

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY
PRESBYTERY OF PHILADELPHIA
POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

1 **INTRODUCTION**

2 The policies and guidelines below address many of the frequently asked questions of
3 those under care and clarify many of the expectations of the CPM of the Presbytery of
4 Philadelphia. The CPM is your partner in the process of preparation for ministry;
5 however, at every step it is important that you take initiative, keeping your liaison
6 informed and responding in a timely manner to requests made by the committee. Please
7 read this entire document carefully.

8 **OVERVIEW OF REQUIREMENTS**

9 **Background Check** (The policy is available on the CPM website)

10 **Seminary Coursework**

- 11 • Hebrew Language
- 12 • Hebrew Exegesis
- 13 • Greek Language
- 14 • Greek Exegesis
- 15 • Reformed Theology
- 16 • Reformed Worship and Sacraments
- 17 • Presbyterian Polity

18 Language courses *may* be taken pass/fail

19 **Psychological/Career Evaluation** at an approved site

20 (Within 1 year of becoming an Inquirer)

21 **Clinical Pastoral Education** (CPE) or an approved clinical alternative

22 **Two Field Education Experiences** (at least one must be in a Presbyterian Church)

23 **Successful completion of the Ordination Exams**

24 You are encouraged to take the Bible Content Examination during the first year of
25 seminary. You are eligible to take the following exams *upon completion of at*
26 *least two years of theological education.*

- 27 • Bible Exegesis
- 28 • Reformed Theology
- 29 • Reformed Worship and Sacraments
- 30 • Polity

31 **PSYCHOLOGICAL/CAREER EVALUATION**

32 An important part of the discernment process is a psychological/career evaluation at one
33 of our approved career counseling providers. We require that this be **completed within a**
34 **year of being enrolled as an Inquirer.** It is your responsibility to schedule the
35 evaluation. A list of approved sites is available on the Presbytery website. If you attend
36 seminary outside the greater Philadelphia area and need to schedule the evaluation at
37 another center, check with your seminary advisor to find an appropriate facility and
38 confirm your choice with the CPM Moderator to insure that the testing is adequate and

39 appropriate. Payment for the testing is shared: one third by the Inquirer, one third by the
40 Presbytery and one-third by the Inquirer's home congregation.

41 We also request that you release the results of your evaluation to the committee, and have
42 one copy sent to your liaison and another to the Presbytery office, care of the CPM
43 Moderator. The evaluation will be reviewed by your liaison upon receipt. Based on the
44 recommendations of the evaluation, and in consultation with the CPM Moderator, your
45 liaison may direct that you engage in further counseling, therapy, spiritual direction, or
46 specific field education requirements. The evaluation and any progress made in
47 identified growth areas will also be addressed during annual consultations and the
48 candidacy and final assessment examinations.

49 **COLLEGE AND SEMINARY TRANSCRIPTS**

50 The CPM requires that you submit certified copies of all college and seminary transcripts.
51 You may send these to the Presbytery of Philadelphia, c/o Crystal Peterkin, 915 East
52 Gowen Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19150.

53 **ANNUAL CONSULTATION**

54 You are **required to meet at least once annually** with the CPM for a review of your
55 progress and to further discern the nature of your call. It is your responsibility to make
56 this appointment with the CPM.

57 You must submit a completed **Form 3**, "Pre-Interview Annual Consultation Report," in
58 order to be scheduled for an annual consultation. This form must be sent to your liaison
59 and the CPM Moderator 2 weeks prior to the date of your annual consultation.

60 During your annual consultation you can expect the following areas to be addressed:

- 61 • Psychological/Career Evaluation
- 62 • **Form 3**
- 63 • Setting and review of goals

64 **APPLICATION FOR CANDIDACY**

65 The final stage of the Inquiry process is completion of **Form 5A**, "Application to be
66 enrolled by Presbytery as a Candidate," which includes the six questions from the *Book*
67 *of Order*, and a written Statement of Motivation.

68 As part of the application you are asked for *An Analysis of at Least One Concept from the*
69 *Personal Faith Statement Regarding what it suggests about God, Humanity, and their*
70 *Interrelationships*. We ask that this analysis be an essay 500-750 words in length,
71 demonstrating basic theological competence.

72 When the Candidacy application is complete, you will meet with your Session. The Clerk
73 of Session will forward your application to the Presbytery Office. When these steps are
74 complete, you will then be scheduled to meet with the CPM.

75 Contact your liaison when you begin your application so that we can schedule your
76 meeting with the committee. Once you have received the recommendation of CPM, you

77 will read your Statement of Motivation on the floor of Presbytery and address any
78 questions regarding your sense of call, personal faith and experience in the church.

79 Remember, you must be an Inquirer for at least one year before you apply for Candidacy,
80 and you must be a Candidate for one year before you are certified as ready for
81 ordination, pending a call.

82 **CANDIDACY CHECKLIST**

83 The following items must be completed before you will be scheduled for a candidacy
84 examination:

- 85 • Session Endorsement Form – received by the Presbytery Office
- 86 • Completed Application (Form 5), including essays.
- 87 • Statement of Motivation – 1 page
- 88 • 2 Letters of recommendation
- 89 • Updated certified transcripts
- 90 • Field Education evaluation(s)
- 91 • Psychological/Career Evaluation

92 All materials must be received by your liaison and the CPM Moderator 2 weeks prior to
93 your meeting with the CPM. Failure to meet this deadline will result in removal from the
94 docket.

95 **STATEMENT OF MOTIVATION**

96 The Statement of Motivation serves as the Inquirer's introduction to the Presbytery when
97 seeking enrollment as a candidate. This Statement is presented to the CPM, and plays an
98 important part in the recommendation to the Presbytery. The Statement should be one
99 page and address the following areas: personal faith, forms of Christian service
100 undertaken and motivation for seeking ordination as a Teaching Elder. These are the
101 only areas upon which you will be examined by the Presbytery.

102 **CANDIDACY EXAMINATION**

103 When scheduled to meet with the CPM for your candidacy examination you can expect
104 the following areas to be addressed:

- 105 • Psychological/Career Evaluation
- 106 • Form 5 Essay responses
- 107 • Statement of Motivation
- 108 • Field Education experience(s)
- 109 • Status of coursework
- 110 • Understanding of call
- 111 • Areas of growth
- 112 • Progress made in meeting all requirements
- 113 (Field Education, Ordination Exams, Coursework)

114 **ORDINATION EXAMS**

115 The ordination exams are an important part of the process of preparation for ordination.
116 While they are just one means of evaluating readiness, the exams are key objective
117 indicators of adequate academic preparation and the ability to practically apply
118 theological concepts. We expect all students to be fully prepared and pass the exams on
119 their first attempt. Further, we encourage students to take all four exams together.

120
121 Failure of one or more exams is a serious issue that demands the careful attention of the
122 inquirer/candidate and the committee. All failed exams will be reviewed by the
123 committee moderator. An appropriate course of action must be completed before the
124 inquirer/candidate will be allowed to retake the exams.

125 **First Failures**

126 If an inquirer/candidate fails **one exam for the first time**, the student must
127 determine to the best of her/his ability the reasons for the failure and what
128 steps will be taken to insure success the next time the exam is attempted.
129 The student must do this in writing and submit the report when the
130 ordination exams are returned to committee moderator.

131 **Permission to retake the exams will not be granted until the report is**
132 **filed with the committee moderator.** The inquirer/candidate can also
133 request the committee's assistance in preparation for retaking the exam.

134 If an inquirer/candidate fails **two or more exams for the first time**,
135 she/he must fulfill the requirements stated above as well as confer with an
136 assigned member or members of the committee who will read the failed
137 exams and recommend a course of action that must be completed before
138 the exams are attempted again.

139 **Second Failures**

140 If the inquirer/candidate fails **one or more exams the second time**, the
141 student must again file a written report as to the reasons for the failure. **A**
142 **second failure is a signal to the committee that the candidate may not**
143 **be qualified for ordination.** After careful consideration, the CPM may
144 take some or all of the following steps:

- 145 a. Assess the candidate's **whole** experience in preparation for ministry—
146 academic achievements, field work, CPE, Annual Consultation reports
147 and seminary experience. Are difficulties with the exams exceptional
148 or is the candidate struggling with other aspects of the preparation
149 process?
- 150 b. Require and provide tutoring/mentoring for the candidate for a final
151 attempt at passing.
- 152 c. Consider alternative means consistent with the CPM Alternate Exam
153 Procedures as a possible better option to satisfy competency if the
154 CPM has determined adequate progress toward ordination in all other
155 areas.
- 156 d. Suggest a group discernment experience to help the candidate
157 determine his/her future course.

158 **Third Failures**

159 CPM must take one or more of the following steps after a **third failure**:

- 160 a. If the CPM is satisfied with the progress made in all other areas and
161 the candidate is otherwise ready to receive a call, it will consider
162 alternative means to demonstrate competency in the failed exam area
163 consistent with the CPM Alternate Exam Procedures.
164 b. Under extraordinary circumstances the CPM *may* grant approval for an
165 additional attempt(s).

166 If the CPM is not satisfied with the candidate's progress, it will terminate
167 the preparation process and provide a group discernment experience to
168 help the candidate determine gifts for ministry other than Teaching Elder.

169 **STATEMENT OF FAITH GUIDELINES**

170 Your statement of faith should be personal while articulating the comprehensive
171 understanding of the Reformed Tradition expected of the office of a Teaching Elder. You
172 will also be examined on your ability to defend and articulate your statement of faith by
173 members of the CPM and on the floor of the presbytery of call.

- 174 • It is a personal statement:
- 175 • It should be written in your own words.
 - 176 • It should reflect a personal integration of the Christian faith and the Reformed
177 Tradition.
- 178 • It is a Presbyterian statement. Your statement should reflect that you are rooted in
179 the Christian, Reformed, and Presbyterian traditions.
- 180 • It must be a single page with numbered lines on the left margin.
- 181 • It is suggested that your statement address the following points (be prepared to
182 address a broad range of theological subjects during your examination)
- 183 • The doctrine of the Trinity.
 - 184 • Who is God the Father?
 - 185 • Who is Jesus Christ?
 - 186 • Who is the Holy Spirit?
 - 187 • How do these three persons interact?
 - 188 • The person and work of Christ.
 - 189 • What is the significance of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?
 - 190 • What is the nature of grace?
 - 191 • How are we saved, or justified?
 - 192 • The nature and role of Holy Scripture.
 - 193 • The nature and role of the Church.
 - 194 • The nature and role of the sacraments.

- 195 • Some additional suggestions:
196 • Be familiar with the *Book of Confessions*.
197 • If any part of your statement is provocative, be ready to explain and calmly
198 defend your position based on your understanding of Scripture and the
199 Confessions.

200 **FINANCIAL AID REQUESTS**

201 Candidates and inquirers may request financial assistance from the Presbytery by
202 completing a financial aid application. The financial aid application is submitted to your
203 liaison, who will present the request for consideration by the CPM. Grants are limited to
204 \$2000 per year. Priority is given to educational and related living expenses and
205 extraordinary personal needs.

206 **FIELD EDUCATION**

207 Field education is an important part of your preparation for ministry. The following
208 guidelines must be carefully observed:

- 209 • Always consult with your liaison *before* accepting a field
210 education placement.
211 • At least one of the field education placements must be in a
212 Presbyterian Church
213 • The CPM must approve all field education placements that are
214 contracted outside the seminary placement system.
215 • The CPM will review all field education completed prior to
216 entering the care process, and may, in some cases, require
217 additional field education placements.
218 • You must submit your learning/serving covenant to your liaison as
219 well as all supervisory reports and evaluations.
220 • The field education requirement may not be satisfied by work in
221 your “home church.” This includes members and church
222 employees.

223 **CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION - OR CLINICAL EQUIVALENT**

224 In addition to the two field education placements required above, you will be required to
225 complete a basic unit of Clinical Pastoral Education or an experience in an equivalent
226 setting. Consult with your liaison *before* accepting a clinical field placement.

227 **FINAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

228 When all requirements for ordination are met you may request to be scheduled for a final
229 assessment examination.

230 The following materials must be submitted in advance of the final assessment interview:

- 231 • Sermon manuscript
232 • An exegesis report on the sermon text.

233 The exegesis report should be an 8-10 page paper similar to that which you might submit for an
234 OT/NT exegesis class. Evidence of facility with the language is important. The committee is

235 interested in seeing how you move from text to sermon – are you aware of, and do you use,
236 appropriate sources, does your exegesis actually inform the sermon?

- 237 • Statement of Faith
- 238 • Completed File (e.g. Ordination exams, certified transcripts, field
- 239 education evaluations, psychological evaluation, annual
- 240 consultation and candidacy forms, etc.)

241 **FINAL ASSESSMENT EXAMINATION**

242 When scheduled to meet with the CPM for your final assessment examination you can
243 expect the following areas to be discussed:

- 244 • You will preach a 10-12 minute sermon to the Committee
- 245 • Examination of your Statement of Faith
246 This is an assessment of theological competence, and is meant
247 to prepare you for your examination by a calling Presbytery.
248 This is seen as a “final trial” for ordination readiness.
249 Candidates may be asked to rewrite their Statements, complete
250 additional study, or work with a small group of committee
251 members to improve the Statement. You should not assume
252 that your Statement will be approved.
- 253 • Assessment of growth objectives
- 254 • Plans for future growth
- 255 • Fitness for ministry
- 256 • Reflection on the care process

257 **GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING WRITTEN MATERIALS TO THE CPM**

258 Copies of all materials (applications, forms, essays, transcripts, field education appraisals,
259 etc.) must be submitted to the Presbytery office. Whenever possible, materials should be
260 submitted electronically. This is the responsibility of the inquirer/candidate. In addition,
261 materials prepared in advance of a meeting with the CPM must be submitted to the
262 student’s liaison and the committee Moderator at least **2 weeks prior to the meeting**.
263 The Committee will only consider materials received at that time. Consideration will not
264 be given to work that is distributed at the meeting. Failure to submit materials on time
265 will result in removal from the docket.

266 When submitting materials to the CPM please follow these guidelines:

- 267 • Include your name on all documents (on every page)
- 268 • Include your name in the file name itself (e.g. Smith.Statement of
- 269 Motivation.doc).
- 270 • All documents should be line numbered for easy reference by the
- 271 committee.
- 272 • Ensure that all materials are carefully prepared – free of typographical and
- 273 grammatical errors.
- 274 • Include the date of submission on all documents
- 275 • All work should be submitted with standard margins in 12 point font.

276 **WORKING WITH YOUR LIAISON**

277 Your liaison is your contact with the committee. It is your responsibility to stay in touch
278 and to keep them informed. It is expected that you will respond in a timely manner to
279 inquiries from your liaison. Failure to actively participate in the care process may result
280 in removal from the care process.

281 **RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN CERTIFIED READY FOR EXAMINATION FOR ORDINATION, PENDING A**
282 **CALL**

283 Certification of readiness to receive a call will be reviewed by the CPM on an annual
284 basis. This includes the requirement to meet with the CPM annually. You are still under
285 the care of the CPM until you receive a call.

286 **APPROVAL OF SEMINARY COURSEWORK**

287 It is essential that you consult with your liaison prior to registering for classes. Do not
288 assume that a particular course meets a requirement. This is especially important for
289 students attending non-Presbyterian seminaries. In some cases, you may be asked to
290 provide a course description and other information to your liaison for course approval.

291 **REQUESTS OF THE CPM**

292 All requests must be submitted in writing to your liaison. Your liaison will present your
293 requests for consideration by the CPM in a timely manner.