



OFFICE OF THE DEAN

ST. TIKHON'S ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

P.O. Box 130
South Canaan, PA 18459
570.561.1818, x 102
Steven.voytovich@stots.edu

January 19, 2015

Dear Seminary Applicant:

Greetings from St. Tikhon's Seminary!

As you discern applying to come to seminary, complete our application toward that goal, or are applying now from an application previously submitted, please carefully read the following materials pertaining to your candidacy and the application process. These changes to the seminary application process **as of 2015** are mandated from the newly revised ***Policies and Procedures of the Orthodox Church in America on Sexual Misconduct, approved by the Holy Synod at their Spring 2014 meeting.*** The relevant sections will be included here (**red text**) for your benefit, and you can go directly to **Section 12, p. 33** of the document by clicking [here](#) to see the documentation in full. As St. Tikhon's Seminary is a stavropegial institution, we are seeking to follow these guidelines in full. These changes are being communicated in letter form at the present time as we work to change our documentation and processes to comply with the revisions.

Applicant Restrictions:

(A) Unless special dispensation is granted by the Ruling Bishop no person shall be approved for admission to an Orthodox Seminary unless that person has been an Orthodox Christian for 3 years. (B) No person who has been convicted or has plead guilty to any violation of law involving any type of abuse, and no person who has been diagnosed with Paraphilia specified or not otherwise specified as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, shall be approved for admission to seminary, ordination or received as Clergy into the OCA in any capacity. (C) Adult survivors of child abuse must meet with the Ruling Bishop and submit to a clinical examination pursuant to 12.03 above before being approved for seminary and/or ordination and a criminal records check must be performed as to such individuals. (D) No person who has been removed from his or her position as a Lay Worker as a result of a Final Decision under section 10 of these Policies, Standards and Procedures shall be approved for admission to an Orthodox Seminary or ordination. No person who has been removed from his position as a Clergy as a result of a decision under these or any similar Policies, Standards or Procedures of this or any other Orthodox jurisdiction or Christian denomination may be received as Clergy into the OCA.

Discussion: All applicants need to have been Orthodox for three years at the time of applying to seminary. Those with any convictions with respect to abuse and/or diagnosis of Paraphilia may not apply to seminary. Those who may be survivors of child abuse need to specifically meet with your diocesan bishop as indicated.

Regarding Recommendations:

Each applicant shall have a letter of recommendation from each of his/her parish priest for the **five years** prior to his/her application for the seminary or ordination. Each **Clergy** shall have a letter of recommendation from his hierarch that includes a recommendation of acceptance *and a certification that the Clergy has not been the subject of any sexual misconduct complaint and/or investigation and has no known criminal, substance abuse or gambling abuse history.*

Discussion: In other words, instead of one reference from your current pastor (point 7A of our application), you will need to include references from **all** your pastors you may have had for the past five years. Additionally, if you are applying as clergy, your hierarch’s acceptance letter must include identified additional elements.

Background Checks

The Holy Synod shall direct ORSMA to adopt a background screening process for all persons who seek admission to an Orthodox Seminary ... All applicants must complete an **application form, and complete a criminal records check authorization form.**

Discussion: All seminary applicants will be required to complete an application form and criminal record check authorization form (we will provide) in order that a background check can be completed for where you have resided for the past ten years. Please note that a release is included in the application form. If the *Office for Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations* (ORSMA) requests further information related to the background check, you need to cooperate in responding, otherwise your application process will, by this policy, have to be put on hold.

If you have further questions related to these policies, please contact:

Archpriest John A. Jillions
Chancellor
Phone: (516) 922-0550 ext. 130
Email: chancellor@oca.org

Mrs. Cindy Heise, LMSW
ORSMA Coordinator
Phone: (516) 922-0931
Email: cheise@oca.org

If you have further question related to these policies and the impacts on your application process, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for taking the time to familiarize yourself with these policies in the context of applying to seminary. Please also note that further policies and procedures in this document become relevant at the time of ordination.

Prayerfully yours,



The Rev. Dr. Steven Voytovich,
Dean