

EFCC Ministerial Accreditation Process

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why are we proposing a change to our process?

EFCC Ministerial Accreditation is a formative process that will include peer mentoring. It will encourage relationships and learning across the EFCC family and will help develop leaders.

Less than half of our pastors completed an ordination credential in our old process. We wanted to engage more of our pastors so that they experienced more support and accountability.

The old process was two tiered. This new process is one tier.

2. Why were the four topics chosen for the seminars in the proposed process?

These are areas in which we hope all who minister in the Free Church – pastors, missionaries, chaplains, and lay leaders – will grow and be formed for more effective ministry.

The seminar topics were chosen to ensure that each candidate will grow in their understanding of the ethos of the EFCC and will handle the Word, their ministry, and their theology in a manner compatible with the EFCC Character and Calling.

3. If the process is adopted, what will happen to those currently credentialed with the EFCC?

Those ordained and in good standing will automatically receive an EFCC Accreditation certificate.

Those who hold a ministry credential and have started the ordination process will have until June 30, 2025, to complete the requirements of ordination.

So long as they complete the annual requirements, those who hold a ministry credential will be able to retain their credential and be in good standing in the EFCC. They will not, however, receive a certificate of accreditation until they complete the additional requirements of accreditation (i.e., the four seminars and an accreditation council).

4. What are the roles of the local church and of the Ministerial Standing Committee in this process?

The local church will affirm the person's *character* and *calling* – they give the person the authority to carry out a specific ministry on behalf of the local church.

The MSC will receive reports from the candidate, from seminar facilitators, from the District Superintendents, and from mentors. The MSC will then affirm the person's *compatibility* with EFCC doctrine and ethos, and their *competency* in handling the Word.

The MSC also oversees the process. The process, including the facilitators, will be evaluated and may be adjusted over time.

5. In this new process, the EFCC will no longer “ordain” ministers. Will the local church “ordain”?

Ordination in hierarchical polities implies “authority” to carry out a ministry on behalf of the denomination. Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Presbyterian polities mandate that a minister must be ordained with the denomination *before* that person is allowed to serve in one of their local churches.

In the EFCC, the local church grants authority to minister; the EFCC ensures that people are qualified to minister competently in a way that is compatible with the EFCC Statement of Faith and Character & Calling.

Hence, the EFCC will accredit all ministers who successfully complete the Accreditation Process; the local church will then have the choice of whether to ordain, commission, or dedicate their accredited minister in the local church.

6. How long will it take for one to complete the Accreditation process?

About two years. Candidates will take two seminars per year.

7. Will the seminars be offered in different languages?

Yes, we will be offering cohorts in other languages.

8. Are people not seeking Accreditation able to attend the seminars?

Absolutely!

9. How will the seminars be offered?

Some seminars will take place in person, while others will be offered over web conferencing. Each seminar will require six-to-eight hours of cohort work under a facilitator plus reading and some writing. Some of the work will be discussions of case studies. In-person seminars may be offered in conjunction with regular EFCC meetings to save on travel costs.

10. Will there be any kind of “council”?

After approval by the MSC, the local church will work with the District Superintendent to conduct an Accreditation Council to affirm the candidate's qualifications for ministry in the EFCC.

11. Is the central goal of this process overhaul motivated by the desire for the EFCC to ordain women?

Not at all. The EFCC recognizes that the local church hires and gives authority to each person in local church ministry to carry out a certain role. EFCC Accreditation better reflects the Free Church reality that while the local church affirms the character and the calling of a candidate and grants the authority to their candidate to live out their calling within their local church ministry, the EFCC affirms their compatibility with the EFCC Statement of Faith and Character & Calling, and their competency in handling the Word.

Successful candidates will receive an EFCC Certificate of Accreditation. In the Free Church ethos, conferral of ordination better fits within the local church. Hence, the reason for the name change. If their local church wants to ordain or commission their accredited minister, they are free to do so (or not to do so).

12. Can an accredited minister take their accreditation to other ministries within the Free Church?

Yes, *accreditation* is portable within the EFCC. Ordination, however, is granted by the local church. If a church or ministry receives a pastor ordained by a Free Church, it is up to the receiving ministry to decide whether it will recognize the ordination.