



GRADUATE PROGRAM
STUDENT HANDBOOK

2009-2010

(Draft Updated 6/12/09)

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INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

MISSION OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS

The graduate programs at Messiah College are an extension of the College's identity as a Christian college of the liberal and applied arts and sciences with a commitment to an embracing evangelical spirit rooted in the Anabaptist, Pietist and Wesleyan traditions of the Christian Church and a mission to educate men and women toward maturity of intellect, character and Christian faith in preparation for lives of service, leadership and reconciliation in church and society. This is accomplished through a variety of graduate level programs designed to prepare students to enter professions, advance within their profession, or enhance their knowledge or skills.

COLLEGE-WIDE GRADUATE EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Messiah College is dedicated to helping students blend faith with learning in service to the world. Messiah College advocates a bold and disciplined exploration of the world and expects its students to both embrace and participate in that endeavor. At the same time, Messiah seeks to instill in its students a sense of intellectual humility, recognizing that even the most learned persons have limited insight and therefore need the insights of others.

The paradigm under which Messiah College's educational programs are designed is that of liberal education. By raising the right questions, exposing students to multiple perspectives, and encouraging critical thinking, Messiah College seeks to enable its students to respond with maturity to the world's complexities. In addition to nurturing these intellectual skills, the College encourages its students to apply their knowledge to the needs of the world—as servants, as leaders, as agents of reconciliation. Messiah College has a historic relationship with the Brethren in Christ Church. Now expressed in a covenant agreement, this heritage informs the College's programs and activities. The distinctives of this heritage, which is rooted in the Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan traditions of the Christian faith, include emphases on justice-seeking, peacemaking, reconciliation, evangelism, and service. Accordingly, the College encourages and prepares students to act as servants who extend the gifts of grace and peace to a broken world.

While we realize that learning is a lifelong endeavor, Messiah College expects students completing graduate degrees have made progress toward the fulfillment of the following three objectives.

Learning Objectives for Graduate Programs

1. To refine and apply abilities and knowledge common to a liberal arts education that has been achieved at the undergraduate level. These include:
 - a. Thinking logically and creatively, analytically and synthetically, and abstractly and concretely;
 - b. Reading, observing, and listening carefully and critically;
 - c. Writing and speaking clearly and coherently;
 - d. Accessing, evaluating, and using information effectively and ethically;
 - e. Applying basic understanding of geographical, social, political, and religious realities throughout the world;
 - f. Applying significant aspects of the Western social, cultural, political, religious, and philosophical heritage; and
 - g. Becoming aware of how people of different cultures perceive the world, interpret reality, and make meaning.

2. To reflect on and apply Christian beliefs and values to vocation. This includes:
 - a. Exploring the relevance of Christian convictions to contemporary issues and concerns;
 - b. Applying the insights of Christian theology and ethics to complex social and personal issues;
 - c. Evaluating institutional policies and social/cultural practices on the basis of whether they promote peace, justice, and reconciliation;
 - d. Developing a sense of civic responsibility and commitment to work with others for the common good; and
 - e. Making decisions that reflect an ethic of service, a concern for justice, and a desire for reconciliation.

3. To attain specialized knowledge and abilities at the graduate level in at least one area of study. This includes:
 - a. Understanding the foundational content and philosophical assumptions of one's specialized area of study;
 - b. Engaging in scholarship in one's specialized area of study;
 - c. Developing proficiency in one's specialized area of study sufficient to prepare students to enter professions, advance within one's profession, or to continue study for a terminal degree;
 - d. Articulating how faith connects to one's specialized area of study and to career or service options in that area of study; and
 - e. Each graduate program will develop its own program-specific learning outcomes beyond those required of all graduate programs.

PRINCIPLES FOR THE GRADUATE PROGRAM CURRICULUM

Graduate Programs and the College-Wide Graduate Educational Objectives

1. The curriculum of each graduate program is directly and primarily tied to College-Wide Graduate Educational Objective 3 (“To attain specialized knowledge and abilities at the graduate level in at least one area of study”). In addressing this College-Wide Graduate Educational Objective, each graduate program must fulfill the following objectives:
 - a. Understanding the foundational content and philosophical assumptions of one's specialized area of study;
 - b. Engaging in scholarship in one's specialized area of study;
 - c. Developing proficiency in one's specialized area of study sufficiently designed to prepare students to enter professions or advance within their profession;
 - d. Articulating how faith connects to one's specialized area of study and to potential career or service options in that area of study; and
 - e. Each graduate program will develop its own program-specific learning outcomes beyond those required of all graduate programs.

2. The relationship of the three College-Wide Graduate Educational Objectives
 - a. College-Wide Graduate Educational Objective 3 is central. Graduate programs focus on specific disciplinary and professional knowledge, skills and competencies. However, the focus of the graduate curriculum is not limited to this.
 - b. The curricula of graduate programs builds on the liberal arts foundation laid in the student's undergraduate experience (College-Wide Graduate Educational Objective 1).
 - c. Graduate programming is developed in a way that reflects Messiah's identity and mission (College-Wide Graduate Educational Objective 2).

Guiding Educational Assumptions and the Graduate Programming.

Graduate programs are not simply a product of the College-Wide Graduate Educational Objectives. There are a number of ways in which the educational content, stipulated by the College-Wide Graduate Educational Objectives, can be configured and delivered. “Guiding Educational Assumptions”—assumptions related to learning and pedagogical theory—determine the form or shape of educational programming. Graduate programming will be formed and delivered within the following four assumptions.

1. The Importance of Experiential/Contextual Learning

- a. Graduate programs provide opportunity for direct contact or encounters with the phenomena or subject matter being studied, through facilitated and sequenced experiences, occurring in authentic, real-life settings, and requiring the participant to respond with a balance of action, reflection, and application.
- b. Each program is encouraged to
 - i. Integrate service-learning within the curriculum; and
 - ii. Augment theoretical reflection with professional experience through practica, internships, and/or collaborative research.

2. The Importance of Understanding Multicultural Diversity and Racial Reconciliation.

Graduate programs are designed in a way to help students engage in issues related to racism, racial reconciliation, and multicultural diversity for the purpose of nurturing persons and shaping social structures that embody a spirit of hospitality, justice, and reconciliation.

Within the graduate curriculum, both thematic content and pedagogical strategies (e.g. reading, assignments, field trips, guest speakers, etc.) introduce students to a variety of diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and global perspectives.

3. The Importance of Developing Connections between Christian Faith and Learning.

Graduate programs are designed in a way that helps students connect the Christian faith to their discipline of study and professional practice.

4. The Importance of Active Student Involvement in the Learning Process.

Graduate programs require students to assume some intellectual responsibility for their own learning. Programming is directive enough to shape and give form to the educational experience of students, but students are given opportunities to shape their education within the curriculum and under the direction of qualified advisors/mentors. Within each program, students have the opportunity to make curricular choices.

IDENTITY AND HISTORY OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS

While Messiah’s educational emphasis has and will continue to concentrate on undergraduate programming, our identity and mission statements are consistent with graduate education. Graduate programming at Messiah has been developed in ways that are consistent with Messiah’s identity as a “Christian College of the liberal and applied arts and sciences” and its mission of “educating men and women for lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation.” Messiah has very robust and successful professional programs that are grounded in our commitment to the liberal arts and a Christian perspective. Our graduate programming will be an extension of this programming, allowing Messiah to expand its distinct Christian and values-based educational objectives in innovative ways in new contexts.

Messiah is committed to developing master’s level programs that naturally flow from and are complementary to our current undergraduate programming. Each of our programs grew out of current institutional and departmental strengths.

Graduate programs focus on applied programs designed to meet the needs of practitioners in for-profit and not-for-profit sectors. Our programs are designed to help students advance in their careers and are offered in formats that are user-friendly to individuals who are faced with the challenges of balancing finances, family, and career.

Messiah has a very robust culture of scholarship given the fact that it has been and remains a predominantly “teaching institution.” Messiah encourages and supports scholarship with a robust internal scholarship program that includes released time from teaching opportunities. This culture of scholarship positioned Messiah well for graduate programming.

Following the lead of alumnus Ernest E. Boyer, Messiah has a broad understanding of scholarship that moves beyond the scholarship of discovery and incorporates and values the scholarship of integration and application. The types of graduate programs Messiah offers have an applied focus that lends itself well to Messiah’s involvement in the scholarship of application and integration. In particular, the good and extensive work Messiah has put into conceptualizing and implementing the scholarship of application in the form of community-based research with an emphasis on service learning is very relevant to the types of scholarship we expect from graduate faculty and students. In addition, Messiah acknowledges that creative activity as exemplified in the visual arts, theatre, and music is a form of scholarship.

ACADEMICS

ACADEMIC DEFINITIONS

Master of Arts. The M.A. degree is conferred for successful completion of a program generally requiring one or two years of full-time college-level study beyond the bachelor's degree. It is awarded in the liberal arts and sciences for advanced scholarship in a subject field or discipline and demonstrated ability to perform scholarly research.

Master of Science. The M.S. degree is conferred for successful completion of a program generally requiring one or two years of full-time college-level study beyond the bachelor's degree. It is awarded in the liberal arts and sciences for advanced scholarship in a subject field or discipline and demonstrated ability to perform scholarly research.

Master of Music. The M.M. degree is conferred for successful completion of a program generally requiring one or two years of full-time college-level study beyond the bachelor's degree. It is awarded in the liberal arts and sciences for advanced scholarship in a subject field or discipline and demonstrated ability to perform scholarly research.

Track. A prescribed set of courses in a sub discipline of a program or closely related discipline consisting of a minimum of 9 credits and a maximum of 45 credits. Students may complete the requirements for more than one track. The requirements for tracks will be delineated in the catalog. Tracks will be included in official counts or lists of Messiah College graduate programs.

SIZE OF CURRICULUM

The amount of required credit in a program will conform to the parameters and policies established by the State of Pennsylvania, professional standards, and best practices.

DEFINITION OF CREDIT HOUR

A credit hour is a unit of academic work consisting of a minimum of 14 contact hours of classroom instruction, or its equivalent, over the period of the learning session. Given PA State regulations, classes will meet for 14 contact hours of classroom instruction, or its equivalent, for every credit offered. Using this formula, a typical three-credit course would be comprised of 42 contact hours of rigorous college classroom instruction (or its equivalent).

PROGRAM AND COURSE DELIVERY OPTIONS

The graduate programming the College is envisioning is quite different from our undergraduate programming. The delivery options will vary from graduate program to graduate program but each includes some combination of the following features: online and blended course and program delivery, student cohort groups, non-residential components, evening and summer offerings, accelerated schedules and off-campus sites.

ADMISSION TO THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

To be considered for admission to a graduate program at Messiah College, applicants must complete the Admission application and meet all of the stated requirements for the general application as well as the specific requirements for the chosen program.

Admission Requirements

1. Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution
2. Completed Application and Application Fee

3. Official transcripts from all colleges or universities attended
4. Undergraduate cumulative GPA of 3.00 or above
5. Written admission essay (not to exceed 400 words)
6. Two recommendations (professional and/or academic)
7. Resume or Curriculum Vita
8. Any additional material specified by your chosen program

Admission decisions are processed on a rolling or continuous basis. No applicant will be considered until his/her application file is complete.

Messiah College is not certified as an F-1 school at the graduate level at this time. Therefore, only applications submitted by U.S. citizens may be considered for admission to our graduate programs.

The application fee is waived for Messiah College graduates. In addition, the Graduate Program at Messiah College will secure Messiah College transcripts for all Messiah College graduates who sign the release included in the application. Applicants are responsible for obtaining transcripts from all other colleges or universities.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF STUDENTS

Matriculated Students. Graduate students who have fulfilled all of the entry requirements and are moving toward candidacy for a master's degree with full graduate status as described in the official letter of acceptance.

Conditionally matriculated. Students whose application does not meet the criteria for full matriculation, but who appear to have the capability to successfully complete graduate courses. A conditionally admitted applicant must satisfy the conditions of his/her acceptance in order to be reviewed for matriculated status. The specific conditions and length of time permitted to meet the stated conditions shall be detailed in a letter from the Director / Program Coordinator or Admissions Committee of the student's chosen program. No degree will be certified while a student is in conditional status.

Non-matriculated Students. A non-matriculated student is one who meets all of the requirements for admission to a specific graduate program, but who does not intend to pursue an advanced degree at Messiah College. This classification includes students who may be taking graduate courses for transfer credits, personal enrichment, for professional development credits such as Act 48, continuing education or licensing requirements, etc. Students may take up to 15 credits as a non-matriculated student. Subsequent to that, the student must apply to become a matriculated student.

Full-Time Status. Graduate students who carry an academic load of 9 or more credit hours in a semester are considered full-time students and may be eligible for financial aid as full-time students.

Part-Time Status. Graduate students who carry an academic load of less than 9 credit hours in a semester are considered part-time students and may be eligible for any financial aid open to part-time students.

Half-Time Status. Graduate students who carry an academic load of at least 4.5 credit hours but less than 9 credit hours in a semester are considered half-time students and may be eligible for any financial aid open to half-time or part-time students.

TRANSFER CREDIT

Transfer Credits for Incoming Students

This policy has been instituted to ensure that transfer students have done satisfactory graduate level work appropriate for transfer credit. It also provides students with a clear understanding of how much work is needed to complete degree requirements.

1. Up to 20% credits may be accepted for transfer credit provided
 - a. The credits were taken at a regionally accredited college or university
 - i. The credits are graduate level.
 - ii. A minimum grade of B was earned in each course.
 - iii. The credits were taken within the last seven years (see individual programs for exceptions).
 - iv. The credits are not among those that must be taken at Messiah College (see individual programs for restrictions).
2. The procedure for evaluating potential graduate transfer credits is as follows:
 - a. When a student applies, he/she requests the former college to send an official transcript of work to the Registrar.
 - b. The Registrar's Office will provide copies of the transcripts to the Program Coordinator / Director.
 - c. The Program Coordinator / Director will notify the student and Registrar how the credits will transfer. The registrar will update the student's record accordingly.
3. Students currently enrolled who wish to take credits elsewhere must have the written approval of the Program Coordinator / Director.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Academic Advising is an essential process in the college setting. Upon entering Messiah College, every matriculated student is assigned a faculty academic advisor who, through experience, professional background, and example, is qualified to assist the student in planning the coursework for the program of study, in developing strategies for academic success, and in providing guidance and information in preparation for the student's career and life goals.

Academic advisors are available during their regularly scheduled office hours or virtual office hours or by appointment at other times. In addition, a student may communicate with his or her advisor any time by email. A reasonable response time is 2-3 business days.

While academic advising assists students in their academic planning, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to meet the academic requirements for graduation. Each student is expected to meet regularly with his or her advisor to discuss the development and implementation of a plan of short and long-term academic goals. The final responsibility in meeting graduation requirements, however, rests with the student.

REGISTRATION

Students admitted to the College formally register for classes through the academic advisement process. Prior to registration, students must ensure their accounts are up to date with the Business Office and their health records file is current with the Engle Center for Counseling and Health Services. Any student not in compliance with these requirements will be blocked from registration.

Registration materials, including the Schedule of Classes, are distributed to current students around April 1 for the summer and fall semester and around November 1 for the spring semester.

Students meet with their academic advisor to discuss course selections for the upcoming registration. Desired courses are listed on the Registration Request form. This form is signed by the student and his/her advisor. A copy remains with the advisor, and the student retains a copy.

Subsequent to the advisement meeting, the advisor releases the hold on registration via self-serve Banner.

Uniformity of procedure is required to handle the large volume of students and ensure fairness to all students. Advisor's signature is required to ensure the student is taking courses appropriate to his/her major, interests, and abilities. Proof of payment is required to ensure that students do not build up large balances which they are unable to pay. Clearance from the Engle Center for Counseling and Health Services is required to ensure that all health records are complete and accurate for each student in case of emergency.

Drop/Add (Change in Registration)

After the registration, changes of courses to the original schedule should be discussed with the advisor. After the first week of classes, changes in courses require the written approval of the instructor(s) and advisor. The requests are submitted to the Registrar's Office in accordance with the published deadlines.

AUDITING

Students who audit a course are required to meet the requirements set by the instructor. Those who do not meet the requirements will be graded W. (Note: Students should be alerted to the fact that courses taken as audit *cannot* be included for financial aid purposes. Faculty members should encourage those students to contact the Financial Aid Office.)

The procedure for auditing a course is as follows:

1. Declaration of the audit is done at the time of registration through the Registrar's Office.
2. Students may change from credit to audit and vice versa during the drop/add period.
3. The Business Office bills audit credits at the published tuition rate for audits.
4. When the course is complete, the student's transcript indicates the symbol "AU" and the name of the course audit—no credit or grade is given.
5. If the student decides not to attend the course, he/she must drop the course so it will not appear on his/her record

This policy accommodates degree program students who want to broaden their horizons in a field of interest or part-time students who wish to take a course purely for their own interest and do not need to work for graduate credit.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Messiah College expects all students to attend scheduled classes regularly in order to maximize opportunities to profit from a professor's expertise and from interchange with their peers, as well as to contribute to the quality of intellectual interchange in the classroom, whether traditional or virtual. Regular attendance in an online course is expected throughout the duration of the term. A student's presence is evidenced by active and meaningful participation in virtual chats, discussion board assignments, synchronous and asynchronous class meetings, and any other threaded discussions/ assignments required by the professor. Lack of participation may result in a student being marked absent for that class session. Having a substitute participate in the registered student's place is a violation of the College's academic policy.

Punctual and regular attendance at classes is expected except when a student is prevented from doing so by illness, death in the family, or a similar emergency. Individual course regulations about class attendance are left to the discretion of the instructor. Attendance regulations should be conveyed to students at the beginning of the semester and must be delineated in the syllabus.

GRADING POLICY

Grading System. The grading system presently in use can be roughly divided into two major categories: letter grades and auxiliary symbols.

1. Letter Grades. Letter grades carry a quality point value and are used in the computation of semester and cumulative grade point averages (GPA).
2. Auxiliary Symbols. Auxiliary symbols do not carry a quality point value and are not used in the computation of semester and cumulative grade point averages (GPA).
 - a. *W = Withdrawal.* Given only to a student who withdraws from all courses (i.e., withdraws from the College), or from specific courses in cases of emergency during the final third of the learning session.
 - b. *I = Incomplete.* Used only when a student cannot, for valid reasons, complete a course by the end of the session of enrollment.
 - c. *AU = Audit.* Used only when a student wishes to attend a course but not receive college credit or a grade for the work in the course.

Grading Matrix Grading Matrix

Grade	Standard	Quality Point Value
A	This grade is given in recognition of excellent achievement by those at the very top of their class.	4.0
A-	This grade is given in recognition of excellent achievement.	3.7
B+	This grade is given in recognition of excellent achievement distinctively above that expected at the graduate level.	3.3
B	This grade indicates achievement expected of graduate students.	3.0
B-	This grade indicates achievement somewhat less than expected of most graduate students.	2.7
C+	This grade indicates less than expected achievement but somewhat more than minimal meeting of course requirements.	2.3
C	This grade indicates below average achievement and a minimally satisfactory meeting of requirements. This is the lowest grade for which credit can be earned toward a graduate degree.	2.0
I	An "I" signifying "incomplete" is a temporary grade given when a student is unable to complete the work for a course on time because of extraordinary circumstances, such as illness, emergency, or other reasonable cause. This temporary grade does not influence the student's grade point average. To be considered for an incomplete, the student must be passing the course and have completed the majority of the coursework. An incomplete should not be given merely because a student fails to complete all the course requirements on time. The instructor giving the incomplete will establish an appropriate completion date with the student. This date may extend to the end of the semester following the one in which the course was taken. If the work is not completed by the designated date, the incomplete will be changed to an "F" and will be calculated as such in the student's grade point average.	0.0
F	This grade reveals accomplishment that is inferior in quality and is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of course requirements.	0.0

Grade Point Average (GPA)

1. Semester GPA: The GPA for each semester is calculated from the graded courses *attempted* during that semester
2. Cumulative GPA: This is the grade point average for all graduate courses taken at Messiah College.

Incomplete Grades

A grade of incomplete may be assigned if a student is unable to complete the course work (for valid reasons), has a passing grade average and a well-defined plan to complete the remaining course work. Requests for an Incomplete must be emailed to the course instructor no later than the last day of final exams. The completed and signed form must be forwarded to the Registrar's Office no later than the published deadline for grade submission. An Incomplete grade must be resolved by the agreed upon date with the instructor but no later than the last day of classes in the following term.

The procedure to apply for an incomplete grade is as follows:

1. The student presents a valid reason and requests his/her instructor to extend the time to complete the course. If the instructor agrees to assign the grade of incomplete, he/she will ensure the student completes the Graduate Course Incomplete Request Form. The student may obtain a copy of the form online or in person at the registrar's office. A completed copy will be kept in the Registrar's office and the instructor will retain a copy.
2. The instructor will enter a grade of "I" in self-serve Banner. He/she will then be prompted for an explanation. Banner automatically sends an e-mail message of confirmation to the instructor and the Registrar's Office for review.
3. When a student completes the course work, the instructor must contact the Registrar's Office with the student's correct final grade.
4. If a course is not completed within the extended timetable, the incomplete grade is converted to an F. Any exceptions to the following timetable must have the approval of the instructor and the Registrar.

This policy serves as a necessity of keeping grade records up to date, provides for student emergencies and establishes a reasonable deadline to help students avoid doing two semesters' work at the same time. It also discourages procrastination.

Change of Grade

If, after final grades have been assigned and submitted, an error in a student's grade is discovered by the instructor, or brought to the attention of the instructor by the student, the instructor should contact the Registrar's Office and complete the Change of Grade form. All changes of grades must be accompanied by a rationale and be approved by the Registrar by the end of the following semester.

A student's final grade may not be raised by doing additional assignments after the course has concluded or by revising previously submitted assignments.

Grade Dispute Procedures

If a student disputes a grade which has been given in a particular course and it has been determined that the grade recorded was not in error, the student may initiate the grade dispute process. The initiation of a grade dispute must occur within two weeks from the date on which the final grade was reported to the Registrar's Office.

The procedure to appeal a grade is as follows:

1. Informal Discussion Between Student and Instructor. If the discussion results in a grade change, a grade change request form is submitted to the Registrar's Office by the instructor. If the matter is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student is referred to the Program Coordinator / Director.
2. Informal Discussion Between Student and Program Coordinator / Director. The student should informally discuss the matter with the Program Coordinator / Director within 10 days of the student's referral to the Program Coordinator / Director. The Program Coordinator / Director should discuss the concern with the instructor within 10 days of the student's discussion with the Program Coordinator / Director. If the discussions result in a grade change, a grade change request is submitted by the instructor. If the matter is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student is informed that there is a formal appeal procedure.
3. Formal Discussion Between Student, Instructor, and Program Coordinator / Director. At the student's written request to do so, the Program Coordinator / Director should arrange a meeting to discuss the matter with the student and instructor together. The request for this formal meeting must occur within 10 days of the notification to the student of the formal appeal notice. If this discussion results in a grade change, a grade change request form is submitted to the Registrar's Office by the instructor. The student should be informed in writing of this decision. If the matter is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student should be informed in writing of this decision, along with options available to the student.
4. Student Appeal in Writing to the School Dean. If the decision of the Program Coordinator / Director is not to the student's satisfaction, the student may appeal the decision to the School Dean. This appeal must be made in writing, within ten working days of the Program Coordinator / Director's letter to the student. The School Dean shall investigate carefully and render a decision in writing within 30 days, which shall be final.
5. Cases Involving the Program Coordinator / Director. In any case where the instructor is the Program Coordinator / Director, another member of the department will serve in the role of the Program Coordinator / Director in these proceedings.
6. Time line. A final decision must be rendered no later than 70 days after the date which the student initiates the dispute with the faculty member who assigned the grade.

TRANSCRIPTS

The student's permanent record of courses taken and grades achieved comprise the academic transcript. Credits taken at all other colleges and universities are entered as transfer credits and are not computed in the student's GPA.

Request for Transcript

Academic transcripts are issued by the Registrar's Office upon a student's written request and must be accompanied by payment (contact Registrar's Office for fees or see www.messiah.edu/offices/registrar/transcript.html). The student's financial account with the College must be cleared before any transcripts are issued.

The procedure to request transcripts is as follows:

1. The student requests a transcript from the Registrar's Office, using the form provided, accompanied by the appropriate fees.
2. The Registrar verifies that the student's business account has been cleared, mails the transcript, and records the date the transcript was issued.
3. The student is notified if we are not sending the transcript due to an outstanding balance on the financial account.

Transcripts are issued only by the Registrar for reasons of confidentiality and security. The Business Office hold is necessary to provide the College a means of collecting overdue bills.

STANDARDS OF SCHOLARSHIP

Good Academic Standing. Once the student has earned 9 credits, a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 will be required to remain in good academic standing.

Academic Warning. When a student's term GPA falls below 3.00 but the cumulative GPA is at or above the required minimum, the student will be given an academic warning. This warning is not part of the student's permanent academic record. However, it does alert the student to potential difficulties.

Academic Probation, Suspension, and Dismissal

Academic Probation. Students who fail to maintain a cumulative GPA as outlined above will be placed on academic probation. Additionally, students will be placed on academic probation if 1) a grade of "F" is awarded in any course or 2) a student receives a grade of C in two or more courses. Students will be reinstated to good academic standing when their cumulative grade point average meets the minimum requirements and, where necessary, courses are repeated earning a minimum grade of B.

Academic Suspension. Students who fail to comply with good academic standing requirements after one full-time semester on academic probation, or after nine credits if part-time, will be placed on academic suspension.

Appealing Suspension. A suspension may be appealed within the time limit stated in the suspension notification. The student must file a written petition with the Registrar stating the reason for the appeal. Appeals are reviewed by the Graduate Council whose decision is final. If the suspension appeal is granted, the student will be eligible to continue for no more than two semesters on probation. If good academic standing is not achieved within the specified period, the student will be suspended.

Readmission. Students who are suspended for academic reasons, may not apply for readmission to Messiah College for at least one academic year from the date of the suspension. During the one-year suspension, students may not take courses in any graduate level program at Messiah College as a non-matriculated student. In addition, students may not apply for admission to a different graduate level program at Messiah College during the course of the year. When petitioning for readmission, the student must evidence fundamental change that will demonstrate a strong likelihood that he/she possesses the motivation and capacity to successfully complete the requirements of the chosen masters-level program. Readmission is neither automatic nor guaranteed. The Program Coordinator / Director will notify the student in writing about the school's decision for readmission. Students who are readmitted must comply with all of the terms set forth in the reinstatement letter. The reinstatement letter will be filed in the Registrar's Office and become part of the student's academic file.

Academic Dismissal. A student who is academically suspended for a second time is academically dismissed and reenrollment is based upon an appeal to the Graduate Council.

REPEATING COURSE WORK

If a student repeats coursework, the second grade and credits count in the calculation of the student's cumulative GPA. The credits earned for the first grade remain in the term and cumulative calculations until completion of the repeated course. At the end of the term in which the course is repeated, only the credits earned for the second grade are used in the calculation of the student's cumulative GPA and total credits earned. However, the original grade and course will remain on the student's transcript, i.e. both

occurrences of repeated courses will be marked on the transcript. All repeated courses must be taken at Messiah College.

It is the responsibility of the student and advisor to monitor the registration for repeated courses. The student should complete a Repeat Course form at the time of registration to notify the Registrar's Office that a course is being repeated.

Students need to be advised of possible financial aid consequences of repeating courses for which credits have been earned.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS & COMMENCEMENT

Degree Candidacy

Students working toward a graduate degree must file an on-line Application for Degree with the Registrar's Office at the beginning of their last full year in the Program. Applications require the approval of the Graduate Council and the Community of Educators before students are formally admitted to degree candidacy. These procedures are needed to identify the potential graduates and keep the Registrar's Office in contact with them prior to graduation.

Requirements for all Masters' Degrees

1. A minimum of 30 hours of credit
2. A minimum scholarship quotient (GPA) of 3.0 for all work listed as specific requirements for the major
3. The last 80% of the credits preceding the conferring of the degree earned at Messiah College.
4. Completion of a major with requirements as specified under the department of instruction in which that program falls.

Attendance at Commencement

Participation in the commencement ceremony each May is encouraged, but optional, for all eligible masters-level students. All students must notify the Program Coordinator / Director of his/her intention relative to attendance at graduation no later than May 1.

Release of Diplomas

In order for diplomas to be released, the following guidelines must be met:

1. All course work, including approved transfer credit, must be completed and recorded on the student's Messiah College transcript.
2. Students must satisfy all outstanding balances with Messiah College.
3. The Registrar's Office will mail the diploma and a copy of the final transcript approximately 30 days after commencement.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE COLLEGE

End-of-Semester Procedure

The withdrawing student completes a Termination of Attendance Notice form with the Registrar's Office. The Registrar's Office keeps a list and count of students not returning and circulates this information to other offices after the close of the semester.

During Semester Procedure

Students wishing to withdraw from the College before the end of a semester must notify the Registrar's Office of their intention and arrange for payment of all monies owed the college.

The procedure for withdrawing during the semester is as follows:

1. The student wishing to withdraw contacts the Registrar's Office to complete the proper form.

2. The Registrar's Office informs the Business Office and Financial Aid Office of the withdrawal.
3. The Registrar informs other administrative offices, the Program Coordinator / Director, the student's advisor, and the student's professors and withdraws the student from classes.
4. The Business Office in conjunction with Financial Aid determines the student's bill and sends the student a statement of balance due or refund.

Refunds

Refunds for students who withdraw voluntarily or involuntarily are determined according to the following policy. The portion of tuition to be refunded to withdrawing students will be as follows:

Percent Refund	3 week course (business day)	8 week course (business day)	15 week course (business day)	Percentage of Semester Completed
100%	Day 1	Day 3	Day 5	6.7%
75%	Day 2	Day 6	Day 10	13.4%
60%	Day 3	Day 9	Day 15	20.0%
50%	Day 4	Day 12	Day 20	26.7%
25%	Day 5	Day 15	Day 25	33.3%
0%	After Day 5	After Day 15	After Day 25	After 33.3%

The procedure to request a refund is as follows:

1. All requests for drops or withdrawals must be emailed to the Registrar's Office. The date of the email determines the refund date and amount. Notifying an instructor does not constitute an official request to drop or withdraw from a course.
2. Requests for drops or withdrawals after completion of 6.7% of the semester will have a fee of \$10.00, per request, charged to the student's account. After the completion of 13.4% of the semester, a late fee of \$25.00 (per course) will be charged to the student's account if the change is approved.
3. Courses dropped during the first 20.0% of the semester will not appear on the transcript. Courses dropped after the completion of 20.0% and through the completion of 40.0% of the semester will be indicated with a W (withdraw) on the student's transcript. This withdrawal grade will not be calculated in the grade point average. After 40.0% of the semester is completed, students are not permitted to withdraw from courses except in cases documented by his/her physician or employer.
4. For any course that is one week in length or less the student has until the end of the first day to drop the course with a full refund. After the first day, the tuition is non-refundable except for the reasons of 1) illness documented by a physician or 2) employment reasons as documented by an employer, or 3) death of an immediate family member.
5. Lab, music, private music lesson, art studio and all other course-related fees, as applicable, will not be refunded after completion of 6.7% of the semester.
6. Dining Services fee refunds are pro-rated throughout the semester/term based on the length of the semester.
7. Refunds and adjusted bills will be sent to the student's home address following withdrawal.

8. In accordance with federal regulations, when federal financial aid refunds are involved, the amounts are allocated in the following order: Unsubsidized Federal Direct Loans, Subsidized Federal Direct Loans, Federal Perkins Loans, Federal Direct PLUS Loans, Federal Pell Grants, other Title IV aid programs.
9. The term “Title IV Funds” refers to the Federal financial aid programs authorized under the Higher Education Act of 1956 (as amended) and includes the following programs: unsubsidized FFEL loans, subsidized FFEL loans, unsubsidized Federal Direct Stafford Loans, subsidized Federal Direct Stafford Loans, Federal Perkins loans, FFEL PLUS loans, Federal Direct PLUS loans, Federal Pell Grants, Federal SEOG.
10. Institutional and student responsibilities in regard to the return of the Title IV funds:
 - a. Messiah College’s responsibilities
 - i. Providing each student with the information given in the policy
 - ii. Identifying students who are affected by the policy and completing the Return of Title IV Funds calculation for those students
 - iii. Returning any Title IV funds that are due the Title IV programs
 - b. Student’s responsibilities
 - i. Returning to the Title IV programs any funds that were disbursed directly to the student and which the student was determined to be ineligible for via the Return of the Title IV Funds calculation
11. Other financial aid will be refunded in proportion to and along the same schedule as tuition.

This policy has been instituted to establish an official withdraw date, provide a fair and equitable policy for determining refunds for withdrawing students, provide student counseling regarding withdraw implications, and provide a waiting period at no expense to the student.

Grading Policy for Withdraws

Students who complete registration for a given semester will have grades recorded on their permanent academic record. All courses will be graded with a “W” if the student withdraws from the College.

OTHER ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Personal integrity is a behavioral expectation for all members of the Messiah community: administration, faculty, staff, and students. Violations of academic integrity are not consistent with the community standards of Messiah College. These violations include:

1. Plagiarism. Submitting as one’s own work part or all of any assignment (oral or written) which is copied, paraphrased, or purchased from another source, including on-line sources, without the proper acknowledgment of that source. Examples: failing to cite a reference, failing to use quotation marks where appropriate, misrepresenting another’s work as your own, etc.
2. Cheating. Attempting to use or using unauthorized material or study aids for personal assistance in examinations or other academic work. Examples: using a cheat sheet, altering a graded exam, looking at a peer’s exam, having someone else take the exam for you, using any kind of electronic mobile or storage devices (such as cell phones, PDAs, Blackberry, iPods, iPhones, Flashdrives, DVDs, CDs), communicating via email, IM, or text messaging during an exam, using the internet, sniffers, spyware or other software to retrieve information or other students’ answers, purposely disconnecting from the internet to cause a lock on an online exam, etc.
3. Fabrication. Submitting altered or contrived information in any academic exercise. Examples: falsifying sources and/or data, etc.
4. Misrepresentation of Academic Records. Tampering with any portion of a student’s record. Example: forging a signature on a registration form or change of grade form on paper or via electronic means.

5. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty. Helping another individual violate this policy. Examples: working together on an assignment where collaboration is not allowed, doing work for another student, allowing one's own work to be copied.
6. Computer Offenses. Altering or damaging computer programs without permission. Examples: software piracy, constructing viruses, introducing viruses into a system, copying copyrighted programs, etc.
7. Unfair Advantage. Attempting to gain advantage over fellow students in an academic exercise. Examples: lying about the need for an extension on a paper, destroying or removing library materials, having someone else participate in your place, etc.

Education Regarding Academic Integrity Policy

Messiah College is responsible to clearly articulate the Academic Integrity Policy to students by publishing it in the graduate student handbook. Faculty should reference the policy in their course syllabi. However, primary responsibility for knowledge of and compliance with this policy rests with the student.

Procedures for Perceived Violations of Academic Integrity

1. If a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is suspected, the faculty member should contact the student(s) to discuss the incident and determine to the faculty member's satisfaction whether or not a violation has occurred. Either party may choose to have a witness present during the discussion so long as the other is informed of that person's presence.
2. If a student is accused of violating the Academic Integrity Policy, but subsequently the faculty member determines that the student is innocent or insufficient evidence exists to justify further action, the student should be informed of this determination in writing. No report of the accusation or of the faculty/student meeting should be filed with the Dean overseeing the faculty member's Program.
3. If the faculty member determines that a violation has occurred, a report should be filed with the Dean overseeing the Program, and a duplicate of the report should be provided to the student. The report should include the following and will be kept on file until a student is graduated:
 - a. Complete description of the incident including date of contact with the student
 - b. Conclusions and sanctions reached as a result of the meeting
4. The faculty member should keep originals of tests, papers, and other documentation that provide evidence of the violation.

Penalties for Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy

A faculty member may exercise broad discretion when responding to violations of the Academic Integrity Policy. The range of responses may include failure of the course to a grade reduction of the given assignment. The typical consequence for violations will be failure of the assignment. Some examples of serious offenses which might necessitate the penalty of the failure of the course include cheating on an examination, plagiarism of a complete assignment, etc. Additionally, the faculty member should notify the Program Coordinator/Director of the Program and the office of the Dean overseeing the Program. The faculty member should communicate to the student in writing whenever a grade reduction or failure of the course occurs due to a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy. With issues related to computer offenses or misrepresentation of academic records, the case may be referred to the Dean who oversees the Program for processing.

If a staff member or an administrator discovers violations of the Academic Integrity Policy, he/she should contact the Dean who oversees the Program who, in turn, will contact the student.

Penalties for Multiple Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy

The policy of the College is to act, whenever possible, in redemptive rather than merely punitive ways. We believe that simply to ignore an offense is to be neither loving nor redemptive.

Consequently, the following procedure will be followed: If a *second* violation of the Academic Integrity Policy occurs, the student will be required to meet with the School Dean. Suspension of the student or other appropriate sanctions may occur as a result of the *second* offense at the discretion of the School Dean. A student may appeal the decision of the School Dean by submitting a written appeal to the Provost, whose decision will be final.

Appeals Process for Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy

The student may appeal a faculty member's response to a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy provided that the appeal is communicated in writing to the Program Coordinator / Director of the Program in which the course is offered within one week of the receipt of the written notification from the faculty member dealing with the incident. The decision of the Program Coordinator / Director may be appealed to the Chair of the Department (the School Dean when the Program Coordinator reports to the Dean) in which the course is offered.

Cases Involving the Program Coordinator / Director. In any case where the instructor is the Program Coordinator / Director, another member of the department will serve in the role of the Program Coordinator / Director in these proceedings.

ACADEMIC PETITIONS

Academic Policies Petitions

When a student finds it necessary to request an exception to any academic policy, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. Secure an Academic Policies Petition form from the Office of the Registrar or designated channel on MCSquare.
2. Complete the form and obtain the signatures of the student's Program Coordinator / Program Director and academic advisor and return the petition to the Office of the Registrar as specified.
3. The petition is then reviewed and acted upon by the Registrar.
4. The decision of the Registrar will be indicated on the bottom half of the form and copies will be distributed to the student's file, the student, and the student's advisor.
5. If the petition is related to a particular course policy, then the student should also include the signature of the course instructor on the petition.

STUDENT SERVICES

The Campus Bookstore / Textbook Express

All required textbooks and other required classroom materials for each course will be listed in the syllabus and also on the Campus Store website. Students can order their books online directly from the Textbook Express through the Campus Store website and have their orders delivered directly to their residence or pick them up at the College. Return policies will be clearly described on the Campus Store website. MasterCard, VISA, Discover, personal checks, and Falcon Dollars are accepted for purchases.

Disability Services

Students with disabilities requiring accommodation in classes, programs, or services can arrange for accommodations through the Office of Disability Services. This office can be reached via email at: DisabilityServices@messiah.edu or via phone at (717) 796-5382.

Students are required to self identify, present current documentation of eligibility (generally no older than 3-4 years) and specify any needed accommodations. Following verification of eligibility, an accommodation profile is developed with the student.

Students are then provided with a document verifying their eligibility and the accommodations for which they qualify. For campus-based courses, students may submit a copy of their accommodation letter to any instructors from whom they wish to request accommodations. They must discuss with their instructor how the accommodations will be provided. That dialogue should continue periodically throughout the course, especially if further adjustments are necessary. Failure to verify need for eligibility early in the semester may limit the student's options for completing course requirements because accommodations cannot be provided retro-actively.

The college reserves the right to deny an accommodation if that accommodation fundamentally changes the nature of the course, or if it results in lowered course standards. Furthermore, the ADA allows the college to offer an alternative, less-expensive accommodation when that alternative is as effective as the requested accommodation. The college is committed to helping students and instructors find workable solutions that meet student needs while preserving course integrity.

For on-line courses, the nature of the instructional process may require a different set of accommodations than those required for traditional courses. When a student with a disability needs to request an accommodation, the student should contact the Office of Disability Services to verify eligibility, and to describe the perceived barrier. The student is expected to work cooperatively with the instructor and ODS to develop appropriate accommodations when possible. The College will actively work to assure that all course materials are available in a form that assures students full, equal access to content and instruction.

Students who think they may have a disability but who have not been evaluated are encouraged to meet or speak with the Director of Disability to arrange an off site assessment to determine whether their learning difficulties meet the definition of a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act and its revisions. This can be a lengthy process. Office of Disability Services can in some situations offer temporary accommodations during the time when a student is actively pursuing evaluation for eligibility under the ADA. Temporary accommodations are available for a maximum of one semester.

Email Account

Every student is provided with an email account at Messiah College. Because official campus communication may be sent via email, all students are expected to check their email on a regular basis

that is within a reasonable time period from the date of receipt. Under normal circumstances a “reasonable time period” is defined as 2-3 business days.

Emergency Text Alert System

All students are strongly encouraged to sign up for the Emergency Text Alert System. The only cost incurred will be the cost of the text message (this cost is determined by your service provider). This System will alert students if there are any emergencies on campus. This System will provide information that will also be available on the Messiah homepage, e-mail, and announcements. The Text Alert is the fastest way to retrieve emergency messages.

To sign up, go to MC Square Home page. On the upper left hand corner there is a title box “Need to Know”, click on Text Alert System. Type in your cell phone number (here you can add, modify, or delete your number). Also, pick your cell phone provider from the drop down list. Then click on Submit. You will now be registered to receive emergency text messages.

Falcon Dollars

The “Falcon Dollars” plan is a declining balance program that works like a debit card. Money deposited into a “Falcon Dollars” account may be used to make cash-free purchases at various campus locations. All purchases are transacted by a card reader. At the time of purchase, the account balance will be displayed as the transaction is completed. A computer record of the balance in “Falcon Dollars” accounts is maintained by the Falcon Card Services Office. Deposits to an account may be made throughout the semester at the Falcon Card Services Office, Business Office counter, or VTS machines located on campus.

Financial Aid

The administration of financial aid programs is coordinated by the Office of Financial Aid. All inquiries or applications should be directed to the Office of Financial Aid.

Information Security

The Chief Information Officer provides oversight for the College’s information security. This plan complies with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLB Act). The intent is to guard against the unauthorized access to, or use of such information that could result in substantial harm or inconvenience to any student. The details of the College’s Data Security Policies are available through MCSquare (the College’s portal).

Information Technology Services

The Department of Information Technology Services provides support for graduate students as specified in the college’s Online Policies.

Medical Emergencies

Any medical emergencies that arise while the graduate student is on campus should be immediately reported to the Dispatch Office.

Murray Library

A key facility in the College’s educational program is the Murray Library. It contains quiet places for individual and group study; more than 250,000 books, periodicals, and other media, as well as access to myriad Web-based electronic resources; the Brethren in Christ and College archives; Media Services; a computer lab; and the Athenaeum. Membership in various consortia expedites the loan of resources from other libraries.

Reference services are available from Librarians; hours and contact information are listed on the library website. Online course students have access via the Internet to online databases (including full-text articles) and the library catalog. Students can access the library through the Messiah website or via MCSquare or Sakai with their Messiah login. Journal articles not available online can be requested through Interlibrary Loan and will be forwarded electronically to students. Books owned by the library will be mailed to a student's home address. Students may also present their Messiah ID card at various Pennsylvania libraries to check out books from a local library. Students outside of Pennsylvania may visit their local college to see if they offer borrowing privileges. If in the area, students in online courses are always welcome to visit Messiah's Murray Library to do research, check out materials, or place ILL requests.

Parking Permits

Parking permits will not be required for graduate students. When on campus, graduate students may park in the lot of their choice. All motorists, however, are responsible to know and abide by the motor vehicle rules and regulations developed and enforced by Messiah College. The code can be found on the Department of Safety's webpage.

Student ID Card

The Falcon Card is your official means of identification while at Messiah college. It is used for identification purposes and for access to numerous facilities and services on campus. All ID cards are issued by the Falcon Card Services Office. All ID cards are the property of Messiah College. No one is allowed to borrow or use another student's ID card for any purpose. Lost cards should be reported to the Card Services Office during the business hours of 8:00 am to 4:00 pm EST weekdays. If the Card Services Office is closed, a temporary card may be obtained at the Dispatch Office. Lost ID cards may be replaced at a cost of \$15. Temporary cards must be returned to Card Services or Dispatch Office within 72 hours or a charge of \$15 will be assessed to the student's tuition account and a replacement card will then be issued. Lost temporary cards are also charged a replacement fee of \$15.00. Damaged cards may be replaced at a cost of \$5.00. All fees are non-refundable.

Summer Housing

On-campus accommodations are available for graduate students attending a week-long summer intensive course. Arrangements can be made by contacting the Office of Residence Life and Housing.

Summer Meal Plans

Graduate students attending a week-long summer intensive course and residing on campus will also receive a week-long meal plan. The plan includes meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner for the week. Students who are not residing on campus may purchase meals on their own at the dining hall or snack shop using cash or Falcon Dollars. Cooking is not permitted in the residential dorms.

ONLINE EDUCATION AT MESSIAH COLLEGE

The emergence of web-based technology and electronic media has brought exciting opportunities for student learning. It has also provided the flexibility that graduate students desire as they seek to balance home, work, family, and education.

Learning Management System

Messiah College has adopted and fully implemented Sakai as the Learning Management System (LMS) that will support the online education. Sakai is an open-source LMS that has been developed by the Sakai Foundation, a non-profit corporation.

This LMS provides learning spaces for each course that allows faculty and students to collaborate asynchronously through forums, blogs, email, and wiki tools. It also provides the ability for faculty and students to communicate synchronously through a chat tool. In some cases, however a course will use a different LMS when it is pedagogically necessary to use a different system. For example, some courses in Modern Languages are taught through a web-based system hosted off-site by a publisher tailored for this disciplinary focus. The use of a system other than Sakai must be approved by the Assistant Provost/Dean of Curriculum. In addition to the LMS, some courses may use a synchronous component allowing for real time audio, video, shared whiteboard, and desktop sharing.

Technology Requirements

Students in the online program must possess basic computer skills and have regular access to a computer with the minimum system requirements that follow

1. Internet Connection – High speed or broadband required
2. Browser
 - a. Mozilla Firefox 2.0 or higher (recommended)
 - b. Microsoft Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher
3. Operating System Version
 - a. Windows XP (recommended)
 - b. Windows Vista
 - c. Mac should be at 10.4 or better
4. Desktop Processor (CPU): Pentium 4 at 3.0 GHz or faster
5. Laptop Processor (CPU): Centrino (or Centrino Duo) 1.5 GHz or faster
6. Memory (RAM):
 - a. Windows® XP: 512 MB or more
 - b. Windows® Vista: 1024 MB or more
 - c. Mac: 1024 MB or more
7. Hard Disk Space: 40 GB or more of free space
8. CD-ROM CD-RW drive (DVD or combo drive helpful)
9. MS Office 2003 or newer

Some courses will require additional software and/or hardware as it pertains to the instruction of the course. These additional requirements will be clearly spelled out in the admissions materials and in course syllabi.

Technical Support for Students

Messiah's online course website offers links to tutorials on Sakai providing valuable information to students so that they may assess whether online courses are suited to their needs. LMS provides a help tool that is accessible on every page. In addition, within the LMS, students are instructed to join a *HELP (for students)* site that offers tutorials, documentation, and links to supporting resources, which are intended to make using the LMS seamless.

Person-to-person support is available between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. (seven days a week). This support is available via instant messaging, phone, and email. Instructions on accessing this help are provided on the *HELP (for students)* site. Links to this information are also included on the course home page.

Online Policies

This policy is written to assure that these standards for quality online programming are met. It addresses a variety of issues related directly to the development, teaching, and the completion of online courses at Messiah College. Students are responsible for the knowing and abiding by the regulations and standards set out in the online policy, which can be found on the graduate programs website.

Computer Access Policy

This policy applies to anyone who uses the college's computers and networks and articulates the standards of behavior that are expected of all users. A link to the policy can be found on the graduate programs website.

Computer Usage and Copyrighted Works

Students should be aware that the unauthorized sharing of peer-to-peer file copyrighted works, including music, pictures, and movies, is a violation of the Messiah College Computing Access Policy. It is also illegal and may carry significant money and/or criminal sanctions. It is the responsibility of students who are downloading or uploading files to make sure that they do not contain copyrighted works, or that the student has the permission of the copyright holder.

Internet Communications

Messiah College encourages its students to become involved and connected to the community in any way possible. Technologies such as the Internet and cellular phones have provided additional ways for community members to connect and communicate. However, with these additional means of networking and communicating, extra care and diligence must be taken by community members. We encourage students to become aware of the added responsibility associated with these forms of networking and communicating.

Communications on sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Xanga, and LiveJournal— though logins are often required, are public and open communication; they are not confidential or private in any way. Communications on such sites are not routinely monitored by the College. However, as with information available in other public arenas, information found on internet sites is admissible as evidence in student disciplinary proceedings. Examples of this information include wall postings, journal entries, blog postings, photos, comments, text messages, instant messages, and other openly accessible communication. This information may also be considered by the College in other situations where student conduct is a relevant factor.

GENERAL POLICIES

Behavioral Expectations

At Messiah College, we strive to bring all of life under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We believe that a personal faith in Jesus Christ is the foundation for social, intellectual, and spiritual growth; furthermore, the College believes as ethical principles of the Christian faith are applied to life, certain actions are beneficial and others are detrimental to the development of character. The College stresses the sanctity of persons and the significance of Christian community. Although Messiah College does not require a personal profession of faith for admittance, we do expect you to be honest in the preparation and completion of assignments, examinations and field experiences, be willing to participate in meaningful and constructive dialog with your instructors and classmates on matters of faith, and respect the rights and opinions of others who may be different than you.

Messiah College is a drug-, tobacco- and alcohol-free environment. When taking part in any Messiah College-related activity (online or classroom instruction, online or face-to-face group meetings, field experiences, performances, etc.), students are expected to preserve this environment by refraining from the use of such substances.

Respect for Others

Our right to free expression is limited not only by general community concerns, but also by individual needs and biblical standards. Sensitivity to the rights, needs, and concerns of others should be evident in all public areas, including the library, classrooms, residences, athletics areas, lounges, dining room, and campus grounds, as well as in campus publications. Out of respect for the rights of others, the following are prohibited: harassment, including physical or verbal attack upon or interference with a person that prevents that person from conducting his or her customary affairs, puts that person in fear for his or her safety, or causes actual physical injury, or conduct less than a physical attack which does the same; hazing; racial or ethnic harassment or intimidation; sexual assault, harassment, or any uninvited behavior of a sexually explicit nature; a willful interruption or disturbance of the day-to-day conduct of the business of the College; failure to comply with directives of College officials carrying out their assigned duties; possession of hazardous or dangerous weapons or materials; false reports of fire or other dangerous conditions; creation of a fire hazard or other dangerous condition; or other activities which interfere with campus safety, civility, or environmental health.

Grievance Procedure

Messiah College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, gender, age, or disability in its admission or other programs, in accordance with the requirements of Title VI Civil Rights Act, Title IX 1972 Educational Amendments, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, or other federal or state statutes. A student having a grievance regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the Director of Disability Services. A student having a grievance regarding sexual harassment or assault, racial harassment/discrimination, or an unresolved conflict with another student or employee of Messiah College should notify the Graduate Program Director and/or Director of Human Resources. The grievance will be processed in accordance with the applicable procedure. Students with an academic grievance should pursue a solution in accordance with the published academic policies.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, provides enrolled students the right to inspect their “educational records” (defined generally as records, files, documents, and other materials maintained by the College which contain information directly related to the student

and from which students can be individually identified) and to have a right to consent to most types of disclosure of these records.

At Messiah College, educational records include cumulative academic records, grades, course schedules, most student disciplinary records, and most student account and financial aid records. Educational records **do not** include records of administrative or instructional personnel which are personal in nature, in the sole possession of the maker, and not accessible to any other person; records which are maintained by physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, or other recognized professionals or para-professionals, and made in connection with treatment of the student; financial records of parents; or records maintained by the Department of Safety created for the purpose of law enforcement. These records, then, are not available to students.

Students who wish to inspect their educational records should indicate such to the College official responsible for maintaining the particular record. FERPA requires that an appointment be made for the student to inspect the record within 45 days of the date of the request. If, upon examination, the student believes the record to be inaccurate or misleading, the student may file a written request that the College official amend the record. If the official decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the student will be advised of his or her right to request a hearing. A hearing, to be conducted by a disinterested person appointed by the President, will be held within 30 days of receipt of a written request. The student will have a full and fair opportunity to present relevant evidence. A written decision will be rendered within two weeks of the date of the hearing.

A student's educational records will be released to his or her parents only with the written consent of the student or upon receipt of certification that the parents have declared the student as a dependent on their most recent income tax return. Any student who does not want this information provided to parents or who does not want his or her educational records released to parents must give written notification to the Registrar. This notification will remain in effect until revoked in writing by the student.

FERPA permits the College to release "directory information" without student consent to anyone requesting information unless a student instructs the College not to release such information. Directory information at Messiah College includes student's name, home address, campus address, home telephone number, high school attended, campus telephone number, campus email address, photograph (available on the College's internal, secure, online system), dates of attendance, degree for which a student is a candidate, academic major, academic awards or honors, birth date, class year, fulltime/part-time status, and weight and height for members of athletic teams. Additionally, the College may provide lists of student names by religious preference (if known) once each year in response to inquiries by local churches. The College does not, however, release directory information to outside organizations for commercial solicitation. Any student who does not want directory information released must give written notification to the Registrar.

FERPA also authorizes the College to disclose personally identifiable information contained in a student's education records without a student's consent in several specific situations. Some of these are as follows: (1) to comply with a judicial order or a lawfully issued subpoena; (2) to appropriate parties, including a student's parents, in an emergency situation if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals; (3) to officials of another institution in which the student seeks to enroll; (4) to certain federal or state agencies; (5) in connection with financial aid for which the student has applied; (6) to alleged victims of any crime of violence or a non-forcible sex offense of the final results of a disciplinary proceeding conducted by the College against the alleged perpetrator of that crime or offense, regardless of whether the College concluded a violation was committed; (7) to anyone — not just the victim — the final results of a disciplinary proceeding if it determines that the student is an alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence or non-forcible sex offense and

the student has been found to have violated the College's rules or policies; and (8) to school officials determined by the College to have a legitimate educational interest. A "school official" is a person employed by the College in a faculty, administrative, or staff position; a person or firm with whom the College has contracted (e.g., physician, attorney, accountant, National Student Clearinghouse) to perform certain institutional services or functions; a member of the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on a College committee or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a "legitimate educational interest" if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

FERPA provides a student the right to file a complaint concerning alleged failures by the College to comply with the requirements of FERPA with Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202-4605. This policy is maintained by the Messiah College Registrar and was last amended May 15, 2008.

GOVERNANCE

The Organizational/Administrative Structure for Graduate Programs

Messiah College has adopted a decentralized model for administering our graduate programs. Thus, we have not created a “Graduate School” to house and provide oversight to graduate programming. Instead, specific graduate programs will be housed in a department or as a department within one of our five academic schools.

Ultimate administrative review and oversight of all graduate programs, in general, will reside with the Provost. The Assistant Provost/Dean of Curriculum will have oversight of the curriculum and online policy and procedures, and the Graduate Program Manager will coordinate the day-to-day administration of the graduate programs under the supervision of the Provost.

Administrative oversight of particular graduate programs will reside with the School Dean of the school in which a given graduate program is housed. Each graduate program, depending on its complexity and size, will have either a “program director” who reports directly to the School Dean or “program coordinator” who reports to a department chair when the graduate program is housed within an academic department within a school.

The Graduate Council is the governing body that will address curriculum and academic matters for the Graduate Programs. All programming that is approved by the Graduate Council goes for approval to the Community of Educators Senate (Messiah’s chief educational governance body) to review the educational suitability of the proposal and the College Council (Messiah’s chief institutional governance body) to review the proposal’s fit with Messiah’s mission and strategic and financial plan. Once a proposal is approved by these two bodies it goes to the Provost and President who take the proposal to the Board of Trustees for final institutional approval.

CONTACT INFORMATION

GENERAL INQUIRIES

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