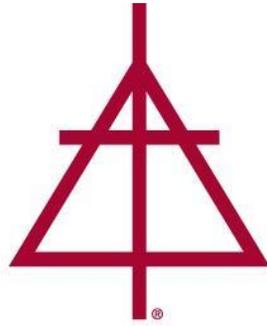


Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy

2019-2020 Handbook



**Christian
Reformed
Church**



CALVIN
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

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I. EPMC Overview and Purpose

The Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC) is designed for students who aspire to be ministers of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA) and who are earning their Master of Divinity at a place other than Calvin Theological Seminary. This route for ministry is referenced in Article 6 of the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church.

This program seeks to holistically prepare participants for ministry and meet the candidacy requirements established by the Synod of the CRCNA. The 10-credit curriculum provides an orientation to the theology, history, and ministry of the Christian Reformed Church. In addition, vocational formation components prepare students with hands-on ministry experiences, mentorship and reflection.

The EPMC can be completed in residence each Fall at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan or via the “24 month non-resident” mentor-focused format. Oversight for the program is shared between David Koll, Director of Candidacy for the CRCNA, and Dr. Geoff Vandermolen, Director of Vocational Formation at Calvin Theological Seminary.

II. Admission Requirements

To apply for the EPMC, students must currently be enrolled in or have completed an MDiv degree from a seminary accredited by The Association for Theological Schools (www.ats.edu). It is helpful for those currently enrolled in an MDiv program to apply for the EPMC early in their studies, preferably after completing one semester.

A. Deadlines

The in-residence EPMC is offered in Grand Rapids, MI each Fall semester. The 24 month non-resident EPMC can begin anytime, with coursework commencing each Fall and Spring semesters.

Students applying for Fall coursework must submit all admission materials, including recommendations, to the Calvin Seminary Admissions office by June 1. (Canadian students applying for the residential program must receive an F-1 visa. To ensure adequate time to issue an I-20, students must complete a Declaration of Finances by May 1.) Those applying for Spring coursework must submit all materials, including recommendations, to the Calvin Seminary Admissions office by November 15.

B. How to apply

The Calvin Seminary Admissions office collects and maintains EPMC application materials. Student files and information may be shared with the Director of Candidacy of the CRC and the EPMC admissions committee, as needed.

Complete an online Application including:

- A non-refundable \$50 fee
- Three brief essays: personal autobiography, summary of ministry experiences, and statement of Christian commitment.
- Four recommendations: church council, pastor, classis/regional body, and personal. When applying, please be prepared with the names and contact information for these four references (not to include family members). Upon submitting the application, the Calvin Seminary Admissions department will send electronic recommendation forms directly to the references to complete.
- Submit all official transcripts

Applicants must request official transcripts from all prior colleges, universities, seminaries, and/or professional schools. Once admitted, students who are currently enrolled in seminary studies must submit unofficial transcripts to Calvin Seminary once a year in the summer. When the degree is completed, final official transcripts with the MDiv degree posted must be sent to Calvin Seminary. All transcripts should be sent to:

Calvin Theological Seminary, Attn: Admissions 3233 Burton St. SE Grand Rapids, MI 49546

After applying, please send a recent photograph to admissions@calvinseminary.edu with your name in the subject line. This allows the admissions office to connect names with faces and be prepared to personally welcome you to campus.

Please note that non-native English speakers must submit TOEFL or IELTS scores.

TOEFL: minimum internet-based score of 80 total with 23 in the writing section (use institution code 1096)

IELTS: minimum score of 6.5 total with 6.5 in the writing section

C. GPA Standards

The GPA requirement for admission is 2.67 in MDiv coursework. Those who do not meet this standard may be admitted on probation. Note: To meet CRC candidacy requirements, students must have a minimum 2.85 GPA taking into account all seminary coursework, including EPMC.

D. Admission and Graduation Requirements

Standards for admission to the EPMC are the same as for those applying to the MDiv program at Calvin Seminary. Prior to admission, the Calvin Seminary Registrar will complete a transcript assessment, reviewing prior studies for completion of liberal arts courses as evidence of academic preparedness for theological education.

* Biblical language courses are required for candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church; see more information on page 7.

Applicants missing a broad-based liberal arts foundation (as determined by a transcript evaluation) may still be provisionally admitted to the EPMC with a learning plan. The registrar will communicate individually with such applicants about creating and completing a learning plan. Learning plans, developed in collaboration with the Calvin Seminary Registrar and EPMC Admissions Committee, map a path for students to complete all outstanding requirements by the time they finish the EPMC. Options for completion include taking courses at accredited colleges/universities or developing an equivalent independent study.

III. EPMC Program Requirements

The EPMC includes both academic coursework and ministry participation components. As the denominational seminary of the Christian Reformed Church, Calvin Theological Seminary provides the course instruction and vocational formation oversight.

A. Required Courses

The Calvin Seminary Registrar will register all enrolled EPMC students for the first semester of studies. Those in the non-resident learning program are responsible for their own registration in subsequent terms. The following required courses are offered in residence each Fall AND online as noted:

- Hermeneutics (1 credit) – offered during Gateway or online during J-Term
- Christian Theology in Reformed Confessions (3 credits) – offered online each Spring and Summer
- Christian Reformed Church Polity (1.5 credits) – offered online each Spring and Summer
- Christian Reformed Church History (1.5 credits) – offered online each Spring and Summer
- Preaching (2 credits) – offered online each Fall
- Digital Tools for Teaching and Preaching (1 credit) – a half semester online course offered each fall.

Note: EPMC students who have completed at least **5** credit hours in preaching at another seminary do not need to take one of these preaching courses at Calvin Seminary. Some of their sermons will be reviewed as part of the vocational formation program. Non-residential students will be doing supervised preaching as part of their 24-month mentoring program.

Note: All EPMC students must take a minimum of 9 credit hours at Calvin Seminary, either as a residential or a non-residential student.

Note: Questions about exceptions or alternatives to the required courses should be directed to David Koll (dkoll@crcna.org).

B. Bible Survey Course (3 credits) OR Bible Survey Exam

Candidacy in the CRC requires a mature level of knowledge of Biblical themes and texts. EPMC students may demonstrate this knowledge by completing the Bible Survey course or passing a Bible Survey Exam.

Those who take the Bible Survey course must achieve a 3.0 GPA or higher to meet this requirement. The course is offered in residence each Fall and online each Summer.

The alternative to the course is the completion of a 100 question exam. For details on this exam, please see Appendix J.

C. Language competency

The Christian Reformed Church also values the ability to read and study Scripture with a working knowledge of the Biblical languages. Therefore, EPMC students must demonstrate competency in the Biblical languages and the skills of exegesis by meeting the following requirements:

- Two graduate-level courses (6 credits) in Old Testament Hebrew studies
- Two graduate-level courses (6 credits) in New Testament Greek studies
- At least one graduate-level exegetical course (3 credits)

Many Mdiv programs will incorporate these courses into their curriculum. If they are not available at the degree granting institution, EPMC students may enroll in these courses at Calvin Seminary or another accredited seminary.

D. Vocational Formation components

In addition to academic coursework, the EPMC strives for whole-person formation for ministry by integrating every part of the learning experience. The Vocational Formation components work toward student growth primarily in three areas: pastoral identity, ministry practice competency, and accountability. Comprehensive goals for the vocational formation program are included in Appendix A. These goals are achieved through the following requirements and overseen by Dr. Geoff Vandermolen, the Director of Vocational Formation:

1. A thorough psychological assessment
Calvin Seminary partners with trained psychologists to individually evaluate each student's strengths and weakness with a view to increasing their effectiveness in pastoral ministry. The assessment guides students and seminary staff in maximizing personal learning and growth.

Assessments should be completed as early as possible in a student's seminary studies to allow ample time to address recommendations and help guide internship opportunities. The Director of Vocational Formation works with each student to complete all psychologist recommendations. Psychological assessments are arranged individually through Kenzie Szczepanski. Non-resident EPMC students may arrange to have the

written psychological tests taken with a proctor. To arrange this, contact David Koll (dkoll@crcna.org).

In some cases, as determined by the Director of Vocational Formation in consultation with the Professor of Pastoral Care, assessments completed at other seminaries may sufficiently fulfill this requirement. Students who have taken assessments in other settings may submit these materials to the Director of Vocational Formation to determine their suitability for meeting the program purposes.

2. Vocational Formation group participation

Residential EPMC students are placed in small vocational formation groups led by a Calvin Seminary faculty member to reflect on scripture and pray together, share personal journeys of faith and calls to ministry, and discuss their emerging sense of pastoral identity as experienced in ministry. Groups meet weekly during the fall semester. Non-residential students are mentored over a two-year period in their local community by a pastoral mentor and a regional mentoring team.

3. In-Context Learning (Internships)

Students must complete 600 hours (15 weeks full-time or its equivalent) of supervised ministry experience that offers significant engagement with cross-cultural and pastoral ministry. All Mdiv programs require internship experiences. If possible, EPMC students should collaborate with the Director of Vocational Formation before pursuing internships through other seminaries to ensure that EPMC program goals and requirements are met.

Students who have begun or completed other internships should communicate with the Director of Vocational Formation to discuss whether the amount of time and range of ministry experiences are sufficient to satisfy EPMC internship requirements. For this conversation, students should prepare and gather: a concise summary of all ministry leadership and congregational internship experiences including the names and locations of ministries served, a description of ministry responsibilities, and any supporting documentation available (job descriptions, statement of objectives, self or council or supervisor evaluations, mentor reports etc.)

If internships do not satisfy requirements, the Director of Vocational Formation will construct a plan with students by which suitable additional experiences can be completed and program goals achieved.

4. Vocational Formation review

The Director of Vocational Formation meets individually with each residential EPMC student to review the psychological assessment report, discuss internship experiences, and create a plan to satisfy any outstanding requirements of the formation for ministry goals. Non-residential students review this material with their appointed local mentor in consultation with the Director of Vocational Formation.

This meeting also includes a review of the six ministry practice areas (as outlined in the program goals, see Appendix A) to determine together the two areas of greatest strength and two areas of greatest weakness. These will be further addressed in the reflection paper.

5. Vocational Formation reflection paper

At the conclusion of their program, EPMC students must submit a reflection paper addressing the three program goals: pastoral identity, ministry practice competency and accountability. This paper is due by March 1 of the candidacy year and submitted as a Word document to vocationalformation@calvinseminary.edu.

The Reflection Paper should be approximately 12 pages in length, double-spaced and should contain three sections:

Pastoral Identity (approximately two pages)

In light of the Pastoral Identity program goal, reflect upon your developing pastoral identity, understanding and confirmation of call to ministry, and personal spiritual formation.

Ministry Practice Competencies (approximately 8 pages)

In the two ministry practice areas identified as strengths, (1) summarize some of the practical ministry skills you have acquired in each ministry practice area, (2) reflect on how your ministry practice in this area has contributed to your own personal spiritual formation, and (3) reflect on how your call to ministry has been challenged, shaped, or deepened through your work in this ministry practice area.

In the two ministry practice areas identified as weaknesses, (1) summarize some of the practical ministry skills you have acquired in this ministry practice area, (2) describe the areas in which you most need greater competence and more experience, and (3) sketch out a possible plan for achieving such competence and experience in the coming three years.

Accountability (approximately 2 pages)

In light of the Accountability program goal, briefly describe a ministry situation in which you experienced tension or conflict with the supervising pastor and/or supervising body. Summarize some of the things you learned about yourself, ministry, and/or God through that experience.

E. Preaching

After EPMC students enroll in the program, they must apply for licensure to exhort in the Christian Reformed Church through the Vocational Formation office. EPMC students are

required to preach and have evaluations completed on four different sermons at 3 locations prior to March of the year in which they intend to be declared a candidate. The sermon evaluation form is available in Appendix B and through the Vocational Formation office.

F. Faculty Interviews

EPMC students meet individually for a 1-hour interview with a Calvin Seminary faculty panel. The faculty interview is more than a casual conversation with the student but it is not the same as the oral examination for an academic degree. The purpose of the interview is to allow the faculty to assess (1) the student's personal, spiritual and professional readiness for ministry, (2) the student's knowledge of and agreement with the confessional positions of the Christian Reformed Church, and (3) the student's general suitability for ministerial candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church. Residential students will be interviewed in November and non-residential students will be interviewed on that date or in January.

Prior to the Interview: Pre-Interview Contact between the Faculty Panels and EPMC students

For resident students, if possible, the convener of the panel (assigned by the Academic office) will set up a brown-bag lunch prior to the interview with faculty members on the panel and the students to be interviewed.

For non-resident students (and potentially some of the resident students), if possible, the convener of the panel will set up a phone call or Skype conversation with the student prior to the interview.

The purpose of this contact is threefold:

- (1) to give everyone a chance to get to know each other (e.g., students could share 3 to 4 minutes of autobiographical information, and faculty panel members could give a brief overview of their life and ministry career, etc.),
- (2) to give the faculty convener the opportunity to explain the nature of the EPMC interview, and
- (3) to give students opportunity to ask questions and get answers about the interview from the very people who will be conducting their interview

Prior to the Interview: Preparation

The Calvin Seminary faculty recommends reading and reviewing the following materials in preparation for the interview. Students should pay particular attention to the biblical support given for the major tenets of the Reformed perspective.

- The three ecumenical creeds: Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed
- The three confessions of the CRC: Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and Canons of Dort

- The Belhar Confession
- “Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony”
- The CRC Church Order
- What It Means to Be Reformed: An Identity Statement, endorsed by the 2002 synod of the CRC as part of the CRCNA’s Denominational Ministries Plan
- The denomination’s official positions on a variety of theological and ethical matters, as found at:
www.crcna.org/howeare/beliefs/position.asp?WhoWeAreMenu
- “The Covenant for Office Bearers”, as found at:
<https://www.crcna.org/resources/church-resources/liturgical-forms-resources/ordination-installation/covenant-officebearers-christian-reformed-church-2012>

Approximately 1 week prior to the faculty interview, students will receive a case study. In response to this case study, students will prepare an oral presentation in response to the study. This oral presentation will be supported by a 1-2 page paper referencing the sources used (scripture, theological materials, seminary courses, discussions with pastors or other students etc.) in helping the student to prepare the response to the case study. The written work for the case study must be submitted to Kenzie Szczepanski a minimum of 48 hours prior to the faculty interview.

Expectations for the interview

- Introduction – the convener will clarify the purpose of the interview: a time to inform faculty of the student’s readiness for ministry and confessional soundness with a view to preparing a candidacy recommendation. The student’s 1-2 page case study report will be submitted.
- 15 minutes – the convener will ask questions regarding the candidate’s personal background, spiritual journey, and sense of vocation
- 15 minutes – a faculty member will ask about the candidate’s Reformed identity, especially knowledge of and agreement with the Reformed Confessions and his/her willingness to sign the Covenant for Officebearers
- 15 minutes – a faculty member will converse with the candidate concerning the assigned case study, focusing on the candidate’s biblical/theological understanding as they inform pastoral sensitivities.
- Conclusion – the student will be excused for a brief time of panel deliberation addressing the student’s strengths and weaknesses and determine if the student passed or will need a follow-up interview. The student will return to hear panel feedback. A prayer of thanksgiving for the student and wisdom for the faculty will be offered.

Should a student not sustain the interview, a plan will be prepared to prepare the student for a follow-up interview.

IV. Costs

A. Tuition & Fees

The Seminary will email student account statement by the 25th of every month to a student's seminary email address to remind them to review and pay the account balance by the due date. Students are expected to regularly review their student accounts. The Seminary does not send invoices.

Tuition and rent payments should be submitted to the Calvin Seminary Financial Services office. If your balance is going to be paid by a church, classis, or other third-party but the payment will not be received by the Seminary before the due date, you are required to fill out a payment plan.

For more information about student accounts, payment options, a payment plan form, or to make a payment, please go to [Semlink](#).

Tuition Due Dates

January Term	February 28
Spring	February 28
May Term	May 31
Summer	July 31
Fall	September 30

EPMC charge	Fee
Tuition (2019-2020 academic year)	\$499 per credit hour
Vocational Formation (Psychological Evaluation, Vocational Formation Assessment & Reflection Paper)	\$1,545
Books (estimate)	\$400

If you have questions, please contact the Financial Services office at semfso@calvinseminary.edu or [616-957-8681](tel:616-957-8681).

B. Financial Aid

EPMC students are not eligible to receive institutional financial aid from Calvin Seminary. Students may seek financial support or scholarships from their own classis' student fund or other sources at their own initiative.

Costs updated 1/24/18

V. Candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church

In order to be a Minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church in North America, students must meet the synodical requirements for candidacy through demonstrating academic, personal and professional readiness for ministry via the process described below. Students who meet the candidacy requirements will be presented to the CRCNA Synod in June and are henceforth eligible for a call to ministry.

Students may begin the candidacy process if they are on track to complete all academic coursework (including learning plans) and vocational formation components by June of the following year. (Students with 4 or fewer outstanding units by the time Synod meets may be considered delayed candidates - see section B below). The GPA requirement for candidacy is 2.85 taking into account all seminary coursework, including EPMC grades.

A. Candidacy Process & Required materials

An informational meeting will be held in September at Calvin Seminary to outline candidacy requirements and deadlines. An audio recording of the meeting is available for non-residential students.

By October 25, 2019 students who are on track and interested to candidate, must express their intent to Kenzie Szczepanski (kck065@calvinseminary.edu). She will notify students of their assigned sermon text (see details below) and will compile a Candidacy Applicant List for all future communications.

All potential candidates must submit the following items:

(Note: Detailed instructions about content, formatting and submission protocol for all required materials are e-mailed to students upon declaring their intent to candidate.)

- Personal Disclosure and Background Check (due October 25, 2019) - gives permission for a background check report to be run.
- Biographical Sketch (due October 25, 2019) – brief online form containing contact information, educational and internship experiences, and ministry intentions (see Appendix C).
- Authorization to Release information (due October 25, 2019) – allows Calvin Seminary to release biographical sketches for the denominational website and other purposes (see Appendix D).
- Two Sermons, One Video (due January 24, 2020). Two (typed, double-spaced) sermon manuscripts and supporting evidence: one on the assigned text and the other from a text of your choice (not one written for class work). Includes one video of the assigned-text sermon being preached. (See Appendix E)
- Written faith journey (due February 21, 2020) – a one-page statement about what the student believes and his/her process of faith formation.

- Statement of reason (due February 21, 2020) – a one-paragraph statement of reason for seeking candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church.
- Minister’s profile (due February 21, 2020) – an important personal online profile submitted to the denomination’s Ministerial Information Service that facilitates the exchange of information between pastors and congregations (see Appendix F).
- Photograph (due February 21, 2020) – a color headshot to appear in The Banner, booklet for Synod, and other Seminary and Candidacy uses. Professional dress is recommended.
- Council recommendation (due March 1, 2020) – the student’s minister or clerk of the council must complete this recommendation (see Appendix G).
- Classis Recommendation (due March 1, 2020) – a representative from the student’s classis must complete this recommendation (see Appendix H).
- Mentor recommendation (due March 1, 2020) – the student’s mentor must complete this recommendation (see Appendix I).

In the spring, all aspiring candidates must interview with the denominational Candidacy Committee. Interviews are conducted in Grand Rapids and in regional areas as arranged by David Koll, Director of Candidacy.

B. Delayed Candidacy

The delayed candidacy policy allows students who cannot complete ALL requirements before June to still participate in the candidacy process (cf. Church Order Supplement, Art. 6). They must meet the following criterion:

- Must have four or fewer incomplete units in their seminary program as of the synodical meeting where candidates are presented. Each course and internship is considered a “unit”.
- Students anticipating a 3.5-year program must work with their Vocational Formation leader, the Director of Vocational Formation and the Candidacy Committee chair to determine priority and complete requirements that are crucial to demonstrating readiness for ministry. Such requirements include a congregational internship, CPE credits, or any other recommendation from the candidacy committee.
- By synodical regulation, any student who does not complete the remaining required units by March 1 of the year following the Synod where they were approved for candidacy must reapply for candidacy. (Church Order Supplement, Article 6 C.4).
- Upon completion of all remaining requirements, the Registrar will inform the Executive Director of the CRC, who will announce the candidate’s eligibility for call.

C. Communicating with churches

The denominational web site (crcna.org) compiles information regarding candidates and potential candidates as part of the Ministerial Information Service (part of Pastor-Church Resources). In the spring of each year, basic information taken from candidate profiles is presented on a webpage of Potential Candidates. After Synod meets and officially declares the candidates for ministry, this information is transferred to the web page for Candidates.

Potential candidates may talk with congregations, exchange information and discuss ministry philosophies. However, students may NOT make a commitment to a church before Synod officially declares the candidates for ministry in June, nor are churches allowed to extend a call prior to Synod's approval.

D. Frequently Asked Questions

What is the timetable for synod declaring candidates and being eligible for call?

Synod usually declares candidates on Tuesday or Wednesday morning (usually the second Tuesday/Wednesday in June). Students are asked, but not required, to be present for the Presentation of Candidates. The president of the seminary and of synod each make fitting congratulatory remarks, and delegates express their congratulations and joy both during the synodical session and at an informal reception held after the session. After this presentation at Synod, candidates are immediately eligible for a call.

What if I don't receive and/or accept a call within 1 year of being declared a candidate?

David Koll, Director of the denominational Candidacy Committee, contacts all candidates every year in the month of March. He will help you process a request for extension of candidacy.

Should I apply for candidacy if I know I can't accept a call in the year of eligibility?

If you are contemplating activity in the year after synod declares you a candidate that will preclude you from taking a call (eg. pursuing an advanced academic degree) you should wait until the following year to apply for candidacy. If you're not sure about future plans, it is recommended that you begin the candidacy process so that you can keep your options open. You can always discontinue the process and begin again the following year.

Who are the members of the Candidacy Committee?

There are actually two committees. The denominational Candidacy Committee is presented on the CRCNA website (<http://www.crcna.org/candidacy/about-committee>).

The seminary Spiritual Care and Candidacy Committee has the following members: Dr. Dr. Geoff Vandermolen serves as the Chair of the committee. Additional members include Rev. Jul Medenblik (CTS President), Dr. Danjuma (Professor of Pastoral Care) The rest of the committee is composed of local pastors, as well as CTS Faculty and Board of Trustee members. Rev. David Koll, Director of Candidacy, attends most committee meetings and enhances communication between the seminary and denomination.

VI. Checklists

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Online application due June 1 (Fall start) or Nov. 15 (Spring start) including:
 - \$50 non-refundable fee
 - Three brief essays: autobiography, summary of ministry experiences, statement of Christian commitment
 - Names and contact info for 4 references: church council, pastor, classis/regional body, and personal
- Four completed recommendations
- Submit all official transcripts
 - Currently enrolled students: submit unofficial seminary transcripts each summer and final transcript after degree is posted
 - Transcripts are reviewed for GPA (2.67 minimum) and liberal arts pre-requisite courses. Applicants who do not meet minimum requirements may be provisionally admitted and required to create a learning plan
- Recent photo (email to admission@calvinseminary.edu with name in subject)
- TOEFL or IELTS scores (non-native English speakers only)
- Declaration of Finances (International students only) due May 1, to obtain an I-20

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

- Required Courses
 - Hermeneutics (1 credit)
 - Christian Theology in Reformed Confessions (3 credits)
 - Christian Reformed Church Polity (1.5 credits)
 - Christian Reformed Church History (1.5 credits)
 - Digital Tools Course at Calvin Theological Seminary (1 credit)
 - Preaching the Word (2 credits) (may be optional if 5 or more credits of preaching is taken at home seminary)
- Bible Survey Exam or take 3-credit Bible Survey Course
- Completion of personal Learning Plan, if required
- Biblical Language Competency
 - Two courses in Old Testament Hebrew (6 credits)
 - Two courses in New Testament Greek (6 credits)
 - One exegetical elective (3 credits)

24 MONTH MENTORING REQUIREMENTS

- “Trip #1” (for non-resident students)

- Seven Mentor Reports (one initial report plus six others)
- Three Classis Reports (one initial report plus two others)
- “Trip #2 (for non-resident students)

VOCATIONAL FORMATION REQUIREMENTS

- Preaching
 - Apply for License to Exhort in the CRC through Vocational Formation office
 - In consultation with mentor present a report that four evaluated sermons have been presented in at least 3 distinct settings, due March 1 of candidacy year (report part of mentor recommendation for candidacy – see below)
- Psychological Assessment reviewed with mentor and completion of any recommendations
- Vocational Formation experiences
 - Congregational internship: 600 hours of supervised ministry experience and any additional requirements
 - Vocational Formation Reflection Paper, due March 1 of candidacy year
- Faculty Panel Interview

CANDIDACY FINAL-YEAR REQUIREMENTS

- Attend informational meeting in September (audio recording available)
- Express intent to candidate to Kenzie Szczepanski (kck065@calvinseminary.edu)
- Submit all forms and paperwork: (under guidance of Kenzie Szczepanski)
 - Background Check and Disclosure Form
 - Biographical Sketch – online
 - Authorization to release information
 - Sermon manuscripts, notes, and digital video of assigned text
 - Sermon manuscripts and notes for text of own choice
 - Council, Mentor, and Classis Recommendation
 - Written faith journey
 - Statement of reason
 - Minister’s profile – online
 - Photograph
- Interview with the Denominational Candidacy Committee in Spring
- Complete all academic, vocational formation, 24 month mentoring and “last lap” requirements
- Attend presentation of candidates at Synod in June (optional)

VII. Contacts

Name	Contact Info	Send questions regarding
Rev. David Koll Director of Candidacy, CRCNA	616-901-7784 dkoll@crcna.org	Unique situations/exceptions Any areas not addressed below
Aaron Einfeld Calvin Seminary Admissions	616-957-7035 admissions@calvinseminary.edu	Application for Admission Application deadlines Recommendation forms Submitting transcripts
Rev. Dr. Geoff Vandermolen Director of Vocational Formation	616-957-6045 gav016@calvinseminary.edu	Vocational Formation Psychological Evaluation
Denise Mokma Assistant Registrar and Academic Services Coordinator	616- 957-6083 drm046@calvinseminary.edu	Schedule Bible Survey exam
Kenzie Szczepanski Academic Services Coordinator	616-957-6173 kck065@calvinseminary.edu	Schedule Psych. Assessment Candidacy process & deadlines
Calvin Seminary Financial Services	616-957-8619 semsfo@calvinseminary.edu	Payment amounts & deadlines
Tim Bruinsma Housing Manager	616-957-8618 housing@calvinseminary.edu	On-campus housing
Joan Beelen Associate Dean of Academic Services and Registrar	616-957-6027 jrb44@calvinseminary.edu	Transcript evaluation Learning plans Registering for courses

VIII. Calendar

SUMMER 2019

June 3 – Aug 2	Distance learning online summer courses
Aug 19 – 23	International Student Orientation
Aug 26 – 30	Gateway to Seminary; ThM and PhD Orientation

FALL SEMESTER 2019

Sept 2	Labor Day (no classes)
Sept 3	Faculty retreat (no classes)
Sept 4 – Oct 11	5 ½ weeks of classes
Sept 4	Convocation
Varies* refund	Last day to change registration status or drop with a full refund
Oct 14 – 18	Canadian Thanksgiving & residential reading week
Oct 16 – 21	Distance learning intensives (DL reading break Oct 14-15, 22-25)
Oct 21 – Nov 22	5 weeks of residential classes
Oct 28 – Nov 22	4 weeks of distance learning classes
Varies*	Last day to drop a course
Nov 8	EPMC (residential and non-residential) interviews
Nov 25 – 29	US Thanksgiving break
Dec 2 – 10	1 ½ weeks of classes
Dec 11 – 12	Reading days
Dec 13 – 18	Course examinations
Dec 19 – Jan 7	Christmas break

JANUARY TERM 2020

Jan 8 – 28	3 weeks of classes – exact schedule varies by course
Varies*	Last day to drop a course or change registration status
Jan 28 – 29	EPMC (non-residential) interviews
Jan 30 – Feb 1	Worship Symposium

SPRING SEMESTER 2020

Feb 3 – 28	4 weeks of classes
Varies*	Last day to change registration status or drop with a full refund
Mar 2 – 6	Distance learning intensives & residential reading week
Mar 9 – 13	Distance learning reading week
Mar 9 – Apr 3	4 weeks of residential classes
Mar 16 – Apr 3	3 weeks of distance learning classes
March 17 – 20	Oral comprehensive exams
Varies*	Last day to drop a course
Mar 30 (Monday)	Dies Natalis celebration (no classes)
Apr 6 – 10	Spring Break
Apr 10	Good Friday (no classes)
Apr 13 – May 11	4 weeks of classes

May 5 – 8	Case study panels
May 12 – 15	Reading days
May 18 – 22	Course examinations
May 18 – 20	PhD dissertation defenses (mornings)
May 23	Commencement

MAY TERM 2020

May 26 – June 5 2 weeks of classes (classes do not meet on Memorial Day)

*Drop/Refund dates vary due to course length. See the Financial Services SemLink page for exact dates.

IX. Appendices

A. Vocational Formation Program Goals

The Vocational Formation component of the EPMC program seeks to achieve the following three Program Goals:

I. Pastoral Identity

In the context of supervised congregational ministry, students will grow in their (a) personal spiritual formation, (b) understanding and confirmation of call to ministry, and (c) theological reflection upon ministry, pastoral identity, and the church.

II. Ministry Practice Competencies

The 16 ministry practice areas listed below serve as a guide for congregation, supervisor and student as they assess the student's strengths and weaknesses, set goals and provide ministry leadership opportunities for the student, and evaluate the student's readiness for ministry.

A. Preaching and Teaching

- a. Preach sermons that are biblically faithful, creative, authentic, contextually sensitive, and life changing
- b. Teach using a variety of methods so that the message will be clearly received and understood by particular audiences

B. Evangelizing

- a. Tell the story of God's grace at work in my life in a lively and engaging way
- b. Model a life of hospitality within a community, welcoming people and paying attention to their needs in ways that communicate God's grace
- c. Model outreach as a way of life in a local congregation and communicate a vision and strategy for church planting
- d. Engage inquirers and people from other faith traditions with a clear biblical explanation and defense of the Gospel and Christian worldview

C. Pastoral Care

- a. Offer compassion, exhortation, forgiveness, and Christ's presence to people at all stages of faith formation so that they become more fully devoted followers of Jesus
- b. Assess, guide, and counsel people within the boundaries of a pastor's expertise, referring them to other professionals as appropriate
- c. Guide people in a moral way of life and hold them accountable

D. Worshipping

- a. Prepare and lead worship that glorifies God and helps people to encounter God
- b. Collaborate with others in the process of preparing for, leading, and evaluating worship

E. Seeking Justice and Serving

- a. Model a life that embodies principles and practices of biblical justice
- b. Educate and mobilize people to serve as advocates for peace, racial reconciliation, and benevolence, both locally and globally

F. Leading

- a. Lead a congregation, local community, and/or individuals through ordinary and celebratory times and through times of crisis, transition, conflict, and loss
- b. Provide alternative styles of leadership according to various needs and settings
- c. Encourage and train others to use their gifts in appropriate ministry practices

III. Accountability

In the context of specific structures of accountability provided by mentor and/or supervising pastor, and congregational leaders or committees specifically charged with supervisory responsibility, students will demonstrate their ability to (1) honestly assess their own strengths and weaknesses; (2) graciously receive feedback from their mentor, supervising pastor and/or congregation, and respond appropriately; (3) work effectively within given structures of authority and accountability; and (4) set realistic formation goals and achieve them.

[Self-Assessment Form on Six Ministry Practice Areas](#) (pdf)

Appendix B

B. Sermon Evaluation Form

You can download the Sermon Evaluation Forms from the Calvin Theological Seminary website at <http://www.calvinseminary.edu/ministry-connections/for-churches/pulpit-supply/>

Appendix C

C. Biographical Sketch

Biographical Sketch found at <https://goo.gl/forms/wDgymSRXLvysN5AI3>

Appendix D

D. Authorization to Release Information

I hereby authorize Calvin Theological Seminary to release Biological Sketch information and photograph to the following:

- The “potential candidates” for ministry for the coming year webpage maintained by the CRCNA
- CRCNA archives
- Synod booklet
- Announcement of call to CTS community

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E

E. Guidelines for Candidacy Sermon Preparation and Submission

PREAMBLE

The Candidacy Committee desires to impress upon those applying for candidacy to the ministry in the Christian Reformed Church, the importance of satisfactory sermonic material. The following requirements become guidelines for the preparation and submission of sermons and also for judging the acceptability of the sermon.

GUIDELINES

The candidate shall submit a manuscript of the assigned sermon text (texts were assigned in the email following your intent to candidate). Please feel free to adjust the assigned pericope (either more verses or fewer verses) as you judge appropriate, and inform Kenzie Szczepanski (kck065@calvinseminary.edu) of any such adjustments.

- The sermon shall include the following supporting materials:
 1. An exegetical study to include word study, grammar, and contextual analysis (minimum of two pages).
 2. A summary of the major moves of the sermon [(what some would call an outline) minimum of one page].
 3. List of commentaries consulted.

- The sermon shall meet the following criteria:
 1. Sermons will be judged by the standards set forth in the [Faculty Working Statement on the Nature of Excellence in Preaching](#).
 2. Sermons should be typed, double-spaced, with no less than one inch of margin all around, and 12 pt. font size.
 3. All pages, exclusive of the title page, must be numbered.
 4. The file name must include the candidate's name, and if the text was assigned or non-assigned. Example: "Szczepanski, Kenzie Assigned Sermon on Matthew 22:34-40"
 5. Sermons should be faced with a title page, giving the title or theme; the textual reference; if the text was assigned or non-assigned; the author's name; and the date.
 6. The minimum length of the manuscript is 2,000 words.

C. The sermon shall be one prepared for and delivered in public worship.

- The candidate shall also submit a manuscript of a sermon from a text of his/her choice. The sermon of choice must be based on a text from the testament of the Bible **other** than the assigned text. **Points A. and B. above also apply to this sermon of choice.**
 1. The sermon shall be one prepared for and delivered in public worship.
 2. The sermon shall not be one prepared for and delivered as a class assignment.

- A video of the assigned sermon must also be submitted and uploaded on the shared Google Drive folder along with the sermon manuscripts, so that the evaluator can evaluate the student's delivery readily.

- The above requirements must be fulfilled by **January 24** of the year in which candidacy is applied for. All materials must be submitted electronically in an email to Kenzie Szczepanski or directly uploaded on the shared Google Drive folder.

Appendix F

F. Minister Information Profile

(due February 21, 2020)

You will receive an email an email from the CRCNA's IT team in the fall approaching your hopeful candidacy approval. This email will give you log-in instructions to create your CRCNA minister profile. You are strongly encouraged to fill out your profile by February 22, which will then enable churches to contact you. If you do not wish to be contacted, you may leave the "Make My Profile Visible to Churches" box unchecked on the profile form. You can then update your profile in the future as your career progresses and your situation changes.

About the Minister's Profile: The Minister's Profile provides important information to the Ministerial Information Service, a denominational service that facilitates the exchange of information between pastors and congregations looking for pastors. Even if you already know where you will be serving you are still encouraged to complete this profile for future information sharing. Congregations regularly ask the Ministerial Information Service for information on specific pastors and can be better served by having the information on you provided by this profile.

If you have questions, please contact profiles@crcna.org.

Appendix G

G. Council Recommendation for Candidacy

(Due March 1 in the year in which the person is seeking approval of synod for candidacy)

Applicant Name: _____

Church Council: _____

Church Address: _____

1. How long has your church known this applicant, and what connections have you had with the applicant in the past three years?

2. Can you affirm that this person has demonstrated the requisite leadership ability, spiritual gifts, spiritual and moral integrity, love for Christ and his people, and a Reformed commitment necessary for flourishing in ministry? Please explain.

3. Are you able to offer an unqualified recommendation for this person's candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church? _____ Yes _____ No

*Please offer comments relative to your response

4. (optional) You are welcome to offer any additional comments about this applicant, using the space below or via attachment of additional pages.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Date Processed in Council: _____

Save a copy of this completed form for your records, and then send it to:

1. Rev. David Koll, Director of Candidacy (dkoll@crcna.org)

2. Kenzie Szczepanski, Candidacy Coordinator at CTS (kck065@calvinseminary.edu)

Appendix H

H. Classis Recommendation for Candidacy

(Due March 1 in the year in which the person is seeking approval of synod for candidacy)

Applicant Name: _____

Mentor Name: _____

Classis Representative Name: _____

Classis Representative Position: _____

Date of Report: _____

1. Has the classis representative/team been in consultation with the mentor regarding the progress of the applicant toward candidacy? (If not, please check in with the mentor before completing this form.)

_____ Yes _____ No

*Please offer comments relative to your consultation

2. Are you able, on behalf of your Classis team, to give an unqualified recommendation for this person as a candidate for ordination as a Minister of the Word in the CRCNA?

_____ Yes _____ No

*Please offer comments relative to your response.

3. This report form was reviewed with the student prior to submission to the Director of Vocational Formation on _____ (date).

Save a copy of this completed form for your records, and then send it to:

1. Your Classis CMLT Representative

2. Rev. David Koll, Director of Candidacy (dkoll@crcna.org)

3. Kenzie Szczepanski, Candidacy Coordinator at CTS (kck065@calvinseminary.edu)

Appendix I

I. Mentor Recommendation for Candidacy

(Due March 1 in the year in which the person is seeking approval of synod for candidacy)

Applicant Name: _____

Mentor Name: _____

Date of Report: _____

1. One candidacy requirement entrusted to the mentor is to review the evaluations of at least four sermons with the candidacy applicant (the four sermons must represent at least three different locations) and then to report completion of this requirement to the persons listed at the bottom of this form.

a. Please list the four dates and the places at which the applicant preached evaluated sermons. (Note that the list must represent at least three distinct locations or venues. The list can be given on this document, or on an attached document or email)

b. Are you able to testify that you have reviewed evaluations and discussed these preaching experiences with the applicant, and indicate that you believe the person is ready for candidacy relative to their preaching skill? Yes No
Comments:

2. Can you affirm that this person has demonstrated the requisite leadership ability, spiritual gifts, spiritual and moral integrity, love for Christ and his people, and a Reformed commitment necessary for flourishing in ministry? Please explain.

3. Are you able to give an unqualified recommendation for this person as a candidate for ordination as a Minister of the Word in the CRCNA?

Yes No *Please offer comments relative to your response.

4. This report form was reviewed with the student prior to submission to the persons listed below on _____ (date).

Save a copy of this completed form for your records, and then send it to:

1. Your Classis CMLT Representative

2. Rev. David Koll, Director of Candidacy (dkoll@crcna.org)

3. Kenzie Szczepanski, Candidacy Coordinator at CTS (kck065@calvinseminary.edu)

Appendix J

J. Bible Content Exam

Information Sheet for Test-Takers

A key value of the Christian Reformed Church for all ordained ministers is a basic working knowledge of the Bible. To ensure that all candidates meet this standard, the Candidacy Committee requires all prospective candidates to successfully complete (or receive Advanced Standing for) a 3-credit Bible Survey course at Calvin Theological Seminary or pass a Bible Content Exam which is designed to assess one's knowledge of stories, themes, and pertinent passages in the Old and New Testaments.

Registering for the exam: For those electing to take the exam, please contact Denise Mokma (drm046@calvinseminary.edu). The 100 multiple-choice question exam may be taken at any time. Prospective candidates may take the exam free of charge the first time. For subsequent attempts, prospective candidates will be required to pay a small administrative fee (\$50). The exam may be re-taken as many times as needed with a minimum of one month between attempts.

Before taking the exam, test-takers will need to find a proctor (a non-CTS professor, a pastor, or a church secretary) who will monitor the test-taking and can verify that no unauthorized materials were used during the exam. Test-takers will be required to supply the name, title, and email of their proctor who will be given a security code to open the exam.

Taking the Exam: To access the exam, simply click on the link entitled Bible Content Exam on the website (Bible Content Exam Canvas Site) you are directed to through your email and have your proctor enter the security code. Once the exam is started, test-takers will have 75 minutes to complete it (those for whom English is not a native tongue or who are entitled to learning accommodations can request more time). During the testing period, test-takers are not permitted to consult any print or digital materials (either stored locally on the computer or on any network), including but not limited to Bibles, dictionaries, commentaries, notes, charts, or timelines. At the end of the exam, students will be asked to affirm that they have not used any unauthorized materials during the exam (for exact statement, see "Expectations regarding Honest Conduct" below). Once the exam is submitted, test-takers will immediately receive their score. In order to pass the exam, test-takers must receive a score of at least 70 out of 100. Test-takers are encouraged to review their graded exam to discern areas of strength and areas of growth in Bible knowledge.

How to Prepare for the Exam: The best way to prepare for the exam is to read the Bible and familiarize yourself with the contents of each book. Reviewing the notes at the beginning of each book of the Bible in a study Bible can be especially helpful for this. Additionally, practice exams can be found at <http://www.whitneyhq.com/biblecontent/>.

Technology Glitches: Technology isn't perfect. Sometimes computers crash and the internet fails. If this happens while you are taking the test, please log back in and resume your exam. If you have any problems with this, please contact Denise Mokma (drm046@calvinseminary.edu).

Expectations regarding Honest Conduct: Test-takers may not refer to any print or digital materials (either stored locally on the computer or on any network) during the testing period. Furthermore, they are not permitted to consult with other test-takers about the exam before, after, or during the testing period.

By way of reminder and for purposes of accountability, test-takers will be asked to affirm their compliance with these standards at the end of the exam. This online affirmation has the same force and expectation as the test taker's signature on a page.

The specific "Affirmations" are as follows:

I recognize and affirm the high standard of conduct expected of anyone called to and engaging in the preparation and practice of ordained ministry. As such, I hereby acknowledge the following with regard to submission of my Bible Content Examination:

1) I attest that while taking this examination I have not used unauthorized material, including but not limited to:

- material copied or viewed from personal notes (my own or anyone else's);
- material obtained by consulting databases, networks, or other electronic communication while taking the Bible Content Exam;
- direct reference to the Bible in any print or electronic form.

2) I have not received and I will not share information that discloses the content of exam questions or my responses by any means of personal or remote communications (telephone, email, text, social media, etc.) to others during the day I take the exam.

For all questions and concerns, please contact Denise Mokma (dmr046@calvinseminary.edu)