



# The Association of Theological Schools The Commission on Accrediting

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Profiles of Ministry (PoM)

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### **1. Our school is looking for a way to determine which of our students should be ministers and which should not. Will PoM help us?**

PoM provides students and faculty with an overview of the student's personal and professional gifts for ministry. It helps students identify areas of strength and areas in which they might want to grow. It is a criterion-based instrument, not a norm-based one. In other words, the profile measures the likelihood of a student exhibiting more than thirty personal and professional characteristics in a ministerial setting; it does NOT measure that student's profile against an "ideal" minister. Because the understanding of good ministry can vary from denomination to denomination, it is impossible to come up with a single instrument that "separates sheep from goats!" However, PoM can provide faculty with a useful foundation for conversation around students' expectations for ministry and facilitate vocational discernment.

### **2. What is the difference between Stage I and Stage II, and when are they typically administered?**

Stage I of the PoM addresses a student's intended practices of ministry and is typically administered early in his or her educational program. Stage I data is gathered from student responses to the *Casebook* and to *Interview* questions. Stage II is typically administered after the student has participated in field education or other reflective practice and reflects the student's actual practice of ministry. In addition to a *Casebook* and *Interview*, Stage II also includes field observations completed by three to five observers who have seen the student in a ministerial setting.

### **3. What are the cases and questions like?**

The *Casebook* presents case descriptions from actual situations in ministry. Following each description, the student is asked to indicate his or her likely response to the situation and the objective he or she would

have in mind. The *Interview* asks students to reflect on their experiences and opinions concerning ministerial and ethical situations.

#### **4. How do I order the PoM?**

Simply fill out our Web-based order form with the necessary information. Please allow two weeks for receipt of your materials. We recommend that you order enough *Casebooks*, *Interpretive Manuals*, and answer sheets for everyone and enough *Interview* manuals for the number of interviewers you have. If you are using the *Field Observation* component, multiply the number of students by the number of observers you want each student to have (typically three to five each). You will be billed for the number of profiles we actually process, not the number of materials we send you.

#### **5. How long does it take to complete the instrument?**

We recommend allowing three hours to complete the *Casebook*. The *Interview* typically takes half an hour to complete. The *Field Observations* have fifty questions each and take less than an hour to do.

#### **6. What does the printed report contain?**

The school coordinator will receive two kinds of printed reports—each student's individual profile and a group profile. The individual profile indicates the likelihood of a student to exhibit the characteristics measured by the instrument; the group profile shows the range and mean of all student responses for that school.

#### **7. Where do I send the completed materials? And how long does it take to receive the completed profiles, once we have mailed the materials for processing?**

When you place your order for the instrument, your school will be assigned a certified coder who will code your students' *Interview* responses. When all of the materials have been gathered, mail the entire package of answer sheets and cassette tapes to your coder. If your school is not using the *Interview* portion of the PoM, mail the answer sheets directly to ATS for processing. Please allow four weeks to receive the profiles. If you have sent in materials for more than forty students, please allow an extra week.

#### **8. How do I interpret the printed profile?**

We require that new users of the PoM attend an Introductory Workshop before administering the instrument to students. At this workshop, you will learn the basics of administration and interpretation. Our *Interpretive Manual* includes descriptions of each of the criteria and what the scores on the profile mean; during the workshop, you will also learn how to cluster and interpret the criteria and lead your students through active reflection on their profiles. These reflective conversations with students can happen either individually or in small groups.

Once you have been using the instrument for at least two years, we strongly recommend you attend the more in-depth Interpretation Workshop to further hone your interpreting skills. As with any other professional or pedagogical skill, the work of interpreting becomes more refined with practice.

#### **9. What are the confidential index and school code?**

The confidential index is a form you will need to fill out in order to match up the correct student with the correct profile. Because of confidentiality, we do not print student names on the profiles. The confidential index will be the only link you have between names and numbers. The school code is a three-digit number we assign to you when you enroll in the program.

**10. What is the cost?**

The price list contains all the details of PoM costs. The charges include all materials, processing fees, and the printed profiles.

**11. We have a very large student body. Can we still use the PoM?**

Absolutely! We have member schools using the instrument with fewer than a dozen students and other schools using it with several hundred. During our workshops, we discuss various ways of making the instrument work in your unique school setting, regardless of the size.