

Evangelical Free Church of Canada Ministerial Accreditation

The Ministerial Standing Committee (MSC) of the Evangelical Free Church of Canada (EFCC) serves local churches and other ministries by ensuring that those called to pastor our churches, serve in ministry or mission, engage with various parachurch ministries, or serve as lay leaders are capable of fulfilling these callings. The flourishing of the churches of the EFCC is dependent on qualified leadership, which includes a deep understanding of the Christian Scriptures and theology, lifestyle and character that honour God, and requisite skills for particular ministries. Another factor in the flourishing of the EFCC is our understanding that each believer has been gifted by God and is called to serve God in whatever their circumstances and in whatever ways they can.

The MSC serves the EFCC by ensuring candidates, recommended by their church or ministry supervisors, are qualified for approved ministry based on their calling and their compatibility with our denominational distinctives. The following process of EFCC Ministerial Accreditation is comprehensive and rigorous and leads to an Accreditation Certificate. “Ministerial Accreditation” refers to the local church or parachurch organization, district, and national EFCC recognition of one’s calling to and gifting for a particular ministry.

Ministerial Accreditation assures a local church or other ministry that the candidate has received full recognition for service in the EFCC. Each local church or ministry is free to choose how to recognize any accredited individual, whether that is by ordination, commissioning, appointment, or in some other way. The MSC awards *EFCC Accreditation* based on successful completion of the following process.

This Accreditation is portable in that when someone changes ministries within the EFCC they carry it with them, and they do not need to repeat the process. The MSC renews Accreditation each year after receiving the submission of the Annual Report.

1. The EFCC Accreditation Process

The Accreditation process is a team effort on the part of the candidate; the local church or parachurch organization; the District Superintendent, ServeCanada Director, or ServeBeyond Director; the coach, seminar facilitators and cohort; and the MSC.

a. Steps in the Accreditation Process

The following steps must be taken, with a notice of completion and documents forwarded to the MSC by the District Superintendent (or designate), the ServeCanada Director, or the ServeBeyond Director (hereafter, “EFCC Leader”). Upon completion of steps i. through v. below, the applicant is considered “in process” and is a pastor, ministry personnel, or missionary “in good standing” for purposes of national and district meetings and for other legal purposes. To maintain this status the candidate must proceed through the accreditation process in a timely fashion.

i. Interview with and Recommendation from the EFCC Leader

The interview happens as part of the candidating process for a particular ministry. The point of the interview is to meet the EFCC Leader to ensure a basic fit with the EFCC, and to ensure the candidate understands the Accreditation process and has the potential to complete it. The EFCC Leader may include other appropriate persons in the interview. The EFCC Leader will submit a short summary of this meeting to the MSC.

ii. Letter of Recommendation to the MSC from an EFCC Church

This letter should verify that the applicant is a member in good standing of an EFCC local church and that they desire to enter the Accreditation process.

iii. Letter of Application to the MSC from the Candidate

The Letter of Application should include a 300-word biography, a statement of call to a particular ministry, a brief affirmation of the EFCC Statement of Faith, Character and Calling, and Covenant of Personal and Professional Ethics, and a statement of willingness to proceed with the Accreditation process including agreement to work with an Accreditation coach and be part of a cohort.

iv. Agreements

The candidate will sign a statement of their agreement to the *EFCC Statement of Faith, Character & Calling*, and *Covenant of Personal and Professional Ethics* documents.

v. Criminal Record Check

The candidate will provide a current criminal record check or police information check.

vi. Completion of the Accreditation Curriculum (below)

The process for Accreditation should take about two years. It is a *formative* rather than *summative* process.

b. Curriculum for EFCC Accreditation

i. Coaching

Candidates will engage with a coach appointed by the EFCC Leader. A seasoned pastor or missionary is ideal. The coach will offer support to the candidate through the Accreditation process. The coach will contact the candidate at least bi-monthly throughout the process.

ii. Cohorts

Candidates will engage with a cohort of candidates in a series of seminars. The seminar cohorts will be administered by the national office. One purpose of the cohort is to help members develop capacities for serving in the EFCC or approved ministry. Another purpose is to establish relationships with people in the EFCC. These seminars will meet semi-annually and include at

least six hours of face-to-face interaction, and fourteen hours of significant reading and short responses/presentations on case studies. After each seminar participants will submit a 1000-word “learnings” paper to the MSC through the EFCC Leader. The paper should detail what the participant learned and how what they learned will impact their ministry. In addition, the seminar facilitator will submit an evaluation of each participant’s involvement in the seminar.

iii. Seminars

For each Seminar, the MSC establishes the objectives and topics. The Facilitator has some freedom regarding the resources and assignment.

c. Seminars

i. Seminar One: Introduction to the EFCC (in conjunction with EFCC Pastors Orientation)

1. Objectives

- a. People will assess their fit with the EFCC.
- b. Establish relationships in the cohort.
 - i. Get to know each other.
 - ii. Pray for each other.

2. Topics

- a. Introduction to the EFCC
 - i. What is the EFCC (ServeCanada and ServeBeyond)?
 - ii. History
 - iii. Polity—Congregationalism
 - iv. Our Character and Calling
 - v. Do I Fit?
- b. Introduction to the Accreditation Process
 - i. What is Accreditation in the EFCC?
 - ii. Why Accreditation?
- c. Case studies on current issues in society from an evangelical perspective. Issues include: human sexuality and marriage; human life and death, including abortion and end-of-life issues; human government vis á vis the kingdom of God; and the church’s response to issues of racial injustice, persecution, poverty, the environment, and war.

ii. Seminar Two: The Bible in Today’s World

1. Objective: People will interpret select passages of Scripture for current contexts of ministry.

2. Topics

- a. Understanding the world in which we serve
- b. The nature of Scripture today
- c. The interpretation of Scripture today
- d. Preaching Scripture today

iii. Seminar Three: Mission and Ministry in the EFCC

1. Objective: People will develop a philosophy of ministry for their work in the EFCC in light of the social situation in which they minister.
2. Topics
 - a. The nature of ministry leadership
 - i. Include a leadership inventory
 - b. Personal and professional ethics
 - c. Philosophy of Ministry
 - i. Outreach and evangelism
 - ii. Preaching
 - iii. Pastoral Care
 - iv. Working with Boards
 - d. The Personal Life of the ministry leader
 - e. Case Studies

iv. Seminar Four: Theology in the EFCC

1. Objective: People will understand and respond to the EFCC Statement of Faith
2. Topics
 - a. What makes us Evangelical?
 - b. What makes us Free?

d. Accreditation Council

After the MSC reviews the facilitators' evaluations and the four learning statements of the candidate, it may recommend the candidate to the appropriate EFCC Leader. As a final step in the Accreditation process, the EFCC Leader, in cooperation with the local church of which the Candidate is a member in good standing, will conduct an Accreditation Council. The purpose of the Council is to affirm the candidate's qualifications for ministry in the EFCC. Upon recommendation of the Council to the MSC, the candidate will be recognized at the next Annual General Meeting of the EFCC.

2. Local Church Recognition

When someone achieves Accreditation with the EFCC, their local church or ministry may choose to recognize this with an ordination or commissioning service to celebrate that the candidate has achieved full Accreditation in the EFCC.

3. Transfer of Certification from Another Entity

If someone wishes to transfer a ministry certification from another entity to the EFCC they should follow steps 1.a.i. - v. They should also submit a proof of certification and a letter from the previous accrediting organization or denomination stating that they were a minister in good standing. Then they should take Seminar One. In discussion with the EFCC Leader, they should complete one or more of the other seminars.

4. Maintenance of EFCC Accreditation

Every accredited individual will maintain their recognition by submitting the Annual Report form distributed annually by the EFCC. In addition, the MSC will regularly request an updated criminal records check. The Annual Report form includes:

- a. A signed statement of continuing agreement with the *EFCC Statement of Faith, Character & Calling, and Covenant of Personal and Professional Ethics* documents.
- b. An accounting of denominational connections through attendance at a national or district Conference or a formal meeting with fellow EFCC ministers in a setting endorsed by the EFCC Leader.
- c. A report of continuing education such as books read, a college or seminary course taken, or attendance at a Professional Development conference.

5. Discipline, Restoration, and Appeal

If an accredited person comes to a point of major disagreement with the policies of the EFCC, or if there is a credible accusation of violating the *Covenant of Personal and Professional Ethics*, the MSC may recall their accreditation until the issue is resolved. See the EFCC policy on *Discipline, Restoration, and Appeal*.