

DEVELOPING COMPETENCY CRITERIA: A DESIGN FOR COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

Purpose:

The purpose of this resource is to assist Committees on Preparation for Ministry to be able to:

1. Identify and determine competency criteria for ordination to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.
2. Establish indicators of competence for Inquirers/Candidates at the major stages of the preparation for ministry process.
3. Decide what resources outside of the presbytery will be needed to determine the competency of Inquirers/Candidates.
4. Identify sources of information for determining the competency of Inquirers/Candidates in the covenant relationship with that presbytery .

Preparation:

1. Secure the services of someone with skills in group dynamics and/or organizational development to assist the committee with the suggested process.
2. Select a meeting site that is comfortable and adaptable for small and large group discussion.
3. Be sure to have newsprint, 3/5 cards, notepads, markers and masking tape.
4. Have resources available to assist the committee i.e. Book of Order, Book of Confession, selected books, papers, pamphlets.
5. Alert participants that a minimum of four to six hours are needed to complete the design process. (Ideally, a committee might want to consider a 1-1/2 day event to work through the process and to allow time to evaluate the final product.)

Process:

It is suggested that CPM's began their task by reviewing the several components of the design process and establishing time blocks for each segment. This overview will enable participants to get a glimpse of what lies ahead in order that they can pace themselves. It is also important in the initial stages of the meeting, to agree on any ground rules that the group wants to establish for itself. This process may help to minimize group confusion and/or conflict if reasonable norms are set at the outset of the meeting.

I. Developing competency criteria for ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

A. Begin by having participants brainstorm a list of responses to the question: "What qualities and skills/abilities should an individual possess for ordination to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament?"

All responses should be accepted: evaluative comments and discussion should be discouraged. The focus at this point should be on building a list as exhaustive as possible. When the list is complete or when responses are slow in coming, assure the group that additions may be made to the list at any time, and move to the next step.

B. Ask participants to review the list and sort the items into two categories: "Qualities" and "Skills/Abilities:" Strive to achieve consensus: avoid voting or majority rule if at all possible.

C. Ask participants to go back over each list and identify those items that are "necessary" (N) for ordination and those that are desirable (D). "Necessary" qualities and skills/abilities are those without which ordination would not be granted. Again, strive to achieve consensus: avoid voting.

D. Have participants to place the items in one of the following categories: Education for Ministry through the theological education experience; Spiritual Development and the personal faith journey; .Interpersonal Relations including group process skills and conflict management; Personal Growth including self-identity and one's sense of call; Professional Development, including skills for ministry and being a presbyter.

In each category, list the "necessary" (N) items first, then the "desirable (D) items.

II. Establishing indicators of competence for each stage of preparation for ministry.

A. Keeping in mind the categorized listings developed in the previous section, have the group to focus on the stages in the preparation process and identity goals for each stage along with indicators of competence in each of the 5 key areas:

Pre-Inquiry Phase (When person has applied to become an Inquirer and a decision is to be made concerning the application)

A. Goals of the Pre-inquiry Phase

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

B. Indicators of Competence (List the necessary "N" items then the desirable "D" items in each area)

1. Education for ministry

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

2. Spiritual Development

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

3. Interpersonal Relations

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

4. Personal Growth

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

5. Professional Development

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

Inquiry Phase (Person is enrolled by presbytery and begins to formally explore and test one's call and to evaluate the suitability of a church occupation)

A. Goals of the Inquiry Phase

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

B. Indicators of Competence (list the "necessary" N items first then the "desirable" D items next.)

1. Education for ministry

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

2. Spiritual Development

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

3. Interpersonal Relations

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

4. Personal Growth

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

5. Professional Development

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

Candidacy Phase (Person is enrolled by presbytery and begins the full preparation to become a minister of the Word and Sacrament)

A. Goals of the Candidacy Phase

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

B. Indicators of Competence

1. Education for ministry

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

2. Spiritual Development

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

3. Interpersonal Relations

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

4. Personal Growth

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

5. Professional Development

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

Readiness Phase (Candidate is completing preparation for ministry requirements and is preparing for "final assessment" and certification of readiness to begin ministry.)

A. Goals of the Readiness Phase

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

B. Indicators of Competence

1. Education for ministry

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

2. Spiritual Development

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

3. Interpersonal Relations

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

4. Personal Growth

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

5. Professional Development

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

B. Ask the group to go back to the list developed for each stage in the preparation for ministry process and determine which indicators are the "minimum" required. In the first stage for example, an appropriate question to ask is "When, if ever, should a person not be enrolled as an Inquirer and Candidate?" In the remaining stages, an appropriate question to ask is, "When should Inquirer and Candidacy not be continued for this person?" Such questions need to be answered by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry in order to decide what indicators or competence a given committee deems minimal.

C. Return now to the listing for each stage in the process and identify the means of assessment to be used to evaluate growth and movement toward competency. The essential questions needing to be addressed at this time are:

1. What does the Committee on Preparation for Ministry want to know in each area of competency at this stage in the preparation process?

a. In what form do you want the information?

b. What are the best sources for obtaining this information?

Who do you want to ask?

(Sources of information could be transcripts. Career Counseling Reports, reports from Field Education or Clinical Pastoral Education, supervisors, etc. or they could include conversation with seminary personnel, the student's peers at seminary, or they could include written materials developed by the Inquirers/Candidates at the committee's request. In many instances, more than one source of information may be desirable in order to obtain different perspectives on the same areas of competence.)

2. What person and/or institutions outside of the presbytery will the CPM ask to participate in determining the competency of Inquirers/Candidates? (field education supervisors, seminary, pastor and session liaison of Inquirers/Candidates home church).

Adapted from work prepared by the Task Force for A Joint Candidacy Process - Presbyterian Church (USA)

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