathway, a person does not need to follow them in a particular order. For example, they may decide to begin theological studies, then attend a discernment weekend, and then discern a call to ministry. Under this pathway, a person must be a member of the United Church before being named a candidate, but they do not need to be a member before beginning discernment for ministry. They are required, however, to be involved in a local ministry or mission for two years before becoming a candidate.

For more detailed background information related to this remit, please see

- Appendix “A,” below
- the [GC42 Workbook](#), Report: The Steering Group on the Candidacy Pathway, REPORTS 137–144 (pages 255–262): www.gc42.ca/workbook
- the [News](#) section of the 42nd General Council website: www.gc42.ca/news/candidacy-pathway-authorized-remit-0

Proposed changes

Current process	Proposed Candidacy Pathway
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A person feels God is calling them to ministry (“call” refers to a person’s sense that God is telling him/her to do something) 2. The person tells the governing body of their congregation about their sense of call. The governing body decides whether to approve the person as an “inquirer”—a person who is in the discernment process for ministry. 3. If approved, the inquirer begins a 12-month period of discernment. 4. At the close of a year of discernment, the governing body of the congregation makes a recommendation to the presbytery. The recommendation may be for the person to be recognized as a candidate for ordained ministry, as a candidate for diaconal ministry, as an applicant for designated lay ministry, or to continue serving in lay ministry positions within the church. 5. The individual is interviewed by the Conference Interview Board and must provide the presbytery Education and Students Committee with the results of a police records check. 6. The presbytery decides on the recommendation of its Education and Students Committee concerning the inquirer. 7. The candidate completes a Master of Divinity degree (or equivalent) and 	<p>There are seven phases, but they are not necessarily sequential. People may enter the pathway at different phases.</p> <p>Call Forth: A person has a sense that God is “calling” them, telling them to consider entering the Order of Ministry. Conferences may offer events such as a discernment weekend for those exploring the possibility of being called by God to vocational ministry.</p> <p>Identify: The church, through interviews, education, and discernment tools, determines whether a person is suited for ministry and “identifies” candidates for the Order of Ministry.</p> <p>Accompany: The church continues to talk to, encourage, and support candidates on the pathway, including through a Circle of Accompaniment.</p> <p>Equip: The church provides opportunities and options for candidates to be educated for ordered ministry.</p> <p><i>Note: Given the work of the Working Group on Leadership Formation for Ministry that led to proposal GCE 11—Faithful, Effective and Learned Leaders for the Church We Are Becoming: A Competency-Based Approach to Ministerial Education—the Candidacy Pathway proposal made no recommendations on the current programs of study offered at United Church–related theological schools for those studying to become diaconal or ordained ministers in The United Church of Canada.</i></p> <p>Assess: The church ensures that candidates are ready for ordered ministry. A person’s readiness, effectiveness, and preparedness for ministry is assessed by the Candidacy Board (or other board of the Conference).</p>

<p>then obtains testamur from a United Church–related theological school or a diploma in diaconal ministries from the Centre for Christian Studies. As part of their studies, candidates must also complete a supervised ministry education component (an internship).</p> <p>8. The presbytery and Conference interview the candidate throughout their years of education to determine whether they are suitable and ultimately ready for ministry. The Conference makes the final decision.</p> <p>9. The Conference commissions or ordains the candidate.</p>	<p>Candidacy Boards receive training so their members are competent, trained, ethical, and accountable.</p> <p>Authorize: The church affirms a candidate's readiness for ministry. Candidacy Boards and Conferences authorize candidates for ordination, commissioning, or recognition.</p> <p>Celebrate: The Conference arranges a recognition and celebration of those entering the Order of Ministry. The presbytery arranges a celebration of those being recognized as a designated lay minister.</p>
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Implications of adopting the Candidacy Pathway

- The pilot projects found that the pathway needed fewer people to be involved throughout the process. Fewer committees were needed than are currently involved, and therefore fewer volunteers. At the same time, the pilots saw a significant increase in the number of enquirers undertaking discernment.
- If the Candidacy Pathway is implemented, we can expect that more changes and practices will emerge in the future as the church lives out the pathway.
- The church will need to work with theological schools and training centres to develop training informed by the Candidacy Pathway.
- There will also need to be ongoing conversation about how the pathway serves an intercultural church. This will include further conversations with All Native Circle Conference, French ministries, and ethnic ministries about how the phases of the pathway can benefit candidates from these communities. A pathway would also need to be developed for those seeking recognition as Designated Lay Ministers.
- The pathway offers different flexibility for candidates. For example, a person can begin their theological education before they have decided whether they want to offer themselves as a candidate. This allows a person some opportunity to explore theology and ministry before making an initial commitment.
- Each Conference can develop a Candidacy Pathway suited to its own context, provided its pathway is grounded in the Core Values and Principles of the Candidacy Pathway, the seven phases, the Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership, and the United Church's Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel.
- Before a person can be recognized as a candidate for ministry, that person must have been actively involved in a local ministry or mission of The United Church of Canada for at least 24 months. A person is not required to be a member of a congregation in order to begin discernment.

- The pathway encourages the use of a variety of resources and tools to help both the person and the church discern whether the person is called to the order of ministry. This allows resources to be used according to a person's life experiences and the contexts of their life. Some of the resources that will be used include the Vocational Assessment tool, the *Ethical Standards and Standard of Practice* document, and the *Learning Outcomes* document.

What is a category 2 remit?

A category 2 remit is needed for changes to the Basis of Union that are significant but not denomination-shaping (*The Manual*, s. F2). A category 2 remit also requires that a study process be available in the church before the remit is released.

The proposed change must be sent to all presbyteries to vote on. If an absolute majority of presbyteries vote in favour of the proposed change—not just a majority of those that vote—then the next General Council must also vote in favour of the proposed change for it to take effect.

NB: If a presbytery does not vote, that is considered a vote AGAINST the proposal.

Appendix "A"

The Seven Phases:

1. Calling Forth

1.1. The Church will engage a creative and invitational approach for calling forth individuals to serve as ministry personnel within our denomination.

1.2. The practice of hosting "discernment weekends" is endorsed as one method (but not the sole method) of calling forth individuals to ministry leadership.

2. Identify

2.1. The Church will engage a variety of tools or agencies to be used to test a person's giftedness for ministry and affirms that not all methods need to be used in each case.

2.2. The Identify phase of the Candidacy Pathway will be engaged for those who feel called as Designated Lay Ministers and Licensed Lay Worship Leaders).

2.3. A committee or board at the Conference level will deal with matters concerning candidacy; Boards may be sub-divided into sub-committees or panels, each of which would interact with a limited number of students.

2.4. Those discerning a call to vocational ministry must have been actively involved in a local ministry or mission of The United Church of Canada for a period of 24 months prior to seeking recognition as a Candidate for the Order of Ministry.

2.5. There is no membership requirement in a congregation before discernment can begin.

2.6. All inquirers sensing a call to ministry must demonstrate active participation in the life and work of a congregation of The United Church of Canada.

2.7. All inquirers must be full members of The United Church of Canada to be eligible for

recognition as a candidate for the Order of Ministry and for appointment to a ministry position.

3. Accompany

3.1. Circles of Accompaniment will support students and candidates, offering clear communication and guidance. Circles of Accompaniment will not have an evaluative role.

3.2. When information comes to the attention of a Circle of Accompaniment that raises serious concerns about the student's promise, suitability, fitness, and readiness for service as ministry personnel, those concerns may be communicated to the Candidacy Board for it to address with the student. The Circle of Accompaniment will advise the student that it will be raising the information with the Candidacy Board.

4. Equip

4.1. The Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership resource and the Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice (or their successors) will be incorporated into students' field placement opportunities and Supervised Ministry Education experiences.

4.2. Student learning goals will be matched with the learning opportunities available at the learning site through the educational supervisor

4.3. Readiness for a Supervised Ministry Education placement will not constitute a promise of a placement.

4.4. The peer learning group model used in the St. Andrew's College internship program and in the educational program for Diaconal Ministry offered at the Canadian Centre for Christian Studies are endorsed as models of integrated Supervised Ministry Education.

4.5. Students may request a transfer of their candidacy between Conferences, even if the Conferences do not operate identical Candidacy Pathways; both Conferences involved will determine if the transfer request will be granted on a case-by-case basis.

4.6. For those on the pathway to ordained ministry, Supervised Ministry Education may occur before the student has completed her/his educational training at a theological school, and can begin following the completion of the first year of formal graduate-level theological studies [currently not applicable to those enrolled in the Summer Distance Master of Divinity Degree program offered through Atlantic School of Theology and those enrolled in the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre].

4.7. Candidates will be permitted to serve their Supervised Ministry Education period on a full-time or a part-time basis; the minimum requirement in a part-time Supervised Ministry Education placement or appointment is half-time (20 hours per week).

4.8. Each Candidacy Board will determine the length of Supervised Ministry Education required of the student on a case by case basis; the minimum period of Supervised Ministry Education is 1,360 hours (the equivalent of 34 weeks at 40 hours per week); these hours may be served in one placement or appointment or in a combination of placements and/or appointments; the minimum period for any placement or appointment in Supervised Ministry Education is 13 weeks.

4.9. The Candidacy Board will approve each period of Supervised Ministry Education and the nature of that Supervised Ministry Education placement prior to the commencement of each placement.

4.10. A variety of Supervised Ministry Education opportunities will be open to candidates for ordained ministry, including placements in missional settings and summer placements; the identification of learning sites is the responsibility of the Conferences.

4.11. Intentional efforts will be made to identify potential learning sites and to urge those sites to continue to be learning sites for candidates.

4.12. The Ministry of Supervision training program will be adapted to include instruction on longer-term supervision, off-site supervision, the use of technology in supervision, and the Candidacy Pathway's Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership.

4.13. The Lay Supervision Team will support, accompany, and encourage the student through providing feedback to the student and periodic evaluation to the student and the Educational Supervisor.

5. Assess

5.1. The Candidacy Board (or other board of the Conference) will assess the promise, suitability, readiness, and effectiveness of each candidate for ministry.

5.2. Candidacy Boards will be trained on maintaining effective, clear, direct, and consistent communications with each student.

5.3. Candidacy Boards will be comprised of competent, trained, ethical, and accountable individuals, who operate in a transparent manner and adopt best practices in a consistent manner.

5.4. Student will have the right be accompanied by a person of the student's choice present at all meetings with the Candidacy Board or a sub-committee or panel of the Board; the accompanier has the right to be present, but does not have the right to speak unless the Candidacy Board or sub-committee or panel of the Board invites the accompanier to speak or grants permission in response to a request to speak.

5.5. Candidacy Boards and any sub-committee or panel of the Boards will endeavor to maintain gender balance in their membership to draw from various ethnicities.

5.6. The training of Candidacy Board members will include specific training on "cross-cultural interviewing" and "interviewing those who are differently-abled."

5.7. Candidacy Board processes will be open to appeal, should a student wish to challenge a process at any stage of the candidacy pathway; such appeals shall follow the appeals process as set out in the current version of *The Manual* of the United Church.

5.8. If a Candidacy Board decides to end a student's candidacy or if the student withdraws from the candidacy pathway and the student subsequently feels called again to ministry, the student will begin the candidacy pathway process at the beginning.

6. Authorize

6.1. The Candidacy Board and the Conferences will authorize candidates as ready for ordination, commissioning or recognition.

7. Celebrate

7.1. The ministry of all persons called to paid accountable ministry will be celebrated by the

Conference, including those recognized as Designated Lay Ministers.

7.2. The Church recognizes the increasing diversity of new and renewing ministries within The United Church of Canada, the opportunities to serve in ministry within the offices of the various courts of the denomination, and the wider opportunities for ministry beyond our denomination (such as chaplaincies in the Canadian Forces, correctional institutions, educational institutions, and hospitals; and teaching ministries) and affirms that candidates for the Order of Ministry may be called to serve in those ministries.

7.3. The Church affirms that, as the number of opportunities for service within a pastoral charge context decreases, opportunities to serve in more missional settings may increase. The celebration of ministry through ordination or commissioning will not be limited to those who have received a call or an appointment to a pastoral charge or presbytery accountable ministry or who are pursuing further studies.

7.4. The Church will celebrate the achievement of the conclusion of each student's candidacy pathway and the Conference will commission or ordain those who have completed the pathway and who have accepted a call, appointment, or offer of employment to a paid accountable ministry, as determined by the Presbytery in which the ministry is geographically located.