

# Candidacy Pathway: Supervised Ministry Education

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## Roles, Responsibilities, and Reports

2024



Office of / Bureau de la  
**vocation**

The United Church of Canada  
L'Église Unie du Canada

## Candidacy Pathway: Supervised Ministry Education, Roles, Responsibilities, and Reports (2024)



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## About This Resource

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This resource augments [\*Candidacy Pathway: Supervised Ministry Education—Educational Supervisor's Orientation\*](#).

Additional resources for Educational Supervisors, Community of Faith Connection members, and candidates are available from the Vocational Minister or on the [Candidacy Pathway](#) page of [united-church.ca](http://united-church.ca).

## Supervised Ministry Education: Roles, Responsibilities, and Reporting

Candidates the church has called into service are **formed for ministry** across three integrated avenues of preparation:

Community of Faith	Theological School	Personal and Communal Discernment
<p>The candidate is or becomes immersed in the life of the church as a primary place of learning, practice, and formation for ministry, reliant on the modelling of other ministers, the support and feedback from lay people, the relationship with a supervisor, and the oversight of employers. The church calls its leaders into service in ministry, and forms them for that ministry.</p>	<p>The candidate completes an integrated program of academic and practical education and formation for ministry at a United Church of Canada school (or, in some cases, has begun or completed an accredited program elsewhere to which additional United Church courses are added). All United Church theological schools offer <b>integrated programs of practice and study</b> that meet standard learning outcomes through various modes of delivery.</p>	<p>The candidate engages in ongoing discernment, integration, personal and spiritual preparation, and an intentional relationship with the Candidacy Board, other mentors, Elders or spiritual directors, and companions/accompaniers, entrusting the discernment of call, suitability, and readiness for ministry to the wider community.</p>

Candidacy Boards depend on three sources of **evaluative feedback** in their discernment of a candidate’s suitability, competence, and readiness to serve in the Order of Ministry in The United Church of Canada: the community of faith, the theological school, and the candidate. The role and reporting offered by the community of faith that experiences the ministerial leadership of the candidate is therefore extremely valuable.

Community of Faith	Theological School	Candidate
<p>The community of faith, through its <b>Community of Faith Connection</b>, provides valuable feedback about the experience of being served by the ministry candidate. The <b>Educational Supervisor</b> further supports and guides the candidate’s learning and capacity for self-reflection.</p> <p><a href="#">Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel</a> guide this appraisal in</p>	<p>The theological school reports on progress toward completion of the testamur and provides an assessment of readiness to begin ministry.</p>	<p>Meeting with the candidate at significant thresholds on the pathway provides opportunities to assess the candidate’s knowledge and depth of faith, and to reflect with the candidate on their ongoing sense of call, learning, self-awareness, practice of ministry, and relationships in the community.</p>

<p>addition to <a href="#">Guide to Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry</a>.</p>		<p>The <a href="#">Guide to Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry Leadership</a> frame this assessment.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reports</b></p> <p>The <b>Community of Faith Connection</b> submits an evaluation report on various aspects of the candidate’s capability for ministry as experienced in the community of faith. The <b>Educational Supervisor</b> submits a report reflecting on the candidate’s <b>Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry</b>, including their progress and self-awareness in meeting their learning goals.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reports</b></p> <p>This report is submitted annually using the Annual Theological School Report or equivalent. Notice of completion of the testamur is required for commissioning or ordination.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reports</b></p> <p>The candidate completes reflective reports to prepare for meeting with the Candidacy Board. These reports articulate the candidate’s faith in relationship to the traditions of the Christian church, and at the final interview affirm their essential agreement with United Church of Canada doctrine.</p>

## Context

**Supervised Ministry Education (SME)** is an intentional cooperative learning experience where

- **Candidacy Board** SME specialists or Vocational Ministers assist the candidate in turning competency outcomes into appropriate contextual learning goals.
- a trained **Educational Supervisor** hones the contextual learning goals for the ministry learning site in consultation with the Community of Faith Connection (CFC), and facilitates the candidate’s learning by meeting regularly for reflective practice on, and oversight of, learning goals, practice of ministry, and growth in pastoral identity.
- **the community of faith** experiences and offers support and feedback to the candidate practising ministry with them.
- the **Educational Supervisor** provides the Candidacy Board with a full report of the candidate’s competence for practice of ministry, and provides the candidate with opportunities for ongoing reflection on growing competence in ministry.
- the **community of faith**, through the Community of Faith Connection, provides the Candidacy Board with responses to evaluative questions on the candidate’s suitability for ministry based on the standards of practice for ministry.
- the **candidate** provides the Candidacy Board with a full reflection on progress made on learning goals designed to develop competencies for the practice of ministry.

## Roles and Responsibilities

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Communities of faith, including their Ministry and Personnel Committees and the Educational Supervisor appointed to the Supervised Ministry student, have roles related to guiding, assessing, and overseeing the candidate in their pastoral relationship during a Supervised Ministry Education experience. The Candidacy Board is responsible for receiving and interpreting the reports of the SME.

The **Educational Supervisor** is the reflective-practice guide who

- is trained and certified by the Office of Vocation
- meets **regularly at their own initiative** with the candidate according to a prearranged schedule (at minimum, one hour per week or two hours twice a month)
- sets the agenda and process for the meetings to review and reflect theologically and practically on the competencies intended to be developed and demonstrated by the articulated learning goals
- works with the candidate to hone or revise any learning goals as needed to take advantage of context for optimum learning
- with the candidate, reviews and reflects theologically on issues and insights arising from practice of ministry experience on-site
- models for, and encourages, the candidate to review and reflect practically on discoveries and questions arising from practice of ministry experience
- with the candidate, reviews and reflects on community of faith feedback, including that of the Community of Faith Connection
- offers appraisal and assessment, using evaluative reports provided by the Candidacy Board for the benefit of the candidate's development and the Board's discernment
- models and assists in building the habit of reflecting on practice and identifying professional development goals and opportunities
- establishes contact with the Community of Faith Connection if and when desirable or requested

The **community of faith** is responsible for creating and maintaining the conditions that meet the Supervised Ministry Education requirements, including

- creating an appointment and becoming a SME learning site in keeping with the [Pastoral Relations Policy](#)

and provides the candidate with people who serve as the **Community of Faith Connection**, who are trained and oriented by the Vocational Minister before the candidate begins their appointment to

- offer support and encouragement to the candidate
- orient the candidate to the community of faith, including ongoing interpretation of the community of faith's culture and ethos

- experience the ministry offered by the candidate to, and with, the community of faith through regular attendance at events where the candidate offers leadership
- meet regularly (at minimum, monthly) to check in with the candidate about how the ministry they are offering is being experienced and appreciated, and what the candidate is experiencing and learning
- if operating as a small Community of Faith Connection, consult with trusted others in the community of faith to check perceptions and broaden feedback
- use a rubric and guidelines provided by the Candidacy Board to offer feedback to the Board on the candidate's ministry
- allow the Ministry and Personnel Committee to perform all duties of supervision according to the Pastoral Relations Policy
- be in touch with the Educational Supervisor as desired or requested

The **Ministry and Personnel Committee** is responsible for ensuring that

- the candidate is welcomed and well-situated
- the community of faith and the candidate covenant to be in ministry together
- the pastoral relations policies on oversight and accountability of ministry personnel are followed

## Reports during Supervised Ministry Education

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Evaluations, assessments, appraisals and feedback are critical to the work of the Candidacy Board, and essential to the development of the candidate's competence and readiness for ministry. Each area of formation attends to particular aspects of a candidate's development in preparation for ministry.

**Educational Supervisors** report to the Candidacy Board at the beginning of the Supervised Ministry Experience to comment on the learning goals identified by the candidate, in the middle of the SME to comment on candidate's progress toward meeting learning goals, and at the end to make an appraisal of the candidate's competence and readiness for a vocation in ministry based on [Competencies for Formation for Ministry \(2022\)](#).

The **community of faith**, through the person or persons serving as the contact, report to the Candidacy Board at the beginning of the Supervised Ministry Experience to indicate that it has begun, and at middle and end of the SME to offer the Board a picture of how the candidate is being experienced as a minister among them. The assessment is based on markers of **effectiveness in practice of ministry** drawn from the [Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice in Ministry \(2023\)](#).

**Candidates** report to the Candidacy Board at the beginning of their SME on their learning goals, in the middle of the SME regarding progress in meeting learning goals and reflection on practice of ministry, and at the end of the SME on developing pastoral identity and commitment to life-long learning. The candidate is also responsible for ensuring that mid-term and final reports by



the CFC and Educational Supervisor are completed and submitted to the Candidacy Board at the appropriate times.

**Theological schools**, through the appointed United Church of Canada faculty member, report annually to the Candidacy Board on the candidate's progress toward the testamur (certification of completion of the program of education and formation for ministry), including areas for further work which may be incorporated into the candidate's supervised ministry experience.

## Roles and Responsibilities of Others during SME

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**Candidacy Boards** assess character, faith, knowledge, and skill by way of the following:

- a) Competencies: The candidate demonstrates competence for ministry through
  - i. an active spiritual life and practice informing identity and role in ministry
  - ii. an authentic Christian faith in which there is knowledge and capacity to communicate, inspire, and embody Christian life and faith
  - iii. contextual knowledge and social analysis, including of United Church commitments to being an anti-racist, affirming, and decolonizing church
  - iv. leadership abilities, including social and emotional
- b) Ethical Standards/Standards of Practice in Ministry as demonstrated specifically, but not exclusively, through Supervised Ministry Education.
- c) Essential agreement with the doctrines of The United Church of Canada as demonstrated in word and deed throughout pathway and in response to direct question.
- d) Candidacy Board receives responses to evaluative questions on suitability for ministry from community of faith.

**Vocational Ministers** are General Council Office staff in the Office of Vocation. They ensure that the candidate, Educational Supervisors, and the Community of Faith Connection are oriented and resourced before the start of the SME. They are available to support those participating in the Candidacy Pathway, including Educational Supervisors, Community of Faith Connection members, and theological school contacts.

Vocational Ministers are equipped to navigate the candidate's pathway with them, including the candidate's relationship with the Candidacy Board, theological school, community of faith, and Educational Supervisor. Vocational Ministers interpret recommendations and actions by the Candidacy Board, find opportunities for candidates to develop outstanding competencies, and offer spiritual and vocational support in the face of challenges and disappointments.

**Regional Pastoral Relations Ministers** work with the Vocational Minister in supporting the SME appointment to

- a) support the pastoral charge in its discernment of whether it is an appropriate SME learning site, including providing resources (pastoral relations resources on [the Pastoral Relations webpage](#))

- b) adapt or create an SME opportunity to meet mutual needs
- c) facilitate approval of vacancy through the regional approval process, including
  - i. support for completing profile
  - ii. discernment with Regional approval process of vacancy as appropriate learning site
- d) on appointment of SME candidate, ensure the appointment of a pastoral charge supervisor