

PART V
GUIDELINES FOR THE FORMATION AND CONDUCT OF AN
ORDINATION EXAMINING COUNCIL

Note: It is the responsibility of the local Church to initiate the ordination process upon recommendation of the CBOQ Credentials Committee.

In the case of a Minister, an Ordination Examining Council is convened by the Church where the individual serves.

In the case of a Chaplain, Missionary, CBOQ Resource Staff, etc. it is usually the Church where the ordinand holds membership, which convenes the Examining Council.

Some Associations spell out in their Constitutions specific time stipulations between the final meeting of a Candidate with the Credentials Committee and the Ordination Examining Council.

A. RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF:

1. The Ordaining Church (Prior to Convening an Examining Council)

a. Following the receipt of a letter from the CBOQ Credentials Committee acknowledging the candidate's completion of all accreditation requirements and a final meeting with the Association Ministry Committee, the local Church may begin the ordination process by:

i) making the following motion at a duly called Church Business Meeting.

Moved by _____ Seconded by _____
That we (name of Church) seek the ordination of (name of candidate) and therefore call an Ordination Examining Council to consider the advisability of ordaining him/her to the work of Christian Ministry.

If time is of the essence and the congregational leadership is satisfied that the appropriate letter will be forthcoming from the Credentials Committee, the motion could be:

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that if and when the Credentials Committee of the CBOQ issues a letter acknowledging that (name of candidate) has met all accreditation requirements then we (name of Church) call an ordination examining council to consider the advisability of ordaining him/her to the work of Christian Ministry.

ii) writing a letter to the CBOQ Credentials Committee, following the acceptance of the above motion to acknowledge receipt of the CBOQ Credentials Committee recommendation of the candidate for ordination, pending the approval of the Church and Association, through the process of an Ordination Council. The letter will inform the CBOQ Credentials Committee of the Date and Time of the Ordination Council.

Sample Letter to the Credentials Committee

Church Name & Address To the Credentials Committee of Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec	Date
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At a duly called Church Business Meeting on _____ the Church congregation of _____ voted to call an Ordination Examining Council on (date and time) _____ with the express purpose of approving (candidate's name) for ordination to the Christian Ministry.

This letter is our formal notice to you, in response to your letter informing us that he/she has met all requirements for credentials with the CBOQ, that we are proceeding to call an Ordination Examining Council for him/her.

b. The Church Leadership needs to initiate the following motions at a Church business meeting.

Motion Authorizing the Clerk to send letters of invitation.

Moved by _____ Seconded by _____
That the Church Clerk be authorized to send a letter to the Churches of the (Association) inviting them to appoint their minister(s) and two delegates from each CBOQ Church, to attend an Ordination Examining Council to be held at (time) on (date) at (place), as well as inviting them to a Service of Ordination to be held at (time) on (date) at (place), should the Examination Council recommend the ordination of (candidate).

Motion to Nominate and Appoint five (5) delegates (may include Minister(s)) to the OEC

Moved by _____ Seconded by _____
That (list of names) be appointed to be our delegates at the Ordination Examining Council of (candidate).

Note: Evening Meetings should start at a time convenient to the farthest Church in the association.

Note: Any date for an Ordination Service must be understood to be tentative until there has been a successful completion of the Ordination Examining Council and should normally be set no sooner than two weeks after the Ordination Examining Council, with the understanding that the Ordination Examining Council may seek to delay such event upon successful examination of the Ordinand.

c. Once these motions have been passed, an individual (or committee) should be appointed to oversee the planning of the Examining Council.

The candidate for ordination need not sit on this committee.

2. The Church Clerk

a. Once authorized by the Church, the Clerk will in consultation with the association and clerk, send out a letter of invitation for the purpose of convening the Examining Council. A copy of the candidate's Ordination Statement should also be sent with the invitation.

This may be done by email with instructions to reproduce the candidate's ordination statement for all delegates.

This letter should be sent to:

- all other Churches within the Association
- the Association Moderator/Chair
- the Association Clerk
- CBOQ Credentials Committee

Note: This letter should be sent out at least six weeks prior to the date of the Ordination Examination Council

Sample Letter to Other Churches of the Association

Church Name & Address	Date
Dear Friends in Christ,	
(Church Name), after recommendation by the CBOQ Credentials Committee, has decided to call an Ordination Examining Council to consider the advisability of ordaining (candidate) to the work of the Christian Ministry.	
You are therefore invited to appoint your Minister(s)* and two delegates to attend the Council to be held in this Church on (date), at (time).	
Sincerely (Church Clerk)	
<small>"Ministers" in this case, refers to Ministers who are ordained and serving on the pastoral staff of <i>your</i> Church. Proxy votes are not permissible.</small>	

b. The Church Clerk will also need to prepare a Roll of Churches and Delegates, where ministers and delegates will sign in (by printing their name) upon arrival on the evening of the Examining Council.

CHURCH	MINISTER(S)	DELEGATES
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c. At least one week prior to the ordination examining council, the Church clerk should conduct a straw poll of the association Churches to ensure that quorum will be met.

d. In the opening moments of the Examining Council, **the Church Clerk** will serve as the Council Clerk, until the Council appoints a new Clerk.

e During these opening moments the Church Clerk will be asked to read the following documents to the Council:

- i. The Letter received from CBOQ Credentials Committee addressed to the Church.
- ii. The Church Minutes recording the motion to seek the ordination of the candidate.
- iii. The Church minutes recording the motion to authorize the Church Clerk to send out invitations to other Churches in the Association for the purpose of convening an OEC.
- iv. The Roll of the Churches and delegates.

3. Those planning the Ordination Examining Council

Someone other than the Individual being ordained should be responsible for planning this aspect of the ordination process. It may be an individual, the Official Board, the Deacons, or a special committee.

This person will need to:

a. Confirm the availability of the Association Moderator/Chair and Association Clerk or their replacements as determined by the Association Executive.

b. Prepare the agenda for the Ordination Examining Council

c. Prepare the order of proceedings for the Ordination Service.

d. Select the Ordination Examining Council (OEC) worship music and Scripture Reading in consultation with the candidate.

e. Prepare extra copies of the Order of Proceedings and the candidate's Statement for the Ministers and Delegates of the OEC.

f. Brief the person on required duties as Moderator/Chair of the OEC up until the new Moderator/Chair is appointed. (Usually this is the Moderator/Chair of the Association).

g. Brief the Church Clerk on duties during the Council.

h. Appoint a Church member to lead the opening devotional, Scripture Reading and Prayer.

i. In consultation with the candidate, appoint someone to officially introduce the candidate to the Council. This introduction should include relevant biographical and educational background.

j. Arrange for refreshments following the disbanding of the OEC.

k. Select Council delegates to make the following motions at the OEC, which need to be made by delegates of the ordaining Church.

Motion 1 “That the Moderator/Chair and Clerk of the (Name) Association (or their appointees as determined previously by the Association Executive) serve as a Moderator/Chair and Clerk of the Ordination Examining Council.”

Motion 2 “That special Visitors be invited to sit on the Council and participate but with the understanding that they will not participate in the final vote.”

Motion 3 “That the delegates of (ordaining Church) accept this Examining Council consisting of those ministers and delegates of the (Name) Association, listed on the roll of Churches and Delegates.”

Motion 4 “That (list 2 to 3 names) serve as scrutineers for this Council.”

Motion 5 In planning the OEC the candidate will be asked whether he/she would prefer to present the Ordination Statement in whole or in parts. The appropriate motion will then be made at the OEC. E.g., where the candidate wishes to present the statement in whole, “That the candidate be permitted to present his/her ordination statement in full, in accordance with his/her preference.” Or, “That the candidate be permitted to present his/her statement in parts...etc”

Motion 6 “That (candidate) be approved for ordination to the Christian Ministry by this Ordination Examining Council.”

(If the ballot vote is less than two-thirds majority the following motion should be used.)
“That Ordination should be deferred until the candidate has satisfied another Ordination Examining Council.”

Motion 7 “That an Organizing Committee consisting of the Moderator/Chair and the Clerk of the Association, (candidate), (list of names from the candidate’s Church) serve as an Arrangements Committee for the Ordination of (candidate) which will take place at (place) at (time) on (date).”

Motion 8 “That the scrutineers be instructed to destroy all ballots.”

a. Prepare appropriate and adequate ballots and pencils. Motion 6 should be placed on the ballot followed by “yes ___” “no ___”.

b. Set up a sign-in table for the Church Clerk where delegates will receive an Order of Proceedings, a ballot, and, if needed, an extra copy of the candidate’s ordination statement.

c. Make a decision as to the steps, which will be taken if there is not a quorum for the Examining Council. (See 2, Duties of the Church Clerk, section (c) above.

4. The Candidate

a. Ensure that all CBOQ and Association requirements for ordination have been satisfied.

b. Prepare an Ordination Statement in consultation with the Supervisor and the AMC for presentation at the OEC.

An example of the structure of an ordination statement is offered below, but note that this is only an example, not a rule!

- i. (250 words) The Individual's conversion and Christian experience;
- ii. (150 words) Sense and direction of a Call to Christian Ministry;
- iii. (250 words) Evidence of the Individual's particular spiritual gifting and ministry skills;
- iv. The Individual's theological interpretations and doctrinal statements which inform ministry;
- v. (1000 words) Philosophy of Ministry (may include issues such as Discipleship, Evangelism, Equipping, Specific Ministry functions Ecclesiology, Role of the minister etc.)
- vi. (250 words) Appreciation of Baptist Polity and Distinctives

It is suggested that the Candidate present the Ordination statement to the local Church, either as an adult elective or discussion group, to gain feedback on the statement and clarify points, if needed. See VII-2 (d) of the Manual for Accreditation, Ordination & Induction for guidelines.

c. Ensure that a copy of the Ordination Statement is given to the Minister of the ordaining congregation, the CBOQ Credentials Committee and Supervisor, and sent to each Church six weeks before the OEC date.

5. The Council Moderator/Chair

- a. Serve as Moderator/Chair of the OEC once appointed by the Council.
- b. Ensure that the OEC is conducted in accordance with Convention and Association specifications.
- c. Ensure that all delegates are aware of their duties. This may be accomplished by reading to the delegates their duties as listed below.
- d. Ensure that those motions listed on page 5 are brought properly before the OEC.
- e. Announce the decision of the OEC including the number of those in favor of the motion and the number of those opposed, as well as ensuring that there is in fact a two-thirds majority to carry the motion.
- f. Sit on the Arrangements Committee for the Ordination Service.
- g. Participate in the capacity of Moderator/Chair at the Ordination Service.

6. The Council Clerk

- a. Serve as Council Clerk once appointed by the OEC.

b. Maintain accurate minutes of the proceedings. Copies of these Minutes should be provided to the local Church, the Association, and the CBOQ Credentials Committee.

c. Report on the results of the OEC at the Ordination Service.

7. The Examining Council Delegates

a. Listen carefully to the candidate's presentation.

b. *Through the Moderator/Chair*, address any questions to the candidate regarding the presentation for the purpose of clarification or further information.

c. Evaluate the sincerity of the candidate's call to the Ministry of Jesus Christ as well as the ordained ministry as a person set apart for leadership in Christ's Mission.

d. Determine why the candidate feels called to the ordained ministry within the Baptist tradition.

e. Determine whether the candidate's doctrine, theology and ecclesiology are in keeping with Christian tradition and the Polity and Practice of Baptist Churches.

f. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, discern the candidate's suitability for Ordained Christian Ministry with CBOQ.

8. Duties of the Ordination Service Arrangement Committee

The Ordination Service Arrangement Committee will normally consist of the Candidate, the Council Moderator/Chair, the Council Clerk as well as a few members from the candidate's Church.

Although the Arrangement Committee is officially appointed by the OEC following the approval of the candidate, the actual work of this committee will have begun weeks earlier.

As soon as the Church voted to convene an OEC, an Arrangement Committee consisting of the Candidate and a few Church members should have begun the work of arranging the Ordination Service.

The following needs to be completed:

- a. The Candidate chooses a Guest Preacher to speak at the Ordination Service.
- b. Invitations are sent out.
- c. The Order of Service is prepared.
- d. The CBOQ Representative, the Examining Council's Moderator/Chair and Clerk are informed of their involvement in the Ordaining Service.

It is customary to invite the CBOQ Representative to offer the Ordination Prayer, the Right Hand of Fellowship, and the Certificate of Ordination on behalf of CBOQ.

It is traditionally the OEC Moderator/Chair who leads the Inquiry of both the Ordinand and the Congregation.

The role of the OEC Clerk is to present the introductory remarks and the report of the OEC.

e. The candidate chooses those individuals who will participate in the Laying on of Hands. This will include any ordained clergy present at the ordination service.

f. Make arrangements for refreshments following the ordination Service.

B. ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS OF AN EXAMINING COUNCIL

Note:

This agenda is an outline of standard Ordination Council procedure, with suggestions for items to be included. However, it is the responsibility of each Association to determine the exact order they are comfortable with. Plans should be discussed with the Association Moderator/Chair if there should be no quorum.

The following steps should take place once the Ordination Examining Council is assembled:

1. The local Church previously appoints a representative to initially chair the Ordination Examining Council (OEC) until the election of a Moderator/Chair and Clerk of the Ordination Examining Council.
2. As Delegates arrive they should register in a book or record form provided by the local Church, where they indicate their name and the Church they represent. Invited individuals should also register their presence.
3. The Church representative calls the OEC to order and ensures that there is a Quorum (representatives from at least **one-third of all the member Churches of the Association**).

It is the responsibility of the Church, which has called for the OEC to determine the steps to be taken if there is not a quorum. *In the event of a failure to obtain quorum there is no option but to reschedule the ordination examining council.*

4. A Devotional Service should at this point occur. The Devotional service may include the reading of a passage of scripture, a prayer of invocation, and prayers for wisdom and discernment. Musical worship could also be integrated into this time.

5. The Church Clerk calls the roll of participating Churches and invited individuals.

6. Letters of endorsement and recommendation are read from:

- the CBOQ Credentials Committee and
- the Association Ministry Committee.
- any other relevant documents, e.g. letter of endorsement from the ministry setting of a chaplain, para-Church worker, or counsellor.

*In the interest of both saving time and avoiding the impression that this is a bureaucratic proceeding, it is recommended that the clerk merely indicate that the above letters of permission and endorsement have been received without reading them in detail. I.e., “_____ Church has received a letter from the CBOQ Credentials Committee indicating that candidate’s name has met all requirements for accreditation with the CBOQ and may be ordained. We have also received a letter from the South Central Association Committee commending candidate’s name to us for ordination to the Christian Ministry. Any letter of endorsement could be read in full *at the discretion of the moderator.**

7. The following minutes of the local Church are read:

- The decision to seek Ordination of the Candidate and the authorization of the sending of invitations to attend the OEC.

8. A Moderator/Chair and Clerk of the OEC are elected by motion and vote of the local Church. In most cases the Moderator/Chair will chair the meeting unless the Association Executive has determined otherwise.

The Clerk will keep minutes of the council meeting and shall file records of the Council's action with the local Church, the Association, and the CBOQ Credentials Committee.

It is not imperative that the Moderator/Chair and Clerk of the Association serve as the Moderator/Chair and Clerk of the Examining Council. Those with more experience may be appointed.

Motion (*Moved & Seconded by Delegates of the ordaining Church*)

“That (Name) and (Name) serve as Moderator/Chair and Clerk of the Ordination Examining Council.”

9. Recognition is made of invited persons and visitors. When the minister is serving outside the local Church, this should include persons from the ministry setting. They are invited to sit with the Council and ask questions but will not participate in the actual vote.

Motion (*Moved & Seconded by Delegates of the ordaining Church*)

“That special Visitors be invited to sit on the Council and participate but with the understanding that they will not participate in the final vote”.

10. The local Church members indicate by motion and vote, their acceptance of the OEC.

Motion (*Moved & Seconded by Delegates of the ordaining Church*)

“That the delegates of (ordaining Church) accept the examining council consisting of those ministers and delegates of the (name) association, listed on the roll of Churches and delegates.”

11. The elected Moderator/Chair shall assume the chair at this point.

12. Moderator/Chair instructs the Council:

- Who may participate
- Delegates allowed two questions each to encourage broad participation
- Who may vote
- The voting process

13. *Where it was once the custom for the Council to vote on whether to hear the candidate's statement in whole or in part, the South Central Association deems this to be unnecessary and no longer requires this to be done.*

14. Appointment of Scrutineers

Motion (*Moved & Seconded by Delegates of the ordaining Church*)

“That (list 4 to 5 names) serve as scrutineers for this Council.”

15. A representative of the local Church formally introduces the Candidate, and facilitates a time of prayer prior to the reading of the Ordination Statement.

16. The Candidate presents the Ordination statement.

17. Questioning takes place as previously decided on either the whole or the sections of the Ordination Statement.

18. The Candidate retires from the room along with any of the Candidate's family present, both immediate and extended.

19. The Council deliberates, and spends time in prayerful consideration of the candidate.

20. The Moderator/Chair makes a request for a Vote.

Two motions are possible depending on the outcome of the deliberations.

If no obvious problems or concerns are raised in the time of deliberation regarding the Candidate's qualifications, suitability and preparedness for Ordained Ministry, the following motion may be made.

Motion (a)

“That (candidate) be approved for ordination to the Christian Ministry by this Ordination Examining Council.”

A two thirds (2/3) majority of the ballots cast is necessary to carry the motion. Spoiled ballots and abstentions are not counted.

21. A vote is taken by secret ballot.

22. The Scrutineers gather the ballots and retire to count them.

23. The Scrutineers present the outcome of the vote to the Moderator.

24. The Moderator/Chair announces the outcome of the vote to the Council.

If Motion (a) is not carried by a two-thirds majority of the OEC then the following motion should be made.

Motion (b)

“That Ordination should be deferred until the candidate has satisfied another ordination Examining Council.”

The Candidate and family members are invited to return.

25. The decision of the OEC is announced to the Candidate.

26. If the Candidate is approved, a motion should be made asking that an Arrangements Committee be appointed to prepare the Service of Ordination. (See motion 7, page 6)
This Committee should include the Ordinand, the local Church and an Association Representative.

Motion

“That an Organizing Committee consisting of the Moderator/Chair and the Clerk of the Association, (candidate), (list of names from the candidate’s Church) serve as an Arrangements Committee for the Ordination of (candidate) which will take place at (place) at (time) on (date).”

27. The Moderator/Chair calls for a motion to have the ballots destroyed.

Motion

“That the scrutineer(s) be instructed to destroy all ballots.”

28. The Moderator/Chair closes the Council with:

- (a) A Closing Prayer
- (b) A Benediction

29. The OEC is disbanded.

C. SAMPLE: ORDINATION EXAMINING COUNCIL

Welcome and Call to Order *Moderator/Chair or Member of Ordaining Church*

Devotional: *Member of Ordaining Church*

- Song of Invocation
- Scripture Reading
- Prayer of Invocation
- Prayer for Wisdom and Guidance

Calling of the Role of Churches and Delegates *Church Clerk*

Presentation of the Credentials and Church Documents *Church Clerk*

- Letter of recommendation from the CBOQ Credentials Committee
- Letter of recommendation by the Association Ministry Committee
- Minutes of the Church motion to seek ordination
- Minutes of the Church motion to authorize the sending of invitations

Instead of reading all these documents, the Church Clerk may elect to mention that the first two documents were received and on that basis at a business meeting held on (date) the Church passed the following motions (read the two motions.)

Election of the Ordination Examining Council Moderator/Chair and Clerk *Church Moderator/Chair*
(Usually Association Moderator/Chair and Clerk)

Motion *(Moved & Seconded by Delegates of the ordaining Church)*

“That (Name) and (Name) serve as Moderator/Chair and Clerk of the Ordination Examining Council.”

Recognition of invited Persons and Visitors *Church Moderator/Chair*
(To participate without vote)

Motion *(Moved & Seconded by Delegates of the ordaining Church)*

That special Visitors be invited to sit on the Council and participate with the understanding that they will not participate in the final vote.

Acceptance of the Examining Council *Church Moderator/Chair*

Motion *(Moved & Seconded by Delegates of the ordaining Church)*

That the delegates of (ordaining Church) accept this Examining Council consisting of those ministers and delegates of the (Name) Association, listed on the roll of Churches and Delegates.”

Council Moderator/Chair chairs the meeting from this point on

Moderator’s/Chair’s Instructions to the Delegates

Appointment of Scrutineers

Motion (*Moved & Seconded by Delegates of the Ordaining Church*)

“That (list 4 to 5 names) serve as scrutineers for this Council.”

Introduction of the Candidate *(Usually by a member of the ordaining Church)*

Time of Prayer for the Candidate *(Facilitated by a member of the ordaining Church)*

The Candidate’s Presentation *The Ordinand*

Question Period

Candidate Retires

Motion

Time of prayerful consideration and deliberation

Ballot Vote

Hymn

Announcement of the Council’s decision to the Council *The Council moderator/Chair*

Candidate is asked to return

Announcement of the Council’s decision to the Candidate *The Council Moderator/Chair*

If vote is favourable a motion is made to appoint an Arrangements Committee for the Ordination Service.

Motion to destroy the ballots

Closing Prayer and Benediction

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE MODERATOR/CHAIR OF AN EXAMINING COUNCIL

The Moderator/Chair should:

1. Have some theological background and understanding of theological issues in order to oversee theological issues, questions and discussion
2. Be experienced and familiar with effective meeting procedures and the prerogatives of the chair to ensure that the examination proceedings are thorough, fair and disciplined
3. Be familiar with the Ordination Examination procedure
4. Create an atmosphere of considerate but thoughtful dialogue and discussion of key theological perspectives
5. Seek to cover the range of relevant subjects; ensuring that the proceedings are not confined unduly to specific people or theological viewpoints or issues
6. Be objective in the treatment of the candidate and participants
7. Not allow situations where there is a clear lack of respect or consideration for other viewpoints to continue
8. Where necessary, be prepared to guide the meeting by exercising control, taking steps so that no one monopolizes the proceedings, or takes the questioning in one direction to the exclusion of other relevant areas

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PARTICIPANTS IN AN EXAMINING COUNCIL

Participants should:

1. Recognize that participation is a privilege and prayerfully prepare to participate in the thoughtful, kind and considerate reflection of a candidate for ordination
2. Thoughtfully contribute in a constructive, insightful way to the proceedings
3. Participate, but not dominate the discussion (suggestion of two questions per participant)
4. Be considerate of the views and responses of the candidate and other participants
5. Participate in the discussion, focusing on the subject areas they feel are important in determining the candidate's qualifications for ordination and encouraging a candidate to provide thoughtful and clear theological perspectives
6. Evaluate the candidate's qualifications, ministry statement and responses, paying specific attention to whether they are considering issues that are important to determining suitability for ordination. Consideration should be whether the candidate is qualified for leadership within the Church, not whether the participant agrees with the candidate's viewpoints