

Candidacy Pathway: Policy

April 2024



Office of / Bureau de la
vocation

The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada

Candidacy Pathway: Policy (April 2024)



Copyright © 2024
The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada



The content of this resource is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd) Licence. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/ca>. Any copy must include the United Church copyright notice and the Creative Commons licence.

Care has been taken to trace ownership of copyright material contained in this text. The publisher will gratefully accept any information that will enable it to rectify any reference or credit in subsequent printings.

The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada
3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 200
Toronto, ON
Canada M8X 2Y4
1-800-268-3781
united-church.ca

Supported by
**Mission
and Service**

Contents

- About This Resource 4
- About the Policy 4
- Purpose of the Policy 4
- Candidacy Board 5
 - Appointment 5
 - Task 5
 - Individual Journey 6
- Principles of the Seven Phases 6
 - Underlying Basis 6
 - Call Forth 6
 - Identify 7
 - Accompany 7
 - Equip 8
 - Assess 8
 - Authorize 8
 - Celebrate 9
- Required Markers of the Pathway 9
 - Identification of Call 9
 - Application 9
 - Assessment by Candidacy Board 10
 - Additional Requirements for Candidacy 10
 - Vocational or Leadership Assessment 10
 - Celebration of Candidacy 11
- The Ongoing Journey with the Candidacy Board 11
 - Reporting 12
 - Interviews 12
- Accompaniment 12
 - Accompaniment for Interviews 12
 - Ongoing Accompaniment 13
- Authorization for Ministry Leadership 14
 - Readiness for Supervised Ministry Education 14
 - Readiness for Appointment 14
 - Readiness for Commissioning, Ordination, or Recognition 14
- Celebration 16
- Formation for Ministry 16
 - Credentialing 16
 - Developing Competency 19
- Resigning from or Terminating Candidacy 20

About This Resource

This resource outlines the policies that must be followed by the church to support people who are called to designated lay ministry, diaconal ministry, or ordained ministry.

The related policies about the Candidacy Board can be found in *The Manual* under E. Office of Vocation. The related policies about the Candidacy Pathway can be found in *The Manual* under H. Entering Ministry.

This resource gives additional policies and procedures that must be followed. It includes the policies from *The Manual* in order to give a complete picture of the pathway to ministry.

Policies from *The Manual* are written in italics.

About the Policy

The United Church of Canada has committed to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation and also adopted the [Calls to the Church](#) at its 43rd General Council 2018.

The church has also made a commitment to become an intercultural church, which “means living together with a respectful awareness of each other’s differences. We do this by examining ourselves, building relationships, and distributing power fairly” (from a Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church, 2016).

The Candidacy Pathway policy is designed to include these commitments as they relate to preparation for ministry leadership.

Purpose of the Policy

The United Church of Canada upholds a vision that all believers are called to participate in the healing of creation. This ministry may be lived out in many ways, from being a disciple who is actively involved in God’s mission in the world, to being in a leadership role as ministry personnel.

We celebrate the diversity of expressions of ministry leadership. We also celebrate that God calls individuals with varying gifts and abilities specifically to the vocation of ministry in order to faithfully lead the church in living out its purpose for the sake of a broken world.

A Song of Faith (2006) gives voice to what we believe:

We are each given particular gifts of the Spirit.
For the sake of the world,
God calls all followers of Jesus to Christian ministry.

In the church,
some are called to specific ministries of leadership,
both lay and ordered;
some witness to the good news;
some uphold the art of worship;
some comfort the grieving and guide the wandering;
some build up the community of wisdom;
some stand with the oppressed and work for justice.
To embody God's love in the world,
the work of the church requires the ministry and discipleship
of all believers.

We affirm that some are called to the vocation of ministry and that ministry leadership that is intentionally set apart is essential for the church to participate in God's hope for the world. The Candidacy Pathway policy is designed to assist people in discerning their call to ministry leadership, and to assist the church in walking with them in the formal process of candidacy.

The requirements aim to ensure the suitability and readiness of those who are authorized by the church to ministry leadership.

The "Statement on Ministry" (2012) further articulates an understanding of ministry within The United Church of Canada.

Candidacy Board

The Board of Vocation has standing commissions called "Candidacy Boards."

One of the Candidacy Boards serves the Indigenous United Church. The other Candidacy Boards serve different geographic areas of the United Church as determined by the Board of Vocation.

Appointment

The Board of Vocation appoints the members of the Candidacy Boards, ensuring the appropriate balance of intercultural, ordained, diaconal, designated lay ministry, and lay members. The members of the Candidacy Board serving the Indigenous United Church are named by the National Indigenous Organization for appointment by the Board of Vocation.

Task

The Candidacy Boards have responsibility for

- a) approving an individual for candidacy for ministry in the United Church;*
- b) terminating candidacy if necessary;*
- c) determining an individual's readiness for accreditation for ordination, for commissioning, and for recognition as a designated lay minister; and*
- d) overseeing the Candidacy Pathway process.*

Individual Journey

The Candidacy Pathway is intended to be nimble, responsive, and streamlined in order to prepare people who each have unique gifts and experiences for the vocation of ministry.

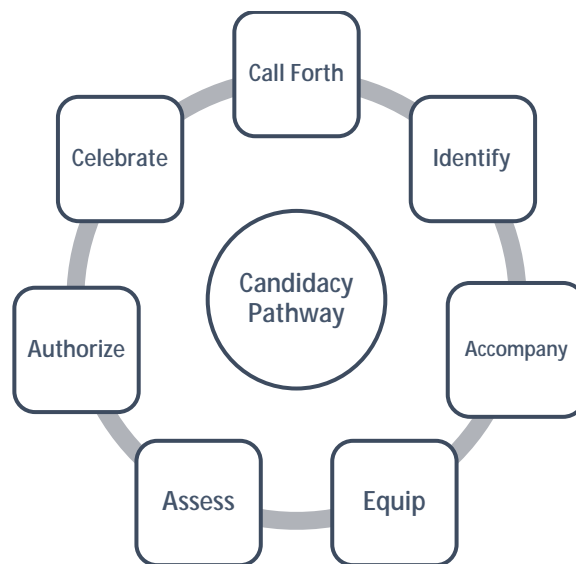
Individuals will journey in similar but sometimes different ways toward ordination, commissioning, or recognition. The Candidacy Board will determine the process on a case-by-case basis with each individual, ensuring that the principles and requirements of the seven phases and the required markers are applied in each case.

Applicants and candidates are responsible for following the direction of the Candidacy Board and the required markers of the pathway. The process is designed to hold applicants and candidates responsible and accountable for fulfilling the requirements in a proactive, timely, and professional manner.

Principles of the Seven Phases

Underlying Basis

The basis underlying the Candidacy Pathway is the integration of the seven phases to guide the process that prepares individuals for ministry leadership. The seven phases are intentionally not sequential.



Call Forth

1. *The United Church affirms that God's call is heard within a variety of communities of faith and ministry settings and is directed to and heard by people of all ages, gender identities, sexual orientations, and cultural backgrounds. God calls people to diverse ministries in the church and in the world.*
2. *Ongoing discernment of God's call and one's faithful response to that call is vital to discipleship and to calling forth individuals for ministry leadership.*

3. *It is the responsibility of the whole church to engage a creative and invitational approach to calling forth leaders by encouraging people to open themselves to God's call and by naming and nurturing gifts for ministry leadership.*

Identify

1. *Discernment is an intentional practice of attending to the Spirit's leading. Listening for and identifying God's hope for our lives involves a habit of ongoing discernment, which is woven throughout the various requirements of the Candidacy Pathway.*
2. *People who are active in communities of faith who experience God's call to ministry leadership may apply for identification as to promise and suitability for candidacy.*
3. *The church identifies the gifts, skills, and competencies that are required in ministry personnel for effectively leading the church today.*
4. *The various requirements of the Candidacy Pathway include identifying an individual's giftedness and competence for ministry.*
5. *The Candidacy Board discerns and identifies promise and suitability for candidacy using a variety of tools.*

Accompany

1. *Accompaniment is intended to encourage and nurture individuals who have been called forth for ministry leadership.*
2. *Candidates are responsible for demonstrating that they have the capacity to receive support for ministry leadership and are open to the wisdom of others.*
3. *The church accompanies applicants and candidates by providing support and guidance in a variety of ways that are woven throughout the Candidacy Pathway journey.*
4. *Candidacy boards foster a supportive relationship with applicants and candidates throughout their journey to commissioning, ordination, or recognition. As much as possible, individuals and candidates meet with the same candidacy board for the duration of the process.*

Additional policies and resources to support the phases of Candidacy Pathway are found in the following documents (some of these are still in development as of April 2024):

- [Candidacy Pathway: Candidacy Board Resources, vols. 1 and 2](#)
- [Candidacy Pathway: Roadmap](#)
- [Candidacy Pathway: Circle of Accompaniment](#)
- [Candidacy Pathway: Supervised Ministry Education](#)
- [Candidacy Pathway: Learning Covenant](#)
- [Guide to Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry Leadership](#)
- [Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel](#)
- [Statement on Ministry \(2012\)](#)
- [Calls to the Church \(2018\)](#)

Equip

Additional policies related to the Equip phase are found in the [Candidacy Pathway: Supervised Ministry Education](#) resource.

1. *Applicants and candidates are equipped to live out God's call to ministry leadership through ongoing formation, spiritual growth, and development.*
2. *There are two components to the education and other preparation for ministry:*
 - a) *Credentialing: acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for effective ministry leadership, and beginning the development of the "habits" or "arts" or ministry and that lead to credentialing; and*
 - b) *Competency: the development, through substantial experience in the field, of the "habits" or "arts" of ministry that leads to the deepening of competency for effective ministry leadership.*
3. *The United Church needs ministers who are trained for ministry in the United Church and who have knowledge and an appreciation of the United Church's polity, ethos, traditions, and theology.*
4. *The United Church relies on the theological schools related to the United Church to provide the training, knowledge, and appreciation required for ministry in the United Church.*

Assess

The guidelines and criteria for assessment and authorization are found in the [Candidacy Pathway: Candidacy Board Resources](#) handbook.

1. *The Candidacy Board assesses the promise, suitability, and readiness of applicants and candidates for designated lay, diaconal, and ordained ministry by following the required markers of the Candidacy Pathway.*
2. *The Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership¹ and Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice form the basis for assessing promise, suitability, and readiness for ministry leadership.*
3. *A collaborative working relationship is to be intentionally nurtured between Candidacy Boards and United Church theological schools in order to best support, equip, and assess those who are preparing for ministry leadership within the United Church.*

Authorize

The Candidacy Board authorizes candidates as ready for

- a) *ministry leadership, including for*
 - i) *candidate supply appointments; and*
 - ii) *Supervised Ministry Education placements and/or appointments as required; and*

¹ At time of publication (2024), the *Learning Outcomes* had been revised to become the [Guide to Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry Leadership](#). This change will be reflected in future editions of *The Manual* starting in 2025.

b) *commissioning, ordination, or recognition.*

Celebrate

1. *The gift of leaders to strengthen the church's participation in God's mission is to be celebrated throughout the Candidacy Pathway process.*
2. *The Spirit's leading, individual growth, and the blessing of a new generation of ministry leadership is to be celebrated at all stages of the Candidacy Pathway.*
3. *The church celebrates the commissioning, ordination, or recognition of candidates who have accepted a call, appointment, or offer of employment as ordained, diaconal, or designated lay ministers.*

Required Markers of the Pathway

Identification of Call

An individual who perceives that God is calling them to the vocation of ministry dedicates themselves to discerning the call personally and within the church by

1. using the resources made available by the church to discern a call, including the option of attending a discernment event, which is recommended as an effective model for discernment;
2. discussing their sense of call with a United Church leader (often a minister or an Elder), who provides a mentor letter;
3. listening for affirmation of the call from others in their community; and
4. attending an orientation session to learn about the streams of ministry and the requirements of the pathway.

Application

When a person has discerned and identified that God is calling them to a particular stream of ministry, they submit an application to the Office of Vocation.

The application must include the following:

1. Work history
2. Educational background
3. Current police records check (refer to [Police Records Checks policies](#))
4. Mentor letter and two letters of reference
5. Narrative responses to questions

Mentor Letter

Those who have prayerfully discerned a call to ministry will have talked with others about this feeling of call. To begin the journey on the pathway, the individual will ask someone with whom they have discussed their sense of call to write a mentor letter. This letter will include the following information:

- how long and in what capacity the writer has known the person discerning a call;
- any observations concerning the person's call to faith, theology, and/or call to ministry;
- a description of the person's involvement and leadership in church and/or community;
- any comments on the person's spiritual gifts and gifts for ministry; and
- any comments on any particular challenges facing the person.

The Office of Vocation, in consultation with the applicant, assigns the applicant to a Candidacy Board.

Assessment by Candidacy Board

Guidelines and criteria for assessing promise, suitability, and readiness are found in the *Candidacy Board* resource.

1. *The applicant meets with the Candidacy Board for the assessment of the applicant's promise and suitability for candidacy.*
2. Following an interview, the Candidacy Board may determine one of the following:
 - a. The applicant shows promise. The Candidacy Board makes recommendations regarding requirements and next steps in order for the applicant to be approved as a candidate.
 - b. The applicant demonstrates promise and suitability and is approved as a candidate;
 - c. The applicant is encouraged to continue in lay leadership.
3. After an interview, the Candidacy Board meets with the applicant to share
 - a. the decision of the Candidacy Board;
 - b. direction regarding the process; and
 - c. guidance on fulfilling the requirements of the pathway.
4. A written record of the decision, direction, and guidance of the Candidacy Board is shared within two weeks of an interview.

Additional Requirements for Candidacy

There are additional requirements for the applicant to be approved as a candidate.

The applicant must

- a) *have been actively involved in the United Church for the last 24 months;*
- b) *be a member of the United Church;*
- c) *have completed mandatory trainings;*
- d) *agree to become a member of the United Church pension plan and group insurance plan upon eligibility for enrolment; and*
- e) *agree to complete a third-party assessment.*

Vocational or Leadership Assessment

The Office of Vocation directs an applicant or a candidate to receive an assessment conducted by a licensed third party, such as a pastoral leadership organization, vocational consultant, or professional counselling service. An assessment may serve as a tool for an *applicant* to

demonstrate self-awareness and discern a fit for ministry. An assessment assists *candidates* to identify areas for growth for lifelong leadership development and can be used to demonstrate readiness for ministry.

The assessment is one of many pieces used by the Candidacy Board to

- aid in discerning an applicant's vocational promise and suitability for ministry
- better understand and support an applicant or candidate navigating the Candidacy Pathway
- allow the candidate to demonstrate openness to self-reflection and feedback, identify areas for growth in practice of ministry settings, and set learning goals in relation to the Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry Leadership.

Bursaries are available for a portion of the cost of a candidate's assessment. Candidates in appointments may use their continuing education allowance for costs associated with these services.

Celebration of Candidacy

When an applicant has been approved as a candidate, the Office of Vocation notifies the regional council in which the candidate lives or has an appointment. The regional council may choose to make the candidate a corresponding member of the regional council.

The regional council will celebrate new candidates.

The Ongoing Journey with the Candidacy Board

The Candidacy Board accompanies and assesses the candidate by receiving reports and conducting interviews throughout the candidacy process.

The applicant or candidate is responsible for demonstrating growth in relation to suitability and readiness for ministry leadership to the Candidacy Board throughout the candidacy process.

If there is significant reason for an applicant or candidate to move to a different Candidacy Board, a request shall be made to the Program Coordinator, Ministry Vocation, by the applicant's or candidate's Candidacy Board or Office of Vocation minister. The Program Coordinator, Ministry Vocation will ensure that there is agreement with another Candidacy Board and Office of Vocation minister to develop a relationship with the applicant or candidate. The Program Coordinator, Ministry Vocation, makes the official assignments to Candidacy Boards for all applicants and candidates, including transfers to another Candidacy Board.

"Significant reason" may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Potential conflict of interest or perception of bias with one or more Candidacy Board members

- Dual roles and relationships – e.g. in the case of regional council staff who are also applicants or candidates (in which case, the staff person could be assigned to a Candidacy Board outside of their regional council; cost for travel will be covered by the Office of Vocation)
- Discerning a call to be in Indigenous ministry settings, for a non-Indigenous applicant or candidate
- Geographic location
- Linguistic preference
- Previous engagement with Candidacy Pathway, resulting in termination or withdrawal of candidacy
- Balancing workloads of respective Candidacy Boards

Reporting

The applicant or candidate communicates their accomplishments, challenges, concerns, and celebrations to the Candidacy Board on an ongoing basis.

The theological school where the applicant or candidate is enrolled submits regular reports to the Office of Vocation.

The Candidacy Board receives and reviews the reports.

Guidelines for submitting reports are found in the [Candidacy Pathway: Roadmap](#).

Interviews

The number of interviews with each applicant or candidate is determined on an ongoing and case-by-case basis, depending on the needs and life circumstances of the applicant or candidate and the requirements of the program of study for the stream of ministry they are pursuing.

The Candidacy Board may hold an interview with an applicant or candidate at any time.

Best practices for interviews are outlined in the [Candidacy Board Resources](#).

Accompaniment

Accompaniment for Interviews

Applicants and candidates bring an accompanier with them to interviews with the Candidacy Board. An accompanier is someone who knows you and your faith journey reasonably well but is not

- a spouse or partner
- relative
- another applicant or candidate

- your minister
- someone involved in your academic evaluation (this includes professors and instructors at theological schools and programs as well as supervisors in ministry)
- someone who is in a position of authority over you, OR you over them
- a member of the congregation that you may be currently serving as a leader

The accompanier will support you through the process, be a silent witness to the interview, offer observations to the interview team when invited, can take notes when the Candidacy Board communicates their decisions and directions to you, and assist you in debriefing after the experience.

Ongoing Accompaniment

The [Circle of Accompaniment](#) resource provides guidelines and best practices.

At the appropriate time in the process, the applicant or candidate is responsible for determining with the Candidacy Board the suitable model for ongoing accompaniment, including establishing a Circle of Accompaniment, taking into consideration their stream of ministry and their chosen program of study.

Those who play an accompaniment role do not have an evaluative function. If information comes to the attention of a Circle of Accompaniment that raises serious concerns about a candidate's promise, suitability, fitness, and readiness for service as ministry personnel (refer to the [Ethical Standards](#) to identify disqualifying behaviour), those concerns are communicated to the Candidacy Board for it to address with the candidate. The Circle of Accompaniment or equivalent notifies the candidate that concerns are being shared with the Candidacy Board.

Authorization for Ministry Leadership

The Candidacy Board is responsible for determining a candidate's readiness for accreditation to ministry.

Readiness for Supervised Ministry Education

Additional policies and procedures are found in the [Candidacy Pathway: Supervised Ministry Education](#) resource.

1. Before the Candidacy Board authorizes readiness for Supervised Ministry Education, approval as a candidate is required.
2. The Candidacy Board discerns and assesses readiness for Supervised Ministry Education through an interview.
3. The candidate is responsible for developing learning goals for Supervised Ministry Education in consultation with the Candidacy Board and in relation to the Learning Outcomes, the Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice, feedback/reports from their theological school/program, and their vocational assessment report.
4. The Candidacy Board recommends the type of Supervised Ministry Education program and learning site to best address the candidate's learning goals. For SME appointments that are not integrated into the program of study, the normal length of the SME is two years. The minimum length of a SME is 34 weeks at 40 hours per week. Supervised Ministry Education can be fulfilled through either a pastoral charge appointment, a specialized ministry setting, or a combination of both. The minimum period in one place is 13 weeks. One exception is that the period may be less in the case of a Clinical Pastoral Education program.

Readiness for Appointment

1. If a candidate wishes to apply for a ministry position in a pastoral charge outside of the context of Supervised Ministry Education, then the Candidacy Board will discern and assess readiness for the appointment through an interview.
2. Before the Candidacy Board authorizes readiness for an appointment, approval as a candidate is required.

Readiness for Commissioning, Ordination, or Recognition

1. The Candidacy Board ensures that the Equipping phase of the pathway has been or will soon be complete in order to assess readiness for commissioning, ordination, or recognition.
2. *The Candidacy Board determines readiness for commissioning, ordination, or recognition. As part of this determination, the Candidacy Board must satisfy itself that*
 - a) *the candidate is in essential agreement with the statement of doctrine of the United Church;*

- b) the candidate, as a member of the order of ministry or as a designated lay minister, will accept the statement of doctrine as being in substance agreeable to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures; and*
- c) that the candidate will comply with the polity of the United Church.*

Celebration

The Office of Vocation determines the regional council that will celebrate the commissioning, ordination, or recognition of the candidate.

The regional council commissions, ordains, or recognizes at a celebration of ministries service based on

- a) receipt of the confirmation of readiness of the candidate from the Office of Vocation; and*
- b) confirmation that a covenantal relationship is in place with a community of faith or offer of employment to a paid accountable/recognized ministry, as determined by the regional council.*

A candidate may pursue postgraduate studies following commissioning or ordination as an alternative to serving in a covenantal relationship.

Formation for Ministry

Credentialing

Credentialing through Program of Study

The General Council has set the program of study for candidates for designated lay ministry, diaconal ministry, and ordained ministry. It includes different options for a candidate's education.

A candidate is responsible for following and completing the program of study approved from time to time by the General Council or its executive.

Completion of Program of Study

A theological school related to the United Church provides a certificate or other form of assurance to confirm that a candidate has satisfactorily completed the program of study required for candidates. For diaconal ministry and ordained ministry, this is called the "testamur."

The theological school is responsible for reporting to the Candidacy Board on whether the candidate

- a) has completed the program of study required for candidates; and*
- b) is recommended by the school for commissioning, ordination, or recognition to ministry in the United Church.*

The formation for ministry that takes place during the program of study for all streams of ministry includes developing competency for ministry leadership and should not be understood as being solely about acquiring a credential.

Credentialing for Ordained Ministry

Theological Education

A United Church theological school grants the testamur based on the candidate's completion of one of the following:

- a) a master of divinity degree from a United Church theological school
- b) a diploma in Indigenous ministry from the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre
- c) a master of divinity degree from an accredited institution and additional education completed at a United Church theological school
- d) a degree in theology from an accredited institution and additional requirements necessary to make the education equivalent to a master of divinity degree from a United Church theological school

The program of study for ordained ministry focuses on an encounter between Christian tradition and our current context. The program of study must include learning in the following areas:

- a) biblical studies, including their critical interpretation;
- b) theology, both historical and current;
- c) Christian ethics and church in society;
- d) church history, including Canadian church history;
- e) mission, ecumenism, and culture;
- f) religious pluralism, including the social dimension of religion and world religions;
- g) theology and practice of ministry, including homiletics, pastoral care, Christian worship, Christian education, leadership, and personal and pastoral identity;
- h) field education; and
- i) church administration and United Church polity
- j) Indigenous Histories, Cultures, and Spiritualities (as per the Calls to the Church 2018, 4B).

The study of Greek and Hebrew languages, or an Indigenous language, is recommended.

The theological school is responsible for designing a curriculum to cover the areas of study specified above and the method of teaching.

The applicant/candidate is encouraged to consult with the theological school where they plan to enrol to ensure that they will meet a theological school's admission requirements.

Credentialing for Diaconal Ministry

Prerequisite

The prerequisite for admission to the theological education for diaconal ministry is **one** of the following:

- a) an undergraduate degree from a university recognized by the Office of Vocation **or**
- b) personal maturity arising out of life and work experience that leads to demonstrating capacity for the program of study **or**
- c) personal maturity arising out of life and work experience, and admission to the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre

Theological Education

A United Church theological school grants the testamur based on the applicant's/candidate's completion of one of the following:

- a) a diploma in diaconal ministries from the Centre for Christian Studies
- b) another degree in theology from an accredited institution and additional requirements necessary to make the education equivalent to the diploma in diaconal ministries from the Centre for Christian Studies
- c) a diploma in Indigenous ministries from the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre

The program of study for diaconal ministry focuses on the integration of academics, field education, and learning in community. The program of study must include learning in the following areas:

- a. Christian education, including educational theories and leadership development;
- b. pastoral care, including personal and social theories and contexts;
- c. social ministry, including social analysis and contextual theologies;
- d. biblical studies, theology, ethics, church history, and Christian worship, including sacraments and preaching;
- e. field education, with a minimum of two terms in each of a congregational setting and a social ministry setting;
- f. diaconal history and diaconal vocational identity;
- g. personal and pastoral identity; and
- h. church administration and United Church polity
- i. Indigenous Histories, Cultures, and Spiritualities (as per the Calls to the Church 2018, 4B).

The theological school is responsible for designing a curriculum to cover the areas of study specified above and the method of teaching.

Credentialing for Designated Lay Ministry

Program of Study

A designated lay ministry candidate is required to complete the Designated Lay Ministry Program at St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon or the equivalent program at the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre in Beauséjour, Manitoba.

The program at St. Andrew's College is a three-year, community-based program consisting of three components:

- a) **Learning Circles.** Six residential learning circles over three years, each of 10 days' duration, held twice a year. The learning circles introduce theory and theology, guide students in reflection on integrating the content with the practice of ministry, and provide a peer setting for deepening formation in lay ministry. An online community supports preparation for and follow-up after the learning circles. The learning circles are required for all candidates regardless of previous formal learning or experience.
- b) **Complementary Courses.** Complementary courses are chosen to round out the educational program based on the learning needs and particular ministry focus of the student. Three courses, each a semester or equivalent, are taken at a theological school, university, or educational centre or other venue, as approved by the Designated Lay Ministry director.
- c) **Supervised Ministry Education:** see the Developing Competency section below.

Developing Competency

Ordained Ministry and Designated Lay Ministry

Each candidate for ordained and designated lay ministry must satisfactorily complete a Supervised Ministry Education program that involves learning goals based on the Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership,² reflection on the practice of ministry, and regular supervision and evaluation.

The Candidacy Board determines a candidate's readiness for Supervised Ministry Education.

The Candidacy Board determines completion of Supervised Ministry Education by assessing a candidate's competence for ministry leadership based on the Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership.

Diaconal Ministry

Each candidate for diaconal ministry must satisfactorily complete field placements through their program of study.

² At time of publication (2024), the *Learning Outcomes* had been revised to become the [Guide to Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry Leadership](#). This change will be reflected in future editions of *The Manual* starting in 2025.

The Candidacy Board reviews the evaluations from the field placements to assess a diaconal ministry candidate's competence for ministry leadership based on the Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership.

Resigning from or Terminating Candidacy

1. If a candidate wishes to resign from the Candidacy Pathway process, they must notify the Candidacy Board in writing, indicating the date of and reasons for their voluntary withdrawal.
2. When the candidate has not met benchmarks of their pathway and/or they demonstrate that they are not able to achieve the growth and development required for the vocation of ministry, or when the Candidacy Board receives a report of an investigator under the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy or the Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Violence Policy, including findings about a breach of ethical standards, the Candidacy Board follows this process:
 - a. Documents: The Candidacy Board reviews the candidate's file and all relevant documents that may inform the decision to terminate candidacy.
 - b. Notification: The Candidacy Board informs the candidate about the concerns and that there are two possible outcomes including that their candidacy pathway process may be terminated.
 - c. Interview: The Candidacy Board interviews the candidate to discuss the concerns that have been raised. Representation from the body that raised the concern (e.g. Circle of Accompaniment, governing body, and/or regional council) may be included as required to provide information regarding the context of the concerns. The candidate may bring an accompanier to the interview with whom to debrief following the interview. In the case of the interview arising from an investigation of a complaint then the candidate is invited to respond to the findings of the investigation as well as the remedy determined by the Candidacy Board.
3. There are two possible outcomes of the interview:
 - a. Termination of candidacy: If the concerns that have been raised are not adequately addressed in the interview, and if the Candidacy Board discerns that the candidate lacks the skills, calling or ability to change behaviour, then the Candidacy Board makes the decision to terminate candidacy. A written copy of the decision of the Candidacy Board is sent to the candidate following the interview. If the candidate is serving in a candidate supply appointment, then the regional council receives a copy of the decision.
 - b. Remedial work: If the concerns are adequately addressed and the Candidacy Board is satisfied that the candidacy process can continue then the Candidacy Board identifies remedial work for the candidate. The goals for the remedial work must be shared with the candidate in writing.
4. The decision of the Candidacy Board to terminate candidacy may be appealed by the former candidate to the Judicial Committee of the General Council. The grounds for appeal are found in *The Manual* section J.10.

5. Former candidates who resigned or whose process was terminated who wish to re-engage the Candidacy Pathway process must wait two years from the date of termination or resignation before submitting an application to the Office of Vocation to be assessed for promise and suitability. The Candidacy Board must consider the reasons for the resignation or termination in their assessment of the former candidate.