

Presbytery of Charlotte
Certifying Policy for Ministers of Other Denominations
and Former PC(USA) Ministers Desiring Restoration to the Denomination

PURPOSE: To provide a means of preparing and examining ministers of other denominations who wish to become Ministers of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA) (Part A) or to provide a means for former PC(USA) ministers to be restored to continuing membership in the PC(USA) as a minister member (Part B).

DUTIES: To contact, shepherd, tutor, examine, and recommend to the Commission on Ministry (COM) and to the Presbytery of Charlotte (POC) ministers of other denominations who wish to become PC(USA) Ministers of Word and Sacrament in the POC. To guide former PC(USA) Ministers of Word and Sacrament through the process of restoration to the denomination.

SCOPE: Every ordained minister of another denomination who desires to become a PC(USA) Minister of Word and Sacrament (MWS) in the POC must go through the following certifying process with the COM prior to seeking a call with a POC congregation.

PART A: PROCESS FOR ORDAINED MINISTERS OF OTHER DENOMINATIONS:

1. All ministers of other denominations who desire to become Ministers of Word and Sacrament in the POC are to be referred to the COM Subcommittee on Certifications.
2. All ministers of other denominations serving congregations under a Temporary Pastor's Contract within the POC must work to become a PC(USA) minister member within 5 years.
3. No minister from another denomination shall initiate any discussions with churches or Pastor Nominating Committees (PNCs) and shall not circulate a Personal Information Form (PIF) or any other form of resume until they have completed this certifying process. All PNCs/APNCs will be referred to this certifying policy in their search instructions so as to be aware of these requirements for potential candidates from outside the PC(USA).
4. The Certification Subcommittee of COM will establish contact with the applicant, The following required documents must be submitted to the Certification Sub-committee.
 - a. official transcripts from all accredited colleges and universities attended;
 - b. a theological degree from an accredited institution acceptable to the POC (including evidence of appropriate study in both Greek and Hebrew)¹;
 - c. credentials of good standing from applicant's denominational body of jurisdiction;
 - d. a statement of faith;
 - e. a biographical statement;
 - f. evidence of Boundary Training taken within the past three years;
 - g. evidence of Anti-Racism Training taken within the past two years; and
 - h. statement of purpose defining the reason for seeking PC(USA) ordination.
5. The applicant will then successfully complete the 5-part Standard Ordination Exam required by PC(USA) General Assembly and administered under the guidance of The Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates. This exam consists of the following parts, each of which must be successfully completed with a passing grade within 5 years of completing the first exam:
 1. Bible Content Exam
 2. Biblical Exegesis Exam
 3. Theology
 4. Worship and Sacraments
 5. Presbyterian Church Polity

¹ Requirements similar to candidacy (G-2.0607c)

Ministers ordained in other Reformed churches that are in communion with the PCUSA may be exempted from the written examinations if (1) the minister has five or more years of experience and (2) the POC agrees by a 2/3 majority for the exemption in accordance with G-2.0505a(2).

The following denominations are recognized as being in communion with the PCUSA: Covenant Relationship Korean Presbyterian Church Abroad, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Moravian-Reformed Covenant Partnership, Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ.

If the exams are not successfully completed within 5 years of completing the first exam, the applicant may be asked to engage in a period of additional study as prescribed by the COM in order to retake those portions of the Standard Ordination Exam. Ministers cannot move forward until the exams have been mastered.

6. The applicant must participate in a ministerial vocational assessment with the counseling agency approved by the Presbytery of Charlotte within the first six months of service. The evaluation report should be released to the General Presbyter. The cost will be shared by the sponsoring church and the POC.
7. When items 1 – 5 have been completed, the applicant will sit for an oral examination by both MWS and ruling elders of the Certification Subcommittee approved for this specific purpose. This oral examination will include, but not be limited to, the following topics:
 - a. Competency in the fields examined in the written exams (Item 4 above)
 - b. Evidence of ministerial skill attested in previous ministry experience
 - c. Examination of the theological views expressed in the applicant's statement of faith
 - d. Commitment to the ministry of Word and Sacrament within the discipline of the PC(USA) and as expressed in the PC(USA) ordination questions
8. Following the successful completion of items 1-6 above, the Certification Subcommittee will then ~~approve~~ recommend to COM the following:
 - ❖ The applicant may circulate a PIF to churches within the POC
 - ❖ The applicant may be interviewed by PNCs, as appropriate
9. When a pastoral call is extended to the applicant from a congregation within the POC, the applicant shall appear before the appropriate COM Cluster, the General Presbyter, and other ~~appointed~~ members of that cluster. The purpose of this meeting is to review of the terms of call and the appropriateness of the pastor-church match.
10. If the COM approves the call, and subsequently the POC, then the applicant shall be received by transfer of membership from the dismissing denomination and shall be received as a PC(USA) minister of Word and Sacrament in good standing in the POC.
11. Temporary pastoral relationships with outside denominations may not be required to meet all qualifications but should sit for an oral examination per Item 6 [see, G-2.0506].
12. An exception to this Certifying Policy may be approved for immigrant ministers from other denominations working with immigrant fellowships and congregations [G-2.0505a(1)].

NOTE: The expenses for all examinations, classes, tutors, transcripts, vocational assessments, travel, and resources are to be borne by the applicant unless otherwise stipulated.

PART B: CERTIFYING PROCESS FOR FORMER ORDAINED PC(USA) MINISTERS:

PREFACE: While the Book of Order does not explicitly outline a process for a former PC(USA) minister that has been dismissed to another denomination to return to the PC(USA), it does under other specific circumstances state that when a minister formerly of the PC(USA) desires to be restored to continuing membership in the PC(USA) as a minister member, that application must be made through the presbytery that granted the original release [G-2.0507].

The process of restoration to continuing membership in the PC(USA) will include the following:

1. Applicant must contact his or her dismissing presbytery in order to seek restoration. If the POC is not applicant's dismissing presbytery, they will be referred thereto and will be required to meet that presbytery's requirement for restoration prior to requesting transfer into the POC.
2. If the applicant was dismissed by the POC, the following documents must be presented to the Certification Subcommittee of COM:
 - a. credentials indication good standing in the current denominational body of jurisdiction;
 - b. evidence of ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacrament;²
 - c. statement of faith;
 - d. biographical statement;
 - e. evidence of Boundary Training taken within the past three years;
 - f. evidence of Anti-Racism taken within the past two years; and
 - g. a statement of purpose for seeking restoration to continuing membership in the PC(USA).
3. The applicant may be required to participate in a ministerial vocational assessment with the counseling agency approved by the Presbytery of Charlotte. The evaluation report should be released to the General Presbyter of the POC.
4. When items 2 and 3 have been completed to the satisfaction of the Certification Subcommittee, the applicant will sit for an oral examination of both Ministers of Word and Sacrament and ruling elders of COM. Participants may be approved for this specific purpose. This oral examination will include, but not be limited to, the following topics:
 - a. Competency in the fields examined in ordination exams
 - b. Evidence of ministerial skill attested in previous ministry experience
 - c. Examination of the theological views expressed in the applicant's statement of faith
 - d. Commitment to the ministry of Word and Sacrament within the discipline of the PC(USA) and as expressed in the PC(USA) ordination questions
5. After successful completion of this process, the Certifications Subcommittee will make its recommendation regarding applicant's restoration to the PC(USA) to the COM. Applicant would then be instructed as to next steps by the COM and/or the applicant's assigned cluster.

² If the applicant provides documentation of prior ordination by the PC(USA), it may be presumed that the requirements listed items 2a, 2b, and 4a have been sufficiently met. However, if the COM Certification subcommittee determines that there is reason to request such items or to have the Standard Ordination Exams re-administered, Com retains the right to request these requirements be met in full.