

# Advanced Course of Study

The Advanced Course of Study is a curriculum that enables a local pastor to meet the educational requirements for probationary membership, full conference membership, and ordination as an elder in The United Methodist Church.

It consists of 32 semester hours of graduate theological study or its equivalent as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. These shall include the areas of evangelism, and United Methodist history, doctrine and polity.

Local pastors who complete the requirements of the Course of Study may continue their preparation for conference membership and ordination as an elder through an Advanced Course of Study program. The 2004 Discipline requires that local pastors who seek ordination through advanced studies:

1. be at least forty years of age;
2. complete a bachelor's degree from a college or university recognized by the University Senate, or in some instances, for missional purposes, a minimum of sixty (60) semester hours of Bachelor of Arts credit (see ¶324.3 for complete information);
3. complete the five-year Course of Study, of which no more than four courses may be taken by correspondence or Internet;
4. complete thirty-two semester hours of graduate theological study or its equivalent as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. These shall include the areas of evangelism and United Methodist history, doctrine, and polity (¶324.6).

A candidate may request that work completed at a recognized school of theology be evaluated by the Division of Ordained Ministry for transfer to the Course of Study curriculum. The request for this evaluation should come from the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry, and grade reports or transcripts must be supplied.

No credit is recognized in the Course of Study for work completed on the undergraduate level unless the Board of Ordained Ministry requests that an exception be made. However, some graduate studies in counseling, business, and education may be applied to the Course of Study, as well as a basic unit of clinical pastoral education (CPE). Division of Ordained Ministry policy allows for up to three courses from a regionally accredited graduate program to be applied to the Advanced Course of Study. Graduate transcripts must be sent to the Division of Ordained Ministry for evaluation before such credit may be granted.

Seminary courses in United Methodist doctrine, polity, and history must be included in the thirty-two semester hours of graduate theological study required for conference membership and ordination as an elder. These courses may be taken at an approved school of theology or through the independent study program of the Division of Ordained

Ministry.

## **General Board of Higher Education and Ministry Guidelines for Advanced Course of Study**

1. The purpose of the Advance Course of Study for Ordained Ministry is to provide a curriculum which will enable a local pastor to meet the educational requirements for full conference membership and ordination as an elder.
2. Local pastors need to complete a total of 32 semester hours of graduate theological studies or its equivalent as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in order to qualify for probationary and full membership.
3. A minimum of six semester hours of credit in United Methodist history, doctrine, and polity are required for this curriculum. These courses are available through correspondence with the General Board of Higher Education, a University Senate approved Seminary and some COS schools. All other specific course requirements listed in the Book of Discipline are met in the Basic five (5) year Course of Study.
4. The Courses chosen will not duplicate those included in the basic five year curriculum.
5. Courses selected shall include both foundational and functional studies appropriate to each candidate.
  1. Foundational courses include studies in areas of theology, church history, biblical study, or church in society.
  2. Functional courses include advanced work in counseling, church administration, evangelism, preaching, teaching or worship.
6. Advance COS students shall be encouraged to enroll in the Master of Divinity curriculum courses.
7. Each student shall have courses approved and recorded by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.
8. Graduate studies not taken in a theological school, which parallel courses offered for advanced studies, may be approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to a maximum of nine (9) semester hours. Such studies must have been taken within the last 10 years.
9. One basic unit of Clinical Pastoral Education may be recognized as the equivalent of six semester hours in the Advanced Course of Study.