

**Louisiana Conference
Board of Ordained Ministry
Division of Deacons and Diaconal Ministers
Policy Number 304
Theological Studies Requirements**

Individuals to be considered for Deacon Commissioning and Provisional Membership within the Louisiana Conference of The United Methodist Church must have completed all of their theological studies at a University Senate approved Seminary prior to being commissioned. These studies are outlined in the 2016 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church ¶324.4a or ¶324.5c “have completed a minimum of one half of the twenty-seven semester hours of the basic graduate theological studies of the Christian faith including the areas of Old Testament, New Testament, theology, church history, mission of the church in the world, evangelism, worship/liturgy, and United Methodist doctrine, polity, and history...”

This policy is to be implemented February 1, 2006.

Policy adopted by the Division of Deacon on November 28, 2005

Policy approved by the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry on January 24, 2006

This policy was reviewed in 2008 and the Task Force on Probationary Membership Commissioning recommended the CBOM maintain the current policy where commissioning is done upon the completion of seminary course work due to the following reasons:

1. There is no practical advantage to the candidates. Early commissioning does not impact years of service nor does it shorten the ordination process.
2. Early commissioning “starts the clock” regarding the maximum time a candidate may be continued. ¶ 327: “*No member shall be continued on provisional membership beyond the eighth regular session following their admission to provisional membership.*”
3. Lack of clarity in the *Discipline* as to where candidates would have sacramental authority.
4. Unresolved issues relating to mandated supervision of the candidates by the Conference Board of Ministry and District Superintendents as well as expenses related to the mandated supervision (¶ 326.3).

Revised wording to be consistent with the 2012 Book of Discipline on March 1, 2013

Revised wording to be consistent with the 2016 Book of Discipline on February 2, 2017