

507. Educational Requirements for Ordination.

1. Educational Objectives. Following the admonition of John Wesley to unite both knowledge and vital piety, candidates for ordination as a deacon or elder within the Global Methodist Church must fulfill basic educational requirements as a part of their preparation process. As a global church, the specific requirements may vary in different regions of the world (¶ 507.2), but all shall be aimed at ensuring that our clergy everywhere have studied to “present themselves to God as one approved, as workers who do not need to be ashamed and who correctly handle the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

2. Pathways to Ordination. While educational programs and opportunities may be different based upon geography and life circumstances, those wishing to serve God’s people through ordination within the Global Methodist Church should pursue the highest level of learning and preparation possible. The historic degree in North American settings, designed to prepare an elder for a lifetime of ministry, is generally the Master of Divinity (M.Div.), though an equivalent education is possible through such degrees as a Master of Arts (M.A.) in biblical studies, a Master’s in Ministry (M.Min.), a Master’s in Theology (M.Th.), or, for persons residing other than in the United States and Europe, a Bachelor’s degree (B.A.) in the practice of ministry including biblical studies. In addition, individuals whose setting, age, or life circumstances make such formal academic degree programs difficult or impracticable may, with a secondary diploma, complete a non-degree certificate of pastoral studies from an educational program or programs approved by the Commission on Ministry, requiring the completion of at least the core classes outlined below.

A list of approved schools or programs for ministry education will be maintained by the Commission on Ministry and Higher Education. Beginning January 1, 2026, candidates for ordination are required to choose from the list of approved institutions or programs to complete educational requirements for ordination. Students who have completed their studies or enrolled prior to January 1, 2026, are not required to complete their studies at an approved school.

The Global Methodist Church will accept courses, singly or in combination, from any of the above listed degree or certificate programs, so long as the required courses are successfully completed for the level of ordination being pursued.

3. Deacons’ Educational Requirements. A total of ten courses (approximately 30 credit hours) are required for those ordained as deacons. These ten courses are:

- Introduction to Old Testament
- Introduction to New Testament
- Systematic Theology
- Wesleyan Theology and Doctrine
- Methodist History and Polity of the Global Methodist Church
- Basics of Preaching
- Pastoral Care
- Evangelism and Mission
- Wesleyan Understanding of the Sacraments and Worship
- Inductive Bible Study or Hermeneutics