

# Internship

## **“Internship in the PCA”**

An internship as outlined in BCO 19:7-11 is now mandatory for every candidate for ordination in the PCA. The purpose of this internship is to test one’s gifts, examine one’s abilities, and develop one’s experience for the Gospel ministry.

The Holy Scriptures require that some trial be previously made of those who are to be ordained to the ministry of the Word, both concerning their gifts and concerning their ability to rule as teaching elders, in order that this sacred office may not be degraded by being committed to weak or unworthy men, and that the Church may have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the gifts of those to whom this sacred office is committed.

To provide for such a period of trial, a candidate for ordination must serve an internship. This period of internship shall be at least one year in length, and may be longer at the discretion of the presbytery so as to give sufficient time for the presbytery to judge the candidate’s qualifications and service. This period of internship may occur during or after the candidate’s formal theological education. When it occurs during his formal theological education, it may include an intern year in addition to his time of academic training or it may run concurrent with his academic training.

The nature of the internship shall be determined by the presbytery, but it should involve the candidate in full scope of the duties of any regular ministerial calling approved by the presbytery. It is to be both a time of practical instruction and testing by the presbytery, and may be in any work which the presbytery deems to be a suitable ministry to test the intern’s gifts. The intern should be closely supervised by the presbytery throughout this trial period. (BCO 19-7)

PMV allows for five different plans of internship, each equivalent to one year’s full-time work in a local church or special ministry (e.g., RUF, chaplaincy, mission field, etc.). The internship usually includes some financial compensation, but this remuneration is not necessary. The internship is an educational and developmental program and not a job demanding remuneration. Internships may be without financial compensation.

To complete an internship eight things are required by *The Book of Church Order*:

1. A position and program in some church or ministry affording the intern “suitable ministry to test the intern’s gifts” (BCO 19-7).
2. A mentor. This may be a teaching elder or ruling elder involved in the intern’s ministry (preferably a pastor at the local church being served).
3. Candidacy status: You may become a candidate, and a licentiate at the same time you become an intern (BCO 19-8).
4. Completion of appropriate applications and testimonials.
5. Appearance before the Credentials Committee to present:
  - Testimony to conversion
  - Testimony to call to the ministry
  - Approval of internship plan
6. Approval of presbytery and declaration of intern status (BCO 19-10).
7. Completion of presbytery requirements (see attached).
8. Proper reports submitted to presbytery (see Intern and Mentor Quick Reference Guide).

The guidelines and responsibilities for Application for Internship are attached. All communication concerning internships should be sent to the committee assistant, [pmvcredentials@gmail.com](mailto:pmvcredentials@gmail.com).

*BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER*

19:7-16

19-7. The Holy Scriptures require that some trial be previously made of those who are to be ordained to the ministry of the Word, both concerning their gifts and concerning their ability to rule as teaching elders, in order that this sacred office may not be degraded by being committed to weak or unworthy men, and that the Church may have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the gifts of those to whom this sacred office is committed.

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19-8. An applicant for internship must be a candidate and may be a licentiate in the presbytery in which he is seeking to become an intern. He may, however, become a candidate, and an intern at the same meeting of presbytery. If an applicant for internship is already a candidate in another presbytery, that presbytery should dismiss him as a candidate to the Presbytery in which he is seeking to become an intern.

19-9. Examination for Internship

Before the applicant begins his period of internship, he shall give to the presbytery a written and/or an oral statement (at the discretion of the presbytery) of his inward call to the ministry of the Word.

19-10. When an applicant is approved for internship, the moderator of the presbytery shall offer a prayer suitable for the occasion, and shall address the applicant, if present, as follows:

**In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by that authority which He has given to the Church for its edification, we do declare you to be an intern of this presbytery as a means of testing your gifts for the holy ministry wherever God in His providence may call you; and for this purpose may the blessing of God rest upon you, and the Spirit of Christ fill your heart. Amen.**

Record shall be made of the internship in the following or like form, namely:

At \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ presbytery, having received testimonials commending \_\_\_\_\_, having received him as a candidate for the ministry, has placed him under internship at his request in order to test his gifts for the holy ministry.

19-11. When any intern shall have occasion, while his internship is in progress, to remove from the bounds of his own presbytery into those of another, the latter presbytery may, at its

discretion, on his producing proper testimonials from the former, take up his internship at the point at which it was left, and conduct it to a conclusion in the same manner as if it had been commenced itself. Presbytery shall repeat any portion of the previous presbytery's examination it desires, but it must at least examine the intern on:

- a. his Christian experience,
- b. his call to the ministry,
- c. his views in theology, and
- d. church government.

When God gives the intern the providential opportunity to serve the church and to receive part of his training within the bounds of a presbytery other than the one in which he has been declared an intern, the presbyteries involved may develop a cooperative agreement to assure the proper training of the intern. In such cases the home presbytery retains the final responsibility for and authority over the internship, but may rely to any extent considered necessary and proper in the circumstances, on the assistance of the sister presbytery. When regular preaching of the Word is involved, care must be taken to comply with BCO 19-1.

19-12. Presbyteries should require interns to devote themselves diligently to the trial of their gifts; and no one should be ordained to the work of the ministry of the Word until he has demonstrated the ability both to edify and to rule in the Church. Reports on every intern in the presbytery should be presented at each stated meeting of the presbytery by the committee of presbytery charged with the oversight of interns, and these reports shall become a part of the minutes of presbytery. The presbytery shall also require every intern himself to make a report to it at least once a year describing his ministerial experiences. If the intern is still in school, the presbytery shall secure from his instructors an annual report upon his deportment, diligence, and progress in study.

19-13. At the end of the period of time set by the presbytery for his internship, an intern shall have his internship either approved or disapproved. Even if it is approved, he cannot be ordained without a call to some specific work. If the internship is disapproved, the presbytery may either extend it for another definite period of time or it may completely rescind his intern status and may revoke his internship. If the intern shall devote himself unnecessarily to such pursuits as interfere with a full trial of his gifts, it shall be the duty of the presbytery to rescind his intern status, and to record its reasons therefore in the minutes of presbytery.

19-14. An intern, who, during his internship, is to serve a congregation in the capacity of the minister of the Word must be called by the congregation in the same way that a regular minister is called. A congregation may later call such a man as its pastor. This call must be approved by presbytery prior to the time of ordination. In the event a congregation does not desire to call such a man as its pastor as determined by a congregational vote, notice should be given as early as possible. Interns may be called to serve as assistants to ministers during their internship, by the Session of a church with approval of the call by presbytery.

19-15. Restrictions.

The intern may be asked by the moderator of a Session temporarily to chair the meeting of the Session. In such cases the moderator shall supervise this activity and may overrule the intern or re-assume the chair at will. The intern is not a member of Session and may not vote in the meetings unless he has previously been ordained a Ruling Elder and elected to the Session by the congregation. Normally, he shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Session and Diaconate when he has been called to work out his internship by a congregation. He shall have the right to

conduct funerals. An intern may not administer the Sacraments. He may serve on committees of the church he serves.

19-16. When circumstances warrant, a presbytery may approve previous experience which is equivalent to internship. This equivalency shall be decided by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of presbytery at any of its regular meetings. Such equivalent experience shall be decided only after the presbytery's internship committee has determined and reported that the candidate has met the following requirements:

- a. he has had at least (1) year of experience in comparable ministry;
- b. he has satisfactorily performed the full scope of ministerial duties;
- c. he has the manifest approbation of God's people in a local church as having the requisite gifts of the pastoral ministry.

### **Intern's Checklist**

- ❑ Secured a ministry opportunity through which I can complete the internship requirements.
- ❑ Completed internship application.
- ❑ Secured letter from a mentor agreeing to oversee my internship.
- ❑ Have read and understood the PMV Internship Program guidelines.
- ❑ Contacted the chairman of the sub-committee on internship.
- ❑ Have completed candidacy applications (if necessary) and licensure applications and exams (if desired). See appropriate guidelines.
- ❑ Contacted Credentials assistant for time, date and location of committee meetings and examinations.

## Guidelines for Applicants Seeking Internship

Internship is now required of all who applied to seminary after June 21, 1981. It involves one full year of supervised ministry in a PCA church. The full details and requirements are found in the *Book of Church Order* and Appendix A of the *Standing Rules of the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley*.

You may apply for candidacy, licensure and internship at the same meeting of presbytery. We recommend that you apply for candidacy at the beginning of seminary training and for licensure and internship when you begin to preach regularly.

### Prerequisites:

1. You must be a candidate (or applying) in the PCA, and be licensed (or applying) in this presbytery (an exception to this requirement may be possible if your internship duties do not require regular preaching).
2. You must have a PCA church in which to serve as an intern. Internship is intended to give you exposure to the various aspects of ministry and preaching. Your development in these roles is paramount!
3. Seek a teaching or ruling elder who is willing to serve as your mentor in a particular PCA church. Secure a written agreement from him to be your mentor.
4. Complete the "Internship Application" (and the "General Candidacy Application" and "Licensure Application" if you have not already done so) and return it/them to the Credentials Committee according to the **Schedule of Deadlines**.
5. Submit your completed "Internship Application" to the credentials assistant at [pmvcredentials@gmail.com](mailto:pmvcredentials@gmail.com) by the **Schedule of Deadlines**.
6. Appear before the Credentials Committee and presbytery to be declared an intern. Contact the chairman of the Credentials Committee for exact dates, times and locations of committee meetings and examinations.

### Responsibilities:

1. You must complete the requirements of internship as spelled out in Appendix A of the Standing Rules of the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley. A "Checklist" is provided.
2. The mentor you choose to supervise your program will be approved by the committee. It is preferable that it be the pastor of the church you serve.
3. You must make arrangements to meet with your mentor at least once a month to evaluate your progress. You should look at completed assignments together and submit the substance of these meetings in your reports to the committee. Note: These meetings are required whether you are actively serving in a church or are between ministries.
4. You must submit three yearly reports to the Credentials Committee. Reports should include a description of your work, dates of meetings with your mentor, concerns raised, evaluation of your progress, and the status of your education.
5. Reports should be submitted according to the Schedule of Deadlines. Reports are required from the beginning of your internship until the completion of it. Interns between ministries are not exempt from submitting reports.
6. You must report in person annually before presbytery on your internship program.
7. Any changes in an internship program must receive prior approval of the Credentials Committee.

### **ALL APPLICATIONS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS MUST BE RECEIVED**

**ELECTRONICALLY.** Send all applications, reports and papers to:

Credentials Committee

David Strain, Chairman

c/o Tricia Baugus, committee assistant

(601)940-2966

[pmvcredentials@gmail.com](mailto:pmvcredentials@gmail.com)

## SCHEDULE OF DEADLINES

Year	Presbytery Meeting	Credentials Committee Meeting	Deadline for Submissions to Credentials Committee
2021	February 2 May 4 August 3 November 2	December 8, 2020 March 9 June 8 September 14	November 20, 2020 February 19 May 21 August 27
2022	February 1 May 3 August 2 November 1	December 14, 2021 March 8 June 14 September 13	November 26, 2021 February 18 May 27 August 26
2023	February 7 May 2 August 1 November 7	December 13, 2022 March 14 June 13 September 12	November 25, 2022 February 24 May 26 August 25



**APPENDIX A**  
**PRESBYTERY'S INTERNSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM**

**1. Statement of purpose:**

The purposes of this program are: to ensure that all candidates meet the requirements of the Book of Church Order (19-7); to ensure that each candidate's seminary training conforms to the uniform curriculum; to ensure that each candidate has confirmation of his calling to the gospel ministry; to ensure that presbytery complies with the stated requirements of the BCO concerning candidacy, licensure, and internship; to allow each candidate the opportunity, under the supervision of the Credentials Committee, to correct any weakness in his examination for licensure; and to provide practical experience for each intern.

**2. Implementation:**

The applicant for internship will be examined for licensure by the Credentials Committee and presbytery according to the BCO 19-6,7,9. If there are deficiencies in the applicant's examination, the committee is to devise a plan of study to correct them. The committee will report to each meeting of presbytery the progress being made by the intern in eliminating his deficiencies.

**3. Financial Arrangements:**

The financial aspects of this program will be flexible. Candidates, licentiates, and interns will be responsible for the expenses of their academic education and internship. Presbytery, local churches, and individuals may provide financial aid to interns.

**4. The Intern:**

It is expected that each intern will participate fully in the training program established by these guidelines. It is the responsibility of the intern to fulfill the requirements. It is recognized, however, that candidates will be received during various stages of training, and every effort will be made to cooperate with presbyteries from which candidates might transfer. Each intern must report four times yearly to the Credentials Committee, two months before each presbytery meeting, and must be responsive to the committee's counsel and guidance. It is further recognized that some men will be specializing in Christian education or foreign missions. In such case the intern must complete the specific requirements set forth in this program, since he will be called upon to fulfill all the duties of a minister of the gospel. A candidate's internship may be fulfilled overseas on a short-term missionary assignment at the discretion of presbytery.

**5. Mentors:**

Each intern will be assigned a mentor who meets the following requirements:

- a. He is a PCA teaching or ruling elder with at least 3 years experience as an elder.
- b. He will meet with the intern monthly to review/measure the intern's progress and to shepherd him in the following:
  - Character - assisted by the intern's spiritual inventory which was previously submitted to the Credentials Committee,
  - Knowledge - according to the Constitution of the PCA (see BCO 19-2),
  - Pastoral duties — see 7. d) (10) below ("Practical On-the-Field Assignment for the intern"). The mentor must model these duties by demonstrating how to conduct each of the required calls and by observing or designating another to observe the intern on at least 8 of those calls.
  - Teaching—evaluate and assess. See 7. d) (1) below ("Practical

## On-the-Field Assignment for the Intern")

c. He will make semi-annual assessments of the intern - his gifts and graces - and submit each assessment to the Credentials Committee for the committee's September and March stated meetings.

d. He will, just prior to the completion of the intern's training program, relate to the interns sub-committee or designated member thereof an account of the development of the internship and give his final assessment of the intern's gifts and graces for ministry (according to I Timothy 3:1-7).

### **6. The Intern and the Uniform Curriculum:**

As part of his application for licensure a candidate will provide the Credentials Committee with transcripts for all seminary academic work. The Credentials Committee will determine if there are any deficiencies existing between seminary training and the uniform curriculum. The results of such a comparison will be reported by the Credentials Committee to presbytery when the candidate is presented for licensure. The committee will provide a plan to correct any deficiencies and report to each meeting of presbytery the progress being made by the intern in eliminating them.

### **7. Practical On-the-Field Assignment for the Intern:**

a. Approval: Presbytery must approve all assignments.

b. Time: The equivalent of a year of full time experience is required.

Various combinations of full and part-time ministries may apply toward partial fulfillment of the requirement. In all cases a minimum of six consecutive months of full time experience as an intern in this presbytery is required.

c. Reports: All written reports and papers must be typed and presented to the Credentials Committee.

d. Specific Assignments to be completed by Each Intern:

(1) A report of his preaching and teaching: A minimum of 52 must be listed, giving the dates, the occasions, the texts and the applications. At least one sermon and one teaching class must be observed and evaluated by a designee of the Credentials Committee (ordinarily the intern's mentor).

(2) A detailed report of a baptismal service: This should include an explanation of counseling, and admonition of communicants present at the baptism, and an exhortation directed toward the parents when the candidate is an infant.

(3) A detailed report of a communion service: This must contain the procedures involved in the notification of the congregation, the explanation of the sacrament offered the congregation prior to its administration, the words of institution to be used, a discussion of what is involved in fencing the table, and an explanation of spiritual preparation for the Lord's Supper.

(4) A detailed report of a funeral service: This must contain precisely what the intern would do in making initial contact with the family of the deceased, at the funeral, and at the graveside. Exposition of appropriate scripture and a description of the various avenues of pastoral care to the surviving family must be included.

(5) A report on session and deacons' meetings: This must include attending three session and two deacons' meetings from at least three different local churches. A sample agenda for a session meeting is

to be included.

(6) A report on the use of Robert's Rules of Order: The book must be read and the procedures for calling and moderating a congregational meeting must be discussed.

(7) A report on church budgets: This should include their preparation and their relationship to missions. The intern is to meet with a designee of the Credentials Committee to discuss the preparation of church budgets and to receive instruction in the stewardship of personal finances. Insights gained in this meeting are to be included in the report.

(8) A report on the Standing Rules of presbytery: The intern must read the Standing Rules and indicate his understanding of the purpose, work, and importance of presbytery. This must include a discussion of the intern's attendance at three presbytery meetings, including one other than this presbytery.

(9) The intern is to attend and report on each of the following committee meetings:

(a) Presbytery - Mission to the World, Mission to North America, and Discipleship Ministries. However, those committee meetings should not be ones which are held during a presbytery meeting.

The report should explain:

- i) procedures followed by committees in planning their meetings;
- ii) participation by ruling and teaching elders;
- iii) his perception of his own role as presbyter if he were a committee member.

(b) Local Church - Worship, Missions, C.E. or other available committees. This report should explain:

- i) procedures followed in planning meetings;
- ii) participation by various members of the committees;
- iii) his perception of his role as pastor in providing leadership, training, motivation, and assistance to church committees.

(c) A report on visitation:

(a) The intern must make the following calls:

- i) hospital patients - 8 calls;
- ii) nursing home patients - 3 calls;
- iii) jail inmates - 2 calls;
- iv) church members' homes:
  - a) regular worshipers - 3 calls;
  - b) visitors - 2 calls;
  - c) church members who are inactive or attend infrequently - 6 calls.

(b) He should indicate the dates, times, and occasions for the visits and answer the following questions:

- i) What is your philosophy of visitation?
- ii) What were your perceptions as a result of visiting in each of the above listed places?
- iii) Were there any negative perceptions which you had to face? If so, identify these and explain how you expect to deal with them.

(11) A report on a wedding: This must include a detailed course outline for premarital counseling and a complete wedding service.

(12) A report on a course for new members: This should include those who come from nonreformed backgrounds. A bibliography should be included.

(13) A report on the intern's relationship with his mentor: This should include his evaluation of the value of the internship program.

(14) A theological paper which reflects the intern's struggles in his pastoral duties must be submitted. The intern and Credentials Committee will agree upon the topic.

## Intern Checklist

Name:

Preliminary Matters

- Intern assignment approved by Credentials Committee
- Date internship approved by presbytery:
- Mentor chosen and approved by Credentials Committee

Mentor's Name:

Specific Assignments

(All written reports and papers must be typed and presented to the Credentials Committee.)

- 52 occasions to preach or teach (report) Church committee on
- Sermon observed by member of the Credentials Committee Church committee on
- Teaching Session observed by member of Credentials Committee Church committee on
- Baptismal service (report)  Visitation (report)
- Communion service (report)  Note special directions in Appendix A.
  - 8 hospital calls
  - 3 nursing home calls
  - 2 jail inmates
  - 3 regular worshippers
  - 2 church visitors
  - 6 inactive or infrequent attenders
- Funeral service (report)
- Attend required officers meetings (report)  Wedding service (report)
  - Include detailed outline for premarital counseling.
- Session meeting: Church  New members course (report)
- Session meeting: Church
- Session meeting: Church
- Deacons meeting: Church
- Deacons meeting where an intern. Church
- Sample agenda for Session meeting  Internship program evaluation (report)
  - Include evaluation of the relationship with mentor.
- Read Robert's Rules of Order (report)  Theological paper
  - Should reflect intern's struggles in his pastoral duties.
  - Topic approved by Credentials Committee
  - Paper approved by Credentials Committee
- Include procedures for calling/moderating a congregational meeting.
- Church budgets/finances (report)  Include results of meeting with designee of Credentials Committee
- Read Standing Rules of the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley (report)
- Attend three presbytery meetings (report)
  - Two meetings of Mississippi Valley
  - One meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery
- Attend required committee meetings (report)
  - Presbytery MTW
  - Presbytery MNA
  - Presbytery CE