

## VII. ACADEMIC POLICIES

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## Academic Assistance

**Academic Advisors.** Each student is assigned to an academic advisor based upon the student's major.

**Support Services for Students.** The University provides a variety of resources to students, including the Office of Academic Accessibility, the Career Center for Vocation and Development, and the Engle Center for Health and Counseling.

**Math Help.** Tutoring is provided by the Department of Computing, Mathematics, and Physics throughout the academic year for students who desire assistance with math, statistics, programming, and physics courses.

- Location and time vary by class; see your Canvas course for details.
- Most tutoring is held in Frey Academic; some virtual tutoring is available.
- During scheduled tutoring sessions, no sign-up is required
- Questions? Contact your course instructor.

**Academic Strategies Courses.** GEST 041 Academic Strategies is offered each semester and is mandatory for provisionally admitted first year students. Highly recommended for students who are on probation or otherwise need help with academic skills.

**The Writing Center.** Any student at any stage in the writing process—from understanding an assignment and finding a topic to composing and revising a draft—may find assistance and encouragement at the Writing Center. Trained peer tutors advise and support student clients who visit the Writing Center, helping them become more confident and adept writers. The Writing Center is located within the Learning Commons of Murray Library and is open Monday through Thursday afternoons and evenings.

**The Learning Center** (located in Murray Library) offers students personal assistance with study skills and teaches the student to apply those skills to the course content the student is attempting to master. The center is available and beneficial to students at all levels of competence, both individual and small group tutoring is offered free of charge. Trained tutors who have excelled in the courses in which they are providing assistance offer tutoring in a number of subjects, including, but not limited to, Biology, Chemistry, Nursing, Spanish, Math, and Music Theory. In addition, tutors are capable of providing assistance with various academic skills such as time management, test-taking, textbook reading, note-taking and memory enhancement. The Center is open afternoons and evenings four days a week, Monday through Thursday, in addition to Sunday evenings. Although some students are faculty referrals, self-referrals are most welcome.

**Supplemental Instruction (SI)** is a program that targets “high risk courses” rather than “high risk students.” The University pays trained Supplemental Instruction Leaders to attend selected class lectures, take notes, read course material, then plan and conduct two 1.5 hour review sessions outside of class each week. The SI review sessions are interactive and utilize a variety of collaborative learning techniques as they combine how-to-learn with what-to-learn. Students acquire effective study strategies as they review course material and prepare for tests. The sessions are not remedial, but benefit all who attend. Statistical data suggest that students who attend SI sessions earn one-half to a full letter grade higher than those who choose not to attend..

**Academic Accessibility.** Students with disabilities requiring accommodation in classes, programs, or services can arrange for adjustments through the Office of Academic Accessibility. Students are required to self-identify, present current documentation of eligibility (generally no older than 3-4 years) and specify 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 accommodation 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.

Students who think they may have a disability are encouraged to meet with the Director of Academic Accessibility. All communication remains confidential. Contact: Ms. Amy Slody, ext. 7258. For more information refer to the Office of Academic Accessibility web site.

**Academic Updates.** When a student's progress in a course is at risk (e.g., low test scores; missing assignments; lack of attendance), the faculty member is encouraged to initiate an "Academic Update." Academic Updates forms are now available on-line to faculty for the purpose of informing students that they are performing poorly or are failing a given course. After the faculty member completes the form, it is submitted and distributed to the student, the student's academic advisor, and appropriate Residence Life staff. This alert is intended to motivate a student to seek the appropriate assistance and to notify those members of the campus community who may be in regular contact with the student.

## Academic Definitions

**Bachelor of Arts.** The B.A. degree is conferred for completion of a program with focus on broad and liberal education in the humanities, arts, social sciences, and sciences. Curricula leading to the B.A. emphasize ways of knowing and approaches to understanding consistent with the liberal arts. B.A. requirements typically promote broad preparation within the discipline and among related fields.

**Bachelor of Science.** The B.S. degree is conferred for completion of a program with focus on in-depth education in the sciences, social sciences, or professional fields. Curricula leading to the B.S. emphasize ways of knowing and approaches to understanding consistent with the sciences and/or professional or pre-professional preparation. B.S. requirements typically promote depth of preparation within a discipline and/or related disciplines.

**Specialized Degrees.** Messiah University may offer specialized degrees such as Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.), Bachelor of Science in Engineering (B.S.E.), etc. Such specialized degrees will be treated as Bachelor of Science degrees.

**Major.** A prescribed set of courses and other requirements recommended by the department and approved by the Community of Educators as a valid representation of the area of study. Generally these courses focus on a specific academic discipline; however, there are some interdisciplinary majors which include work from two or three disciplines. Satisfactory completion of this prescribed set of courses leads to a degree in that area of study.

**Double Major.** Students may complete more than one major within the normal timeline and requirements for each baccalaureate degree. A student pursuing a double major must determine which major is the primary major and which is secondary. The primary major determines whether a B.A. or a B.S. will be granted. Each major must have 24 unique credits. Unless additional requirements are met (see "Dual Degree"), a student completing a double major receives only one diploma and one degree representative of the primary major. The primary major is also the standard by which QuEST General Education, other requirements, and the degree are determined.

A **dual degree** is the concurrent awarding of two different majors each with a different baccalaureate degree type, e.g., a B.A. and a B.S. In order to graduate with dual degrees, the following conditions must be met: each major must have 24 unique credits; the student completes the general education requirements related to each major; and completes at least 30 additional credits beyond the larger baccalaureate degree program. Since Messiah's baccalaureate programs range from 123 to 133 credits, anyone completing two degrees must complete 153-163 credits. Students who complete these requirements will be issued two diplomas, one for each degree earned.

**Subsequent Degree.** See COE Handbook.

**Minor.** A minor is a prescribed set of courses which focuses on a particular academic discipline or area of study. The goal is to allow the student to develop some depth of understanding in that discipline or area of study. Students are not required to complete a minor. To earn a minor, a student must attain a minimum grade point average of 2.0 for the courses listed as meeting requirements for the minor, and at least 12 credits must be unique to the minor. A student may complete more than one minor. At least one third of the course work must be taken at Messiah. More information and the appropriate forms are available through the Office of the Registrar.

**Concentration.** A prescribed set of courses in a sub-discipline of a major or closely related discipline consisting of a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 36 credits. Students may complete the requirements for more than one concentration, as long as there is a minimum of eight unique credits in each concentration. All completed concentrations will be noted in the student's transcript. See department listings for requirements.

**Certificates.** A credit-bearing certificate is a prescribed set of courses leading to a credential that should be focused on a defined set of skills or structured expertise. Often a certificate reflects an emerging area of expertise in demand in the marketplace, or professional development requirements that are necessary to stay current. A certificate does not constitute an entire degree program, but it is a separate credential. As such, certificates are accessible to both degree and non-degree seeking students. Certificates should not be confused with the process of professional certification awarded by governmental and professional agencies for teaching and other fields.

**Emphasis.** A prescribed set of courses in a subdiscipline of a major or closely related discipline consisting of a minimum of 12 credits of requirements. Emphases will not be noted in the student's record or transcript.

**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 University. These violations include:

- **Plagiarism:** Submitting as one's own work part or all of any assignment (oral or written) which is copied, paraphrased, purchased, or generated from another source, including online 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.
- **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, sharing information about exams, using any kind of electronic mobile or storage devices (such as cell phones, PDA's, Blackberry, iPods, iPhones, iPads, Flash drives, DVD's, CD's, photocopy pens) for unapproved purposes, 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, etc.
- **Fabrication:** Submitting altered or contrived information in any academic exercise. Examples: falsifying sources and/or data, etc.

- **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.
- **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.
- **Computer Offenses:** Altering or damaging computer programs without permission. Examples: software piracy, constructing viruses, introducing viruses into a system, copying copyrighted programs, etc.
- **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, etc.

The full policy is published in the Student Handbook and the University communicates the policy to students via the new student orientation program. However, primary responsibility for knowledge of and compliance with the policy rests with the student.

### **Classification of Students**

Students pursuing a degree program shortly after completing high school are classified by year, based on earned credits:

- a. First-Year Student: Satisfaction of entrance requirements
- b. Sophomore: Twenty-four (24) earned credits
- c. Junior: Fifty-seven (57) earned credits
- d. Senior: Eighty-seven (87) earned credits

Students not pursuing a degree (enrolling in courses for enrichment) are unclassified.

### **Conditionally Admitted Students**

Conditionally admitted students are new students who have not met the regular entrance requirements. These students are required to register for a two-credit developmental Academic Strategies course and limited to 14 credits. Conditionally admitted students must meet the usual GPA levels for academic good standing, probation and suspension.

### **Enrolled**

A student is enrolled at Messiah University if they are registered for any credit-bearing course offered by Messiah University as of the first day of class of the term or by an off-campus program affiliated with Messiah University. A student is considered to be continuously enrolled if they are enrolled for consecutive semesters.

Students admitted for limited or special programs designed to meet their particular needs but not leading to graduation are considered non-matriculated, non-degree seeking, or visiting students, depending on the nature of their program.

### **Full-time Status**

Degree-seeking students who carry an academic load of 12 or more credit hours are considered full-time students, charged at the full-time student rate, and eligible for financial aid as full-time students. Audited courses are excluded from the academic load calculation for full-time status. Exceptions are made for students whose disabilities are confirmed by the Office of Academic Accessibility (OAA) as requiring

consideration of this policy. OAA will recommend an adjusted standard of “full-time” for a particular student based on knowledge and documentation of the student’s disability.

*Note:* In order to maintain financial aid eligibility, all students must meet the standard of Satisfactory Academic Progress outlined elsewhere in this catalog and available on the [Financial Aid Office’s web site](#).

## **Part-time Status**

Students who carry an academic load of less than 12 credit hours are considered part-time students, charged at the part-time student rate per credit hour, and eligible for any financial aid open to part-time students.

Students admitted for limited or special programs designed to meet their particular needs but not leading to graduation are considered non-matriculated, unclassified, or visiting students, depending on the nature of their program.

## **Overload**

### ***Policy:***

Any student taking more than 18 credits per semester must first obtain the approval of the student’s academic advisor and the Registrar. Moderate requests for overloads are generally granted if the student has a grade point average of 3.0 or better. Students must complete an Academic Policy Petition available on the Registrar’s Office web site to request such overload. Additional tuition will be charged by the credit hour at the overload rate for each credit above 18.

## **Visiting Students**

Visiting students are technically students who are matriculated at another institution, who have received permission from that institution to attend Messiah University. Visiting students receive their financial aid from their home institution and intend to transfer their Messiah University credits back to their home institution.

## **Credit**

### **Definition of Credit Hour**

A credit hour is a unit of academic work consisting of fifty (50) minutes of instructional time, or two (2) or three (3) such periods of laboratory work per week, throughout the standard 15-week semester. In addition to the in-class work, the student is expected to spend two hours outside of class. For terms other than the standard 15-week semester, an equivalent amount of time is required.

### **Transfer Credit**

Credit for academic work completed at another institution may be awarded based upon the following criteria:

1. The student must arrange for the transfer institution to send an official transcript to the Messiah University Office of the Registrar.
2. Transfer institutions within the United States must be regionally accredited. International transcripts require a third-party evaluation from an organization such as World Education Services (WES), National Association of Credential Evaluations Services (NACES), or Association of International Credential Evaluators, Inc. (AICE).
3. Only those courses in which a grade of “C” (2.0) or better has been earned are eligible for



transfer.

4. Transfer credits are not computed into the student's GPA. The policy on repeating courses in order to improve the student's grade point average does not apply to transfer credit.

5. The number of transfer credits earned and the name of the institution will be indicated on the Messiah University transcript. Individual course titles and grades will not be listed.

### ***Transfer Credit for Military Service Policy***

Credit for experience completed during military service may be awarded based on the following criteria:

1. The student must provide proof of military service, including dates of service and branch of service.
2. Upon proof of service, student may receive two (2) credits toward the General Education Wellness requirement as transfer credit.
3. Transfer credits are not computed into the student's GPA. The policy of repeating courses in order to improve the student's grade point average does not apply to transfer credit.
4. The number of transfer credits earned and the name of the military branch of service will be indicated on the Messiah University transcript. Individual course titles and grades will not be listed.

## **Advising**

### **General Guidelines**

1. Personal student-faculty association provides the small university with unique opportunities to influence students. The concept of faculty as role models takes an added meaning in this setting.
2. All students, new and returning, need to feel that they belong. Faculty advisors can do much to help students acquire and maintain this sense of belonging.
3. The success of an advising program is dependent on the participation of everyone. It is a team effort.
4. Every faculty member is in a position to help students. The potential for each faculty advisor to help students requires faculty accessibility and availability.
5. An advisor cannot make decisions for an advisee, but he/she can be sympathetic, an understanding listener, and can offer various suggestions and possible solutions to the student's questions or concerns. A faculty advisor is commissioned to do an interpretive, preventative, and sometimes a corrective job.

### **Academic Calendar**

The undergraduate academic calendar at Messiah consists of two semesters, one in the Fall, and one in the Spring. These semesters have eight weeks of instruction, a one week break, and eight additional weeks of instruction. There is an additional, optional Summer semester.

#### **Fall semester**

The Fall semester begins in late August and ends mid-December. There is a one week Fall break mid-semester in addition to a Thanksgiving break.

#### **Spring semester**

The Spring semester begins in mid-January and ends late April/early May. There is a one week Spring break mid-semester in addition to an extended weekend for Easter.

### ***May term***

Students may elect to take a 3-week cross-cultural May term course as part of their Spring semester. For those students, the Spring semester ends in early June. Since May term is considered a part of the Spring semester, students are charged additional tuition at the overload rate only for each credit above the 18 credits allowed for the second semester.

### **Summer semester**

Messiah University offers an optional online summer semester. Online courses are offered in two 6-week terms, with different courses offered each term. The summer semester is helpful for students wishing to create space in their fall or spring schedules, or to graduate in less than eight semesters, or to make up a course. Students may take up to six credits in each 6-week term, for a total of 12 credits for the summer semester. Messiah University does not offer institutional financial aid for regular summer classes, as they are offered at a significant discount from the traditional Fall and Spring semesters. For most forms of financial aid, a student must be enrolled at least half-time. Half-time at Messiah University for undergraduate students is defined as at least six (6) credits. The Federal Stafford Loan, or an alternative student loan, is often the only form of financial aid that a student will receive during the summer.

Since Summer Session is not considered a part of the second semester, fees for Summer Session courses are charged independent of fees from the regular academic year.

## **Course Listing and Numbering**

### **Course Numbering System**

Courses are listed by department or discipline, the alpha prefix in the course number indicates in which department and discipline the course is offered. The course numbering is to be interpreted by the following principles:

- a. All courses are numbered at either a 100, 200, 300 or 400 level. These numbers represent a progression in academic rigor and expectation.
- b. Lower-level courses (numbered at 100 and 200) are introductory and foundational and designed for first-year and sophomore-level students.
- c. Upper-level courses (numbered at 300 and 400) are designed for junior- and senior-level students. Upper-level courses –
  - (1) presuppose exposure to the content of a prior course(s) at the “lower-level” and
  - (2) possess an academic rigor and a level of expectation for student work and performance that is significantly greater than for lower-level courses (e.g., demonstrate an advanced level of independence, writing ability, and critical thinking skills in learning difficult content material within various academic disciplines).
- d. The first digit of the course number represents the generally accepted level of the course (i.e., 100-199 courses are first-year level courses).
- e. Students may generally take courses which are at their level or below. Upon advice of their advisor, students may take courses which are one level above their classification.

### **Cross-Listing of Courses**

Cross-listed courses have multiple department prefixes for the same course. Students register for the course under the prefix for which credit is to be given.

## **Majors**

### **Selecting a Major**

A student should select a major no later than the second semester of the sophomore year to allow adequate time for meeting graduation requirements in that major.

### **Declaration or Change of Major**

**Policy:** After having declared a major, students who wish to register for another course of study must obtain the signatures of their current advisor, of the department chair in the major field to which they wish acceptance, and their new advisor, who is assigned by the new department chair. Changing a major must be done through the Office of the Registrar.

#### **Procedure:**

- (1) The student obtains the Change of Major Request card from the Office of the Registrar, obtains the signature of the Department Chair in which the new major is housed, and returns it to the Office of the Registrar.
- (2) The Office of the Registrar makes the change and asks the former advisor to send the student's advisor file (paper or electronic) to the new advisor.

### **Individualized Major**

Individualized majors are designed for students who have special interests that are not accommodated by any combination of existing majors or minors at the University. Students may develop a proposal for an individualized major that combines various academic resources available to all Messiah University students (including external programs). Each proposal must stand on its own as a unique, individual initiative of the proposing student. Students completing an individualized major will graduate with a B.A. degree.

The following guidelines apply to all individualized majors.

- a. Parameters for the Individualized Major
  - a. The individualized major must be between 36 and 72 credit hours chosen from at least two different disciplines offered at Messiah.
  - b. Two disciplines will be considered the primary disciplines and the major curriculum can have no fewer than 12 credit hours from each of these disciplines.
  - c. At least 18 credit hours must be chosen from courses numbered 300 or higher.
  - d. Each individualized major must include a senior-level (400) capstone course. This may be an existing course or an independent study course supervised by one of the faculty advisors.
  - e. Each individualized major must include an existing writing intensive course from the primary disciplines from which the individualized major draws upon.
  - f. No more than two courses can be taken as an independent or directed study.
  - g. The student must meet all the General Education requirements and all other requirements for graduation (e.g., residency requirements, total required credits, etc.). Any proposed overlaps with General Education must be approved by the Associate Dean of General Education and Common Learning and cannot exceed 12 credits.
  - h. In order to propose an individualized major, the student must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0.
  - i. The individualized major may be proposed after the student has completed 30 credit hours. No proposal will be accepted after the student has completed 72 credit hours.

b. Development of the Proposal.

The student will develop a proposal for the major in conjunction with two faculty advisors from the two primary disciplinary areas, with one of these two faculty advisors to serve as the student's primary faculty advisor. The proposal must include the following elements:

- a. A title for the major that does not duplicate the name of any existing majors or minors and clearly captures the nature of the proposed program of study.
- b. An explanation of how the major will enhance the student's personal learning goals and objectives including possible connection with vocational and/or graduate school interests.
- c. Curriculum sheets (similar to those found in the Advising Handbook for existing majors) describing which specific courses will meet the major requirement and which will meet the University's General Education requirements.
- d. A semester by semester plan for completing the required courses. Note that any planned independent or directed study courses must be pre-approved.
- e. The proposed courses must fit together logically and demonstrate the coherence, breadth, and depth which is characteristic of a major. Proposals that simply piece together existing majors and minors are not acceptable.
- f. A statement that clearly explains how each required course satisfies the University's learning objectives for all majors (i.e., CWEO #4) and contributes to achievement of the goals and learning objectives of the proposed major (as articulated in point b).
- c. **Approval Process.** The primary faculty advisor will convene and chair an ad hoc committee composed of the two faculty advisors, the Registrar, and the Associate Dean of General Education and Common Learning to review the proposal. If approved by this committee, the individualized major proposal will be forwarded to the Department Chairs of the two primary disciplines represented in the proposal for review and approval. Following the approval of the Chairs, the proposal will be reviewed by the Dean of the School of the primary advisor for final approval. If approved, it will be officially recorded as the student's declared major and a copy of the approved proposal will be sent, for information purposes, to the Dean of the School housing the other primary discipline. In order to assure prompt processing of a completed proposal, the approval process should take no longer than two months during the academic year from the time it is submitted. In the event that a sponsoring faculty advisor's employment ends, the department chair of the respective department will either supervise the completion of the major or appoint another faculty member capable of supervising it to completion.

## Minor

**Definition:** A minor is a prescribed set of courses which focuses on a particular academic discipline or area of study. The goal is to allow the student to develop some depth of understanding in that discipline or area of study.

- a. Students are not required to complete a minor.
- b. Minors require a minimum of 18 semester hours in a discipline other than that of the student's major.
- c. A student may complete more than one minor.
- d. To earn a minor a student must attain a minimum grade point average of 2.0 for the courses listed as meeting the requirements for the minor.

- e. At least 12 credits of the minor must be unique to the minor (not shared with the major, a second minor or the General Education requirements).
- f. At least one-third of the total credits must be taken at Messiah.

**Procedures for completing a Minor:**

- a. Information about available minors and minor curricular requirements can be found in the catalog, university website or obtained from the student’s advisor or department chair.
- b. Students are encouraged to discuss their interests in a minor with their advisor during registration times. If the student has specific questions, they can contact the chair of the department (or the designee) in which the minor is housed.
- c. Once the completion of all minor requirements has been verified, the minor will be recorded on the student’s final transcript. If, at the time of graduation, a student has not completed the requirements for a minor, the minor designation will be added to the student’s transcript if he or she completes the requirements for the minor within one calendar year of the graduation ceremony at which his or her most recent Messiah degree has been awarded.

**Registration**

**Policy:** During the semester, currently enrolled degree-seeking students may preregister for the upcoming academic semester. (Students register for Spring semester (including the optional May term) in the Fall, and register for the Summer and Fall semesters in the Spring.) Students must consult with their assigned academic advisor and obtain his/her approval before preregistering for classes. Prior to registration, students must ensure their accounts are up to date with Student Financial Services and their health records file is current with the Engle Health Center. Students with a Chapel Hold must receive clearance from the Campus Ministries Office. Any student not in compliance with these requirements will be blocked from registration.

**Procedure:**

- 1. Registration materials, including the Schedule of Classes are available online approximately one week before Academic Advising begins.
- 2. Students meet with their academic advisor to discuss course selections for the upcoming registration. The Advisor and student agree upon the appropriate courses to be taken.
- 3. At the conclusion of the advising meeting, the advisor releases an advising hold enabling the student to register at his or her appointed time. Registration appointment times are generated by Information Technology Services and the Registrar’s Office based on the student’s earned credits and current semester course schedule.

**Rationale:** Uniformity of procedure is required to handle the large volume of students and ensure fairness to all students. A student/academic advisor meeting is required to ensure the student is taking courses appropriate to his or 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 Health Center is required to ensure that all health records are complete and accurate for each student in case of emergency. Obligations with the Campus Ministries Office are an essential component that requires the student’s commitment.

**Drop/Add (Change in Registration)**

- a. Students may add courses through the end of the second week of classes. After initial 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 approval of the instructor(s) and advisor via the

electronic “Drop/Add” form available on the Registrar’s Office web site.. The requests are submitted to the Registrar’s Office in accordance with the published deadlines.

b. Procedure:

- (1) Students contact their advisor prior to changing courses on their schedule.
- (2) Subsequent to the contact with their advisor, students log on to the online registration system (through the end of the first week of classes) to make schedule adjustments.
- (3) Beginning with the second week of classes, all changes to the student’s schedule will be processed through the Registrar’s Office with the electronic “drop/add” form. The approvals of the instructor(s) and advisor are required.
  - (a) Courses may be dropped during the first third of the term and will not appear on the student’s transcript.
  - (b) During the middle third of the semester, a grade of “W” is recorded and appears on the student’s transcript. The withdrawal does not affect the student’s GPA.
  - (c) During the final third of the semester, withdrawals are not permitted, except for medical or other emergencies. Unofficial withdrawals are recorded with a grade of F.
- (4) After the first five class days of the fall or spring semester, a fee of \$25.00 per processed Drop/Add/Withdraw Request is charged to the student’s account.
- (5) Specific deadline dates for course changes are posted each semester on the Registrar’s website. All requests for dropping or adding courses after the published deadlines, due to neglect or failure to follow the procedures outlined above, will be reviewed by the Registrar. A late registration fee will be assessed if the change is approved.

- c. Courses may be dropped during the first third of the term and will not appear on the student’s transcript. Students may withdraw from a course during the second third of the term. Courses from which a student has withdrawn will be indicated with a “W” on the student’s transcript. Dropped or Withdrawn courses do not affect the student’s grade point average. After the first five class days of a semester, a fee may be assessed for each course change requested. Specific deadline dates for course changes are posted each semester on the Registrar’s Office web page.

**Rationale:** Drop/Add procedures emphasize the importance of student responsibility in the advisor/advisee relationship while providing flexibility and convenience to the process. Changes occurring later in the semester ensure students have the opportunity for counseling.

## Special Courses and Credit Programs

### Independent Study Guidelines

Students wishing to explore a particular area of study outside a classroom setting may apply for an independent study. Projects must be carefully designed and directed toward a specific goal under the direction of a qualified faculty member who meets regularly with the student during the study. A faculty member may direct a total of two independent and directed studies during a given semester and three during a given summer. The fee of \$250 per credit applies for independent study.

**Procedure:**

- (1) The student completes the electronic “Application for Independent Study” for each project undertaken. This electronic form is available on the Registrar’s Office web site. A course syllabus must be attached to the Independent Study Application. Approvals from the academic advisor, sponsoring faculty, department chair, and school dean are required.

- (2) The student submits the signed application and a copy of the proposal to the Registrar's office
- (2) The Registrar's office reviews the completed application and, if approved, the student is registered for the course by the Registrar's Office. Once approved, the student, academic advisor, sponsoring faculty, department chair, and school dean have access to the Independent Study Application and supplemental materials through Dynamic Forms.
- (3) Grades are submitted by the faculty member to the Registrar along with other grades at the end of the semester.

### **Directed Study Guidelines**

Junior and senior students who need to complete a catalogued course at a time other than when it is offered may apply for a directed study. Each study must be done under the supervision of a qualified faculty member who will meet with the student from three to five hours per credit hour of the course. A faculty member may direct a total of two independent and directed studies during a given semester and three during a given summer. The fee of \$250 per credit applies for a directed study.

#### **Procedure:**

- (1) The student completes the electronic "Application for Directed Study" for each course. This electronic form is available on the Registrar's Office web site. A course syllabus must be attached to the Directed Study Application. Approvals from the academic advisor, sponsoring faculty, department chair, and school dean are required.
- (2) The Registrar's Office reviews the completed application. If approved, the student is registered for the course by the Registrar's Office. Once approved, the student, academic advisor, sponsoring faculty, department chair, and school dean have access to the Directed Study Application and supplemental materials through Dynamic Forms.
- (3) Grades are submitted by the faculty member to the Registrar along with other grades at the end of the semester.

**Rationale:** To allow students to complete certain catalogued courses at times when they are not normally offered and to ensure that the proper amount of supervision is given to each student completing a directed study.

### **Co-curricular Activities Guidelines**

- a. Students participating in a full session of an intercollegiate sport may register, at most, twice for one credit per season of involvement. However, only one credit may be applied toward the General Education Wellness requirement. Students participating in two intercollegiate sports may apply only one toward the General Education Wellness requirement. A maximum of one credit may be counted as an elective. Credit may be granted only during the semester in which the completion of participation occurs and will not be awarded after the fact.
- b. Students participating in music ensembles register for 0.5 credits during the semester of participation. If the registration is for credit, a pass/fail grade will be recorded.
- c. The editors of the University newspaper, *The Swinging Bridge*, and the yearbook, *The Clarion*, may register for the course ENGL 392 Student Publications Practicum (1). Permission of the advisor is required before enrollment. The course may be repeated for a total of four (4) credits.

### **Credit Earned Through Examination Programs**

Messiah University awards credits earned through the approved testing programs listed below. A maximum of 32 credits may be earned by all forms of testing. (Approved by action of the Dean's Council,

2/8/97.)

### **Advanced Placement (AP)**

Students who have taken university level courses in high school may possibly receive university credit for them by taking the AP Examination of the University Entrance Examination Board, if their high school offers it. Granting such credit may reduce the number of semester hours students need to complete at Messiah to earn a degree. Official transcripts of AP test results should be sent to the Messiah University Registrar's Office for evaluation.

### **International Baccalaureate (IB)**

IB is a curricular program with university entrance examinations which may be taken in any country and recognized in any country. Students who have taken IB courses in high school may possibly receive university credit for them by taking the IB examination. Granting such credit may reduce the number of semester hours students need to complete at Messiah to earn a degree. Official transcripts of IB test results should be sent to the Messiah University Registrar's Office for evaluation.

### **Credit by Examination**

- (1) Messiah University offers a limited number of courses by which students may earn credit for the course by taking a "challenge" exam in lieu of the course. The Registrar's Office will maintain a list of courses which may be challenged.
- (2) Procedure
  - (a) Prior to taking the exam, the student must obtain an application form from the Registrar's Office.
  - (b) The student presents the form to the appropriate department chair who will make arrangements for the challenge exam or designate the examining professor.
  - (c) The student pays the credit by examination fee at the Business Office, obtaining the approval signature showing that payment was made prior to taking the challenge exam.
  - (d) When the exam has been taken, the department chair or examining professor will indicate the grade (Pass/Fail) on the application form and return it to the Registrar's Office.
  - (e) The Registrar's Office records credit on the student's transcript if the examination is passed. If the student fails the exam, no record is made on that student's transcript, and the student will be required to take the courses or credits that were to have been waived by successful completion of the exam. Completion of the course is not required if it was intended to be elective credit.

### **College Level Examination Program (CLEP)**

Students who wish to verify knowledge of college level work in a given discipline may take the CLEP test (Messiah is not an approved test site) and receive CLEP credit on the transcript. These credits are evaluated by the Registrar's Office and may be applied to general education and major requirements. Any student considering CLEP opportunities should contact the Registrar's Office for further information.

### **Department Honors Courses**

To encourage scholarly initiative and in-depth investigation within a limited area of study, Messiah University provides able students with an opportunity to pursue honors courses within their major. Students may qualify for an honors course by 1) earning a GPA of 3.50 for all courses completed at the University to the middle of their junior year and 2) meeting all other requirements as prescribed by the department (e.g., GPA for major courses).

Each department offering an honors course prescribes the nature of the work, the point at which it shall



begin, and whether the credit in whole or in part may be counted toward fulfillment of a student's major requirements. The Department must also approve a student's work for a given semester before permission can be given to proceed with the next semester's work.

A minimum of four and a maximum of six semester hours of credit in honors courses may be earned at the rate of three hours per semester. Only the grades of A, A-, and B, B+ will carry credit. If the honors work is of such high quality as to merit the grade of A, the student will graduate with honors in the discipline, provided he/she has completed six semester hours.

Students participating in the University Honors Program may meet their senior honors project requirement through an approved Department Honors Course.

Graduation with honors in a discipline is recognized at Commencement and is noted on the student's diploma and academic transcript. Only senior students may participate in Department Honors courses.

### **Class Attendance**

Class attendance is important to student learning and hence central to Messiah University's educational mission; therefore, regular class attendance is expected. However, the University recognizes that certain types of educational activities take place outside of the classroom and can lead to conflicts with class attendance. The purpose of this policy is to spell out guidelines for student attendance and absence, in general, and to clarify policy and protocol related to four out-of-class educational activities, in particular. These "University-endorsed" activities requiring University review and approval include:

- Intercollegiate athletic contests (this does not include regularly scheduled practices or club sports)
- Artistic performances (this does not include regularly scheduled rehearsals)
- Academic field trips
- Student presentations at professional conferences

### **Introduction**

- a. Class attendance is important to student learning and hence central to Messiah University's educational mission; therefore, regular class attendance is expected. *This entails physical attendance in the classroom for courses designated as operating in a face-to-face modality.*
- b. However, the University recognizes that certain types of educational activities take place outside the classroom and can lead to conflicts with class attendance. The purpose of this policy is to spell out guidelines for student attendance and absence, in general, and to clarify policy and protocol related to four out-of-class educational activities, in particular. These "University-endorsed" activities requiring University review and approval include:
  - Intercollegiate athletic contests (this does not include regularly scheduled practices or club sports)
  - Artistic performances (this does not include regularly scheduled rehearsals)
  - Academic field trips
  - Student presentations at professional conferences

### **Course Attendance Policies**

Class attendance is important to student learning and hence central to Messiah University's educational mission; therefore, regular class attendance is expected. This entails physical attendance in the classroom for courses designated as operating in a face-to-face modality. However, the University recognizes that certain types of educational activities take place outside the classroom and can lead to conflicts with class attendance. Guidelines for student attendance and absence are provided below.

1. Individual course policies on class attendance are left to the discretion of the instructor (or academic department). Individual faculty members (or academic departments) are expected to

design and implement attendance policies that are supportive of the University-endorsed educational programming outside of the classroom and, to the extent it is possible, provide ways a student can make up the portions of the courses missed due to student participation in University-endorsed educational activities without penalty.

2. Attendance policies must be conveyed to students at the beginning of the semester and must be delineated in the syllabus. Attendance policies must address the following: (1) the extent to which physical or remote attendance is required, (2) the role absences play in the attendance policy, (3) the policy for making up absences, and (4) the impact of attendance/absences on student evaluation.
3. Faculty should be respectful of student schedules and the class time assigned to other courses. Faculty have been given an assigned time for their courses, and it is, in general, expected that instruction will take place within this designated time. Any exceptions must be stated in the syllabus.
4. If an out-of-class requirement in one course conflicts with the class time of another course, the faculty member making the out-of-class requirement must provide other ways for the student to fulfill the requirement of the required out-of-class requirement.

#### **Procedures and Protocol for Absences related to University Endorsed Activities**

1. Steps will be taken to minimize student absences related to University-endorsed activities. Toward this end:
  - a. All athletic contest schedules will be reviewed and approved by the Athletic Director and the Faculty Athletic Representative prior to the beginning of the semester.
  - b. All artistic performance programming will be reviewed and approved by the Dean of the School of Arts, Culture and Society prior to the beginning of the semester.
  - c. All student absences due to student professional presentations will be reviewed and approved by the appropriate School Dean at least one month prior to the activity.
2. All parties involved will be made aware of the scheduled absences well ahead of the date(s) of absence.
  - a. To the extent it is possible, absences due to University-endorsed activities will be identified at the beginning of each semester or term.
  - b. At the beginning of each semester, the Faculty Athletic Representative will send all teaching faculty the approved dismissal times for all scheduled athletic contests.
  - c. At the beginning of each semester, the Dean of the School of Arts, Culture and Society will send all teaching faculty a schedule of approved performances which may result in class conflicts.
3. Upon receipt and approval by the appropriate supervisor, anyone sponsoring the University-endorsed educational activity must complete the “Instructor/ Academic Notification System” that is available in Banner Self Service under the Faculty and Advisors menu two weeks prior to the activity. This form must be filled out in full, and upon completion will be sent to each faculty member that is impacted.
4. Students participating in University-endorsed activities are still required to directly notify in advance the faculty member of any class they must miss. This must be done at least a week prior to the planned absence. Students are also responsible for meeting with the faculty member to

work out the conditions for completing any work or assignments in advance with the attendance policy of the course.

5. No University-endorsed activities that result in student absences may be scheduled on the days before or after any University break or during finals week. Any exceptions must be approved by the Athletic Director, Vice Provost for Student Success and Engagement, School Dean or Provost.
6. It is understood that flexibility in these procedures will be granted in the case of conference and NCAA playoffs, or approved late-developing opportunities for student performance or presentation.

### **Absences due to student illness or critical illness/death in immediate family**

For class absence due to personal illness, it is the student’s responsibility to notify the instructor(s) prior to the class, if possible. If prior notification is not feasible, the student should ensure that instructors are notified by the end of the day on which the classes meet.

For deaths in the family and similar emergencies, students should notify the Office of Student Success and Engagement via [email](#) or call (717) 796-5234 with the pertinent details. The Office of Success and Engagement will notify the faculty of the student involved; therefore, it is important that the student notify the office as soon as possible.

For longer-term medically related absences, students should refer to the policies for Medical Leave, Medical Absence, and Medical Incomplete. Students needing these longer-term medical absences should reach out proactively to the Engle Center. See the Academic Catalog for additional details.

### **Appeal Process**

If a student believes that the above policy has not been followed, he or she can appeal to the Provost.

### **Make-Up Work**

It is the prerogative of the individual instructor to decide whether students who miss a class examination are granted make-up privileges. Any arrangements are to be made between the student and the instructor.

## **Grading Policy**

### **Grading System**

The grading system presently in use can be roughly divided into three major categories: letter grades, pass/fail grades, and auxiliary symbols.

#### ***a. Letter Grades:***

Letter grades carry a quality point value and are used in the computation of semester and cumulative grade point averages (GPA).

<b>Quality/ Characteristic</b>	<b>A – Honor Outstanding</b>	<b>B – Excellent Above Average</b>	<b>C – Good Average</b>	<b>D – Poor Below Average</b>	<b>F – No credit Unsatisfactory</b>
1. Interest and ability to communicate.	Almost always shows creativity, sound judgment, intellectual curiosity and	Frequently shows creativity, sound judgment, intellectual curiosity and	Shows sustained interest and is able to communicate well and understandably	Exhibits interest. Marginal performance in communicating	Shows sub-minimal interest. Does not communicate clearly enough to get ideas

	communicates correctly and clearly	communicates correctly and clearly			across.
2. Performance skills of discipline.	Almost always analyzes critically, synthesizes creatively, uses facts in original thinking, and generalizes logically	Frequently analyzes critically, synthesizes creatively, uses facts in original thinking, and generalizes logically	Usually produces viable generalizations and satisfactorily organizes data	Commits errors in fact and judgment when discussing material and has difficulty going beyond gathering and examining facts and data	Does not comprehend the concepts and ideas which are a part of the course. Does not gather and examine facts and data satisfactorily.
3. Techniques of scholarship.	Shows sound techniques in all projects and uses knowledge effectively	Shows sound techniques in most projects and uses knowledge effectively	Good understanding of techniques in most projects.	Demonstrates minimal competence in the techniques of scholarship.	Does not use sound techniques of scholarship.
4. Meeting requirements of the course in preparation, outside reading and class participation, etc.	Meets or exceeds stated course requirements with distinction in all aspects.	Meets or exceeds stated course requirements with excellence in most aspects.	Meets stated course requirements with adequate performance in all aspects.	Meets stated course requirements with adequate performance in some aspects.	Does not meet the standards and requirements.

### Performance Level of Different Letter Grades

Letter Grade	Meaning	Quality Point Value
A	Honor-Outstanding	4.0
A-		3.7
B+		3.3
B	Excellent-Above Average	3.0
B-		2.7
C+		2.3
C	Good-Average	2.0
C-		1.7
D+		1.3
D	Poor-Below Average	1.0
F	Failure- No Credit	0.0

#### *b. Pass/Fail Grades*

Undergraduate students may take a maximum of four courses on a Pass/Fail (P/F) basis. Pass/Fail courses cannot be used to meet a major, minor, or QuEST/General Education requirement. It must be a free elective. Pass/Fail grades do not carry a quality point value and are not used in the computation of semester and cumulative grade point averages.

P = Pass. Used only for a passing grade in a Pass/Fail course or when a student selects to register for a course on a Pass/Fail basis. The cutoff for pass shall be “C–”. Semester credits in which the student receives a P count toward the total required for graduation, but not toward the grade point average.

F = Failure. The grade of F is a failing grade and is included in the computation of both the semester and cumulative GPA. F applies under the following conditions:

- (1) The student has not done passing work for the term;
- (2) The student does not do passing work (earning a D+ or less) in a course graded on a pass/fail basis;
- (4) The student fails to clear an Incomplete within the specified time frame;
- (5) The student unofficially withdraws from a course, i.e. does not complete the necessary work and fails to make a provision for an Incomplete.

***c. 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).

W = Withdrawal. Given to a student who withdraws from a course(s), or from the University, or from specific courses in cases of emergency during the final third of the semester.

I = Incomplete. Used only when a student cannot, for emergency reasons, complete a course on schedule.

AU = Audit. Used only when a student wishes to regularly attend a course but not receive University credit or a grade for work in the course.

**Grade Point Average (GPA):**

- a. Semester GPA: The GPA for each semester is calculated from the graded courses attempted during that semester. Credit hours in which the student receives a “P” count toward total credits earned but not toward the GPA. Credit hours in which the student receives an “F” are calculated in the GPA.
- b. Cumulative GPA: This is the grade point average for all courses taken at Messiah University.
- c. Factors Affected by GPA:
  - (1) Graduation: 2.0 cumulative GPA for all work; 2.0 cumulative GPA in major requirements.
  - (2) Acceptance into specific programs: Engineering, Nursing, and Teacher Education programs have cumulative and/or major GPA requirements as part of admission into the program. Consult the University catalog for specific GPA requirements for each program.
  - (3) Graduation Honors:
    - (a) summa cum laude: Cumulative GPA of 3.90 or above
    - (b) magna cum laude: 3.60 but less than 3.90 cumulative GPA
    - (c) cum laude: 3.30 but less than 3.60 cumulative GPA
  - (4) Department Honors Courses: 3.50 cumulative GPA
  - (5) Dean’s List: 3.60 semester GPA or higher, based on twelve (12) or more graded hours.
  - (6) Academic Probation:
    - (a) First Year (0 - 23 credits): below 1.8 cumulative GPA.

- (b) Sophomore (24 - 56 credits): below 1.9 cumulative GPA.
- (c) Junior or Senior (57 credits or above): below 2.0 cumulative GPA.

### **Incomplete Grades**

a. Policy: A grade of incomplete is recorded for a student only when, for emergency reasons, the course cannot be completed on schedule. To receive credit for the course, the unfinished work must be completed within four (4) weeks of the last day of final exams.

b. Procedure:

- (1) When the student presents a legitimate emergency request to his instructor and the instructor agrees to it, the instructor records a grade of I (incomplete) in online grading. He/ She will then be prompted by a dialogue box to submit the reason for the incomplete grade. A system generated confirmation e-mail is sent to the instructor and the Registrar's office for review. When a student completes the course work, the instructor must submit a grade change through the Registrar's Office with the student's updated final grade.
- (3) 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 be cleared in advance with the instructor and the Registrar. The incomplete grade resolution deadline is the end of the fourth week following the close of the part of term in which the incomplete grade was awarded.

c. Rationale: This policy serves as a necessity of keeping grade records up-to-date, provides for student emergencies, and yet provides a reasonable deadline to help students avoid doing two (2) semesters' work at the same time. It also discourages procrastination.

### **Auditing**

a. Policy - Students who wish to attend a course but not receive college credit or a grade for their work may audit the course. This option requires students to attend the class on a regular basis. Students are not required to do any of the course work (though they may opt to do so) or take tests. A student must drop the course if he or she decides not to attend the course since it appears on the transcript as an audited course. The option of auditing courses is open to both full-time and part-time students. (Note: Students should be alerted to the fact that courses taken as audit cannot be included for Financial Aid purposes. Encourage those students to contact the Financial Aid Office.)

b. Procedure

- (1) Declaration of the audit is done at the time of registration through Self-Service Banner. .
- (2) Students may change from credit to audit and vice versa during the online drop/add period during the first five days of the term.
- (3) The Student Financial Services 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—no credit or letter grade is given.
- (5) If the student decides not to attend the course, he or she must drop the course within the drop/add deadline so it will not appear on the student's record.

c. Rationale - Accommodates degree program students who want to broaden their horizons into 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 college credit.

## Change of Grade

- a. If after final grades have been assigned and submitted, and 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 submits a "Grade Change Request" via Self Service Banner (Faculty and Advisor Tab). All changes of grades must be accompanied by a rationale and be approved by the Registrar's Office by the end of the following semester.
- b. A student's final grade may not be raised by doing additional assignments after the course has concluded or by revising previously submitted assignments.

## Repeating Courses

A student may only repeat any course in which a grade of D+, D, or F was received. With repeated courses, the second grade and credits count in the calculation of the student's cumulative GPA, but the original grade and course will remain on the student's transcript. All repeat courses must be taken at Messiah University, including any other approved off-campus program, subject to the assessment of course equivalency. (Revised by action of the Curriculum Committee 2/27/98)

- a. It is the responsibility of the student and advisor to monitor the registration for repeated courses.
- b. Both occurrences of repeated courses will be marked on the transcript.
- c. 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 and grade earned for the second occurrence are used in the calculation of the student's cumulative GPA and total credits earned.
- d. Students need to be advised of possible financial aid or athletic eligibility consequences of repeating courses for which credits have been earned. Students should contact the Financial Aid Office for specific information.

## Grade Appeal Procedures

If a student disagrees with 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 appeal process.

### ***a. Informal discussion between student and instructor.***

If the discussion results in a grade change, a grade change request 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 department chair.

### ***b. Informal discussion between student and department chair.***

The student should informally discuss the matter with the department chair. The department chair should discuss the concern with the instructor. 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. The first informal contact with the department chair must be before the end of the semester following the semester in which the grade was earned.

### ***c. Formal discussion between student, instructor, and department chair.***

The department chair should arrange a meeting to discuss the matter with the student and instructor together. If this discussion results in a grade change, a grade change request 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.

***d. Student appeal in writing to department chair.***

This written appeal must be made within ten (10) working days of the written notification to the student by the department chair of the outcome of the formal discussions. Within ten (10) working days of the student's appeal, the department chair must inform the instructor of the appeal and provide a copy of the student's appeal. The instructor has ten (10) working days to provide a written explanation of the student's grade. The department chair has ten (10) working days to convene a departmental meeting (without the instructor or student present) to review the case.

***e. Student appeal in writing to the School Dean.***

If the decision of the department is not to the student's satisfaction, the student may appeal the decision to the dean. This appeal must be made in writing, within ten (10) working days of the department chair's letter to the student. The dean shall investigate carefully and render a decision in writing within thirty (30) days, which shall be final.

***f. Cases involving the department chair.***

In any case where the instructor is the department chair, another member of the department will serve in the role of the chair in these proceedings.

## **Transcripts**

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

**a. Request for Transcript**

- (1) Policy: Academic transcripts are issued by the Registrar's Office upon a student's written request and, depending upon expediency of service requested, must be accompanied by payment (see [messiah.edu/registrar](http://messiah.edu/registrar)). The student's financial account with the University must be cleared before any transcripts are issued.

## **Academic Petitions**

To request an exemption to an academic policy:

- a. The student completes the "Academic Policies Petition" available on the Office of the Registrar's web site.
- b. The student complete the form and obtain the signatures of their academic advisor and department and return the petition to the Office of the Registrar. .
- c. The petition goes to Registrar's Office for review and decision. The Registrar's office communicates the decision to the student via email. The student, academic advisor and department chair will have access to the completed petition via Dynamic Forms.

To request an exemption or substitution for a QuEST/General Education requirement:

- a. The student completes the "QuEST/General Education Policies Petition" available on the Office of the Registrar's web site.
- b. The student's academic advisor and department chair review the petition.
- c. The petition goes to Registrar's Office and/or the Assistant Dean for General Education and



Common Learning for review. The Registrar's office communicates the decision to the student via email. The student, academic advisor and department chair will have access to the completed petition via Dynamic Forms.

### **Alternate Course Request due to Disability**

Qualifying students must register with the Office of Academic Accessibility and be declared eligible for accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act prior to submitting petitions for consideration. There must be a direct relationship between the student's documented disability and the reason for requesting course alternatives.

- a. Secure an "Alternate Course Petition" from the Office of Academic Accessibility (available online).
- b. Complete the form and submit the petition to the Office of Academic Accessibility.
- c. Students who have previously been approved for ADA accommodations will only need to submit the petition. Students not presently ADA-eligible will be required to verify eligibility before a petition will be considered.
- d. If approved, and following approved guidelines for course substitutions, the Director will specify course alternatives as approved by the respective departments and/or the General Education Committee and return the petition to the student.
- e. Obtain signatures of the student's department chair and academic advisor(s) and submit the completed petition to the Office of the Registrar.
- f. Copies will be distributed to the student, the student's academic file, the academic advisor, and the Office of Academic Accessibility.

### **Co-Curricular Eligibility**

#### **Purpose of Academic Probation**

The purpose of placing a student on academic probation is to help the student reorder his/her priorities and time commitments in the direction of greater emphasis on academic studies, in order to help that student attain the University's minimum standards of scholarship as soon as possible. Any full-time student who fails to maintain the standards of scholarship (defined as completion of 24 or more credits per academic year and maintaining a cumulative grade point average of 1.8 while earning the first 23 credits, 1.9 for 24–56 credits, and 2.0 for 57 credits or more) will be placed on academic probation.

The Registrar is responsible for notifying students of their being placed on academic probation immediately upon completion of the grading process for the period of study leading to such status. A student on academic probation will be advised to take a maximum of 14 credits per semester while on probation.

#### **Co-curricular Eligibility during Academic Probation**

A student who has been placed on academic probation shall be ineligible for participation in the following cocurricular activities:

- Intercollegiate athletics and club sports
- Theatre productions
- Music ensembles
- SGA officers
- Officers in any SGA-chartered organization, including team managers of Outreach Teams
- Music Ministry Teams
- Resident Life Staff

- WVMM Radio Station staff

Students placed on academic probation as a result of fall semester grades shall become ineligible for cocurricular participation on the first class day of the Spring Semester. Students placed on academic probation as a result of spring semester or summer session grades shall become ineligible for participation on the first class day of the fall semester. The only exceptions will be those cases where such participation earns academic credit in a college course and that course meets a graduation requirement for the student's major.

Students who are removed from academic probation as a result of fall, spring semester, or summer grades shall become eligible for cocurricular participation as soon as grades are officially recorded for that period of study.

## **Exam Policies**

**Class examinations.** When students miss a pre-announced class examination, the instructor decides whether they will be granted a make-up privilege.

**Final examinations.** The final exam period is an important and integral part of the semester. Students are expected to attend their final exam period at the scheduled time.

**Requests for final exam changes.** Any student having more than eight credit hours of final examinations in any one day may request a change in his/her final exam schedule by e-mailing the Registrar's Office. All requests for rescheduling exams must be submitted to the Registrar at least one week prior to the first day of final examinations. The Registrar's Office confirms the student is scheduled for more than eight credit hours of final examinations in one day. Once the Registrar has approved the request, the student may contact his/her instructor to reschedule the exam at a time that is mutually acceptable to both the instructor and the student. It should be noted that travel arrangements are **not** a sufficient reason for exceptions to the final exam schedule.

## **Notification of Rights under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) provides students who are or have been "in attendance" at Messiah University certain rights with respect to their "education records." A student is deemed to be in attendance at the University if he/she is enrolled and is either physically present for classes or receives instruction through distance learning. Education records may be paper or electronic and are defined generally as records, files, documents, and other materials maintained by the University which contain information directly related to the student and from which the student can be personally identified.

Rights granted to a student under FERPA include:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records;
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA; and
3. The right to provide written consent before the University discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

At Messiah University, education records include cumulative academic records, grades, course schedules, most student disciplinary records, and most student account and financial aid records. Education records do not include records that are created or received by the University after an individual is no longer a student in attendance and are not directly related to the individual's attendance, as well as grades on peer-graded papers before they are collected and recorded by an instructor.

Education records do not include records of administrative or instructional personnel which are kept in the sole possession of the maker, are used only as a personal memory aid, and are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute for the maker of the record; records which are made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in his/her professional capacity, made or maintained only in connection with treatment of the student, and disclosed only to individuals providing the treatment; financial records of parents; or records created and maintained by the Department of Safety for the purpose of law enforcement. These records, then, may not be inspected by students without the consent of the custodian of the records.

Students who wish to inspect their education records should indicate such to the University 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 University 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.

Except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent, a student's education records will be released to his or her parents or designee only with the written consent of the student or upon receipt of certification that the individuals have claimed the student as a dependent on their most recent income tax return. Any student who does not want his or her education records released to parents/guardians must give written notification to the Registrar. This notification will remain in effect until revoked in writing by the student.

FERPA permits (but does not require) the University to release "directory information" without student consent to anyone requesting information unless a student instructs the University not to release such information. Directory information means information contained in the education record of a student that would not be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Directory information at Messiah University includes a student's name, home address, campus address, all telephone numbers on record, high school attended, campus e-mail address, photograph (available on the University's internal, secure, online system), dates of attendance, degree for which a student is a candidate, academic major and minor, academic advisor, academic awards or honors, class year, full-time/part-time status, and weight and height for members of athletic teams. Directory information does not include a student's social security number or student identification number. Without student consent, a student's social security number or student identification number may not be used by itself to authenticate identity or to gain access to education records.

The University may provide lists of student names by religious preference (if known) once each year in response to inquiries by local churches. The University does not release directory information to outside organizations for commercial solicitation.

Any student who does not want directory information released must indicate as such on the Directory Profile, located on the Personal Information tab in Self Service Banner. You can complete this information anytime. This profile will be effective until rescinded by the student. The University will not disclose directory information of a former student if the student instructed the University not to release directory information while he/she was in attendance.

FERPA authorizes the University to disclose personally identifiable information from education records without a student's consent to appropriate parties, including parents/guardians of an eligible student (even if the student is not a dependent for income tax purposes), in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals. In making

this determination, the University may take into account the totality of the circumstances pertaining to a threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals. If the University determines that there is an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals, it may disclose information from education records to any person whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals. The University must keep a record of the threat, the basis for its determination, and the names of the parties to whom the information was disclosed.

FERPA also authorizes the University to disclose personally identifiable information from education records without a student's consent in several other specific situations. Some of these are as follows: (1) to comply with a judicial order or a lawfully issued subpoena, including an ex parte court order under the USA Patriot Act; (2) to another institution that has requested the records and in which the student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer; (3) to designated federal or state agencies; (4) in connection with financial aid for which the student has applied; (5) 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 University against the alleged perpetrator of that crime or offense, regardless of whether the University concluded a violation was committed; (6) 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 University's rules or policies; (7) information concerning a student who is required to register as a sex offender provided under a state sex offender registration and campus community notification program; (8) to organizations conducting studies for or on behalf of the University for purposes of developing, validating, or administering predictive tests, administering student aid programs, or improving instruction; and (9) to school officials determined by the University to have a legitimate educational interest.

A "school official" is a person employed by the University in a faculty, administrative or staff position, or a contractor, consultant, volunteer, or other party to whom the University has outsourced institutional services or functions. The contractor, consultant, volunteer, or outside service provider may be considered a school official under this paragraph provided that the outside party (1) performs an institutional service or function for which the University would otherwise use employees; (2) is under the direct control of the University with respect to the use and maintenance of education records; and (3) is subject to FERPA requirements governing the use and re-disclosure of personally identifiable information from education records.

A "school official" may also be a member of the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on a University 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.

The University will use reasonable methods to identify and authenticate the identity of parents, students, school officials, and any other parties to whom it discloses education records. It will ensure that a school official obtains access to only those education records in which he/she has a legitimate educational interest.

Academic information will be released when a FERPA Release Form is completed and returned to the Registrar's Office, Messiah University Suite 3007, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055 and the student has set-up a privacy word in the Challenge Response System (<http://www.messiah.edu/crs>) and shared that word with the individual/s noted on the FERPA release.

FERPA provides a student the right to file a complaint concerning alleged failures by the University to comply with the requirements of FERPA with Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202. This policy is maintained by the Messiah University Registrar and was last amended July 2017.

## **PARENTAL NOTIFICATION POLICY**

Messiah University may elect to notify the parents/guardians of students in the event of serious health concerns such as illness, injury, or hospitalization. As noted above, the University may notify a student's parents or guardians in the event of an emergency when it is deemed to be necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons even if the student is not a dependent for income tax purposes.

Messiah University may also notify parents/guardians of students under the age of 21 for disciplinary violations related to alcohol or controlled substances or when a student is suspended or expelled, even if the student is not a dependent for income tax purposes. In disciplinary matters, parents/guardians are notified only after students are determined to be responsible for a violation of University rules or standards. In all matters, the context of individual circumstances is considered when deciding whether to contact parents/guardians. When possible, students will be given the opportunity and encouraged to discuss the situation with their parents/guardians prior to the institution's notification.