

## Para-professional certification

Para-professional certification is available to those working in areas of specialized ministry through programs approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. These programs are available through some jurisdictions, annual conferences, colleges and seminaries. Para professional certification does not have academic credit and is designed for persons seeking training in a specialized ministry as a worker or volunteer. Those seeking para-professional certification should take the following steps.

**STEP 1:** Persons seeking para-professional certification in the United Methodist Church should make their interest known to the certification registrar of their annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry. For the name and address of the registrar contact your annual conference office, or the Education office of the Division of Ordained Ministry of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

**STEP 2:** Study the requirements for para-professional certification which include personal standards, church membership, course work and experience in the area of specialized ministry. Register with the program chosen to fulfill the course requirements. Program information can be obtained from the annual conference or from [www.gbhem.org](http://www.gbhem.org).

**STEP 3: Personal Requirements**

- Recognized Christian character, personal competence, integrity, and commitment to the church's total ministry and mission.
- Ability to function with emotional maturity and sound judgment; ability to relate to people and to work with others.
- Demonstrated leadership; ability to integrate theory and practice; understanding of the relationship to the mission of the church.

**STEP 4: Church Requirements**

- A member of the United Methodist Church for at least two years at the time of application for para-professional certification. (This should be done when course work is completed.)
- Knowledge of the United Methodist Church's structure and mission, curriculum resources and programs.

**STEP 5: Course Requirements**

Applicants must have completed a course of work approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Division of Ordained Ministry, Education Team of the United Methodist Church. (Information on approved programs can be obtained from the conference office or on [www.gbhem.org](http://www.gbhem.org).)

**STEP 6: Experience in area of Specialized Ministry**

Persons seeking para-professional certification must have two years experience in their area of specialized ministry at the time of applying for certification. This can be through employment, full or part-time, or volunteering in a United Methodist Church setting.

STEP 7: Following the meeting of requirements individuals may apply for para-professional certification by completing an application form available from the annual conference registrar or GBHEM.

STEP 8: Each applicant must submit a minimum of three references from persons acquainted with her/his personal standards, church relationship, and course work. Among the three persons must be a United Methodist minister (ordained deacon, ordained elder, or local pastor), a course work teacher under whom the person has studied, and a general officer in a local church with whom the person seeking para-professional certification has worked.

STEP 9: The completed application form must be sent to the registrar of the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry and a copy to the Division of Ordained Ministry, Education Team/Certification, GBHEM, P. O. Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007.

STEP 10: The annual conference board of ordained Ministry will conduct a background check of the applicant, a psychological background test is also recommended.

STEP 11: The Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Education Team will review the application to determine that all requirements have been met and notify the annual conference board of ordained ministry. The annual conference board of ordained ministry will then interview the applicant and if all standards and requirements have been met make a decision to grant para-professional certification.

STEP 12: Upon vote of the conference Board of ordained ministry indicating the applicant has been approved for para-professional certification, the Division of Ordained ministry, Education Team will be notified and will prepare the certificate sending it to the board of ordained ministry who will present it to the applicant, usually at the annual conference session.

STEP 13: The para-professional certification is subject to biennial review and approval by the conference board of ordained ministry. The individual must continue to meet the standards maintained by the Division of Ordained Ministry, Education Team. Every other year the conference board will send all the certified persons the renewal form which must be completed and returned by the date specified. Certification is renewable for as long as the certified person desires it contingent upon meeting the requirements set for continuing education and approval of the conference BOM.

## **APPROVED PARA-PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS**

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