

## COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND RECEPTION

### CURRENT GUIDELINES

#### **Graduates of Other Theological Colleges Applying for Certification for Ordination**

1. All certified candidates for ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada must complete the entire candidacy process of preparation and discernment before ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacraments or designation to the Order of Diaconal Ministries. This process assigns significant roles in listening to the direction of God's calling of the candidate to the following: the session of the home congregation, the certifying presbytery, the college of The Presbyterian Church in Canada where the candidate studies, and eventually, the calling congregation and its presbytery.
2. The purpose of the guidelines for graduates of "other" theological colleges is two-fold:
  - a) to provide the church and the candidate with sufficient time and development of relationships to discern the candidate's readiness to serve in the ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada;
  - b) to ensure that candidates are equipped with the knowledge, understanding and experience necessary to serve in the ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

#### **3. Membership Requirements**

Candidates for the ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada are members of a congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada for at least one year before certification by a presbytery. Although this initial time span is short, the candidate's three years (or more) of study in a Presbyterian Church in Canada college normally extend this period considerably.

In the case of certified candidates for ministry who apply for a course of study as graduates of "other" theological colleges, they must have completed a minimum of two years of membership in a congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in the period immediately preceding their application. Such candidates, with the guidance of their presbytery and in consultation with their session, are directed to seek active participation and leadership, as appropriate to their interests and abilities and the needs of the church.

Presbyteries are required to ensure that the candidate's application, which comes before the Committee on Education and Reception only with the endorsement of the presbytery, details fully the nature and extent of the candidate's experience in The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

#### **4. Educational Requirements**

Candidates for the ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada are normally required to earn 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.

- 4.1 Candidates for ministry who are graduates of "other" theological colleges are assigned additional theological studies in a college of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The goals of these courses of study include the following:
  - a) to build upon the candidate's previous theological education
  - b) to provide competent instruction on the Reformed view of scripture that enables students to develop sound principles of biblical interpretation
  - c) to ensure strong emphasis on the preaching of the Word in Reformed practice

- d) to provide clear instruction on Reformed theology, sacramental theology and worship
- e) to provide instruction on Presbyterian Church in Canada history and polity, recognizing that understanding this denomination's history and the Canadian context is essential for ministerial service in The Presbyterian Church in Canada
- f) to ensure knowledge and understanding of the theology and practice of The Presbyterian Church in Canada
- g) to facilitate strengthening and sharpening of skills for ministry in the context of congregational practice in The Presbyterian Church in Canada
- h) to facilitate the development of significant friendships and relationships among those who will be colleagues in ministry.

4.2 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 a B.A., or equivalent, from an accredited university, followed by an M.Div. degree from a Christian theological college accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (or equivalent, outside North America). No applicant will be considered without at least a B average, or its equivalent, in the M.Div. studies.

- a) Graduates of theological colleges not affiliated with member churches of the World Communion of Reformed Churches will normally be required to complete 2 semesters of theological study (10 semester courses) under the care of the governing board of one of the colleges of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. This study will include supervised theological field education in a congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada throughout the assigned academic year.
- b) Graduates of theological colleges affiliated with member churches of the World Communion of Reformed Churches whose academic requirements are the equivalent of those of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, namely a B.A. degree, or equivalent, from an accredited university, plus an M.Div. degree, and diploma, or equivalent, will normally be required to complete 1 semester of theological study (5 semester courses) under the care of the governing board of one of the colleges of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and a supervised theological field education placement in a congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The semester's study will be focused in such areas as: Presbyterian Church in Canada history, Presbyterian Church in Canada polity (including policies), preaching and worship, sacraments and the doctrine of the church, and Reformed confessions.
- c) Colleges are expected to work with each candidate to map out a program of study that, to the fullest extent possible, avoids duplication of the candidate's previous studies. Colleges may use such means as comparison of detailed course outlines to determine areas of overlap.
- d) Significant length of time and breadth of leadership experience within The Presbyterian Church in Canada may be reflected in the educational requirements assigned to a particular candidate. Normally both factors – length and breadth – are required for an adjustment in the usual educational requirements. Length of time normally denotes continuous leadership experience in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Breadth of leadership experience normally denotes service outside the local congregation, such as presbytery representative elder; giving leadership in presbytery, synod or national programs; or serving on presbytery, synod or national committees.

## **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.