



## **EFCA CREDENTIALING THROUGH EFCA EAST**

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The following FAQs will give you an overview of EFCA credentialing. For complete details, read through [Ministerial Credentialing in the EFCA](#). On that site, look at each of the blue icons, but pay particular attention to [Documents and Forms](#). Download the document for the credential you are pursuing. It will give you directions for applying and writing the paper and the documents that must be submitted to the EFCA East office.

### **WHAT DOES CREDENTIALING INVOLVE?**

If not already ordained by another denomination, a candidate must start with the [Ministry License](#). If already ordained in a non-EFC church, the candidate can proceed to the [Transfer of Ordination](#).

While credentials are granted by the national EFCA, the process is completed at the district level. Please contact the EFCA East office ([easterndistrict@efca.org](mailto:easterndistrict@efca.org)) with any questions and to let us know of your desire to be credentialed.

## THE EFCA OFFERS FOUR MINISTERIAL CREDENTIALS:

- The [Ministry License](#):
  - [Expedited](#) (for senior/lead pastors with 10+ years in EFCA ministry). Available until 11/1/22
  - [Five Year Non-renewable](#)
  - [Three Year Renewable](#)
- The candidate can begin pursuing the next credential once the license is instated, working with district office to determine when he/she is ready to pursue the next available credential. The [Certificate of Ordination](#) is designed primarily, though not exclusively, for those in full-time ministry directly teaching the Word of God. It is granted to males only. The [Certificate of Christian Ministry](#) is designed for a wide variety of ministry roles which involve teaching the Word of God regularly.
- [Transfer of Ordination](#) is for those who have already been ordained by another denomination or church and have their written paper and council notes. Requirements are largely the same as for Certificate of Ordination, as the previous paper can often be adapted to meet EFCA requirements.

## WHAT SPECIFIC WORK IS REQUIRED?

### SUMMARY OF **MINISTRY LICENSE REQUIREMENTS**

- Paperwork (Letter of Intent; Application; Minister's Profile; Policy on Spiritual and Character Qualifications ([PSCQ](#)) questionnaires for the candidate, spouse or friend, and elders; and [Reading Affidavit](#)), submitted to the [EFCA East office](#).
- One-time \$50 credentialing fee, payable by check or online to the [EFCA East](#).
- Reading [Evangelical Convictions](#) in addition to choosing one of two History, Theology and Polity requirement options listed in their entirety [HERE](#).
- Observing a licensing council prior to your own.
- Doctrinal-biographical paper (15-20 pages).
- Successful completion of an examination by the District Board of Ministerial Standing.

### SUMMARY OF **CERTIFICATE OF ORDINATION OR CERTIFICATE OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRY REQUIREMENTS**

Prerequisite: EFCA Ministry License.

- Paperwork (new Letter of Intent, Application, Minister's Profile, Church Recommendation AND Policy on Spiritual and Character Qualifications ([PSCQ](#)) questionnaires for the candidate, spouse or friend, and elders).

- Doctrinal-biographical paper, expanding the licensing paper based on further study, reflection, growth, and interaction during the licensing period (25–30 pages for a Certificate of Christian Ministry; 35–40 pages for a Certificate of Ordination).
- Observing an ordination council prior to your own.
- Successful completion of an examination by the District Board of Ministerial Standing.

## **WHO IS ELIGIBLE?**

You must be a member of an EFCA church and engaged in a qualifying vocational or bi-vocational ministry. Men in qualifying ministries are eligible for the Ministry License and Certificate of Ordination; men and women in qualifying ministries are eligible for the Ministry License and Certificate of Christian Ministry. The license is the required credential for all pursuing further credentialing in the EFCA. It is intended, first and foremost, for those directly involved in local church ministry of teaching and preaching the Word and, secondly, for those who are indirectly involved in the ministry of teaching and preaching the Word, who engage in a ministry that is supportive of the ministry of the Word.

## **WHAT IS A QUALIFYING MINISTRY?**

Generally, it is a ministry within the EFCA or approved by the national Board of Ministerial Standing. Non-EFCA ministries are considered on a case-by-case basis.

## **ON WHAT BASIS DOES THE EFCA EVALUATE AN INDIVIDUAL'S FITNESS FOR CREDENTIALING?**

[Call to ministry](#) (a church or qualifying ministry has called you to be a pastor, chaplain or ministry leader in accord with eligibility).

[Personal character, integrity, and ministerial capability](#), as shown in the [Policy for Spiritual and Character Qualifications Questionnaires](#) (PSCQ). Ordination requires an additional Church Recommendation.

[Competence in Biblical-theological understanding](#), as demonstrated in the paper and council examination.

## **IS THERE AN EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENT?**

The basic requirement for licensing is preparation that produces appropriate theological understanding and alignment with the EFCA, as demonstrated in your paper and your oral examination. Some who have had no formal Bible college or seminary training go through the EFCA GATEWAY training. A diploma from GATEWAY or other theological training is recommended, but not required. A license requires the demonstration of theological competency. The Certificate of Christian Ministry requires the demonstration of theological proficiency. The Certificate of Ordination requires the demonstration of theological mastery.

## **WILL OBTAINING A CREDENTIAL HELP ME OBTAIN TAX BENEFITS?**

Please understand that credentialing is not primarily a means to obtain ministerial tax status with the IRS or recognition by the state in which you live to perform marriages. While an EFCA credential may help you to qualify for these things, we ask you to view credentialing as an opportunity for public affirmation of your integrity and competence in ministry, an opportunity for personal growth, and development to that end. (Note: regarding the relationship between an EFCA ministerial credential and IRS tax treatment, you need to consult expert advice from tax accountants in the state in which you live or helpful manuals such as Zondervan Minister's Tax and Financial Guide by Dan Busby, J. Michael Martin, and John VanDrunen.)

## **CAN WOMEN BE CREDENTIALLED IN THE EFCA?**

Yes. They are eligible for the Ministry License and for the Certificate of Christian Ministry. However, the Certificate of Ordination is reserved for men who serve in a qualifying ministry as per the EFCA complementarian conviction.

## **WHAT IF I'M NOT YET IN A QUALIFYING MINISTRY? IS THERE SOMETHING I CAN DO?**

If you anticipate entering a qualifying ministry soon, you can begin working on the requirements for the Ministry License. You can also participate in a licensing study group (see below).

## **CAN I TRANSFER MY CREDENTIAL TO THE EFCA?**

If you are licensed, but not ordained, with another denomination or church, you must begin with the EFCA Ministry License. If you are ordained with another denomination or church, and that ordination process involved a compatible paper and a formal examination council, you are likely eligible to transfer your ordination to the EFCA. The process for a Transfer of Ordination is largely the same as for the Certificate of Ordination, except that you do not have to complete the Ministry License, and you may not have to write an entirely new paper. See [EFCA Transfer of Ordination](#) or contact the [EFCA East office](#) to determine eligibility.

## **WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP ME?**

The EFCA has [self-study notes](#) that can help you in a personal regimen of preparation and development. If you desire a [credentialing mentor](#), contact the [EFCA East office](#). If available, you can join a credentialing study group. These groups meet in various locations and are led by EFCA-ordained pastors to discuss the theological themes of the Statement of Faith and apply them to life and ministry, thus helping individuals prepare for licensing and certification. Contact the [EFCA East office](#) to inquire about group availability.

## WHAT ARE MY FIRST STEPS?

- Download [Ministerial Credentialing in the EFCA](#) for all the forms and resources you need for the credential you desire.
- Contact the [EFCA East office](#) to let us know of your intent so we can track with you and answer questions you may have. We will create a file for you that we will send to the EFCA Board of Ministerial Standing for final approval once your process is complete.
- [Work at your own pace](#) on the application forms, book reading, and writing your paper. These can be done and submitted to the EFCA East office in any order.
- [Observe a credentialing council](#) prior to your own.
- [Schedule your council](#) once your paper is complete and accepted by the EFCA East office. At that point a council date for your examination will be approved.

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