

# Minster Credentials

A credentialed minister is recognized as an individual called by God and engaged in active, Christian ministry, who evidences godly character, leadership gifts, and preparation. Upon commitment to cooperate with the provisions, procedures, and regulations of the Open Bible Manual, an approved applicant is conferred ministerial standing with the Association.

Types of credentials and requirements for ministerial credentials are:

## Ordination

Ordination is the highest classification of ministerial credential. An ordained minister is authorized to administer the ordinances of water baptism and communion, officiate at marriage ceremonies, and may hold office in Open Bible Churches. Ministers shall be ordained by the laying on of hands at a public ceremony prescribed by the regional board, except in a transfer of credentials from another organization where hands have formerly been laid upon them. Ordination certificates shall be issued after the formal, public ceremony.

## Eligibility

An applicant must hold regular license and be in active ministry for at least two years before applying for ordination credentials and fulfill any necessary ministry growth requirements. The regional board shall state the requirements to be satisfied prior to advancement to an ordination credential.

1. An applicant holding ordination with another organization may transfer ordination at the discretion of the national board. Upon receiving Open Bible credentials, other ministerial credentials must be discontinued.
2. An applicant must be a graduate of an official, Association school, other accredited theological schools, or INSTE Level 2, or an equivalent.
3. An applicant not meeting the above educational requirement must have at least five years, proven, vocational or bi-vocational, ministry experience, score at a satisfactory level on the Bible competency/doctrine examination, except where waived by national board policy, and successfully complete a leadership-competency assessment. An applicant not achieving a satisfactory score on the examination may take another examination after 30 days.

## Provisional Ordination

Provisional ordination shall be granted to those not qualified for ordination, but whose position with the Association requires official ordination. A minister with provisional ordination shall have the same privileges as those with ordination. Provisional ordination ceases when the position with the Association concludes. An individual whose provisional ordination has ceased may apply for a ministerial credential following the application process prescribed in this section.

## Regular License

A minister holding a regular-license credential is authorized to administer the ordinances of water baptism and communion and may officiate at marriage ceremonies.

### **Eligibility**

1. A candidate who is a graduate of an official, Association school or other accredited theological schools or has completed INSTE Level 2, Year 1, or an equivalent, and is engaged in active, approved ministry, may be licensed.

2. An applicant holding license with another organization may transfer that license at the discretion of the regional credential committee. Upon receiving Open Bible credentials, other ministerial credentials must be discontinued.

3. An applicant not meeting the above educational requirements shall have at least three years, proven, vocational or bi-vocational, ministry, score at a satisfactory level on the Bible-competency/doctrine examination, except where waived by national board policy, and successfully complete a leadership-competency assessment. An applicant not achieving a satisfactory score on the examination may take another examination after 30 days.

### **Associate License**

A minister holding an associate-license credential is authorized to administer the ordinances of water baptism and communion and officiate at marriage ceremonies. An individual holding an associate license shall be assigned to a geographic region or specific ministry and shall be a member in good standing of an Open Bible church, unless permission is otherwise granted by the regional board. The individual shall have a regionally approved mentoring relationship with a senior pastor or other approved mentor.

### **Eligibility**

An associate license shall be recommended for an individual who is not eligible for a regular license or for whom a probationary period is desired.

1. An applicant for associate license shall have a proven, active ministry and shall have completed the Bible certificate from an Association school or INSTE Level 1, Year 1 or an equivalent.

2. When the above, educational requirement is not met, an applicant must have at least two years proven, active, ministry experience and score at a satisfactory level on the Bible-competency/doctrine examination, except where waived by national board policy. An applicant not passing the examination may take another examination after 30 days.

3. When the reason for issuing an associate license is other than educational, the regional board shall state the requirements to be satisfied prior to advancement to regular license.

### **Transfer**

A minister with an associate license shall transfer to another region only upon the recommendation of the region where the minister was credentialed and the approval of the region to which the transfer is requested.

### **Renewal**

Annual renewal shall be contingent upon the recommendation of the respective regional board and written recommendation from the mentor. When educational courses are prescribed, the completion of at least one course per year shall be required. When the individual holding an associate credential has not advanced to regular license after six years, the credential shall be terminated. An associate credential cannot be filed.

## Specialized-Ministry License

The specialized-ministry license is designed for those in active staff or support ministry who do not aspire to the office of pastor. They shall not advance to another credential.

### **Eligibility**

1. An applicant must be in active ministry and have completed at least a Bible certificate from an Association school or INSTE Level 1 Year 1, or an equivalent.
2. When the above educational requirement is not met, the applicant shall have been in active ministry two years and score at a satisfactory level on the Bible-competency/doctrine examination, except where waived by national board policy.

An applicant shall apply in writing on forms furnished by the regional executive director. All applications and other required documents shall be sent to the executive director of the region in which the applicant resides. Completed reference forms shall be required. When the applicant is transferring from another church organization, a completed reference form from that organization is required. The applicant shall provide the name of an officer of the other church organization authorized to attest the applicant is a minister in good standing and there are no charges against or investigations concerning the applicant. The applicant shall arrange to have all records on file with the other organization transferred to the region. Evidence shall be submitted by the applicant this request was made. An applicant shall appear before the regional, credential committee or its authorized representatives for an interview before the applicant can be approved.

All applicants must take the Open Bible Manual, Open Bible history, and Bible competency/doctrine examinations, except where waived by national board policy or when the applicant's language cannot be accommodated. All applicants for credentials must score at a satisfactory level on the Bible competency/doctrine examination, as established by national board policy.

### **Please Note:**

All persons interested in Open Bible Churches credentials should contact their appropriate regional office to begin the process. Completed applications for credentials must first be approved by the region, followed by the National Board of Ordination.