

Candidacy Processes -- notes for Synodical Deputy/Stated Clerk

Resources:

[Journey Towards Ordination](#)

[Commissioned Pastor Handbook](#)–2023 updated version

Synodical Deputies

Article 8

A classis should not schedule a colloquium doctum until they have received notification from the Candidacy Director that all Article 8 submissions have been received and approved and approval has been granted by the Candidacy Committee for the applicant to proceed (or that approval is pending some minor submissions). **If you have not seen an email to this effect (forwarded from the Candidacy Director) for a colloquium doctum that you are scheduled to attend, please contact the Candidacy Director.**

Article 10

- When you are invited to attend an Article 10 exam (seminary route to ministry), please check the [candidates page](#) of the CRCNA website to make sure there is no asterisk behind the candidate's name denoting delayed candidacy. If there is an asterisk, check with the Candidacy director to see whether that delay will be lifted in time for the scheduled exam.
- In cases of article 12c, a specialized ministry that relates directly to the calling of a minister, you'll be asked for concurrence on the job description
- You will weigh in on the classes' judgment call that the job is consistent with the role of Min of the Word, and that there is a good description of the job responsibilities and a description of accountability
- Chaplaincy office must also give endorsement for Ministers of the Word who will serve as chaplains (*this is not true in all chaplaincy positions –only those which require denominational endorsement – i.e. hospital, prison, military chaplaincy*). *Some positions like “marketplace chaplaincy” and some campus chaplaincy positions don't require endorsement.*

Article 23

- Article 23 job description must be approved by synodical deputies (See page 8 in the [CP Handbook](#) for elements of a good job description)

- *Note: Double check to make sure the “article 23 job description” is not for a lead/solo pastor in an organized church. If it is, you should redirect the classis to article 24, and advise that a candidacy approved learning plan is necessary*
- Chaplaincy office must also give endorsement for commissioned pastors who will serve as chaplains

Article 24

- **NEW in 2025: Synodical deputies must concur on the examinations of all commissioned pastors who will serve in solo/lead roles in an organized church**
- The use of Article 24 (CP serving as solo/lead in an organized church) must be approved by synodical deputies

One of the following criteria must be evident: (pg. 27 in the CP handbook)

1. Commissioned pastors who are planting a church may continue to serve for **“a reasonable period of transition”** after the church becomes an organized congregation. **New in 2025: “If the newly organized church desires to call the Commissioned Pastor to remain in this position beyond that period of transition, the commissioned pastor shall begin the process of article 24b bridge ordination”.**

2. Commissioned pastors who serve in an organized church **alongside a minister of the Word** may, in exceptional circumstances, move into the senior/solo role if the minister of the Word leaves. **New in 2025: In this scenario, the commissioned pastor shall begin the process of article 24b bridge ordination.**

3. In **unique ministry contexts** a commissioned pastor may be called to serve in an organized congregation if the classis, with concurring advice of synodical deputies, ascertains that standards for pastoral preparation required by Articles 6, 7, or 8 are not presently **possible** for one of the following reasons: **1. The prescribed training is not offered in a language spoken by the commissioned pastor. 2. The context is one that presents significant obstacles to raising up indigenous leadership in ways that are sustainable by the respective congregations and communities, and this has resulted in limited- or non-availability of competent indigenous leaders trained for ministry via one of the prescribed routes for ministry of the Word.**

NOTE: This is now the only “scenario” in which a CP can serve as solo/lead in an organized church without committing to work towards theological training for ordination as Min of the Word.

4. There is an agreement to use Article 24b **“Bridge Ordination”** – term call with agreement to make accountable progress towards education for Minister of the Word

- Synodical deputies should make sure a Candidacy Committee approved learning plan is in place for ***ALL solo/lead positions in emerging or organized churches***

“In all cases in which a commissioned pastor serves in a solo leadership position in an emerging or organized church, it is mandatory that such a person, in cooperation with classis, shall develop and complete a contextualized learning plan for denominational orientation, adopted by classis and approved by the Candidacy Committee, as described in the Commissioned Pastor Handbook.”
 –Supplement, Article 24a

Candidacy items – Stated Clerks

Article 8

- [The Article 8 Process Guide and Checklist](#) is a guide to the responsibilities of classis and various entities throughout the process
- Candidacy Director will communicate with you regarding: a. Concurrence of need and granting of denominational licensure b. Approval to proceed with colloquium doctum

Note: If you haven’t received approval (or haven’t heard from the Candidacy Director that approval will close to being granted), please do not schedule a colloquium doctum

- Need is justified when:
 - The minister to be called has such **extraordinary qualifications** that the church recognizes that it would be important for the denomination to acquire the minister’s service.
 - The need of a particular congregation for a pastor is so **urgent** that it can be met only by calling a minister of another denomination.

*(Art. 8 Supplent E.1) A church may consider calling a minister ordained outside of the CRCNA **only if it has put forth a sustained and realistic effort** to obtain a minister from within the Christian Reformed Church or the Reformed Church in America. This shall apply only to a church which continues to have a viable ministry.*

- The minister is a **new-church developer** and is being called to start a new church.
- There is a need for **indigenous leadership** in a multicultural or ethnic minority church.

NOTE: When need cannot be established through any of the above situations: Synod has endorsed the Candidacy Committee’s strategy of allowing the article 8 to continue on the condition that the minister’s learning plan contain the “MEPMC” (modified program for ecclesiastical candidacy) coursework at Calvin Seminary.

- Note: The CMLT of your classis has a large role to play in this process. If they are not familiar with their role, refer them to the Process Guide linked above.
- **Candidacy approval is needed before colloquium doctum can occur.** If you haven't seen an email from the Candidacy Director to that effect, please reach out to ask which remaining requirements unmet (slaclear@crcna.org.)
- The Candidacy Director is glad to give you updates, support and help as you and your CMLT navigate this process

Article 10

- For Article 10 exams (seminary route to ministry), please check the [candidates page](#) of the CRCNA website to make sure there is no "asterisk" behind the candidate's name denoting "delayed candidacy". A candidate should not accept a call or undergo an exam until their delay is cleared. If you see an asterisk, contact the Candidacy Director for more information.
- Classis will weigh in on whether the job is spiritual in nature and consistent with the role of Min of the Word—and also make sure there is a good description of the job responsibilities and a description of accountability
- Chaplaincy office must also give endorsement for Ministers of the Word who will serve as chaplains **if the position requires denominational endorsement** (i.e. hospital, military, prison chaplains). Some chaplain positions don't require denominational endorsement (i.e. marketplace or campus chaplaincy).

Article 23

- Article 23 job description must be approved by synodical deputies (See page 8 in the [CP Handbook](#) for elements of a good job description).
- The learning plan should be completed before the examination takes place
- ***Note: If the "article 23 job description" describes a solo/lead position in an organized church, the clerk should redirect those who submitted it to Article 24, and advise that a candidacy approved learning plan needs to be in place.***
- Chaplaincy office must also give endorsement for commissioned pastors who will serve as chaplains (if required for the position, as in scenarios described above in article 10 section)

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that period of transition, the commissioned pastor shall begin the process of article 24b bridge ordination”.

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