

## ADVANCED COURSE OF STUDY

The purpose of the Advanced Course of Study for Ordained Ministry is to provide a curriculum which will enable a local pastor to meet the educational requirements for full conference membership and ordination as elder.

Requirements are stated in the *2012 Book of Discipline*:

Local pastors may fulfill the requirements for provisional membership when they have

- a) reached forty years of age;
- b) satisfied all requirements of Sections 1-3 and 7-14 of this paragraph
- c) completed the five-year Course of Study for ordained ministry, of which no more than one-half may be taken by correspondence or Internet...
- d) an **Advanced Course of Study** consisting of **thirty-two semester hours of graduate theological study** offered by a seminary recognized by the University Senate ; or its equivalent as determined by the GBHEM that shall include United Methodist history, doctrine and polity. (§324.6)

Description of requirements and the process for ACOS:

1. Local pastors need to complete a total of **32 semester hours of graduate theological studies** at a University Senate approved school; or an equivalent as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.
2. Advanced Course of Study courses will not duplicate those included in the basic five-year Course of Study curriculum.
3. The Book of Discipline (§324.4) refers to the basic graduate theological studies for persons pursuing ordination. Some conferences require and GBHEM recommends that these courses be included within the 32 hours of the Advanced Course of Study, understanding that for ACOS they will be upper level classes as the basic classes were covered in COS. These graduate theological studies include:
  - a) Old Testament
  - b) New Testament
  - c) Theology;
  - d) Church history
  - e) Mission of the church in the world
  - f) Evangelism
  - g) Worship/liturgy
  - h) United Methodist doctrine
  - i) United Methodist polity
  - j) United Methodist history (§324.4a)

4. A minimum of ***six semester hours of credit are required for United Methodist history, doctrine and polity.*** These may be taken at any United Methodist Seminary or any University Senate approved theological school. They may be taken by correspondence through the COS office of GBHEM; UM history and polity are also available online through the COS office.
5. Advanced COS student is encouraged to enroll as a non-degree student at a United Methodist Seminary, or a seminary approved by the University Senate, and to take appropriate Master's level courses. GBHEM offers scholarships for seminary enrolled non-degree ACOS students at \$300 per credit hour. Application form can be obtained from the GBHEM website. The scholarship is sent to the seminary once the student is enrolled.
6. Through the exception listed in ¶324.6d for Advanced Course of Study equivalency, GBHEM has authorized certain Regional COS schools related to a University, to offer ACOS classes. These offerings must use the same criteria for Advanced Course of Study. These classes must be vigorous in study and offered at a Master's degree level. Although they do not offer academic credit, the classes will count toward the Advanced Course of Study requirements.
7. One basic unit of Clinical Pastoral Education may be recognized as the equivalent of six semester hours in the Advanced Course of Study.
8. Graduate studies which parallel courses offered for advanced course of study, but not taken in a theological school, may be approved by the GBHEM up to a maximum of nine (9) semester hours. Such studies must have been taken within the last 10 years.
9. Each student shall send a transcript of completed courses to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. These become a part of their permanent ministerial educational record.
10. Students may complete no more than 10 hours of online or correspondence courses within the Advanced COS.
11. Individual students are responsible for ensuring they meet particular Advanced Course of Study requirements established by the annual conference in which they are pursuing membership and ordination.

1. Undergraduate Requirement:

A candidate for provisional membership shall have completed a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university. Exceptions to the undergraduate degree requirement may be made with the approval of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry for persons who have a minimum of sixty semester hours of undergraduate credit from a University Senate approved school. ¶324.3