



The Presbytery of  
**DONEGAL**

## Process for Examination of Those Seeking Membership or Positions as Teaching Elders in Donegal Presbytery

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Adopted November 13, 2012  
Update Adopted: March 10, 2016

### The Administrative Commission for Examinations shall be empowered:

1. To conduct on behalf of the presbytery any and all parts of examinations for presbytery membership and/or installation for all teaching elders seeking admission to the presbytery.

The Commission shall conduct examinations for ordination for candidates from another presbytery receiving a call from a church in Donegal Presbytery, or for candidates under the care of Donegal Presbytery who have received a call within the bounds of the presbytery.

The Commission shall receive the report of the “Fit Between Person and Position Conversation” conducted by the Connecting Our Ministry Commission, including whether or not the COM recommends that the call be extended and whether the Terms of Call are in order. The Commission shall conduct any other examinations specifically assigned to it by the presbytery on an occasional basis (such as examinations for teaching elders outside the presbytery seeking temporary pastoral relationships within the presbytery or ordinations of candidates under care of this presbytery when requested by the presbytery of call).

There are infrequent situations where extension of a pastoral call requires a  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote of the presbytery, including approval for an interim pastor to become the next installed pastor, approval for an associate pastor to become the next head of staff/pastor. Another situation is approval of a call without a search to a position already being served, which may involve ordination. In these situations, if requested by the Connecting Our Ministry Commission, the Commission may conduct the examination for membership in the presbytery and ordination, if required, on an “if the way be clear” basis prior to the presbytery meeting where the call may be considered. When it is advisable, a member of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry may be invited for a particular examination if a candidate under the care of the presbytery is being examined.

When the Commission has taken action they shall send their report to the Executive Administrative Assistant, who shall send the information to the Connecting Our Ministry Committee, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry when appropriate, and the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery on their actions regarding each teaching elder seeking admission to the presbytery; i.e., that it:

- Sustains the examination in all its parts and as a whole and declares the teaching elder/examinee approved for presbytery membership and/or installation; or
  - Does not sustain part or all of the examination.
2. To enroll teaching elders into the presbytery and to conduct the final approval of the terms of call for teaching elders, upon receipt of the report that the Connecting Our Ministry Commission has found the terms to be in order.
  3. To conduct the final Fitness Between Person and Position review for each teaching elder receiving a call from a congregation within the presbytery.
  4. To recommend to the Connecting Our Ministry Committee that a teaching elder receive extended supervision, mentoring, or such remedial work as the Commission deems necessary and appropriate.
  5. To appoint Commissions to ordain and/or install teaching elders.

As part of the examination process for a particular teaching elder with a call, a liaison person designated by the Connecting Our Ministry Committee may be present as an ex-officio member of the Commission.

All actions of the Administrative Commission on Examinations are to be reported to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery who shall ensure that the actions are reported at the next stated gathering of the presbytery. The presbytery may rescind or amend an action of the Commission in the same way actions of the presbytery are modified. (G-3.0109b(6)).

As part of the report of the Commission at the next stated gathering of the presbytery, members of the Commission shall introduce each teaching elder whom the Commission has approved for presbytery membership and/or ordination or installation. A statement of faith and a biographical faith journey written by the teaching elder shall be included with the presbytery packet. After presentation to the presbytery, each teaching elder shall be given a brief period to make a statement concerning his or her call and Christian experience. Then the new member(s) will be welcomed to the presbytery with prayer and a laying on of hands by friends and representatives of the calling church(es).

A document prepared by the Commission outlining potential questions for use in the examination of teaching elders is posted on the presbytery website. This document is sent to each examinee prior to their meeting with the Commission.

### **Composition of the Commission:**

- The Administrative Commission for Examinations shall be composed of nine (9) members approximately equally ruling elders and teaching elders elected from within Donegal Presbytery, with one third of its membership elected annually.

- Members of the Commission shall be elected to serve terms of no more than three years and may be eligible for reelection. However, no member shall be eligible to serve more than six consecutive years, and a member who has served six successive years shall be ineligible for election to the Commission for at least one year.
- In the process of nominating Commission members, the Discerning Gifts and Passions Committee shall seek to identify persons with expertise in the various academic and practical disciplines pertinent to ministry. Careful attention shall also be given to insure both fair ethnic and gender representation and balance in theological perspective on the Commission. It is recommended that at least one member of the Commission shall be an active member of the Connecting Our Ministry Committee.
- A quorum of a majority of the nine (9) members of the Commission shall be required to conduct Commission business. If an examinee is being considered for a position in a church with which one or more Commission members are connected, those Commission members will be excused from the examination and the quorum will become a majority of those members present.
- The Stated Clerk and Executive Presbyter are ex-officio members of the Commission. An Assistant Stated Clerk may be assigned as a commission assistant on an ex officio basis.

Meetings of the Commission shall be held on a specific date and time each month so that the Connecting Our Ministry Committee, Pastor Nominating Committees, and others shall be able to adjust their examination schedules appropriately. Members of the presbytery not on the Commission may be accorded the right to address the commission with permission from the Moderator.

The place of meetings of the Administrative Commission for Examinations shall be at the presbytery office. The Commission may change the location or the date when the situation demands and may cancel a meeting if there is no pressing business. Also the Moderator or Co-Moderators of the Commission, the Stated Clerk, and the Executive Presbyter are authorized to evaluate weather or other emergencies that may arise in connection with scheduled meetings of the Commission and to take action in response. Decisions about meeting times, locations and cancellations may be advised by email conversations, with the final decision made by one of those authorized to do so.

The Commission may convene a conference call to deliberate and make other decisions, if an in-person meeting is not feasible.

This examination process will be reviewed periodically by the Examination Commission. The Commission may recommend revisions of the process to the Presbytery Leadership Team who, in turn, may propose revisions of the process for approval by the presbytery.