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## Explorer Phase

During this phase the individual and the church explore the call to serve and suitability for ministry as a commissioned ruling elder.

You will:

- complete the Foundations (Year 1) courses at Union Presbyterian Seminary
- preach once in a church, as assigned;
- observe a regular session meeting, as assigned
- observe a periodic visit in a church, as assigned

## Disciple Phase

As you progress in the program, you will:

- complete the required coursework
- preach and lead worship twice (two different sermons in two different churches), as assigned
- teach twice with arrangements approved by the mentor
- interview one CRE and one teaching elder
- observe two regular session meetings in churches as assigned.

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After completing the required phases, you will receive a final assessment.

You will:

- complete at least 6 months as a disciple
- complete the activities required in the disciple phase
- complete the CRE program at UPS;
- receive the concurrence of your mentor that you seem to be called to be a CRE
- complete a form that is similar to the Personal Information Form for teaching elders
- submit a written faith statement;
- submit an autobiographical account of your faith journey and the development of your calling
- submit a written sermon
- give evidence of an understanding of the questions required for ordination
- be examined by Presbytery

For further information, contact:

**Shenandoah Presbytery Office**  
**Phone - 540-433-2556**  
**email - [shenpres@shenpres.org](mailto:shenpres@shenpres.org)**

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# Your path to becoming a Commissioned Ruling Elder



## Is God calling you to become a commissioned ruling elder?

As a CRE, you would -

- preach and lead worship
- moderate Session meetings
- administer the sacraments
- officiate at funerals and weddings
- provide pastoral care

## Do you feel you may have the call to do so, but would like to explore it further and begin a more in depth exploration of yourself and your spiritual development?

There are two phases to becoming a commissioned ruling elder – exploration and discipleship.

These two phases are designed to explore the call, evaluate the gifts, and support the preparation of men and women who are personally examining their sense of call to ministry as a commissioned ruling elder or have been encouraged by the faith community to consider the possibility that God is calling them to that particular ministry.

During the Explorer and Disciple Phase, trainees must complete tasks and report on them to their mentors.

## Mentorship

You will be assigned a mentor and you and your mentor are expected to build a relationship of trust and understanding which will continue through both the exploration and discipleship phases.

You will be mentored and assessed in five key areas:

- *Education for Ministry*
- *Spiritual Development*
- *Interpersonal relations*
- *Personal Growth*
- *Professional Development*



## Education

Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Virginia offers in a two year program of study with a third year, post-commissioning.

**Costs for the program are approximately \$1,500 and are shared between the CRE Candidate, Presbytery and the Sponsor/Home Church. In some cases, scholarships may be available.**

To apply, you must:

- be an active ruling elder for at least six months
- undergo a psychological and vocational assessment
- submit a complete application
- be endorsed by your Session
- submit two letters of recommendation
- be interviewed by the CRE Oversight Committee
- have a high school diploma or GED