



Guide to Written Examinations

Updated: January 2019

The Credentials Committee serves the Missouri Presbytery (MO Pres) particularly with regards to the ministerial credentials of its members. The Committee is charged to recommend candidates who desire to obtain, transfer or exercise their ministerial credentials within the bounds of MO Pres; who have satisfactorily met the requirements contained in the Book of Church Order, and who are in accord with the consensual tenets of relationship within the presbytery. The Committee will assist men through this process and also will test and interview candidates as appropriate. Above all, the Committee seeks to do its work with the goal to see more laborers who are qualified to serve the kingdom, which we believe God is building, within the bounds of MO Pres.

Schedule:

- MO Pres schedules its regular meetings quarterly (Jan, Apr, July, and Oct) on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.
- The Credentials Committee schedules its regular meetings roughly two (2) weeks prior to the meeting of Presbytery.
- Any Candidate who desires to be placed on the docket for the Credentials Committee must complete all requisite tests and submittals prior to the regular meeting of the Committee.

Testing Criteria:

You are reading this document because you have expressed a desire to pursue a calling that you believe God, and His people, have expressed to you; and this is no small thing. You should view your interaction with the Credentials Committee as part of God's confirming that call to you. And with that perspective in mind, please pay special attention to the following counsel and guidelines for taking the written tests which are appropriate to your desired credentials.

Current Credentials Committee Chair is TE Tim LeCroy.

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Current Credentials Committee Vice-Chair TE Greg Meyer.

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At the direction of the Committee Chair, the Vice-Chair will distribute each written exam to you electronically. You should direct any questions you might have regarding the exam process and also return your completed exam to the Vice-Chair's attention.

1. Please read all the instructions for each exam carefully.

This is important because some exams allow you to use a bible and some don't.

2. Allocate sufficient and qualitative time to complete each exam.

For most people 4-6 hours is going to be sufficient for each exam. But you know yourself and your tendencies; therefore, you should plan accordingly.

3. Each written exam is to be completed within one setting.

You may take a break during the course of the exam (i.e. lunch, snack, etc.). However, it is required that you would start and complete the exam within the confines of one 24hr day. You are NOT permitted to take the exam over the course of multiple days.

4. Once you have started an exam you are not to discuss the material with anyone or to access any resource, other than what will be specifically permitted in the written instructions of the exam.

For example, while taking a break for lunch please avoid discussions with others regarding the test in any way (content, questions, problems, recollections, etc.).

5. Do not consult any of your previously completed exams while taking an exam.

6. In order to pass an exam you must score a minimum of 80%.

You must first pass the bible exam before taking any other exam.

7. You may keep a copy of your completed exams for your personal records. Nonetheless, we would fervently appeal you not to share these tests with any others so that we can ensure the integrity of testing future candidates.

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Test Descriptions:

Bible

You are not permitted to consult any source, helps, reference, or bible during the course of this exam.

You must pass the bible exam before you are eligible to take any other exam. If you fail the bible exam, subsequent make-up exams will be similar to the original exam but will deviate in sections, length, and content.

The English bible exam consists of seven sections:

1. English Bible Books - These are questions related to general bible knowledge
2. The Message of the Books of the Bible (self-explanatory)
3. Old Testament English Bible Facts (self-explanatory)
4. New Testament English Bible Facts (self-explanatory)
5. Where does the Bible Teach That? - You will provide book and chapter answers for where a particular doctrine is taught
6. Where is that in the Bible? – A particular Biblical quote will be listed; you will provide the book and chapter where it is found. Often passages can be found in more than one place.
7. Using the Bible to Help People - You provide book and chapter references which you would select to assist someone addressing a particular issue.

PLEASE NOTE: You must first pass the bible exam before taking any other exam.

Theology

During the course of the theology exam, you may use a “plain text” bible. This is defined as being NOT a study bible or one with notes or cross references or marginal references. A pew bible is generally acceptable.

Knowing the Westminster Shorter Catechism & various historical heresies will be helpful in preparing for this exam, but the exam is broader than these two areas. You also need to show knowledge beyond simply stating Westminster (though that can be helpful).

Before beginning the exam, you must have previously read and understood the following PCA and MO Pres study reports: Creation Days, Divorce and Remarriage, Baptism and Re-Baptism, Paedo-communion and MO Presbytery FV.

You will not pass the theology exam if you have not previously read the Westminster Confession of Faith, Shorter and Larger Catechisms.

The theology exam consists of nine main sections:

1. Subscription to the Doctrinal Standards
2. Prolegomena
3. Revelation / Scripture

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4. Theology Proper (with an emphasis on the Trinitarian Nature and the Works of God)
5. The Divine Covenants
6. Humanity and the Fall into Sin
7. Christ and Salvation
8. Christian Ethics (with an emphasis on the Law of God and its application)
9. Spirit, Church, and Last Things

Church Government / BCO

The Church Government & BCO exam is a closed book exam. You are not allowed any helps including previous exams. You are not required to know chapter references for the BCO portion of the exam. This exam consists of a range of questions concerning church government broadly and therefore is not simply limited to the BCO.

The Church Government exam consists of four sections:

1. Ordination Vows
2. The Doctrine of the Church and its Government
3. The Book of Church Order
4. Short Answer Questions; these are brief case studies that you are to interact with and demonstrate how your knowledge of church government / BCO helps you to deal with particular situations.

Sermon

You must submit a sermon that you preached in a worship service. The sermon should be e-mailed as an Mp3. If the sermon is too large to e-mail, please e-mail a link to where it can be accessed on the web. Do NOT mail a CD or DVD.

Included with the sermon, please attach your manuscript if available.

Stated Differences with our Standards

According to the B.O.C.O.; *"Presbytery minutes shall record ministers' and ministerial candidates' stated differences with our Standards in their own words"*. Please consult the Committee's "Differences Document" for further instructions in this area.

Before appearing before Credentials Committee to be examined for Licensure or Ordination, you must have previously read and understood the MO Pres Standing Rules.

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The testing requirements which follow are for those seeking Ministerial Credentials

Sacraments

During the sacraments exam, you may use a “plain text” bible. This means that you are not permitted to use a study bible or a bible containing notes, cross references or marginal references.

Knowing the Westminster Shorter and Larger Catechisms questions and answers related to the sacraments will be helpful. The questions are short answer and case studies. Good answers will incorporate some, if not all, of the following categories: biblical knowledge, historical theology, the Standards, and pastoral wisdom.

The Sacraments exam consists of three sections:

1. Sacraments generally
2. Baptism
3. Lord’s Supper

History

This exam is a closed book exam. You are not permitted to use any helps including previous exams.

You should answer five questions from each section; for a total of twenty-five questions. Each section contains more than five questions; you should select **ONLY** five that you choose to answer. Each question is valued at four points.

Resources to consider prior to taking this exam include the following items (this is not exhaustive as there are other resources that may benefit you) to review: notes from previous church history classes taken and/or to review, Bruce Shelly, *Church History in Plain Language*, Mark Noll, *Turning Points*, Don Clements, *Historical Roots of the PCA*, D.G. Hart, *Turning Points in American Presbyterianism*.

The history exam consists of five sections:

1. Ancient History
2. Medieval Church History
3. Reformation Church History
4. Modern Church History
5. The PCA & Presbyterian Church History

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Theological & Exegetical Papers

Please consult the Committee's "Guidelines for Theology & Exegetical Papers" document for further instructions in this area.

Confirmation of a Proper Call

Please consult the B.O.C.O. for further instructions in this area.

Resources that you should be familiar with and will benefit your study:

1. Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger & Shorter Catechism. You need to be familiar with these topics and be able to express knowledge of them. It is highly recommended that you memorize the Shorter Catechism. To give the answer to a catechism question is a common question in committee and on the floor
2. PCA Position Papers. Particularly the ones concerning, but not limited to; *The Validity of Certain Baptisms*, *Creation Study Committee*, *Divorce and Remarriage*, and *Paedocommunion*. You are expected to know the conclusions of these reports and be able to interact with any minority reports, as the case may be.
3. MO Presbytery Federal Vision Report. You must read this report before the committee exam and tell us if you approve or disapprove of the "affirmations and denials" made in the report.
4. *Concise Theology* by JI Packer. This book will be helpful as it gives short descriptions and summaries of important theological categories and terms.