

# The Psychological Assessment Process

Prior to a candidate's certification interview by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, the candidate shall have a psychological assessment as detailed below. The candidate shall not meet with the DCOM for a certification interview until after the Feedback session, in which the DCOM chairperson (or their designee) has met with the candidate and the ministerial assessment specialist to review the recommendations contained in the Psychological Assessment Report. Candidates are invited to sign all appropriate release forms and waivers at the time of the written testing, as well as any release forms of the Ministerial Assessment Specialists. Our common practice is that the Psychological Assessment Report is the property of the Board of Ordained Ministry and its District Committees on Ordained Ministry. The candidate is not to see or receive a copy of the full report; rather, only a copy of the summary recommendations page is made available.

The Psychological Assessment Committee (PAC) of the Board of Ordained Ministry has oversight of the psychological assessment process, policies and procedures, with final authority resting with the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM). The Board of Ordained Ministry contracts with at least two appropriately-credentialed psychologists with the necessary training and skills for evaluating candidates for ministry to serve as our Ministerial Assessment Specialists (MAS). Every effort has been made to maintain ethnic and gender diversity within the Psychological Assessment team.

The purpose of the psychological assessment is to screen for mental health and emotional fitness for ministry. The psychological assessment process consists of an auto-biographical report, four reference reports and a battery of on-line testing instruments. As of September 2018, only one clinical interview has been required, with the possibility of an additional interview available upon the request of the PAC. Currently, three testing instruments are being used – the MMPI-2, the 16 PF, and the ISB (Incomplete Sentences Blank). Other assessment instruments at our disposal include the FIRO-B, the DISC personality profile.

As with other candidates enrolled in the UMCARES system throughout the denomination, candidates for ministry in the Baltimore-Washington Conference now have all assessments offered on-line. The tests may be proctored by a trained Candidacy Mentor or another proctor trained in the UMCARES system at a remote location. This decentralized arrangement allows for flexible scheduling and also provides a helpful option for students studying out-of-state.

Once the on-line tests are completed, the Ministerial Assessment Specialist (MAS) receives the results through a secure portal within a week. (The raw data from the written tests is the property of the Ministerial Assessment Specialist and is not viewed by anyone else.) Clinical interviews are scheduled several times a year, usually on Saturdays at the Conference Mission Center. The MAS uses information gleaned from this interview, as well as the tests, autobiographical report and references, to compose a comprehensive report.

As mentioned above, the contents of this Psychological Assessment Report is the property of the BOOM and its District Committees and is never shared in full with the candidate. Rather, a Feedback Session is scheduled during which the MAS shares with the Candidate and the DCOM chair (or their designee) the recommendations from the report. These recommendations may include the need for additional counseling, areas for interpersonal growth or concerns about unresolved personal issues in need of attention. The candidate has the opportunity to respond and ask questions of the professional. The report recommendations and the proceedings of the Feedback session are relayed to the District Committee for consideration in the candidate's certification interview. The full report will be placed in the candidate's personnel file but is not available for supervisory review. **The DCOM must keep record of any discussion with the candidate regarding following through on the psychologist's recommendations, and the candidate's fulfillment (or lack there-of) needs to be included in the candidate's file.**

If the candidate would like to coordinate behavioral health services, the Ministerial Assessment Specialist will consider providing consultation with a candidate's clinical specialist on a case by case basis.

Cost: (as of 10/2018)

The Board of Ordained Ministry covers the cost of the Feedback session, as well as a portion of the MAS fees and any additional interviews.

The cost to the candidate/local church is \$600 (in addition to the initial \$75 enrollment fee for UMCARES).

Local Church Financial Support

"It is out of the faith and witness of the congregation that men and women respond to God's call to licensed or ordained ministry. Every local church should intentionally nurture candidates

for licensed or ordained ministry, providing for spiritual and financial support, as well as supporting the Ministerial Education Fund, for their education and formation as servant leaders

for the ministry of the whole people of God. (paragraph 247.8)"

Please note the Seven Year Rule: For certified candidates that are seeking provisional membership and commissioning, if it has been seven years since they underwent psychological assessment, they must be re-evaluated.

Candidates requiring the re-testing for Psychological Assessment before provisional membership and commissioning must complete this requirement in time for the report to be in their file at the time all other written material is due.

District Committees on Ordained Ministry and/or the Board of Ordained Ministry may require re-testing or further testing at any stage of candidacy when circumstances warrant it.