

Expanded Application Packet **Table of Contents**

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General Board of Higher Education and Ministry Application

Professional Certification Application

<https://www.gbhem.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/form323790appforprofessionalcertification2017.pdf>

Para-professional Certification Application

<https://www.gbhem.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/form4066applicationforparaprofessionalcert2017.pdf>

Professional or Para-professional Certification

General Instructions

Read carefully the ***Standards and Requirements for Certification*** in the area for which you are requesting certification. This sets forth the minimum requirements for certification. An Annual Conference may not subtract from these requirements but may add more. All educational requirements must be completed prior to September 15 of the year of application. Requirements for effective supervised experience must be completed prior to the annual conference of the year being certified.

The forms, papers, and materials detailed in this packet must be received by the Board of Ordained Ministry, in care of the Center for Clergy Excellence, by **the deadline shared with you in email by the committee chair and/or Clergy Excellence**. The Board of Ordained Ministry has a policy that no materials will be accepted after this firm deadline. You would need to reapply next year.

Your interview with the Board of Ordained Ministry will be shared with you in email.

The specific date and time of your interview will be communicated after the established deadline.

This packet is for your use to make notes and keep records as you prepare for your interview with the Board of Ordained Ministry. If you have questions, please call the Center for Clergy Excellence at 804-521-1142, or contact the Associate Director of the Center for Clergy Excellence, Rev. Crystal Sygeel at CrystalSygeel@vaumc.org.

Upon receiving this packet, please read the instructions contained in this application packet carefully and begin working through this series of assessments, forms and papers required by the United Methodist Church and the Virginia Annual Conference.

- Details and guidelines are included so that all applicants may be evaluated by the Board of Ordained Ministry by equal measure.
- All forms, documents, interview committee papers and practice of ministry materials will be submitted through an application which is hosted by Jotform. If you are not familiar with this process, your colleagues and Clergy Excellence can help you.
- Using the checklist in this packet, you are responsible for making sure that your application is complete. If you are reapplying, please check the requirements carefully as they may have changed from previous years.
- This Expanded Application Packet contains all the materials in one place.

Professional or Para-professional Certification

Checklist for Candidates for Certification

_____ All educational requirements must be completed prior to **the deadline sent to you via email.**

Psychological Assessment – Interim deadlines to stay on track for completion

_____ By **September 15**, VIPCare is to have received your Request for the Psychological Assessment form. This is the same assessment required for certified candidates. If you have completed this assessment in the past three-years, you do not need to repeat it. You may indicate this detail on your application in Jotform.

_____ By **November 1**, submit your request for an expanded background check. Instructions for this process can be found here:

<https://doc.vaumc.org/MinServices/ExtBackgroundCheckInstructions.pdf>

This is the same reports required for inquiring candidates working toward becoming admitted candidates. If you have completed these background checks in the past two-years, you do not need to repeat them. There is a place where you can indicate this on your application in Jotform.

_____ By **December 1**, complete the Clergy Ethics Training available through Safe Gatherings. Instructions can be found here:

Clergy Excellence automatically receives a copy of your certificate of completion and we add it to your file in Unity (the database for the Virginia Conference)

By noon on **January 6**, all the following materials must be received **by the Center for Clergy Excellence**:

1. Application for Certification

_____ Submitted via Jotform, this application will include a place for your to upload the following:

- A multi-page paper. The questions can be found on x-x in this packet.
- Three References: Send the reference request form to the three references listed on your application and ask them to return the form per the instructions on the form.
- Official transcripts
 - For Professional Certification
 - Undergraduate (Bachelor's) degree transcript
 - Graduate Degree or Certification Studies transcript
 - For Para-professional Certification send:
Certification Studies Transcript

The application will automatically be sent to Clergy Excellence, the Board of Ordained Ministry, and the Certification Coordinator at the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) of the United Methodist Church

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If you were previously continued in an application for Certification:

2. _____ An **action plan** and results related to how you followed up in addressing the areas of growth identified by the Board that were the basis for your continuance. List separately each area of growth identified by the Board when you were continued, what you did to address each area, and what the result has been. The action plan is not included in the page count.
3. _____ Additional items specified by the Board of Ordained Ministry (if applicable—any such requirements would be listed in your prior feedback from the BOM)

Looking Ahead

Shortly after the deadline for submitting materials, you will receive an email and schedule with the exact date, time and location of your interviews. Professional Certification interviews will be held in February 2023 at the Virginia United Methodist Conference Center in Glen Allen. You will be notified of the Board's action in early March, following the Board of Ordained Ministry meeting at the end of February.

Assuming a favorable recommendation from the Board, your certificate of certification will be presented at Annual Conference, to be held **June 14-17, 2023** in Roanoke, VA. You will receive detailed information about Annual Conference in the spring.

What Can I Expect to Happen at the Interview?

The members of the Board of Ordained Ministry in the VAUMC want you to know that we are glad you are answering God's call in this way, and that we will be praying for all those who will be preparing for the interviews. We also want you to know something of what to expect when you come for your interview before the Certification Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

You are the most important person in the process. You are responsible for making sure all items are in your Jotform application by the deadline. If all materials are not in by the deadline, you cannot be scheduled for an interview.

Why & How

The interview is meant to be affirming and helpful, and to provide for the church capable leaders in our conference who will serve well through many years. **The purpose of the interviews is to go beyond a critique of the paper or other materials and to engage the candidate** in dialogue around knowledge in the specified areas, integration of that knowledge into the practice of ministry, and demonstrated willingness to pursue on-going growth and learning. During the interviews, you will be asked questions that demonstrate an integration of theory and practice. Interview questions may go beyond the specific questions asked in the papers. **Feedback on the paper and the interview will be communicated in writing in a letter from the Board. Direct evaluative feedback will not be given during interviews but only in written form following the interviews.**

When & Where

You will be notified after the January deadline of the exact day and time of your interview. If you have specific needs for morning or afternoon, please contact the Center for Clergy Excellence to make specific arrangements. Your interview will be for one hour. Depending on the needs of the interview, your interview may take place in person or via zoom.

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What happens after your interviews?

Following your interview, the Certification Committee will make a recommendation regarding your certification to the Board of Ordained Ministry which meets at the end of February. You will be notified by in writing within two weeks after that about the decision of the Board.

What happens if you are continued?

If continued, the Board will identify the materials that need to be resubmitted. Candidates who are continued are given feedback about what the Board perceived in their papers, file materials and interviews. Continuance is not designed to be punishment. It is designed to be an opportunity for strengthening of the candidate toward lifelong and fruitful ministry.

Thank you for taking time to read this note of welcome and instruction. We truly want you to do well and look forward to conversations with you as you pursue ways to answer God's call into ministry.

The Board of Ordained Ministry, Virginia Conference

Forms for Application:

1. Psychological Assessment

- a. To request your psychological assessment, use this jotform:
<https://form.jotform.com/222634906069056>
- b. Once you complete the assessment, you will receive a copy of your results. Clergy Excellence will also receive a copy and upload the document into both your Basecamp file for the Para/Professional Certification Committee and your VAUMC file in the Unity, the conference database.

2. Expanded Background Check

- a. To request a background check please use these instructions:
<https://doc.vaumc.org/MinServices/ExtBackgroundCheckInstructions.pdf>
- b. Once you complete the background check, Clergy Excellence will receive the results and upload the document into both your Basecamp file for the Para/Professional Certification Committee and your VAUMC file in the Unity, the conference database.

3. Reference Request Form

- a. Please use this reference request form with three persons:
<https://form.jotform.com/231005229205038>
- b. When your references submit this form a copy will be sent directly to Clergy Excellence and to the Para/Professional Certification Committee

Instructions for Writing and Submitting the Committee Paper

This checklist is provided as a final review before submitting your paper so that you may verify that you have met the requirements. This checklist is for your records only; you do not submit it with your papers.

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The Board of Ordained Ministry reserves the right not to accept materials that do not meet the standards below.

1. _____ A title page with the following information:
 - Professional Certification (current year) or Para-professional Certification (current year)
 - Your name
 - The title page should either not be numbered, or set page numbers to begin at zero
2. _____ Paper must be typed using the following attributes:
 - Font: Times New Roman, 12-point
 - Page margins: 1" on all four sides
 - Line Spacing: Double (with the exception of the "stated question" as noted below)
 - State and number each question, as it is written, prior to answering the question. The question is to be single spaced.
 - Page numbers are required, beginning with *Page 1* on the first page after the title page
 - Your name on each page, in either the header or footer area.
3. _____ Adhere to a minimum of 10 full-pages and a maximum of 16-pages.
The bibliography, endnotes, and continued action plan are not included in the page limits.
4. _____ A bibliography is required, including all printed materials, web pages, audio-visual materials, seminary lecture notes, the Bible, *Book of Discipline*, all other United Methodist resources, etc. The bibliography does not count toward the required number of pages for that paper. **Please select one established endnote-friendly citation style format like MLA and use that style throughout your bibliographies.**
5. _____ Endnotes at the end of the paper, **NOT** footnotes at the bottom of the page or within the paper, shall be used to cite the source of direct quotes, paraphrases, and concepts within the body of the paper, including all printed materials, web pages, audio-visual materials, seminary lecture notes, the Bible, *Book of Discipline*, all other United Methodist resources, etc.. Endnotes shall not be used to expand on what is written within the body of the paper. Endnotes do not count toward the required number of pages for the paper. Read the statement on **Plagiarism and Using Sources**. Again, **please select one established endnote-friendly citation style format like MLA and use that style throughout your endnotes.**
6. **Review the following pages enclosed in this packet in preparation for writing your papers:**
 1. Plagiarism and Using Sources,
 2. Writing Guidelines (Inclusive Language and Quality of Writing).

The Board of Ordained Ministry has contracted with a web-based company called Turnitin which scans papers for citation errors. You have the opportunity to pre-scan your papers through a company called "Write Check" which is powered by Turnitin. Pre-scanning is certainly not required, but we want to let you know about this option. To initiate this, go to the following web site: <https://www.writecheck.com>. Write Check offers several packages of service. On the home

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page, just click “Get Started” and follow the instructions. The endnotes, bibliography, and the title page can be removed to reduce the number of words submitted. Since this is an independent decision on your part, the Center for Clergy Excellence is not able to assist you with this site or the costs you may incur by using it.

Tips, Tricks, and Recommendations

1. If you copy and paste the committee paper questions, be aware of your margins and the possibility that the program you are using has indented the text of your answer. This means your answer is not abiding by the 1” left margin requirement.
2. Learn how to format your page numbers to be different on the first page of your document, or to begin numbering your pages with zero.
3. Learn how to add your name in the header or footer area of the document, not as a line of text within the body of your paper.
4. Learn how to force a page break between your title page and the body of your paper (and between the end of your paper and bibliography). This will ensure text stays on the page you intend it to.
5. Learn about what Microsoft Word calls “widow/orphan” control. Turn this feature off to fill each page of your document with text from top to bottom margin. Leaving this feature on will cause paragraphs of text to “roll” to the next page and leave a gap at the bottom of the proceeding page. Leaving this gap is only a concern if you are at or near the minimum or maximum required number of pages for a paper.
6. Review your documents carefully if converting file formats (from Mac programs to Word, out of a Google Doc, or to a .pdf format). Font size, footers, endnote formats, etc. may have changed during the conversion process.

Digital submission format for committee papers

Save your paper in one of the following formats: .doc, .docx, .pdf. If you submit in .pdf, the text must be searchable, rather than a scanned image of the document. Submit your paper via the Jotform application link provided in this packet.

Plagiarism and Using Sources

The Virginia Conference Board of Ordained Ministry uses the following definition of plagiarism:

“According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to “plagiarize” means

- to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
- to use (another's production) without crediting the source
- to commit literary theft
- to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

But can words and ideas really be stolen?

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According to U.S. law, the answer is yes. The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property, and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file).

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 (see our section on "fair use" rules)

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism.”ⁱ

The Board has identified five levels of plagiarism, from least to greatest offense, as follows:

1. Attributed quote (in quotation marks) with no endnote.
2. Verbatim with an endnote with no quotation marks or improper paraphrasing that is attributed.
3. Improper paraphrasing that is unattributed.
4. Unattributed verbatim of material in the paper.
5. Copying so many words or ideas from *a single source* that it makes up the majority of your work, whether it is accredited or not.

ⁱ http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_article_what_is_plagiarism.html.

The following article from the Claremont School of Theology website, which is reprinted here with permission, is offered to assist you in citing sources:

USING SOURCES

“Unintentional plagiarism is a serious matter in graduate school. Unintentional plagiarism most often occurs when a student loses his or her own voice. That is, instead of the student remaining in control of what he or she is saying with his or her own voice. The scenario goes something like this: the student finds a source with whom he or she agrees and, making a few changes in wording, basically follows the structure of the source material. Even if citations are used, this is a recipe for plagiarism. The following are some commonsense suggestions to help you avoid unintentional plagiarism.

- Use your own voice. Put what you have to say in your own words. Don't hide behind the "experts."
- Never compose essays with source material open. Take notes from source material on note cards and compose from those cards.
- Clearly mark cards to distinguish summaries from quotations.

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- Keep quotations brief and few. Use direct quotes as spices in a meal, not as the main dish.
- Use block quotations only when you plan to give extensive analysis of the quoted material.
- Always introduce quotations (e.g. According to Helmer, "...").
- Summarize or paraphrase material using sentence structure that differs significantly from the source. (Changing a few words, but keeping the same basic sentence structure of the original is still plagiarism.)
- Provide a citation for all quoted, paraphrased or summarized material. When in doubt, provide a citation.

Examples:

Original Source #1

Cheap grace means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner. Grace alone does everything, they say, and so everything can remain as it was before. [1]

Plagiarized Version #1A

Cheap grace means the justification of sin but not the justification of the person who sinned. Some people say that grace alone does everything, so everything can remain the same. [2]

Comment:

Even though the writer has cited the source, quotation marks were not used around direct quotations such as "cheap grace means the justification of sin" and "grace alone does everything."

Plagiarized Version #1B

Cheap grace is taking care of sin without dealing with the one who sins. God's unmerited favor alone takes care of everything, some say; so the situation can stay as it was before. [3]

Comment:

Still plagiarism. Replacing key words with synonyms but keeping the basic sentence structure of the original is still plagiarism, even if you provide a citation.

Acceptable Version #1C

According to Bonhoeffer, cheap grace refers to the theological position that a sinner can be justified before God without changing his or her behavior. According to this theological position, one does not need to change to receive justification for it is provided by grace alone. [4]

Comment:

This is a legitimate paraphrase of Bonhoeffer's words. Note that it is both introduced and footnoted. Also note that short phrases (usually three words or less) do not necessarily need to be placed in quotation marks, especially if the sentence structure is completely different from the source.

Original Source #2

As Christianity spread, and the Church became more secularized, this realization of the costliness of grace gradually faded. The world was Christianized, and grace became its common property. It was to be had at low cost. Yet the Church of Rome did not altogether lose its earlier vision. It is highly significant that the Church was astute enough to find room for the monastic movement, and to prevent it from lapsing into schism. [5]

Plagiarized Version #2A

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Christianity spread throughout the Empire but at the same time it became more worldly; thus the realization of the costliness of grace gradually faded away. As the Empire embraced Christianity, grace became its common property and was available cheaply. Nonetheless, the Church of Rome did not completely lose its earlier vision. That the Church was smart enough to make room for the monastic movement and to keep it from dividing from the Church is highly significant.

Comment:

Plagiarism: not only does the writer copy the outline and sentence structure of the original, she or he fails to place within quotation marks long phrases taken directly from the source such as "the realization of the costliness of grace gradually faded" and "grace became its common property." Moreover, there is no citation.

Plagiarized Version #2B

According to Bonhoeffer, Christianity spread throughout the Empire but at the same it became more worldly; thus "the realization of the costliness of grace gradually faded." As the Empire embraced Christianity, grace became its common property. Nonetheless, the Church of Rome did not completely lose its earlier vision. It is highly significant that the Church was "astute enough to find room for the monastic movement," and to prevent it from "lapsing into schism." [6]

Comment:

Still plagiarism. Although the writer has introduced the material and included a citation and placed some quoted material in quotation marks, other direct quotations are not in quotation marks such as "grace became its common property." Moreover, the sentence beginning with "nonetheless" is a direct quote with only two words replaced by synonyms. Finally, the overall structure of the paragraph and of each sentence mimics the original too closely.

Acceptable Version #2C

Bonhoeffer argues that monasticism within the Church is evidence that the concept of costly grace was not completely lost after Christianity became the state religion. Nonetheless, the Church was largely secularized during this period; and for most, grace "was to be had at low cost." [7]

Comment:

Notice that the paraphrased information is introduced and a citation is provided; both the overall structure and the sentence structure differ significantly from the source. One small quotation is used to add flavor." ⁱⁱ

ⁱⁱ Used by permission. Gillis, Scott. "Using Sources," The Writing Center at Claremont School of Theology. http://www.cst.edu/academic_resources/writing_center.php.

Writing Guidelines

Guidelines for Inclusive Language

Our language, both written and spoken, reflects our understanding of the Disciplinary mandate to be an inclusive church.

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In using language about God:

In using language about God, we must hold to two basic theological principles: first, God is personal; second, God is beyond human characteristics and limits; therefore, God is not a sexual being. Considering the limitations of language, this is difficult to do. If one uses the neuter pronoun “it” to describe God, one depersonalizes God in the process; however, to use the pronoun “he” makes God male in the reader’s/hearer’s mind. Some people solve this dilemma by never using pronouns for God at all. This may be awkward and impersonal. One acceptable approach is to reduce the number of pronouns while increasing the number of images for God.

While we recognize these are times and occasions when it is appropriate to use the traditional terms for God, especially in the language of Scripture, creeds, and liturgy, candidates are expected to use a variety of images for God in all written and oral work for the Board of Ordained Ministry.

In using language about people:

The assumption that the male is normative, the dominance of masculine imagery and grammatical forms, or any other usage that diminishes the equal dignity of women and men, is to be avoided in all written and oral work for the Board of Ordained Ministry.

We remind you that our *Virginia Conference Standards for Clergy Leadership* state that a clergy leader, in all things, models and embraces inclusiveness.

Guidelines for the Quality of Writing

The papers which you submit to the Board of Ordained Ministry must clearly reflect your deepest understanding of the questions being asked. The Board members conducting your interviews will carefully read each response.

A poorly or inadequately written paper, regardless of the quality of the content, sends a negative message to those who must make a decision about the competency of the candidate. Moreover, the Board members expect candidates to be fully capable of expressing their thoughts in grammatically correct prose.

We strongly recommend that you allow sufficient time for you and/or others to proofread your papers. Be sure that the materials you submit are your work. While Board of Ordained Ministry members are not allowed to read papers prior to submission, you have parishioners and clergy colleagues who appreciate good form in speech and writing. Candidates may consider using resources for improving writing skills that are available at nominal costs through the community colleges in the Commonwealth of Virginia (or elsewhere). Seminaries also offer opportunities for improving one's writing skills.

It is in your best interest to represent yourself in the most professional manner possible and to put forth your best efforts

Questions to be answered for the Committee Paper

Refer to “Instructions for Writing and Submitting the Committee Paper” for details about formatting.

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Written responses to the questions below are required. Deal fully with all questions. Please answer these questions in order one at a time without grouping your answers together.

1. Share experiences in your ministry and personal life since you began the process toward certification that have shaped your professional and spiritual development. Share positive and negatives experiences in both your ministry and personal life during this process.
2. Discuss how you believe you are fulfilling your commitment to the church's ministry through serving as a certified professional in your area of specialization?
3. In the life of the church or church related agency, what is the role and purpose of the area of ministry for which you are requesting certification? Include biblical and theological foundations.
4. What is your understanding of the nature and purpose of the mission and organization of The United Methodist Church?
5. How will you integrate the mission and purpose of the church with your area of specialization?
6. In your area of specialization, what do you envision as future trends and directions in the next ten to fifteen years?
7. If you were to develop a program in your area of specialization for a group in your church or agency, what would be its core elements and why?
8. Where and how would you locate resources for the work in your area of specialization? Include how decisions are made as to the selection and use of appropriate resources in the local church/agency and use of United Methodist denominational resources.
9. How do you approach and work with laity in ministry?
10. How would you characterize positive/effective staff and supervisory relationships? What is your role in a multiple-staff relationship? How do you relate to authority in supervisory relationships?
11. What surprises and/or confirmations did your psychological assessment offer you?
12. Identify your areas of strength and areas where growth or help is needed. How will each of these areas affect your ministry?
13. What are your plans for a program of continuing education for personal and professional growth?

Criteria for the Committee Paper

- The candidate is able to identify and articulate significant factors that influenced their professional and spiritual journey.

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- The candidate articulates and demonstrates an understanding of their role as a professional in the area of specialization.
- The candidate understands the area of specialization in the life of the church, including biblical and theological foundations.
- The candidate understands the mission and organization of The United Methodist Church.
- The candidate shows evidence of integrating the mission and purpose of the church with their area of specialization.
- The candidate has a vision for the future of ministry in their area of specialization.
- The candidate demonstrates competency in their area of specialization through knowledge of and ability to put into practice effective ministry in their area of specialization.
- The candidate demonstrates an ability to select and use resources and shows a commitment to United Methodist resources.
- The candidate recognizes the importance of laity in ministry and working in partnership with laity.
- The candidate shows evidence of working effectively in staff and supervisory relationships.
- The candidate shows evidence of self-awareness and an ability to use life experiences to determine areas for growth.
- The candidate is able to identify areas of strength and areas for growth.
- The candidate has a plan for continuing education for personal and professional growth.