

**The Board of Ordained Ministry  
Iowa Conference of The United Methodist Church**

## **Plagiarism Policy**

Adopted October 21, 2016

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 Iowa Board of Ordained Ministry (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 grace for ministry.

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, to plagiarize is to:

1. steal and pass off the ideas or words of another as one's own
2. use another's production without crediting the source
3. commit literary theft

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plagiarize>

“In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.” <http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/what-is-plagiarism>

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

1. turning in someone else's work as your own
2. copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
3. failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
4. giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
5. changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
6. 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)

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

We believe plagiarism is a serious offense and it will be treated as such. The BOM 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.

Key members of our Examinations Committee and Teams shall be constituted as a BOM Plagiarism Team (the Plagiarism Team), as follows: BOM Vice Chair, Examinations Committee Chair(s), and Chair of the Examination Team to which the candidate is assigned. If the foregoing individuals do not include a layperson, the team's membership shall be expanded to include at least one layperson selected by the Committee Chair(s).

We recognize three levels of plagiarism in a candidate's written materials:

### **1. Isolated instance(s) of unattributed material.**

Consequence: The clergy candidate must have a conversation with the Plagiarism Team about the plagiarism identified and about the proper crediting of sources, at which time the Plagiarism Team shall have discretion to determine whether the candidate may participate in the examination process, and whether to notify the candidate's District Superintendent.

**2. The incidence of plagiarism raises questions of ethics, carelessness and/or authenticity.**

Consequence: The Plagiarism Team shall evaluate the evidence of plagiarism and meet with the candidate. The Plagiarism Team shall then determine whether the candidate is properly before the Examination Team, the invitation to interview with the Examination Team may be withdrawn for the year, and the candidate may be considered for discontinuance. The candidate's District Superintendent shall be notified.

**3. Substantial portions of a candidate's written materials and/or statements of the candidate's personal experience or belief are directly plagiarized.**

Consequence: A violation at this level will be considered a major ethical and covenant violation. The Plagiarism Team shall evaluate the evidence of plagiarism and meet with the candidate. Upon a determination that the plagiarism rises to this level of severity, the applicant's candidacy status shall be discontinued and other disciplinary consequences may also be considered. The candidate's District Superintendent shall be notified.

## PLAGIARISM POLICY ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

*I have read the Iowa 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 will submit to the Board of Ordained Ministry will be my own and I will credit sources appropriately.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

**NOTE:** Return this form to the Director of Ministerial Services with your application and written materials.

*This policy and form are adapted and modified by the Iowa BOM based on documents of the Western North Carolina Conference.*