



Minnesota
Annual Conference
of the United Methodist Church

Guidelines for Submitting Written Work

Written materials submitted to the Board of Ordained Ministry in applying for provisional or full membership in our Conference, especially responses to the Disciplinary questions, are but one part of what your interview team and the Board use to discern your readiness for membership. They are a crucial part of the discernment process, however. For people on your interview team who do not know you, their first impression of you will be formed through reading your papers. This is important work and will require of you significant time and attention. Here are the requirements to be observed and some guidelines to consider as you prepare your work.

1. The Board of Ordained Ministry has directed the registrar and LeaderWise to hold firmly to scheduled deadlines. **Please submit your materials on time.**
2. Limit your total response to the Disciplinary questions (excluding other written materials) to no more than 25 pages.
 - The questions for Provisional Membership are found in paragraph 324.9 a-p, and those for full membership are found in paragraphs 330.5a,b,c (deacons) and 335.8a,b,c (elders). All references are to *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016*. Please type out the questions as you respond to them. Do not simply refer to the questions by the Disciplinary paragraph number.
 - Writing for all materials submitted should be double-spaced, Arial Font, size 12, when possible.
 - Make sure **your name** is displayed prominently on all of your written material.
 - Email all of your written work as Word or PDF attachments to the conference registrar (janet.beard@minnesotaumc.org, 612-230-6156). If you do not receive a confirmation reply, please follow up with an additional email or phone call.
3. All written work should be prepared in a manner commensurate with a graduate school education and should reflect such an education.

“Graduate Level Work” means that your work contains no grammatical errors, no typos, no spelling errors, and that your research and quotations have been properly documented and footnoted according to a consistent style. Theological language is expected in the paper as well as in the interview. As a graduate student, the Board expects that your work is of a quality that would be publishable.

In whatever way you name your theological perspective, (conservative, progressive, middle of the road, or something else) you need to be able to clearly articulate your understanding of such concepts as atonement, salvation, Jesus, God, Spirit, resurrection, etc. Some of these theological concepts may be developing or changing

for you. We welcome your honest engagement with these topics as you continue to grow and develop your theological perspective and we encourage use of both theological language as well as common, everyday language that you might use in preaching or Bible Study in your description of these theological concepts.

4. Grammar and spelling matter. Don't rely on your computer's grammar and spell checking capabilities alone, but proofread your materials. It is advisable to have someone else proofread them as well. Attention to detail is a ministry skill.
5. Neatness and organization are also important, and again reflect a skill you will use time and again in ministry.
6. We expect that in your work you will be able to formulate an integrated and authentic theology, in harmony with your own faith journey and the Christian faith within the United Methodist tradition. Your written work should demonstrate both theological learning and heart-felt faith.
 - a. Your work should reflect engagement with historical and contemporary theological resources. When quoting the work of another, appropriate citation (footnotes, end notes, notes in the text) should be utilized. (See the "BOM Plagiarism Policy" and "The Guidelines for Sermon Submissions to MN BOM" for further information.)
 - b. You should articulate your own position clearly in writing and be prepared to share your reasons for your views in your interview. The members of the interview team are not looking for you to agree with them, but are looking for your ability to articulate your own position clearly and authentically and to provide solid reasons for it.
 - c. Your written work should allow the interview team and the Board to get to know you as well. We are looking for a faith that engages both your head and your heart. Integration is important, and your work should reflect the attempt to integrate your theology with your life experience and ministry.
7. Inclusive language is expected throughout your writing. There are two aspects to inclusive language:
 - References to people should include pronouns or words referring to both males and females, and examples from ministry experience should relate to both women and men.
 - References to God should be gender-neutral and/or include both masculine and feminine images for God.
8. Your written work will be screened using iThenticate. This tool will check your work for any wording that may be considered plagiarism. Please read the "BOOM Plagiarism Policy" and the "Guidelines for Sermon Submissions" to understand how iThenticate will be used by the Board. The iThenticate report will be submitted to the Board of Ordained Ministry as one part of the discernment process for provisional and full membership and will be given to you before the interview so that you will know the content of the report.

9. In presenting your written work, you may use the style to which you are most accustomed, and we encourage you to use the same style consistently throughout your work. You may wish to refer to any of the style guides below as helpful resources:

- a. Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Eighth Edition
- b. *Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*, Eighth Edition. University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- c. Strunk, William, Jr. *The Elements of Style*. Tribeca Books, 2011.
- d. Garner, Bryan A. *Garner's Modern American Usage*. Oxford University Press, 2009.
- e. *The New Oxford Style Manual*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

10. We wish you well and look forward to meeting with you.