

Holston Presbytery

Alternate Ordination Exam Procedure

When a candidate has fulfilled all requirements for certification to be ready for examination except a satisfactory grade on one or more of the standard ordination exams,

AND the candidate has failed the standard ordination exams on two or more separate occasions,

AND the candidate has submitted all original ordination exams to the CPM Moderator for review,

AND the candidate has fulfilled the CPM guidelines on preparation for exams, AND the CPM guidelines for candidates who have failed one or more exams,

THEN the Committee on Preparation for Ministry has adopted the following alternate ordination exam procedure in fulfillment of the requirements of G-14.0431:

Alternate Ordination Exam Procedure:

The candidate will be examined in the area(s) of difficulty by an examination panel consisting of 5 members of the Presbytery, of which no more than 2 shall be currently serving on the CPM. The members of the panel shall be appointed by the Moderator of the CPM. The CPM Moderator, or a CPM member designated by the Moderator, shall serve as chairperson of the examination panel.

The examination to be administered shall consist of the following:

In the case of Church Polity, Worship and Sacraments, or Theological Competence, the exam shall consist of 3 questions selected from previous ordination exams. The 3 hour examination shall include 90 minutes for the candidate's preparation and outline of the responses, and another 90 minutes for the candidate's oral response to the questions. Each question will be allowed 30 minutes. In each case, the candidate will speak for 20 minutes to be followed by 10 minutes of elaborative-type questions from the examination panel.

In the case of Biblical Exegesis, the CPM will select and assign a passage of scripture, and the candidate shall have 7 days to choose from and complete one of the following two assignments.

- A. Prepare an exegesis paper on the assigned passage, including identification of the exegetical method, translation and exegesis of the assigned text with attention to pertinent exegetical issues, and an outline of a sermon informed by and emerging from the preceding exegetical work. At an assigned time following the submission of the exegesis paper, the candidate shall meet with the examination panel for a period of 60 minutes to present his or her exegetical findings in oral form and respond to questions from the panel pertaining to that work.
- B. Prepare an outline of the pertinent exegetical issues and an accompanying outline of a sermon or lesson plan informed by and emerging from the preceding exegetical work. At an assigned time following the submission of the outline, the candidate shall meet with the examination panel for a period of 90 minutes during which time he or she shall deliver the prepared sermon

or teach the prepared lesson plan, to be followed by a presentation of his or her exegetical findings in oral form and a question and response time led by the panel pertaining to that exegetical work.

In the case of Bible Content, each of the five panel members will prepare 3 questions in the following respective areas:

1. Pentateuch
2. Historical Books
3. Prophets, Psalms and Wisdom Literature
4. Gospels and Acts
5. Epistles and remainder of the New Testament

The questions should be structured so as to demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of the subject, taking into account thematic structure, movement, style, and context, as well as familiarity with key texts and content. This will be an oral examination, and the candidate must satisfactorily respond to at least 11 of the 15 questions to receive a passing grade (73%).

At the conclusion of each exam, the candidate shall be excused. Each member of the panel shall then independently render a grade of pass or fail for the candidate, taking into account the whole of the proceedings.

The panel shall then render a grade of pass or fail to the candidate. The decision of the panel shall be final. **Should the panel judge the candidate still deficient in the area(s) of the examination, the CPM may consider such failure as grounds for removal from the process of preparation for ordained ministry.** A candidate may not be permitted to retake standard or alternate ordination exams after having performed unsatisfactorily on this examination, *unless* the candidate has a clinically defined and documented disability attested by a professional of the Presbytery's choosing, in which case the CPM shall have discretion over the number of times an alternative exam may be attempted.

Guidelines on Preparation for Exams:

In preparation for the standard ordination exams and for the office of ordained ministry, the CPM requires the following of ALL candidates: A class or acceptable coursework in Presbyterian Polity, Reformed Theology, Reformed Worship and Sacraments, Original Language Exegesis (Greek or Hebrew).

Guidelines for Candidates who have failed one or more Ordination Exams

After the first failed attempt at a standard ordination exam, the CPM requires that a candidate:

1. Submit the original exam(s) to the CPM Moderator

Furthermore the CPM recommends that:

2. After consultation with an individual with experience in the subject area (a seminary professor, a CPM member, or ordination exam reader), the student should submit to the CPM Moderator a

summary detailing the student's understanding of what went wrong, as well as the student's plan of action in preparation for the next time he or she attempts that exam.

3. A student acquaint him or herself with the recommended resource material(s) for the subject area maintained by the CPM, and submit a written evaluation of the resource materials in the area(s) of difficulty. This should be submitted to the CPM Moderator before approval will be granted to re-register for exams.

After the *second* and subsequent failed attempts, the CPM *requires* that a candidate complete items 1, 2 & 3 above. These MUST be completed BEFORE a student can register for standard ordination exams or petition the CPM to undertake an alternative exam.

CPM Exam Preparation Resources

In preparation for the standard ordination exams, and in the event of one or more exam failures, the CPM commends to candidates the following resource materials in the respective exam areas:

Bible Content:

- <http://www.whitneyhq.com/biblecontent/> (past Bible content exams for study)
- Duncan S. Ferguson, *Bible Basics: Mastering the Content of the Bible*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995.

Biblical Exegesis:

- Phyllis Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.

Theological Competence:

- Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004.
- Shirley Guthrie, *Christian Doctrine*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994.

Polity:

- Joan Gray and Joyce Tucker, *Presbyterian Polity for Church Officers*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999.
- Frank Beattie, *Companion to the Constitution of the PCUSA: Polity for the Local Church*. Louisville: Geneva Press, 1999.
- *PCUSA Book of Order, current edition*

Worship and Sacraments:

- Peter Bower, ed., *The Companion to the Book of Common Worship*. Louisville: Geneva Press, 2003.
- James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2001.

Alternative Examination Request

Requested by: _____

Presbytery: _____ Date: _____

Candidate: _____

Name of examination(s) to be completed: _____

Reason for requesting an alternate examination: *(Be specific)*

Have you completed Guidelines 1-3 for Candidates who have failed one or more ordination exams and submitted all these to the CPM Moderator or your liaison? *(see above)*

CPM Use only:

Alternative Exam(s) scheduled for: _____

Alternative Examination Committee Members: _____ (CPM)

_____ (Presbytery at large) _____ (CPM)

_____ (Presbytery at large) _____ (Pres. at large)

(Please circle committee moderator above.)