

Board of Ordained Ministry
Alabama-West Florida Conference, The United Methodist Church

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP

The *Discipline* lists the following specific course requirements that must be included in graduate theological education for ordination in the United Methodist Church (see ¶324.4). In order to apply for provisional membership and commissioning, a candidate shall have completed ½ of the basic graduate theological studies from a seminary listed by the University Senate. Note that the Alabama-West Florida Conference requires completion of all educational requirements prior to beginning the two-year residency required for ordination and full membership.

- Old Testament
- New Testament
- Theology
- Church history
- Mission of the church in the world
- Evangelism
- Worship/liturgy
- United Methodist Studies: Doctrine, Polity and History
- For candidates on the elder track, these are the additional Alabama-West Florida Conference requirements: two courses in homiletics and one quarter (unit) of clinical pastoral education (CPE).
- For candidates on the deacon track, these are the additional Alabama-West Florida Conference requirements: one seminary-level course in missions or servant leadership and one quarter (unit) of clinical pastoral education (CPE).

Although each seminary has the responsibility to designate which basic course meets the core requirements and advise students of these courses, the conference Board of Ordained Ministry will have the final authority to approve academic studies.

The Alabama-West Florida Conference Board of Ordained Ministry requires that all educational requirements (both disciplinary and conference requirements, including one unit of CPE) be completed successfully prior to residency and full membership.

The Alabama-West Florida Conference Board of Ordained Ministry follows the direction from the University Senate rulings on distance learning. The University Senate set these policies:

1. All 13 UMC seminaries and Asbury Theological Seminary are allowed to offer 2/3 of the Master of Divinity degree online. 1/3 of the degree must be done on campus.
2. The only online courses allowed to count toward a degree for a person seeking UMC ordination must come from one of the 13 UMC seminaries and Asbury Theological Seminary.
3. At their June 2010 meeting, the University Senate made the decision to require that all official transcripts of University Senate approved schools must identify the courses that are taken online. The University Senate reconfirmed this decision in January 2011. The term “online courses” includes those that offer some instruction on campus.
4. As of January 2011, few if any additional seminaries will be invited to join the list of non-UMC schools approved for the education of those seeking ordination in the UMC.
5. All non-UMC schools currently approved to educate UMC candidates for ordination must continue to meet University Senate criteria. It is necessary that a non-UMC school either (a) have at least one full-time UMC faculty member with a Ph.D. or Th.D. on a long-term contract teaching the courses in UM history, doctrine and polity (b) or partner with a UMC seminary to offer the required courses in history, doctrine, and polity. This policy takes effect in August 2012.