



Board of Ordained Ministry

West Virginia Conference

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

PLAGIARISM POLICY

Adopted 3-7-17*

I. As Christians, we are called to be the body of Christ in our world. As clergy, we are called to exhibit the highest levels of professional and intellectual integrity as part of our witness for Christ. The West Virginia Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (the Board) understands plagiarism to be a violation of our covenant with one another and our covenant with God to offer the best of our gifts and grace for ministry.

Plagiarism, according to Google: “The practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as one’s own.”

According to Plagiarism.org, all of the following are considered plagiarism:

- Turning in someone else’s work as your own
- Copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- Failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- Giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- Copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not

<http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/what-is-plagiarism>

We believe plagiarism is a serious offense and it will be treated as such. The Board will utilize iThenticate and/or other review methods it may determine in its discretion to identify instances of plagiarism in written work submitted by candidates for ministry.

II. We recognize these levels of plagiarism in a candidate’s written materials:

1. Isolated instance(s) of unattributed material
2. Failure to provide quotation and end notes properly
3. Failure to notate paraphrases, verbatim material, or ideas taken directly from another source
4. Using so many words and/or ideas from another source that one’s own material is difficult to define
5. Substantial portions of a candidate’s written materials and/or statements of the candidate’s personal experience or belief are directly plagiarized

Consequences of Plagiarism

III. When it finds that a candidate has violated copyright, presented another’s ideas as his or her own, or otherwise failed to credit another’s work, the Board (acting through the Executive Committee) shall take appropriate remedial or disciplinary action. Generally, in balancing the violation and the consequences, the Board may distinguish among:

1. Conduct that constitutes a failure to meet high standards of personal integrity expected of those set apart for ordained ministry,
2. Conduct that suggests poor academic or intellectual understanding or an unengaged attitude toward the material, and

3. Conduct that reflects low standards of care in preparing material, and poor academic discipline.

Upon discovery of any materials in work presented to the Board that raise plagiarism issues, the Board members discovering them shall promptly bring them to the attention of the Executive Committee, which shall consider and act upon the concerns as soon as reasonable. The Executive Committee will review any alleged violations in consultation with such additional Board members as the Chair may designate for that purpose. If the Executive Committee decides that an allegation does not warrant disciplinary or remedial action, then the matter shall be considered fully resolved. Otherwise, the Executive Committee may take any of the actions described below at any time before, during, or after the process for which the written work in question was prepared.

With respect to candidates for provisional membership,

1. Return the candidate to the supervision of the District Committee
2. Impose conditions to be met before being interviewed by the Board
3. Return the candidate to the supervision of the District Committee as they seek alternative paths to ministry

With respect to provisional members seeking full membership,

1. Defer the candidate, with or without participation in the interview process
2. Discontinue the candidate
3. Require that coaching on plagiarism issues by an individual approved by the Board be completed by the candidate prior to full membership

**We are grateful to our colleagues from the Iowa, Western North Carolina and Baltimore-Washington Boards of Ordained Ministry for their work in first creating "Plagiarism Policies" and "Consequences of Plagiarism," which they have shared with us. Our WVUMC policy is closely modeled after theirs.*

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PLAGIARISM POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Please read the plagiarism policy and sign the policy statement below when you are ready. **Keep the policy to guide you in your preparation and return the signed statement to the registrar**, along with your application.

I have read the policy on plagiarism and understand it. I understand that plagiarism will not be tolerated and is a violation of my Christian ethic and covenant. The work that I will submit to the Board of Ordained Ministry will be my own and I will credit sources appropriately.

Signed

Date

Print Name