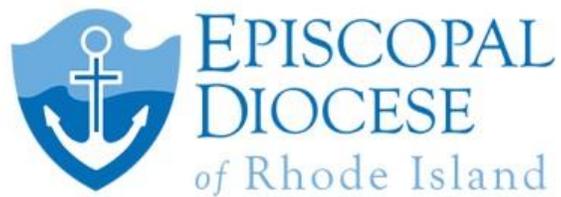


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# Deacon's Formation Guidelines 2020



August

2020

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*FORMATION GUIDELINES FOR DIACONATE PROCESS*  
*The Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island*

2020

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This document is intended to be a resource for individuals in the diaconate formation process in the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island. There is a timeline table at the end of the document that can be used as a tool to track the various forms, letters, and meetings that are required by the Diocese and will be useful to track progress. Questions about this process can be directed to the Archdeacon of the Diocese of the Chair of the Commission on Ministry (COM).

## **Postulancy**

During postulancy all those in formation will:

- Using the information submitted with the application for postulancy Form 5, create a spiritual autobiography and share this the Archdeacon who will share this with the bishop
- attend regular diaconal meetings in this Diocese and the Province 1 School for Deacons (P1SfD). (Formation is meant to be done in community and this small group will provide an opportunity to enhance one’s formation. The meetings are meant to be a time of fellowship with fellow postulants and candidates as well as the current community of deacons.)
- attend annual retreat with the Bishop, Deacons, and other Diaconal Postulants and Candidates
- attend the annual Diocesan Convention
- communicate regularly with Bishop on Ember Days (4x a year -”The Ember Days, traditionally observed on the Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays after the First Sunday in Lent, the Day of Pentecost, Holy Cross Day, and December 13.”) and maintain an ongoing relationship with the bishop for pastoral care, guidance and conversation

(See <https://episcopalchurch.org/library/glossary/ember-days> for more details on Ember Days.)

- Create a Learning Portfolio that will be compiled during the academic formation, completed during Candidacy, and submitted to the COM prior to Ordination, including:
  - Spiritual Autobiography
  - First Parish Internship Evaluation
  - One sermon from parish internship
  - One essay from the first academic year of the P1SfD

See more details below on how to prepare pieces for your Learning Portfolio.

- serve as the Bishop's chaplain on a regular basis for the parish visitations throughout the year. This is coordinated through the Bishop's office; it's recommended that you sign up for no more than two or three visitations every six months.
- engage in ongoing academic formation through P1SfD
- meet regularly with a spiritual director
- meet regularly with a deacon mentor (who is not your spiritual director) as assigned by the Diocese through the Commission on Ministry (COM) or the office of the Archdeacon
- engage in an internship in one or two parish settings as assigned by the Bishop
- explore the possibility of an internship in a social service setting
- maintain good practices of self-care and develop appropriate spiritual disciplines to support that care

## **Requirements for Candidacy**

During the third unit of school,

- complete and submit Form 6 for Candidacy
- complete Province 1 Clergy Background Screening as ordered by the Bishop's Office

Complete the portfolio and submit the following to COM two months prior to completion of the academic program:

- Second Parish Internship Evaluation
- A report from Dean for Province 1 School for Deacons (P1SfD) and the Archdeacon, and any other individual supervising academic formation (if applicable)
- One sermon from parish internship
- One essay from the second academic year of the P1SfD

### **How to prepare a Learning Portfolio piece**

Each portfolio piece must include both an object and a subjective reflection.

When considering inclusion of an object (such as an academic paper, a personal essay, a blog entry, a video of yourself engaged in a ministry such as preaching or simply reflecting verbally, a prayer service or other liturgical experience you have developed, or something else) for your portfolio, you should consider the following:

- Does it help show how you are learning and developing proficiency in one of the canonically required areas? If so, how? (See below for list of canonical requirements.)
- Which of the required proficiencies does it demonstrate?
- Does it, in the context of other objects you are including in the portfolio, demonstrate the breadth of your formation in fulfillment of all of the canonically required areas?

The subjective reflection included with each component is critical. In it, you should consider:

- What did you learn from the experience that produced this object?
- How were you (your thinking, your awareness, etc.) changed, or how were you (your thinking, your awareness) confirmed or deepened?
- What were the hard and easy parts of it?
- What about it do you feel was successful, and where do you feel it was not as successful as you would have wished? (Note that the failures from which we learn a lot can be more important than the easy successes, and your self-

awareness is an important proficiency to be demonstrated in the portfolio.)

- How, when there is time, would you like to go further in pursuing the learning this object provided you?

## **Requirements for Ordination**

To be approved for Ordination, an individual shall add to the portfolio material to reflect competency in each of the canonical areas:

- Academic studies including, The Holy Scriptures, theology, and the tradition of the Church.
- Diakonia and the diaconate.
- Human awareness and understanding.
- Spiritual development and discipline.
- Practical training and experience.

( See Title III, CanonIII.6.5 (f) page 110 of The Constitution and Canons of the 2018 General Convention of the Episcopal Church,

<https://extranet.generalconvention.org/staff/files/download/23914>)

A copy of the competencies and detailed description of the associated demonstration of each competency will be made available to each Postulant when entering the formation process.

The Province 1 School for Deacons will issue a letter stating that the ordinand has successfully completed all the requirements of the school following the completion of all eight modules. This letter will be sent to the Diocese.

## **Tips to Keep in Mind**

Use the timeline on page 6 of this document to help keep track of your progress through the process. There are several deadlines you'll need to be aware of and, because the process is on a rolling basis, it will be useful if you assign approximate dates to each of the items listed.

The psychological evaluation and background screening require you to complete several forms and, in the case of the background screening, may need your follow-up. Be sure to plan accordingly.

Know that Forms 7 and 9 require sign-off by the priest-in-charge and the vestry of your sponsoring church so be sure to allow time for those signatures to be collected. (Depending on when the vestry meeting happens, it could take a month.)

Tuition for the Province 1 School for Deacons is \$2,000/year. In this diocese, the cost is split accordingly:

- \$600 paid by postulant/candidate
- \$600 paid by sponsoring parish
- \$700 paid by diocese

Invoices for each year will be sent to the diocese who will then contact you and your sponsoring parish for payment. If you don't hear about invoicing within the first six months of the school year, contact the Chair of the Commission on Ministry to follow up.



### DEADLINE DATES FOR DIACONATE: POSTULANCY TO ORDINATION

ACTION ITEMS	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	DATE COMPLETED
<i>Ember Day Letters</i> (Title III, Canon 6, Sec. 3e)	Postulant/Candidate to Bishop	
Attend <i>Diocesan Convention</i> annually	Postulant/ Candidate	
Download and Process <i>Form 6 – Postulant’s Application for Candidacy</i>	Postulant to Bishop <b>During 3rd unit of Deacon School</b>	
Download and coordinate processing of <i>Form 7: Affirmation for Candidacy</i>	Postulant, rector/vicar/priest-in charge, vestry to Bishop’s Office <b>During 3rd unit of Deacon School</b>	
Complete <i>Province One Clergy Background Screening</i> prior to Candidacy	Ordered by Bishop’s Office <b>During 3rd unit of Deacon School</b>	
COM certifies continued formation to the Bishop and Standing Committee	Postulant provides required information. COM reviews and recommends to Bishop	
Postulant invited for interview by Standing Committee (SC) for Candidacy	SC chairperson to postulant <b>During 4th unit of Deacon School</b>	
On advice of SC, Bishop grants candidacy and informs postulant	Bishop <b>by end of 4th unit of Deacon School</b>	
If applicable, update medical exam, psychological evaluation	Candidate repeats evaluations prior to ordination if more than 3 yrs have elapsed since initial evaluation	
Complete <i>Safe Church, Anti-Racism, and Title IV</i> training	Postulant/Candidate prior to approval for ordination send Certificate to Bishop’s Office <b>by end of 6th unit of Deacon School</b>	
Download and process <i>Form 8: Application to be Ordained a Deacon</i>	Candidate to Bishop’s Office <b>During 6th unit of Deacons School</b>	
Download and coordinate processing of <i>Form 9: Affirmation for Ordination</i>	Candidate, rector/vicar/p-j-c, vestry to Bishop’s Office <b>During 6th unit of Deacons School</b>	
COM certifies satisfactory formation to Bishop and Standing Committee	Candidate provides required information. COM reviews and recommends to Bishop <b>No later than 6th unit of Deacon School</b>	
Standing Committee may interview for ordination	SC chairperson to candidate	
SC sends testimonial to the Bishop	SC to Bishop	
On advice of SC, Bishop approves ordination and confirms ordination date	Bishop	