

CBAC Licensing Tool Kit

Rationale

In 2021, the Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada (CBAC) approved a change to its licensing process from a two-licensing system (Local Church and Association license) to a single unified License to Minister which is granted after a combined interview of the Candidate by representatives of the Local Church and the Association. The Board of Ministerial Standards and Education (BMSE) and the CBAC Council brought forward this change following extensive consultation with Association Licensing committees, recent Ordinands, and other stakeholders. The CBAC Assembly ratified these changes at Oasis 2021.

Throughout the consultation, one concern candidates and licensing committees shared was the added administration burden that the annual renewal of licensing added especially for those completing educational requirements. The one License to Minister is now good for two years.

Through the process, we have been committed to valuing our Baptist polity particularly "Local Church Autonomy" and "The Principle of Association." The Local Church must affirm that the individual possesses gifts and calling for ordained pastoral or recognized lay ministry in order for the process to begin. If the Local Church leadership does not know the individual, or they cannot affirm that the individual possesses gifts and calling for ordained pastoral or recognized lay ministry, the Local Church should not seek a meeting with the Association Licensing committee. At the same time, the principle of the Association is the weaving together and interdependence of our local churches. In our current process, the Association Licensing Committee could pause or stop an individual's journey based on their questioning of the individual. To honour this polity in the new licensing process, the Association is granted more members than the Local Church on the Licensing Committee that interviews the individual.

Licensing Committee Composition

The Licensing Committee should be composed of;

- no more than three (3) members of the Local Church where the candidate is a member;
- at least four (4) and no more than five (5) members of the Association.
- If there is no active Association Licensing Committee,
- If the Association does not have a Licensing Committee, the Local Church would seek out Accredited Ordained CBAC ministers, Recognized Convention Lay Pastors and local church lay leaders, who are knowledgeable in Baptist polity, practices and beliefs; and are believers baptized by immersion (except where precluded by medical condition) from other, preferably neighbouring, CBAC Churches.

Starting the Process

An individual desiring to begin the process must be a member in good standing of a Local CBAC Church for a minimum of one (1) year. The individual informs their Local Church that they are interested in pursuing ordained pastoral with the CBAC or becoming a recognized lay leader by the CBAC and request that the Local Church leadership arrange a time for the candidate and up

to three (3) Local Church representatives to meet with the Association Licensing Committee or equivalent as outlined in Regulations. It is the responsibility of the Local Church to discern and as appropriate affirm the candidate's gifts and calling to ministry.

The Association should set aside time in the spring and fall for these interviews, both for initial granting and renewal of Licenses to Minister. Each Association will need to communicate with their churches the dates they are setting aside for interviews. Decisions may need to be ratified by an Association Executive or at the Association meetings as per their practice and bylaws. We would encourage this as a practice in the new licensing process, and we would caution against the Association trying to set up individual sessions throughout a season.

The Roles of the Local Church and Associations

Issuing a License to Minister is an expression of confidence in a person's call to ordained pastoral ministry, academic progress, and suitability for ministry. The issuing of a License for Lay Ministry is an expression of confidence in a person's call to lay ministry within the Local Church. The Local Church and Association's representatives on the Licensing Committee must exercise the utmost care and be thoroughly satisfied with the qualities of mind, character, and Christian experience that would qualify the person for the vital work of an ordained CBAC Christian minister or that of lay ministry.

In coming together to interview candidates, the Local Church and the Association bring different perspectives about the individual and the process. The Local Church knows the individual and have witnessed their growth in faith and practice; the Association may not always know the individual like the Local Church but should bring a broader view of the CBAC family and objectively assess the candidate's fit and calling within the CBAC.

The Licensing Committee, in interviewing both Ordained and Lay candidates, should question the candidates about the following:

- Tell of their conversion, their call to ministry, their faith and life in Jesus Christ, their view of Christian doctrine with reference to the Bible, and their understanding of and substantial agreement with the 1905/06 Basis of Union, the foundational statement of agreed doctrine and church polity for the CBAC;
- give evidence of biblical knowledge and spiritual growth;
- has preached, taught or given leadership in the ministries of the church to determine their gifts for ministry;
- demonstrate an ethical lifestyle appropriate to a pastoral leader, including family relationships;
- give an account of their ministries in the church, how they have related to people, and how they have honoured their commitments, and articulate their understanding of pastoral ministry and basic Baptist beliefs.

The Licensing Committee should also assess the Ordination Candidates' call about:

- the candidate's fit within our broader CBAC family;
- exploring a theological and pastoral response to current trends and cultural issues;
- the ability to engage with other denominations, other Baptists in their community or others who may share differing theological views; and,
- the ability of male and female pastors to cooperate with one another in ministry.

In addition, the Licensing Committee should inquire about the candidate's commitment to the aims, core values and activities of the Association and the CBAC.

Because the process starts and ends with the Local Church, the Local Church should endeavour to offer financial, emotional and relational support to their candidates, as well as ministry opportunities (volunteer or paid) throughout their process.

Granting the License

Once the Licensing Committee has determined that they are in favour of granting the License to Minister or the License for Lay Ministry, the representatives will need to take the candidate's name back to their respective organization for ratification. This part of the process may vary across Associations and Local Churches. However, once the Local Church and the Association have ratified the Licensing Committee's decision, the Association will take the lead on getting the actual License signed and counter-signed by the Local Church.

Renewing the License

- The License is valid for two years.
- The Licensing Committee will renew the candidate's License to Minister or License for Lay Ministry if:
 1. the applicant's license was not rescinded.
 2. the applicant continues to be a member of and involved in a CBAC church;
 3. the applicant has given evidence of satisfactory ministry; and
 4. the applicant is making progress toward the completion of the academic and other requirements for ordination or recognized lay leadership.
- At the renewal interview, the Licensing Committee should ask the candidate additional questions regarding progress towards educational requirements and any changes to their theology, philosophy of ministry, etc., since their last meeting with the Licensing Committee.
- It's up to the candidate to initiate the request for renewal.

Transfer of License

In the event the candidate moves to another Association, they may request a transfer of license from the original Licensing Committee to the Local Church and Association where they are ministering. (Section 2.1 I. for ordination candidates and 5.1 H. for lay leadership candidates).

Next Steps

After affirming the candidate, the Licensing Committee should direct the candidate to the following steps on their journey that include:

- Contacting the BMSE through CBAC staff (Garth Williams or Andrew Myers) for application and information.
- Attending Explore – a required annual online event for ordination candidates that introduces them to the basics of the CBAC, process and available supports.
- For those pursuing the Recognized Lay Leadership track, they should be first pointed to the BMSE through CBAC staff (Garth Williams or Andrew Myers) for application and information; they are encouraged to investigate the Lay Leaders Certificate at Acadia Divinity College.
- Become familiar with the Basis of Union and Baptist Distinctives.
- Become familiar with the Regulations Concerning the Ministry and Protocols for Cases of Alleged Professional Misconduct.

Exceptions

- Where Associations no longer are functioning or do not have a Licensing Committee:
 1. The Local Church invites four or five local CBAC Church pastors/leaders to form the Association representatives for the interview (See Section 1.1 B. and 4.1 A.).
 2. One member of the Association representatives may sign the document on behalf of the Association.
 3. The church, following their process to ratify the decision of the Licensing Committee, may counter-sign the License.
- Some Associations may decide that the old two license system (Local Church then Association license) are robust enough to maintain; they are permitted to do this but must inform the CBAC office (Garth Williams or Andrew Myers) of this decision. If at some point in the future the Association opts into the current licensing system, they must inform the CBAC office. Once Associations have opted to use the current licensing system, they cannot return to the old two license system.

Note: Licenses to minister may be granted under three different options:

- **Option #1 (Default)** - The Association can choose to maintain the Association Licensing Committee, which would meet in conjunction with the local church to grant a License to Minister; or,
- **Option #2** - If the Association chooses to appoint a Licensing Committee no longer, the Local Church would be responsible to gather qualified pastors and laypeople as described in Section 1.1 B.; or,
- **Option #3** - The Association may decide to continue to use the old two-license process. If this is the case, they will need to declare and inform the CBAC that they wish to retain and operate under the former process.

Process Flow Chart

