

# Policy: Validation of Ministries

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Presbytery of Baltimore  
May 8, 2014

## ***Preface***

The PC(USA) Book of Order provides that the continuing (minister) members of the presbytery shall be either “engaged in a ministry validated by that presbytery, [or] a member-at-large as determined by the presbytery, or honorably retired” (G-2.0503). These categories will be referred to as A, B and C, respectively.

Ministries validated by the presbytery (Category A) are further divided into the categories of: (1) service within a congregation, (2) in other service of the church, or (3) service beyond the jurisdiction of the church.

Those teaching elders who fail to engage in a validated ministry are to be placed on the Inactive Member roll (G-2.0508), referred to in this paper as Category D

- A. Engaged in a ministry validated by the presbytery (G-2.0503a)**
  - (1). Service within a congregation
  - (2). In other service of the church
  - (3.) Service beyond the jurisdiction of the church
- B. Member at Large (G-2.0503b)**
- C. Honorably Retired (G-2.0603c)**
- D. Inactive (G-2.0508)**

The purpose of this document is to provide policies and procedures regarding the admission to, continuation of, and termination of membership in the Presbytery of Baltimore in:

- Category A(2) – In Other Service of the Church;**
- Category A(3) – Service Beyond the Jurisdiction of the Church**
- Category B – Member at Large;** and,
- Category D – Inactive**

These categories are the responsibility of the Commission on Ministry’s Credentials sub-group. The other categories, namely: **Category A(1) – Service Within a Congregation** and **Category C – Honorably Retired**, are responsibilities of other entities of the Commission on Ministry.

**Category A(2) – In Other Service of the Church**, and **Category A(3) – In Service Beyond the Jurisdiction of the Church**, are collectively referred to in these policies and procedures as “Validated Ministry.” Separate treatments are given for **Category B – Member at Large**, and **Category D – Inactive**.

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**Validated Ministry (Standing Rule VIII.9-8)**

**Categories A(2) – In Other Service of the Church, and  
Category A(3) – In Service Beyond the Jurisdiction of the Church,**

The purpose of this policy is to provide the written criteria required by G-3.0306 for the validation of ministry within the bounds of the presbytery for service other than within a congregation; and to outline the procedures by which such validation shall initially be determined and thereafter reviewed.

**Note:** Ministers themselves are not validated under this policy. Rather, validation applies only to the ministries that ministers may seek to undertake as active members of the presbytery. In that it is ministries – not ministers – that are validated, no judgment about any minister’s professional competence, vocational fitness, or theological adequacy is either expressed or implied by the validation process, regardless of its outcome.

**Criteria for validation:**

The following criteria shall be used by the Commission on Ministry to determine which ministries may be recommended to the presbytery for validation. As required by the Book of Order and pertinent decisions of the General Assembly’s Permanent Judicial Commission, these criteria are based on the nature of ordained office found in G-2.01 and G-2.05 as well as the standards of G-2.0503a(1)-a(5). A primary consideration for validation shall be whether the ministry calls for “strong faith, dedicated discipleship, a love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord ... [and] a manner of life [that is] a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world.” (G-2.0104) The criteria related to the specific standards of G-2.0503a(1)-a(5) are:

**I. G-2.0503a(1): Conformity to the mission of God’s people.** A ministry will be judged to meet this standard if both of the following criteria are met:

1. An overall review by the Presbytery, through its Commission on Ministry, leads to the conclusion that the ministry does support the Mission of God’s people.
2. No aspect of the ministry requires actions that are seen by the Presbytery as contrary to the mission of God’s people.

**II. G-2.0503a(2): Service to Others.** A ministry will be judged to meet this standard if one or more of the following criteria are met:

1. The ministry is generally perceived to be one of the “serving professions” dedicated to service to others (such as is suggested by G-3.0306, paragraph 3) rather than improvement of self.
2. The stated mission or goal of the ministry is to serve the community in which it is located.
3. The ministry offers administrative support or other essential aid or assistance for an institution whose mission is to provide services in accordance with one of the previous two criteria.

**III. G-2.0503a(3): Theologically informed fidelity to God’s Word.** A ministry will be judged to meet this standard if one or more of the following criteria are met:

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1. The ministry is undertaken in other services of this church or a church with which the PCUSA is in full communion.
2. The ministry is undertaken under the auspices of a church with which the PCUSA is in communion or has ecumenical relations, provided the ministry has been reviewed for compatibility with the reformed tradition as understood by the Presbytery of Baltimore.
3. The ministry requires that the minister be ordained and for which PCUSA ordination is acceptable.
4. The ministry is such that, though an M.Div. degree and/or ordination is not a requirement for the position, the training and experience attendant to the study and training for ordination and the experience gained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament materially enhances the ability of the minister to perform the ministry.

IV. G-2.0503a(4): Accountability. A ministry will be judged to meet this standard if one or more of the following criteria are met:

1. The minister serves a governing body or agency of the PCUSA; an ecumenical agency in which the PCUSA participates; or a church with which the PCUSA is in communion.
2. The minister serves a not-for-profit corporation with a properly constituted and active governing board.
3. The minister serves a for-profit corporation whose board, by specific action, agrees to undertake the supervision and accountability envisioned by G-2.04503a(4).
4. The minister serves an agency of local, state or Federal government.
5. The minister serves a non-church, non-corporate entity, or is self-employed, and agrees to be subject to accountability to the presbytery through a special oversight board established by the Commission on Ministry for the purpose. The minister shall invite persons to serve on the board, with the prior approval of the Commission on Ministry. Such a board will meet at least twice a year with the minister and report annually to the Commission on Ministry.

V. G-2.0503a(5): Participation in Presbytery and Congregation. A ministry will be judged to meet this standard if both of the following criteria are met:

1. The minister participates in the life of the Presbytery by at least one of the following:
  - a. Regularly attending meetings of the Presbytery.
  - b. Serving on a committee or other agency of the Presbytery.
  - c. Being available for service to the Presbytery on Commissions and Task Forces, providing supply preaching.
  - d. Making specific professional expertise available to the Presbytery when appropriate.
  - e. If in the view of the Presbytery, participation in the life of the Presbytery would be difficult or inappropriate, this criterion may be waived.
2. The minister participates in the life of a Congregation by at least one of the following:

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- a. Being a Parish Associate of a church of this Presbytery.
- b. Relating to a church of this Presbytery that does not have a Pastor in a manner similar to that of a Parish Associate.
- c. Relating to a church of another denomination in correspondence with the PC(USA) in a similar way.
- d. Undertaking parish ministry in another presbytery or denomination.
- e. Undertaking ministry for the Presbytery of Baltimore, such that association with a single church in the Presbytery would be inappropriate.
- f. If in the view of the Presbytery, specific service in a congregation would be difficult or inappropriate, this criterion may be waived.

VI. Certain calls beyond the congregation are deemed to meet the required criteria and will be automatically validated upon request of the minister. These are: service in and for Baltimore Presbytery, the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, or the General Assembly; service as faculty or administrative staff at a PCUSA theological seminary; teacher/instructor of religion, theology, or Bible at a PCUSA-related college or secondary school; PCUSA commissioned missionaries and fraternal workers in overseas work; service as a chaplain in the United States Armed Forces or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs recognized by the Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel.

*Procedures for Validation:*

The responsibility for the approval and oversight of validated ministries beyond the congregation rests with the presbytery. The responsibility for the initial review and recommendation regarding the proposed ministerial function rests with the Commission on Ministry, as does the annual review and recommendation regarding continued validation. The principles and procedures below shall guide both the presbytery and the Commission on Ministry in their deliberations and decisions regarding validation of ministry.

The minister applicant shall be a minister member in good standing of the Presbytery of Baltimore, or a candidate certified for ordination pending a call. A minister member of another presbytery seeking admission to Baltimore Presbytery in order to take up a validated work within the bounds of this presbytery shall be a member in good standing in his or her home presbytery.

A written request for the validation of a ministry shall be submitted by the minister to the Commission on Ministry through the Stated Clerk of the presbytery. Ordinarily, such a request should be made prior to the start of service with the proposed validated ministry.

The Commission on Ministry shall specify the application procedure, which shall ordinarily include the following:

- A position description from the prospective validated ministry that reflects the concerns identified in the criteria, above.

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- Mission statement and/or goals and objectives of the calling agency, especially as they may pertain to the proposed validated ministry position of the applicant.
- A letter from the appropriate party at the calling agency indicating the agency's intention to call the applicant, or other appropriate documentation of the call.
- Information on the remuneration for the position.
- Any additional information that may aid the Commission on Ministry and the presbytery in determining whether to grant validation.

Ordinarily, the ministry shall be located within the bounds of the Presbytery of Baltimore. If the ministry is outside the bounds of the Presbytery, the applicant shall explain why he/she is not transferring to the presbytery in which the ministry takes place.

The application and supporting documentation will be reviewed by the Credentials Subgroup of the Commission on Ministry, after which they will meet with the minister to further discuss the proposed validated ministry, the call, and how the proposed validated ministry meets the requirements of all validated ministries.

The Credentials Subgroup will make a determination in accordance with the COM document *Guidelines for the Presbytery of Baltimore Commission on Ministry Clearance Process*. In some cases, the applicant may be asked to appear before the entire Commission on Ministry in support of his/her application. In any case where the Subgroup recommends that validation not be approved, the reasons for this recommendation shall be provided to the applicant in writing and the entire Commission on Ministry shall grant the applicant a hearing on the matter upon request.

If the Credentials Subgroup's recommendation is to approve, and the Commission on Ministry grants their recommendation, that recommendation shall be presented to the presbytery at its next stated meeting. If the Commission on Ministry does not grant the Subgroup's recommendation for validation, the rationale for the decision shall be provided to the applicant in writing and the entire Commission on Ministry shall grant the applicant a hearing on the matter upon request.

**Procedures for Annual Reporting and Review:**

For ministers in validated service outside the congregation, the Book of Order requires that "the presbytery shall review annually the work" (G-2.0503). Ministers who fail to engage in validated ministry are to be moved to the Inactive roll (G-2.0508). The processes below outline the means by which this annual review and renewal shall ordinarily take place."

Not later than August 1<sup>st</sup> each year, the Commission on Ministry shall request the completion of an annual report from each minister serving a call to an approved

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validated ministry. Information to be requested may include, but not be limited to, the current status with regard to the validated ministry and the minister's call to the ministry; the current level of participation by the minister in the life of a congregation and of the presbytery; and other items that may be deemed pertinent to such a ministry and call and to an annual review.

Annual report forms and other requested documentation are to be completed and returned to the Commission on Ministry not later than September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year of the report. Failure to return the report is deemed grounds for the revocation of validation. Requests for the Commission on Ministry will entertain a one-month extension, provided they are received prior to September 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Credentials Subgroup of the Commission on Ministry shall review the contents of all annual reports and, as they deem necessary, may arrange a conference with the minister. After review, they shall make a recommendation to the Commission on Ministry that the Committee recommend or not recommend the approval of the continued validation of the ministry. If so approved, the recommendation of the Commission on Ministry shall be made to the Presbytery, ordinarily at the November stated meeting and be valid for one year or until the next evaluation.

If the Credentials Subgroup recommends that validation not be continued, the reasons for this recommendation shall be provided to the minister in writing and the entire Commission on Ministry shall grant the minister a hearing on the matter upon request.

If the Credentials Subgroup's recommendation is to approve, and their recommendation is not granted by the Commission on Ministry, the rationale for the decision shall be provided to the minister in writing and the minister shall be granted a hearing on the matter by the entire Commission on Ministry upon request.

### **Membership At Large (Standing Rule VIII-9-9)**

#### **Category B – Member at Large**

##### *G-2.0503b. Member-at-large*

*A member-at-large is a teaching elder who has previously been engaged in a validated ministry, and who now, without intentional abandonment of the exercise of ministry, is no longer engaged in a ministry that complies with all the criteria in G-2.0503a. A teaching elder may be designated a member-at-large because he or she is limited in his or her ability to engage in a ministry fulfilling all of the criteria for a validated ministry due to family responsibilities or other individual circumstances recognized by the presbytery. A member-at-large shall comply with as many of the criteria in G-2.0503a as possible and shall actively participate in the life of a congregation. A member-at-large is entitled to take part in the meetings of the presbytery and to speak, vote, and hold office. The status of member-at-large shall be reviewed annually.*

Minister members of the Presbytery of Baltimore may be designated as Members-at-Large by the Presbytery if they meet any one of the criteria listed below, provided that it

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is their stated intention to return to a validated ministry when the specified criterion no longer applies. Members-at-Large “shall comply with as many of the criteria in G-2.0503a as possible and shall actively participate in the life of a congregation.” (G-2.0503b) This will be evaluated by using criterion V. Participation in Presbytery and Congregation of the criteria for validated ministry (see page 3).

Criteria for membership-at-large:

1. Illness or disability. The minister is unable to undertake ministry for reasons of health. Persons with long-term disability may remain in this status indefinitely.
2. Seeking a call. The Commission on Ministry may require teaching elders in this presbytery who are leaving a parish call or other validated ministry and who are actively seeking a call to have an active PIF in the General Assembly call referral system, or to be otherwise engaged in an active search. Teaching elders, other than with the exception noted below, will not be permitted to transfer into the Presbytery in this status. Rather, they should undertake their call search and, upon receiving a call, request the transfer of their membership. Exception: A Teaching Elder in good standing in another presbytery may petition to be transferred to this presbytery as a Member-at-Large if his or her clergy spouse has been approved for a call to this presbytery, or if his or her non-clergy spouse has moved here for employment. Ministers transferring in this way would be subject to the same background check, presbyter-to-presbyter reference check, and COM approval, as required of ministers transferring due to a call.
3. Graduate Study. Ministers engaged in graduate study designed to enhance their ability to undertake ministry.
4. Family responsibility. Ministers who must be available to care for members of their family (children, parents, etc.) and are therefore unable to undertake active ministry.
5. Government Service. Ministers employed by a government entity whose ministry would qualify for validation except for restrictions on their undertaking Christian ministry in their job situation because of stipulations required by the separation of church and state.
6. Service ministry. Ministers engaged in a ministry that meets the standard stated in G-2.0503a(1) and G-2.0503a(2), but fails to meet one or more of the rest of the standards stated in G-2.0503a(3) through G-2.0503a(5), may be designated as Members-at-Large at the discretion of the Presbytery, upon recommendation of the Commission on Ministry. The decision as to whether to recommend Member-at-Large status shall be based on a review of the overall nature and purpose of the undertaken ministry. The fact that a ministry meets the standard of G-2.0503a(5) does not confer an expectation that Member-at-Large status will be granted.
7. Minister in Transition. Minister members of this Presbytery who have a change in call, and do not have in-hand a new call to ministry that would be a basis for continuing

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membership in the Presbytery, will be placed on the Roll of Members-at-Large by the Stated Clerk, citing this criterion. It will become the immediate responsibility of the Commission on Ministry acting through its appropriate committee, to counsel with the minister and determine that minister's future status. At least as often as every six months the minutes of the COM will reflect a decision regarding the continuation of this status, and in no case will a minister remain in this status for more than 18 months. (COM recommended this provision to Presbytery on 02/06/07).

### **Inactive Membership (Standing Rule VIII.9-10)**

#### **Category D – Inactive**

*G-2.0508 A teaching elder whom the presbytery determines no longer to be engaged in a validated ministry (G-2.0503a) or to fulfill the criteria for membership-at-large (G-2.0503b), and who is not honorably retired (G-2.0503c), shall not have voice or vote in meetings of the presbytery, except when the matter under consideration pertains to his or her relationship to the presbytery. Names of such persons shall be reported annually to the presbytery by the stated clerk. If after three years the teaching elder does not meet the criteria for validated ministry or membership-at-large, the presbytery may delete that person's name from the roll of membership and, upon request of a session, dismiss that person to a congregation.*

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament may be Inactive Members of the Presbytery for periods of up to three years, without having to meet the criteria for active service or membership-at-large. There is no requirement that they be actively engaged in ministry or plan to return to ministry. However, unless they become eligible for active membership or membership-at-large before completing a period of three years of inactive membership, they shall be removed from the roll of the Presbytery and may be granted a letter of transfer to a congregation.

Inactive status may be granted to any member of the Presbytery of Baltimore upon request, when eligibility for active membership or membership-at-large ceases. Inactive members (and active members and member-at-large who no longer qualify for that status) of other presbyteries who are resident within the bounds of the Presbytery of Baltimore, or are otherwise connected to the Presbytery, may transfer their inactive membership to the Presbytery of Baltimore.

Inactive members of the Presbytery of Baltimore are encouraged to maintain a relationship with a congregation.

Inactive members will report annually to the Commission on Ministry, updating contact information, advising of any intention to return to active ministry, and informing the Committee of their congregational involvement.



*[Any attached documents are Commission on Ministry internal documents and do not require approval by the Presbytery.]*

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# Annual Report Form for Specialized Clergy

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## Presbytery of Baltimore

### YEAR

- Name and Contact information from the Presbytery Database: Provision will be made for member to correct this information.
- Status and Basis for that status, according to Presbytery Records.
- One of the following will be shown:
  - Validated Ministry                      Ministry
  - Member-at-Large                      Criterion applied
  - Inactive Ministry                      None
- Provision for confirming this and/or advising of changes, including changes in position title and duties.
- The form will note that changes are to be reported to the Commission on Ministry when they occur.
- Relationship with a Congregation, according to Presbytery Records. One of the following will be shown:
  - Parish Associate                      Congregation
  - Former Parish Associate              (Congregation without a Pastor)
  - Provision for noting any changes.
  - Blank for noting other congregational involvement:
- Specific requested data, as appropriate:
  - For Members-at-large, Seeking a Call: Description of efforts with a copy of their resume/PIF.
  - For Members-at-Large and Inactive Members: A statement of their intention to return to ministry.
  - Other information which may be of interest or concern to the Commission on Ministry:
- Specific information COM may wish to collect in a particular year

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