

Guidance for Candidates for Ministry in Preparation for Interviews

The Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) and District Committees on Ordained Ministry (DCOMs) are committed to helping ministry candidates succeed in their efforts to follow God's call. We pray for all of our candidates and we ask in turn for your prayers for our wisdom and discernment.

We also pray that the interview process, however challenging it may seem, will become a sacred time in which we may freely share, learn, and clearly see the unique God-given gifts of each ministry candidate.

To this end, we have prepared the following document outlining BOM and DCOM expectations of interviewees, as well as suggestions for your preparation.

The first part of this document is a narrative description of interview dynamics and ways to prepare for them. The second part is an outline of interview expectations for each ministry path. Please take time to prayerfully read and reflect on the following guidelines for your interview preparation. The clearer you are about these expectations, the more successfully you can share the gifts of your heart, mind, and soul with your interview team.

Part 1: General Interview Preparation

Interviews are a sharing of the mind and of the heart.

As Jesus reminds us in his greatest commandment, Christian service involves balancing love from one's heart, soul, and mind (Matt. 22:37). This balance is of vital importance during your interviews at all levels.

Yes, interview teams listen for sound theology, clear thinking, and thoughtful reflection on ministry experiences. We do this to ensure that each candidate's theology is biblical and life-giving rather than flawed or potentially harmful.

At the same time, your interviewers are listening for words shared from the heart. We ask ourselves, "Could I envision this person as *my pastor*? Is this candidate compassionate and trustworthy – someone I could confide in and confess my weakness to?"

In the context of a candidate's interview, BOM and DCOMs are listening for integration of the whole person, heart, soul, and mind.

Interview teams are comprised of both clergy and laity.

While there tend to be more clergy than lay members on our interviewing teams, both will be present, representing a vital diversity of perspective and theological training. For you to include and engage the *whole* interview team, it is good to bear in mind the diversity of your audience.

BOM only: Responses to your paper writing offer you an opportunity to acquaint yourself with interviewers ahead of time.

In the letter inviting you to be interviewed, information is provided for you to focus your interview preparation. You are also invited to contact a Board member with clarifying questions if desired. Many candidates find that contacting a DCOM or Board member on the phone is especially helpful as it allows for two-way conversation that is not possible via email or letters.

For returning candidates: Follow up on recommendations made the previous year.

Having to repeat steps in the ordination process is not easy. Both candidates and BOM/DCOM pray that growth and learning will result from this extra time in the process. To that end, it is essential that candidates make their best effort to follow all recommendations by BOM/DCOM in the time before they are interviewed again. It is often inspiring to witness candidates' efforts to learn from setbacks by following BOM/DCOM recommendations and bearing greater fruit as a result.

Part 2: Interview Expectations for Each Ministry Path

District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM) Interviews

- A. Interviews with DCOM required for those seeking ordination as an Elder or Deacon
 - a. Candidacy Certification
 - i. DCOM is looking for "Fitness for Ministry"- *Do you have the basic gifts necessary to serve the church as a minister. At this stage, you are answering the call and trying to understand at what level God might be trying to use you as a pastor.*
 - 1. Fitness for ministry is evaluated by:
 - a. Spiritual fitness
 - b. Psychological fitness
 - c. Physical fitness
 - d. Potential for effectiveness
 - ii. Required Interviews to be Certified:

1. **Introductory Interview** with District Superintendent and DCOM chair. (Typically done in January)
 2. **Certification Interview** following completion of all steps for certification. Most likely with the entire DCOM. (Typically done in April/May and will be about 45 minutes.)
 3. **Recertification Interview** is an annual renewal of certified candidacy with a subcommittee of DCOM. (Typically done in January and will be about 20 minutes.)
- iii. How to prepare:
1. Pray for discernment as you begin this process towards ordination.
 2. If you need any accommodations, including interpretation services, please reach out to the DCOM chair as soon as possible.
 3. Check in with your mentor.
 4. **Introductory Interview**
 - a. Write down any questions you may have about the ordination or licensed local pastor process.
 - b. Practice sharing your call story in a succinct way.
 - c. Reflect on the types of leadership you have already demonstrated in your local church.
 - d. Reflect on your plans for the future.
 5. **Certification of Candidacy Interview**
 - a. Review the candidacy checklist to make sure all requirements are complete.
 - b. Re-read the paper you submitted to DCOM and review it with your mentor. Reflect on any questions that arise.
 6. **Recertification Interview**
 - a. Reflect on how you have grown in the last year.
 - b. Be prepared to share how you addressed any feedback or identified areas for improvement from the board in the previous interview.
- b. Recommendation for Provisional Membership
- i. DCOM is looking for “Readiness for Ministry”- *Are you prepared to interview with the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) to be commissioned? You will have moved beyond merely being fit for ministry and begun to show signs of growth and grace while continuing to grow in your ability to preach, teach, lead, and serve.*
 1. Readiness is evaluated in four areas:
 - a. Call
 - b. Theology
 - c. Personal growth and development
 - d. Practice of ministry
 2. DCOM will review your papers as well as academic background and consider field education experiences, internship, and other practice of ministry experiences.
 - ii. Interviews are done in August/early September with the full DCOM.

iii. How to prepare:

1. Request your mentor, or other UMC clergy, to read your Paper A and ask you follow up questions.
2. Reflect on examples you can share that show evidence of a clear call to ministry.
3. Prepare to articulate the difference between Deacon and Elder tracks.
4. Reflect on how your theological understanding has evolved since certification.
5. If you are not recommended to BOM make sure to ask for clarification on what DCOM would like you to improve on during the next year.

B. Interviews with DCOM for those seeking licensure as Local Pastors

a. This is an Annual License for Pastoral Ministry

- i. DCOM is looking for “Fitness & Readiness for Ministry”- *Have you moved beyond merely being fit for ministry and begun to show signs of growth and grace while continuing to grow in your ability to preach, teach, lead and serve?*

1. Readiness & Effectiveness is evaluated in four areas:

- a. Call
- b. Theology
- c. Personal growth and development
- d. Practice of ministry

ii. Required Interviews to be licensed:

1. **Recommendation for Licensing and Conference Relationship** (part-time or full-time). *This may be done in conjunction with the Certification of Candidacy interview for someone seeking ordination if the candidate has completed the Orientation to Ministry.
2. **Annual Interview** for renewal of the license for pastoral ministry.

iii. How to prepare:

1. If you need any accommodations, including interpretation services, please reach out to the DCOM chair as soon as possible.
2. Reflect on your leadership qualities demonstrated in ministry.
3. Reflect on ways you have contributed to growth in the church and reaching out to new people for Christ.
4. Be able to clearly articulate the understanding of grace as made evident in the practice of Sacraments.

C. Interviews with DCOM for those seeking Associate Membership

- a. DCOM is looking for “Readiness & Effectiveness for Ministry” - *Are you demonstrating effective ministry within the local church? Do you have the ability to clearly articulate and communicate the major doctrines of our faith and denomination?*

i. Readiness & Effectiveness is evaluated in four areas:

1. Call
 2. Theology
 3. Personal growth and development
 4. Practice of ministry
- b. How to prepare:
- i. If you need any accommodations, including interpretation services, please reach out to the DCOM chair as soon as possible.
 - ii. Consider your current practice of ministry.
 - iii. Reflect on how your theological understanding evolved since licensing and since your course of study.

Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) Interviews

A. Interviews with BOM for those seeking Provisional Membership as an Elder or Deacon

a. Day of Discernment

- b. This is technically not an interview but a conversation. This is your introduction to BOM after you are recommended by DCOM to interview for commissioning.
- c. BOM is looking to get to know you and provide a chance for you to meet your interview team.
 - i. Conversation will be focused on your call and current ministry setting.
 - ii. BOM will follow up with written feedback about your strengths, any concerns the team may have, and things you might want to consider as you prepare to write Paper B and interview in the spring.
- d. This gathering is typically done in October with your BOM team (a smaller subset of the Board who will interview you throughout your ordination journey) and the discussion will last about an hour. There will also be a time for worship and fellowship.
- e. How to prepare:
 - i. Pray for discernment as you begin the process for commissioning.
 - ii. If you need any accommodations, including interpretation services, please reach out to the BOM chair as soon as possible.
 - iii. Review your Paper A- Part 1 with your mentor, and/or other UMC clergy, and discuss any questions that arise.
 - iv. Reflect on how your call fits within The United Methodist Church and the California-Pacific Annual Conference.
 - v. Reflect on what you feel is essential for your BOM interview team to know about you.

- vi. Write down any questions you may have for your BOM interview team or about the process in general.

f. Provisional Membership Interview

- i. BOM is looking for “Readiness for Ministry”
 - 1. God’s call and your response, talents, gifts, and training for ministry
 - 2. Fitness and readiness to serve as clergy in an appointment
 - a. Do you have the graces to serve a local church or other ministry setting?
- ii. The interviews are typically done in February with your BOM team and will be 1 hour and 50 minutes with breaks.
 - 1. Remember that the interview is just one piece that guides the discernment on whether to recommend commissioning. Your BOM team will also consider your papers, Day of Discernment, references, reports, etc.
- iii. How to prepare:
 - 1. Pray.
 - 2. Review your Paper A- Part 2 and Paper B with your mentor, and/or UMC clergy, and discuss any questions that arise.
 - 3. Reflect on examples that show your readiness to serve as clergy in an appointment.

g. Annual Check-In with BOM team

- i. Once you are commissioned as a Provisional Member you will meet annually with your assigned BOM team for a brief check-in. (Typically done in April on Zoom for about 30 minutes).
- ii. How to prepare:
 - 1. Reflect on your past year in ministry.
 - 2. Prepare to share both the joys and the challenges you have faced since the last check-in.
 - 3. Prepare any questions you may have about next steps in the ordination process.

B. Interview with BOM for those seeking Full Connection as an Elder or Deacon

a. Full Connection Interview

- i. BOM is looking for “Effectiveness in Ministry.”
- ii. The interviews are typically done in March with your BOM team and will be 1 hour and 50 minutes with breaks.

1. Remember that the interview is just one piece that guides the discernment on whether to recommend ordination. Your BOM team will also consider your papers, sermon recording, Bible Study, Fruitfulness Project, site visit, references, reports, etc.
- iii. How to prepare:
1. Pray.
 2. If you need any accommodations, including interpretation services, please reach out to the BOM chair as soon as possible.
 3. Review Paper C with your mentor, and/or UMC clergy, and discuss any questions that arise.
 4. Reflect on examples that show your effectiveness as a Pastor.