

National Credentialing Process

Revised April 12, 2013

This document outlines the process for ministry credentialing and registration as carried out by the provincial Faith and Life bodies which are part of the of the Canadian Mennonite Brethren Conference.

1. Definitions

1.1 Credentialing – The process by which the provincial Faith & Life body deems a pastoral minister's theology and life-style fit to serve in the Canadian Mennonite Brethren Conference, in the role for which s/he is being considered. The credentialing process is a prerequisite to registering the pastor with the province for a license to solemnize marriages, though credentialing does not automatically lead to registration.

1.2 Registration – The legal provincial registration to solemnize marriages according to each provincial Marriage Act. Only Lead/Sr. pastors and pastoral staff whose licensing is requested by the congregation in which they serve will be registered. The provincial MB Conferences do not register persons not recognized as ministers in a local MB congregation. The provincial MB Conferences do not issue temporary registrations except at the discretion of the provincial Faith and Life body.

1.3 Questionnaire – the Ministry Credentialing/Ordination Questionnaire is the document owned and managed by the National Board of Faith and Life (BFL) for the purpose of gathering information regarding the lifestyle and theological convictions of the candidate undergoing the credentialing process.

1.4 Pastors Credentialing Orientation (PCO) – A seminar-style introduction to Mennonite Brethren history, theology and polity. Participation in PCO is a credentialing requirement.

1.5 Ordination – by the laying on of hands is the act by which the local church and the provincial conference affirm those called by God and the church for the ministry of the gospel. Ordination assumes that credentialing requirements have been completed, and is initiated by the local congregation. The ordination requirements and process are not addressed in this document.

2. The Credentialing Process

2.1 General Policy Statements

2.1.1 The national BFL, in collaboration with each province/region, is responsible for the overall credentialing process, the maintenance of credentialing policies and the upkeep of the credentialing questionnaire.

2.1.2 The Ministry Credentialing/Ordination Questionnaire meets the current requirements of each provincial BFL and the legal requirements for registration of each province. The questionnaire is available in the English and French languages on the Canadian MB Conference site.

2.1.3 Pastors requesting to serve in the Canadian MB Conference are required to complete the Province specific pre-hire assessment by the Provincial Faith and Life body, agree with the Confession of Faith, and agree to undergo the credentialing process ideally as part of candidating in an MB church, but minimum within 1 year of hire.

The following roles require credentialing:

1. Ministry staff with any spiritual leadership role (regardless of title) in a local church or an MB organization (such as MB Mission, MBBS, etc.)
 2. All church staff with the title “pastor”, employed at ½ time or more
- Credentialing is not required for staff whose roles are primarily administrative.

2.1.4 The credentialing candidate must complete PCO within 2 years of hire date.

2.1.5 Each province assigns a person or a group to administer the credentialing and registration process and to serve as a liaison between the national and provincial BFL, the local church and the candidate.

2.1.6 Each credentialed individual will undergo a re-covenanting process (Section X of Ministry Credentialing/Ordination Questionnaire) a minimum of every 5 years.

2.1.7 Credentialing completed in any province within 5 years of a role transfer to another province will be recognized by the hiring province. The transferred candidate will forward the original completed Questionnaire and a letter of commendation from the previous provincial BFL to the new BFL, which will conduct a welcome interview with the transferred candidate.

2.2 Credentialing Process

See Flowchart (Page 4) for an overview of the process

1. The **credentialing candidate** submits the completed Questionnaire and supporting documentation to the provincial credentialing individual or group (PCM or BFL). *Note: from here on this process description refers to the credentialing individual/group as the PCM (Provincial Conference Minister).*
2. The **PCM** arranges for and conducts a credentialing interview with the candidate, his/her Sr. Pastor or Moderator, and representatives of the provincial Faith and Life body
If the candidate is deemed unsuitable the PCM will inform the hiring church moderator of the interview results.
If the candidate is deemed suitable but more information is required in order to complete the credentialing process successfully the PCM will schedule a follow up interview and request the additional information form the candidate. Once the candidate provides the information the interview process will resume.
3. If the interview is successful, the **PCM** will inform the hiring church moderator and log the credentialed candidate into the provincial pastors database.
4. If the credentialed candidate is a minister qualified for provincial registration the PCM will proceed to register the credentialed candidate with the provincial Marriage Office.
5. The **provincial BFL** will ratify the newly credentialed candidate at the next scheduled BFL meeting.
6. The **PCM** will invite the credentialed candidate to the next PCO and any other provincially specific required seminars (e.g. Sacred Trust in BC etc)

3. Privacy of Information

All credentialing documentation will be stored, shared and destroyed in keeping with the provincial privacy legislation The information requested in the Ministry Credentialing/ Ordination Questionnaire may be accessed only by those within the Mennonite Brethren Conference who have been designated to determine the candidate's suitability for credentialing in the indicated ministry role. Information from the questionnaire may not be shared without the candidate's permission. The questionnaire will be kept by the provincial conference office in confidentiality and in a safe and secure location.

Credentiaing Process Flowchart

