

**USCCB Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service**  
**Certification Standards for Specialized Ecclesial Ministers**  
**2016 Common Qualifications and Competencies including NACC Specific Competencies**  
**Alignment – In Red**

#### **4.1 Mission**

#### **4.2 Standard One: Human**

Ecclesial ministry builds upon the evangelical mission to which all the baptized are called to, “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel” (Mark 16:15). This proclamation of the Good News requires a witness not only in words but also in actions. It is through the authentic witness of the Catholic Christian in their manner of life and fidelity to the Church’s teaching and traditions that the gospel is best preached. Therefore, all who feel called to specialized ecclesial ministry must first show themselves well-formed and healthy human beings who are a living good and moral life according to the Church’s teaching. To invite men and women to serve the Church in this important work and witness who are not living in keeping with the Church’s clear teaching in these matters is to create contradiction in our work and to sow scandal within the community.

Ecclesial ministers ought to demonstrate the qualities of human maturity needed for fruitful ministry with the people of God. This is true both for the ordained and for the laity. In his apostolic exhortation on priestly formation, “Pastores dabo vobis,” Blessed John Paul II wrote that men who are candidates for Holy Orders are to develop their human character and relational abilities so that they can be “a bridge and not an obstacle” for people in their encounter with Jesus Christ. Laity in their distinct but complementary role should do likewise. This development entails the twofold dynamic of strengthening positive traits that foster ministerial effectiveness and lessening negative traits that hinder it. Accordingly, they ought to strive to deepen their knowledge of self and others, grow from experiences of suffering and challenge, maintain a balanced lifestyle and positive relationships, appreciate and value diversity, and demonstrate basic human virtues. Cultivating such traits and skills within a Christ-centered community contributes to the development of “a healthy and well balanced personality, for the sake of both personal growth and ministerial service” (*Co-Workers*, p.36).

While the priesthood of the ordained differs from the common priesthood of the faithful “essentially and not only in degree,” they are “nonetheless ordered one to another, each in its own way sharing in the one priesthood of Christ” (*Lumen Gentium*, 10 and *Pius XII, Mediator Dei*, no 43). As such the same human qualities and competencies that the Church would seek to be evidenced in candidates for Holy Orders would be the ones that should be found in the lives of those seeking certification for specialized ecclesial ministries.

#### **Ongoing psychological and ministerial growth**

**PIC3: Attend to one’s own physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.**

**PIC 3.1 Articulate a spirituality grounded in a relationship with God, self, and others.**

**PIC 3.2 Demonstrate one’s commitment to on-going faith development and spiritual growth**

**PIC 3.3 Demonstrate life-work balance skills, including time management**

### **A capacity to be self-reflective**

PIC1: Be self-reflective, including identifying one's professional strengths and limitations in the provision of care.

### **An ability to articulate knowledge of personal and ministerial strengths and limitations**

PIC1: Be self-reflective, including identifying one's professional strengths and limitations in the provision of care.

### **A commitment to professional development**

#### 306 Requirements for the Maintenance of Certification (MNT)

In order to maintain status as a Certified Chaplain, the chaplain must:

MNT1: Participate in a peer review process every fifth year.

MNT2: Document fifty (50) hours of annual continuing education as designated by one's professional association.

MNT3: Provide every fifth year documentation of current endorsement or of good standing in accordance with the requirements of his/her own faith tradition.

MNT4: Be current in the payment of the annual fees as designated by one's professional association.

MNT5: Adhere to the Common Code of Ethics for Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors, Clinical Pastoral Educators, and Students.

### **An ability to articulate feelings, attitudes, values, and assumptions that affect ministry.**

PIC2: Articulate ways in which one's feelings, attitudes, values, and assumptions affect professional practice.

## **4.3 Standard Two: Spiritual**

Sharing in the common priesthood of all the baptized, a lay ecclesial minister demonstrates Christian spirituality as foundational to ministry, integrated in service with the people of God, and possessing a sacramental view of the world that recognizes the world can be a vessel of God's presence and God's transforming grace.

Having encountered the person and message of Jesus Christ, the hunger of the ecclesial minister for union with the Triune God is constant. The result of this hunger is the call to holiness, built on the Word of God, experienced in liturgy and sacraments, formed through suffering, nurtured in joy, sustained in community with all the baptized and through the Church as Mystical Body. The minister gives witness to a well-formed spirituality through a rich and diversified prayer life, theological reflection, and action rooted in Catholic social teaching. Spiritual formation is grounded in the understanding that "if ministry does not flow from a personal encounter and ongoing

relationship with the Lord, then no matter how ‘accomplished’ it may be in its method and activities, that ministry will lack the vital soul and source needed to bear lasting fruit” (*Co-Workers*, p. Standards, Page 638). Therefore, open to the mystery of God’s love and in touch with the world’s realities, all actions of the lay ecclesial minister flow from “that fundamental conversion that places God, and not oneself, at the center of one’s life” (*Co-Workers*, p.38).

### **Ongoing faith development and spiritual growth;**

PIC 3.2 Demonstrate one’s commitment to on-going faith development and spiritual growth

**-An understanding of personal gifts and abilities brought to ministry;**

PIC 3.1 Articulate a spirituality grounded in a relationship with God, self, and others.

**-A commitment to spiritual growth;**

PIC3: Attend to one’s own physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

**-An ability to reflect theologically;**

PPS8: Facilitate theological/spiritual reflection for those in one’s care practice.

**-An understanding of their baptismal call and the ecclesial elements of ministry; and**

IIP2.2 Articulate an understanding of one’s baptismal call and chaplaincy as a ministry of the church

**-An understanding of their role as a public minister.**

PIC5.1 Articulate an understanding of the responsibility of the public nature of a chaplain’s role.

## **4.4 Standard Three: Intellectual**

An ecclesial minister demonstrates understanding of the breadth of Catholic theological and pastoral studies as well as the intellectual skill to use that knowledge in ministry with God’s people from diverse populations and cultures.

“Formation for lay ecclesial ministry is a journey beyond catechesis into theological study” (*Co-Workers*, p. 43). An ecclesial minister’s faith and ministry is formed by the study of the Catholic theological tradition. Based upon this study, a theologically competent minister can articulate and interpret this Catholic theological tradition with disciples from diverse communities. A key dynamic of effective ecclesial ministry is the integration into ministry practices of the key documents and principal theories of pastoral ministry.

**Theological competencies shall be demonstrated in the following subject areas:**

- Vatican II and Post-Vatican II documents of the Church;
- Systematic/foundational theology;
- Scripture;
- Theology of the Trinity;
- Christology;
- Ecclesiology;
- Sacramental theology;
- Liturgy;
- Spirituality;
- Ethics/moral theology;
- Social and ecological justice;
- Pastoral theology;
- Canon law;

IIP2.1 Demonstrate an understanding of Vatican II and Post Vatican II documents of the Church, Systematic/Foundational Theology, Scripture, Theology of the Trinity, Christology, Ecclesiology, Sacramental Theology, Catholic Social Teaching, Canon Law, Ecumenical and Interreligious Practice.

IIP4: Incorporate a working knowledge of different ethical theories appropriate to one's professional context.

#### **-Familiarity with ecumenical and interreligious practice**

PPS6: Provide religious/spiritual resources appropriate to the care recipients, families, and staff.

PPS7: Develop, coordinate, and facilitate public worship/spiritual practices appropriate to diverse settings and needs.

#### **-Familiarity with the theological issues that emerge in the specialized ministry.**

IIP1: Articulate an approach to spiritual care, rooted in one's faith/spiritual tradition that is integrated with a theory of professional practice.

IIP2: Incorporate a working knowledge of psychological and sociological disciplines and religious beliefs and practices in the provision of spiritual care.

IIP 4.1 Demonstrate an understanding of *The Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*.

### **Standard Four: Pastoral**

An ecclesial minister demonstrates a range of leadership, pastoral skills and gifts for functioning effectively in ministry. As a response to their baptismal call, ecclesial ministers accept the grace of leadership and manifest a range of skills, and pastoral gifts which allow them to function effectively in ministry. In their role as evangelizers, they operate in a parochial setting which has various dimensions – faith formation, worship, cultural diversity, community life, social justice, and apostolic service. They are effective listeners who foster respect and offer compassionate care within varied family, community, and cultural settings. In the spirit of the Gospel, they serve others as

companions on the journey of faith. These ministers demonstrate good stewardship; work collaboratively with other lay and ordained ministers, and exhibit human resource and management skills. They have an ability to discern and nurture the gifts of all the baptized in order to build the Kingdom of God. Lastly, these ministers embrace a professional code of ethics worthy of Catholic ministry and abide by civil and Church law. “Pastoral formation cultivates the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that directly pertain to effective functioning in the ministry setting and that also pertain to pastoral administration that supports direct ministry” (Co-Workers, page 47).

**Certification standards shall include professional and ministerial competencies utilized for service within a particular faith community. These competencies shall include:**

**An understanding of the stages of human and faith development and how these stages are applicable to the specialized ministry**

IIP2: Incorporate a working knowledge of psychological and sociological disciplines and religious beliefs and practices in the provision of spiritual care.

IIP3: Incorporate the spiritual and emotional dimensions of human development into one’s practice of care.

**An understanding of the ways culture and ethnicity affect ministerial practices**

PPS3: Provide spiritual care that respects diversity and differences including, but not limited to culture, gender, sexual orientation and spiritual/religious practices.

**Assessment, intervention, and referral skills**

PPS10: Formulate and utilize spiritual assessments, interventions, outcomes, and care plans in order to contribute effectively to the well-being the person receiving care.

PPS11: Document one’s spiritual care effectively in the appropriate records.

**Listening and communication skills pertinent to cultural diversity**

OL4.1 Demonstrate skill in facilitating decision-making based on an understanding of culture/ethnicity, gender, race, age, educational background and theological values, religious heritage, behavioral sciences, networking, and systems thinking.

**Conflict management skills**

PPS4: Triage and manage crises in the practice of spiritual care.

OL2.2 Demonstrate skills in organization, conflict management, leadership, or supervision of others.

**Time management skills**

PIC 3.3 Demonstrate life-work balance skills, including time management

### **Balanced life style skills**

PIC 3.3 Demonstrate life-work balance skills, including time management

### **Collaboration skills**

OL2: Establish and maintain professional and interdisciplinary relationships.

OL2.1 Demonstrate the ability to build peer relationships for the purpose of collaboration and active participation in the creation and maintenance of a healthy work environment.

OL2.2 Demonstrate skills in organization, conflict management, leadership, or supervision of others.

OL5: Foster a collaborative relationship with community clergy and faith group leaders.

### **Skills of group process and dynamics**

**302.5** Demonstrate a conceptual and practical understanding of group dynamics and organizational behavior.

### **Skills in the organizing and supervising of volunteers**

OL2.2 Demonstrate skills in organization, conflict management, leadership, or supervision of others.

(NACC note: Volunteer organization and supervision is one of the “others” but not specified.)

### **Skills in initiating, sustaining, and bringing to closure ministerial relationships**

PPS1: Establish, deepen and conclude professional spiritual care relationships with sensitivity, openness, and respect.

### **Pastoral skills relevant to the specialized ministry.**

IIP5: Articulate a conceptual understanding of group dynamics and organizational behavior.

IIP6: Articulate how primary research and research literature inform the profession of chaplaincy and one’s spiritual care practice.

PIC4: Function in a manner that respects the physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual boundaries of others.

PIC5: Use one’s professional authority as a spiritual care provider appropriately.

PIC6 Advocate for the persons in one’s care.

PIC7: Function within the Common Code of Ethics for Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors, Clinical Pastoral Educators, and Students

PIC8: Communicate effectively orally and in writing.

- PIC9: Present oneself in a manner that reflects professional behavior, including appropriate attire, and grooming.
- PPS2: Provide effective spiritual support that contributes to well-being of the care recipients, their families, and staff.
- PPS5: Provide spiritual care to persons experiencing loss and grief.
- PPS9: Facilitate group processes, such as family meetings, post trauma, staff debriefing, and support groups.
- PPS11: Document one's spiritual care effectively in the appropriate records.
- OL1: Promote the integration of spiritual care into the life and service of the institution in which one functions.
- OL3: Understand and function within the institutional culture and systems, including utilizing business principles and practices appropriate to one's role in the organization.
- OL4: Promote, facilitate, and support ethical decision-making in one's workplace.