

STEPS IN CERTIFICATION

in Specialized Ministries in The United Methodist Church

.....



HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

OVERVIEW

CERTIFICATION IN SPECIALIZED MINISTRY in The United Methodist Church demonstrates a level of competency according to denominational standards in faith formation, academic training and experience, membership in The United Methodist Church and continuing study in the area of specialization.

Certification is the United Methodist Church's recognition that an individual has been called, made a commitment to serve and has fulfilled the required standards for academic training, experience and continuing study to serve with excellence in an area of specialized ministry.

The church's need for leaders who are prepared and committed to a ministry focus makes certification by The United Methodist Church increasingly important.

TRACKS

Professional certification entails biblical and theological training, knowledge of The United Methodist Church structure and resources, skill development, support and accountability.

Professional certification is available to lay people, ordained deacons and elders, diaconal ministers and local pastors who have an undergraduate degree, take prescribed certification courses for graduate level credit and meet other requirements.

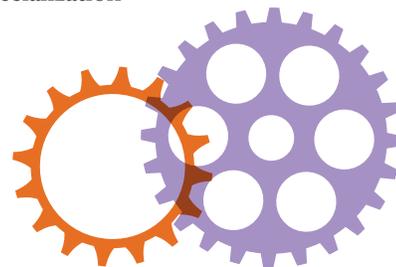
Undergraduate certification requires completion of an undergraduate degree at a United Methodist-related college that has specialized ministry certification studies programs approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM). After completing two years' employment in the area of specialized ministry, and with at least two years' membership in The United Methodist Church, those seeking certification may apply. Download Form 323790, Application for Professional Certification from www.gbhem.org/certification. A copy should be sent to the certification registrar of the applicant's annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry. In both instances, copies of undergraduate transcripts should be sent with the application.

To request additional information on United Methodist-related colleges with approved undergraduate programs, visit www.gbhem.org/certification.

Paraprofessional certification is available to those who may not have an undergraduate degree and are working in areas of specialized ministry. Paraprofessional certification courses do not carry academic credit.

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Recognized Christian character, personal competence, integrity and understanding of and commitment to the church's ministry and mission
2. Ability to relate to people, to work with volunteers and staff and to function with emotional maturity and sound judgment
3. Demonstrated leadership and ability to integrate theory and practice
4. Membership in The United Methodist Church for at least one (1) year before enrolling in the certification process. Courtesy certification may be granted to pan-Methodist members at the approval of GBHEM
5. Knowledge of The United Methodist Church's structure, polity, resources, program and mission
6. Psychological assessment and background check
7. Expressed commitment to continuing education that includes a planned program to enrich both personal and professional growth. Such a program shall include: (1) reading; (2) study, on an individual and group basis; (3) participation in professional, community, denominational and ecumenical groups; (4) renewal of spiritual life, and (5) evaluation by the immediate supervisor.
8. Membership in a group or professional association related to the area of specialization



ENROLL TO START THE PROCESS

Begin the process toward certification by enrolling with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

1. Download and complete the enrollment form found at www.gbhem.org/certification.
2. Send copies of the completed form to your annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the Certification Office at GBHEM. The annual conference and GBHEM will review the form to determine if you are eligible for a GBHEM scholarship for part-time students.



STEP 2 REGISTER FOR CLASSES

1. Register for classes at a school approved to offer courses in United Methodist certification.
2. If you are a part-time student, complete the scholarship application form found on www.gbhem.org/certification and submit it to the school's financial aid office.



STEP 3 APPLY FOR THE APPROVAL PROCESS

When you have completed all the required courses, download and complete the appropriate application form from www.gbhem.org/certification. Send completed form to your annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

- Professional Certification: Form 323790
- Paraprofessional Certification: Form HE4066

Send a copy of the application with a copy of your transcripts to the Certification Office, Division of Ordained Ministry, GBHEM, P.O. Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007.



STEP 4 APPROVAL PROCEDURES

Upon receipt of your application, the **Certification Office of GBHEM** will:

- Verify that you have met the educational requirements
- Verify your employment experience and church membership

Your annual conference **Board of Ordained Ministry** will:

- Contact the three references you provided in the application, asking them to complete GBHEM's evaluation form HE4012
- Administer a psychological assessment and background check
- Schedule an interview with you
- Verify your local church membership, abilities, skills, experience and leadership positions in the certification specialty area
- Determine whether to approve you for certification
- If you are approved for certification, your Board of Ordained Ministry will request from GBHEM a certificate to present during the next annual conference session.

The annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry will maintain a record of all certified ministry specialists and their areas of certification, and publish the list annually in the conference journal.



STEP 5 BIENNIAL REVIEW AND RENEWAL

The continuing validity of certification is dependent upon a biennial review and renewal by the certified ministry specialist. File for renewal by downloading and completing Form HE4004, Biennial Review and Renewal for Professional/Paraprofessional Certification, found at www.gbhem.org/certification.

1. Form HE4004 must be completed every other year (even-numbered years, regardless of the year of original approval) and submitted to the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry.
2. The annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry will make renewal status recommendations to the annual conference and inform GBHEM.
3. Employment supervisors of certified ministry specialists should complete a performance evaluation.
4. The certified ministry specialist must be actively participating in the area of specialized ministry in order to renew certification.
5. Renewal of certification is permissible for certified ministry specialists who are currently not serving in a United Methodist setting or are temporarily unemployed but wish to keep their certification current.
6. Certification is valid for as long as all requirements are fulfilled and the biennial review is updated.
7. The annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry may withhold renewal for a valid cause, subject to the individual's right to appeal to the annual conference.
8. If the conference fails to act on a request for renewal due to its own oversight or neglect, the individual's certification status shall not be jeopardized. The conference should act quickly to correct the situation.
9. If certification lapses because the certified specialized minister fails to submit renewal forms even after requests from the annual conference, the individual will lose certification status. To obtain recertification, the person must meet the current standards in force.
10. Certified specialized ministers may voluntarily relinquish their status upon written notification to the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

CONFERENCE TRANSFER

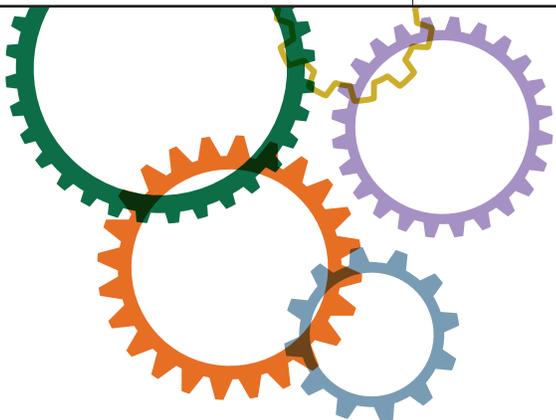
When a certified specialized minister transfers to another annual conference, the individual should write to the receiving conference's Board of Ordained Ministry and request transfer of his or her certification status. He or she should send a copy of this request to the Board of Ordained Ministry of the conference that currently holds the records.

The receiving conference's Board of Ordained Ministry shall review the request and upon approval, ask the former conference to transfer the individual's certification status and files.



COMPARISON CHART

PROFESSIONAL	UNDERGRADUATE	PARAPROFESSIONAL
EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS		
Graduate degree (Master's, D.Min., Ph.D.). Must include a concentration in the area of specialization and United Methodist studies. Must be earned at a seminary or university approved by the University Senate. OR: Bachelor's degree and graduate courses required for certification, taken at an approved school.	Undergraduate degree from one of the United Methodist-related colleges or universities in a program approved for certification studies.	Courses taken not for academic credit through a program approved for paraprofessional certification. Student need not have an undergraduate degree.
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE		
Two years of supervised employment in the area of specialization. Must be approved by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and entail a contractual agreement with supervision, accountability, evaluation and continuing education.	Two years of supervised employment and two years of membership in The United Methodist Church	Two years of supervised experience. Must be approved by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and entails a contractual agreement with supervision, accountability, evaluation and continuing education.



HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1001 Nineteenth Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37212

www.gbhem.org