



Common Errors and How to Avoid Them

1. Exceeding the page limits

Page limits are provided to ensure fairness to all candidates and to encourage succinct, well thought out responses. Page limits can be found in the guidelines for each section.

Exceeding the page requirements may be penalized.

2. Using incorrect formatting: wrong font, font size, margins, spacing

The required font is Arial 11pt, with 1-inch margins. All documents must be double spaced.

This is for ease of reading by the examiners and to ensure fairness in lengths of submissions.

3. Failing to submit portions of the application/paperwork

Many applicants fail to upload their growth assignment reports, which should be clearly named as such. Additional commonly missed items are the Bible study, responses to Bible study questions, and responses to the Ordination Leadership Project questions required for full connection applications.

4. Closing (accomplished by “signing”) a step before the applicant has uploaded the correct documents; or uploading incorrect documents

When you “sign” a step as “closed”, we assume this step is complete. Contact Holly Finley at hfinley@flumc.org to re-open the step if you have made this error. THE APPLICANT is responsible for deleting incorrect material. The Office of Clergy Excellence forwards to the Board the documents the applicant has uploaded.

5. Failure to properly label documents

The templates provided in UMCARES are formatted according to the required font, margin, and spacing guidelines for the applicant to complete, including the header for name and section information, and footer for page number. Instructions on correctly labeling documents can be found in the UMCARES Application Instructions. This includes your first and last name, the status for which you are applying, and the document name. For example, Holly Finley PD Personal Growth. Correctly labeling each document can help avoid the problem of uploading the wrong document into the wrong step, which is another common error we encounter.

6. Uploading documents in file formats other than PDF

The entire application is compiled into a single PDF file by the Office of Clergy Excellence (OCE). Other than the photo which may be in jpeg format, jpeg documents are NOT an acceptable format to use to combine into a PDF file. Word and Excel files require additional effort on the part of OCE and may introduce errors into your application. Excel files, in particular, do not always download correctly. See the FAQ for guidance in generating PDF

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files. Files that are submitted in formats other than PDF will NOT be accepted and will be returned to the applicant for reformatting.

- 7. Failure to set video to “public” in YouTube or VIMEO.**
*The committee cannot view your video if the setting is “private”. See instructions for how to upload videos on the Florida Conference OCE website.
<https://www.flumc.org/applicationforms>*

- 8. Failure to send ALL official transcripts to OCE**
ALL official transcripts from each educational institution you have attended including high school (or equivalent), community college, college, graduate school, Course Of Study, Advanced Course Of Study should be sent to OCE. Official transcripts must be sent by the institution and must show degree awarded, if applicable.

- 9. Failure to complete all the Basic Graduate Theological Studies (BGTS) as required for full connection applicants as specified in *The Book of Discipline* ¶ 324.4 a) plus preaching required for elders by the Florida conference.**
We have experienced many instances of applicants completing their M.Div or other graduate seminary degrees, applying for Full Connection without these course requirements being met. A letter C or above is required, and these courses must be taken at a University Senate approved seminary. Only 50% of the required degree courses may be taken online. Hybrid courses are NOT considered online but contribute to the residential courses. (An exception to this rule has been made during the pandemic since January 2020 through December 2021)

- 10. Not all recommendations (4), ordination project evaluations (4), and DS evaluations are submitted to OCE.**
These items frequently do not get completed and sent to OCE. It is the candidate’s responsibility to follow up with those submitting references and ordination project evaluations to make sure they are submitted on time. The applicant should let their DS know, in writing, well in advance of the October 1 deadline that they are applying to the Board and are requesting their recommendation. It is the candidate’s responsibility to follow up with DS well in advance of the October 1 application deadline. Your DS may wish to schedule time to observe you preaching or review online sermons prior to writing your evaluation.

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