

**A National Certification Standards Assessment Tool
Developed by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry**

**Assessing the Breadth of
Ministry Education and Formation Opportunities that
Address the National Certification Standards
for Lay Ecclesial Ministers
(Tool developed by Sean Reynolds and Charlotte McCorquodale)**

Introduction

With the publication of the National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers (NALM, NCCL, NFCYM, 2003), we have been provided with a powerful new lens with which to evaluate the comprehensiveness of our ministry education and formation opportunities. This tool has been developed by the NFCYM to assist diocesan leaders and their associates in academic and ministry formation institutions in assessing the breadth of ministry education and formation programs available to their constituents. Specifically, such an assessment will help them identify:

- **Strengths:** areas in which the five national standards are thoroughly addressed
- **Weaknesses:** areas in which the five national standards are inadequately addressed
- **Gaps:**
 - in levels and kinds of educational and formational opportunities
 - in specific target audiences for whom opportunities are limited, scarce or nonexistent
- **Balance:** whether there is a healthy balance of opportunities, sponsoring institutions, target audiences
- **Overlaps:**
 - whether there are areas of duplication or competition
 - whether there are areas of real or potential collaboration

The National Certification Standards

Following are the five national standards. For a complete version of the standards, including general and specialized competencies for each, obtain a complete copy of *The National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers* from NALM, NCCL or NFCYM. Proceed to the next page for directions and the assessment tool.

1. **Standard One – Personal and Spiritual Maturity:** *A lay ecclesial minister demonstrates personal and spiritual maturity in ministry with the people of God.*
2. **Standard Two – Lay Ecclesial Ministry Identity:** *A lay ecclesial minister identifies the call to formal and public ministry as a vocation rooted in baptism.*
3. **Standard Three – Roman Catholic Theology:** *A lay ecclesial minister integrates knowledge of Catholic faith within ministry.*
4. **Standard Four – Pastoral Praxis:** *A lay ecclesial minister engages in pastoral activity that promotes evangelization, faith formation, community, and pastoral care with sensitivity to diverse situations.*
5. **Standard Five – Professional Practice:** *A lay ecclesial minister provides effective leadership, administration, and service, in the spirit of collaboration.*

Assessment Tool: Ministry Formation Opportunities that Address the National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers

Instructions:

1. List in column #1 the various opportunities for ministry education and formation available to persons in your arch/diocese (including the full range of opportunities, from workshops/seminars through degree programs)
2. Check the appropriate column indicating the educational level of the program: Ph.D., M.A., B.A., Course, Series or Workshop (columns 2-7)
3. Identify the sponsoring institution (column 8).
4. Identify the target audience(s) of the particular program (column 9).
5. In columns 10-14, assess how thoroughly a given standard is addressed, using the following scale: A=thoroughly or completely addressed; B=significantly addressed; C=partially addressed; X=not addressed.
6. Proceed to Part II (page 5).

1. Program	2. Workshop	3. Workshop Series	4. Institute	5. Course	6. Multi-Course Program	7. B.A.	8. M.A.	9. Ph.D.	10. Sponsoring Institution(s)	11. Target Audience(s)	12. Addresses Standard #1	13. Addresses Standard #2	14. Addresses Standard #3	15. Addresses Standard #4	16. Addresses Standard #5

Part II. Assessing and Interpreting the Data

1. Identify Significant Gaps:

- a. Underserved target audiences:
- b. Significant gaps in levels of education/credential (e.g., columns 2-7):
- c. Standards that are inadequately addressed:

2. Balance:

- a. Is there a healthy balance of different educational levels (e.g., columns 2-7)? If not, identify areas of needed improvement:
- b. Is there a healthy balance of service to the range of potential target audiences? If not, identify areas of needed improvement:
- c. Is programming offered by a healthy variety of sponsoring institutions? If not, identify areas of needed improvement:
- d. Is there a healthy balance in educational opportunities across the standards? If not, identify standards and target audiences in need of attention:

3. Overlaps:

- a. Identify areas where programs overlap, and are potentially in damaging competition with one another:
- b. Identify areas of potential healthy collaboration between programs and/or their sponsoring institutions:

4. Additional questions/issues:

- a. What percentage of parishes in the diocese with lay ecclesial ministers take advantage of the different programs or resources?
- b. What is the rate of completion of programs?
- c. What incentives or disincentives exist for various target populations to participate in programs?
- d. What can diocesan or institutional leaders do to increase both awareness of and access to programs?

5. Conclusions:

- a. What conclusions can you draw from your assessment and interpretation of the data?
- b. Prioritize: what are the most urgent and important needs to be addressed?

Part III. Action Steps and Decisions

1. Recommended action steps:
2. Decisions: