

Candidacy Pathway: Candidacy Board Resources

January 2019



Office of / Bureau de la
vocation

The United Church of Canada
L'Église Unie du Canada

Candidacy Pathway: Candidacy Board Resources (January 2019)



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“Conducting Interviews with Intercultural Awareness” adapted from the 2009 United Church resource of the same name, by Steve Willey, Intercultural and Diverse Communities in Ministry.

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About This Resource

This resource contains best practices that provide information, guidance, and advice to the Candidacy Board. It recommends ways to live out the mandatory policies and procedures found under section H in *The Manual* and in the Candidacy Pathway Policy resource. Please refer to the current edition.

All United Church documents that are referenced may be found at www.united-church.ca.

Thank you for serving on the Candidacy Board. You are supporting the church in living out God's mission in the world by helping to ensure that those who enter ministry are competent, faithful, and effective.

Understanding the Candidacy Pathway

The following is a list of resources that Candidacy Board members must review:

Candidacy Pathway Policy
Calls to the Church (2018)
Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership
Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice
Supervised Ministry Education
Candidacy Pathway Candidate Roadmap
Circle of Accompaniment
Statement on Ministry

Seven Phases

The Candidacy Pathway includes seven phases that guide the church in developing processes that prepare individuals for ministry leadership. The seven phases are:

Call Forth
Identify
Accompany
Equip
Assess
Authorize
Celebrate

The seven phases are not sequential. The Candidacy Pathway is designed to be nimble, flexible, and responsive to the needs of each applicant, taking into consideration the applicant's experiences, gifts, education, and ministry stream. Each applicant and candidate will journey in different ways through the pathway.

Exceptions to the non-sequential nature of the Candidacy Pathway are outlined under "Required Markers of the Pathway" in the Candidacy Pathway Policy resource. For example, there are particular requirements that must be accomplished in order to be approved as a candidate.

Candidacy Board members must be well versed in the requirements of the pathway. The following is a narrative overview:

Discernment

When a person believes that they are called to the vocation of ministry, they are encouraged to explore this sense of call with others in the church and to give prayerful consideration to the streams of ministry, their financial plan, and the most appropriate program of study to meet their formation requirements.

Discernment is understood as an ongoing journey of attending and responding to the Spirit's leading. Discernment is woven through all aspects of the Candidacy Pathway.

Resources, including discernment events, are available to support people in this phase of the journey. There is also a mandatory orientation session for applicants to receive accurate information about the ministry streams and to learn about the Candidacy Pathway process.

Application

When a person feels that they have discerned their call and are ready to meet with a Candidacy Board, they submit an application to the Office of Vocation. At this stage in the process, the person is referred to as an “applicant.”

Interviews

The Candidacy Board determines the number of interviews to be conducted with the applicant. The following are possible scenarios, depending on the initial application:

The criteria for *promise*, *suitability*, and *readiness* and information about the vocational assessment are given later in this resource.

- **Promise:** During an initial interview, the Candidacy Board assesses the applicant's promise for candidacy. If the applicant demonstrates promise, then they complete a vocational assessment and the remaining requirements to apply for candidacy. The applicant returns for at least one additional interview with the Candidacy Board, which assesses suitability in order to approve the applicant as a candidate.
- **Promise and Suitability:** The applicant is instructed to complete the vocational assessment before the first interview. During the first interview, the Candidacy Board follows the criteria for assessing promise and suitability. The Candidacy Board determines the number of interviews with each applicant on a case-by-case basis in order to approve the applicant as a candidate.
- **Promise, Suitability, and Readiness for Supervised Ministry Education (SME):** The initial application to the Candidacy Board may include a request for assessment of readiness for Supervised Ministry Education. This scenario applies when the applicant has completed the required course of study or the applicant intends to enrol in a program of study that incorporates SME. The applicant is instructed to complete the vocational assessment before the first interview. During the first interview, the Candidacy Board assesses the applicant's promise, suitability, and readiness for SME. The Candidacy Board determines the number of interviews with each applicant on a case-by-case basis in order to approve the applicant as a candidate and authorize readiness for SME.

For the remainder of the process, the Candidacy Board walks with the candidate to assess growth, readiness, and effectiveness for ministry leadership and to ensure that all of the requirements are fulfilled. The Candidacy Board conducts interviews with the applicant/candidate following the minimum guidelines in the following chart. The Candidacy

Board can meet with an applicant or candidate at any time during the process to check in, address concerns, and provide guidance or support.

An additional interview may be required if the candidate intends to serve in a candidate supply appointment outside the SME framework in order for the Candidacy Board to assess readiness for ministry leadership.

Program of Study	Type and Purpose of Interviews	Scheduling of Interviews
Atlantic School of Theology: Summer Distance Program	Promise and Suitability for Candidacy	Beginning of process
	Readiness for SME	Before third year of program
	Benchmark: progress on learning goals and assess competency development based on Learning Outcomes	Recommended before fifth year of program but not required
	Readiness for Ordination	Final year of program
Centre for Christian Studies (Diaconal Stream)	Promise and Suitability for Candidacy	Beginning of process
	Benchmark: progress on learning goals and assess the focus of learning goals for competency development based on Learning Outcomes	Before third field placement
	Readiness for Commissioning	Final year of program
Designated Lay Ministry Program	Promise and Suitability for Candidacy Readiness for SME	Beginning of process
	Benchmark: progress on learning goals and assess the focus of learning goals for competency development based on Learning Outcomes	Halfway through program
	Readiness for Recognition	Final year of program
Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre	Promise and Suitability for Candidacy Readiness for SME (for ordination and DLM streams)	Beginning of process
	Benchmark: progress on learning goals and assess the focus of learning goals for competency development based on Learning Outcomes	DLM: Halfway through program Diaconal or ordained: before fourth year of program
	Readiness for Commissioning, Ordination, or Recognition	Once all requirements are nearly complete—typically at least 4 months before anticipated date of celebration

Program of Study	Type and Purpose of Interviews	Scheduling of Interviews
Emmanuel College	Promise and Suitability for Candidacy	Beginning of process
Atlantic School of Theology (non Summer Distance)	Readiness for SME	Typically final year of program—candidates may have reason to begin SME at an earlier time (see SME section for more details)
United Theological College		
Vancouver School of Theology	Readiness for Ordination	Once all requirements are nearly complete—typically at least 4 months before anticipated ordination date
St. Andrew’s College Ministry Residency Program	Promise and Suitability for Candidacy	Beginning of process
	Readiness for SME	At the appropriate time in the program, typically after 2 years of academic formation
	Readiness for Ordination	Once all requirements are nearly complete—typically at least 4 months before anticipated ordination date

Circle of Accompaniment

At the appropriate time on their pathway, the person pursuing ministry leadership and the Candidacy Board determine a suitable format for their Circle of Accompaniment. Factors such as their ministry stream and the requirements of their program of study, which may already include some systems of support, should be taken into account. The following are two possible formats:

Group Format

The Circle of Accompaniment may be a small group of people, perhaps four or five, that the applicant or candidate gathers for regular meetings.

Individual Format

The circle may be made up of individuals who are identified to fill particular supporting roles with whom the applicant or candidate meets one-on-one. Put differently, the circle may be a group of dispersed people who surround the applicant or candidate and accompany them in specific ways. The relationships that form this type of Circle of Accompaniment may include

- a spiritual director—or Elder, if preparing for ministry within the Indigenous context—to focus on ongoing discernment, personal awareness, and identity

- a mentor who is well versed in the requirements of the Candidacy Pathway and of the applicant's or candidate's chosen ministry stream, who helps navigate their journey
- a person who helps shape the applicant's or candidate's learning goals and provides feedback in relation to their ongoing growth and development

Formation for Ministry

The policies and best practices for the Equipping phase are found in the Candidacy Pathway Policy resource and the Supervised Ministry Education resource.

The Candidacy Board ensures that the Equipping phase of the pathway is designed to optimize the applicant or candidate's preparation and formation for their chosen ministry stream.

Determining the Pathway on a Case-by-Case Basis

The Candidacy Board must remain flexible and responsive to applicants who have previously completed requirements of the pathway and determine the process accordingly. The Candidacy Board may consider the following:

- Does the applicant have prior theological education? How might this prior education determine a unique way forward?
- Will an applicant's first interview(s) include assessment for readiness for candidate supply appointment or for SME, depending on their stream of ministry and chosen program of study?
- How many interviews are needed through their program of study?
- What do the theological school reports reveal, and how will these insights guide the Candidacy Board in their assessment of the applicant/candidate? How will the Candidacy Board plan to work in partnership with the theological school to determine the pathway for the applicant/candidate?
- What is the most appropriate time for the applicant or candidate to establish a Circle of Accompaniment?

Role of the Candidacy Board

Providing oversight of the process is a key part of the Candidacy Board's role. Effective oversight ensures that there is continuity, transparency, and encouragement for the applicant or candidate. To enable the applicant or candidate to take responsibility for navigating their pathway, it is essential for the Candidacy Board to be clear and transparent about its expectations. Oversight also means working in collaboration with partners in the process, especially the theological schools.

The following chart summarizes the Candidacy Board's oversight role in relation to the seven phases of the pathway:

Phase	Summary of the Candidacy Board's Role The Candidacy Board...	
CALL FORTH	...receives applications and reports and discerns the Spirit's leading in the applicant's sense of call to ministry	...oversees the process and provides continuity
IDENTIFY	...discerns and identifies whether the applicant demonstrates promise and suitability for a particular ministry stream	
ACCOMPANY	...ensures that the applicant/candidate receives support during their pathway and determines with the applicant/candidate the suitable format for their Circle of Accompaniment	
EQUIP	...receives and reviews reports from the theological school, approves learning goals, determines the type of Supervised Ministry Education program as required, receives evaluations from field placements and Supervised Ministry Education experiences, and ensures that the candidate completes all requirements of the pathway ...uses the Learning Outcomes as a measure to monitor the growth and development of the applicant/candidate throughout the pathway	
ASSESS	...assesses the promise, suitability, and readiness of the applicant/candidate for designated lay, diaconal, or ordained ministry by following the required markers of the pathway and the guidelines provided in this resource	
AUTHORIZE	...authorizes readiness for serving in a candidate supply appointment as required; for Supervised Ministry Education as required; and for commissioning, ordination, or recognition	
CELEBRATE	...participates in celebrating all aspects of the pathway with the church and with the applicant/candidate	

Individual Roles

Individual members fill specific roles on the Candidacy Board. Additional roles may be identified and added as needed.

- *Chair*: conducts decision-making meetings and works with the Office of Vocation Minister to oversee the work of the Candidacy Board
- *Secretary*: records the decisions of the Candidacy Board and liaisons with the Office of Vocation Minister or Administrator regarding documents and reports
- *SME Specialist*: is knowledgeable about the SME requirements and supports the candidate in the work of setting up their SME experience
- *Theological Schools Liaison*: is knowledgeable about theological education requirements and the various programs at theological schools. This individual acts as liaison to the theological schools. They attend meetings with faculty or staff from the theological schools to receive ongoing orientation and to foster a collaborative relationship between the Candidacy Board and the schools. This person is responsible for orienting fellow members of the Candidacy Board.
- *Vocational Assessment Specialist*: acts as liaisons to the third-party consultant and interprets reports for fellow members of the Candidacy Board

Assessment

The entire Candidacy Pathway journey involves discernment. When the Candidacy Board assesses for promise, suitability, and readiness, they seek to discern God’s hope for both the applicant/candidate and for the church. The Candidacy Board should be committed to the spiritual practice of prayerful discernment and embrace an attitude of openness to the Spirit in their work of assessment.

Discernment has been described as “a faithful inquiry into understanding what God is doing and what we are to do in response to God.” (Kathleen A. Cahalan, *Projects That Matter* (The Alban Institute, 2003, p. 89.)

Throughout the Candidacy Pathway process, the Candidacy Board must refer to three sets of measures to assess an applicant or a candidate and to discern their giftedness for ministry leadership:

- **Learning Outcomes for Ministry Leadership** identifies the competencies that the church requires in its ministry leaders. The Candidacy Board is responsible for measuring a candidate’s proficiency in these Learning Outcomes. Applicants and candidates are required to complete self-assessments during their process in order to identify the focus for their learning and growth. Theological schools will submit yearly reports to the Candidacy Board to share their assessment of the applicant/candidate’s proficiency in the Learning Outcomes.
- **Ethical Standards for Ministry Personnel** act as a resource for ministry personnel as they struggle with ethical issues in their daily practice. These standards also enable ministry personnel to be accountable to self, church, and community.
- **Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel** are descriptions of practice to which ministry personnel aspire.

Tools for Assessment

The Candidacy Board uses several tools that offer unique perspectives and broaden the Candidacy Board’s understanding of an applicant or a candidate.

Vocational Assessment

The vocational assessment is designed to assess an applicant’s fit for the vocation of ministry. Its findings are used throughout the Candidacy Pathway, including when assessing suitability, determining learning goals, and evaluating readiness for ministry leadership.

The vocational assessment is conducted by a consultant with an independent service provider who supports the Candidacy Pathway process but is not directly involved in any formal decision making about candidacy. The vocational assessment includes an exploration of the applicant’s work and education experience and how that experience relates to ministry leadership. The consultant reviews the results of various assessment tools with the applicant to identify needs

related to the working conditions and relationships that result in healthy, productive behaviour, especially in a ministry setting. The consultant also invites the applicant to reflect on other available career options.

The consultant prepares a report that identifies the applicant's strengths, areas to develop in self-awareness, and specific priorities for vocational growth and development. The applicant responds to the experience by preparing an action plan that is shared with the Candidacy Board.

The provider is accredited to conduct these assessments by the Ministry Development Council, an association that is committed to contributing to the effective development and support of professional church personnel in the United States and Canada through a consistent, professional approach to church vocation and ministry development counselling.

References

Reference checks are conducted with those who have direct, relevant experience with the applicant or candidate. Written references are solicited as a part of the initial application and are provided to the Candidacy Board. Phone interviews provide an opportunity for the referee to convey their perception of the applicant or candidate, and for those requesting the reference to ask clarifying questions. The Candidacy Board can ask for references at any time during the Candidacy Pathway process.

Sample Reference Questions

- How long have you known x, and what were the circumstances?
- How would you describe x to me? What stands out?
- How does x demonstrate their Christian faith? Are they willing and able to articulate their faith, and if so, how is it expressed?
- How effective is x in working with teams? as an individual contributor?
- Describe occasions when you have seen x in a leadership role, including projects or committee involvement. Describe their leadership style.
- To your knowledge, does x have a good support network in place? How do they deal with issues of self-care?
- In your opinion, what provides x with the most satisfaction in their ministry involvement? When have you seen them at their best? Are there areas of ministry involvement that appear more challenging or problematic?
- What gifts will x bring to ministry?
- What will be important for x to learn in order to take on a ministry leadership role? In your opinion, what are their development priorities?

Case Studies

This tool presents the applicant or candidate with a scenario that they could encounter in ministry leadership. The scenario describes opportunities and/or problems within a pastoral relationship and raises questions of faith that invite theological reflection. A case study invites the applicant or candidate to demonstrate judgment and resourcefulness as well as their attitude toward serving others. It is a useful tool to assess an applicant or candidate's knowledge of the Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice.

Presentations

Presentations are used to explore the applicant or candidate's understanding of a particular topic, their communication skills, and their desire and ability to connect with listeners. It is a useful tool to invite the applicant or candidate to demonstrate competency related to a particular Learning Outcome.

Interviews

The purpose of interviews is to provide a space that supports reflection, faithful inquiry, and discernment for everyone involved.

Interview Guidelines

Interview teams must foster an environment of openness and trust in order to witness a true reflection of the interviewee. The physical setting, the attitudes and behaviours of the Candidacy Board members, the pace of the discussion, and the expectations of those involved will influence whether the interview truly becomes a time of discernment.

The content of an interview is kept confidential. However, decisions of the Candidacy Board are public.

Be aware of potential conflicts of interest. If a Candidacy Board member is related to the person being interviewed, has a close working relationship with them, or is a member of their community of faith, that member will face the challenge of overlapping roles and may have difficulty remaining objective. Members who have a conflict of interest must not participate in the interview session with the individual in question.

Compliance with human rights principles and legislation must also be considered. For example, sexist language and asking sexist questions, questions about marital status, and questions about sexual orientation are inappropriate. There should be no difference between the questions asked of men and those asked of women, or between those who are known to be married and those who are single. Information about provincial and territorial legislation can be found on provincial websites.

Conducting Interviews with Intercultural Awareness

Representing one's true self in an interview is challenging. Additional challenges and further dynamics are at play when the majority of the interview team belongs to one ethnocultural group and the interviewee belongs to another. Candidacy Board members need to engage in

individual and collective self-examination to discover whether their beliefs and assumptions might create gaps in their discernment and block insight into how God is working in the world and in the life of the person being interviewed.

An interculturally aware interview team tries to look at the process from the perspective of the other person and the ways in which they are required to accommodate, as in this example:

I am a person from Korea being interviewed to assess my suitability for candidacy. I am attempting to communicate who I am in English, which is my third language. I must accommodate the interview team's requirement that English will be spoken. I will similarly accommodate the interview team's conviction that a circle without a table is the best configuration for the interview, although personally, this arrangement makes me feel exposed and vulnerable.

I am doing my best not to panic at the thought of talking about myself with a group of individuals with whom I have no prior relationship, but I will accommodate this Western practice and hope that I will not be perceived as being evasive or vague.

As a sign of respect, I would like to offer a gift to the Office of Vocation minister, but I'm afraid that the group might think that I am trying to ingratiate myself to influence the outcome of my interview. I have learned not to cringe when a man in the circle crosses his legs and shows me the soles of his shoes, or to be offended by the apparent disinterest of a woman who knits while I am speaking. In this interview, I am in their culture, and I will accommodate to what they do and need.

Recognizing how much of the responsibility to navigate cultural differences normally falls upon the individual being interviewed, a culturally aware interview team is committed to the principle of mutual accommodation. As the group in control of the interviewing process and format, it does whatever it can to narrow the cultural gap so that the person being interviewed is less anxious and intimidated, and more able to accurately communicate their character and competencies.

A commitment to mutual accommodation requires an adaptive, flexible approach to interviewing rather than adherence to a formulaic, rigid model. To build bridges across the cultural divide and empower the person being interviewed, the interview team could employ practices such as the following:

Preparation

- Consult with a member of the interviewee's ethnocultural community to offer "coaching" to the group regarding culture-specific sensitivities; for example, formal greeting, eye contact, the meanings of silence and pause, posture toward hierarchy and authority, the meaning of gift-giving, the meaning of intonation in speech, how agreement and disagreement is expressed, and gestures to avoid.
- Vet the interview questions with the coach to avoid any inquiries that would put the interviewee "on the spot" about, for example, their personal circumstances or feelings.

- Provide the questions that will be asked in advance, so the person is less pressured to think on the spot in a language that is not their first language.

Representation

- Ensure that the interview team is racially and culturally diverse.
- Ensure that at least one person present at the interview is from the interviewee's ethno-linguistic community.

Language

- Ask the interviewee if they would like to have someone present who is fluent in both English and the interviewee's first language to help should clarification be required.
- Have the interviewing group practise speaking English slowly and plainly for conversations with people who do not have advanced English fluency.
- Communicate that the person's ability to speak more than one language is a valuable asset, and that accented English is not a problem to be overcome.
- Interviewers also need to stay mindful of their own familiarity with church language and traditions. Those being interviewed might not have the same experience and should not have to contend with unrealistic and unfair expectations about knowledge and context.

Physical Space and Process

- Before the interview, ask for the interviewee's preference on the configuration of table/chairs for their interview. If the person is hesitant to indicate, follow the counsel of the cultural coach.
- Begin the interview with an informal social time for personal connection. To signal honouring the person's culture, provide a sweet from their culinary tradition at the opening refreshment time.
- Acknowledge at the beginning of the interview your awareness that this is an intercultural encounter, and that both parties should feel free to ask questions for clarification, if needed.
- Confirm the interview as a space that seeks to honour cultural differences by inviting a member of the group to open with prayer in a language other than English, and/or by offering a prayer in English that asks God to bless their intercultural time together.
- Proceed in a fashion that facilitates deep listening in a safe space: be attentive to the other person, don't rush, communicate a comfort with silence and pauses, communicate affirmation and encouragement with your body language, show interest but don't pry, and laugh together as much as possible (but never at anyone else's expense).

Guidelines for Asking Questions

There is a tendency in a Western way of thinking to view the gathering of information as the primary purpose of an interview.

While some of this information is “personal” in nature, all of it is “of the person.” Hence, what and how a person thinks, believes, functions, relates, and knows speaks of their very heart and soul. This heart is something an intercultural church seeks to honour and to protect. It recognizes that for interviewees coming from many non-Western cultures, the interview is not primarily about information sharing as it is about establishing a relationship.

The interviewing team may ask a question that is intended to give information that will help them “get to know” an interviewee; meanwhile, the interviewee may be pulling away from the group because they are experiencing those questions as too direct, too personal, or too prying.

When asking interview questions, consider the following:

- Be aware that the issue of “saving face” is always present, regardless of the person’s cultural heritage. Do whatever you can to avoid making the person feel overly self-conscious or put on the spot to answer questions that it would embarrass them to answer.
- Be aware that too broad an opening question can not only make it difficult to know where to start but also may immediately cross the uncomfortable boundary of sharing personal information. “Tell us about yourself” is too broad. “Tell us about your experience as it relates to ministry leadership” is better.
- Similarly, as the final question of an interview, it is common to ask, “Do you have any questions you’d like to ask us?” In many cultures, to ask questions is to be seen to not know what one should know. “Is there anything you would like to say to us before the interview ends?” is more inviting.
- Generally, Western thought patterns tend to be abstract in nature. This is not the case in many other cultural traditions, which employ concrete images and are story-based. So it is always a good idea to include scenario or case study questions that will help an interviewee connect to their lived experience and lived expertise.
- If they are a recent immigrant, it is best to avoid questions that put the person on the spot about either their reasons for immigrating to Canada or how long they intend to stay. The first communicates that the group thinks some reasons are more valid than others, and the second tends to be asked more frequently of racialized people, especially if they are coming from a country in the Two-Thirds World. Both questions emphasize the status of the person as an outsider, or “other,” who might be hiding some clandestine motivation. Interviewers are neither immigration officers nor inquisitors.
- Interviewers do have a careful discernment to make. It is entirely appropriate, therefore, to ask questions to help the group get to know an interviewee’s posture toward the United Church without unfairly scrutinizing their motivations or intentions. These might include questions such as “What is it about The United Church of Canada that appeals to you?”, “What are the similarities and differences you see between the denomination of your childhood and The United Church of Canada?”, “Can you tell us the story of when you heard God’s call into the ministry?”, and “In what ways have you seen God at work in your decision to seek to become a candidate for ministry?”

Accompaniment for Interviews

Interviewees are accompanied by a person of their choosing—for example, someone who has been a companion with them on their discernment journey but is not a relative or their minister. This support person does not take an active role in the interview but is an observer who can help the individual debrief and reflect post-interview.

Interview Teams

The Candidacy Board can divide into smaller groups of interview teams in order to conduct interviews. Decisions, however, must be discussed and voted on by the whole Candidacy Board. Teams of three to four people help keep the discussion interactive and informal, and give the interviewee a chance to more fully engage with each person as well as the team as a whole.

Interview Outlines and Resources

General Process for Interviews

Before the Interview

- Carefully study any written submissions by the interviewee before the interview.
- Review the Candidacy Pathway policy and the interview guidelines under Assessment, above.
- Determine the process of the interview, including which member of the interview team will begin the interview.
- Ensure the interview space is comfortable and welcoming and that everyone has water or a beverage.
- Ensure the accompanying person understands their role as a silent observer.

During the Interview

- Refer to the interviewee's written material during the interview.
- Have at least one member of the interview team take notes. These can be used to give feedback during the interview and afterwards as needed, as well as to keep track of the process. The notes should be destroyed following the interview.

After the Interview

The interviewee leaves the room. The accompanying person is invited to meet briefly with the interview team to name any concerns and to share whether they believe the interview team experienced an accurate reflection of the interviewee.

The full Candidacy Board then meets to hear the recommendation of the interview team and to make a formal decision.

The interviewee joins the Candidacy Board to receive the decision and to hear the Candidacy Board's guidance regarding next steps.

A written record of the decision, direction, and guidance of the Candidacy Board is shared within two weeks of an interview.

Promise

Criteria

The Candidacy Board determines *promise* for ministry leadership based on the following criteria:

- The person is able to articulate their call to ministry and has sound reason for choosing a particular ministry stream.
- Others in the church support and affirm their call to ministry.
- They possess some of the basic gifts and attributes required for ministry leadership, including a deep spiritual life and self-knowledge as articulated in the Learning Outcomes.
- They demonstrate the potential for further development and have a willingness to learn and grow.

Interview Guidelines

The interview focuses on building relationship with the applicant, discerning their call to ministry, and assessing promise. At this time, it is helpful to learn an applicant's perceptions of who they are, what they have accomplished, and what their hopes are for the future. The Candidacy Board learns about the applicant through the written and oral accounts of their personal history and spiritual journey, and through questions during the interview about significant life events and people who have been meaningful along the way.

Beginning

- Interviewers introduce themselves and describe their involvement in the church and interest in being part of the Candidacy Board.
- Outline the process and timing.
- The interviewee is given a chance to ask questions about process, expectations, and so on.
- Pray.

Introductory Questions

- Tell us about your spiritual journey and how it has led to your desire to explore a call to ministry.
- What events or people have been important for you in learning about your call?
- What gifts do you bring to ministry? How have these gifts been affirmed by others either within or outside the church?
- How did you go about discerning your call to ministry?

Questions Based on the Learning Outcomes

Spiritual, Vocational, and Personal Formation

- Where do you find spiritual nurture?
- How do you currently express your spirituality? What are familiar ways? Are you exploring new expressions?

- Describe an experience in a faith community setting that was particularly meaningful for you. What made it so?
- Are there people who have been role models in your life? If so, what qualities or abilities do they have that you most appreciate?
- What helps you to be at your best with and for others?

Teach and Facilitate Learning in and of the Christian Faith

- What is your preferred way to learn? Or, what is your learning style?
- Describe a recent learning experience. What was most challenging about it? most rewarding?
- What influence has the Bible had on your life and faith formation?
- What knowledge and skills do you especially want to learn to equip yourself for ministry?
- How do you go about finding out how you are perceived by others?
- In your experience, what helps communities of faith to learn? What gets in the way?

Cultural and Contextual Knowledge

- How has your Christian faith shaped your values, decisions, and actions?
- What helps you stay open and consider other points of view, especially about issues you really care about? What gets in the way?
- What are some social justice issues currently present where you live?
- What are the social justice issues that speak to you most directly? Describe any experience you've had with these issues.
- What are the opportunities and challenges for the church as it seeks to become an intercultural church?

Leadership within the Faith Community and Wider Community

- Describe a time when you were part of a rewarding team or group experience. What role did you have on the team? What made the experience so positive?
- How do you usually go about planning and priority setting to achieve your goals?
- How do you manage significant change when it affects you directly? Where do you find support in these situations?
- How do you go about making difficult decisions?
- When you encounter disagreements or conflicts, how do you usually handle them?
- In your opinion, what is the role of the church in the world today?

Additional Questions

- What do you still want to discover and learn as you continue in discernment?
- Is there anything we didn't discuss today that you would like to mention or ask about?

Post-Interview Decision

There are three possible outcomes:

- *There is clear evidence of promise.* The Candidacy Board provides clear direction to the applicant regarding their next stages and what they need to do in order to demonstrate suitability and be approved as a candidate.
- *The evidence of promise is not clear.* The Candidacy Board is not yet able to affirm that the applicant demonstrates promise. The applicant needs to take time for further discernment and develop greater clarity about their call. Areas for exploration are named, and the applicant is directed to meet with the Candidacy Board when these areas have been addressed.
- *The applicant does not meet the criteria for promise.* The Candidacy Board encourages the individual to continue in lay leadership.

Suitability

Criteria

The Candidacy Board determines *suitability* for candidacy based on the following criteria:

- The person meets the criteria for promise.
- They have a well-reasoned plan related to theological education and have started to identify potential learning goals.
- The vocational assessment affirms their strengths for ministry leadership and identifies some achievable goals for further learning and development.
- They have met all of the additional requirements for candidacy as outlined in the Candidacy Pathway Policy.

Interview Guidelines

The interview for assessing suitability leads to a decision about candidacy. If the applicant is approved as a candidate, a substantial investment in further training and development is required. So the Candidacy Board must ensure that the applicant demonstrates a depth of understanding of their gifts and abilities for ministry.

If this is the applicant's first interview, the Candidacy Board ensures that the criteria for assessing promise are also applied.

In addition to asking questions, the Candidacy Board will need to initiate conversation about the vocational assessment, the Circle of Accompaniment, and their theological education.

Beginning

- Interviewers introduce themselves.
- Outline the process and timing.
- The interviewee is given a chance to ask questions about process, expectations, and so on.
- Pray.

Introductory Questions

- (*if this is not a first interview*) How has your sense of call developed since our last session together?
- Tell us about your selection of a ministry stream. How has your understanding of this choice developed (since our last meeting)?
- What have you learned about yourself (over this time period)?

Questions Based on the Learning Outcomes

Spiritual, Vocational, and Personal Formation

- Tell us about your current spiritual practices and why they have been important.

- In your experience in a faith community, what congregational or group spiritual practices have been most meaningful for you? What practices do you think have been most meaningful for others?
- What helps you deal positively with personal challenges in your life (e.g., other people, journaling)?
- How do you typically handle praise? criticism?
- How would you describe Christian beliefs to someone from another faith tradition or with no faith tradition?

Teach and Facilitate Learning in and of the Christian Faith

- Describe a time when you felt highly motivated and engaged in a learning situation. What do you think made it so rewarding?
- From what you have discovered so far, how do you feel about the educational requirements of your preferred ministry stream?
- What supports do you have in place that will facilitate undertaking this education (e.g., personal circumstances, finances)?
- What are you most excited about learning?
- In your experience, what are some of the learning needs and priorities within communities of faith?

Cultural and Contextual Knowledge

- How do you go about establishing relationships of trust?
- Have you engaged in reflecting on experience with others in a group setting? If so, what was most positive about that experience? most challenging?
- What do you think communities of faith can do to embrace diversity and foster hospitality and inclusion?
- What does “being part of God’s mission in the world” mean to you as an individual, and as a member of a faith community?
- What skills and knowledge do you think ministry leaders need in order to support their faith communities in increasing awareness and action for social justice?

Leadership within the Faith Community and Wider Community

- What would you say are important characteristics of effective ministry leaders?
- Tell us about your experience in planning and priority setting with others to achieve shared goals.
- When you are working with teams, how do you manage others’ expectations?
- What do you think are some of the biggest challenges in managing church administrative affairs? Describe any experience you’ve had that illustrates these challenges.
- What does accountability mean for organizations, like the church, that rely on volunteers?

Additional Questions

- What gifts do you think you will bring to ministry? Has this list changed over the course of your discernment for ministry? How have these gifts been affirmed by others either within or outside the church?
- What are your hopes for the Circle of Accompaniment? What format do you think will be most beneficial to you, and why?
- What did you learn about yourself in the vocational assessment?
- Is there anything we didn't discuss today that you would like to mention or ask about?

Post-Interview Decision

There are three possible outcomes:

- *There is clear evidence of suitability, and the Candidacy Board approves the applicant as a candidate.* The Candidacy Board provides clear direction to the candidate regarding their next stages on the pathway.
- *The evidence of suitability is unclear.* The Candidacy Board is not yet able to affirm that the applicant demonstrates suitability. The applicant needs to take time for further discernment and develop greater clarity about their call. Areas for exploration are named, and the applicant is directed to meet with the Candidacy Board when these areas have been addressed.
- *The applicant does not meet the criteria for suitability.* The Candidacy Board encourages the individual to continue in lay leadership.

Benchmark

Interview Guidelines

It is helpful to hold a benchmark interview with those in the DLM program, the AST Summer Distance program, the Centre for Christian Studies program, and the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre program.

The Candidacy Board ensures that the applicant/candidate is supported in identifying and tracking their learning and growth at this point in their pathway.

The applicant/candidate is invited to review their progress related to the Learning Outcomes and to identify priority areas for their goals moving forward.

The Candidacy Board initiates conversation about their experience with the other requirements of the pathway, including with their Circle of Accompaniment and their accomplishments in theological education.

What follows are general guidelines. The Candidacy Board needs to develop questions for conversation that more closely align with the interviewee's particular circumstance.

Beginning

- Interviewers introduce themselves.
- Outline the process and timing.
- The interviewee is given a chance to ask questions about process, expectations, and so on.
- Pray.

General Questions

- Since we last met, how has your sense of call been confirmed or unsettled?
- What are your learning goals? At this time in your journey, where do you see your need to learn and grow in your preparation for ministry?
- What courses or learning circles have challenged and developed your faith so far? How and why? Are you having any challenges with your course load and other requirements of your program of study?
- How are you handling your finances?
- Give us an update regarding your Circle of Accompaniment.
- What do you think needs to be the focus of your learning to complete your program of study?

Questions Based on the Learning Outcomes and Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel

Spiritual, Vocational, and Personal Formation

- What is your current understanding of the Trinity, salvation, and grace? How might this understanding have changed through your ministry experience so far?

- What excites you about the possibility of being commissioned, ordained, or recognized? What makes you apprehensive?
- What sustains/inspires your faith or spiritual life?
- What components of your program of study have taught you the most about yourself and your style of ministry? How and why?
- How have you dealt with conflict?

Teach and Facilitate Learning in and of the Christian Faith

- What are you learning about the ethos and doctrine of the United Church? How have you seen it expressed in your field placement or Supervised Ministry Education context?
- Have you facilitated learning experiences within a community of faith? What was that like for you? How did you prepare? How did you reflect on and evaluate the experience?
- How have you experienced scripture being used in the contexts you have served so far? Has this approach resonated with you or presented you with challenges?

Cultural and Contextual Knowledge

- What have you experienced as your role in supporting the community's discernment and decision making about its call to participate in God's mission in the world?
- How have you encouraged diverse voices and perspectives, for example, with different generations, cultures, or socio-economic life circumstances? Please share an example.
- In your experience, what is the best way to deal with lack of awareness arising from privilege and prejudice?
- What skills and knowledge have you applied to support a community of faith in increasing awareness and action for social justice? What challenges have you encountered, and how have you responded?

Leadership within the Faith Community and Wider Community

- Given that stress management is important, what are your insights into what causes you stress in ministry? What coping tools have you developed so far?
- How are you managing your time? What strengths, weaknesses, and challenges are you discovering in your time management?
- How have you been able to offer the gifts and abilities you have for ministry leadership? How have your gifts of leadership been received by others?
- How have you managed personal and professional boundaries? What has been the most challenging aspect of this for you?

Possible Outcomes

- *The interviewee continues to demonstrate suitability.* The Candidacy Board provides direction regarding the Learning Outcomes that require further development and growth and indicate the next stages on their pathway.
- Despite providing appropriate development opportunities, the interviewee has not sufficiently demonstrated the knowledge, skills, and attributes necessary for the vocation of ministry. The Candidacy Board can make a decision to follow the process to terminate candidacy.

Readiness for Supervised Ministry Education

Criteria

The Candidacy Board determines *readiness for Supervised Ministry Education* based on the following criteria:

- The person meets the criteria for suitability. Approval of candidacy is a prerequisite to readiness for SME.
- They have sufficient education or training to undertake the responsibilities of ministry.
- They have identified potential learning goals for the SME experience in relation to the Learning Outcomes and the Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice.
- They have given thought to the type of ministry setting or context where their learning goals may be best fulfilled.

Interview Guidelines

The Candidacy Board conducts an interview to explore readiness for SME and to discuss how the experience could facilitate learning and further growth. The Candidacy Board provides direction for the development of learning goals and identifies the appropriate context(s) for the SME.

During the interview, the Candidacy Board seeks clarity on the following:

- Does the person's proficiency in the Learning Outcomes demonstrate that their learning would best take place within the context of team ministry, solo ministry, in a pastoral charge, or in another setting?
- Are they an independent learner, or would they best thrive with an on-site supervisor?

Signs that the interviewee is not ready for SME in solo ministry in a pastoral charge include the following:

- Unsure of their relationship to God
- No realistic idea of what a minister does
- No experience or evidence that they are good at time management
- No recently developed skills or ideas
- No preparatory work such as reading, courses, pulpit supply, visitation
- Very dependent personality
- Very rigid views about everything or about important things

The interviewee should come prepared to present possible learning goals in relation to the Learning Outcomes and the Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice. The Candidacy Board dedicates time to discussing these goals with the applicant/candidate.

What follows are general guidelines. The Candidacy Board needs to develop questions for conversation that more closely align with the interviewee's particular circumstance.

Beginning

- Interviewers introduce themselves.
- Outline the process and timing.
- The interviewee is given a chance to ask questions about process, expectations, and so on.
- Pray.

General Questions

- What do you think a typical day in the life of a minister is like? What about a typical week, month, or year?
- What are your hopes, concerns, and questions as you consider beginning SME?
- What learning goals have you and others identified? What learning outcomes need the most attention?
- In your experience, what are the opportunities and challenges involved with being supervised? How do you think you can make the most of the opportunities? best deal with the challenges?
- Do you have personal needs that should be considered before you undertake SME (e.g., family obligations, health issues)?
- What context for SME do you think would best support your learning goals?
- You are beginning in your first pastoral charge. You can take only three books for your library (assume there are Bibles already). Which three books would you take, and why?

Questions Based on the Learning Outcomes and Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel

Spiritual, Vocational, and Personal Formation

- How has your theology evolved, and how will this development inform your ministry in the SME? What will your approach be when churchgoers' theology differs from your own?
- How do you seek feedback to ensure your words and actions are perceived positively and as you intended?
- How do you deal with conflict if you encounter it? Describe occasions when you've dealt with conflict in the past.
- How do you support people who are dealing with loss and grief? How will you manage the impact that these situations could have on you personally?

Teach and Facilitate Learning in and of the Christian Faith

- In your experience, what is the best way to make scripture accessible and engaging for a learning community?
- How do you facilitate learning when there are different understandings of the Christian faith; for example, some have been Christians their whole lives, and others are brand new to the faith?
- What have you learned about your effectiveness as a preacher, and how will you use that knowledge during the SME?

- How will you process your experience and learning with your educational supervisor and the lay supervision team?

Cultural and Contextual Knowledge

- How will you go about establishing mutual relationships of trust?
- What do you see as your role in supporting the community's discernment and decision making about its call to participate in God's mission in the world?
- How will you encourage diverse voices and perspectives, for example, with different generations, cultures, and socio-economic life circumstances?
- In your experience, what is the best way to deal with lack of awareness arising from privilege and prejudice?
- What skills and knowledge do you bring to the SME to support the community in increasing awareness and action for social justice?

Leadership within the Faith Community and Wider Community

- What kind of a leader are you? When is your style most effective? least effective?
- What is your understanding of the mission of the church?
- How do you learn how decisions are made and how work gets done in the community of faith?
- How will you establish and manage expectations for your time in ministry?
- How will you ensure that you are managing personal and professional boundaries? What has been the most challenging aspect of managing boundaries for you?
- Ministry personnel are subject to the discipline and oversight of The United Church of Canada. What does the exercise of this discipline and oversight mean? What are your views on being subject to this discipline and oversight?

Case Studies

Scenario 1

You are a candidate for ministry who is providing weekend supply in a pastoral charge (leading worship and providing pastoral care for a limited number of hours) while the minister is away because of illness. It may be some time before the minister is able to return. You've noticed that a long-time active member of the congregation is rude and dismissive if anyone has questions or offers suggestions about the volunteer work this member is involved with. This behaviour is discouraging others from getting involved, including newcomers to the congregation. What will you do?

Scenario 2

You are providing pulpit supply in a pastoral charge (leading worship on Sunday mornings) while the minister is away on summer vacation. A member of the congregation comes to you with complaints about the music director and her choice of music. He urges you to do something, as the minister won't take any action, even though "lots of people have complained." What will you do?

Scenario 3

You are serving in a half-time appointment in a pastoral charge, and it's going well. People really like you and want you to be involved in a variety of activities and committee meetings, so many in fact that you realize your hours of work have grown significantly. You can't take on this extra time because of other commitments, but at the same time you feel that they really need your support. What will you do?

Presentations

Invite the interviewee to come prepared to present on one of the following:

Suggestion 1

Tell us about a ministry in the church that is near and dear to your heart (for example, children and youth, pastoral care, adult education, outreach). What is important to understand about this ministry, and what does it take to ensure it's healthy and thriving?

Suggestion 2

Present a five-minute sermonette on your favourite Bible passage or story.

Suggestion 3

You've been asked by a church council to give a short presentation on how they can begin to engage with the needs of the surrounding community and become more involved in this work as a church rather than leaving it to one or two members.

Post-Interview Decision

There are three possible outcomes:

- *The Candidacy Board approves the candidate as ready for Supervised Ministry Education.* It provides clear direction to the candidate regarding the focus of learning goals, the context for the experience, and any additional expectations.
- *The Candidacy Board is not yet able to affirm that the candidate is ready for SME.* Areas for greater development and exploration are named, and the applicant/candidate is directed to meet with the Candidacy Board when these areas have been addressed.
- *The applicant/candidate does not meet the criteria for readiness for SME, and demonstrates that further growth and development will not be possible.* The Candidacy Board encourages the individual to continue in lay leadership. The Candidacy Board can make a decision to follow the process to terminate candidacy.

Readiness for Candidate Supply Appointment

Criteria

The Candidacy Board determines a candidate's *readiness to serve in a candidate supply appointment* based on the following criteria:

- The person meets the criteria for suitability and has already been approved as a candidate.
- They have sufficient education or training to undertake the responsibilities of ministry.
- They have sufficient proficiency in the Learning Outcomes and the Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice.
- They demonstrate strong time-management skills in order to fulfill the role in a community of faith and attend to other commitments.

Interview Guidelines

The Candidacy Board conducts an interview to explore readiness for candidate supply appointment outside the context of Supervised Ministry Education.

What follows are general guidelines. The Candidacy Board needs to develop questions for conversation that more closely align with the interviewee's circumstance.

Beginning

- Interviewers introduce themselves.
- Outline the process and timing.
- The interviewee is given a chance to ask questions about process, expectations, and so on.
- Pray.

General Questions

- What are your hopes, concerns, and questions as you consider serving in an appointment?
- What are your reasons for wanting to serve in an appointment?
- What do you think a typical day in the life of a minister is like? What about a typical week, month, or year?

Questions Based on the Learning Outcomes and Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel

Spiritual, Vocational, and Personal Formation

- What is your theology, and how does it relate to the theology of the United Church?
- How has your theology evolved, and how will this development inform your ministry in a community of faith? What will your approach be when churchgoers' theology differs from your own?
- How do you deal with conflict if you encounter it? Describe occasions when you've dealt with conflict in the past.

- How do you support people who are dealing with loss and grief? How will you manage the impact that these situations could have on you personally?
- How do you replenish your energy? What role does faith play in restoring your energy? How do you maintain a close relationship with God in your life? Give some examples.

Teach and Facilitate Learning in and of the Christian Faith

- In your experience, what is the best way to make scripture accessible and engaging for a learning community?
- How do you facilitate learning when there are different understandings of the Christian faith; for example, some have been Christians their whole lives, and others are brand new to the faith?
- How do you go about preparing a worship service? How much experience have you had with your approach? Where do you start when preparing a sermon? Why?
- What do you think about death, and life after death? How would you provide pastoral care to a family that has experienced loss? How would you prepare the funeral service?

Cultural and Contextual Knowledge

- How will you go about establishing mutual relationships of trust?
- What do you see as your role in supporting the community's discernment and decision making about its call to participate in God's mission in the world?
- How will you encourage diverse voices and perspectives, for example, with different generations, cultures, and socio-economic life circumstances?
- In your experience, what is the best way to deal with lack of awareness arising from privilege and prejudice?
- What skills and knowledge do you bring to support the community in increasing awareness and action for social justice?

Leadership within the Faith Community and Wider Community

- What kind of a leader are you? When is your style most effective? least effective?
- How do you learn how decisions are made and how work gets done in the community of faith?
- How do you react to stress? Do you get anxious or depressed when you are under stress? How have you managed in the past, and how do you plan to manage in the future?
- How will you ensure you are managing personal and professional boundaries? What has been the most challenging aspect of managing boundaries for you?
- Ministry personnel are subject to the discipline and oversight of The United Church of Canada. What does the exercise of this discipline and oversight mean? What are your views on being subject to this discipline and oversight?

Case Studies

The case studies in the readiness for SME section may be used.

Presentation

Invite the interviewee to come prepared to present on one of the following:

Suggestion 1

Present a five-minute sermonette that represents the kind of sermon you would preach for your first Sunday with the community of faith.

Suggestion 2

Invite the interviewee to keep a time planner for a busy week and a quiet week in their lives, and to identify whom each activity is for (example, God, self, family, work, study). Then create an imaginary time plan of what it would be like if they were in a candidate supply appointment. The presentation to the Candidacy Board should touch on the following:

- What will the effect of the appointment be on what you are doing now?
- How will that timetable affect you as a person and as a minister?
- How will it affect your family and your ongoing commitments?
- What are you going to change or do differently to accommodate your various commitments?
- How stressful will that be for you and your family, and how do you plan to manage stress?

Post-Interview Decision

There are three possible outcomes:

- *The Candidacy Board approves the candidate as ready for candidate supply appointment.*
- *The Candidacy Board is not yet able to affirm that the candidate is ready for a candidate supply appointment.* Areas for greater development and exploration are named, and the applicant/candidate is directed to meet with the Candidacy Board when these areas have been addressed.
- *The applicant does not meet the criteria and demonstrates that further growth and development will not be possible.* The Candidacy Board encourages the individual to continue in lay leadership. The Candidacy Board can make a decision to follow the process to terminate candidacy.

Readiness for Commissioning, Ordination, or Recognition

Criteria

The Candidacy Board determines *readiness for commissioning, ordination, or recognition* based on the following criteria:

- The candidate is at or near completion of the Equipping phase of the pathway.
- The candidate demonstrates sufficient competence for each of the Learning Outcome goal areas.
- The candidate is able to articulate a functional understanding of the Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice and name why these standards are important in ministry leadership.
- They demonstrate openness to lifelong learning and can identify areas for further growth and development for continuing education.
- They have a well-developed sense of identity in their chosen ministry stream.
- They agree to comply with the polity of the United Church.
- They are in essential agreement with the statement of doctrine of the United Church.

Interview Guidelines

The assessment is intended to elicit the information needed to determine whether the candidate is ready for commissioning, ordination, or recognition.

What follows are general guidelines. The Candidacy Board needs to develop questions for conversation that more closely align with the interviewee's circumstance.

Beginning

- Interviewers introduce themselves.
- Outline the process and timing.
- The interviewee is given a chance to ask questions about process, expectations, and so on.
- Pray.

General Questions

- Please share some of the key insights and personal learning you have experienced as you have journeyed along the Candidacy Pathway.
- What have you found to be particularly helpful in terms of your well-being and resilience through this process? Where have you found support, and how do you plan to be supported in the future?
- How has your call to ministry evolved over this time?
- Are you in essential agreement with the doctrine of The United Church of Canada? What does essential agreement mean to you?

Questions Based on the Learning Outcomes and Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel

Spiritual, Vocational, and Personal Formation

- How do you go about maintaining work/life balance? Describe when you've been successful in achieving balance and when you have not been successful.
- Ministry leaders are called to be authentic. What does this mean to you, and what are some of the challenges that come with authenticity?
- What have you learned about your own spiritual formation that you find useful in supporting others who seek to develop their spirituality? What other approaches have you or could you use when working with others?
- Please tell us about the role of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit in your personal life and the lives of believers.
- Tell us about a time when you felt most affirmed and upheld in your ministry, and about a time when you experienced doubts and discouragement. What did you learn from these situations?
- How do you self-manage when you are ministering to those who are experiencing suffering, loss, or anger?

Teach and Facilitate Learning in and of the Christian Faith

- Tell us about your learning style. What other learning styles have you encountered in working with others, and how have these styles influenced your approach?
- The United Church recognizes the following as doctrine: the Basis of Union's Twenty Articles of Doctrine, A Statement of Faith (1940), A New Creed, and A Song of Faith. Which is the most meaningful for you, and why? What role do these statements have in the life of a faith community?
- How should the church go about developing disciples? What is the role of individual ministry leaders in this regard? of the wider church?
- How do you use the dimensions of reason, scripture, tradition, and experience in your educational initiatives with individuals and groups?
- Tell us about a time when you facilitated a particularly rewarding learning event with a community of faith. What happened to make it meaningful?
- What is your approach for making the Bible accessible to the community? What response have you had with this approach?
- What is your understanding of the sacraments?

Cultural and Contextual Knowledge

- Tell us about your involvement in ecumenical and/or interfaith events or projects. What did you learn?
- How would you go about helping a community of faith design and apply an ethical decision-making process to support right relationships within the church and to address issues and concerns in the wider community?
- What possibilities exist for designing worship in a multicultural setting? Describe any direct experience you've had in this area.

- Describe the involvement you've had in social justice and outreach. Is there a particular issue or initiative that has inspired and motivated you?
- How have you or would you encourage lay members to recognize needs beyond their own faith community and to become involved in seeking social justice in the wider world?
- Describe how you become sensitive to your implicit biases, unexamined assumptions, and other areas where you lack awareness. How can you and others in ministry leadership help others do the same? Share an experience that relates to your response.

Leadership within the Faith Community and Wider Community

- What are the particular challenges involved with exercising leadership in a community of faith? Describe your leadership style. When do you find you are most effective with this style? When do you adapt it?
- How do you encourage and develop the leadership of others? Please share examples of when you were involved in leadership development.
- What have you learned about maintaining professional boundaries in a ministry role? How do you manage relationship dynamics when you are in a position of power and influence, and when you are not?
- Tell us about a time when you led a discernment process with a congregation or other group. What did you learn about leadership from that experience?
- Tell us about a time when you were directly involved in a disagreement or conflict while in a ministry role. What did you learn?
- What does accountability mean to you in the context of The United Church of Canada? How would you describe the obligations of ministry leaders in this regard?

Case Studies

Scenario 1

A member of the Ministry and Personnel Committee of your congregation has been seeing you for pastoral counselling. You have had four sessions together, and while you originally thought that the meetings were helpful, you are starting to become aware of a different dynamic. Not only does this member want to continue seeing you for pastoral counselling, but their behaviour also suggests that they may feel a romantic attraction to you. What will you do?

Scenario 2

You are the sole minister in a small but busy pastoral charge. Your spouse is a member of your congregation and is actively involved in the life of the church. Lately you've both become aware that a family that has belonged to the church for many years is seeking to become closer to you as a couple. You want to foster strong relationships at the church, but your partner senses that this family is seeking a special advantage based on the perception that you have a close, intimate friendship with them. What will you do?

Scenario 3

You are a minister in a pastoral charge. A young couple who are members of your congregation have a child with a serious chronic illness. The situation is wearing them down, and they have

shared with you that it is testing their faith in a loving and caring God. Why aren't their prayers for healing for their child being answered? What will you do?

Presentations

Invite the interviewee to come prepared to present on one of the following:

Suggestion 1

Tell us about your approach to faith formation and Christian education. From your experience and what you have learned, what are the main challenges involved in carrying out this ministry? What difference does context make when considering educational options? What are some current opportunities for bringing the gospel to people?

Suggestion 2

Present your ideas for how ministry leaders can best manage their physical, emotional, and spiritual health in the demanding work of serving others in ministry roles.

Suggestion 3

Your pastoral charge is in a multi-faith community setting. Members of your congregation have asked you to address why Christians believe in the Trinity, as they aren't sure how to answer questions they are encountering from friends of other faiths. Present a brief education session on the Trinity.

Post-Interview Decision

There are three possible outcomes:

- *The Candidacy Board authorizes the candidate as ready for commissioning, ordination, or recognition.*
- *The Candidacy Board is not yet able to authorize readiness for commissioning, ordination, or recognition. Areas for further development and exploration are named, and the candidate is directed to meet with the Candidacy Board once these areas have been addressed.*
- *The applicant does not meet the criteria and demonstrates that further growth and development will not be possible. The Candidacy Board encourages the individual to continue in lay leadership. The Candidacy Board can make a decision to follow the process to terminate candidacy.*

Note-Taking Template

A copy of this table can be used during an interview to help interviewers track their assessment and identify recommendations for next steps.

Understanding and Evidence of Learning Outcomes			
Learning Outcome	Limited Understanding or Evidence	Evidence and Open to Learning and Development	Well-Developed Understanding and Evidence
Spiritual, Vocational, and Personal Formation			
Teach and Facilitate Learning in and of the Christian Faith			
Cultural and Contextual Knowledge			
Leadership within the Faith Community and Wider Community			

Response Form for After an Interview

This chart can be used to record the details that need to be shared with an applicant/candidate following an interview.

Decision of the Candidacy Board
Feedback Including Affirmations and Growing Edges
Next Stages and Recommendations Consideration should be given to timeline for future interviews, recommended learning goals related to the Learning Outcomes, direction regarding the Circle of Accompaniment, and other details that the applicant/candidate will need to attend to at this point in their pathway.