

# CERTIFICATION

in Specialized Ministries in  
The United Methodist Church



**HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY**

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



## Urban Ministry

### Educational Requirements

Individuals seeking professional certification in Urban Ministry in The United Methodist Church must meet the standards set by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's Division of Ordained Ministry (GBHEM). These include successful completion of five (5) certification courses relating to Urban Ministry. Specialized ministers are certified by the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM), in cooperation with GBHEM.

Courses are designed to provide a graduate academic foundation. Other requirements for certification include personal and church qualifications and experience in the area of Urban Ministry, as determined by GBHEM. The five courses include theories and methods of teaching the Bible, exploration of the pedagogical and theological bases for ministries and equipping people as disciples for the transformation of the world. Courses also include an understanding of The United Methodist Church, its structure, curriculum and resources.

Each course must be offered for no less than two (2) semester (or equivalent quarter) hours of graduate academic credit. All certification courses must be taken at a United Methodist seminary or approved graduate school. Exceptions may be made for other seminaries on the University Senate-approved list in consultation with an annual conference BOM and GBHEM.

Three of the five courses may be taken online. Candidates may participate in more than one course each year. A maximum of ten (10) years is allowed for the certification

studies in ministry careers. Two years' experience working in a specialized area is required for certification. Experience is defined as a contractual agreement with supervision, accountability, evaluation and continuing education in a specialized ministry area. Sufficient experience is approved by the annual conference BOM and may also require pre-approval.

### CORE COMPETENCIES FOR CERTIFICATION IN URBAN MINISTRY

1. A biblical understanding of the nature of the city in contemporary society
2. Ability to develop and administer a program that builds Christian community and seeks to bridge differences with creative positive connections
3. An understanding of the cultural dynamics of urban life and the significance of the presence of the church in urban communities
4. Skill in determining the needs of communities and how to build partnerships to respond to those needs
5. Understanding of the United Methodist tradition and Wesleyan heritage as a presence in urban life

## REQUIRED COURSES FOR URBAN MINISTRY

### 1. **Engaging the Bible in the Urban Ministry Setting:**

An exploration of the nature of the city in the Bible and its role in congregations and communities. Particular themes will be explored in their various biblical contexts and in relation to the contemporary world.

### 2. **Practical Theology and Ministry in the Urban Setting:**

An overview of theological issues, basic theological concepts and practical theology methods. The course explores ways of engaging theory, context and practice in Christian community development and organizing.

### 3. **Urban Community:**

This class provides students opportunities to enhance their affinity for ministering in urban settings. It will provide immersion experience in urban settings, including an examination of the cultural dynamics of urban life and the church. Students will be encouraged to develop approaches to bridge differences and create positive connections.

### 4. **Congregations and Communities as Partners in Urban Ministry:**

Students will examine best practices used by congregations and community groups that have successfully launched and grown ministries in urban settings. An elective course can meet this requirement, such as a course in health-related ministries, vulnerable youth, children living in poverty, prison ministry, housing, living with the poor or community organizing.

### 5. **United Methodist Studies:**

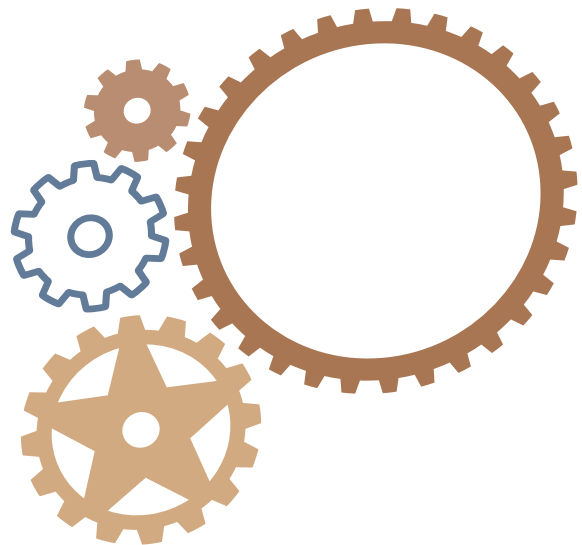
Understanding of and grounding in United Methodist doctrine and polity, and the practice of ministry. The course may include a study of doctrine, the General Rules, Social Principles and polity of the UMC as found in The Book of Discipline, or historical issues in UMC polity (organization and structure of contemporary United Methodism).

GBHEM may accept the two (2) courses in Bible and theology required for other areas of certification as meeting the requirements for Urban Ministry certification when these courses have been taken within the past ten (10) years and a special assignment related to Urban Ministry is completed in consultation with GBHEM.

## SHOULD I SEEK PROFESSIONAL OR PARAPROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION?

Professional certification is available to people with an undergraduate degree and graduate credit courses at a United Methodist seminary or approved graduate school, or to students graduating from a United Methodist-related college, where they have completed the required courses in an area of specialization and have served two years in a specialized ministry area.

Paraprofessional certification is available to people who may or may not have an undergraduate degree and are working in areas of specialized ministry. Paraprofessional certification does not carry academic credit and is designed for people seeking training in a specialized ministry as a worker or volunteer.



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