

The Virginia Annual Conference
Board of Ordained Ministry
Policy on Plagiarism & Citation Issues
Approved and Effective on June 18, 2024

Introduction:

“The Church expects those who seek ordination to make a complete dedication to the highest ideals of the Christian life,”ⁱ which requires authenticity and integrity in all written submissions and oral interviews.

Plagiarism is defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionaryⁱⁱ as:

1. To steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one’s own.
2. Use (another’s production) without crediting a source.
3. To commit literary theft.
4. Present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

“The BOM 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 graces for ministry.”ⁱⁱⁱ Any infractions will be handled in accordance with the policy outlined below.

Five Types of Plagiarism:

Type 1. Accredited quote with no end note.

Type 2. Verbatim with an end note, but no quotation marks, or improper paraphrasing that is accredited.

Type 3. Improper paraphrasing that is uncredited.

Type 4. Unaccredited verbatim of material in the paper.

Type 5. Copying so many words or ideas from another source that it makes up the majority of submitted work, whether it is accredited or not. This includes using AI to write sections of the written work. *Note: iThenticate has the ability to identify AI in the written work.*

Consequences of Violating each Type of Plagiarism:

Type 1. The candidate is interviewed in all areas. The interview team in which the plagiarism was found includes the matter in its report to the full Board and in the feedback sheet to the candidate. The matter is regarded in the context of the “whole person” when considering the candidate.

Type 2. For one or two instances of up to two sentences:

- The candidate is interviewed.
- The interview team includes the matter in its report to the full Board and in the feedback sheet to the candidate.
- The matter is regarded in the context of the “whole person” when considering the candidate.

For three or more separate instances of up to two sentences:

- The paper is turned into the Plagiarism Committee which will determine if the candidate forfeits the right to an interview with the committee of which the plagiarism was found.
- The written material is not accepted.
- The candidate is automatically continued.

Type 3. For instances up to two sentences:

- The candidate is interviewed and the plagiarism is discussed.
- The interview team includes the matter in its report to the full Board and in the feedback sheet to the candidate.
- The matter is regarded in the context of the “whole person” when considering the candidate.

For three or more instances of two or more sentences:

- The paper is turned into the Plagiarism Committee which will determine if the candidate forfeits the right to an interview with the committee of which the plagiarism was found.
- The written material is not accepted.
- The candidate is continued at minimum. Candidate may not be interviewed in other areas.
- The candidate will meet with the Plagiarism Committee.
- If this type of plagiarism is found in other papers submitted to the Board, discontinuance will be considered.

Type 4. For one or two separate instances up to two sentences:

- The candidate is interviewed, and plagiarism discussed.
- The interview team includes the matter in its report to the full Board and in the feedback sheet to the candidate.
- The matter is regarded in the context of the “whole person” when considering the candidate.

For three or more instances of two or more sentences:

- The paper is turned into the Plagiarism Committee which will determine if the candidate forfeits the right to an interview.
- The written material is not accepted.
- The candidate is continued at minimum. The candidate may not be interviewed in other areas.
- The candidate will meet with the Plagiarism Committee.
- If this type of plagiarism is found in other papers submitted to the Board, discontinuance will be considered.

Type 5. The candidate forfeits the right to interview with the Board in all areas:

- The paper is turned into the Plagiarism Committee.
- The Team will discern whether future invitations to interview will be extended.
- Discontinuance from the process will be considered.

Avoiding Plagiarism:

- To help avoid plagiarism, the following suggestions are recommended in an article entitled “How to Avoid Plagiarism” from Harvard Guide to using sources website: <https://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/how-avoid-plagiarism-0>

Conclusion:

The Virginia Conference Board of Ordained Ministry provides clear guidelines for written work to be submitted. These are the standards by which all written work is taken into consideration.

The Board will review all written submissions for plagiarism and will use an online authentication program, *iThenticate*, to identify plagiarism.

Candidates are encouraged to run their written work through a plagiarism checker prior to submission to ensure confidence of properly cited work. Many free services are available. Here is one plagiarism checker you can use: <https://www.grammarly.com/plagiarism-checker>

Candidates should understand that plagiarism is such a serious breach of covenant that the BOM will consider discontinuance and the candidate may lose their license to practice ministry.

PLAGIARISM POLICY ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

As a part of submitting your material for Candidacy, Associate, Provisional, or Full Membership, this acknowledgement will be at the end of your application online and will require your signature:

“I have read the Virginia conference Plagiarism Policy 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 submit to the Board of Ordained Ministry will be my own and I will credit sources appropriately.”

Signed

Date

Print Name

ⁱ BOD ¶ 304, 2.
ⁱⁱ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plagiarize>
ⁱⁱⁱ Has been adopted from the CAL-NEV BOOM documentation on plagiarism