

Clergy and lay members to annual conference will vote on four proposed amendments to The United Methodist Church constitution. Ballot 4 refers to educational requirements for clergy to be eligible to vote for clergy delegates to General Conference.

## Background

The postponed 2020 General Conference voted to amend Section VI, Article IV of the United Methodist Constitution. This paragraph outlines the educational requirements for clergy members of annual or provisional conferences who are eligible to vote for clergy delegates to the General Conference. The paragraph required a clergy delegate to have completed a “course of study or an M. Div. degree ...”

## What Would Change

[Read the Proposed Constitutional Amendments](#)

If ratified, ¶35 of the Book of Discipline would change to the following:

Article IV. The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or a Master of Divinity degree from a University Senate-approved theological school or its equivalent as recognized in a central conference and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.

# Key Points

This amendment ensures that those voting for clergy delegates have met the denominational standards for theological education. It does not expand or restrict voting access for licensed local pastors (LLPs) in central or regional conferences. Instead, it clarifies the meaning of an M. Div. degree and specifies qualifying theological schools and their equivalents.

Local pastors retain the right to elect clergy delegates to the General Conference if they meet the following criteria:

1. Educational Requirements: They must have either
  - a. Completed the Course of Study, or
  - b. Earned a Master of Divinity degree from a University Senate-approved theological school or its equivalent as recognized in a central or regional conference.
2. Service Requirement: They must have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately before the election.

This amendment brings greater clarity and consistency to the voting process for clergy delegates while allowing for necessary contextualization within central and regional conferences.