

Procedure For Admission
To the Classis
Of A Licensed Candidate
From Another Denomination

BCO, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 11, Section 2, 3, and 5
(2011 edition)

Step I – Determination of Educational qualifications

“When an application is made for admission to the classis by a licensed candidate or a minister from another denomination, the classis shall determine whether the applicant’s educational qualifications are equal to those required in the Reformed Church in America...” BCO, 1, II, 11, 3 (first part)

1. The classis determines whether the applicant’s educational qualifications are equivalent to those required in the RCA. Transcripts of the applicant’s seminary work must certify acceptable work in expected study areas (See Appendix A).
2. Where deficiencies are evident, the classis may specify a procedure for remediation. Where the academic preparation is unacceptable because the expected study areas have not been completed or because of substandard work, the classis should deny admission.

Step II – Specification of Studies in RCA Life and History

1. The classis reviews the applicant’s previous study of RCA life and history. Where there are deficiencies, studies in RCA polity, history, confessional statements, worship, and program/agencies are to be specified as needed. This may be done by MFCA summer intensives whereby the applicant is adequately prepared for classis examination.

Step III – Examination by Classis

“A classis shall not receive any licensed candidate or minister under its care from any body of professing Christians which maintains doctrines opposed to those of the Standards of the Reformed Church in America, unless that licensed candidate or minister shall make a complete and explicit declaration in writing renouncing such doctrines as being contrary to the Standards.” BCO, 1, II, 11, 2.

“It (the classis) shall subject the applicant to such examination before classis as shall demonstrate the applicant’s understanding of the theology, history, government, and disciplinary procedures of the Reformed Church in America; understanding of and adherence to the Standards of the Reformed Church in America; and loyalty to its agencies.” BCO, 1, II, 11, 3 (last part).

1. The classis examines the applicant in the areas specified in the BCO, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 11, Section 3.
2. The classis inquires into the candidate's character and behavior; physical, emotional, and spiritual qualifications; and the motives, which led the applicant to seek the ministry as a vocation. Psychological/vocational testing and a Criminal Background Check are normally prescribed as part of the above assessment.
3. The classis recommends one of the following:
 - a. that the applicant's examination be sustained.
 - b. that a remedial prescription be set up to treat deficiencies.
 - c. that the applicant's admission to classis be denied.

Step IV – Petition for Supervised Ministry

“A licensed candidate from another denomination shall not be ordained as a minister before serving in a supervised ministry for a period of up to twenty-four months. The classis shall petition the General Synod to provide this superintendence through the board of trustees of an RCA seminary or the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency, which will determine the length of the period of supervision.” BCO, 1, II, 11, 5.

1. The classis petitions the General Synod by way of a letter to the MFCA Board of Trustees. The letter should include what the classis has done thus far, what involvement in the RCA the candidate has had, what the candidate is now doing, the name and address of the classis representative to be contacted, and other information the classis feels will be helpful in handling the petition.
2. MFCA through its Certification Committee reviews the petition, develops a program for supervised ministry, and reports it to the next meeting of the Board of Trustees and the classis.
3. A \$1,000.00 fee, payable to MFCA, is required.

Step V – Implementation of Supervised Ministry

1. The Ministerial Formation Certification Agency implements the supervised ministry. The Minister for Candidate Care and Certification, as the field instructor, designates the supervising pastor and the laity committee. Where possible, a member of classis who is not a member of the church where the supervised ministry is to take place, shall be assistant to the implementation and evaluation process of the supervised ministry.
2. The MFCA evaluates the quality of the supervised ministry and at the close of the designated period of supervised ministry makes a report to the classis candidate care committee.
3. Classis reviews the supervised ministry report and makes one of the following determinations:

- a. that the applicant be admitted to classis.
- b. that remedial procedures be prescribed before admission be granted.
- c. that admission be denied.

Appendix A:

The following study areas are typically required as acceptable work:

- a. Biblical languages and Exegesis – normally two courses of Greek and the same for Hebrew (exegetical courses may count).
- b. Church History – coverage of the whole span of history from the early Christian church to the modern period-normally two or three courses.
- c. Theology – coverage of the classical areas of Reformed theology – normally two or three courses.
- d. Biblical studies including OT and NT introduction/survey – normally two courses of each.
- e. Christian ethics – 1 basic course.
- f. Christian education – 1 basic course.
- g. Preaching and Practicum – 2 courses.
- h. Evangelism or Missiology – 1 course.
- i. Supervised ministry – 1 year full-time internship or its equivalent. (This is supervised ministry taken in the Master of Divinity program while in seminary, not to be confused with the General Synod mandated supervised ministry for a licensed candidate.)
- j. Courses in RCA content including RCA Polity, RCA Standards, RCA History & Mission and RCA Worship. A credo is also recommended.
- k. A unit of Clinical Pastoral Education or its alternative.