

GUIDELINES FOR REFERENCE GROUP MEETINGS

The Educator Certification Advisor and each member of the Reference Group are vital links in the certification process, providing a context when serious attention can be given to both the person and the process while helping to maintain standards for certification. The Reference Group meeting is the first of three checkpoints in the process of exam process. 1) Reference Group, 2) Independent Readers, 3) Educator Certification Council.

The Educator Certification Advisor and the Reference Group are responsible to the Educator Certification Council and the presbytery for the integrity of the process.

Reference Group Meeting Process

Step I

The first meeting of the Reference Group is to clarify the role of the Group in the certification process and to ask questions. Allow Reference Group members a chance to become more familiar with the process and the expectations. Consider using some community building activities to allow members a chance to get to know each other and then select portions of the Certification Handbook to share as the Reference Group members become more familiar with the certification process and their role.

Step II

Between meetings, members of the Reference Group are to maintain contact with the Educator, to offer support and encouragement. Having the Group as a whole, or individuals therein, read portions of the exam as it progresses is also appropriate.

Step III

The Reference Group should meet within two weeks after receiving the examination from the Educator, completing the *Reference Group Guidelines for Reading the Exam* as a form of evaluation.

1. Reference Group meets briefly without Educator to clarify the purpose of the meeting, the role of the Reference Group members, and questions to ask/areas to discuss and explore.
2. Reference Group meets with Educator.
 - a. Review examination responses using previously completed *Reference Group Guidelines for Reading the Examination Form*.
 - b. With Educator, identify strengths and areas needing improvement.
 - c. Hear and discuss the Educator's understanding of the educational task and his/her perception of relationships with pastor, staff, laity and presbytery.
 - d. Discuss Educator's plans for future professional development.
3. Reference Group again meets independently to compare perceptions of Educator's strengths and areas needing improvement using the *General Reference Group Comments Form* and to make decisions about asking the educator to make major and/or minor changes on the exam.
4. If changes are necessary, the Reference Group will decide whether the changes will be evaluated by the whole group meeting again, or; by one or two people from the Reference Group, or by the Advisor.
5. If changes are not needed, the Reference Group moves to recommend Certification and the Advisor and the Educator work together to get all the papers into the Educator Certification Council.