

## Licensing School

### **What is Licensing School?**

Licensing School is an 80-hour, 8 subject-area course designed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to provide the basic educational and formational experience for persons preparing to serve as pastors of congregations. Licensing Schools are administered through the Board of Ordained Ministry, which in the MSAC delegates this responsibility to the Center for Ministry.

### **Who Can Attend?**

Persons who have completed the Candidacy process, received the recommendation of their local church Pastor-Parish Relations Committee & Charge Conference, been approved by their District Committee on Ordained Ministry, and will be appointed in the coming year. Exceptions may be made at the request of a DS for those who will be Certified Candidates before the end of the current session.

### **Application and Registration Process**

Students may register by visiting the Center for Ministry website, or by calling the Center for Ministry and requesting an emailed form. In order to complete their registration, applicants must have their registration forms (or email confirmations for online pre-registration) signed by the candidate's Mentor, DCOM Chair, and DS.

### **Absentee Policy**

A student may miss no more than 20% of any one subject area's class(es) and still receive credit for completion of that class.

### **Grades and Evaluations**

In order to better align the MSAC's practices with other Annual Conferences, the Center for Ministry now asks instructors to complete evaluations, including a letter grade, for each student who completes their class. These will be provided to the DCOM's and DS's.

### **Current Format (2018-2019 Conference Year)**

We are piloting a new model that functions like Course of Study. Classes meet 10 times between July and April. At any point in the year, as soon as a student is ready to begin Licensing School they may register for the next upcoming class. Once a student has completed all 8 subject areas (80 hours), they will have completed Licensing School.

## Course of Study

### **What is the Course of Study?**

The Basic Course of Study is prescribed and administered by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to provide theological education and spiritual formation for Licensed Local Pastors in the United Methodist Church. The Basic Course of Study consists of 20 different classes in four different subject areas (Biblical Studies, Theology and History, Parish Ministry, and Pastoral Leadership). The Basic Course of Study is designed to be a five-year program for full-time Local Pastors, and a ten-year program for part-time Local Pastors.

Course of Study classes are offered primarily through Regional Schools meeting at United Methodist-affiliated seminaries. Regional Schools may also operate extension and/or satellite campuses.

### **What are the annual COS requirements for Local Pastors?**

Full-time Local Pastors (FTLP's) who are not enrolled in seminary at a University Senate-approved school must take at least four courses per conference year in order to continue serving in their appointment. Part-time Local Pastors (PTLP's) who are not enrolled in seminary at a University Senate-approved school must take at least two courses per conference year in order to continue serving in their appointment. This includes Retired Local Pastors serving in an appointment, who must continue to take either four (FTLP's) or two (PTLP's) courses per conference year.

A full-time pastor must complete the COS within 8 years, and a part-time pastor within 12.

A local pastor may be granted an annual extension beyond these limits in exceptional circumstances by a 3/4 vote of the DCOM, recommendation by the BOM, and the vote of clergy members in full connection. (BOD P.318.3)

Beginning in June 2019, all COS students must complete COS 121 (Bible I) and COS 122 (Theological Heritage I) before taking any other COS courses.

### **What is the Mississippi Course of Study School?**

The MSCOS is an extension campus of the Course of Study at Emory University. The MSCOS offers all 20 courses once a year, every year.

### **Who may take courses at the MSCOS?**

Only part-time local pastors, and full-time local pastors with special permission from GBHEM, Emory COS, the MSCOS, the MSAC Local Pastor Registrar, the MSAC Director of Spiritual Leadership, and their DS, may attend the Mississippi Course of Study.

## **Registration for MSCOS**

Students may register by visiting the Center for Ministry website and pre-registering online, or downloading a printable registration form. Student registration is not complete until it includes signatures from the student's DS and the AC Local Pastor Registrar.

## **Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend all 20 hours of class to receive course credit. A student may miss up to four hours of class time due to illness or emergency and still receive course credit, if said absence is excused by the instructor and the director of the MSCOS. A student missing more than 20% (four hours) of class time for *any reason* **shall not receive credit**. Unexcused absences of any length of time may be cause for loss of credit or dismissal. In exceptional circumstances, a student may request an incomplete for a course by contacting their instructor and the MSCOS director. Incomplete grades not resolved within 60 days are recorded as an F.

## **Grades**

The MSCOS uses letter grades A, B, C, D, and F. Grades will be sent to the student, GBHEM, the Annual Conference, and in Mississippi, the District Superintendent, and if possible the DCOM.