

**COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR
MINISTRY**

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CPM-1 MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS

Section 1. Preparation for Ministry Process

The preparation for ministry process involves two phases: Inquiry and Candidacy. These two phases are designed to explore the call, evaluate the gifts, and support the preparation of men and women who feel themselves called to the ordered ministry of teaching elder (also called minister of the Word and Sacrament G-2.0501.) (G-20102, G-2.0204, G-2.0601)

Both the Inquiry Phase and the Candidacy Phase of the process evaluate the individual's development in five key areas:

- **Education for Ministry**, which includes evaluation of the individual's academic potential and progress and the individual's ability to relate the academic learning to the ministry of teaching elder (minister of the Word and Sacrament);
- **Spiritual Development**, which explores with individuals their personal faith journeys and their spiritual practices to discern the will of God in their lives;
- **Interpersonal Relations** which provide opportunities to reflect on how an individual relates to others, one's own leadership style, and what this means in terms of the ministry of the teaching elder (minister of the Word and Sacrament);
- **Personal Growth**, through which persons reflect on who they are, what areas they need to develop, how to understand their call, and how to develop personal stewardship;
- **Professional Development**, to help persons develop specific skills that will enhance their effectiveness as teaching elders (ministers of the Word and Sacrament) and as presbyters. Those skills should include and understanding of one's ministry context and the ability to deal with conflict that may emerge in the place one serves.

It is important for inquirers and candidates to understand that an educational process and the Presbytery of Detroit's process, which is consistent with G-2.06, must both be completed prior to ordination. While they interconnect, the educational institutions and the presbytery operate independently. **It is the responsibility of the inquirer or candidate to coordinate the completion and the timing of those processes**

Section 2. Phase 1: Inquiry

“The purpose of the inquiry phase is to provide an opportunity for the church and those who believe themselves called to ordered ministry as teaching elders to explore that call together so that the presbytery can make an informed decision about the inquirer's suitability for ordered ministry.” (G-2.0603) The church is seeking teaching elders who possess “wisdom and maturity of faith, leadership skills, a compassionate spirit, an honest repute, and sound judgment.” (G-2.0607a)

Because this exploration is with the whole church, the inquirer is engaged in a network of relationships—first, between the inquirer and the church session, then with the presbytery through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, and with finally with a theological institution.

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Because this exploration is with the whole church, the inquirer is engaged in a network of relationships—first, between the inquirer and the church session, then with the presbytery through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, and with finally with a theological institution.

2.1. Admission to Inquiry

- 2.1.1. A member of a congregation is considered for enrollment as an inquirer when he or she approaches the session about the possibility of becoming a teaching elder (also known as minister of the Word and Sacrament G-2.0501) and formally agrees with the session and with the presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry to explore the implications of this quest. Enrollment is intended to be a thoughtful and deliberate step; people are encouraged to take this formal action soon after they have made their personal decision to explore this ministry so that the presbytery's Committee can provide them with support and counsel as early as possible.

2.2. The process of the inquiry phase is as follows:

- 2.2.1. A person desiring to become an inquirer shall indicate to the pastor of the particular church a desire to explore the personal implications of becoming a teaching elder (minister of the Word and Sacrament).
- 2.2.2. The applicant shall have been an active member of that particular church for at least six months
- 2.2.3. If, after consultation with the pastor, the applicant wishes to apply to be taken under care, the applicant shall prepare background information by completing Forms 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D and 2A, and request the pastor notify the session and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. The applicant shall also complete the Presbytery of Detroit forms required for a background check. These forms will be submitted to the session and the CPM to be used by the liaisons, and kept in the applicant's file.
- 2.2.4. Prior to meeting with the applicant, the session shall schedule a meeting with a CPM liaison for orientation to the process used by the Presbytery of Detroit to prepare persons who are called to be a teaching elder.
- 2.2.5. The session shall consult with the applicant and, if the individual requests to be enrolled as an inquirer, shall make a recommendation to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. The session's recommendation and the person appointed as session liaison will be reported on Form 1D, "Session Evaluation and Recommendation."
- 2.2.6. Upon receipt of the recommendation of the session, the CPM Co-moderator(s) shall request from the presbytery office a criminal background check, and appoint a liaison who shall conduct a minimum of three reference checks (See Form 2D). [amend. 10/23/12]
- 2.2.7. When the criminal background check has cleared, and the reference checks have been completed, the inquirer's liaison shall review the information gathered, and present the person and the information to CPM. CPM shall determine whether to enroll the person as an inquirer. If the person is enrolled, the committee shall also complete Form 2C, "Report of Initial Consultation." [amend. 10/23/12]

- 2.2.8. CPM shall discuss with the applicant the implications of Form 2B, “Covenant Agreement and Inquirer’s Release.” The applicant shall also be given a copy of the Presbytery of Detroit’s “Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures” (Policy P-4). When the applicant has signed Form 2B, and has signed the receipt of and concurrence with the Sexual Misconduct policy, the applicant shall be enrolled as an inquirer. Copies of the documents signed shall be given to the inquirer and the liaisons, and placed in the inquirer’s file.
- 2.2.9. CPM shall report its action to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery on Form 2A. The Stated Clerk shall then notify the Session and the General Assembly.
- 2.2.10. The date of the Committee’s action to enroll shall be the beginning of the covenant relationship. “The inquiry and candidacy phases shall continue for a period of no less than two years, including at least one year as a candidate.” G-2.0602 (See G-2.0610 for exceptions).
- 2.2.11. The phase of inquiry shall be of sufficient length for the inquirer, the session, and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry to decide whether the inquirer should apply to become a candidate. During this time, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall make use of resources such as information provided by the inquirer, personal references, and reports from counseling services, the session, and the inquirer’s institution of learning, if the inquirer is a student.

2.3. *During Inquiry*

When a person is enrolled as an inquirer, she or he, in consultation with the liaison, shall immediately begin the process of gaining a psychological assessment. That assessment should be completed within one year of enrollment as an inquirer but must be completed within 18 months of enrollment to remain an inquirer under the care of the Presbytery of Detroit.

The inquirer should also arrange for and take the Bible Content Exam within one year from the date of enrollment in theological education.

2.4. *Inquirers and candidates shall have a consultation at least once a year*

Inquirers and candidates shall have a consultation at least once a year with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. In no case shall an inquirer or candidate be excused from these annual consultations. These consultations will be scheduled by the CPM moderator.

- 2.4.1. Prior to meeting with the committee, the inquirer shall complete Form 3, “Pre-Interview Annual Consultation Report: Growth and Development in the Last 12 Months.”
- 2.4.2. These forms must be submitted to the presbytery office one month prior to the scheduled consultation so they may be distributed to the session liaison, CPM and the CPM liaison in preparation for the consultation.
- 2.4.3. During each annual consultation, the Committee, the inquirer, and the session liaison or moderator will assess the inquirer’s progress toward previously

established goals in each of the five growth areas and together negotiate new goals to be completed by the next consultation.

- 2.4.4. The agreed upon goals shall be reported on Form 4, "Report of Annual Consultation." A copy shall be given to the inquirer/candidate, the session and CPM liaisons, and a copy will be kept in the inquirer/candidate's file.

2.5. Psychological Assessment

- 2.5.1. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) in the Presbytery of Detroit requires that an inquirer have a psychological assessment prior to moving from the inquiry phase to the candidacy phase. The psychological assessment is developed by the assessment center, for the use of CPM and the inquirer in relationship to the inquirer's application or to become a teaching elder (minister of the Word and Sacrament). The psychological assessment is a confidential document which is available to CPM members, but cannot be released by CPM to any other entity. The inquirer may, of course, sign a release with the assessment center releasing the document to anyone the inquirer wishes.
- 2.5.2. CPM's practice regarding the cost at the psychological assessment center for this assessment is that:
 - 2.5.2.1. one-third of the cost be paid by the inquirer
 - 2.5.2.2. one-third of the cost be paid by the inquirer's home church
 - 2.5.2.3. one-third of the cost be paid by the CPM
 - 2.5.2.4. If there are significant financial issues for either the inquirer or the inquirer's church, the Committee is willing to negotiate another payment plan.
 - 2.5.2.5. (Ordinarily, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry does not share in any related costs incurred for a psychological assessment; i.e., meals and housing costs while at the assessment center, travel to the center, etc.)
- 2.5.3. **To complete a psychological assessment an inquirer must:**
 - 2.5.3.1. Receive approval from CPM to have the psychological assessment at an approved assessment center upon a request from the inquirer.
 - 2.5.3.2. Schedule a date for an assessment at the center.
 - 2.5.3.3. Inform the center that the inquirer will pay one-third of the cost of the assessment as the down payment, that one-third of the balance should be billed to the inquirer's home church (provide the address),
 - 2.5.3.4. Inform the center the final one-third should be billed to: Committee on Preparation for Ministry, The Presbytery of Detroit, 17575 Hubbell Avenue, Detroit, MI 48235.
 - 2.5.3.5. The psychological assessment center will correspond with the inquirer regarding the specific materials to be completed prior to the assessment.

- 2.5.3.6. The inquirer must sign a release to have the results of the assessment sent to the current Chair of CPM (at the Presbytery address).

2.6. Educational Standards for Seminarians Who Are Under Care

A candidate for the ministry of teaching elder (minister of the Word and Sacrament) must attend a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery (G-2.0607). The seminary and the course of study must be approved by CPM. The course of study the Presbytery of Detroit requires is listed below. The inquirer shall contact the CPM liaison requesting permission to attend a particular seminary and requesting any equivalent courses for substitution. Exceptions to the minimums listed below must be approved by CPM, and in some cases the Presbytery of Detroit.

2.6.1. Biblical Languages (4 courses required)

- 2.6.1.1. Hebrew
- 2.6.1.2. Greek
- 2.6.1.3. Hebrew Scriptures original language exegesis
- 2.6.1.4. New Testament original language exegesis

2.6.2. Biblical Studies (4 courses required)

- 2.6.2.1. Old Testament survey
- 2.6.2.2. New Testament survey
- 2.6.2.3. Additional Biblical study course - OT
- 2.6.2.4. Additional Biblical study course - NT

2.6.3. History (3 courses required)

- 2.6.3.1. Church history overview, pre-Reformation
- 2.6.3.2. Church history overview, post-Reformation
- 2.6.3.3. Presbyterian history and creeds

2.6.4. Theology (3 courses required)

- 2.6.4.1. Systematic theology
- 2.6.4.2. Systematic theology
- 2.6.4.3. Reformed theology

2.6.5. Practical Theology (8 courses required)

- 2.6.5.1. Ministerial overview course
- 2.6.5.2. Reformed Worship and Sacraments
- 2.6.5.3. Speech class
- 2.6.5.4. Homiletics
- 2.6.5.5. Christian Education

2.6.5.6. Pastoral Counseling

2.6.5.7. Mission / Evangelism

2.6.5.8. Presbyterian Polity

2.6.6. Note: Any of the above courses that a student would like to take with a Pass / Fail grade must be approved by the CPM prior to enrolling in that course.

2.7. *Clinical Pastoral Education*

The CPM requires all inquirers and candidates take one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) or an approved alternative as approved by the seminary. Before beginning the CPE experience, CPM must be notified and give their approval, and upon completion, the supervisor's report and the inquirer's/candidate's final report will be sent to the CPM chairperson, for the whole committee's review.

Internet address for CPE sites: www.ACPE.org

2.8. *Field Education*

2.8.1. CPM requires each inquirer or candidate to fulfill an approved 480 hour Field Education experience.

2.8.2. The Field Education experience shall be in a formal Presbyterian or Reformed church or parish-like setting with supervision and evaluations made available to CPM.

2.8.3. The Field Education must not be in the inquirer or candidate's home church and should be in a different setting from the home congregation. For example, if the inquirer or candidate is from a small town, an urban or suburban church would be a challenging and broadening experience. If the candidate's home church is large, a smaller church would provide new experiences.

Section 3. Phase 2: Candidacy

The purpose of the candidacy phase is to provide for the full preparation of persons to serve the church as teaching elders (ministers of the Word and Sacrament). This shall be accomplished through the presbytery's support, guidance, and evaluation of a candidate's fitness and readiness for a call to ministry requiring ordination. Evidence of readiness to begin ordered ministry as a teaching elder (minister of the Word and Sacrament) shall include the completion of the requirements in this manual, and an affirmation of the candidate's wisdom and maturity of faith, leadership skills, compassionate spirit, honest repute, and sound judgment. (G-2.0607a)

3.1. *Admission to Candidacy*

An inquirer becomes a candidate by action of presbytery. At that time the presbytery formally concludes a candidate has demonstrated adequate promise for ministry (G-2.0604), the candidate is assured of God's call to enter ordered ministry, and the candidate formally agrees to accept the presbytery's supervision of the candidate's preparation for the ministry of teaching elder (minister of the Word and Sacrament).

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3.2. The process of the candidacy phase is as follows:

- 3.2.1. When the inquirer has completed a psychological assessment and the results, along with reference checks, and any other required information, have been reviewed by the Subcommittee on Inquirer Qualifications, and its recommendations have been acted upon by CPM, the inquirer and liaison may explore together the inquirer's readiness for candidacy.
- 3.2.2. When the inquirer is ready to apply for status as a candidate, the inquirer and the liaison shall:
 - 3.2.2.1. verify that the inquirer has completed and submitted to CPM a psychological assessment,
 - 3.2.2.2. verify that the inquirer has taken the Bible Content Examination, and
 - 3.2.2.3. verify that any other requirements of CPM have been completed.
- 3.2.3. The inquirer shall complete and present to the session and the CPM the following:
 - 3.2.3.1. Form 5A "Application to Be Received as a Candidate," including three references: a professor, a supervisor and a colleague who has worked with the candidate,
 - 3.2.3.2. a statement of his or her understanding of the uniqueness of the Reformed tradition (F-1.01 to F-3.04),
 - 3.2.3.3. a statement of personal faith which incorporates an understanding of our tradition as found in F-1.02,
 - 3.2.3.4. a statement of what it means to be Presbyterian, indicating how that awareness grows out of participation in the life of a particular church;
 - 3.2.3.5. a statement of self-understanding which reflects the inquirer's personal and cultural background and includes a concern for maintaining spiritual, physical, and mental health;
 - 3.2.3.6. a statement of the candidate's understanding of the task teaching elders (minister of the Word and Sacrament) perform, including a self-awareness of specific gifts for the ministry of teaching elder (minister of the Word and Sacrament) and of areas in which growth is needed.
- 3.2.4. After Form 5A has been completed, the inquirer, the CPM liaison and the session liaison shall schedule with the Session a time for examination.
- 3.2.5. The session shall make a recommendation to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry that this inquirer should or should not be enrolled as a candidate and shall report that recommendation to CPM on form 5A.
- 3.2.6. The CPM liaison shall check the references, on Form 5A using Form 5C, Reference Form for Candidacy. The CPM liaison will prepare a written summary for the Chair of CPM. Upon receipt of that summary, the chair will

schedule the examination for candidacy with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

- 3.2.7. After receiving and reviewing the above information, and examining the inquirer, CPM shall make a definite recommendation to the presbytery that the inquirer shall or shall not be received as a Candidate for Ordered Ministry.
- 3.2.8. If CPM decides that the inquirer shall not be received as a candidate for ordered ministry, that decision shall be reported to the presbytery and the session on form 5A.
- 3.2.9. If CPM recommends to the presbytery that the inquirer should be received as a candidate for ordered ministry, that decision shall be reported to the presbytery on form 5A, and the inquirer shall sign Form 5B, "Covenant Agreement and Candidate Release. A copy of this form shall be given to the candidate and the session and CPM liaisons, and placed in the candidate's file.
- 3.2.10. The presbytery shall receive the report and recommendation of its committee and shall examine the inquirer in person with respect to his or her Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken, and motives for seeking the ministry.
- 3.2.11. If the examination is approved, the presbytery shall receive the inquirer as a candidate as described in the Presbytery of Detroit's policy P-21. "The moderator shall ask the following questions of the candidate before the candidate is declared enrolled.
 - 3.2.11.1. "Do you believe yourself to be called by God to *the ordered ministry of teaching elder*?"
 - 3.2.11.2. "Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a Christian character and conduct, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for this ministry?"
 - 3.2.11.3. "Do you accept the proper supervision of the presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for this ministry?"
 - 3.2.11.4. "Do you desire now to be received by this presbytery as a Candidate for *the ordered ministry of teaching elder* in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?"
- 3.2.12. "If these questions are answered in the affirmative, a brief charge shall be given, the candidate's name shall be recorded on the presbytery's roll of candidates, and the proceedings shall close with prayer."
- 3.2.13. The Stated Clerk of the presbytery shall report the action of the presbytery to the General Assembly, the candidate, and the session by completing Form 5A.

3.3. During Candidacy

The covenant relationship between the candidate and the presbytery shall be continued through annual consultations as described in this manual at Section 2.4., "Inquirers and candidates shall have a consultation at least once a year." During this time CPM will

focus on the candidate's preparation for ministry; especially in the areas of educational requirements, field education, and Clinical Pastoral Education. Every inquirer and candidate enrolled in study in a theological seminary should take the Bible Content exam as often as it is offered, until it is passed.

3.4. Completion of Candidacy

Candidacy continues until the presbytery acts in one of three ways to remove the candidate's name from the Roll of Candidates:

- 3.4.1. Completion of the preparation for ministry process with a call to the ordered ministry of teaching elder (minister of the Word and Sacrament). In this case, the following steps are involved:
 - 3.4.1.1. the Committee on Preparation for Ministry determines that the candidate is ready to be examined for ordination (Presbytery of Detroit policy P-17);
 - 3.4.1.2. the candidate receives a call; and
 - 3.4.1.3. "The presbytery placing the call to the candidate for ministry shall ordinarily examine, ordain and install the candidate." (G-2.0702)
- 3.4.2. Withdrawal by the candidate;
- 3.4.3. Removal by the presbytery;

3.5. Final Assessment and Negotiation for Service (G-2.0607)

- 3.5.1. Final assessment must ordinarily be completed within one year of the completion of the educational requirements.
- 3.5.2. A candidate may not enter into negotiation for service as a teaching elder (minister of the Word and Sacrament) without approval of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. The committee shall record when it has certified a candidate ready for examination for ordination, pending a call, and submit Form 6, "Certification of Final Assessment" to the clerk and to the presbytery. (See Presbytery of Detroit policy P-17). Evidence of readiness to begin ordered ministry as a teaching elder (minister of the Word and Sacrament) shall include: (G-2.0607)
 - 3.5.2.1. a candidate's wisdom and maturity of faith, leadership skills, compassionate spirit, honest repute, and sound judgment;
 - 3.5.2.2. a transcript showing graduation, with satisfactory grades, at a regionally accredited college or university;
 - 3.5.2.3. a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery, showing a course of study including Hebrew and Greek, exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek, satisfactory grades in all areas of study, and graduation or proximity to graduation; and

- 3.5.2.4. a satisfactory grades, together with the examination papers in the areas covered by any standard ordination examination approved by the General Assembly.
- 3.5.3. The basis for this assessment will be:
 - 3.5.3.1. a statement of faith, presented to the committee;
 - 3.5.3.2. an exegesis of an Old Testament or New Testament text,
 - 3.5.3.3. a sermon based upon that text and exegesis, presented and preached to member of the committee, and
 - 3.5.3.4. a face-to-face examination of the candidate by the committee.
- 3.5.4. Any candidate who has successfully passed all of the Standard Examinations for Ordination, is within five (5) months of successful completion of all academic and clinical pastoral education requirements, has fulfilled any other requirements specified by CPM and the Presbytery, and has received a positive Final Assessment, may begin to circulate a Personal Information Form for the purpose of seeking a call as teaching elder (minister of Word and Sacrament.) This action will be recorded on Form 6, and a copy shall be given to the candidate, the liaisons, and placed in the file. [amend. 11/27/12]

3.6. *Transfer or Removal*

- 3.6.1. At the request of the inquirer or candidate and with the approval of the sessions and presbyteries involved, a presbytery may transfer the covenant relationship of an inquirer or candidate. (G-2.0608) This action shall be reported to the receiving presbytery by the Stated Clerk on Form 7A. If the transfer is to the Presbytery of Detroit, the Stated Clerk shall report the receipt of the inquirer or candidate to the General Assembly on Form 7A.
- 3.6.2. In accord with G-2.069 the CPM may allow an inquirer or candidate to withdraw, or may remove an inquirer or candidate from the roll. These actions shall be reported to the Stated Clerk on Form 7B, who shall then notify the General Assembly.

3.7. *Ordination or reception of a minister from another denomination*

- 3.7.1. When a congregation of the Presbytery of Detroit issues a call to a candidate for ministry, or a minister from another denomination, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry shall conduct the Examination for Ordination, unless the Presbytery agrees that the examination shall be done by another presbytery.
- 3.7.2. CPM shall conduct the examination of a candidate when the candidate provides certification of Final Assessment by the sending presbytery (Form 7A).
- 3.7.3. CPM shall conduct the examination of a minister from another denomination when it has received certification that the minister is in good standing, and has complied with G-2.0505.

- 3.7.4. The candidate shall provide CPM and the presbytery with an autobiographical statement, and a Statement of Faith.
- 3.7.5. The candidate shall preach a sermon before the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, and shall be examined by CPM. The examination shall cover the reasons the candidate seeks membership in the presbytery, the candidate's theological understanding, and any other issues the committee believes appropriate.
- 3.7.6. The committee shall present the candidate to the presbytery, with the candidate's statement of faith and autobiographical statement, and with a recommendation as to whether ordain/receive the candidate into membership. The presbytery shall conduct an examination.
- 3.7.7. The Stated Clerk shall report the ordination to the General Assembly on Form 7B.

Section 4. Miscellaneous Policies

4.1. Financial Aid

Amended 3/21/15

4.1.1. Premise

The Presbytery of Detroit, through its Committee on Preparation for Ministry', reviews the financial well-being of those individuals under the care of the presbytery in their preparation for ordination as teaching elders.

The committee sees its role as two-fold. First the committee has a responsibility to guide inquirers and candidates in understanding acceptable rates of indebtedness and realistic level of repayment on a pastor's starting salary. Second, the committee has a responsibility to assist candidates and inquirers in locating sources of financial aid within acceptable indebtedness levels.

4.1.2. Total Educational Debt

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry suggests that \$50,000 is the maximum reasonable level of educational indebtedness. (The committee defines total educational indebtedness as the total of all outstanding debt. from undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate studies.)

The committee urges candidates to be careful about the amount of educational debt incurred, and realistic in their expectation of their future financial ability to repay that indebtedness.

4.1.3. .Availability of Funds

The Presbytery of Detroit has limited funds available to students under the care of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. Although both inquirers and candidates may apply for tuition and/or expense reimbursement, requests from candidates will receive priority.

4.1.4. Tuition-Presbytery Theological Scholarship Fund

- 3.7.4. The candidate shall provide CPM and the presbytery with an autobiographical statement, and a Statement of Faith.
- 3.7.5. The candidate shall preach a sermon before the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, and shall be examined by CPM. The examination shall cover the reasons the candidate seeks membership in the presbytery, the candidate's theological understanding, and any other issues the committee believes appropriate.
- 3.7.6. The committee shall present the candidate to the presbytery, with the candidate's statement of faith and autobiographical statement, and with a recommendation as to whether ordain/receive the candidate into membership. The presbytery shall conduct an examination.
- 3.7.7. The Stated Clerk shall report the ordination to the General Assembly on Form 7B.

Section 4. Miscellaneous Policies

4.1. Financial Aid

Amended 3/21/15

4.1.1. Premise

The Presbytery of Detroit, through its Committee on Preparation for Ministry', reviews the financial well-being of those individuals under the care of the presbytery in their preparation for ordination as teaching elders.

The committee sees its role as two-fold. First the committee has a responsibility to guide inquirers and candidates in understanding acceptable rates of indebtedness and realistic level of repayment on a pastor's starting salary. Second, the committee has a responsibility to assist candidates and inquirers in locating sources of financial aid within acceptable indebtedness levels.

4.1.2. Total Educational Debt

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry suggests that \$50,000 is the maximum reasonable level of educational indebtedness. (The committee defines total educational indebtedness as the total of all outstanding debt. from undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate studies.)

The committee urges candidates to be careful about the amount of educational debt incurred, and realistic in their expectation of their future financial ability to repay that indebtedness.

4.1.3. Availability of Funds

The Presbytery of Detroit has limited funds available to students under the care of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. Although both inquirers and candidates may apply for tuition and/or expense reimbursement, requests from candidates will receive priority.

4.1.4. Tuition-Presbytery Theological Scholarship Fund

The Presbytery, through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, administers a Theological Scholarship Fund. Funding for this scholarship fund comes from offerings collected at each ordination or installation service conducted by the presbytery. All inquirers and candidates under care of the Presbytery are eligible to apply for tuition assistance. Applicants for scholarships from the Presbytery must adhere to the process described in 4.1.6 below.

4.1.5. Expenses – Presbytery of Detroit Operating Budget

The Presbytery of Detroit's annual operating budget for the Committee on Preparation for Ministry contains specific accounts where living and travel costs can be expensed. Unlike the Presbytery Theological Scholarship Fund mentioned above, the annual operating budget is funded each year on the basis of anticipated expenses. If an inquirer or candidate expresses a need for educational expense reimbursement in a subsequent year, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry must decide whether or not to reimburse those expenses and then budget for the specific amounts needed. If a request is received for a current year, the amount of money remaining in the budget will limit the amount that can be reimbursed.

4.1.6. Graduate and Professional Financial Aid for Students Form

All applicants for financial aid will furnish the Committee on Preparation for Ministry with a current GAPFAS (Graduate and Professional Financial Aid for Students) form. This document varies from seminary to seminary and should be available through the financial aid office.

4.1.7. Form 1C – Financial Planning

The request for financial aid must be accompanied by a detailed accounting of anticipated income and expenses on Form 1C – Financial Planning. This accounting should include all income sources - self, family, church, seminary, denomination and any other financial assistance the individual will receive (or anticipates receiving). Expenses should be specific, e.g. tuition, room, board, books, supplies, etc.

4.1.8. Verification

The presbytery will only consider requests for assistance after verification has been provided that the individual has applied for assistance from the sources listed in 4.1.7 above.

4.1.9. Non-Degree Coursework

From time to time the Committee on Preparation for Ministry may receive a request from an inquirer or candidate to reimburse tuition and/or expenses related to non-degree coursework it has specifically requested. Based on the

merits of each request, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry will determine whether it will deny, share or totally reimburse these costs.

Amended 10/23/12, 11/27/12,3/21/15

CPM-2 POLICY FOR COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS



MANUAL AND RESOURCE GUIDE

For Commissioned Ruling Elder Applicants Presbytery of Detroit

Revised Version 03/2013 LJG

Manual Contents

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- **The Learning Phase**

Approved CRE Trainee Education Options - *to be determined by CPM*

CRE Process Checklist – *Appendix 1 C*

Sample of Typical Examination Questions for CRE Trainees- *Appendix 2*

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A Sample Covenant Agreement with a Commissioned Ruling Elder – *Appendix 3*

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Introduction & Overview

Introduction

The Presbytery of Detroit is committed to providing the best possible leadership to all churches within its bounds. Teaching elder/ministers normally provide this leadership. However, one additional way of providing leadership is through the use of Commissioned Ruling Elders as provided in the *Book of Order*, G-2.10.

This Manual

This manual has been prepared to guide elders seeking to become Commissioned Ruling Elders (CRE) and to be a resource for the various committees of the Presbytery in the administration of the CRE program. It includes the policies, procedures, and forms developed by the Presbytery of Detroit to carry out the CRE program as outlined in the *Book of Order*. A person considering becoming a CRE and those responsible for administering the CRE program should familiarize themselves with the applicable *Book of Order* provisions.

Definition of a Commissioned Ruling Elder

A Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) is an ordained elder who is approved to perform pastoral functions not requiring ordination as a teaching elder/minister and is currently a member of a congregation of the Presbytery of Detroit and has been for six months or more. This person may serve in a full-time or part-time, salaried, or volunteer position. He/she has been called by God and affirmed by his/her Session and received appropriate training in accordance with the *Book of Order*, G-2.1002, and under the supervision of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM). The CRE is commissioned by the Presbytery to serve a particular congregation in the Presbytery of Detroit when invited by the Session of that congregation, recommended by the Committee on Ministry (COM), and approved by the Presbytery.

Standards for Commissioned Ruling Elders

Those being considered as CREs should follow these standards of faith and Christian life:

1. Belief in Jesus Christ as his/her Lord and Savior and acceptance, understanding of, and faithfulness to the questions and vows of a CRE. (*Book of Order*, (W-4.4003)
2. Membership in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and faithful, regular participation in its worship and service.
3. Demonstrated leadership in the church as an Elder.
4. Demonstrated pastoral ability.
5. Commitment to personal spiritual growth through prayer, Bible reading and devotions.
6. Acceptance, understanding of, and faithfulness to the ethical standards of the Presbyterian Church (USA) as set forth in the documents, *Life Together in the Community of Faith: Standards of Ethical Conduct for Ordained Officers in the Presbyterian Church (USA)*, adopted by the 210th General Assembly and the Presbytery's *Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures*.
7. Satisfactory completion of a mandatory background check and pre-employment screening.

Overview of the CRE Program

Those persons seeking to become CREs will follow a different "track" or program from those seeking ordination as teaching elder/ministers. A lay person's ability to preach, teach and lead worship may be seen as a gift of the Spirit developed through experience, practice and formal training.

To further develop these gifts for service in a particular field of ministry, the Presbytery, through the CPM and COM, will guide the CRE Trainee through a program of preparation for service. Throughout this training and preparation, the CPM and the CRE Trainee will prayerfully discern God's call for the individual.

The program track for CREs is:

I Seeking Phase

The individual seeking to become a CRE receives endorsement from the Session of his/her own church and is evaluated and received by the CPM.

II Learning Phase

With the authorization, guidance and support of the CPM, the CRE Trainee will engage in study and preparation for service as an **Eligible Commissioned Ruling Elder (ECRE)**.

III Commissioning Phase

After having completed the program of training, preparation and discernment with the CPM and after the CPM designates the trainee an ECRE and ready to receive a commission to a field of service or congregation, he/she is recommended to COM. At the recommendation of the COM and with the approval of the Presbytery, the ECRE will be commissioned to a particular congregation or field of service for ministry as a **Commissioned Ruling Elder**.

This Manual is divided into three sections, and each section highlights the particular responsibilities of different committees or persons in the three phases of the above process. Familiarity with the overall manual by all those involved is encouraged.

CREs Trained or Commissioned by Other Presbyteries

If a CRE who has been trained or formerly commissioned by another Presbytery seeks to be commissioned to a congregation in the Presbytery of Detroit, the CPM will evaluate the training program and explore past ministerial experience(s) of the CRE candidate. They will then interview the candidate to determine that he/she has met the standards established for training of CREs in the Presbytery of Detroit. Any discrepancies of training will be made up at the discretion of the CPM, prior to the recommendation of the CRE candidate to COM for recommendation to a congregation for commissioning by the Presbytery of Detroit.

The Seeking Phase

During this phase, a person, believing that he/she has been called by God to be a Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE), seeks validation of the call by his/her Session and then by the Presbytery through the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM). The process of examination followed will be similar to that of those seeking status as Inquirers in preparation for ordination as teaching elder/ministers. (*Book of Order*, G-2.0601, 2.0603-2.0607, a.b.)

The CRE Applicant

- Completes the Commissioned Ruling Elder Application Form [see Appendix] and presents this application to his/her Session for endorsement and then to the CPM for review and examination.

The Session of the home church of the CRE

- Examines the CRE applicant and recommends him/her to the CPM for further evaluation and preparation toward becoming a CRE. [*See the relevant procedures as outlined for Inquirers in the Book of Order, G-2.0605*]
- Encourages, supports, and prays for the CRE applicant throughout his/her time of preparation for service.
- May offer to provide financial assistance for class work or study.
- May offer opportunities for service and preparation for ministry through working in the congregation under the supervision of the pastor(s).

The Presbytery CPM

- Provides materials to congregations to help elder members consider pursuing CRE training and commissioning.
- Receives and reviews applications from CRE aspirants and, if appropriate, guides them through training and preparation for a CRE. The CPM will follow the current process through which they receive and examine those seeking to enroll as Inquirers in preparation for ordained teaching elder/ministers and in accordance with the requirements of the *Book of Order*, G-2.0601 and 2.0603-2.0603-2.0607, a.b. including examining a CRE applicant regarding his/her personal faith and motives for seeking the commission.
- The CPM will require a career assessment by Midwest Ministry Development Service or an approved alternative upon request of the CRE applicant submitted to his/her liaison . **This must be completed within one year or the Seeking Phase shall be terminated.**
- The CPM will ask the applicant to address inadequacies in any area before recommending further preparation.

Upon satisfactory completion of this phase of seeking and exploration, the applicant will be authorized by the CPM to move on to the next phase of learning and preparation as a **CRE Trainee (CRET)**.

The Learning Phase

During this phase, the **CRET** will acquire competency and skills in Bible, Reformed theology and sacraments, Presbyterian polity, preaching, leading worship, pastoral care, and teaching (*Book of Order*, G-2.1002) under the supervision and direction of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM).

The trainee, with the approval of the CPM, may take classes offered by the Presbytery and designated for CRETs; may enroll in a designated CRE training program offered by a college, seminary, or another Presbytery as approved and recommended by the CPM.

Competency in these skills will be demonstrated through a comprehensive written exam and the delivery of a sermon as arranged and administered by the CPM. [*See the Sample of Possible Examination Questions for Commissioned Ruling Elder Trainees in the Appendix.*]

The Field Education Requirement

The CRET will complete a required 480 hour Field Education experience to be completed within one

year of its start following approval of a written plan submitted to the CPM. (see *Appendices 5 and 5-A*)

The Presbytery CPM

- Reviews available CRE training programs from other presbyteries, seminaries, colleges, etc. and provides an authorized list of available programs to candidates. CPM will review and approve independent study arrangements and other Presbytery-sponsored training programs as requested by a CRE Trainee.
- Will meet with the CRET at least annually through this phase to review his/her progress and determine other needs or future plans.
- Will provide a written final examination, hear a sermon preached by the trainee, and interview him/her for readiness to be commissioned to a field of service or congregation. (*Book of Order*, G-2.1002). Upon successful completion of the final exam and interview by the CPM, the CPM will designate the CRET an ***Eligible Commissioned Ruling Elder (ECRE)*** and ready to be considered for commissioning and will notify the COM.

The Commissioning Phase

Upon recommendation by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) to the Committee on Ministry (COM), the designated **ECRE** candidate may complete a Personal Information Form (PIF) [available at www.clc.pcusa.org] and be considered for commissioning to a specific congregation or field of service as a Commissioned Ruling Elder.

This **commission shall be valid for a period up to three years** as negotiated by the Session, COM, and the CRE and approved by the Presbytery. It may be renewed at expiration or terminated at any time at the discretion of the Session, the CRE, or COM, with approval of the Presbytery.

The CRE may perform pastoral functions not requiring ordination as a teaching elder/minister and in agreement with the Session such as teaching, visitation of members in home or hospital, visitation of prospective members, supervising Sunday school, leading music or choir, prayer meetings or study groups, or conducting funerals. If commissioned to a congregation, the CRE will ordinarily be the primary leader of worship and preacher for the congregation.

Upon the written request of the Session to the COM, and with the recommendation of the mentor and supervisor, the CRE may also be authorized by the Presbytery to carry out other functions allowed in *Book of Order*, G-2.1001:

- (a) administer the Lord's Supper;
- (b) administer the Sacrament of Baptism;
- (c) moderate the session of the congregation under the supervision of, and when invited by, the moderator of the session appointed by the Presbytery;
- (d) have voice in meetings of the Presbytery;
- (e) have a vote in meetings of the Presbytery;
- (f) perform a service of Christian marriage when invited by the session or other responsible committee and when allowed by the state;
- (g) may be appointed by the Presbytery as moderator of the session to the church to which he/she is commissioned.

If the CRE is to be commissioned to a field of service not directly supervised by a congregation of the Presbytery of Detroit, then the CRE will follow the same procedure through the COM for confirmation of that field of service as a validated ministry as followed by teaching elder/ministers. (*Book of Order*, G-2.0503a.)

The ECRE Candidate

- Will complete a Personal Information Form (PIF) for distribution to the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) or Session of a congregation considering the service of a Commission Ruling Elder. [*This form can not be entered online but will be distributed by paper or email.*]
- Will only distribute his/her PIF to congregations in the Presbytery of Detroit as recommended and approved by the COM to receive PIFs of CREs.
- Will be prepared to interview and preach for sessions or PNCs of congregations that may be considering CREs.
- Once commissioned to a particular congregation or field of service, the CRE should see that he/she meets regularly with his/her assigned mentor and supervisor. An annual consultation and review between the CRE and the mentor and supervisor will be reported to the COM.
- The CRE is encouraged to participate in continuing education and may consult with his/her mentor and supervisor for particular recommendations.

The Session (and/or the PNC) of a Congregation Employing a CRE

- The Session or Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) consults with the COM considering the appropriateness of seeking a CRE to serve their congregation and/or the particular field of service.
- The Session or PNC reviews PIFs, interviews the ECRE candidates, checks references, and through the COM arranges for a neutral pulpit for the candidate if they wish to consider commissioning that candidate.
- If the Session, at the recommendation of the PNC, invites the ECRE to be employed by the congregation, the Session will draw up a Covenant Agreement between the candidate and the congregation specifying duties to perform, the time expectations, and terms of the employment including compensation, benefits, vacation, study leave, etc. [*See Covenant Agreement with Commissioned Ruling Elders in the Appendix.*]
- The Session will then request COM to recommend to the Presbytery that the ECRE candidate be commissioned to the congregation or field of service as a **Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE)** as specified in the Covenant Agreement. The Agreement will be reviewed annually by the COM including any subsequent salary adjustments during the term of the commission.
- The Session will request the COM to recommend to the Presbytery that the CRE be authorized to perform certain additional designated responsibilities. (*Book of Order*, G-2.1001)
- The Session will consider a service of recognition welcoming the CRE to their congregation and acknowledging the Presbytery's Service of Commissioning. [*See the Service of Recognition of Commissioning for Congregations in the Appendix.*]
- At the conclusion of the initial term of the commission, if the Session of the church and the CRE desire to renew the commission, they will make a request to the COM three to six months prior to expiration for renewal. A COM representative will review the commission in a meeting with the CRE, the Session, and its moderator (if not the CRE), and will make a recommendation to the COM for action by the Presbytery.

The Presbytery COM

- Consults with congregations considering the appropriateness of seeking a Commissioned Ruling Elder to serve their congregation and advises congregations calling candidates on appropriate levels and forms of compensation and benefits.
- Maintains a listing of ECRE candidates available to be commissioned by the Presbytery and, when appropriate with a congregation, recommends particular available ECRE candidates to the congregation. (*Book of Order*, G-2.1001)
- Upon request of the Session of a congregation, the COM recommends to the Presbytery that an

Eligible Commissioned Ruling Elder candidate be commissioned by the Presbytery to a particular congregation or field of ministry, based on the approved Covenant Agreement with Commissioned Ruling Elder. [See *Covenant Agreement in the Appendix.*]

- Annually reviews the Covenant Agreement between the CRE and the congregation.
- At the request of the Session, the COM may recommend that the Presbytery authorize the CRE to perform particular additional responsibilities. (*Book of Order, G-2.1001*) The COM may require some additional training prior to recommending the granting of these additional responsibilities.
- Recommends to the Presbytery at the request of the Session that a CRE commission be terminated or renewed when appropriate. (*Book of Order, G-2.1001*)
- Assigns a mentor and supervisor to the CRE and through the mentor and supervisor annually reviews the work of the CRE. (*Book of Order, G-2.1004*) [See *Annual CRE Review Form in Appendix.*]
- Provides for a regular periodic gathering of CREs serving in congregations for support, education, and spiritual enrichment.
- Provides a model Covenant Agreement for use by congregations calling CREs. [See *Covenant Agreement with Commissioned Ruling Elders in the Appendix.*]
- Provides resources to congregations for services of recognition of the CRE and the commissioning by Presbytery. [See *the Service of Commissioning for CREs in the Presbytery of Detroit and the Service of Recognition of Commissioning for Congregations in the Appendix.*]
- At the conclusion of the initial term of the commission, if the Session of the church and the CRE desire to renew the commission, they will make a request to the COM three to six months prior to expiration for renewal. A COM representative will review the commission in a meeting with the Session, its moderator and the CRE and will make a recommendation to the COM for action by the Presbytery.

The Presbytery of Detroit

- Will act upon the recommendation of the COM to commission or terminate a commission of a CRE to a particular congregation.
- Will provide a Service of Commissioning at a meeting of the Presbytery to commission the CRE to that congregation. (*Book of Order, G-2.1003*) A Service of Recognition will be held at the commissioning church without undue delay. [See *the Service of Commissioning for CREs in the Presbytery of Detroit and the Service of Recognition of Commissioning for Congregations in the Appendix.*]

The Session of the CRE's Sponsoring Church

- The Session of the sponsoring or home church of the CRE may wish to consider recognition in

worship of the CRE at a time when its congregation is gathered for worship. *[See the Service of Recognition of Commissioning for Congregations in the Appendix.]*

The Mentor and Supervisor

- The mentor and supervisor will be a teaching elder/minister who is a member in good standing of the Presbytery of Detroit who is appointed by the COM to a relationship with the CRE. (*Book of Order*, G-2.1004). The mentor and supervisor may be the pastor serving as moderator of the Session of the commissioning congregation. When the moderator of the Session is not an installed pastor of the commissioning congregation or when the CRE is serving as moderator of the Session as approved by the Presbytery, the mentor and supervisor may be another pastor assigned by COM.
- The mentor and supervisor will meet regularly with the CRE and at least annually with the CRE and members of the Session of the commissioning congregation in conducting the annual review of the work of the CRE. The results of this annual review will be communicated to the CRE, the commissioning congregation, and the COM.

Appropriate CRE Designations

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry of the Presbytery of Detroit has determined the following appropriate use of self-designations for individuals called to service in the commissioned ruling elder ministry:

- **Commissioned Ruling Elder Trainee (CRET)** designation when in the preparation process
- **Eligible Commissioned Ruling Elder (ECRE)** designation when all preparation processes are complete and recommendation to the Committee on Ministry for commissioning has occurred.
- **Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE)** designation reserved only for a ruling elder serving a commission to a validated ministry in our presbytery. When not doing so, the individual is identified once again as an **Eligible Commissioned Ruling Elder (ECRE)**.

Revised September 2009, September 2010, January 2011, November 2011, December 2011, March 2012, March 2013

Appendix 5 - FIELD EDUCATION APPLICATION FORM
The Presbytery of Detroit
Committee on Preparation for Ministry
Policy on Field Education for Commissioned Ruling Elder Candidates
GUIDELINES

Added 11/16/19

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) requires that each Commissioned Ruling Elder Trainee demonstrate their ability in skills and areas critical to pastoral leadership. The Field Education requirement provides an opportunity for a candidate to develop pastoral skills, demonstrate ability in areas essential to the, work with a supervisor to set goal and priorities,

The process has the following requirements:

- The CRE Trainee shall submit a written Field Education Proposal to the CPM's subcommittee for Commissioned Ruling Elder Preparation which contains:

1. **the anticipated time period of the assignment,**
2. **the details of the assignment,**
3. **the fourteen focus areas required the CPM requires a trainee to demonstrate a minimum level of competency**

- The Field Education must be completed under the guidance of a supervisor who has been selected by the Presbytery of Detroit as a CRE Teaching Congregation.
- The Field Education must not be in the CRE candidate's home church.
- The Field Education experience shall be in a formal Presbyterian or Reformed church or parish-like setting with supervision and evaluations as made available and approved beforehand by the subcommittee for Commissioned Ruling Elder Preparation and CPM.
- This field education will be completed when the CPM receives and approves a Standards Evaluation Form that demonstrates basic competence in the focus areas. A Trainee and Supervisor may set a schedule that requires specific hours of the CRE Trainee, the CPM does not mandate a minimum hours requirement.
- The CPM recommends that Sessions compensate CRE candidates for their time serving in ministry at this site. At a minimum, CPM recommends that the mileage driven by the candidate be covered by the Session for work done as part of this Field Education.

Candidate:

CPM Liaison:

Proposed Field Ed Site:

Proposed Supervisor:

Evaluations by supervisors and candidates will be shared with the CPM via the CRE candidate's liaison. **Please use this sheet as the cover page of the written Field Ed Proposal.**

Field Education Application, page 2

Goals of Field Education program

- Develop a more robust sense of identity and call as a pastor and/or ministry leader

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Preaching | 6. Worship planning | 11. Running meetings |
| 2. Teaching | 7. Sacraments | 12. Volunteer management |
| 3. Church Administration | 8. Weddings & funerals | 13. Program evaluation |
| 4. Budgeting & Stewardship | 9. Pastoral care | 14. Transitional Ministry |
| 5. Facility management | 10. Pastoral calling | |
| | 11. Leadership | |

- Develop new skills and abilities that are necessary to serve ministries and congregations.
- If a CRE Trainee has prior experience and skills, demonstrate those abilities in a structured setting so the supervisor (and the CPM) have a sense of the CRE Trainee's gifts for ministry. The CPM requires basic competence in 14 areas (defined in greater detail on Pages 6-8 below):

- Work with supervisor to identify areas of improvement, receive honest and helpful feedback, and continue to build confidence in the practice of ministry and leadership.

Minimum Field Education Expectations

The CRE Trainee will:

- Attend worship regularly and participate in worship planning. The period of the field placement must include at least one of the high Christian seasons of the calendar (i.e. Advent-Christmas and Lent-Easter.)
- Have experience in leading worship at least once in each of these worship functions: lector, liturgist, children's message, preaching, assist in sacraments
- Design and lead at least one Bible Study.
- Attend/participate in Session and Deacons meetings.
- Attend various standing committee meetings of Session and ad hoc committee meetings. Prepare an agenda and moderate at least one committee meeting.
- Observe and assist in Confirmation and New Member instruction classes
- Attend Presbytery meetings
- Participate and assist in congregational social activities whenever possible
- Participate in youth group meetings and activities where appropriate (not all small churches have youth groups)
- Gain experience in pastoral care/visitation under the supervision of the pastor

Supervisor Commitments

The supervisor must:

- Be approved and designated a “CRE Teaching Congregation” in good standing with the CPM of the Presbytery of Detroit
- Be serving in an ordained (or validated) capacity within the Presbytery of Detroit
- Meet regularly with the CRE Trainee for pastoral and theological reflection about ministry experiences, and provide the student with honest, constructive, and timely feedback.
- Be able to tailor pastoral activities appropriate to the student’s learning goals,

CRE Trainee
Name

CRE Trainee
Signature

Date

Supervisor
Name

Supervisor
Signature

Date

CPM Liaison
Name

CPM Liaison
Signature

Date

- Assess the CRE Trainee’s mastery of the skills required of CRE Trainees as demonstrated in their work in the Teaching Congregation and/or prior experience.