

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND RECEPTION

CURRENT GUIDELINES

Graduates of Other Theological Colleges Applying for Certification for Ordination

1. Candidates for the ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada are normally required to acquire a B.A. degree, or equivalent, from an accredited university plus an M.Div. degree, and diploma, or equivalent, from a theological college of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.
2. Candidates who are considering attending colleges other than those of The Presbyterian Church in Canada shall write with the consent of the certifying presbytery to the Committee on Education and Reception for approval of the proposed educational program. This request for approval should occur immediately after initial certification of the candidate by the presbytery. Such candidates for ministry will be counselled to choose their course program in consultation with The Presbyterian Church in Canada college they plan to attend for their additional assigned studies.
3. Graduates of theological colleges not affiliated with The Presbyterian Church in Canada will be required to be formally examined under the auspices of the Committee on Education and Reception as to their readiness for ministry in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and to determine the length of additional study required at one of our theological colleges. All applicants must have an M.Div. degree from a theological college accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) (or equivalent, outside North America). According to ATS standards, an M.Div. degree indicates readiness for ministry.
 - a) Graduates of theological colleges affiliated with member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, whose academic requirements are the equivalent of ours, viz., an arts degree or the equivalent, plus three years in theology, will normally be required to complete 1 academic year of study (2 full-time semesters or equivalent) under the care of the senate of one of the colleges of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, in addition to meeting any deficiencies identified by the committee.

This pastoral formation year is intended to prepare and contextualize the person for ministry within The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The period of study gives the denomination and the candidate for ministry a chance to assess his/her readiness to minister within our denomination. This study would include supervised field education in a congregation of this denomination throughout the assigned academic year, with both the field education supervisor and the faculty advisor being from The Presbyterian Church in Canada.
 - b) Graduates of all other theological colleges will normally be required to complete a minimum of 1½ academic years of study (3 full-time semesters or equivalent) under the care of the senate of one of the colleges of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

The additional semester (added to the 2 pastoral formation semesters assigned to Reformed church college graduates in 3a) is intended to address foundational theological courses that may not have been studied from a Reformed perspective in the M.Div. degree.
4. No applicant will be considered without at least a B average or its equivalent.
5. Applicants applying for certification for ordination will complete the requirements of the candidacy process (e.g. recertification, guidance conference, psychological assessment).

Ministers and Those Certified for Examination for Ordination of Other Churches

All recommendations are made in terms of the ruling of the General Assembly (A&P 1977, p. 15) that:

All ministers from other denominations and Presbyterian Churches outside of Canada who desire to be received into the ministry of our Church, shall be required by the presbyteries in which they may labour to pass satisfactorily an examination on the history of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and on the rules and forms of procedure: the examination to be taken any time between the time of application for reception and the time the applicant is received; results of such examination to be sent to the Committee on Education and Reception; the convener shall advise the Clerk of the General Assembly that all requirements have been met. The Clerk of Assembly may then inform the presbytery concerned that it may proceed to examine for certification for ordination, ordain or induct as the case may be.

Applicants for Special Courses

1. No application for a special General Assembly course may be recommended unless the applicant has attained at the time of first certification, the age of 35 years, and not attained the age of 60 years as of June 1st of the year in which the application is to be considered.
 - (a) Applicants for a special General Assembly course will be required to attend a guidance conference.
 - (b) Applicants are also required to have a psychological assessment.
 - (c) A synopsis of a candidate's responses to certification questions in Appendix J of the Book of Forms will be forwarded to the Committee on Education and Reception by presbytery as part of the candidate's application.
2. Requirements for special General Assembly programs shall be:
 - (a) Age 35-40. The equivalent of two full years of arts at the university level, three years intramural study in theology; one biblical language may be assigned at the discretion of the committee.
 - (b) Age 41-59. The equivalent of one full year of arts at the university level, three years intramural study in theology, with exemption from the biblical language requirement if desired by the applicant. These age guidelines shall come into effect at the time of application for a General Assembly course, or at the time a person begins the process of preparation for ministry, whichever is the earlier.
 - (c) Prerequisite course work for any special course must achieve a B average or above. A program will not be recommended based on a lesser academic standard.
3. In January of the final year of study of an Assembly student, the appropriate presbytery is permitted to examine him/her for certification for ordination. Approval, however, must be subject to the certification by the college that prescribed studies have been satisfactorily completed and with affirmation, comparable to the college diploma, that the candidate has demonstrated fitness for ministry. The examining presbytery shall inform Ministry and Church Vocations of the Life and Mission Agency of its action.

General

1. In cases where the General Assembly does not approve a recommendation of the Committee on Education and Reception with regard to a particular candidate, the matter will be referred back to the Committee on Education and Reception for further consideration and report. (Book of Forms sections 302.1 and 302.2).
2. All candidates who have English as a second language and who are applying for a special course of studies in English, will be required to pass an English language examination under the supervision of the college the candidate proposes to attend.
3. The responsibility to examine candidates for reception in Canadian Presbyterian Church History and Government belongs to the presbyteries. Presbyteries are invited, nevertheless, to use the colleges of the church as resources to assist them in this responsibility.

Note: A reading course has been developed by the Presbytery of East Toronto in consultation with the faculty of Knox College. The Committee on Education and Reception is prepared to make this course available to presbyteries upon request.
4. Travel Costs: The policy of the committee is that applicants are responsible for any travel costs involved in appearing before the committee, except in those cases for which the committee accepts financial responsibility because of special circumstances.
5. All recommendations to the General Assembly are conditional upon receipt of a satisfactory medical certificate when requested.
6. All recommendations of eligibility for reception are valid for three years but may be renewed upon application.
7. Applications to the Committee on Education and Reception for a special General Assembly course, for permission to be examined for certification for ordination, and for reception as a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada should be in the hands of the committee one full month before the next scheduled meeting of the committee.
8. (a) In the case of persons who apply for permission to be examined for certification for ordination, the committee will send a circular letter to all the presbyteries of the church, which will be given three months to lodge any competent objection with the Secretary of the Committee. (Book of Forms section 205.2).

(b) In the case of applicants for reception as a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the committee will send a circular letter to all the presbyteries of the church which will be given two months to lodge any competent objection with the secretary of the committee. (Book of Forms section 248.3).
9. All recommendations for permission to be examined for certification for ordination and for reception are subject to no valid objections being received from the presbyteries in response to circular letters.
10. The committee has adopted a policy to not receive applications for exemption from the study of a biblical language from persons who have a B.A. degree or equivalent.
11. The assignment of a course of study does not guarantee admission to one of the colleges of the church. Each college sets its own admission criteria.
12. The financial obligations for travel and an assigned course of study are the responsibility of the candidate and his/her presbytery of care.

Guidelines for Reception into The Order of Diaconal Ministries

1. Each application should be received on its own merits.
2. Transcripts will be forwarded to the Committee on Education and Reception which will arrange to have them evaluated, paying attention to the degree of similarity of training to that of other members of the Order.
3. For graduates of colleges of other Reformed Churches or ATS accredited colleges, the applicants shall normally be required to pass an examination on The Presbyterian Church in Canada (its history, doctrine and polity) and on Christian Education in The Presbyterian Church in Canada.
4. Graduates of non-affiliated colleges shall normally be required to complete satisfactorily not less than 1 year of study at one of our colleges, which year shall include those areas of study listed in guideline 3.
5. In cases where the General Assembly does not approve a recommendation of the Committee on Education and Reception with regard to a particular candidate, the matter will be referred back to the Committee on Education and Reception for further consideration and report.
6. All candidates who have English as a second language, and who are applying for a special course of studies given in English will be required to pass an English language examination under the supervision of the college the candidate proposed to attend.
7. The financial obligations for travel and an assigned course of study are the responsibility of the candidate and his/her presbytery of care.
8. All recommendations to the General Assembly concerning candidates are conditional upon receipt of a satisfactory medical certificate, if requested.