

Checklist Of Requirements for Ordination as Full Member 2026 Exam

For Deacon and Elder

The following checklist is offered to help you successfully prepare all required forms and submissions to meet the requirements for ordination as a full member. **All deadlines must be understood as "by 11:59 pm" on the date listed.** Materials may be submitted in advance. Please refer to the website for specific instructions and links to forms and templates:

<https://www.bwcumc.org/full-membership/>

All materials will be submitted through the SMA portal: <https://bwc-umc.smapply.org/>

You will not submit materials by mail or email. If you do not have an account ALREADY set up in the portal, you should set one up immediately **AND** contact Hilary Golden at bomstaff@bwcumc.org and the full member registrar, Rev. Dr. Alicia Vanisko, at fmregistar@gmail.com.

If you have any questions about the portal or the exam process, please ask!

Note, please keep a hard copy and/or electronic copy of anything that you upload into the SMA portal in case there is a transmission or system error.

☐ Step 1: Acknowledgment & Initial Forms – *No later than June 15, 2025*

This step includes:

- Updating your applicant information
- Acknowledgement & Understanding of Full Member Exam Requirements
- Download, complete, and upload the notarized Candidate Disclosure Form

**** You must click “mark complete” after everything in each stage is completed.****

☐ Step 2: Request Recommendations – *Deadline: July 15, 2025*

** You must have a minimum of 5 recommendations returned.*

For those serving in a local church:

- District Superintendent
- Senior Pastor (if you are an associate pastor)
- Lay Leader
- COM Chairperson or Administrative Board/Church Council Chairperson
- PPRC/SPRC Chairperson
- Youth member of your church
- One other active lay person
- Any additional references you would like to include

**** For those of you serving congregations with a One Board Leadership model, please include the Chairperson of the board/council, and at least 2 other members of the board/council in addition to an active lay person and a youth.**

For those serving outside the local church in extension ministry or other ministry settings:

- District Superintendent
- Pastor of the church in which you maintain your Charge Conference Relationship

- Lay Leader, SPRC chair, or Council chair of the church in which you participate
- Person in your extension ministry who supervises you
- One other person from your extension ministry setting
- Any additional references you would like to include

* **Deacon candidates and elder candidates serving in extension ministry** need to have recommendations from each ministry site.

If you have changed appointments during your provisional time, you will need to submit recommendations from all of your ministry settings.

* **Returning candidates** do not need to resubmit recommendations unless you have changed appointments OR your recommendations are two years old or older.

Evaluations need to be completed by **August 18th**. It is your responsibility to respectfully make sure that they are submitted on time.

❑ **Step 4: Fruitfulness Project – *Deadline: September 1, 2025.***

- Complete and upload your ***Fruitfulness Project***. Detailed instructions are located on the BWC website.

❑ **Step 5: Sermon Review – *Early Submission: May 1 – July 1, 2025.***

Deadline for final submissions: September 1, 2025.

- You may submit one sermon by the early submission deadline. To submit early, upload all of your sermon materials to the following Dropbox:
 - <https://www.dropbox.com/request/nEDWe1ZZ3NW6LPDM7qJp>
- If the sermon submitted early does not pass, you may resubmit one sermon for review before the final deadline. You must submit your early submission by July 1, 2025 in order to be eligible for a resubmission.
- Sermons submitted between July 1 and the September 1 deadline need to be uploaded into Dropbox through the SMA portal. Make sure to mark your task “complete” after uploading your documents.
- Detailed instructions, requirements for formatting, and a grading rubric are located on the BWC website.

❑ **Step 6: Biblical Skills – *Early Submission: May 1 – July 1, 2025***

Deadline for final submissions: September 1, 2025

- You may submit one Bible Study by the early submission deadline. To submit early, upload all of the required materials into the following Dropbox:
 - <https://www.dropbox.com/request/ITcYkzrtkAnxVAIKbXrB>
- If the Bible Study submitted early does not pass, you may resubmit one additional Bible Study for review before the final deadline. You must submit your early submission by July 1, 2025 in order to be eligible for a resubmission.
- Bible Studies submitted between July 1 and the September 1 deadline need submitted into the Dropbox through the SMA portal. Make sure to mark your task as “complete.”
- Detailed instructions, requirements for formatting, and a grading rubric are located on the BWC website.

❑ **Step 7: Conditions from Provisional Exam (if applicable) – *Deadline: September 30, 2025***

- Upload all your documentation into the SMA portal. If applicable, have the appropriate mentor or other professional submit a letter documenting the completion of your requirements. This can be emailed to fmregistrar@gmail.com or mailed to BOM Staff 11711 E. Market Place, Fulton, Md. 20759-2594.

❑ **Step 8: Medical Summary Report – *Deadline: September 30, 2025***

- Form 103, provided by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, must be completed and signed by a Physician or Nurse Practitioner within the past six months. *Please be sure to also complete your portion of the form.* For your convenience, you can download the form from the SMA portal. You will need to scan and upload your Medical Summary Report form into the portal by the deadline.

❑ **Step 9: Current Photo – *Deadline: September 30, 2025***

- Upload a current photo

❑ **Step 10: Written Responses to the Book of Discipline and additional questions required by the Board of Ordained Ministry – *Deadline: September 30, 2025***

- On the BWC website you will find:
 - The written examination instructions and questions
 - The written examination rubric
 - A template for your written responses

**** Please be sure your document is formatted according to the requirements!**
- Upload your written responses into the SMA portal by the deadline.

❑ **Additional Information:**

- We will be reviewing your file and you will be contacted if any of the following documentation is missing.
 - Current background check
 - Required psychological testing
 - Official Seminary Transcript, including all Field Education requirements such as the Practice in Ministry and Mission and Covenant Discipleship experiences
 - Completion of Basic Graduate Theological Studies, including United Methodist History, Doctrine and Polity (exceptions granted to transferring candidates only)

❑ **Lay Visitation**

A laity member of the Board of Ordained Ministry will visit with you at your ministry site.

- For those of you serving in the local church, your lay visitation will occur when you are preaching. The lay member will also meet with leadership in the congregation.
- For those of you serving in ministry settings outside of the local church, your visit may take place in your primary ministry setting. They will also want to meet with people in your ministry setting.