

Continuing Education Guidelines for Clergy

Administered by the Center for Ministry
in Accordance with the Board of Ordained Ministry of
the Mississippi Conference of the United Methodist Church*

What are the basic continuing education requirements?

All clergy in full-time appointments (deacons, elders, associate members, and full-time local pastors who have completed their educational requirements) are required to earn an average of two (2) Continuing Education Units (CEUs) each calendar year or a minimum of eight (8) over the course of a quadrennium (Methodist for “four-year period”).

Part-time local pastors who have completed their educational requirements are expected to earn one (1) CEU per year or four (4) per quadrennium.

Clergy enrolled in college, seminary, or graduate school are not required to earn additional credit while they are students.

What exactly is a CEU?

Ten (10) contact hours with a qualified instructor or resource person equals one (1) CEU. This is a standard measurement used across professions and by colleges and universities in the United States.

Units are granted in 0.10 units which equals one hour. This means that a seven-hour event, for example, qualifies for 0.70 CEU.

Where can I earn CEUs?

Starting at home, you can garner credits at events sponsored by the Center for Ministry and the Mississippi Conference—the annual Pastors’ School and the Clergy Leadership Conference, for example. Check the promotional materials for CEUs available through other events related to the Conference and the Center.

Looking beyond the home-front, you will find many opportunities for developing your mind and spirit. If you plan to attend events sponsored by other ministry organizations, check in with the Center for Ministry in advance to review credits and reporting processes.

What do I do when I’ve earned CEUs?

Two things, if you’re a United Methodist:

1. Be sure that an official record of your participation reaches the Center for Ministry. Enter the event on your People Portal or send your information our offices at ministry@millsaps.edu or the mailing address below.

What is an “official record?”

- For UMC pastors, you may print your official record at any time from your People Portal. You may enter events CEUs for approval here as well.
 - If the Center handles the registration and you participate in the entire event, your credit will automatically be added to your record.
 - If the Conference or other related organization handles the registration, they will send the Center a list of participants and we will add that to each person’s record.
 - If another organization sponsors the event, it is necessary for you to get a certificate issued by that body stating the CEU value and either upload it to People Portal or send a copy to the Center.
2. Turn in an accounting of your continuing education on the report form provided in your Charge Conference packet each fall.

What if a local church, district or peer group wants to plan a continuing education event?

Great idea! If you’re interested in doing this, contact the Center for Ministry to discuss your plans and/or submit a proposal with the theme or topic, dates, purpose, audience, leadership, and schedule. You can find guidelines and a conversation-starting form on our website.

Is it up to me to decide what I want to learn?

In part, yes. It is also important to get feedback and set goals with your Pastor/Staff Relations Committee each year. How can your leadership in this particular congregation be enhanced by your continuing education? Where do all of you see room for growth? What kinds of experience do you need in order to stay fresh and refreshed in your life and ministry?

Garner support from your committee and congregation for your participation in lifelong learning. It benefits them as well as you! Encourage their financial support through the church budget if that is not already in place. Your district superintendent can advocate the congregation in this direction as well.

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*Other denominations have similar requirements. These guidelines are tailored to the standards of the *United Methodist Book of Discipline*.