**Preparing for Endorsement Interview**

*2021-2022*

*Updated 12/15/2021*

Welcome to the next major milestone in your Candidacy and Seminary Formation!

I invite you to pause for a moment to consider all the people prayerfully tending to and investing in your formation, discernment, and call. Please pray for your candidacy committee as they engage in the holy work of determining readiness and fitness of candidates for positions of authority as church leaders. Know that they are praying for you along with me, your advisor, and so many here at Wartburg!

To be endorsed by your synod and seminary is to have your gifts and progress affirmed as well as to have the confidence of both that you will successfully complete candidacy and seminary and be ready to serve.

One thing to note: you are encouraged to take the lead in the candidacy process. It demonstrates how you manage multi-layered projects (and people). You contact the candidacy committee, your advisor, arrange the meetings, and facilitate good communication.

The ELCA Candidacy Manual found [here](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Candidacy_Manual_2021.pdf?_ga=2.204648025.810330230.1622668933-1684206230.1607372521) is a great resource, especially if you appreciate details and a sense of the big picture.

**Endorsement Components**

1. Essay
2. Supporting Documents
3. Interview
4. Follow up about any issues outlined at Entrance

**Essay**

It is important that you reach out to your candidacy committee and advisor to determine your endorsement timeline in early/mid June.

A best practice is to have talk to your synod candidacy early so you know when to begin a draft of your essay (often late summer/early September). You can then refine and revise your essay in light of your Fall classes until you submit the final draft. This way your endorsement essay best reflects your emerging theological and Biblical understanding of ministry. Check your candidacy entrance decision for any recommendations or requirements associated with your candidacy. You may wish to address the recommendations in your endorsement essay and/or discuss your growth in these areas during the interview.

Provide a copy of your essay to your Synod Candidacy Committee, your Faculty Advisor, and keep a personal copy. Carefully follow the instructions within the first few pages of the Endorsement Essay.

The Endorsement Essay is online at the “essays” tab at [this link](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Endorsement_Essay.pdf?_ga=2.8242939.810330230.1622668933-1684206230.1607372521), the essay is updated annually.

*“The Endorsement Essay is a significant milestone in your Candidacy journey. I encourage you to take the time and space to prayerfully tend to your preparation and writing. Feel free to engage others in conversation and draw on your reading, research, fieldwork, clinical pastoral education, etc. The essay is an experience of self- reflection, marking your theological progress and will be used to shape dialogue with your advisor and committee reps at your upcoming interview. Remember, your call is a journey of discernment ever changing and growing by the grace of God.”[[1]](#footnote-1)*

**Documents**

***Remember: students provide the following to their candidacy committee and academic advisor/interviewer:***

* CPE Evaluations
* Endorsement Essay
* Academic Transcript: request a transcript be sent to synod ([registrar@wartburgseminary.edu](mailto:registrar@wartburgseminary.edu) )
* Any other items requested by the Candidacy Committee.
* Complete a synod [FERPA](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Candidate_FERPA.pdf?_ga=2.14855167.810330230.1622668933-1684206230.1607372521) release for the seminary. This will allow the seminary to communicate with the synod. It is best to provide this approximately 2 months prior to your interview.

**Interview Logistics -** *It is your responsibility to assist in making necessary arrangements for this interview.*

**Timing.** Endorsement interviews are typically scheduled in the fall of the 2nd year of seminary or just short of halfway and after CPE has been completed. However, this varies by synod so please check with your synod candidacy contact for their practice.

*Work together with your candidacy committee and academic advisor to set date and time for the interview. For many synods, the synod takes the lead providing possible dates, but in others you might ask your advisor to provide dates and times first.*

**Panel.** Interview Panel usually consists of your academic advisor with members of the candidacy committee.

**Location.** Zoom (digital platform), at Wartburg (in-person), or, sometimes, at the synod office. Talk with your candidacy committee about their plans for your interview location and be sure to include your academic advisor in setting these plans in place. Academic advisors are not expected to travel for endorsement interviews.

Please note every candidate is responsible for arranging their individual interview--scheduling a room/space/technology for their interview and establishing the mutual meeting time with their faculty advisor (or designee) and their committee reps.

If the interview will be on the WTS campus, students from the same synod may arrange the visit with the committee reps for possible meals together and accommodations. You could offer the possibility of meals and guest rooms on-campus but be sure to reserve them and inform the kitchen if there will be guests for meals. The Synod is responsible for payment of accommodations, travel, meals, etc. for the committee members.

**Interview Snapshot**

The interview should be scheduled for a period of 1 ½ hours.

* **Pre-interview Panel Briefing** (15 minutes)

*Committee reps and academic advisor (Candidate will wait outside the “room”)*

* **Endorsement Interview (**45-60 minutes): *committee reps, academic advisor and candidate*
* **Panel Reflection and Consultation** (15 minutes): *committee reps and academic advisor*
* **Panel Recommendation** (recommendation possibilities are to endorse, postpone, deny - the panel will discuss their recommendation with you and you will have opportunity to ask questions) (15 minutes): *committee reps, academic advisor and candidate*

**Things to Remember**

* *Bring a copy of your essay to the interview.*
* *Talk with your academic advisor prior to the day to touch base and be prepared.*
* *The people in your interview and you are on the same side with a goal of faithfully obeying God’s will.*
* *We need to be challenged in order to grow – constructive feedback can be a gift.*
* *You are a child of God and you are not alone in this.*

**Questions?** Contact WTS Candidacy at [candidacy@wartburgseminary.edu](mailto:candidacy@wartburgseminary.edu)

1. Bishop Amy Current, SE Iowa Synod [↑](#footnote-ref-1)