

## **Uniform Curriculum and Ordination Requirements**

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The BCO's ordinary educational requirements for ordination as a minister are stated in BCO 21-4:

An intern applying for ordination shall be required to present a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved college or university, and also a diploma of Bachelor or Master from some approved theological seminary or authentic testimonials of having completed a regular course of theological studies, or a certificate of completion of and endorsement from a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America.

With the growth of two-year M.A. programs among seminaries, a question arises a two-year M.A. degree from a theological seminary meets the ordination requirements set forth in the BCO. If an M.A. is the only theological education the candidate has had, then the M.A. alone would not meet the educational requirements because a two-year M.A. degree does not meet the requirements of "a certificate of completion of and endorsement from a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America." The Uniform Curriculum adopted by the General Assembly (see Minutes of the General Assembly, 1978, p.214, Appendix G, IV). The Uniform Curriculum is divided into three major areas with supervised practical experience required in each area:

1. Scripture
  - a. English Bible
  - b. Biblical languages
    - Hebrew
    - Greek
  - c. Methods and Interpretation
  - d. Supervised Practical Experiences
2. Doctrine
  - a. Church History
  - b. Apologetics
  - c. Theology and Ethics
  - d. Presbyterian Church Polity
  - e. Supervised Practical Experiences
3. Practical Theology
  - a. Pastor's personal life
  - b. Worship
  - c. Evangelism
  - d. Missiology
  - e. Pastoral Care
  - f. Christian Education

- g. Pastoral Administration
- h. Supervised Practical Experiences

Typically a two-year M.A. program has only one biblical language or neither biblical language, is deficient in Practical Theology, and has little or no supervised practical experience. Since an M.A. program is a two-year rather than a three-year program, it may cover some of the same areas of an M.Div. program but may not be to the same depth or extent.

There are three models to satisfy ordination requirements:

1. The three-year M.Div. program plus one-year internship (Three plus One Model) is the preferred program but there are alternatives.
2. One alternative is the Two Years of academic training in an extension seminary or Distance Learning program plus two years of tutorial training in Practical Theology and Supervised Practical Experiences under the supervision of Presbytery (Two Extension plus Two Serving Model). CTS and RTS both now offer two-year accredited M.A. degrees via Distance Learning.
3. A third alternative is the two years of residential study in an approved seminary (usually for an M.A. or M.T.S. degree) plus two years of tutorial training in Practical Theology and Supervised Practical Experiences under the supervision of Presbytery (Two Seminary plus Two Tutorial Model).

It should be noted that if either of the Two plus Two Models are used, the Presbytery must follow “a theological study program as approved by the General Assembly and one of the Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America” that satisfies the content and Supervised Practical Experiences of the Uniform Curriculum.

Interpretations of *The Book of Church Order*, *The Westminster Standards*, “The Rules of Assembly Operation,” “The Operating Manual of the Standing Judicial Commission,” and/or *Robert’s Rules of Order* by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PCA are of an advisory nature and are not authoritative rulings that may only be made by the courts of the Church. The Office of the Stated Clerk does not give legal advice. When legal advice is needed, professional legal counsel should be secured from one familiar with applicable laws and regulations.