

The Basics for dCOMs

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Thank you for serving on your District's Committee on Ministry! The work you've agreed to do is holy work.

On behalf of your District, the Board of Ordained Ministry, the Texas Annual Conference, and the United Methodist Church, you will be interviewing God's people... ..people God has definitely called for ministry.

You'll be helping discern if they are called to one of the many forms of lay ministry, to serve the church as

- lay volunteers
- lay church staff members
- lay church staff members with specialized certifications
- certified lay speakers
- certified lay ministers

or if they are called, gifted, fit, and ready to be set apart to lead God's people, to serve the church as

- ordained deacons
- ordained elders
- licensed local pastors

You'll be guiding people through "candidacy" (a period of discernment during which people help people discern God's callings) and guiding licensed local pastors throughout their ministry.

Your first step: pray for and with your District Committee on Ministry (dCOM) for God's presence among you as you work, and for God's wisdom and guidance and you make important and sometimes difficult decisions.

Our hope and prayer: that this resource manual will help you in this holy work.

Membership

The following shall be represented in the membership of the dCOM (see ¶666.2):

- the District Superintendent
- at least six other clergy in the District including:
 - women
 - ethnic clergy
 - at least one elder who has completed the Course of Study whenever possible, deacons in full connection
 - whenever possible, at least one clergy person age 35 or younger

- at least three laypersons shall be members of the committee with limited vote
- interim vacancies may be filled by the District Superintendent
- clergy and lay members shall be nominated annually by the District Superintendent and approved by the District or annual conference
- within 10 days after election, a correct list of dCOM members and officers should be sent to the BOM Candidacy & Recruitment Assistant (CRA)

Organization

Although the *Discipline* does not prescribe a specific structure, the organization of the dCOM must ensure a close working relationship with the conference BOM and other District committees within the annual conference. Currently, all dCOM chairs serve ex officio (with voice and vote) on the conference Board of Ordained Ministry to help ensure this close working relationship.

Officers

The dCOM may appoint or elect officers listed below and others, taking care to assign duties and responsibilities for each. Within 10 days after election, a correct list of dCOM members and officers should be sent to the BOM Candidacy & Recruitment Assistant (CRA).

Chairperson: This office may not be held by the District Superintendent (§666.2). The Chairperson serves ex-officio with voice and vote on BOM; is responsible for effective communication between the dCOM and BOM; and stays in close connection with the CRA, BOM registrar, and other BOM officers. The duties are:

- to ensure the members of the committee are properly trained
- to call regular meetings of the dCOM informing each member of the time, place, and agenda
- to preside over meetings or appoint a temporary chair, if necessary—it is the chairperson’s responsibility to make sure the committee understands the scope of its duties and fulfills them with care
- to maintain a close relationship with the District Superintendent and district office
- to work with other chairpersons of district committees in the conference to ensure consistent use of procedure

Registrar: The dCOM should elect a person other than the District Superintendent or the chair of the dCOM to act as registrar for the committee. The duties are:

- maintain a list of all candidates under dCOM care (§666.3) and share candidate information and status with CRA
- to be the custodian for all dCOM files (all dCOM candidate files, including psychological assessment reports, belong to the annual conference) (see “record keeping” section, which follows)
- to keep a separate file on each person for whom the dCOM is responsible

- to inform the persons responsible what materials are needed for each file/interview, and instruct the dCOM on what actions to take
- to promptly (within 10 days) inform the CM of all actions taken on persons under the care of the dCOM (see One Page dCOM Action Report)
- to transfer individual files to another district or annual conference upon receipt of a written request
- to forward all candidates' files to the CRA or BOM registrar when the referents become an associate or provisional member (copies of file material may be sent to the BOM along with any recommendations, without the written permission of the candidate)
- to keep all persons interviewed by the district committee informed about decisions and recommendations promptly (within 10 days) in writing **Psychological Officer:** This officer should maintain communication with the BOM Psychological Officer for the receipt, utilization, and return of the psychological assessment report. The duties are:
 - Receive the psychological reports from the BOM psychological officer for use in the dCOM process of candidate evaluation
 - Review the psychological report for the candidate's potential for gaining sufficient levels of competence and readiness for ordained ministry
 - Use the reports appropriately
 - Help dCOM members interpret reports
 - Honor issues of confidentiality as outlined in the Authorization for Release of Information signed by the candidate

Executive secretary (optional): This office may be filled by the District Superintendent or District Administrative Assistant. The duties are:

- to record the minutes of each meeting and distribute copies to committee members, if a recording secretary has not been assigned this responsibility
- to conduct correspondence and business necessary for the efficient functioning of the committee as directed by the chairperson

Functions of the Committee

Confidentiality

Above all, as a member of a dCOM, you must keep all conversations and all decisions strictly confidential. If there is any question about whether a certain action, statement, or story can be shared with others, assume it to be confidential until you have explicit instructions to assume otherwise.

Interviewing

Most of each committee's time together is spent interviewing candidates. dCOMS are responsible for many different types of interviews. Of course, the purpose and expectations of each interview is shaped by the decision asked for in any interview. For

example, the purpose of interviewing a candidate for certification is different from the purpose of interviewing a candidate for provisional membership.

In general, when interviewing candidates for...

...**certification**, you are trying to determine **fitness** for ministry.

...**commissioning**, you are trying to determine **readiness** for ministry.

...**recertification**, you are trying to determine continued **fitness** for ministry and **progress** in completing theological education.

...**relicensing**, you are trying to determine continued **fitness** for ministry, **readiness** for licensed ministry, and **progress** in course of study.

In this resource manual, you'll find a section covering each type of interview and listing the purpose and expectations for each. Each section includes simple steps to take before, during, and after each type of interview.

However, the following guidelines apply to all interviews.

Hospitality

A candidate or local pastor coming to meet with your committee for certification, recertification, or relicensing is a stranger in your midst and should be treated as the Bible teaches us. As the committee, you are the hosts; the candidate or minister is the stranger; you should **extend hospitality**.

1. Reminding yourselves and your guests that the work you will do together is holy work, take care to **create a hospitable space**.
 - Consider setting up a simple **altar** space on the table with cloth, cross and lit candles to represent God's presence among you.
 - Consider sitting in a **circle** with your guest; not facing your guest in a line.
 - Consider breaking your committee into smaller interview teams, as necessary, so that each candidate or minister meets with a small group of **no more than eight** committee members.
2. Because you will probably meet with multiple candidates one after the other, appoint one or more representatives of your committee to serve as **host**.
 - A host should stay with the candidates waiting to interview with the committee, **welcoming** them, offering beverages and/or healthy snacks, answering any questions, and making them feel at home.
 - A second host (or a candidate's home pastor or mentor) should accompany each candidate into the interview, introducing the candidate and staying with the candidate to serve as **silent advocate**.

If a committee member asks **inappropriate questions**, either the chair or host should feel free to invite the committee member to ask another question or to ask the question in a more appropriate way.

Prayer

Begin and end each interview with prayer.

Psychological Testing Results

One of the tools the committee will use during certification interviews to help discern fitness for ministry is a summary report of psychological testing results written by a professional evaluation team after written recommendations and assessments are completed. In the Texas Annual Conference, this summary report assigns each candidate one of four color "types".

Green Candidates - demonstrate no psychological issues that preclude certification, commissioning, or ordination.

Yellow Candidates - are individuals who, in the evaluation of the MAS, have some psychological issues that are noted as potential concerns for vocational ministry. For these individuals, the MAS will list recommendations that the candidate and the dCOM/BOM should pay close attention to and develop a plan of action. This plan of action should be documented and revisited by the dCOM upon recertification or by the BOM before ordination. Reassessment by the MAS is not required, unless specifically called for in the original psychological assessment.

Orange Candidates - are individuals who, in the evaluation of the MAS, are not currently psychologically ready to be granted the level of relationship to the conference to which they aspire. At the level of certification, the Board of Ordained Ministry strongly recommends that candidates who are evaluated as Orange should not be certified by the District Committee on Ministry until the recommendations by the MAS have been satisfied and the candidate has been reassessed by the MAS as Yellow or Green. At the level of commissioning, the Board of Ordained Ministry strongly recommends that candidates who are evaluated as Orange should not be recommended for commissioning until the recommendations by the MAS have been satisfied and the candidate has been reassessed by the MAS as Yellow or Green.

Red Candidates - are those who, in the evaluation of the Ministerial Assessment Specialist, should not be in licensed or ordained ministry. Psychological concerns identified during the assessment are significant/substantive to the degree that the MAS recommends this candidate discontinue the ordination or licensing process, and explore other ways to bring expression to his/her faith. These candidates may be referred to the Psychological Assessment Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry or the Executive Committee for recommendations to the full Board; however, without further evaluation, Red candidates may not be certified, licensed, commissioned, or ordained.

Follow-up

After every committee meeting, within 10 days, a dCOM representative (registrar, chair, DAA or DS) should:

1. report all committee actions to the CRA on the "one-page dCOM action report" page and
2. write a letter to each candidate and his or her mentor, clearly indicating the committee's decisions and any recommendations or requirements. If the candidate will continue to another step in candidacy, include a copy of the checklist for that next stage in candidacy with the letter.

Regardless of decisions made, the candidate should know the committee to be a caring community of Christians. When a difficult decision is made and the candidate is not encouraged to continue, a personal contact should be planned for the days that follow. Vocational alternatives can be explored with the candidate and assistance given in locating other employment. Candidates who experience difficulties in dealing with the board's decision should be informed about any available pastoral care options.

Record Keeping

The district committee shall maintain a service record and file on every local pastor and candidate for the ordained ministry until the individual becomes an associate or provisional member of the annual conference. A copy of the files shall then be forwarded to the CRA or BOM registrar.

The records and files of the committee are kept on behalf of the annual conference and shall be maintained under guidelines provided by the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) (see ¶666.8).

Before the Certification Interview

By February 1, schedule District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) certification interviews.

Certification interviews should be scheduled **between April 1 and April 19**, giving consideration to students and school breaks (This is to give time for psychological assessments for January Candidacy Summit participants). Contact candidates from your District who attended Candidacy Summit the previous summer and those who self-delayed or were continued the previous spring to determine how many interviews you'll need to schedule. Plan to allow at least one hour per interview—at least 45 minutes for the actual interview plus a total of at least 15 minutes for dCOM discussion before and/or after the interview. Divide committee, if necessary, so that no more than eight members are present in any interview.

By February 15, notify dCOM and candidates with interview dates and times.

Give dCOM and candidates detailed information about the interview location. Tell candidates what they should expect and what they should wear. **No later than two weeks prior to the interview, candidates should forward to you:**

- **Statement of call** including (i) through (vi) in ¶311.2.a
- **Written responses to Wesley's historic questions** (¶310)
- **Minutes from home church charge conference**
(Candidate approved by 2/3 written vote)
- **Exploring Mentor's recommendation letter**
- Any other District requirements

Invite each candidate's **home church pastor** to accompany him or her to the interview. If pastor is not available, request a recommendation letter.

After interviews are scheduled and dCOM, candidates, and home church pastors are notified, collect the rest of the information you will need for the interview:

After the candidacy summit, you should have received from Candidacy Manager:

- **Personal Data Inventory**
- **Personal and Professional References List**
- **Notarized disclosure form**

Contact the BOM Psychological Officer or exploring mentor for the

- **Psychological assessment summary**

Two weeks before the interviews, confirm that all candidate information has been received.

Forward candidates' information to dCOM members who will be present during that interview:

- **Personal Data Inventory**
- **Statement of call** including (i) through (vi) in ¶311.2.a
- **Written responses to Wesley's historic questions** (¶310)

dCOM members should prepare for interviews by:

- Prayerfully reviewing candidates' information

During the Certification Interview

Extend hospitality.

- Create a **hospitable waiting environment**. Choose one committee member to stay in the waiting area for candidates and home church pastors, serving as host. Hosts should welcome candidates, offer beverages and/or healthy snacks, answer any questions, make the guests feel at home.
- Create a **hospitable interview environment** with a simple altar space, chairs arranged in a circle, and no more than eight committee members. If home church pastor or exploring mentor is not available to accompany each candidate as his or her advocate during the interview, choose another committee member to serve as advocate.

Before the candidate is invited into the interview environment, committee members should:

- Briefly discuss the information they received prior to the interview (including statement of call (§3.11.2.a (i) through (vi)), written responses to Wesley's historic questions (§ 310) and personal data inventory) and suggest possible interview questions which will help the candidate further articulate;
 - o **the maturity and depth of her or his Christian faith**
 - o **a genuine sense of call to licensed or ordained ministry**
 - o **physical, psychological, and emotional fitness for ministry**
 - o **potential for effectiveness in ministry**
- Confirm that the candidate's other information was received and is satisfactory, including minutes from charge conference, mentor's recommendation letter, notarized disclosure form, and psychological assessment summary.

When the candidate is invited to enter, committee members should:

- Greet the candidate warmly
- Graciously acknowledge any obvious anxiety
- State the purpose of the interview honestly and openly
- Begin with prayer

During the interview, committee members should:

- Express interest in the candidate's present situation
- Ask candidate to share his or her faith story and call to ministry
- Ask questions which will help the committee discern whether or not the candidate is **fit for ministry**
- Ask candidate if she or he is aware of the **Behavioral Guidelines**, and whether or not there is anything information he or she needs to share with the committee

During the interview, committee members should **not**:

- Ask questions which assume previous theological education
- Ask questions which assume previous pastoral leadership experience
- Ask questions which might be interpreted as discriminatory (i. e., questions which suggest a prejudice against a candidate's age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, level of education, social status, etc.)

If any committee member asks an inappropriate question, either the chair or advocate should feel free to invite the committee member to ask another question or to ask the question in a more appropriate way.

At the end of the interview, the chair or another committee member should:

- Thank the candidate for his or her time
- Inform the candidate when to expect a decision—both written and oral • End with prayer

After the Certification Interview

After the candidate is dismissed, debrief the interview and make a decision. You will need to make one of the three following decisions:

1. Candidate is fit for ministry

In this case, the candidate is “**certified.**”

- Candidates seeking ordination as deacon or elders become certified candidates and will be assigned certified mentors and complete theological education, following the steps on the “certified candidate” checklist. They will return to your committee annually for recertification.
- Candidates seeking appointment as local pastors who do not plan to attend seminary and seek ordination will request appointment.
 1. If appointed, the DS/dCOM assigns a clergy mentor from their district and notifies the Candidate, Candidacy and Recruitment Assistant and Clergy Mentor Chair of the assignment. The candidate must attend licensing school, and begin course of study, following the “local pastor” checklist. They will return to your committee annually for relicensing.
 2. If not appointed, the DS/dCOM assigns a clergy mentor from their district and notifies the Candidate, Candidacy and Recruitment Assistant and Clergy Mentor Chair of the assignment as they await an appointment. They will return to your committee annually for recertification.

2. Candidate is not fit for ministry, now or in the foreseeable future. In this case, candidate is “**discontinued.**”

3. Candidate is not currently fit for ministry but may be fit in the future.

In this case, candidate is “**continued**” as an exploring candidate for one year. The committee will need to give the candidate specific reasons why they find the candidate not currently fit, along with reasonable and tangible suggestions and/or requirements which may result in the candidate becoming fit for ministry. Most exploring candidates who either self-delay or are continued work with the same exploring mentor for one additional year. If candidates are not certified within two years after attending the Candidacy Summit, they should “start over” or ask the District Superintendent for approval to attend the Candidacy Summit again. In this case, the GBHEM candidacy fee does not usually need to be paid again. However, \$100 (the candidate’s portion of the psychological testing administered at the Candidacy Summit) will be due with the Candidacy Summit application.

Once a decision is made, the committee should decide who will inform the candidate of the committee’s decision, verbally and in writing.

- **Inform the candidate verbally as soon as possible, within 24 hours.**
- **Inform the candidate in writing as soon as possible, within 10 days.** If the candidate is certified, include a copy of (or link to) the certified candidate checklist.

Regardless of decisions made, the candidate should know the committee to be a caring community of Christians. When a difficult decision is made and the candidate is not encouraged to continue, a personal contact should be planned for the days that follow. Vocational alternatives can be explored with the candidate and assistance given in locating other

employment. Candidates who experience difficulties in dealing with the board's decision should be informed about any available pastoral care options.

Registrar or District Administrative Assistant should complete the onepage dCOM action report and forward it to Candidacy & Recruitment Assistant as soon as possible, within 10 days.

Before the Recertification Interview

By February 1, schedule dCOM recertification interviews.

Recertification interviews are usually scheduled in person in the spring, giving consideration to students and school breaks. However, summer or fall interviews are acceptable and recertification interviews may be scheduled via video conferencing or conference call.

If certified candidates are in seminary, dCOMs may request that the Center for Clergy Excellence Clergy Recruitment ministry area team Seminary Ambassadors conduct certification interviews on their behalf during fall seminary visits by contacting the Associate Director of the Center for Clergy Excellence at 713.521.9383.

Contact certified candidates from your District to determine how many interviews you'll need to schedule. Plan to allow at least 45 minutes per interview--at least 30 minutes for the actual interview plus a total of at least 15 minutes for dCOM discussion before and/or after the interview. Divide committee, if necessary, so that no more than eight members are present in any interview.

By February 15, notify dCOM and certified candidates with interview dates and times.

Give dCOM and candidates detailed information about the interview location. Tell candidates what they should expect and what they should wear.

No later than two weeks prior to the interview, candidates should forward to you:

- Current transcript
- Any changes in contact information, college, university, or seminary
- Any other District requirements

Two weeks before the interviews, confirm that all candidate information has been received.

Forward candidates' information to dCOM members who will be present during that interview:

- Personal Data Inventory
- Any changes in contact information, college, university, or seminary

dCOM members should prepare for interviews by:

- Prayerfully reviewing candidates' information

During the Recertification Interview

Extend hospitality.

- Create a **hospitable waiting environment**. Choose one committee member to stay in the waiting area for certified candidates, serving as host. Hosts should

welcome candidates, offer beverages and/or healthy snacks, answer any questions, and make the certified candidates feel at home.

- Create a **hospitable interview environment** with a simple altar space, chairs arranged in a circle, and no more than eight committee members. If certified mentor is not available to accompany each candidate as his or her advocate during the interview, choose another committee member to serve as advocate.

Before the candidate is invited into the interview environment, committee members should:

- Briefly discuss the information they received prior to the interview (including Personal Data Inventory and any changes in contact information, college, university, or seminary) and suggest possible interview questions which will help the candidate further articulate;
 - **continued fitness for ministry**
 - **progress in studies** (if candidate for ordination)
- Confirm that the candidate's current transcript was received and is satisfactory.

When the candidate is invited to enter, committee members should:

- Greet the candidate warmly
- Graciously acknowledge any obvious anxiety
- State the purpose of the interview honestly and openly
- Begin with prayer

During the interview, committee members should: •

Express interest in the candidate's present situation

- **Ask candidate about progress in his or her studies** (if candidate for ordination)
- **Ask questions which will help the committee discern whether or not the candidate is still fit for ministry**

During the interview, committee members should **not**:

- Ask questions which might be interpreted as discriminatory (i.e., questions which suggest a prejudice against a candidate's age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, level of education, social status, etc.)

If any committee member asks an inappropriate question, either the chair or advocate should feel free to invite the committee member to ask another question or to ask the question in a more appropriate way.

At the end of the interview, the chair or another committee member should:

- Thank the candidate for his or her time
- Inform the candidate when to expect a decision—both written and oral • End with prayer

After the Recertification Interview

After the candidate is dismissed, debrief the interview and make a decision. You will need to make one of the following decisions:

1. **Candidate is still fit for ministry and progressing in studies.**

In this case, the candidate is **“recertified.”**

- Recertified candidates seeking ordination as deacon or elders will continue to work with certified mentors and complete theological education, following the steps on the “certified candidate” checklist. They will return to your committee annually for recertification.
- Recertified candidates seeking appointment as local pastors who do not plan to attend seminary and seek ordination will continue to request for and await appointment. They will return to your committee annually for recertification.

- 2. Candidate is no longer fit for ministry and/or is not progressing in his or her studies. Committee does not expect candidate to become fit or resume studies in the foreseeable future. Committee does not expect candidate to become effective in ministry in the foreseeable future.** In this case, candidate is **“discontinued.”**

Once a decision is made, the committee should decide who will inform the candidate of the committee’s decision, verbally and in writing.

- **Inform the candidate verbally as soon as possible, within 24 hours.**
- **Inform the candidate in writing as soon as possible, within 10 days.** If the candidate is certified, include a copy of (or link to) the certified candidate checklist.

Regardless of decisions made, the candidate should know the committee to be a caring community of Christians. When a difficult decision is made and the candidate is not encouraged to continue, a personal contact should be planned for the days that follow. Vocational alternatives can be explored with the candidate and assistance given in locating other employment. Candidates who experience difficulties in dealing with the board’s decision should be informed about any available pastoral care options.

Registrar or District Administrative Assistant should complete the onepage dCOM action report and forward it to Candidacy & Recruitment Assistant as soon as possible, within 10 days.

Before the Relicensing Interview

By February 1, schedule District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) relicensing interviews.

Recertification interviews are usually scheduled in person in the spring. However, fall interviews are acceptable.

Contact local pastors currently appointed in your District to determine how many interviews you’ll need to schedule. Plan to allow at least 45 minutes per interview--at least 30 minutes for the actual interview plus a total of at least 15 minutes for dCOM discussion before and/or after the interview. Divide committee, if necessary, so that no more than eight members are present in any interview.

By February 15, notify dCOM and local pastors with interview dates and times.

Give dCOM and local pastors detailed information about the interview location. Tell candidates what they should expect and what they should wear.

No later than two weeks prior to the interview, local pastors should forward to you:

- Current license
- Most recent course of study transcript(s)
- Any changes in contact information or appointment
- Any other District requirements

Two weeks before the interviews, confirm that all local pastor information has been received.

Forward candidates' information to dCOM members who will be present during that interview:

- Personal Data Inventory
- Any changes in contact information or appointment

dCOM members should prepare for interviews by:

- Prayerfully reviewing candidates' information

During the Relicensing Interview

Extend hospitality.

- Create a **hospitable waiting environment**. Choose one committee member to stay in the waiting area for local pastors, serving as host. Hosts should welcome local pastors, offer beverages and/or healthy snacks, answer any questions, make the local pastors feel at home.
- Create a **hospitable interview environment** with a simple altar space, chairs arranged in a circle, and no more than eight committee members. If a clergy mentor is not available to accompany each candidate as his or her advocate during the interview, choose another committee member to serve as advocate.

Before the candidate is invited into the interview environment, committee members should:

- Briefly discuss the information they received prior to the interview (including Personal Data Inventory and any changes in contact information or appointment) and suggest possible interview questions which will help the candidate further articulate:
 - **continued fitness for ministry** ○
 - **continued readiness for licensed ministry** ○
 - **progress in course of study**
- Confirm that the candidate's license and current course of study transcripts were received and are satisfactory.

When the candidate is invited to enter, committee members should:

- Greet the candidate warmly
- Graciously acknowledge any obvious anxiety

- State the purpose of the interview honestly and openly
- Begin with prayer

During the interview, committee members should:

- Express interest in the candidate's present appointment
- **Ask candidate about progress in his or her studies**
- **Ask questions which will help the committee discern whether or not the candidate is still fit for ministry**

During the interview, committee members should **not**:

- Ask questions which might be interpreted as discriminatory (i.e., questions which suggest a prejudice against a candidate's age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, level of education, social status, etc.)

If any committee member asks an inappropriate question, either the chair or advocate should feel free to invite the committee member to ask another question or to ask the question in a more appropriate way.

At the end of the interview, the chair or another committee member should:

- Thank the candidate for his or her time
- Inform the candidate when to expect a decision—both written and oral • End with prayer

After the Relicensing Interview

After the local pastor is dismissed, debrief the interview and make a decision. You will need to make one of the following decisions:

1. Local Pastor is still fit for ministry and progressing in studies.

In this case, the local pastor is “**relicensed.**”

- Relicensed local pastors who have not yet completed the basic course of study will continue to serve under Episcopal appointment as part-time or full-time local pastors and work with clergy mentor. Once local pastors complete the basic course of study, a clergy mentor is no longer required. Relicensed local pastors will return to your committee annually for relicensing.
- Relicensed local pastors no longer serving under Episcopal appointment as part-time or full-time local pastors will be assigned a clergy mentor from their district (dCOM will notify the Candidate, Candidacy and Recruitment Assistant and Clergy Mentor Chair of the assignment). Candidate will request and await reappointment and return to your committee annually for recertification.

2. Local pastor is no longer fit for ministry and/or is not progressing in his or her studies. Committee does not expect local pastor to become fit or resume studies in the foreseeable future. Committee does not expect local pastor to become effective in ministry in the foreseeable future. In this case,

committee should confer with the District Superintendent—who serves as his or her direct supervisor--before proceeding. If the District Superintendent agrees with the committee's decision, the local pastor is "**discontinued.**"

Once a decision is made, the committee should decide who will inform the local pastor of the committee's decision, verbally and in writing.

- **Inform the local pastor verbally as soon as possible, within 24 hours.**
- **Inform the local pastor in writing as soon as possible, within 10 days.**

Regardless of decisions made, the local pastor should know the committee to be a caring community of Christians. When a difficult decision is made and the local pastor is not encouraged to continue, a personal contact should be planned for the days that follow. Vocational alternatives can be explored with the candidate and assistance given in locating other employment. Candidates who experience difficulties in dealing with the board's decision should be informed about any available pastoral care options.

Registrar or District Administrative Assistant should complete the one-page dCOM action report and forward it to Candidacy & Recruitment Assistant as soon as possible, within 10 days.

Before the Commissioning Interview

By June 1, schedule District Committee on Ordained Ministry (dCOM) commissioning interviews.

Interviews to recommend certified candidates to the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) for commissioning and provisional membership should be scheduled **between July 1 and September 15**, giving consideration to students and school breaks. Contact certified candidates from your District who have completed or are completing their last year of theological education—along with those who self-delayed or were continued the previous year--to determine how many interviews you'll need to schedule. Plan to allow at least one hour per interview—at least 45 minutes for the actual interview plus a total of at least 15 minutes for dCOM discussion before and/or after the interview. Divide committee, if necessary, so that no more than eight members are present in any interview.

By June 15, notify dCOM and certified candidates requesting commissioning and provisional membership with interview dates and times.

Give dCOM and candidates detailed information about the interview location. Tell candidates what they should expect and what they should wear. **No later than two weeks prior to the interview, candidates should forward to you:**

- **Current transcript(s)**
- **Any changes in contact information or seminary**
- **Written responses to Disciplinary questions**
(¶ 324.9.a through p)
- **Certified mentor's recommendation letter**
- **Any other District requirements**

After interviews are scheduled and dCOM and certified candidates are notified, collect the rest of the information you will need for the interview:

- **Personal Data Inventory**

Two weeks before the interviews, confirm that all candidate information has been received.

Forward candidates' information to dCOM members who will be present during that interview:

- **Personal Data Inventory**
- **Any changes in contact information or seminary**
- **Written responses to Disciplinary questions (§ 324.9.a through p)**

dCOM members should prepare for interviews by:

- Prayerfully reviewing candidates' information

During the Commissioning Interview

Extend hospitality.

- Create a **hospitable waiting environment**. Choose one committee member to stay in the waiting area for candidates, serving as host. Hosts should welcome candidates, offer beverages and/or healthy snacks, answer any questions, and make the guests feel at home.
- Create a **hospitable interview environment** with a simple altar space, chairs arranged in a circle, and no more than eight committee members. If certified mentor is not available to accompany each candidate as his or her advocate during the interview, choose another committee member to serve as advocate.

Before the candidate is invited into the interview environment, committee members should:

- Briefly discuss the information they received prior to the interview (including the personal data inventory, any changes in contact information or seminary, and the written responses to Disciplinary questions § 324.9.a through p) and suggest possible interview questions which will help the candidate further articulate:
 - **readiness for ministry including:**
- a maturity and depth of her or his Christian faith
- a genuine sense of call to ordained ministry
- physical, psychological, and emotional fitness for ministry
- potential for effectiveness in ordained ministry
- Confirm that the candidate's other information was received and is satisfactory, including certified mentor's recommendation letter and current transcript(s).

When the candidate is invited to enter, committee members should:

- Greet the candidate warmly
- Graciously acknowledge any obvious anxiety
- State the purpose of the interview honestly and openly
- Begin with prayer

During the interview, committee members should: •

- Express interest in the candidate's present situation
- Ask candidate to articulate his or her faith and theological understanding

- Ask questions which will help the committee discern whether or not the candidate is **ready for ministry**

During the interview, committee members should **not**:

- Ask questions which might be interpreted as discriminatory (i. e., questions which suggest a prejudice against a candidate's age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, level of education, social status, etc.)

If any committee member asks an inappropriate question, either the chair or advocate should feel free to invite the committee member to ask another question or to ask the question in a more appropriate way.

At the end of the interview, the chair or another committee member should:

- Thank the candidate for his or her time
- Inform the candidate when to expect a decision—both written and oral • End with prayer

After the Commissioning Interview

After the candidate is dismissed, debrief the interview and make a decision. You will need to make one of the three following decisions:

1. Candidate is ready for ministry

In this case, the candidate is “**recommended for commissioning.**”

Candidates recommended to the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) for commissioning and provisional membership will complete additional requirements (see certified candidate checklist) and interview with BOM. If approved by BOM for commissioning, candidates will seek appointment. If appointed, candidates will seek final approval and commissioning at annual conference. If not appointed, candidates will be assigned to mentors who will help them consider their options. 2.

2. Candidate is not ready for ministry, now or in the foreseeable future. In this case, candidate is “**discontinued.**”

3. Candidate is not currently ready for ministry but may be ready in the future.

In this case, candidate is “**continued**” as a certified candidate for one year. The committee will need to give the candidate specific reasons why they find the candidate not currently ready, along with reasonable and tangible suggestions and/or requirements which may result in the candidate becoming ready for ministry.

Most certified candidates who either self-delay or are continued work with the same certified mentor for one additional year.

Once a decision is made, the committee should decide who will inform the candidate of the committee's decision, verbally and in writing.

- **Inform the candidate verbally as soon as possible, within 24 hours.**
- **Inform the candidate in writing as soon as possible, within 10 days.**

Regardless of decisions made, the candidate should know the committee to be a caring community of Christians. When a difficult decision is made and the candidate is not encouraged to continue, a personal contact should be planned for the days that follow. Vocational alternatives can be explored with the candidate and assistance given

in locating other employment. Candidates who experience difficulties in dealing with the board's decision should be informed about any available pastoral care options.

Registrar or District Administrative Assistant should complete the one-page dCOM action report and forward it to Candidacy & Recruitment Assistant as soon as possible, within 10 days.

TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE DISTRICT COMMITTEE ON ORDAINED MINISTRY

In 2008, the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry had to make some tough decisions based on the current situation of an abundance of ministers in relation to available appointments. This directly affects those going up for provisional approval. After receiving a recommendation from the BOM, only those who receive an appointment for that June will be commissioned that May at annual conference. (Due to this change in policy the board will interview those seeking provisional approval in January to give the cabinet plenty of time to know and hopefully appoint all those recommended by the Board for provisional approval.) This means that it is even more important than ever that the candidates seeking provisional approval are completely ready for those interviews. That is where you come in. It is your job to make sure those candidates are truly ready to come before the BOM.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Please meet with all certified candidates that are seeking to go before the Spring meeting of the BOM by **August 31.**
2. At this meeting, please require all candidates to submit to you the questions found in the **2012 Book of Discipline on page 240-241 Paragraph 324 number 9 questions a-p.**
3. In order for all the DCOM members to be prepared we would suggest that you give all the candidates a deadline of submitting their paperwork at least two weeks before you are to meet. Please be clear to the candidates to whom they are to submit their paperwork to, whether it is the District Superintendent, Administrative Assistant or the DCOM Registrar. Also, once you receive the paperwork, please make sure it gets to all DCOM members in a timely matter.
4. As you read this paperwork, please examine it closely as these questions will be the basis of many questions, they will be asked in their board interviews. If there are any red flags that come up, please ask the candidates questions to find out further information to clarify if this is truly an issue of concern.
5. In your interview with the candidates please ask any questions designed to further learn about their theology. It is important that the candidates can articulate their theology. It is important that the candidates can articulate their theology without rambling or avoiding the question.

6. When they go before the board, they will interview in three separate groups: theological, church and personal. Make sure you ask each candidate questions in all three of these areas.
7. After meeting with the candidate ask yourself these questions:
 - a. Is this person ready right now to go before the BOM?

YES – recommend them to the BOM whole heartedly.

Yes, with reservation – This person may have not been able to articulate the way you wanted, maybe some red flags. The question you need to ask as a DCOM is will this person truly be ready and is it possible for them to accomplish what is needed to be ready to come before the BOM in January? If you recommend this person you need to let them know what exactly they need to work on in order to be ready. You may want to recommend they work on these with their mentor, or you may want to assign them someone on the DCOM to work with them, for instance a theological mentor or whatever else you deem necessary. Remember it is important that they are at the top of their game when they appear before the BOM in January. If you have too many questions about their readiness in January, the best thing to do for them would be to delay them a year. It is much better to get delayed on the DCOM level than the BOM level.

No not ready this year – This person is someone you think has gifts and graces for ordained ministry but needs to work on something and then come back next year. If you delay them make sure you communicate to them what you expect of them in writing before they come back next year.

NO – This person is someone who the committee feels will never be ready and as hard as it is, this person needs to be discontinued. It will be better for this person to be discontinued now then to continue on a journey that will not end favorably.

District Committee on Ordained Ministry Action Report

From the _____ District Committee on Ministry of the Texas Annual Conference

*****Please complete the entire form*****

CANDIDATE INFORMATION	
Full Name _____	
Current Address _____ Current Phone _____	
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____	
Current Email Address _____	
Church Currently Serving _____	
Seminary or College (Currently Attending) _____	
Expected Graduation Date _____	
Has she/he completed the Course of Study? Yes No	
Attending Course of Study: Yes No If yes, number of Courses completed: _____	

COMMITTEE ACTION	
Certification	<input type="checkbox"/> dCOM approves as certified candidate
¶311.2	<i>Track:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Elder <input type="checkbox"/> Deacon <input type="checkbox"/> Local Pastor
	<input type="checkbox"/> dCOM continues as exploring candidate
	<input type="checkbox"/> dCOM discontinues candidate
Recertification	<input type="checkbox"/> dCOM recertifies candidate
¶312, 313	<i>Track:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Elder <input type="checkbox"/> Deacon
	<input type="checkbox"/> dCOM discontinues candidate
Relicensing	<input type="checkbox"/> dCOM relicenses as local pastor
¶319, 320	<input type="checkbox"/> dCOM discontinues as local pastor & candidate
Commissioning	<input type="checkbox"/> dCOM recommends for commissioning <i>(by required 3/4 majority vote)</i>
¶324.10	<i>Track:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Elder <input type="checkbox"/> Deacon
	<input type="checkbox"/> dCOM continues as certified candidate
	<input type="checkbox"/> dCOM discontinues candidate

OTHER ACTIONS, REQUIREMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, OR NOTES
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>You may note dCOM members present for actions taken or continue notes on back page.</i></p>

Date _____ Signature _____

Approved signatures: **District Superintendent** or **Administrative Assistant**; **dCOM Chair** or **Registrar**

<i>Please send a copy to your candidate; keep a copy for your dCOM records; and forward to</i>
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**Candidacy & Recruitment Assistant, Ivana Wilson *at* iwilson@txcumc.org or
Board of Ordained Ministry, 5215 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002**

Revised 11/7/2018