Written Ordination Examinations

- Theology
- Sacraments
- Reformed Tradition
General Exam Information

Content Areas

Content areas required by *Book of Government* 13-2 are covered in four written ordination exams:

1. English Bible (2 hours maximum; no books, Bibles, or notes of any kind allowed)
2. Theology, Sacraments, and Reformed Tradition (3 hours maximum; Bible text allowed – no books, study Bibles, Bibles with cross references, or personal notes)
3. Polity (4 hours maximum; open book)
4. Exegesis (2 sections: Biblical Hebrew or Greek Exegesis and Written Sermon Manuscript on the assigned passage. 7 days maximum; exam answers must be typed.

Exam Arrangements

The four exams must be taken within a time frame of three weeks. Any exceptions for the time limits of each exam (e.g., for those whose first language is not English) must have an advance agreement with both the Presbytery and General Assembly.

After receiving approval from the presbytery’s Candidates or Ministerial Committee, the examinee is responsible to secure an approved proctor and arrange a time and place for the exam. The proctor is typically a pastor or church staff member. Others may be approved by the presbytery chairman requesting the exams. Family members will normally not be approved as proctors. Exam arrangements, including the name and mailing address of the proctor, must be communicated to the presbytery chairman requesting the exam.

The presbytery Ministerial or Candidates Committee Chairman submits a Request for Ordination Exam Form¹ by email, mail or fax to the Office of the General Assembly. The examinee’s current Personal Information Form (PIF) must accompany the exam request.

Requests must be received at least 2 weeks prior to the proposed exam dates in the event there are any problems to be resolved and to avoid unnecessary mailing expenses. Exams and an instruction sheet will be mailed to the proctor no more than 30 days from the projected exam date.

Exam Grading and Results

The proctor mails completed exams to the Office of the General Assembly by a means requiring a signature (e.g., registered mail, Fed Ex envelope). Exams are then forwarded to a grader. Results are typically received from the grader within 10 days. Grading times may be longer over holidays and in the summer.

Scores are communicated from the General Assembly Office to the Presbytery chairman requesting the exam and the presbytery Stated Clerk. The Presbytery chairman, in turn, notifies the examinee. A passing score is 75%. If a passing score is not achieved, the examinee is eligible to take a different version of the exam 30 days following the date of the original exam.

¹ Form may be downloaded from www.epc.org/resources/forms
The request for a second exam follows the procedure above. A third attempt is possible, if needed, after another 30 days.

### Theology, Sacraments, and Reformed Tradition Exam

**Scope**

**Theology**: Covers all the traditional heads of Systematic Theology with an emphasis on Reformed Theology

**Sacraments**: Covers the major viewpoints on the Sacraments with an emphasis on the Reformed/Presbyterian view

**Reformed Tradition**: Covers major people and events of church history with a focus on those with major contributions to the Reformed tradition, particularly American Presbyterianism

**Types of Questions**

The exam utilizes a range of questions from true/false, multiple choice and matching to short answer and short essay.

**Suggested Books and Resources for Study and Review**

As the exam covers the broad sweep of Systematic Theology and the Reformed Tradition, a thorough review of notes from seminary classes is a must. Of the many books that cover the material in the exam (see the EPC’s “Reformed Reading List,” pages 6-9), those listed below have been selected as the best in bringing a good deal of material together in one place for the purpose of reviewing for the exam. *Those marked with an asterisk (*) are essential to digest.*

**General**


**Theology**

(Note: Many of the resources listed below also have material related to the Sacraments)


Topics for Review

**Theology**

(Note: Be able to identify the position of the Westminster Confession of Faith when it addresses these topics)

♦ Definitions and biblical support for the doctrines of revelation and inspiration identified with various systems of theology and theologians

♦ Formation of the canon

♦ Definition and biblical support for the nature and attributes of God, both communicable and incommunicable

♦ Major approaches to theodicy

♦ Major views and biblical theology of the providence of God

♦ Classic arguments for the existence of God

♦ Definition and biblical support for the doctrine of the Trinity
♦ Definition and Biblical support for the humanity and Deity of Christ
♦ Major Christological and Trinitarian heresies and the people associated with them
♦ Major conclusions and circumstances surrounding the ecumenical councils and creeds
♦ The “cultural mandate” as viewed in the Reformed tradition
♦ Biblical theology of angels and demons
♦ Biblical theology of the nature of human beings
♦ Covenants of God with humanity
♦ Covenant theology as expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith
♦ Significance of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ
♦ Definition of, people associated with, and biblical support for the major theories of the atonement
♦ Definition and biblical support for the ordo salutis as a whole and in each of its parts
♦ Definition and biblical support for the “five points of Calvinism” in contrast with Arminianism
♦ Relationship of law and grace in the Reformed tradition
♦ Biblical theology for the assurance of salvation
♦ Biblical theology of person and work of the Holy Spirit
♦ Definition and biblical theology behind major schools of thought regarding eschatology

Sacraments
(note: give emphasis to the Reformed/Presbyterian view of the Sacraments)
♦ Views of major theological traditions and their biblical support for:
  • the nature of sacraments in general
  • baptism
  • the Lord’s Supper
Reformed Tradition

♦ Identify and explain the significant events of the Reformation in Europe and Great Britain

♦ Identify and explain the significant theological issues surrounding the Reformation in Europe and Great Britain

♦ Identify the significant events and theological issues in the history of American Presbyterianism

♦ Identify the events and/or writings associated with and the contributions of the following people (positively or negatively) to our faith:

Alexander, Archibald
Anselm
Athanasius
Aquinas, Thomas
Arius
Arminius, Jacob
Augustine
Barker, Frank S.
Barnes, Albert
Bede
Beecher, Lyman
Bell, L. Nelson
Bernard of Clairveaux
Briggs, Charles A.
Bryan, William Jennings
Bucer, Martin
Calvin, John

Cartwright, Thomas
Constantine
Cranmer, Thomas
Dabney, Robert L.
Davies, Samuel
Dickinson, Jonathan
Erasmus
Charles Finney
Fosdick, Harry Emmerson
St. Francis
Gregory the Great
Hodge, Charles
Hus, John
Irenaeus
Jackson, Sheldon
Jerome
<table>
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<td>Jumper, Andrew A.</td>
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<td>Simmons, Menno</td>
<td>Zwingli, Ulrich</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
REFORMED READING LIST
(revised 2008)

THEOLOGY


BIBLICAL THEOLOGY


SACRAMENTS

Glodo, Michael J. “Covenant Sign and Seal.” Available widely on various internet sites including www.thirdmill.org.


REFORMED TRADITION


**OFFICE OF THE MINISTER**


