

ORDINATION APPLICATION INFORMATION SHEET

Application

1. Please be sure you review the Candidate's Letter of Request for Examination for Ordination form for a checklist of documentation required in your application.
2. Be sure you have reviewed Section 3 of the Manual on Ministry. However, where there is a conflict between the Manual on Ministry and this Information Sheet, the instructions on this sheet control.
3. Ordination Papers must be no more than 25 double-spaced pages, 12-point TimesNewRoman font, plus a cover sheet that includes the candidate's name, home church, and date. Be sure there are page numbers on each page. Also, it is very important that you carefully proofread and edit your paper for grammar, spelling and punctuation. You might want to get someone else to look over it to proofread it as well. Papers full of technical errors will be returned for a rewrite and this may delay your meeting with the Committee or recommendation to the Ecclesiastical Council.
4. Documentation typically is required to be submitted to the Chairperson of the Committee on Ministry (CoM) via email 3 weeks before the next CoM meeting. If any documents, such as transcripts, must be sent in hard copy, please contact the CoM Chairperson for the appropriate mailing address. The deadline for email and hard copy documentation is the same. This is a real deadline. If the required documentation is not received by the CoM Chairperson by the deadline you may not be on the agenda for the next CoM meeting.
5. Documents may be submitted one at a time, and do not need to be sent in one batch. PDF format is preferred. If documents have been submitted earlier during the discernment period (such as certificates of completion of Boundary Training, etc), please note that along with your Letter of Request checklist.
6. Do not wait until the last minute to arrange for your UCC Background Check or Psychological Evaluation. If the CoM does not have the results of these at the time of your application for Ordination, it is not complete. The Psychological Evaluation should be completed in the first year as a Member or Minister in Discernment. The Background Check should be done no later than 1 month before the date of your meeting with the CoM. There is a fee for the Psychological Evaluation that is split between the candidate, the home church and the NTA. There is a fee for this that must be paid to the company that does the background checks. It is the responsibility of the candidate to pay that fee. The process to arrange for the UCC

Background Check is outlined in the Background Check Information Sheet on the NTA website.

7. You will receive an email within 1 week after the documentation deadline notifying you whether your application is complete. If it is complete, you will be given an appointment time for the next CoM meeting.

Interview

8. At this interview you will be examined for ordination. Be prepared to discuss your sense of call, your journey of preparation for ordination, your ordination paper and other aspects of your application, and to be evaluated based on the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers. Information about the Marks is available on the UCC website. The members of the CoM will have received your Ordination Paper and sermon to read prior to the meeting.

9. Please arrive about 15 minutes early for your appointment and wait outside the room. There may be signs posted directing you where to wait.

10. The CoM works hard to keep to the schedule, but sometimes circumstances and the movement of the Spirit dictate otherwise. Be prepared to wait. The CoM apologizes in advance if the meeting is running behind. Regardless of whether the meeting is running on time or behind, the CoM will spend as much time with each candidate as needed.

11. Your Pastor or Discernment Advisor may accompany you to the interview as support.

12. After the interview, you (and your pastor/advisor) will be asked to step outside the room so the CoM can discuss your application. Then you will be invited back to hear the results of the CoM's deliberations and to discuss next steps. The CoM will make one of the following decisions:

- *Yes.* The CoM commends the MiD to the NTA for its approval and authorization for ordination (pending a call) at an Ecclesiastical Council.
- *Yes, but ...* The CoM continues the process of discernment and defines certain learning outcomes or behaviors that must be demonstrated and reassessed by a specific time.
- *No, but ...* The CoM does not recommend the MiD for ordination at this time, but affirms the candidate's call to ordained ministry and offers constructive feedback for learning outcomes or behaviors that could be addressed and an application for ordination submitted at another time. MiD status continues.
- *No.* The CoM does not recommend the MiD for ordination in the UCC and concludes that its process of discernment is complete with this decision. MiD status is terminated either with or without bias to reapply.

13. Later you will receive an acknowledgment in writing by email of the outcome of this meeting, with information about the upcoming NTA meeting where your Ecclesiastical Council will be held.

Ecclesiastical Council

14. The NTA sits as an Ecclesiastical Council twice a year, at the Fall and Spring meetings of the Association.

15. Copies of the candidate's ordination paper will be circulated to all ministers and churches in the NTA to be read by delegates prior to the NTA meeting.

16. Candidates should come to the Ecclesiastical Council prepared to make a brief statement (about 5-10 minutes) about their faith journey, sense of call to ordained ministry in the UCC and fundamental theology and be prepared to answer questions from the delegates.

17. When there are no further questions, the candidate will be escorted out of the room, so that the delegates may deliberate. If the Ecclesiastical Council's vote is *Yes*, the candidate is approved for ordination pending receipt of an ordainable call (except occasionally when a call has already been received). If the Ecclesiastical Council's vote is *No*, MiD status is terminated, either with or without bias to reapply to the.

Approved for Ordination Pending Receipt of a Call/Search and Call Process

18. The candidate who has been approved for ordination pending receipt of an ordainable call remains an MiD until an ordainable call is received. Meetings with Discernment Advisors are no longer required, but are recommended. A UCC Profile may now be completed and circulated.

19. The status of "approved for ordination pending receipt of a call" must be renewed yearly by a simple request to the CoM, explaining where you are in the search and call process. If more than 4 years pass, another meeting with the CoM will be required.

20. The Search and Call process can be long and frustrating. MiDs are always welcome to request a meeting with the CoM during the time of search and call for support or to discuss their discernment around search and call.

21. Ordination requires an "ordainable" call. Traditionally this has been a call to be a minister of a local church or to serve as chaplain in a staff position at an institution such as a hospital, hospice, police or fire department, or school which require the authorization to perform the sacraments. Be aware that many chaplain positions may require specific training such as Clinical Pastoral Education, or a

certificate of chaplaincy from a recognized organization in addition to seminary training and ordination.

22. The CoM recognizes the need to be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit and the new things God is doing in the church. Therefore, the CoM may be asked to consider approval of a ministerial setting that does not fit the traditional definition of “ordainable call” if it meets the following criteria:

- *The Call is Covenantal.* The call demonstrates a clear connectedness with a local church as partners in ministry with an Association in the shared ministry of the UCC (as demonstrated by a 3- or 4-way covenant agreement, see below).
- *The Call Responds to the Needs of the Church.* The call, whether to a local church setting or a setting beyond the local church, shows intent, authenticity, and validity to serve the ongoing and expanding needs of the Church.
- *The Call Involves Mutuality of Ministry Between the Minister and the Community.* Whether a minister is serving in a local church or in a specialized setting while holding membership in a local church that supports the authorized minister and the ministry setting, it is expected that there are ongoing structures of both support and accountability in place to encourage the long-term well-being of the minister and on-going viability of the ministry being undertaken.

23. In the NTA, there are no minimum number of hours to be worked or minimum salary for a call to be considered an “ordainable call.” Of course, it is always preferable that the call agreement provide for a salary in line with Conference guidelines or higher. Call agreements will be reviewed with an eye towards fairness. However, a minister may be ordained to a volunteer position.

24. If you hold standing as an MiD approved for ordination pending receipt of an ordainable call, regardless of where you receive your call, you will be ordained by the NTA. Therefore, look to the NTA’s requirements for an “ordainable call,” not those of the Association where you will be serving your call.

25. Once a call is received, a copy of the call agreement or call letter that includes details of the ministry to be undertaken should be submitted to the CoM for approval as an “ordainable call.” Where the call is to a local church setting, the call agreement or call letter is considered a 3-way covenant between the minister, the local church and the Association. If the call is to a setting beyond the local church, a 4-way covenant agreement is required between the minister, the local church of which the minister is a member and who supports this ministry, the Association, and the calling body (the institution or organization where the minister will serve).

26. When appropriate, approval of a call by the CoM may be done by email vote of the CoM. However, the CoM reserves the right to require a meeting with the minister to discuss the call prior to approval for ordination.

Ordination

27. Once a call is approved as ordainable, the CoM sets a date for ordination. The CoM may request a selection of dates from the ordinand and/or the local church. Ordination may be performed at a service at either the local church that sponsored the ordinand or at the local church that has called the ordinand as minister.

28. If the call is to a ministry setting in the NTA, a service of installation will be performed in conjunction with the service of ordination. Where there is a 4-way covenant, a representative of the calling body should be invited to participate in the installation.

29. If the call is to a ministry setting in another Association, and the ordinand desires the ordination service to take place in a church in that other Association, the NTA CoM will coordinate with that Association to represent the NTA at the service of ordination. However, the NTA is still the ordaining body. Be aware that some Associations will not perform an installation at the same time as an ordination for those coming from another Association, and a separate service of installation may be needed.

30. The responsibility for the worship service falls on the local church hosting the service and the ordinand. The CoM will provide the liturgy or ordination (and liturgy of installation where appropriate) to be included within that worship service.

31. Announcements of the ordination/installation service are also the responsibility of the local church and/or the ordinand and should be made to the NTA and its clergy as a whole. The announcement or invitation should indicate whether clergy attending should robe and if so what color stole is preferred. If clergy robe, typically they process formally into the sanctuary (and out) and sit in a designated area.

32. The ordinand should choose and indicate during the service or in the bulletin where the offering taken during the service will go. Traditionally it goes to support seminary education in some way. As the NTA is connected to the CUE seminaries (Chicago, United, Eden), that is always a good option for this offering.

33. At or after the ordination service, you will receive a certificate of ordination.

34. If the call is to a ministry setting in another Association, after the ordination you should apply to transfer your standing from the NTA to your new Association.

Contact your new Association to see what processes they require. As part of the transfer, your file will be transferred from the NTA to your new Association.