

APPENDIX B

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING UNITED METHODIST AND NON-UNITED METHODIST SCHOOLS OF THEOLOGY

The Commission on Theological Education implements the University Senate policy regarding the identification, invitation, and review of United Methodist and non-United Methodist schools of theology desiring to educate and train candidates for ordained ministry. Non-United Methodist schools are reviewed and approved by the Senate to provide additional opportunities for training United Methodist clergy in order to fulfill the mission of The United Methodist Church. Effective January 2011, few, if any, additional schools of theology will be invited to join the list of non-United Methodist schools approved for the education of those seeking ordination in The United Methodist Church.

In reviewing individual schools, due consideration will be given to the availability of theological education through United Methodist schools of theology and other approved schools in the region in order to provide for the appropriate preparation of United Methodist students for fulfilling the mission of The United Methodist Church. Preference for approval of non-United Methodist schools will be given to schools of other denominations having ecumenical agreements with The United Methodist Church.

The review of seminaries and schools of theology will employ the following criteria:

- Compatibility with the document “A Wesleyan Vision for Theological Education and Leadership Formation for the 21st Century”
- Freedom of Academic Inquiry
- Opportunity for Growth in the United Methodist Tradition
- Compatibility with The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church
- Racial and Gender Inclusiveness of Faculty, Staff and Student Body
- Academic Quality

Compatibility with the Document “A Wesleyan Vision for Theological Education and Leadership Formation for the 21st Century”

The commission, in its responsibility for the provision of theological education by the General Church, is guided by the document “A Wesleyan Vision for Theological Education and Leadership Formation for the 21st Century.” Approved schools of theology should be able to respond appropriately to the challenges, opportunities and agenda

items expressed in this document. Schools should:

1. Be able to provide formation for sustained, faithful and effective pastoral excellence;
2. Prepare leaders who are people of grace and who are challenged to live as faithful disciples;
3. Provide resources for the teaching ministry of the church both in theological discourse and in the work of catechesis for the larger church;
4. Provide continuing resources for lifelong learning for laity and clergy;
5. Demonstrate a commitment to and presence with the poor;
6. Show an ability to celebrate and honor the multiethnic, intercultural, and interfaith manifestations of a Wesleyan ethos.

Freedom of Academic Inquiry

An uninhibited opportunity to address openly and seriously theological issues being addressed in United Methodist and non-United Methodist schools of theology requires that freedom of academic inquiry be guaranteed for faculty and students. A non-United Methodist school has the right to require allegiance to principles and doctrinal or confessional affirmations which are integral or indispensable parts of its institutional life. However, the school must demonstrate that such requirements neither inhibit nor abrogate free inquiry for faculty and students and are compatible with United Methodist traditions.

Opportunity for Growth in the United Methodist Tradition

Opportunity for growth in the United Methodist tradition requires:

1. Exposure to contemporary expressions of that tradition. The United Methodist Church is theologically diverse. There is an expectation that United Methodist seminarians will be exposed to a variety of theological positions current within Methodism.
2. Effective annual instruction in the history, doctrine, and polity of The United Methodist Church, and in evangelism. The Division of Ordained Ministry provides schools with guidance for constructing courses appropriate to this goal. Such study is a minimal requirement in order to insure that the seminarians will increase in their knowledge of the church in which they will serve.
3. Careful study of the life and thought of those contributing to that tradition. It is expected that the ecumenical experience gained by United Methodist seminarians through their study in a non-United Methodist school shall be supplemented by significant opportunities to study in depth the works of Methodist theologians.

4. Active participation in the life of The United Methodist Church. Seminarians must incorporate field learning in a United Methodist congregation into their study programs. They must also have the opportunity to participate regularly in the worship life of The United Methodist Church. Regular services of worship with United Methodist hymnody and liturgy should be available in the seminary chapel program.
5. Encounters with ministerial leadership consistent with the United Methodist tradition. Seminarians preparing for leadership in the church need opportunities to know mentors who demonstrate the commitments of The United Methodist Church, its connectional nature, its distinctive piety, its Social Principles, and its methods and materials for Christian education.
6. A community of inquiry and formation. The commission shall assess a school's ability to provide United Methodist students with an opportunity for growth in the United Methodist tradition. This shall include discussion and mutual inquiry into United Methodist history and theology. To nurture such a tradition, there must be a critical mass of persons who claim the tradition and an environment in which such an ethos can flourish. Schools and extension centers must demonstrate that adequate faculty guidance, financial support, and library resources are available for United Methodist students. Schools participating in a cluster or consortium must demonstrate their intentional effort to meet the needs of United Methodist students for exposure to and nurture in the United Methodist tradition. Reliance upon other schools within the consortium to provide for the United Methodist students is not sufficient for approval by the commission.

Compatibility with the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church

The United Methodist Church seeks to be responsive to the needs of people, the demands of justice, the challenges of love, and the obligations of power and influence. These responsibilities are set forth in its historic Social Principles.

Racial and Gender Inclusiveness of Faculty, Staff, and Student Body

The United Methodist Church is committed to affirmative actions and initiatives promoting justice and equality among all people regardless of race, gender, or national origin. It is committed to an ecumenical and inclusive community of faith which seeks and welcomes without reservation persons of every race, both male and female. This inclusiveness should be reflected in its faculty, administration and student body.

Academic Quality

As part of its responsibility, the Commission on Theological Education considers the accreditation status and the overall academic quality of schools seeking University Senate approval to educate United Methodist ministers. In so doing, the commission evaluates:

1. Quality of the faculty, including the number of faculty with terminal degrees;

2. Scholarly activity, including publications, of faculty;
3. Curriculum and academic resources;
4. Evidence of exposure to a variety of theological positions represented within United Methodism;
5. Academic quality of the entering student class.

Other Considerations

1. All official transcripts of University Senate approved schools shall identify the courses that are taken as distance education (as defined by ATS Standard ES.4).
2. Every academic year, all schools shall offer courses in United Methodist history, doctrine, and polity certified by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (as provided in *The Book of Discipline 2012*, ¶1421.3b). To fulfill this requirement, a school may choose one of two options. The first option is that a school may employ on a long-term contract at least one full-time UMC faculty member (a) whose specialization and Ph.D. or Th.D. degree are in UMC history, doctrine, or a related field (e.g., systematic theology, church history, or historical theology) and (b) who teaches courses in these fields. The second option is that a school may partner with a United Methodist school of theology to offer the required courses in history, doctrine, and polity. This partnership is understood to be a working relationship between the administration and faculty of the two schools of theology expressed in a Memorandum of Understanding.