



ANGLICAN MISSION IN THE AMERICAS

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Department of Leadership Development

# Clergy Credentialing Guide

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# The Purpose of Clergy Credentialing

*How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"*

Romans 10:14-15

*And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

Ephesians 4:11-16

Clergy credentialing is the centerpiece in the process of identifying, equipping and releasing those who have been called to serve in **ordained ministry** under the Canons of the Province of the Anglican Church of Rwanda and the Charter for Ministry of the Anglican Mission in the Americas. It is intended to invest in the life of the one who is called the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for the work to which they have been called. At the same time, it upholds the trust of the community by ensuring that those individuals who are called are properly prepared and thus ready to take their place in the leadership of the church.

This process is intended to be enriching and constructive in the life of the postulant and to the community in which they are involved. It focuses on three key areas: theological foundations, spiritual formation and practical fundamentals.

## The People Guiding Clergy Credentialing

### Episcopal Oversight

Clergy credentialing happens under the oversight of a Bishop. It is the Bishop's role to ordain clergy. As such, each Bishop chooses one representative to serve as his Clergy Formation Advisor. This person serves at the pleasure of the Bishop and ensures that postulants are equipped and prepared for the office they are called to fulfill under the guidelines set forth by the Anglican Mission in the Americas' Department of Leadership Development and approved by the Council of Bishops.

### Department of Leadership Development

The Department of Leadership Development, under the direction of the President and in consultation with the Council of Bishops, sets forth the process and guidelines for

the credentialing of clergy and ensures that those guidelines are being met. The Department of Leadership Development maintains records of all clergy as well as candidates in the process of credentialing.

### **Clergy Formation Advisor**

The Clergy Formation Advisor functions on behalf of the Bishop and in cooperation and coordination with the Director of Leadership Development to ensure that candidates for Holy Orders are prepared and equipped through an enriching and constructive process as established by the Department of Leadership Development for the Anglican Mission. While there are multiple means of preparing and equipping candidates including traditional seminary, distance learning and parish based education, the Clergy Formation Advisor works to identify the best process for the particular candidate and the Anglican Mission.

Under the direction of the Department of Leadership Development and in consultation with the Bishop, the Clergy Formation Advisor is to use prayerful common sense in the application of the guidelines set forth for credentialing.

## **The Process of Clergy Credentialing**

*You then my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

Romans 10:14-15

The process of clergy credentialing focuses primarily on the orders of deacon and presbyter (priest). We recognize that the diaconate is a “full and equal order” of ordained ministry, and as such, distinguish between vocational deacons who are called to the diaconate and transitional deacons who serve for a period of time in the process of ordination to the presbyterate. As a missionary church planting movement, we are committed to intentionally identifying potential church planters in order to equip them with the unique skills and resources necessary to fulfill this call.

We also recognize that candidates for Holy Orders enter the process at different points in their lives and ministries, therefore, the process for credentialing takes into account both the office to which an individual is being called and the place from where they are entering the process.

We are committed to equip the called and to ensure character and competency in our clergy. With this in mind the process of credentialing is not based in the completion of tasks but rather in instructing and equipping for ministry. We want to ensure that our

clergy are appropriately prepared for the office to which they are called by instilling them with theological foundations, spiritual formation and practical fundamentals.

The Anglican Mission has a unique call as an Anglican missionary church planting movement in the Americas. As such, while we honor and commend all those called to ministry in the Kingdom, we are committed to identify and equip those uniquely called to serve in this particular endeavor. This is particularly true of church planters. So, in order to identify those called to church planting we ask all of our clergy to take a simple online survey as an initial screening to identify possible church planters.

As a safeguard to our parishioners and the integrity of the Anglican Mission, we have several practical fundamentals that are required of all clergy coming into the Mission. They include a subscription to the Solemn Declaration, background check, psychological and marriage assessments, and abuse/misconduct prevention instruction.

## Vocational Deacons

Deacon Guidelines			
	Postulants	Non-Anglican Ordained	Reception
Practical Fundamentals	Anglican Mission Vision & Values	Anglican Mission Vision & Values	Anglican Mission Vision & Values
	Subscription to Solemn Declaration Application	Subscription to Solemn Declaration Application	Subscription to Solemn Declaration Application
	Discernment	Discernment	Discernment
	Background Check	Background Check	Background Check
	Psychological Eval.	Psychological Eval.	
	Marital Assessment	Marital Assessment	
	Abuse/Misconduct Prevention	Abuse/Misconduct Prevention	Abuse/Misconduct Prevention
	Church Planter Screening	Church Planter Screening	Church Planter Screening
	Theological Foundations	Old & New Testament	Theological Discussion
Basic Exegesis			
Basic Theology			
<b>Theological Exam</b>		<b>Theological Exam if necessary</b>	
Anglican History & Polity		Anglican History & Polity	
Anglican Liturgy & Worship		Anglican Liturgy & Worship	
Ministry of the Deacon		Ministry of the Deacon	
	<b>Anglican Exam</b>	<b>Anglican Exam</b>	
Spiritual Formation	Spiritual Director/Mentor	Spiritual Director/Mentor	Spiritual Director/Mentor

## Presbyters

Presbyter Guidelines			
	Postulants	Non-Anglican Ordained	Reception
Practical Fundamentals	Anglican Mission Vision & Values	Anglican Mission Vision & Values	Anglican Mission Vision & Values
	Subscription to Solemn Declaration	Subscription to Solemn Declaration	Subscription to Solemn Declaration
	Application	Application	Application
	Discernment	Discernment	Discernment
	Background Check	Background Check	Background Check
	Psychological Eval.	Psychological Eval.	
	Marital Assessment	Marital Assessment	
	Abuse/Misconduct Prevention	Abuse/Misconduct Prevention	Abuse/Misconduct Prevention
	Church Planter Screening	Church Planter Screening	Church Planter Screening
Theological Foundations	Old & New Testament	Theological Discussion	Theological Discussion
	Biblical Exegesis		
	Systematic Theology		
	Church History		
	Homiletics		
	<b>Theological Exam</b>	<b>Theological Exam</b> if necessary	
	Anglican History & Polity	Anglican History & Polity	
	Anglican Liturgy & Worship	Anglican Liturgy & Worship	
	Ministry of the Presbyterate	Ministry of the Presbyterate	
<b>Anglican Exam</b>	<b>Anglican Exam</b>		
Spiritual Formation	Spiritual Director/Mentor	Spiritual Director/Mentor	Spiritual Director/Mentor
	Diaconate 6 month min.	Diaconate 6 month min.	

## **Application**

The process begins with an aspirant making an application. Applications are available on line or by request. Completed applications should be sent to the appropriate Clergy Formation Advisor and to the Department of Leadership Development. Electronic submittals are preferred.

*Applications can be found online at [theamia.org/clergycredentialing/applications](http://theamia.org/clergycredentialing/applications)*

## **Discernment**

Once an application has been submitted the process of discernment is the next step. We believe God calls individuals into vocational ministry. That call must be discerned by both the individual and by the church. Those considering Holy Orders need to go through a process to confirm this call. The process of discernment takes place either in the parish, the network or with a Bishop. Through this process there is affirmation the individual has an identifiable call on their life to ordained ministry. A copy of the discernment report should be sent to the Department of Leadership Development and Clergy Formation Advisor.

## **Background Check**

When an application has been made for Holy Orders and the discernment process is complete a background check will begin at the request of the Clergy Formation Advisor. All background checks for postulants will be ordered by the Department of Leadership Development through the appropriate provider.

## **Psychological Evaluations and Marital Assessments**

Ordained ministry has its unique challenges that can have negative effects on both an individual and their family relationships. If a person does not have emotional health or healthy supportive relationships their potential for successful ministry may be significantly impacted.

In order to address these issues and to provide support and guidance for potential areas of concern, we require psychological evaluations and marital assessments of postulants. The report is sent to the Department of Leadership Development.

Given the particular rigors of ordained ministry, the Anglican Mission recommends that candidates obtain a physical exam for their personal use in order to ensure and maintain good physical health throughout their ministry.

## **Abuse/Misconduct Prevention Instruction**

The Anglican Mission has adopted policies to help prevent abuse. Part of that policy includes instruction for all clergy in issues of child abuse and in professional conduct. All candidates for Holy Orders and those clergy being received must take an approved abuse/misconduct prevention course. Appendix B of the Sexual Misconduct Policy must be signed and returned to the Department of Leadership Development.

## **Church Planter Screening**

As a missionary movement committed to church planting, our postulants take an initial church planter screening to see if there may be any proclivity toward this unique call. If a postulant self declares their desire to church plant or is revealed to have potential church planting skills, assessment, personal interview and coaching is expected to be done by Networks, Initiatives or Parishes involved in specific church planting strategies.

## **Theological Foundations**

Ordained clergy should have basic core competencies in biblical studies and Anglican studies. The Anglican Mission recognizes that there are many different ways these competencies can be achieved, including seminary, distance learning, parish based education, and reading for orders. The Clergy Formation Advisor should work with the individual postulant to determine what method will work best and be of the most value for the postulant while meeting the desired outcome of the individual Bishop and the Anglican Mission.

Postulants will be required to take exams for the respective order they are pursuing. Vocational deacon postulants will be required to take a Diaconal Biblical Foundation Exam and a Diaconal Anglican Studies Exam. Presbyter postulants will be required to take a Presbyter Biblical Foundation Exam and a Presbyter Anglican Studies Exam. All exams should be submitted electronically to the Department of Leadership Development as a Word document.

For those coming into the Mission who have already been ordained in another Christian tradition, we honor the Kingdom ministry they are involved in while acknowledging that they do not have Anglican Orders. For them the process is to take into account the theological foundations they have already received and prepare them for Anglican Orders. In order to accomplish that, it will be necessary for the Clergy Formation Advisor to assess what theological competencies, if any, are deficient. Education and years of ministry experience are key factors that must be taken into consideration. Of utmost importance a subscription to orthodox Christian teaching must be accounted for. In many cases all of this can be achieved through a “theological discussion.” In cases where an individual’s education and ministry experience is minimal a course of study followed by an examination may be necessary to ensure core competencies have been met.

A course of Anglican studies should be set forth for candidates from other traditions concluding with the successful completion on an Anglican studies exam.

For those being received from a church in communion with the Province of the Anglican Church of Rwanda, a theological discussion to address issues of orthodoxy should be conducted and a letter summarizing the conversation submitted to the Department of Leadership Development.

*...set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.*

I Timothy 4:12-16

## **Spiritual Director/Mentor**

Equipping and preparing clergy is not simply an intellectual or professional endeavor. At its core it is a spiritual endeavor that must include the spiritual formation of the postulant. Each postulant should choose or be assigned a spiritual director/mentor approved by the Bishop and the Department of Leadership Development, to come along side of them in the process. The director/mentor is not the guide to the process but someone who through relationship, will pray for and with the postulant and encourage them toward a vibrant and deep living faith.

It is expected that a spiritual director/mentor will have regular contact with the postulant throughout the process. This regular contact should be no less than once a month and face to face.

## **Final Approval from the Bishop**

When the ordination requirements have been met and the Clergy Formation Advisor believes the postulant is equipped with the character, knowledge and skills necessary, the postulant is put forward for final approval from the Bishop. Upon final approval of the Bishop the Department of Leadership Development is notified and the ordination should be scheduled to take place in no less than 14 days and no more than 60 days.

## **Ordination Documents**

When an ordination is scheduled, the necessary documents for ordination will either be prepared by the Bishop's office or requested by the Bishop's office from the Department of Leadership Development.

## **Fees**

The fees associated with the credentialing process, including background check, church planter screening, psychological evaluation and marital assessment (when necessary) are established annually by the Department of Leadership Development based on the current cost of obtaining these service. The fee structure is broken into two portions; an Application Fee and an Assessment Fee. The Application Fee is due upon submittal of the initial application and the Assessment Fee is due after a successful background screening is completed and before any psychological assessment is begun. Fees are the responsibility of the postulant but may be paid by a network, parish or other source. The Anglican Mission is not responsible for any travel costs associated with evaluations or assessments.

In cases where church planting assessment, beyond the initial screening that is required of all postulants, is necessary, the cost of additional assessment will be the responsibility of the postulant, parish, network, or other entity requesting the assessment.