

## 45-10

### The Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards Proposed Amendments to *The Book of Government* 11-2

Current Language: G.11-2	Proposed Language: <u>additions</u> , <del>deletions</del>
<p><b>11-2</b> Preparation for ordained ministry as a Teaching Elder</p> <p>Since the office of Teaching Elder is seen as the first office in the Church both for dignity and usefulness, special preparation is required.</p> <p>A. A person desiring to become a Teaching Elder shall first become a Candidate under the care of the Presbytery of which that person's church is a member. That person begins this process by seeking the endorsement of the Session of the local church where the person's membership has been held for at least six months. When the Session has approved the Candidate, application shall be made to the appropriate Committee of Presbytery.</p> <p>B. The Presbytery Committee charged with the oversight of Candidates shall make whatever tests of gifts and abilities, as well as of sincerity of purpose, it deems necessary. If the Candidate is approved, the Committee shall recommend to Presbytery the approval of candidacy.</p> <p>C. The Presbytery shall make public examination of the Candidate as to Christian experience and growth, the motive for seeking ordination by a Presbytery of the EPC, and a statement regarding the person's call to the Ministry. If approved, the Presbytery shall proceed as follows.</p> <p>The Candidate shall respond affirmatively to the following questions to be put by the Moderator of the Presbytery:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As you understand God's working in your heart and life, do you continue to believe yourself called to the office of Teaching Elder?</li> <li>2. Do you now submit yourself to the care and supervision of this Presbytery as you prepare yourself for this office?</li> </ol>	<p><b>11-2</b> Preparation for ordained ministry as a Teaching Elder</p> <p>Since the office of Teaching Elder is seen as the first office in the Church both for dignity and usefulness, special preparation is required.</p> <p>A. A person desiring to become a Teaching Elder shall first <u>seek the endorsement of the Session of the local church where the person's membership has been held, ordinarily for at least six months. After receiving the endorsement of the Session, the Applicant shall submit their name and record of endorsement to the appropriate Committee of the Presbytery. The Session shall assign an active Ruling Elder to serve as a Liaison between the Applicant and the Session throughout the Applicant's preparation for office once the Applicant is approved for candidacy.</u></p> <p>B. The Presbytery Committee charged with the oversight of Candidates shall make whatever tests of gifts and abilities, as well as of sincerity of purpose, it deems necessary. If the <u>Applicant</u> is approved, the Committee shall recommend to Presbytery the approval of candidacy.</p> <p>C. The Presbytery shall make public examination of the <u>Applicant</u> as to Christian experience and growth, the motive for seeking ordination by a Presbytery of the EPC, and a statement regarding the person's call to the Ministry. If approved, the Presbytery shall proceed as follows.</p> <p>The <u>Applicant</u> shall respond affirmatively to the following questions to be put by the Moderator of the Presbytery:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As you understand God's working in your heart and life, do you continue to believe yourself called to the office of Teaching Elder?</li> <li>2. Do you now submit yourself to the care and supervision of this Presbytery as you prepare yourself for this office?</li> </ol>

3. Do you renew your commitment as a Christian, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, to live as becomes a follower of Jesus?

The Moderator, or someone appointed by the Moderator, shall offer a prayer of thanksgiving and a blessing for the Candidate.

A charge shall be given to the Candidate by someone appointed by the Moderator. The Moderator shall then declare the person received as a Candidate; the person's name shall be placed on the Candidate roll of the Presbytery and welcomed in an appropriate manner.

- D. The Candidate continues to be a member of the local church and subject to the Session. But with regard to the Candidate's training for the ministry, the Candidate is under the oversight of the Presbytery. It is appropriate for the home church of the Candidate to have a service of recognition.
- E. The Presbytery shall assign a Teaching Elder in the Presbytery, ordinarily not the Candidate's Pastor, to serve as advisor to the Candidate. The advisor and the Candidate's Pastor shall submit regular reports to the appropriate committee on the progress of the Candidate.
- E. The Presbytery shall have some Committee to which the oversight of Candidates is assigned. This Committee shall oversee the training of the Candidate, giving encouragement and pastoral attention, and making an annual report to the Presbytery of the progress of the Candidate.
- G. A Candidate shall pursue a course of study that leads to a Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary approved by the Presbytery, and such other standards as may be determined by Acts of the General Assembly. Academic work that is equivalent to a Master of Divinity degree may be completed by those means designed for Candidates under extraordinary status (G.11-2I).

3. Do you renew your commitment as a Christian, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, to live as becomes a follower of Jesus?

The Moderator, or someone appointed by the Moderator, shall offer a prayer of thanksgiving and a blessing for the new Applicant.

A charge shall be given to the Applicant by someone appointed by the Moderator. The Moderator shall then declare the person received as a Candidate; the person's name shall be placed on the Candidate roll of the Presbytery and welcomed in an appropriate manner.

- D. The Candidate continues to be a member of the local church and subject to the Session which shall continue to follow the preparation of the Candidate by means of the Ruling Elder Liaison. But With regard to the Candidate's training for the ministry, the Candidate is under the oversight of the Presbytery. It is appropriate for the home church of the Candidate to have a service of recognition.
- E. The Presbytery shall assign a Teaching Elder in the Presbytery, ~~ordinarily not the Candidate's Pastor~~, to serve as Advisor to the Candidate. The Advisor and the Candidate's ~~Pastor~~ Session shall submit regular reports to the appropriate committee on the progress of the Candidate.
- F. The Presbytery shall have some Committee to which the oversight of Candidates is assigned. This Committee shall oversee the training of the Candidate, giving encouragement and pastoral attention, and making an annual report to the Presbytery of the progress of the Candidate and, if the Candidate fails to make appropriate progress, recommend termination of candidacy.
- G. A Candidate shall pursue a course of study that leads to a Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary approved by the Presbytery, and such other standards as may be determined by Acts of the General Assembly. ~~Academic work that is equivalent to a Master of Divinity degree may be completed by those means designed for Candidates under extraordinary status (G.11-2I).~~ For reasons it deems appropriate, the Presbytery may authorize a Candidate's completion of academic work that it deems equivalent to such a Master of Divinity.

<p><b>H.</b> Ordinarily, a Candidate must be under care for a minimum of one year prior to ordination. A Candidate, for reasons acceptable to the Presbytery, may request transfer to another Presbytery. The Candidate's membership must also be transferred to an EPC congregation within that Presbytery.</p> <p><b>I.</b> A Presbytery, for reasons it judges adequate, may receive a Candidate under extraordinary circumstances for whom it may waive part or all of the total educational requirements for ordination. This action requires a two-thirds vote by the Presbytery. When such a Candidate is received, it is appropriate to assign courses of independent study or study under some appropriate person.</p> <p><b>J.</b> A Candidate from another Reformed denomination who has been under care for at least one year in that denomination, has met EPC educational requirements for ordination, and is pursuing a call from an EPC congregation shall be examined in the manner prescribed in G.12-2. Any Candidates from outside the Reformed Tradition follow the procedures of G.11-2.</p>	<p><b>H.</b> Ordinarily, a Candidate must be under care for a minimum of one year prior to ordination. A Candidate, for reasons acceptable to the Presbytery, may request transfer to another Presbytery. The Candidate's membership must also be transferred to an EPC congregation within that Presbytery.</p> <p><del><b>I.</b> A Presbytery, for reasons it judges adequate, may receive a Candidate under extraordinary circumstances for whom it may waive part or all of the total educational requirements for ordination. This action requires a two-thirds vote by the Presbytery. When such a Candidate is received, it is appropriate to assign courses of independent study or study under some appropriate person.</del></p> <p><b>✚ I.</b> A Candidate from another Reformed denomination who has been under care for at least one year in that denomination, has met EPC educational requirements for ordination, and is pursuing a call from an EPC congregation shall be examined in the manner prescribed in G.12-2. Any Candidates from outside the Reformed Tradition follow the procedures of G.11-2.</p>
--	---

## Rationale:

- **G.11-2.A**
  - Applicant refers to the one petitioning to become a Candidate.
  - Since church members are subject to the jurisdiction of the Session, the process of seeking the Session's endorsement is described prior to the Applicant submitting their name to the Presbytery.
- **G.11-2.C** – The Applicant becomes a Candidate under care upon declaration of the Moderator.
- **G.11-2.D** – Since Candidates remain members of the local church during their preparation for ordination, a Liaison between the Candidate and the Session provides fuller care for the Candidate.
- **G.11-2.E** – This provision would give the Presbytery freedom to assign a Candidate's Pastor as the Advisor when deemed appropriate. It also clarifies that the spiritual nurture and oversight of a Candidate lies with the Session and not solely with the Pastor.
- **G.11-2.F** – The supervision of a Candidate may determine that the Candidate has ceased preparation for ordination or is in some other manner failing in the needed preparation for

office. The details for this evaluation are included the *Procedural Manual for Ministerial Committees* (p. 43).

- **G.11-2.G** – This clarifies that there are two educational pathways toward ordination: a Master of Divinity degree, and education equivalent to a Master of Divinity degree. For a description of “equivalent” see: *Acts of Assembly* 82-07; 12-12; and 14-08.
- Deletion of present **G.11-2.I** – This would eliminate the ambiguous and often confusing third “extraordinary” pathway toward ordination.

[www.epconnect.org/2025AIC-Ordination](http://www.epconnect.org/2025AIC-Ordination)