



Board of Ordained Ministry

West Virginia Conference

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

2014 ANNUAL CONFERENCE RULE CHANGE EXPLANATION

These seminary course requirements took effect for students entering seminary during the fall of 2015.

During the 2014 West Virginia Annual Conference there was change in our Rule III 6 pertaining to the ordination of elders. The Rule, with the highlighted changes, reads as follows:

6. Ordained Elders In Full Connection. Pre-requisites for elders in full connection with the West Virginia Annual Conference shall include a Master of Divinity or equivalent first professional degree, from a school of theology approved by the University Senate. For those on a degree track no more than **66 2/3%** of their classes may be taken by correspondence or on-line. Classes required by the Board of Ordained Ministry include: Old Testament; New Testament; theology; church history; mission of the church in the world; worship/liturgy; evangelism; United Methodist doctrine, polity, and history; preaching; pastoral care; and church administration, **provided, however, that classes in preaching and pastoral care may not be taken in correspondence or on-line format.** Associate members may request to be approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry, in consultation with the cabinet, to enter the advanced Course of Study in preparation for the process leading to provisional membership and the possibility of being admitted to membership in full connection without a Master of Divinity degree. Associate members seeking full membership and who are moving toward ordination as elder, shall follow ¶322.4 of the Book of Discipline with the addition of a bachelor's degree from an approved college or university. Associate members or local pastors who are moving toward ordination as elder provided by ¶324.6 Book of Discipline shall have completed a bachelor's degree or equivalent degree from a college or university recognized by the University Senate before beginning their graduate theological studies or its equivalent.

The WV Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM) has adopted the ATS (Association of Theological Schools) policy regarding hybrid courses that reads as follows:

The credits awarded for a hybrid or blended distance education course will count toward residency for those degrees that require residential instruction only if the majority of instructor-directed learning occurs in situations where both faculty and students are in person on the school's main campus or at an extension approved for the school to offer the full degree. (ES.4.2.19)

To clarify for those in the process toward commissioning and ordination:

- The allowance of 66 2/3% of coursework online or by correspondence will become operative immediately.
- The WV BOOM follows the ATS definition of residential courses that includes hybrid courses that are taught by over 50% face to face instructor contact.
- The adopted rule (2014 Annual Conference) restricting preaching and pastoral care courses to the ATS residential standard took effect for students entering seminary in the fall of 2015. Students already enrolled or who graduated (e.g. those who are in the Residency program) who have taken these two courses, will not be held to the new standard.

Please note the specific courses required by the West Virginia Conference, in addition to the Discipline's requirements. If you have questions, or feel you are lacking any of these courses, contact [Jacob Steele](#), Board Registrar, or [Bonnie MacDonald](#), Director of Leadership Formation & Ministry Support.