

Professional Ministry Glossary

This glossary was developed by the USCCB Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service and updated in 2021. It contains working definitions used in USCCB and other publications. It is not intended to be definitive or exhaustive but can be a guidance for common usage of terms in ministry formation and certification. In some instances, to clarify related terms, the glossary makes use of grids, included at the end of the section.

accreditation: See [Glossary Grid #1](#) on accreditation, certification and approval.

accreditation body: See [Glossary Grid #1](#) on accreditation, certification and approval.

advisory committee: A committee composed of members both internal and external to a program that consults regularly with the program director regarding all aspects of the program and assists in the development of the program according to agreed upon standards. Professional consultation committees function in the same manner.

approval: See [Glossary Grid #1](#) on accreditation, certification and approval.

ACPE The Standard for Spiritual Care and Education (ACPE): The ACPE is a national multi-faith organization of CPE certified educators and ministers. Its mission is to foster experience-based theological education that combines the practice of pastoral care with qualified supervision and peer-group reflection and that is grounded in a person-centered approach to religious ministry. The ACPE Accreditation Subcommittee accredits ACPE centers, and the ACPE Certification Subcommittee certifies CPE supervisors.

authorization: See [Glossary Grid #2](#) on endorsement, appointment, authorization and commissioning.

Catholic Campus Ministry Association (CCMA): A professional organization whose mission is to foster the professional and theological growth of Catholic campus ministers and to promote the mission of the Church in higher education. The USCCB Subcommittee first approved its certification standards and procedures in 1992, and most recently, in 2019.

certificate: A written statement that a participant has completed a program or course of studies through attendance, participation, and successful completion of program requirements. Receiving a certificate of completion of a program is not the same thing as being recognized as certified by a diocesan ministry formation program or national ministry organization. See certification below.

certification: See [Glossary Grid #1](#) on accreditation, certification and approval.

chaplains: Canon Law (Canons 564-572) restricts the title “chaplain” to ordained priests. In 1997, several Congregations of the Holy See issued an Instruction, “On Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests.” This Instruction was given approval by Pope John Paul II and further specified that it is unlawful for non-ordained faithful to assume the title of “chaplain.” However, in the United States, hiring

institutions (health care, prison, and other specialized institutions) will only employ “chaplains” who are board certified and hold this professional credential for spiritual care services. Catholic women religious, religious brothers and lay faithful, who have met standards or competencies of Catholic chaplaincy associations approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops through its Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service and who have been acknowledged or endorsed by their own local bishop, are also essential representatives of the Church. These ministers help maintain a Catholic presence in most such institutions, assure adherence to the “Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services,” ensure the availability of the sacraments to Catholics, and provide direction and comfort to physicians, staff, and family members of the sick, dying and incarcerated.

To retain and affirm this very important ministry, while also being faithful to the letter and spirit of Canon Law and the 1997 Instruction, the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) separates out "acknowledgement or endorsement for ministry" from the "certification by the profession." This distinction enables NACC to be faithful to Canon Law, and, at the same time, meet the requirements for certification. The NACC requests of the local ordinary a letter of acknowledgement/endorsement for the candidate for certification which is a prerequisite for certification. The NACC then issues a certificate for "the profession" as a legally separate 501(c) 3. The certificate, no longer with the inclusion of the phrase "and by the authority of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops,." instead includes the statement “according to the NACC Standards and Procedures approved by the USCCB Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service.”¹ As is theologically and canonically appropriate, the bishop of the local Church may choose to commission and authorize as "lay ecclesial pastoral care ministers" those who have obtained the professional certification to do those things which the hiring institutions entrust to certified chaplains, regardless of religion or ecclesiastical standing within a given faith.

clinical pastoral education (CPE) program: A program of ministry formation for chaplains and for others considering a pastoral care ministry administered in a clinical setting under the supervision of a CPE certified educator. It offers students a structured system of components, including a unified curriculum, a student learning contract, participation in peer groups, and the practice of ministry in a supervised context with formal reporting of this ministry, theological reflection on ministry, a multidisciplinary approach, and an evaluation of the achievement of learning contract

¹ For a more detailed explanation of the initial efforts to clarify the distinction between ordained chaplains and lay ministers functioning in that role in the U.S., see a copy of the May 7, 2004 letter of Bishop Melczek. (then Episcopal Liaison to the NACC) to the U.S. Bishops and reprinted with permission of NACC at the conclusion of this glossary. Note that while Bishop Melczek’s letter stated that the NACC could both certify chaplains through its certification process and issue a certificate by the authority of the USCCB, in point of fact, the NACC could *not* do both. Rather the NACC expected the local ordinary to endorse the chaplaincy which NACC certified. Since 2004, local ordinaries now endorse “lay ecclesial health care ministers.” This endorsement is now a prerequisite for certification by NACC. For additional information on the current NACC policy regarding episcopal endorsement, “NACC and the need for Ecclesial Endorsement for Board Certified Members: What does endorsement mean and what is expected of the local ordinary?” also included at the conclusion of the glossary.

goals. The CPE program consists of 4 units and occurs within a specified time frame. 400 hours comprises each CPE unit, during which participants strive for personal growth and professional competence as chaplains and ministers of pastoral care. The USCCB Subcommittee no longer accredits CPE programs.

commendation: Acknowledgment that an individual, group, program or program aspect deserves special recognition.

commissioning: See [Glossary Grid #2](#) on endorsement, appointment, authorization and commissioning.

competence: The demonstrated and proven ability of candidates for certification to meet certification standards approved by the USCCB Subcommittee.

competencies (core or specialized): Knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, values, and/or traits required to be eligible for certification in four major areas: [human](#), [spiritual](#), [intellectual](#), and [pastoral](#). Core competencies are foundational and common to all specialized ministries. Specialized competencies are unique to a particular specialized ministry.

competency: The requisite attainment of a level of proficiency associated with specific knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, values, and/or traits for a specialized ministry.

consultation: A review of standards and procedures used for certification by a diocese or national organization or of programs of formation offered by dioceses or academic institutions. The purpose of such a discussion is to improve the quality and effectiveness by sharing best practices and guidance in accord with *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* or other relevant pastoral documents, concerns and priorities of the USCCB and the universal magisterium. A request for a consultation may be made to the USCCB Office as an informal discussion, conference call, or meeting. The more formal review is a review of standards and procedures and includes a [review](#) team.

***Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* ([Co-Workers](#) | [Colaboradores](#)):** A resource for diocesan bishops and for all others who are responsible for guiding the development of lay ecclesial ministry in the United States. Developed by the Committee on the Laity of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, this document was approved by the full body of bishops at its November 2005 General Meeting. It provides a common frame of reference for ensuring that the development of lay ecclesial ministry continues in ways that are faithful to the Church's theological and doctrinal tradition and that responds to contemporary pastoral needs and situations. It suggests concepts, goals, strategies, resources, and ideas to consider. It invites local adaptation, application, and implementation to achieve consistency where possible and to encourage diversity where appropriate. It is the foundational, though not exclusive, basis upon which existing standards for certification for specialized ministry for lay ministers are based.

cultural diversity: The Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service affirms diversity of culture as a gift to the church and a value to be promoted on its own merits, and

especially in light of the intercultural context of the Church in the United States. The USCCB Subcommittee seeks information through a biennial reports or other means from dioceses and organizations whose standards and procedures have been approved, regarding the gender, racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of diocesan staff, committee or board members, and the general population or membership served. This information can be best collected from the dioceses or organizations themselves by surveying or engaging certified leaders or members. The Subcommittee may also offer a general anonymous survey of leadership and members. It is important that leaders understand that they are being asked these questions with a goal of tracking efforts to better reflect the actual diversity of the Church being served. *See also* “[intercultural competency](#).”

dimensions of formation: See “[four dimensions of formation](#).”

endorsement: See [Glossary Grid #2](#) on endorsement, appointment, authorization and commissioning.

equivalency: The documented and demonstrated ability to evidence in other ways the diocesan or organizational requirements, when one or more expected perquisites are not able to be met, to be eligible for certification

evaluation: A formal and planned process after an assessment for determining whether accreditation standards have been met by all components of the program, as well as recognition of the strengths and limitations of the program.

Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC): A national organization composed primarily of members of diocesan liturgical subcommittees, worship offices, and/or the equivalent diocesan liturgical structures. These diocesan liturgical personnel, appointed by their bishops, have responsibility for the promotion of the liturgical life of their dioceses. The organization is a partner of the [Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers](#). The USCCB Subcommittee first approved its certification standards and procedures in 2011 and reapproved revised and expanded certification standards and procedures in 2018.

four dimensions of formation: The four dimensions of formation—[human](#), [spiritual](#), [intellectual](#), and [pastoral](#)—that provide a framework for the formation of deacons and priests and for lay ecclesial ministers, and which are reference in [Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord](#).²

guidelines: Suggestions for contents, procedures, and policies in developing, maintaining, or evaluating programs.

² See Co-Workers, p. 34; John Paul II, *On the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day* [Pastores Dabo Vobis]; *Program of Priestly Formation*, National [Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States](#), and National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers on the [website](#) for the Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers.

human formation: One of the [four dimensions of formation](#). Human formation seeks to develop the lay ecclesial minister's human qualities and character by fostering a healthy and well-balanced personality for the sake of both personal growth and ministerial service. These qualities are critical to form wholesome relationships and necessary for the ministers to become apt instruments of God's love and compassion.³

indicator: Something that constitutes an "effective" demonstration of a particular skill. Each skill within the core skills section has a set of competency indicators. To be competent, one should demonstrate many but not necessarily all of the indicators for each competency. Indicators not demonstrated represent areas for growth.

intellectual formation: One of the [four dimensions of formation](#). Intellectual formation seeks to develop the lay ecclesial minister's adequate knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the Catholic faith, which is rooted in God's revelation and embodied in the living tradition of the Church. It consists chiefly of study of the sacred sciences but draws also on a wider range of other disciplines: philosophy, literature and the arts, psychology, sociology, counseling, medical ethics, culture and language studies, business administration, leadership and organizational development, law, etc. Although the sacred sciences are a primary focus, study of the other disciplines are valuable and relevant to effective ministry.⁴

intercultural competency: A goal for ministry leaders set by the USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church is to increase their capacity to welcome, receive, and encourage all emerging cultural groups to assume their leadership role in the Church. The five learning modules of the guidelines on [Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers](#) include formation in the following areas:⁵

1. Frame issues of diversity in terms of the Church's identity and mission to evangelize.
2. Seek an understanding of culture and how it works.
3. Develop intercultural communication skills in pastoral settings.
4. Expand one's knowledge of the obstacles that impede effective intercultural relations.
5. Foster ecclesial integration rather than assimilation in Church settings, with a spirituality of reconciliation and mission.

³ Cf. *Co-Workers*, 34,36.

⁴ Cf. *Co-Workers*, 47.

⁵ The Catholic Church's concern with diversity is not just a practical matter but something integral to the Church's very identity and mission. Proficiency in matters of culture and intercultural relations is an essential feature of the ongoing process of conversion by which the Gospel becomes life for people. For more about the guidelines for intercultural competency, the content of the training, and resources, visit the [webpage](#) for the USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church.

justice issues: A comprehensive concept that encompasses aspects of moral action and policy in promotion of the common good and the preservation of proper rights and responsibilities of people and groups within a society. Justice issues are often considered in light of realities which threaten the common good and the rights of others.

lay ecclesial minister: As described in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Lay Ministry Subcommittee report entitled *Lay Ecclesial Ministry: State of the Questions*, a lay ecclesial minister is a fully initiated lay member of the Christian faithful, including vowed religious, who responds to the empowerment and gifts of the Holy Spirit received in Baptism and Confirmation to participate in ministry. The lay ecclesial minister has prepared him/herself through a process of prayer discernment and has received the necessary formation, education, and training to function competently within a given area of ministry. They intentionally bring personal competencies and gifts to serve in the Church's mission through a specific ministry of ecclesial leadership, and do so with community recognition and support. Furthermore, lay ecclesial ministers are entrusted with a formal and public role in ministry, or have had an office conferred by competent ecclesiastical authority. Additional hallmarks of a lay ecclesial minister include having been installed in a ministry through the authority of the bishop or his representative, perhaps using a public ritual and someone who commits to performing the duties of a ministry in a stable manner and/or who is a paid staff person (full-time or part-time) or a volunteer with responsibility and the necessary authority for institutional leadership in a particular area of ministry.⁶

limitation: A statement in a self-study or a report of a site liaison that indicates that an organization or diocesan office needs to address a standard, criterion, guideline, process, policy, or procedure to improve the program.

ministerial priesthood: The ministerial or hierarchical priesthood of bishops and priests and the common priesthood of all the faithful participate, "each in its own proper way, in the one priesthood of Christ." While being "ordered one to another," they differ in essence.⁷ While the common priesthood of the faithful is exercised by the unfolding of baptismal grace—a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life according to the Spirit—the ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians. It is a mission of service in the likeness of Jesus who came to serve and not be served. The ministerial priesthood is a privileged means by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his Church in

⁶ Cf. USCCB Subcommittee on Lay Ministry, *Lay Ecclesial Ministry: The State of the Questions* (Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 1999), 7-8. Cf. also, *Co-Workers*, 10.

⁷ See Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church [*Lumen Gentium*], no. 10, in *Vatican Council II: Volume 1: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing, 1996).

prolonging his mission throughout time. For this reason, it is transmitted by its own sacrament, the Sacrament of Holy Orders.⁸

The characteristics that differentiate the ministerial priesthood of bishops and priests from the common priesthood of the faithful may be summarized in the following fashion: (1) the ministerial priesthood is rooted in the apostolic succession and vested with the faculty and the responsibility of acting in the person of Christ, the Head and the Shepherd⁹ and (2) it is a priesthood that renders its sacred ministers servants of Christ and of the Church by means of authoritative proclamation of the Word of God, the administration of the sacraments, and the pastoral direction of the faithful. In other words, the ministerial priesthood continues the mission received by the Apostles from Christ. For these reasons, the formation for seminarians is distinct from that of candidates for lay ecclesial ministry. In the same way, the lay ecclesial minister necessitates a program of formation proper to his or her form of ministry or service in the Church. Nevertheless, the formation of both seminarians and lay ecclesial ministers, while distinct, is rooted in the common four dimensions of formation. See *“four dimensions of formation”* above.

ministry formation program: A program to assist the participants with understanding their gifts, call, role, and mission in the Church and in the world, and with developing skills to respond to the call. Components of a program include a mission, goals, and objectives based on the authoritative teaching of Vatican II and the teaching and guidelines found in post-conciliar documents, the needs of the local Church; a curriculum based on the program’s mission and its goals and objectives that integrate the four areas (pillars) of *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*. It also requires a program director who administers the program; instructional faculty who assist in the formation process; and sufficient resources for the program to operate according to its mission.

National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC): The NACC, as a national association of certified Catholic chaplains, CPE certified educators, and other pastoral care ministers, aspires to be the forum for dialogue between the Catholic Church and chaplaincy in responding to new realities and the initiation of continual renewal and transformation of the practice of chaplaincy.

National Association for Lay Ministry (NALM): A professional organization that supports, educates, and advocates for lay ministers and promotes the development of lay ministry in the Catholic Church.

National Community of Catechetical Leaders (NCCL): A professional organization for catechetical leaders that provides networking, resources, and training opportunities for its members and those engaged in catechetical ministry.

⁸ See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana—United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000), nos. 1542, 1547.

⁹ Pope John Paul II, *On the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day* [*Pastores Dabo Vobis*], no. 4.

National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM): An organization of diocesan, regional, and national structures encompassing the United States and its territories that strives to raise awareness of and foster the ongoing development of ministry to, with, by, and for youth.

National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM): A membership organization composed primarily of musicians, musician-liturgists, clergy, and other leaders of prayer. NPM is devoted to serving the life and mission of the Church by fostering the art of musical liturgy in Catholic worshiping communities.

ongoing formation: The ongoing program of academic studies, days of reflection or retreat, lectures, readings, workshops, and other activities that enhances the competencies of specialized ministers. Ongoing formation is often understood as continuing education. This formation should integrate a candidate's self-evaluation and growth plan for each of the [four dimensions](#) of *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*: [human](#), [spiritual](#), [intellectual](#), and [pastoral](#).

organization: A national professional organization of specialized ecclesial ministers or an organizational structure in a region or state Catholic conference that submits certification standards or certification standards and procedures to the USCCB Subcommittee for approval.

pastoral formation: One of the [four dimensions of formation](#). Pastoral formation cultivates the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that directly pertain to effective functioning in the ministry setting and that also pertain to pastoral administration that supports direct ministry.¹⁰

peer reviewer / peer review: See "[reviewer / review](#)."

role of bishop: See [Glossary Grid #2](#) on endorsement, appointment, authorization and commissioning.

spiritual formation: One of the four dimensions of formation. Spiritual formation aims to arouse and animate the hunger for holiness, desire for union with the Father through Christ in the Spirit, daily growing in love of God and neighbor in life and ministry, and the practices of prayer and spirituality that foster these attitudes and dispositions. It promotes and strengthens that fundamental conversion that places God, and not oneself, at the center of one's life. Openness to this ongoing conversion is a prerequisite for fruitful spiritual formation.¹¹

sponsor: The authority that partially or totally finances a ministry formation program so that it can operate.

¹⁰ *Co-Workers*, 47.

¹¹ Cf. *Co-Workers*, 38.

standards: Criteria established by which the competence of ministers is assessed and evaluated for certification. Each of the four dimensions of formation—human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral—is to be addressed in development of these criteria.¹²

statement of approval: A statement given to dioceses and organizations whose standards and procedures for certification have been approved. The statement lists their name, the name of the role or roles approved the year they were approved, and the year their approval ends. See also [Glossary Grid #1](#) on accreditation, certification and approval.

synodal: From the Greek word “synod,” meaning “to walk together,” this term, in an ecclesial context, refers to processes, structures, conversations or other engagements in the life of the church which are based on the participatory nature of the church as the People of God in communion. This participatory role is based on the nature of co-responsibility of all the faithful for the life of the church, and the charisms or gifts given under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to all the church’s members and to the church as a whole. It is expressed under the guidance and leadership of the authoritative magisterium of the church. In exercising synodality, the church is “called to give expression to the participation of all, according to each one’s calling, with the authority conferred by Christ on the College of Bishops headed by the Pope. Participation is based on the fact that all the faithful are qualified and called to serve each other through the gifts they have all received from the Holy Spirit.”¹³

The nature of how synodality is exercised varies with ecclesial context. In regard to the processes described in this *Handbook*, it refers to the procedures established for evaluating certification standards for approval in a way which encourages dialogue and genuine engagement on the part of members of the USCCB Subcommittee and the Office of Certification together with the representatives and leaders of organizations and dioceses with approved standards, or those which are seeking to develop standards. It also refers to the approach taken regarding consultations on ministry formation when these are requested. The purpose is not only to ensure a good practice with respect to dialogue and the promotion of a collegial process, but to use such engagements as an opportunity for the participants to discern together the work of the Holy Spirit: “The ... members of the People of God who take part in [synodal assemblies] are responding to the summons of the Lord, listening as a community to what the Spirit is saying to the Church through the Word of God which resonates in their situation, and interpreting the signs of the times with the eyes of faith. In the synodal Church the whole community, in the free and rich diversity of its members, is called together to pray, listen, analyze, dialogue, discern and offer advice on taking pastoral decisions which correspond as closely as possible to God's will.”¹⁴

¹² Cf. *Co-Workers*, 34.

¹³ International Theological Commission, “[Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church](#),” no. 67. March 2, 2018.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 68.

Glossary Grid #1: Distinctions between Accreditation, Certification and Approval

This grid has been developed to help clarify terms often associated with recognition of accomplishments related to ministry formation. These terms have specific meanings in the context of the USCCB and should not be used interchangeably. This grid clarifies the definition, who is responsible for it, and how the USCCB relates to the process.

TERM	DEFINITION	WHO DOES IT?	HOW USCCB RELATES TO IT
accreditation	The public status granted an institution or program by an authorized national or regional accrediting agency that assures the public that the institution or program is in compliance with accreditation standards. Examples include: the accreditation of academic programs associated with colleges, universities, and schools of various types.	Typically, institutions who monitor and administrate credentialing of schools and programs within schools accredit those schools or programs to ensure public confidence and awareness of their compliance with academic or similar standards. This accrediting agency's determination is often constitutive of the recognition of the school or program as an appropriate location for learning in the areas accredited. An example of an accrediting body for theological schools is the Association for Theological Studies (ATS). Examples: The Middle States Commission on Higher Education accredits Saint Bonaventure University to grant academic degrees;	The USCCB does not accredit any school, program or process. This is due to its nature – and that of the USCCB as a whole – as a body which does not perform the functions necessary to ensure accreditation. Instead, the USCCB does offer consultation , upon request, to lay ministry formation programs and academic institutions for the purpose of improving the quality and effectiveness of these programs in accord with the guidance offered by <i>Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord</i> and by other relevant pastoral documents of the USCCB and the universal Magisterium. This

<i>TERM</i>	<i>DEFINITION</i>	<i>WHO DOES IT?</i>	<i>HOW USCCB RELATES TO IT</i>
		ATS accredits the Oblate School of Theology to grant academic degrees.	consultation may, in turn, have an impact on the accreditation process which these programs and academic institutions pursue independently as part of their academic credentialing process.
certification	Certification is a formal, often renewable, process by which competency in a particular area of knowledge or capability is recognized. In formation for ministry, a candidate's competency in a specialized ministry is regularly evaluated and acknowledged by an authorized committee of an organization, diocesan or similar program. That competency is based on established criteria and standards. Candidates who receive certification are judged to have adequately demonstrated that they have met the standards and competencies of the diocese, organization or program. They are granted formal recognition of certification for a stipulated period of time before a renewal of certification is due.	Certification for roles in ecclesial ministry is accomplished by an appropriately authorized committee of an organization, diocese or program in accord with established standards determined by a competent authority. Certification is not granted for the general category of "lay ecclesial ministry" or "lay ecclesial minister," but for particular ministerial roles based on those established standards. Examples: A psychologist is certified in a particular area / role in the field (e.g. rehabilitation psychology).	The USCCB does not certify organizations or individuals. It does offer consultation and resourcing for those dioceses, Catholic conferences or ministry organizations which voluntarily submit their certification standards and procedures for review by the subcommittee. <i>Upon request</i> , the USCCB offers guidance for the development of certification standards based on the <i>National Certification Standards for Ecclesial Ministry</i> based on those produced by the Alliance for the Certification of

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		<p>The Catholic Campus Ministry Association certifies a person for the role of professional Catholic campus minister; the Diocese of San Bernardino certifies a person for the role of Charity & Justice Coordinator.</p>	<p>Lay Ecclesial Ministers and other approved diocesan programs and ministry organizations.</p>
<p>approval</p>	<p>Approval is the means by which some information or activity is acknowledged to be good and valuable for its intended purpose based on an established framework of what is expected. In the context of formation and certification for roles in ecclesial ministry, approval refers to the granting of this status as a means of identifying a program as expressing or emulating ‘best practices’ in the preparation, formation, and certification of ecclesial ministers.</p>	<p>Approval of a program of certification for roles in ecclesial ministry for a diocese may be granted by a competent ecclesial authority (e.g. a bishop and/or a bishops conference) or his delegate. For institutes for consecrated life, this approval could be granted by provincials or provincial councils.</p> <p>For ministry organizations which offer certification, approval is typically sought by an appropriate ecclesial authority (e.g. a bishop, a</p>	<p>The USCCB approves voluntarily submitted certification standards and procedures for (1) dioceses and diocesan offices, (2) national organizations of specialized ministers listed in <i>The Official Catholic Directory</i>, and (3) national organizations sponsored by state Catholic conferences.</p> <p>Diocesan offices, national organizations of ecclesial ministers, and state Catholic</p>

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		<p>conference of bishops, a provincial or provincial conference, etc.)</p> <p>Examples: The National Institute of Standards Technology approves a cybersecurity framework as meeting best practices for U.S.-based cyber technology; The Pennsylvania Dept. of Education approves a program framework for Grades 7-12.</p> <p>The Archbishop of New York approves a program of study for Pastoral Life Coordinators for his diocese. The USCCB Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service approves the standards and procedures for certification of the Archdiocese of Detroit.</p>	<p>conferences with approved certification standards and procedures are listed on the USCCB website.</p>

Glossary Grid #2: Distinctions - Endorsement, Appointment, Commissioning and Authorization

This grid was developed to clarify activities which are delineations of the role of the bishop or local Ordinary with respect to recognizing competency and leadership activity of ecclesial ministers with respect to certain leadership roles in the life of the church. It is not exhaustive but descriptive of a number of ways in which Ordinaries have exercised this function in various dioceses. Language referring to the bishop / diocese in the information below can also include provincial leadership in religious communities and institutes for consecrated life. The terms presented are merely descriptive and do not reflect “levels” of achievement in recognition. They are simply delineated ways in which such recognition by bishops have developed in pastoral practice, or as indicated in ecclesial documents.

For additional information, please see Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, pp. 54-60.

endorsement	appointment	commissioning	authorization
<p>The formal recognition by the bishop or by the bishop’s delegate in the diocese of the ecclesial minister’s good standing in the Church, residence and/or place of ministry, and of the certifying body’s authorization to certify that minister.</p> <p>An endorsement conveys two messages. First of all, it implicitly is an affirmation of the process that informs the bishop or his delegate that a minister’s call and preparation align with the ministerial competencies and expectations set by the certifying body.</p>	<p>The formal designation by the bishop or the bishop’s delegate in the diocese assigning an ecclesial minister to a specific position that includes its rights, obligations, responsibilities and authority, usually for a particular period of time.</p> <p>The appointment of a person to a specific position should be done in writing (required for ecclesiastical offices [cf. Code of Canon Law § 156]) and should include the rights and obligations attached to the position or office, any limits on the exercise of authority (e.g., budget reviews, prior</p>	<p>A liturgical rite or prayer service that highlights the new relationship of the ecclesial minister in the life of his/her community as a result of the minister’s role.</p> <p>Public prayer and ritual can be significant for the lay ecclesial minister and for the community, highlighting the new role being undertaken and the relationship the lay ecclesial minister has with the bishop and/or his delegate.</p> <p>Commissioning can be said to be a public liturgical celebration of</p>	<p>An ecclesial action which formally and publicly affirms a lay ecclesial minister’s activity and leadership in the name of the Church and of the local bishop and his delegate. Such authorization frequently includes all the aspects of endorsement, appointment and commissioning.</p> <p>It is this set of action in its entirety which <i>Co-Workers</i> recommended for lay ecclesial ministers and others in a ministry</p>

endorsement	appointment	commissioning	authorization
<p>Secondly, while endorsement is neither an authorization nor an appointment, its most common understanding is that it affirms that the person is “in good standing” and has the disposition or character to serve. When considering endorsement of an ecclesial minister, a bishop may rely on the recommendation of the person’s pastor, program director, or ministry organization leader. Endorsement encourages the hope that the bishop himself and the minister will establish a professional rapport and an affirming ministerial relationship, possibly including appointment, commissioning or authorization.</p> <p>Though not envisioned in the <i>Co-Workers</i> document, this dimension of a bishop’s role has developed based on pastoral need.</p>	<p>permission for certain actions), relevant employment and personnel policies, any limitations on the term of the appointment, and—perhaps most importantly—any special delegation to perform functions proper to the ordained (e.g., baptizing outside of emergencies [canon 861 §2] and witnessing the exchange of matrimonial consent [canon 1112§1]104). Canonical and/or legal counsel should be consulted with respect to the drafting of written contracts and/or any proposed term of appointment.</p> <p>Appointment is discussed in <i>Co-Workers</i>, pp. 57-58.</p>	<p>acknowledgement, endorsement and/or appointment.</p> <p>See also <i>Co-Workers</i>, p. 54.</p>	<p>leadership role that has a professional relationship to the ministry of the bishop and/or his delegate.</p> <p>See also <i>Co-Workers</i>, pp. 54-56.</p>