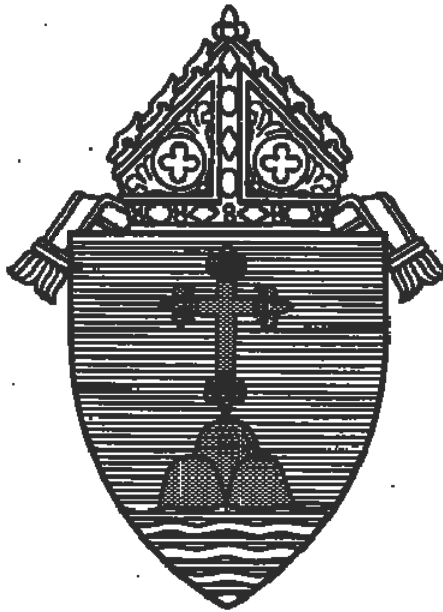


Certification Pastoral Associate Policies and Procedures



ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON

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ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON
Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries

I. PASTORAL MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

God's love, incarnate in the Christ, continues to enter and transform the world through the Church, the living body of Christ. It is the Church that carries on the mission of Jesus, proclaiming the Kingdom of God in our midst, and witnessing to the power of His death and resurrection until He comes.

By sacramental initiation, every Catholic is called to share in the mission of Christ and the Church, each in a particular way and always in union with the community of the Church.

Pastoral ministry is one of the ways in which Catholics may be called to carry forward the mission of the Church. This ministry makes present the shepherding care of the Lord for all His people. By sacramental ordination, bishops, together with the priests and deacons who assist them, are given a central responsibility for providing this ministry to the Church and the world. They do this, not only by themselves, but also by associating other people with them in the essential tasks of ministering to God's people. Depending on their gifts and experience, persons may be called to minister in pastoral roles such as teaching, counseling, worship, and the coordination of the Church's activities.

Those who participate in this pastoral ministry do so only in and for the Church. They do not serve in their own name or by their own authority; the Church ministers through them. It is always the Church who welcomes other people through Baptism and forgives them; the Church guides them and leads them in prayer and in service to others.

To assist pastors in the pastoral care of a parish, the Archdiocese of Boston has established the role of pastoral associate. The pastor of a local community may call lay persons or religious to this position, but always on the basis of their strong faith, their deep love of the Church, their competence as teachers of the Catholic tradition, and their witness of an authentic Christian life.

To qualify for this important work of pastoral associate, the Archdiocese requires that each individual be registered and certified by the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries.

II. QUALITIES OF A PASTORAL MINISTER

It is important that certain qualities be present in a pastoral associate. The following qualifications are considered to be essential characteristics of an ecclesial minister as well as virtues to be cultivated.

- ❖ Possesses faith in God – a personal faith in a loving Father who has revealed Himself in Jesus, the Savior, and who guides and animates the Church through the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ Gives evidence of a Catholic way of life – one who shares publicly his/her faith and seeks to integrate faith and life in an authentic way.
- ❖ Participates actively and regularly in the worship and sacramental life of the Church – one who embraces the Church’s faith in the Eucharist.
- ❖ Loves the Church and is committed to her teachings – one who seeks to proclaim and explain in the context of ministry her message in faithful accord with the teaching of the Magisterium.
- ❖ Strives to build community while being a servant of the community – one who embodies the servant dimension of Christianity in his/her life and inspires others to involvement in the life and mission of the Church.
- ❖ Possesses human qualities of integrity, compassion, a sense of justice, and the capacity to respect and relate to others – a person who is true to one’s word and possesses healthy self-knowledge.
- ❖ Takes initiative to exercise his/her responsibility while being accountable to the pastoral leadership of the pastor.

III. CERTIFICATION OF A PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

A. The Requirements for Certification

1. The candidate is a Catholic in good standing who possesses the qualities of a pastoral minister and has demonstrated a commitment to further growth through ongoing formation.
2. The candidate has a level of competence considered necessary for effectiveness in pastoral ministry. Ordinarily, this includes:
 - a. Experience in pastoral ministry
 - b. A bachelor’s degree which includes a minimum of 12 hours of foundational theology in the Catholic tradition (Scripture, Christology, Ecclesiology, Sacramental Theology)
OR
A master’s degree in Catholic theology, pastoral ministry, or a related field which includes a minimum of 12 hours of foundational theology in the Catholic tradition (Scripture, Christology, Ecclesiology, Sacramental Theology)
 - c. Theological updating.
3. The candidate is actively serving as a pastoral associate in a parish of the Archdiocese and has been in that position for at least nine (9) months.

If there is no evidence of the candidate's meeting the above requirements, an application will not be considered for certification.

B. The Process for Certification

1. The Application

- a. A candidate for certification is required to submit a completed Certification Application Form(Appendix A).
- b. Upon receipt of the Application Form, the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries will complete the Application Packet by contacting the following:
 - 1) the persons listed as references on the Application Form for letters of reference
 - 2) the parish of baptism for a Baptismal Certificate
 - 3) the Regional Bishop where the candidate works or resides.

2. The Interview

Before a person is certified as a pastoral associate by the Archdiocese of Boston, the candidate is to be interviewed by the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries. The interview includes a review of the following areas:

- a. The faith life of the candidate as reflected in the qualities of a pastoral associate
- b. The human qualities of the candidate as reflected in the qualities of a pastoral associate
- c. The academic competence of the individual from the perspective of formation in Catholic doctrine, as well as exposure to the human sciences that relate to pastoral ministry
- d. The professional background, training, and practical experience of the applicant.

C. Decision on Certification

The decision as to whether or not a candidate is eligible for certification is the responsibility of the Director of the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries.

Certification is granted for a period of five (5) years. For certification to be renewed, a person certified as a pastoral associate is required to participate in continuing formation programs according to policies and practices of the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries.

Certification with notation will be granted when an applicant is considered to possess the necessary spiritual and human qualities but is lacking in some area of the academic and/or pastoral formation required for the position. The notation will be reviewed periodically, as indicated at the time of certification.

If certification is denied, the individual may appeal to a review board. The decision of the review board will be final.

D. Special Certification

Special certification is required for certain areas of responsibility. This includes such areas as preparation of canonical forms in connection with marriage or annulments and responsibility for parish catechetical programs. These specific certifications and others are granted upon completion of continuing education courses/programs sponsored by the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries or through the certification procedures and programs of an Archdiocesan office.

ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

I. INTERVIEW

After receipt of all required forms and letters, each candidate will be interviewed by the Director of the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries, along with two other interviewers recommended by the Director and approved by the Secretary for Pastoral and Ministerial Services.

II. CERTIFICATION BOARD

The Certification Board reviews all applications for certification. Its membership, appointed by the Archbishop of Boston, is composed of the Secretary for Pastoral and Ministerial Services and at least four (4) persons recommended by the Director of the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries.

III. CERTIFICATION DECISION

- A. The Certification Board, after reviewing the completed Application Form, references, and interview material, will make a recommendation to the Director of the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries regarding certification.
- B. The certification decision will consist of one of the following:
 - 1. Certified as Pastoral Associate
 - 2. Not certified as Pastoral Associate
 - 3. Certification with notation for a determined period of time
- C. An individual may appeal the decision regarding certification to a review board.
 - 1. If a candidate has reason to appeal the decision, he/she is to notify in writing the Director of the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries within two (2) weeks of the date of the original decision. Included in the letter should be the reasons for making the appeal and pertinent information, which supports the reasons given.
 - 2. An ad hoc review board will be established by the Secretary for Pastoral and Ministerial Services in consultation with the Director of the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries. Membership on this board is to include three (3) persons familiar with the *Pastoral Associate Guidelines* and the *Pastoral Associate Certification Policies and Procedures*.
 - 3. The review board, after reviewing the application, the original interview material, and any new information submitted, will make a decision. An additional interview may be required.
 - 4. The decision of the review board is final.

IV. PASTORAL ASSOCIATE FILE

- A. A certification file will be established in the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries for each pastoral associate who is granted certification.
- B. In keeping with the *Guidelines for Pastoral Associates* concerning continuing formation (II.C.), each pastoral associate will be required to submit yearly updated information regarding courses taken, continuing education units, and related experiences.

V. **PASTORAL ASSOCIATE CERTIFICATION RENEWAL**

A. **Eligibility**

- 1. At the end of five (5) years, a pastoral associate actively serving in a parish of the Archdiocese is required to have their certification status reviewed.
- 2. A certified pastoral associate not actively serving in a parish of the Archdiocese at the end of five (5) years is not eligible for certification renewal until such time as that person is once again serving in a position as a registered pastoral associate in the Archdiocese of Boston. The certification renewal process will be initiated after a period of nine (9) months from the time a person returns to active ministry.

B. **Requirements**

- 1. Evidence that the pastoral associate continues to manifest the ecclesial and human qualities set forth in the *Guidelines for Pastoral Associates*
- 2. Documentation of fulfillment of the pastoral associate continuing formation requirements as stated in the *Pastoral Associate Continuing Formation Policy*.
- 3. Documentation that the pastoral associate has fulfilled any notation indicated on the previous certification.

C. **Procedure**

- 1. The pastoral associate eligible for certification renewal is contacted by the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries and asked to submit a completed Pastoral Associate Certification Renewal Application (Appendix B).
- 2. Upon receipt of the Application, the following will be contacted by the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries:
 - a. Current pastor where the Pastoral Associate is engaged for a reference
 - b. Reference noted on the Application Form
 - c. Regional Bishop in the region where the candidate works.
- 3. A Pastoral Associate who had a notation on their original certification will be interviewed by the Director of the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries, as necessary.

D. **Decision**

1. The completed Pastoral Associate Certification Renewal Application Form and other required documentation will be reviewed by the Certification Board.
2. The Certification Board after reviewing the completed application packet, will make a recommendation to the Director of the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries..
3. The certification renewal decision will consist of one of the following:
 - a. Certification is renewed for five (5) years
 - b. Certification renewal is denied
 - c. Certification renewal is granted with notation for a determined period of time.
4. An individual may appeal the decision regarding certification renewal to a review board. (See Section III.D. Certification Decision.)

6. LIST SPECIFIC COURSES AND CREDITS RECEIVED IN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY IN UNDERGRADUATE/GRADUATE YEARS

<u>Course</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Institution</u>	<u>Date</u>

CATES RECEIVED:

I.	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

8. OTHER EDUCATIONAL PURSUITS: (Degree program, Post-Graduate Courses, Workshops attended since last degree)

<u>Title</u>	<u>Institution</u>	<u>Date</u>

9. LIST ANY SCHOLARSHIPS OR HONORS RECEIVED:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Granted by</u>	<u>Date</u>

10. PRESENT POSITION;

POSITION _____ DATE _____
EMPLOYED _____

PARISH/
INSTITUTION _____ CITY _____

RESPONSIBILITIES _____

11. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES IN MINISTRY;

<u>Position</u>	Parish/Institution	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>

12. WRITE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE QUALITIES AND SKILLS YOU BRING TO PASTORAL MINISTRY:

12. NAME THREE REFERENCES: (Pastor, Colleague, Employer) Relationship to you.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>City</u>

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: _

DATE: _____

6.. OTHER CERTIFICATES RECEIVED SINCE INITIAL CERTIFICATION:

Title	Date
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
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7. OTHER EDUCATIONAL PURSUITS SINCE INITIAL CERTIFICATION: (DEGREES, POSTGRADUATE COURSES, CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS, WORKSHOPS):

8. LIST ANY SCHOLARSHIPS OR HONORS RECEIVED SINCE INITIAL CERTIFICATION:

Title	Date	Granted by
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
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9. PRESENT POSITION:

POSITION _____

DATE EMPLOYED _____

PARISH/INSTITUTION

CITY _____

RESPONSIBILITIES _____

