2024 General Ordination Examination

Scale of General Criteria

Evaluators weigh GOE answers with the following in mind: perception (and analysis) of issues; application of resources; demonstration of knowledge; and articulation of views. These factors are implicit in all the two-level scales used for the entire GOE. Together with the two-level scales for each individual set, these factors give Evaluators clear criteria for deciding how well a paper addresses the questions. The two levels of these general criteria represent proficiency in the area being tested or a lack thereof, in accordance with Episcopal Church Canons III.15.2-4.

Proficient: The response gives evidence of a sound and perceptive understanding of the basic issues raised by the question(s) and how those issues relate to the canonical area being tested. Written presentation is clear and organized with apt use of source material.

Not Proficient: The response indicates largely erroneous, minimal, or no understanding of essential issues in the area being tested or does not answer the question asked. Arguments that the paper offers may be flawed, ineffective, or incoherent. Writing may be unclear, with little, inept, or inappropriate use of sources.

Set 1: Christian Worship

Open Resources

For several decades, The Episcopal Church has admitted all the baptized to Holy Communion, including infants and young children. This represents a significant change instituted in the late 20th century and is not a practice shared in all denominations.

In an answer of approximately 1,000 words, explain why The Episcopal Church teaches that it is normative to admit all who are baptized to Communion. Discuss administering Communion at the time of Baptism to the newly baptized.

The response must cite the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. It must also include at least one reference from one of the following: Episcopal Church canons; relevant statements from Anglican bodies, such as the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church; the General Convention of the Episcopal Church; or the Lambeth Conference; and/or Episcopal Church teaching and commentary on this issue in other publications.

Scoring Rubric

A Proficient answer must satisfy the requirements of all criteria.

Criteria	Proficient	Not Proficient
Understanding of The Episcopal Church's teaching that Baptism provides admission to Holy Communion	Consistent with Episcopal Church teaching in support of admitting all to Communion when they are baptized, including infants and young children Explains relationship between Baptism and Communion in manner consistent with 1979 Book of Common Prayer	Suggests admission to Communion not related to Baptism Suggests additional steps other than Baptism required before receiving Communion Unclear or confusing response
Use of resources	Cites 1979 Book of Common Prayer and one reference from the options provided	Grounds response in materials outside of The Episcopal Church, without reference to 1979 Book of Common Prayer

Set 2: The Holy Scriptures

Open Resources

The lectionary in our 1979 Book of Common Prayer includes the following readings for the Propers for Social Justice: Isaiah 42:1–7 and Matthew 10:32–42. In an answer of approximately 1,000 words, address the texts' perspectives on social justice. Address each text's historical background, its literary dimensions, and its theological implications. Note difficulties or challenges in these texts. Discuss how the texts might prompt actions in support of social justice issues today.

Scoring Rubric

A Proficient answer must satisfy the requirements of all criteria.

Criteria	Proficient	Not Proficient
Understanding of each text	Demonstrates an understanding of each text's historical background, literary dimensions, and theological implications	Demonstrates partial or no understanding of these texts' historical background, literary dimensions, and/or theological implications
Discusses both texts in the context of social justice	Offers a coherent discussion of the texts' perspectives on social justice	Does not offer a clear discussion of social justice in both texts or Offers only personal reflections or Does not discuss both texts
Difficulties or challenges	Notes historical, interpretive and other challenges these texts might pose for readers today	Avoids or glosses over difficulties or challenges
Prompts actions in support of social justice issues today	Includes a meaningful discussion of how these two texts might prompt actions in support of social justice today	Does not discuss how the texts might prompt social justice action today or Offers a perspective on social justice uninformed by the texts

Set 3: History of the Christian Church

Open Resources

The word "episcopal" – as used in "The Episcopal Church" – refers to "governance by bishops." Over nearly two millennia, episcopal leadership has been central to numerous strains of organized Christianity. Episcopal leadership has come to be exercised in the context not only of Church affairs but also of contemporary political and social circumstances.

Part A

Identify one historically prominent bishop of The Episcopal Church who was consecrated between 1810 and 1880, and identify one non-living bishop of The Episcopal Church consecrated between 1946 and the present. In approximately 650 words, describe using historical analysis and insight how each bishop exercised notable leadership in their time – both within The Episcopal Church and in the broader society – and provide at least one concrete example of each.

Part B

Choose either one of the two bishops you selected in Part A, and based on your historical analysis and insight, discuss in approximately 350 words how a newly elected bishop in the 21st century might find in your chosen bishop's life and work a helpful model for today's episcopacy.

Set 3: History of the Christian Church
Scoring Rubric

A Proficient answer must satisfy the requirements of all criteria.

Criteria	Proficient	Not Proficient
Part A Bishop consecrated between 1810 and 1880 as leadership model of their time	Appropriately identifies one bishop as specified and Correctly locates bishop using historical analysis and insight and Provides at least one concrete example of how bishop exercised significant influence on The Episcopal Church at that time and beyond	Overlooks or mischaracterizes time frame for selecting a bishop specified or Limits discussion of bishop to ecclesiastic matters or secular preoccupations or Lacks concrete example of how bishop exercised important influence on The Episcopal Church at that time and beyond or Concludes with inaccurate or inappropriate concrete example
Non-living bishop consecrated between 1946 and the present as leadership model of their time	Appropriately identifies one non-living bishop as specified and Correctly places bishop historically and persuasively describes place in Church and society through analysis and insight and Provides at least one concrete example of how that bishop exercised significant influence on The Episcopal Church at that time and beyond	Overlooks or mischaracterizes time frame for selecting a bishop specified or Limits discussion of bishop to ecclesiastic matters or secular preoccupations or Lacks concrete example of how bishop exercised important influence on The Episcopal Church at that time and beyond or Concludes with inaccurate or inappropriate concrete example
Part B Helpful model for 21st century episcopacy	Deals meaningfully, based on historical analysis and insight, with one of the two bishops selected in Part A by explaining how that historic episcopacy demonstrates leadership qualities that could be inspiring and exemplary for a 21st-century bishop	Reiterates points made in Part A or Misidentifies or inaccurately assesses leadership qualities of selected bishop or Does not mention challenges facing a 21st-century episcopacy

Set 4: Christian Ethics and Moral Theology

Open Resources

A parent meets with you as their rector to express their dismay that their twelve-year-old child has begun using a different name and pronouns and identifies as transgender. The parent indicates that they do not plan either to use the name and pronouns their child has requested or to support further social transitioning (that is, the public use of a new name, pronouns and gender expression). Nonetheless, the parent wants to know how you think about social transitioning in light of Christian faith. What ethical reasoning would you draw upon to guide your counsel toward this parent?

In an answer of approximately 1,000 words:
1. Make a Christian ethical case that would guide a future pastoral conversation with this parent. This should be an example of the ethical reasoning—not a transcript or summary of the imagined pastoral conversation itself.
2. Discuss at least one resource from each of the following three categories:
   a) at least one Scripture passage;
   b) at least one theme or resource drawn from Christian ethics; and
   c) at least one Episcopal Church statement, liturgical practice, or Anglican thinker.

Set 4: Christian Ethics and Moral Theology
Scoring Rubric

A Proficient answer must satisfy the requirements of all criteria.

Criteria	Proficient	Not Proficient
Makes an ethical case	Frames the issue or issues at stake in terms of Christian Ethics	Does not employ ethical reasoning, for instance, offering only a pastoral or clinical (psychological or physiological) argument Offers a transcript or description of a hypothetical conversation rather than ethical reasoning that could guide pastoral counsel
Quality of reasoning	Offers a clear thesis statement well supported by chosen resources	Does not offer a clear thesis by presenting either no discernable thesis or an incoherent thesis statement Does not use the chosen Christian ethical resources to support the thesis or does not connect the resources to the thesis
Use of resources	Uses one example in each of the following categories: 1. A passage from Scripture 2. A theme or resource from Christian ethics 3. An Episcopal Church statement, liturgical practice, or Anglican thinker Makes explicit how the resources are applicable to the case being made	Does not use all the following: 1. A passage from Scripture 2. A theme or resource from Christian ethics 3. An Episcopal Church statement, liturgical practice, or Anglican thinker Does not connect the resources to the case being made or leaves the connection implicit

Set 5: Christian Theology

Open Resources

A parishioner forwards you an email from the Episcopal News Service that includes a quote from a recent sermon by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry: "If it's not about love, it's not about God." The parishioner writes, "I know God calls us to love people, but how am I supposed to love that politician I cannot wait to seewant voted out of office? Their actions harm people!"

In a response of approximately 1,000 words, offer this parishioner a theological understanding of God's love, and the ways God invites Christians to show love in the world. Taking into consideration your own social location and the parishioner's dilemma, discuss Christian love as it relates to forgiveness, accountability and reconciliation. The response must cite the Book of Common Prayer 1979, one 20th- or 21st-century theologian, and only one passage of Scripture. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry cannot be the theologian cited in the response.

Set 5: Christian Theology
Scoring Rubric

A Proficient answer must satisfy the requirements of all criteria.

Criteria	Proficient	Not Proficient
Theological understanding of God's love and how this shapes behavior of Christians	Articulates theological understanding of God's love and describes its implications for Christian behavior	Presents a non-Christian theology of love or only an emotional definition of love or Presents only a theology of God's love not related to the actions of Christians or Presents only a theology of how Christians are to demonstrate love or Omits discussion of love
Supporting sources	Appropriately supports theological understanding of love articulated by referencing the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, a 20th – or 21st – century theologian, and one passage from the Bible	Omits any required supporting sources or Sources cited do not support theology articulated in response
Treatment of parishioner's theological dilemma	Adequately addresses parishioner's theological dilemma, including how love relates to forgiveness, accountability and reconciliation Shows awareness of how social location might affect understanding of forgiveness, accountability and reconciliation	Does not address or superficially addresses parishioner's dilemma or Inadequately or incompletely connects theology of love to concepts of forgiveness, accountability and reconciliation or Lacks or displays insufficient awareness of how a person's social location may impact their view of forgiveness, accountability and reconciliation or Provides a secular/partisan political response, not centered in Christian theology or Inadequately or incompletely connects the theological dilemma to the stated understanding of love

Set 6: The Practice of Ministry

Open Resources

Pastoral Care touches on a wide variety of human experiences and has at its disposal a broad range of unique resources. It can be confused with clinical mental health care (therapy). Drawing on the Book of Common Prayer, Scripture, and/or theology, write a focused answer of approximately 1,000 words on your understanding of the purpose and goals of Pastoral Care as distinct from therapy. Include how your understanding will guide your pastoral ministry. Based on your definition and distinctions, what resources are uniquely essential to exercise faithfully your ministry of Pastoral Care?

Set 6: The Practice of Ministry
Scoring Rubric
A Proficient answer must satisfy the requirements of all criteria.

Criteria	Proficient	Not Proficient
Purpose and goals of Pastoral Care and how that understanding will guide ministry	Clearly describes the purpose and goals of Pastoral Care in theological terms consistent with the ecclesiastical resources cited. Provides description of how that understanding will guide their pastoral ministry	Gives insufficient theological foundation for purpose and goals of Pastoral Care and/or Description of purpose and goals of Pastoral Care is confused, disjointed or erroneous and/or Discussion of how the understanding of Pastoral Care will guide ministry is missing, superficial, or unconnected to previous argument
Difference between Pastoral Care and Clinical Mental Health Care	Aptly recognizes and addresses the practical distinctions between the two disciplines	Describes Pastoral Care in ways that are predominately therapeutic or psychological
Essential resources for pastoral ministry	Mentions some of the resources that are uniquely within the Church Clearly explains the connection between the resources and the purpose of Pastoral Care	Omits or unclearly identifies resources unique to the Church and/or Identifies resources that are not unique to the Church and/or Vaguely or unclearly connects resources to the purpose of Pastoral Care
Use of resources	Skillfully utilizes references from the BCP, the Catechism, Scripture, and/or other theological or pastoral resources	References few if any sources integral to the argument