Oregon-Idaho Conference
The United Methodist Church

The Board of Ordained Ministry

Plagiarism Policy
Adopted May 2021

The Board of Ordained Ministry understands the act of plagiarism to be a violation of the covenant we share with other clergy, as well as a failure of our commitment to offer our best to God.*

What is plagiarism?
Plagiarism.org notes that 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
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not

How can you avoid plagiarism?
- Cite sources properly
- Use quotation marks for sentences or phrases that come from another source
- Know the difference between a paraphrase (stating a concept in your own words) and tweaking (rearranging someone else's words to make it seems like they're your own)
- Use a copy editor (BOM has recommendations here)
- This article has simple, effective suggestions for avoiding plagiarism in written work
- Plagiarism.org has many articles and videos with anti-plagiarism tips
- Use the BOM's iThenticate tool (see below)

How is the BOM working to prevent plagiarism?
The Board's approach is to educate about plagiarism before paperwork is submitted. Through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the Board shares a subscription with BOMs across the country for iThenticate, an anti-plagiarism software tool. Before a candidate submits any written work to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry or to the Board of Ordained Ministry, they will be given sign-in credentials to iThenticate, along with instructions for uploading a single document with all written work to be submitted. The candidate receives a report from iThenticate, and is allowed to make changes to the document and resubmit it until the candidate is satisfied with the report. After the candidate submits their work to the DCOM or the BOM, a final iThenticate report will be run.

If plagiarism occurs even after opportunities have been offered to address it, the Board may take steps to delay or terminate a person's candidacy journey.

*We are indebted to the Western North Carolina Board of Ordained Ministry for many of the ideas and phrases used in this policy.