

COE Handbook: Section Ten

Academic Policies for the School of Graduate & Professional Studies

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PART I: GRADUATE ACADEMIC POLICIES

A. Academic Integrity

1. Policy

Violations of academic integrity are not consistent with the community standards of Messiah University. Seven types of academic integrity violations are identified and defined below. Each definition is followed by select examples, i.e., the examples are representative, but do not constitute an exhaustive list of possible violations.

- a. 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 digital sources, without the proper acknowledgment of that source. Examples: misrepresenting another's work as your own; failing to cite a reference; failing to use quotation marks where appropriate.
- b. Self-Plagiarism
The reuse of significant, identical, or nearly identical portions of one's own work without acknowledging that one is doing so (by citing the original work) or without the instructor's permission to do so. Examples: Reusing portions of a previously written text, paper, or article (published or unpublished text); republishing or reusing the same paper that is published elsewhere without notifying the reader or publisher of the journal.
- c. Cheating
Attempting to use or using unauthorized material, study aids, or technologies for assistance in examinations or other academic work. Examples: using a cheat sheet; looking at a peer's exam; having someone else take the exam for you; using an electronic device to access information during an exam; getting assistance via email or text messaging during an exam; purposely disconnecting from the internet to cause a lock on an online exam; utilizing artificial intelligence technology to complete an assignment in a way that hasn't been authorized by the instructor.
- d. Fabrication
Submitting altered or contrived information in any academic exercise. Examples: falsifying sources and/or data; inflating observation hours.
- e. Misrepresentation of Academic Records
Tampering with any portion of a student's record. Example: altering a graded exam; forging a signature on a registration form or change of grade form on paper or via electronic means.
- f. Unfair Advantage
Attempting to gain an unfair 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.
- g. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty

Helping another individual violate this academic integrity 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; sharing a past exam or quiz with another student.

The violations listed above represent a university-wide standard for academic integrity. Departments and programs may identify additional academic integrity standards by which their students must abide, as long as these additional standards align with the ones listed above. Any additional standards to which students in a given course or program must adhere must be clearly identified in the department/program course syllabi or the department/program handbook. With respect to their own courses, individual instructors may elaborate on the application of this policy in ways that are suitable to their particular courses.

2. Education Regarding Academic Integrity Policy

Messiah University is responsible to articulate the Academic Integrity Policy to students by publishing it in the academic catalog. Instructors should reference the policy in their course syllabi. However, primary responsibility for knowledge of and compliance with this policy rests with the student.

3. Procedures for Perceived Violations of Academic Integrity

- a. If a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is suspected, the instructor should discuss the incident with the student(s) and determine to the instructor's satisfaction whether or not a violation has occurred.
- b. If the instructor determines that it is more likely than not that the student is innocent, the student should be informed of this determination in writing. No report of the incident or of the instructor/student meeting should be filed with the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies.
- c. If the instructor determines that it is more likely than not that a violation has occurred, they should complete an Academic Integrity Violation Report, available on FalconLink, and submit the report as outlined on the first page of the form. The formal report should include a complete description of the incident, including date of the violation, the nature or type of the violation, and the nature and type of evidence. The formal report should also include appropriate sanctions (see below). The Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional studies will send copies of the instructor's report to the student's advisor(s). In the event a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is suspected by the Director who also serves as the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies, the Provost will serve in the dean's role as described in the Academic Integrity violation and appeal policy.
- d. The instructor should keep originals of tests, papers, etc., that provide evidence of the violation; when the case has concluded, those records should be sent to the Registrar's Office and should not be retained by the instructor.
- e. With issues related to misrepresentation of academic records, the case may be referred to the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies for processing.

- f. If a staff member or an administrator discovers violations of the Academic Integrity Policy, they should contact the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies, who will contact the student.
- g. The student may appeal in writing to the graduate program in which the course is offered. A student's intent to appeal an instructor's response to a violation must be communicated to the program director in writing within one week of the receipt of the written notification from the instructor dealing with the incident. The instructor filing the initial report of a violation should be recused from the program committee handling the appeal. The program committee should be comprised of faculty members from its own graduate program and include at least three individuals. In the event a program has fewer than three faculty members, directors of other graduate programs will supplement the existing group in order to reach a minimum of three committee members hearing a student appeal.
- h. The student may appeal the decision of the academic department in writing to the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies, whose decision will be final. In the event the graduate program processing an appeal is also a graduate program that is directed by the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies, the student may appeal the decision to the Provost.
- i. When the appeal process ends, or the deadline for making an appeal has passed, the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies will notify the Registrar and determine if this is the first or second violation.

4. Procedures for Multiple or Egregious Violations of Academic Integrity

- a. If the student has committed two or more violations of academic integrity, or if the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies determines that the violation is egregious, the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies will meet with the student who has committed the violation. Unless the violation is egregious, this meeting will take place after the appeal process ends.
- b. The Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies will consult with the student's advisor and with the Director of the student's program of study. The Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies will determine appropriate sanctions (e.g., disciplinary probation, disciplinary suspension, or, in consultation with the Vice Provost for Student Success and Engagement, suspension from cocurricular activities).
- c. The Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies will notify the student in writing of the sanctions determined and send copies to the student's advisor(s) and to the Director of the student's program of study.
- d. The student may appeal the decision of the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies in writing to the Provost, whose decision will be final. In the event the student's initial appeal was heard by the Provost due to the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies being recused from the process, the student may appeal the Provost's decision to the President.

5. Penalties for Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy

- a. In all instances of violations of the Academic Integrity Policy, the instructor will assign sanctions within the context of the course. If the violation is a second offense, or is determined to be an egregious offense, the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies will assign appropriate sanctions that go beyond the course. In the case of an egregious offense, the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies may temporarily suspend the student before and during any appeal process.
- b. For a non-egregious first offense, the instructor 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.
- c. When violations occur near the end of the semester or term, instructors may request the Registrar's Office to file a course grade of "NR—Not Recorded" until the investigation and possible appeals are complete. Once the investigation/appeal process is complete, the instructor should submit a grade change request to record the appropriate course grade.
- d. The policy of the University 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, if a second report of a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is received, or if the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies determines the violation to be egregious, the range of possible responses includes suspension of the student, disciplinary probation, or other appropriate sanctions.

6. Time and Record-Keeping Considerations

- a. Academic integrity violations should be processed in a timely manner:
 - (1) Instructors should report academic integrity violations within a week of their discovery.
 - (2) Student appeals must be filed within a week of receiving the written report of an academic integrity violation.
 - (3) The recipient of student appeals should acknowledge receipt of the appeal within one week.
 - (4) Timing constraints only apply when school is in session, but processing of violations may continue during breaks.
- b. When violations occur near the end of the semester or term, instructors may request the Registrar's Office to file a course grade of "NR—Not Recorded" until the investigation and possible appeals are complete. Once the investigation/appeal process is complete, the instructor should submit a grade change request to record the appropriate course grade.
- c. Academic integrity violations will continue to be processed if the student withdraws from the course in which the violation occurred.

- d. Academic integrity violations may be reported within one semester after the course if first discovered at that time.
- e. The final results of all academic integrity investigations, including all appeals, should be filed with the Office of the Registrar.
- f. A record of academic integrity violations will be maintained by the Office of the Registrar in accordance with the University's Schedule for Records Retention. However, when determining whether a Messiah graduate student has had multiple violations, any violation the student committed at the undergraduate level will not be considered in that total.
- g. The Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies will notify the instructor filing the report and the student's advisor(s) of the results of all appeals. In the case of multiple or egregious violations, the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies will also notify the Director of the student's program of study, if other than the Director of the program in which the violation occurred, of the results of any appeal.
- h. On-campus program areas conducting required background checks of students (for example, teacher certification, professional advisor) should submit the students' names and ID numbers to the Office of the Registrar for clearance. The Registrar will determine that an appropriate need to know exists under FERPA guidelines.
- i. If a Director and the Registrar have established that that Director has an ongoing need to know about academic integrity violations, the Registrar will automatically notify the Director of any violations by students in that program of study after all appeals are resolved.

B. Academic Standing, Maintaining

The following academic standards apply to all degree and non-degree seeking graduate students.

1. Satisfactory Academic Progress – Good Academic Standing

A student must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 (as calculated at the end of a semester) to remain in good academic standing at Messiah University.

2. Satisfactory Academic Progress – Conditionally Admitted Students

A conditionally admitted applicant must satisfy the conditions of their admittance in order to continue in the program. The specific conditions and length of time permitted to meet the stated conditions shall be detailed in a letter from the program director or admissions committee of the student's program.

3. Academic Probation

- a. Students who do not maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher (as calculated at the end of a semester) will be placed on academic probation. In addition, students who earn two final course grades of C (C+ or C) in graduate courses taken at Messiah University (regardless of cumulative GPA) will be placed on academic probation effective at the conclusion of the semester in which the second C (C+ or C) was earned.

- b. The Registrar's Office will notify the student in writing of the probation and will provide a copy of the communication to the program director and academic advisor. Students placed on academic probation are granted one semester to earn a cumulative GPA of 3.0 to be reinstated to good academic standing. Students who fail to earn a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or earn a third C (C+ or C) may be subject to dismissal.
- c. Some programs may require GPAs higher than the standard 3.0. Program-specific GPAs and any additional requirements are maintained, published, and managed by individual programs.

4. Dismissal for C Grades

Students who earn three final grades of C (C+ or C) will be academically dismissed from the University effective at the conclusion of the part-of-term in which the third C (C+ or C) was earned.

5. Dismissal for Failing Grade

Students who earn a final grade of F, including a fail in a pass/fail course, in any graduate course at Messiah University will be academically dismissed from the University effective at the conclusion of the part-of-term in which the failing grade was assigned.

6. Notice and Appeal for Academic Dismissal

The Registrar's Office will notify the student in writing of the academic dismissal and will provide a copy of the communication to the academic advisor and program director/coordinator. A student may appeal the academic dismissal within the time limit stated in the dismissal notification by filing a written petition with the Registrar's Office stating the reason for the appeal. The student must also send a copy of their appeal to the program director/coordinator of the program from which the dismissal took place. Appeals are reviewed by a subcommittee of the Graduate Council whose decision is final. The Registrar's Office will notify the student in writing of the appeal decision and will provide a copy of the communication to the academic advisor and program director/coordinator. If the dismissal appeal is granted, the student will be eligible to continue for one semester on academic probation. If good academic standing is not achieved within one semester, the student will be academically dismissed from the University.

7. Notice and Appeal of Outcome from Remediation and Development Plans

All remediation plans, development plans, or similar corrective measures, will be managed by the program in which the student is enrolled. If a student, however, takes issue with the outcome of the plan, they may appeal the decision of the program within the time limit stated in the program's final decision letter by filing a written petition with the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies stating the reason for appeal. The student must also send a copy of their appeal to the program director/coordinator of the program that provided the decision that is being appealed. Appeals are reviewed by the Graduate Council or an appointed subcommittee from within the Graduate Council. The program director/coordinator who was part of the decision being appealed will recuse themselves from deliberations of the appeal. The decision of the Graduate Council (or its appointed subcommittee) is final. The Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies will notify the student in writing of the appeal decision and will provide a copy of the communication to the program director/Coordinator.

C. Admissions and Enrollment Definitions and Policies

1. Provisionally Admitted Students

Applicants who have submitted all graduate program application materials, except official transcripts or letter(s) of reference, may be provisionally admitted to Messiah University, pending approval by the respective graduate program director. Those with provisional status have one semester to submit all the required admissions materials. The student will not be eligible to register for a second semester until the provisional designation is removed. Any request for an exception to this registration block must be submitted to the director of the applicant's chosen graduate program.

2. Conditionally-Admitted Students

Applicants whose application does not meet the criteria for degree-seeking or non-degree seeking status, but who appear to have the capability to successfully complete graduate courses may be admitted to Messiah University on a conditional admittance status. A conditionally admitted applicant must satisfy the conditions of admittance in order to continue in the program. The specific conditions and length of time permitted to meet the stated conditions shall be detailed in a letter from the program director or admissions committee of the student's graduate program.

3. Non-degree Seeking Students

Applicants who meet all requirements for admission to a specific graduate program, but who do not intend to pursue an advanced degree at Messiah University may enroll as a non-degree seeking student. (Note: Not all programs admit non-degree seeking students). This classification includes students who may be taking graduate courses for transfer credits, personal enrichment, professional development credits, Act 48, continuing education or licensing requirements, etc. Students may take up to 9 credits as a non-degree seeking student. Any student changing from non-degree seeking to degree seeking must fulfill the admission requirements for degree seeking students prior to proceeding beyond the 9-credit limit for non-degree seeking students.

4. Denied Admission

- a. Applicants may be denied if the candidate does not meet the admissions criteria, and the program faculty has concerns about the candidate's ability to be successful in the program.
- b. A candidate who applies and/or interviews, but whose admission is denied, has the right to appeal the decision. Appeals must be made in written form to the Director of Enrollment for SGPS within 30 days of the original decision. The letter should clearly state the ground for appeal. Applicants whose appeal is accepted will be reconsidered for admission by the respective graduate program.

5. Deferred Admissions Policy

Application for admission to the School of Graduate & Professional Studies at Messiah University is limited to the semester indicated on the student's application. If an applicant's plans change, a one-time option for deferring admission for up to two semesters from the initial semester of acceptance is possible. If a student defers, there is no guarantee that all coursework will be available upon their enrollment. Therefore, it is recommended that accepted students who are considering deferring enrollment consult with their program director prior to declaring their intentions. *Note: Applicants accepted into Doctor of Physical Therapy or Master of Occupational Therapy Programs may not defer their admission. See respective program director for more information.*

6. Re-enrollment Policy

- a. Students who have withdrawn from the University (not enrolled in at least one course at Messiah University during the past semester – fall, spring or summer) must file an Application for Re-Enrollment with the Graduate Enrollment Office at least twenty (20) days prior to the beginning of the semester for which re-enrollment is being sought. Students who are granted a leave of absence or medical leave will be considered withdrawn if they do not enroll in at least one course at Messiah University during the semester following their leave of absence or medical leave.
- b. If students applying for re-enrollment who have earned graduate credits at another institution since their most recent enrollment at Messiah University, and who want those courses to be considered as transfer credits and/or for enrollment decisions, must submit official transcripts from each institution attended before a re-enrollment decision can be made.
- c. To be eligible for re-enrollment, applicants must be in good standing with the University and the academic program must have the capacity to accept additional students. Additional conditions of re-enrollment may be imposed by the specific graduate program for which the applicant seeks re-enrollment. Students are required to complete the curriculum and graduation requirements in effect at the same time the Re-Enrollment application is filed, which may result in different courses, credit amounts, or other requirements from their initial registration.

7. Re-Admission Policy

Students who have not been enrolled in graduate courses at Messiah University for two years or more must reapply for admission to the graduate program by completing the full application required of the requested program.

8. Re-Admission after Academic Dismissal

Students who are dismissed for academic reasons may not apply for readmission to Messiah University for at least two academic years from the date of the dismissal. During the two-year dismissal, students may not enroll in graduate level courses at Messiah University. In addition, students may not apply for admission to a different graduate level program at Messiah University during the two-year dismissal. When petitioning for readmission, the student must provide evidence demonstrating a strong likelihood that they possess the motivation and capacity to successfully complete the requirements of the chosen program. Readmission is neither automatic nor guaranteed. The program director notifies the student in writing about the University's decision for readmission. Students who are readmitted are placed on academic probation and must comply with all of the terms set forth in the reinstatement letter.

D. Assistance, Academic

Each student is assigned to an academic advisor based upon the student's program

1. General Guidelines

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. The success of an advising program is dependent on the participation of everyone. It is a team effort.
- d. Every faculty member is in a position to help students. The potential of each faculty advisor to help students depends upon faculty accessibility and availability.
- e. An advisor cannot make decisions for an advisee, but they can be sympathetic, an understanding listener, and can offer various suggestions and possible solutions to the student's questions or concerns.

2. Academic Advising

- a. In advising students regarding their academic programs, the following factors should be kept in mind:
 - (1) The student's satisfaction with the curriculum under which they are registered.
 - (2) The student's general progress, including semester and cumulative scholarship records.
 - (3) Overall graduation requirements.
 - (4) Requirements in the major or curriculum of specialization.
 - (5) Desired sequence of courses (in non-cohort model programs).
 - (6) Course prerequisites, restrictions, etc.
- b. Crucial to effective advising is the availability of a faculty member to students. Faculty are expected to be available six to eight hours per week for student conferences, activity counseling, and committee work. Office hours should be announced to classes, posted on the faculty member's office door, and filed with the School Dean's office at the beginning of each semester.

- c. Each year every student will have the opportunity to submit an evaluation of their academic advisor. The results of this evaluation will be made available to the faculty member's dean and program director. It will also be forwarded to the Provost's Office and placed in the faculty member's Evaluation File, where the faculty member can access it.

E. Attendance and Absence (Student)

1. Course Attendance Policies

- a. Messiah University 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.
- b. Regular attendance is expected throughout the duration of the course. For online courses, 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 a class session, or failure in the course if they do not properly withdraw.
- c. Having a substitute participate in the registered student's place is a violation of the University's academic integrity policy.
- d. 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.

2. Illness-Related Absences

a. Short-Term Absences Due to Personal Illness

For short-term absences due to personal illness (no more than a few days), it is the student's responsibility to notify their instructor(s) prior to the class or synchronous session they will miss. If prior notification is not possible, the student should ensure that s/he notifies her/his instructors by the end of the day on which the class(es) meet. Students should consult with their instructors and/or their course syllabi with respect to make-up work and other course-related absence policies. These policies may vary from course to course.

b. Extended Medical Absences

An Extended Medical Absence may be granted to students for an acute illness or injury that does not require a full-semester Medical Leave, but nonetheless necessitates a period away from academics and/or from campus to receive care and support by family and/or medical professionals.

- (1) Due to the distinctive nature of graduate programs (in-person, online, number of weeks per class, number of classes per week, hands on, etc.), Extended Medical Absences are handled on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with the instructor, advisor, and the program director, who determines if such an absence is academically feasible. SGPS Student Services is an available resource to students if additional support is needed. Consultation with the Graduate Registrar and SGPS Student Services regarding how best to support the student may occur if the absence warrants additional consideration.
 - (2) Students may choose to continue their coursework during their Extended Medical Absence, if they are able. However, it is up to the discretion of the instructor on whether or not the student will be able to make up the work they missed, and the student is responsible for making arrangements with their instructor for any missed content and assignments. An instructor may offer remote attendance (“Zoom into class”) or class recordings as an option for keeping up with coursework, but is not obligated to provide these options.
 - (3) To request an Extended Medical Absence, a student should contact their instructor, who will consult with the program director and the student’s advisor to verify the need for this absence.
 - (4) In cases where a student’s absence would make success in the course prohibitive, the advisor and program director may recommend a withdrawal from the affected course. If a medical condition warrants leave beyond the approved period, a Medical Leave will likely be recommended.
- c. Medical Leave
- Medical Leaves may be granted to students who, due to illness or injury, will not be returning to school for the remainder of the semester. For details, see the [Medical Leave](#) policy later in this document.

3. Family-Related Emergencies

For a death in a student’s family and other critical family-related situations (e.g., an illness that requires the student’s care), the student should notify their program director as soon as possible. The program director will notify the student’s instructors.

4. Exam Policies

The instructor shall decide whether students who miss a pre-announced class examination will be granted make-up privileges. Faculty may consult their program's handbook for any program specific policies.

F. Calendar Parameters

The Community of Educators has responsibility for setting the parameters of the academic calendar. The following parameters, approved by COE Senate, will be used by the Office of the Provost to establish annual academic calendars which, when finalized, will be distributed to the Community of Educators for information purposes.

1. University-Wide Calendar Parameters

- a. Semesters will run with the following breaks and parts of term:
 - (1) Fall: 8 weeks; 1-week break; 8 weeks; Christmas Break (8-1-8)
 - (2) Spring: 1-wk GRAD Accel./Intensive.; 8 weeks; 1 week break; 8 weeks; May Development Week (1-8-1-8-1)
 - (3) Summer: 6 weeks; 1-week break; 6 weeks; 1-week break (6-1-6-1)
- b. Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) regulations require 14 hours of instructional time for each credit hour earned, plus time for a final assessment (a 50-minute class session is considered an "hour" of instructional time).
- c. Instructional hours will be fulfilled for each course within the associated part of the term.
- d. The earliest start in the spring semester will be January 2 for GRAD intensive, January 8 for all other GRAD courses, and January 9 for traditional UG courses.
- e. The latest start in the spring semester will be January 8 for GRAD intensive and January 14 for GRAD courses, and January 15 for traditional UG courses, with the exception that when Martin Luther King Day falls on January 15, the UG spring semester will begin on January 16.
- f. Fall and spring semesters will both include a working In-Service Day on which classes, both daytime and evening, are canceled, with the exceptions of off-campus experiential classes such as clinicals and internships.
 - (1) The fall In-Service Day will be on the Tuesday of the 4th week of classes.
 - (2) The spring In-Service Day will be on the 2nd Tuesday of February.
- g. Days Off / Holidays:
 - (1) The University has specified days when classes are not scheduled but the University is open for business; as well as specified holidays when classes are not scheduled and the University is closed. These days, inclusive of both types, are as follows:
 - (a) Spring Semester: Martin Luther King Jr. Day; In-Service; Spring Break (one week); the Friday and Monday around Easter
 - (b) Summer Semester: Memorial Day; Juneteenth; mid-Summer Break (one week); and July 4th (though mid-Summer Break frequently encompasses July 4th)

(c) Fall Semester: In-Service; Fall Break (one week); and Wed-Fri surrounding Thanksgiving

(2) On the days off and holidays listed above, no synchronous class sessions will be held, nor will assignments be due.

h. Homecoming weekend will include the first Saturday in October.

2. SGPS-Specific Parameters

a. Terms – Each semester may be divided into “parts of term” as defined below.

Courses may cross over defined “parts of term” within a single semester, but they shall not cross over defined semesters, i.e., all courses must begin and end in the same semester.

(1) Eight-Week Term. Courses offered using the 8-week term will be delivered in eight consecutive weeks. Typically, 8-week courses begin at the start of the SGPS full semester or end at the conclusion of the SGPS full semester.

(2) Semester-Long Term. Courses offered using the semester-long term will be delivered in consecutive weeks with a one-week break at the mid-point of the fall, spring and summer semester. Exceptions for the one-week break will apply to courses related to internship, practicum, clinical, fieldwork, and thesis/project. In all instances, the minimum number of hours of classroom instruction time for a graduate course must be equivalent to 14 hours per student credit.

(3) Intensive Terms. Courses offered using intensive terms will be delivered face-to-face and may not exceed fourteen (14) days of on-campus instruction. Intensive courses will frequently require students to complete work before the first face-to-face meeting and finish course work within a designated period of time following the last day of the on-campus instruction. Though other configurations are permissible within the intensive term delivery (with prior approval from the Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies, the Associate Provost, and the Graduate Registrar’s Office), a course designated using the intensive term will typically require students to meet face-to-face for one week (Monday – Friday), approximately eight hours each day, and allow one week prior and one week following for the completion of course work. For all intensive courses, the duration of the course (including face-to-face time as well as pre- and post-classroom expectations) must be communicated clearly in the course syllabus, the minimum number of hours of classroom instruction must be equivalent to at least 14 hours of classroom instruction per student credit, and the course must begin and end in the same semester.

(4) For course-specific/program-specific term needs, administrative approval by the Associate Provost and the Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies, in collaboration with the Graduate Registrar’s Office, is required. The Associate Provost will inform the Provost of such decisions.

b. Weeks – A week on the graduate calendar begins on Sunday and ends on Saturday.

- c. Start Dates – The fall semester will begin on the Sunday after the one-week break between summer and fall. The spring semester will begin with an intensive course, which begins the first full week of January. All other spring courses will begin on the Sunday of the second full week of January. All summer courses will begin on the second Sunday following the last Saturday of the spring semester. Intensive summer courses will be scheduled throughout the 13-week semester at least one year in advance and in coordination with the appropriate campus offices.
- d. Holidays
 - (1) There will be no graduate classes between the end of the fall semester and January. This will preserve the Christmas and New Year's Day holidays as well as the University's closure between Christmas and New Year's Day.
 - (2) For Messiah University-observed holidays, faculty must ensure the appropriate amount of instructional time is achieved for the course. Faculty teaching face-to-face will choose from one of the following:
 - (a) Move face-to-face time to an alternative day and time that week; OR
 - (b) Develop alternative instructional time through the University's LMS and/or additional assignments.

The chosen option, with any additional meeting dates, must be clearly defined in the course syllabus prior to the start of the course. Course assignments may not be due on any observed holiday.
 - (3) Faculty teaching online may not hold synchronous sessions, nor may a course assignment be due, on a University-observed holiday.

G. Confidentiality of Student Information

1. *Disclosure of Student Education Records*

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) limits disclosure of student education records. Examples include not posting grades by name, University identification number, or any format in which others can identify the student as well as sharing specific student academic or personally identifiable information without valid need to know (i.e., consult FERPA Compliance for "valid").

Similarly, faculty are not to distribute graded papers, projects, or other graded course assignments by placing them outside an office door such that any student can see the results. If such graded materials are returned to students outside of class, this must be done in a manner that insures confidentiality for each student. Any questions of interpretation should be directed to the Registrar or the University Council.

2. *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*

The Family Educational and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, provides enrolled students the right to inspect their "education records" (defined generally as records, files, documents, and other materials maintained by the University 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 University education records include cumulative academic records, grades, course schedules, most student disciplinary records, and most student account and financial aid records.

- a. Education 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 paraprofessionals, 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.
- b. 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 their right to request a hearing. A hearing, to be conducted by a disinterested person appointed by the President of the University, 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.
- c. A student's education records will be released to their parents/guardians/significant other only with the written consent of the student or upon receipt of certification that the parents/guardians have declared the student as a dependent on their most recent income tax return. The University, however, may elect to notify the parent/guardian of a student under the age of 21 who commits a disciplinary violation related to use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance.
- d. Individuals identified on the FERPA and/or parents/guardians may be notified when a residential student contracts a serious illness/injury/requires hospitalization. Additionally, academic status may be shared with individuals identified on the FERPA and/or parents/guardians. Any student who does not want this information provided to parents/guardians or who does not want their 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.

- e. FERPA permits the University to release “directory information” without student consent to anyone requesting information. Directory information at Messiah University includes a student’s name, campus address, campus telephone number, campus e-mail address, photograph (available only on an internal online student directory and faculty class rosters), dates of attendance, degree for which a student is a candidate, academic major, academic awards or honors, birth date, class year, full-time/part-time status, and weight and height for members of athletic teams. Additionally, 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, 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.
- f. FERPA also authorizes the University to disclose personally identifiable information contained in a student’s education records without a student’s consent in several other circumstances. Five of these circumstances are as follows:
 - (1) to comply with a judicial order or a lawfully issued subpoena;
 - (2) to protect the health or safety of the student or others in an emergency situation;
 - (3) to officials of another institution in which the student seeks to enroll;
 - (4) to alleged victims of any crime of violence (as that term is defined in Section 16, Title 18, U.S. Code) or nonforcible sex offense of the final results of a disciplinary proceeding conducted by the University against the alleged perpetrator of such crime or offense with respect to that incident; and
 - (5) 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; a person or firm with whom the University has contracted (e.g., physician, attorney, accountant); a member of the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on a University committee or assisting another school official in performing their tasks.

A school official has a “legitimate educational interest” if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill their professional responsibility.
- g. 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 20202-5901. This policy is maintained by the Messiah University Registrar and was last amended August 2024.

H. Copyright Compliance

1. Defining Copyright

Copyright is a property right given to content creators that allows them to control, protect, and exploit their creative works.

- a. Copyright owners have the exclusive rights to do the following things, though they can grant or sell those rights to others:
 - (1) Reproduce all or part of the work

- (2) Prepare new (derivative) versions based on the original work
- (3) Distribute copies
- (4) Perform the work publicly
- (5) Display the work publicly
- (6) Digital Audio Transmission
- b. Copyright protection covers both published and unpublished works. The fact that a previously published work is out-of-print does not affect its copyright. Learn more by reviewing [Copyright Basics \(from U.S. Copyright Office\)](#).
- c. As stated in the Copyright Act, it is unlawful to infringe on the rights of copyright holders. Copyright holders can sue offenders for damages or to recoup lost profits as a result of infringement.

2. Using Copyrighted Materials in Messiah University Courses

Instructors may use copyrighted materials in their courses in the following ways:

- a. Placing a physical item on Library Reserve.
- b. Linking (in the University's LMS) to electronic resources (books, films, journal articles) available at Murray Library in the University's LMS. Educators should contact their liaison librarian to determine whether a digital copy is available for purchase by Murray Library.
- c. Creating a digital or print coursepack through the Campus Store for students to purchase.
- d. Linking (in the University's LMS) directly to legally obtained copyrighted material available freely online.
- e. Additional examples of using copyrighted materials are outlined on www.messiah.edu/copyright.
- f. Generally speaking, instructors may not make copies of copyrighted materials for distribution and charge their department or the University for the copyright clearance fee. Exceptions to this rule must be granted by the appropriate budget manager before the copies are produced.

3. When Copyright Permission is not required:

Copyright permission is not required if all of the following conditions are met for each section:

- a. **Single Copying for Faculty Use**
A single copy may be made of any of the following by faculty for scholarly research or use in teaching or preparation to teach a class:
 - (1) A chapter from a book.
 - (2) An article from a periodical or newspaper.
 - (3) A short story, short essay, or short poem, whether or not from a collective work.
 - (4) A chart, graph, diagram, drawing, cartoon, or picture from a book, periodical, or newspaper.
- b. **Multiple Copies for Classroom Use**
Multiple copies (not to exceed more than one copy per student per course) may be made by or for faculty for classroom use or discussion, provided that:

- (1) The copying is spontaneous.
 - (2) The copying is used only once in a single course.
 - (3) The same author is represented only once, i.e., only one selection per author.
 - (4) No more than three selections are used from a collective work or periodical volume.
 - (5) No more than nine instances of multiple copying occur for one course during one term.
 - (6) Each copy includes notice of copyright, e.g.: © Jackson, J.K., and Jackson, J.J. (1952). *The Effects of Birth Order on Career Selection*. Green Bay, WI: Green Bay Press.
 - c. The item is in the [Public Domain](#).
 - d. The item is licensed by a [Creative Commons License](#) that allows for reuse.
 - e. The item's use is deemed [Fair Use](#).
 - (1) Fair use is a guideline, not a rule.
 - (2) The University's Fair Use Evaluation tool, available at www.messiah.edu/copyright, can assist educators with determining fair use.
 - (3) For liability purposes, educators should always retain documentation of their fair-use evaluation process.
- 4. *The University keeps updated instructions on the utilization of copyrighted materials in classes at www.messiah.edu/copyright.***

I. Course Listing and Numbering

1. *Course Numbering System*

Courses are listed by program; the alpha prefix in the course number indicates in which program and discipline the course is offered. The course numbering is to be interpreted by the following principle: All graduate courses are numbered at a 500, 600, 700, 800 or 900 level, which represent a progression in academic rigor and expectation.

2. *Cross-Listing of Courses*

Cross-listed courses have multiple program prefixes for the same course and have the same course description and learning objectives. Students register for the course under the prefix for which credit is to be given.

3. *Interdisciplinary Courses*

Courses which are designed for use in multiple programs and/or are interdisciplinary in nature may use a prefix that is outside of either program. The prefix must be agreed upon by the Registrar's Office and the program directors who intend to use the course.

J. Credentials: Concurrent, Dual and Subsequent

1. *Concurrent Credentials*

Concurrent credentials occur when a student is enrolled in two graduate credentials of the same level at the same time, which are not arranged by the University as a dual degree program.

- a. Admission decisions for the degrees are made independently.

- b. Students request to earn concurrent credentials via Graduate Enrollment (at the time of application or to add a degree) or the Graduate Registrar's Office (for current students adding a certificate).
- c. Students completing a certificate that is fully embedded in a degree program do not automatically receive a certificate upon completion of their degree. Students who are pursuing a certificate and a degree are required to request their declaration of a certificate prior to completing their application for degree.
- d. All requirements must be completed for each degree.
- e. Credentials are not required to be earned in the same academic year.
- f. Completion of the concurrent credentials results in individual citations on the academic transcript, and students are issued a credential for each one earned.
- g. Up to nine (9) credits of one degree may be applied to meet requirements of another graduate degree.
- h. Credits earned in a *certificate* may be applied to a *degree* in their entirety.
- i. Two (or more) *certificates* may be earned if there are at least three (3) unique credits between them.
- j. A student's cumulative GPA is calculated and based on all graduate credits earned at Messiah.

2. Dual Credentials

Dual credentials are formal programs of study created by the University where students complete two different existing graduate credentials of the same level at the same time.

- a. Dual credentials require further study than either credential alone, but less than when credentials are pursued separately.
- b. Reductions may be achieved by sharing a course(s) between more than one program, course substitutions, or waivers due to complimentary content of coursework.
 - (1) Program objectives for each credential must be maintained when establishing potential reductions. The total number of credits is reduced to no more than 25% to establish requirements for the dual credentials.
- c. Students apply specifically to the dual degree program(s), and director(s) of the dual credential program(s) make admission decisions. A student may be eligible for admission to a standard credential program if they are not admitted for the dual degrees.
- d. Students complete all requirements as outlined by the University for the dual credentials.
- e. The awarding of the credentials occurs simultaneously at the time all requirements are successfully completed. Students are not eligible for one credential until all credentials are finished.
- f. Completion of the dual credentials results in individual degree citations on the academic transcript, and students are issued a diploma for each degree earned.
- g. A student's cumulative GPA is calculated and based on all graduate credits earned at Messiah.

3. Concurrent Degree and Certificate

- a. Students request their desire to earn concurrent credentials via Graduate Enrollment or the Graduate Registrar's Office.
- b. Students are required to request their declaration of a certificate prior to completing their application for degree.
- c. Credits earned in a certificate may be applied to a degree in their entirety.
- d. Students are not required to earn all credentials in the same academic year.
- e. Completion of all credentials results in individual citations on the academic transcript, and students are issued a diploma and certificate upon completion of each.

4. Subsequent Credential(s)

A subsequent credential is awarded when a student completes an additional graduate credential of the same level at Messiah University after completing the first graduate credential.

- a. Students must apply to the succeeding credential and admission decisions are independent of previous admission decisions.
- b. Students complete current requirements for subsequent credentials.
- c. Courses completed within the last seven (7) years may be applied to meet requirements for the subsequent credential.
- d. Students may be approved to use up to nine (9) credits from a previous Messiah graduate degree to meet the requirements of a subsequent graduate degree.
- e. Credits earned in a previous *credential* may be applied to a subsequent *certificate* if at least three (3) credits are unique (not shared).
- f. Completion of the subsequent credential results in individual citations on the academic transcript and students are issued a credential for each one earned.
- g. A student's cumulative GPA is calculated and based on all graduate credits earned at Messiah.

5. Subsequent Degree

Students may be approved to use up to nine (9) credits from a previous Messiah graduate degree to meet the requirements of a subsequent graduate degree.

6. Subsequent Certificate

- a. Credits earned in a previous credential may be applied to a subsequent certificate if at least three (3) credits are unique (not shared) and is completed after the first certificate is awarded.
- b. Completion of the subsequent certificate results in a citation on the academic transcript, and the student is issued a credential for the certificate earned.

K. Definitions, Academic

1. Master's Degree

A master's degree (M.A. or M.S.) 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.

2. Doctorate

The doctorate degree is the highest award a student can earn for graduate study, requiring advanced work beyond the master's level; conferred upon completion of a program providing knowledge and skills for recognition, credential or license for professional practice; or upon the preparation and successful defense of a dissertation based on original research; or the planning and execution of an original project demonstrating substantial artistic or scholarly achievement.

3. Post-Master's Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies (CAGS)

This certificate is designed for students who have a master's degree but would like to earn additional credits for a specialty area or certification and/or licensure requirements. The specific course work is tailored to meet the needs of the certificate student, but the course work must include a minimum of 9 credits.

4. Post-Baccalaureate Certificate of Graduate Studies

This certificate is designed for students who have a bachelor's degree but would like to earn graduate level credits within a specialty area or discipline. The group of courses required to earn this certificate is specifically prescribed and includes a minimum of 9 credits.

5. Accelerated Programs

Accelerated programs are approved academic programs that provide students with an option to earn both their bachelor's degree and graduate degree in a shorter period of time with fewer total credits than if they completed both degrees separately. An accelerated program can be completed with another partnering institution or it can exist within a single institution. This policy applies to accelerated programs involving programming offered within Messiah University.

a. Accelerated programs will conform to the following:

- (1) The curriculum meets the curricular requirements for the Bachelor degree including QuEST/General Education and common learning requirements.
- (2) The curriculum meets all of the curricular requirements for the Master's degree.
- (3) Accelerated programs resulting in a Master's degree must include a minimum of 153 credits (123 for the undergraduate degree and at least 30 unique credits for a masters-level degree). Graduate credits will count toward the undergraduate degree within these credit assumptions.
- (4) Accelerated programs resulting in a Doctoral degree must include a minimum of 183 credits (123 for the undergraduate degree and a minimum of 60 unique credits for the doctorate-level degree). Graduate credits will count toward the undergraduate degree within these credit assumptions.
- (5) Students may elect to participate in the undergraduate commencement ceremony in the academic year in which all undergraduate degree requirements are completed.
- (6) Students have undergraduate standing until they complete all undergraduate degree requirements and are awarded their Bachelor degree. As undergraduate students, they are:
 - (a) assessed undergraduate tuition and fees;

- (b) eligible for undergraduate financial aid and scholarships;
- (c) subject to all undergraduate academic and student policies.
- (7) Students obtain graduate standing after completion of the undergraduate degree requirements. As graduate students, they are:
 - (a) assessed graduate tuition and fees;
 - (b) eligible for graduate financial aid and scholarships;
 - (c) subject to all graduate academic and student policies.
- b. Proposals for accelerated programs must address the following:

[These are beyond what is normally required of proposals for any program.]

 - (1) What is the multi-year curricular plan for completing both degrees? Does the plan include summer requirements?
 - (2) What pathways to undergraduate majors are available for students who cannot or chose not to progress through this program?
 - (3) What are the options and associated expectations for admission into this program?
 - (4) What are the expectations for progression through this program?
 - (5) What is the organizational and administrative home of this program?
- c. Governance process for accelerated programs proposals

Proposals must be approved by the relevant undergraduate department and graduate program, Assessment of Student Learning Committee, Curriculum Committee, (General Education), Academic Council, Graduate Council, University Council, and COE Senate.

6. Program

A prescribed set of courses and other requirements recommended by the Graduate Council and approved by the Community of Educators and University Council as a valid representation of the area of study. Generally, these courses focus on a specific academic discipline. Satisfactory completion of this prescribed set of courses leads to a graduate degree in that area of study.

7. Program Core

A prescribed set of specialized courses recommended by a program and approved by the Community of Educators as a valid representation of the area of study. These courses are completed by all students in a particular graduate program. A core may be complemented with a track/concentration.

8. Subsequent Degree

A subsequent degree is awarded when a student completes an additional graduate degree of the same level at Messiah University after completing the first graduate degree.

9. Concurrent Degrees

Concurrent degrees occur when a student is enrolled in two graduate degrees of the same level at the same time, which are not arranged by the University as a dual degree program.

10. Dual Degree

Dual degrees are formal programs of study created by the University where students complete two different existing graduate degrees of the same level at the same time.

11. Track/Concentration

A prescribed set of courses in a sub-discipline of a program or closely related discipline typically consisting of a minimum of 9 credits and a maximum of 45 credits. Students may complete requirements for more than one track.

12. Semester (Term)

A semester or term is a session within the academic year in which courses are offered. Consisting of 17 weeks in length in the fall and spring, and 13 weeks in the summer, each semester may contain various parts-of-term. Students may register for more than one course in a semester.

13. Part of Term

A part of term is a condensed term contained within a semester and provides the flexibility for accelerated courses to be offered. Typical models include 6-week, 8-week or intensive parts-of-term. All parts-of-term are confined within the published beginning and ending dates of the semester. Students may register for more than one course in a part of term.

14. Prerequisite Course

A prerequisite is a course which must be completed prior to another course(s) due to the fundamental content or knowledge required through the progression of study. Prerequisite requirements are included in course descriptions and may be enforced through course registration.

15. Co-requisite Course

A co-requisite is a course which must be taken in the same part-of-term as another course. Typically, registration for co-requisite courses must be performed in the same registration transaction. Co-requisite requirements are included in course descriptions and may be enforced through course registration.

16. Concurrent Course

A concurrent course is a modification of a prerequisite requirement, where it can be taken in an earlier part-of-term or in the same part-of-term as the course in which registration is attempted.

17. Course Delivery

- a. In-person students meet at a physical location during scheduled meeting times for the duration of the course.
- b. Online Synchronous-Use of a learning management system and other technologies to deliver real-time online lectures and discussions for students at remote locations.
- c. Online Asynchronous-Use of a learning management system and other technologies to deliver recorded online lectures and materials for students at remote locations at any time.
- d. Hybrid-A combination of face-to-face meetings and synchronous and/or asynchronous class sessions.

- e. Online-Students access all course materials online through the learning management system: there are no requirements for face-to-face sessions. Online courses will include synchronous and/or asynchronous methods of delivery.

18. 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. A contact hour consists of 50 minutes of instruction. The contact may take place in a classroom or laboratory setting, online where the learners and faculty member are engaged in the instructional process, or within the context of experiential settings, e.g., practicum, internship, clinical and student teaching.

In addition to the hours of classroom instruction (or its equivalent), the student is expected to invest two to three hours for each contact hour of instruction.

19. Full-time Status

Graduate students who carry an academic load of 6 or more credit hours in a semester are considered full-time students and may be eligible for financial aid as full-time students.

20. Three-Quarter Status

Graduate students who carry an academic load of at least 4 credits, but less than 6 credits are considered three-quarter-time students. They are eligible for any financial aid open to three-quarter time students.

21. Half-Time Status

Graduate students who carry an academic load of 3 credit hours in a semester are considered half-time students and may be eligible for any financial aid open to half-time students.

22. Less than Half-Time Status

Graduate students who carry an academic load less than 3 credit hours in a semester are considered less than half-time students and may be eligible for financial aid that is open to less than half-time students.

L. Experiential Learning

Experiential learning courses can include student teaching, internship, clinical placements, practica, and fieldwork placements that fall outside of the classroom setting. These are supervised contextual learning experiences required for credit and program completion. The experiences take place in a discipline-related setting and promote self-assessment, professional development, faith-work integration, and self-directed learning.

M. Field Trips

All course field trips contemplated for a given semester will be registered with the program director at the beginning of that semester together with supporting rationale for the trips. Directors must ensure all course instructional hours are being met. Field trips should be planned to minimize their disruptive effects on student schedules. For example, mid-semester and end-of-semester scheduling should be avoided along with extended field trips that would conflict with other class periods. Students are expected to participate in a planned field trip unless excused by the faculty member planning the event.

N. Grading

1. Grading System

The current grading system can be roughly divided into two major categories: letter 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. 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).

- (1) P= Used for a passing grade in a Pass/Fail only course. Credit hours in which the student receives a P (pass) count toward total credits earned but not toward the semester or cumulative GPA.
- (2) W = Withdrawal. Given to any student who withdraws from all courses (i.e., withdraws from Messiah), or from a specific course after the 100% refund period for that course and before the final third of the part-of-term.
- (3) I = Incomplete. Used only when a student cannot, for extraordinary reasons, complete a course by the end of the session of enrollment.

2. Grading Matrix

Grade	Description of the Standard	Quality Point Value
A	This grade is given in recognition of outstanding achievement.	4.00
A-	This grade is given in recognition of excellent achievement.	3.70
B+	This grade is given in recognition of achievement above that expected at the graduate level.	3.30
B	This grade indicates achievement expected of graduate students.	3.00
B-	This grade indicates achievement somewhat less than expected of most graduate students.	2.70
C+	This grade indicates less than expected achievement but somewhat more than minimal meeting of course requirements.	2.30
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.	2.00
F	This grade reveals accomplishment inferior in quality and is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of course requirements.	0.00
P	This grade indicates satisfactory achievement of course requirements in courses offered on a pass/fail only basis.	0.00
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. This temporary grade does not influence the student's grade point average; refer to "Incomplete Grades" for more information.	0.00

3. Grade Point Average (GPA)

- Semester GPA: The GPA for each semester is calculated from the graded courses attempted during that semester.
- Cumulative GPA: The GPA for all graduate courses taken at Messiah University.

4. Incomplete Grades

- A grade of incomplete may be assigned if a student is unable to complete the course work for extraordinary reasons such as illness, emergency, or other reasonable cause; has completed at least two-thirds of the course; 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 before the last day of class. An incomplete grade must be resolved by the agreed upon date with the instructor but no later than four weeks from the last day of the particular course. The procedure to apply for an incomplete grade is as follows:

- (1) The student presents a valid reason and requests their instructor to extend the time to complete the course.
 - (2) To be considered for an incomplete, the student must be passing the course and have completed at least two-thirds of the coursework. An incomplete should not be given merely because a student fails to complete all the course requirements on time.
 - (3) The instructor giving the incomplete will establish an appropriate completion date with the student. This date may extend to four weeks from the last day of the particular course.
 - (4) When reporting final grades, the instructor will enter a grade of "I" in Self-Service. They will then be prompted to record an explanation for the incomplete grade. Self-Service automatically sends an e-mail message of confirmation to the instructor, the student, and the Registrar's Office for review, as well as Student Financial Services and Financial Aid.
 - (5) If a course is completed within the extended timetable, the instructor submits a grade change request to the Registrar's Office via Self-Service.
 - (6) If a course is not completed within the extended timetable, the incomplete grade will be converted to an F. Any exceptions to the timetable must be approved in advance with the instructor and the Registrar's Office.
- c. This policy keeps grade and student 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.

5. Change of Grade

If, after final grades have been submitted to the Registrar's Office, it is determined that an error in the computation or recording of the grade has occurred, the instructor should submit a corrected grade via the online request form. All changes of grades must include supporting rationale and must be received no later than the end of the semester following that in which the original grade was recorded. A student's final grade may not be raised by doing additional assignments after the course has concluded or by revising previously submitted assignments. All grade changes require the approval of the Registrar's Office.

6. Grade Dispute Procedures

If a student disputes a final grade given in a particular course and it is 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 7 days from the date in which the final grade is due to the Registrar's Office for that part-of-term.

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 Program Coordinator/Director.

b. Formal Discussion Between Student, Instructor, and Program Coordinator/Director

Within 7 calendar days of the informal discussion, the student sends a written appeal to the Program Coordinator/Director to request a formal discussion. The Program Coordinator/Director should arrange a meeting to discuss the matter with the student and instructor together within 7 calendar days. 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 the decision by the Program Coordinator/Director. If the matter is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student sends a written appeal to the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies.

c. 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 in writing to the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies within 7 calendar days of the formal discussion. The Dean shall investigate carefully and render a decision in writing within 21 calendar days, which shall be final.

d. 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.

e. Timeline

A final decision must be rendered no later than 49 days after the date which the student initiates the dispute with the faculty member who assigned the grade.

f. Student Enrollment

Students who are in good academic standing prior to receiving the disputed grade may continue their enrollment while the grade dispute is in process. If the disputed grade is an F or the third C (C or C+) earned in a course, the student may continue enrollment only in cases where additional courses are already in progress. Once a final decision is rendered by the Dean over the disputed grade, the student's academic standing is evaluated by the Registrar's Office at the next occurrence of academic standing assessment.

7. AI-Assisted Assignment Evaluation

a. Defining AI-Assisted Assignment Evaluation

- (1) AI-assisted assignment evaluation is the use of artificial intelligence tools to assist instructors in evaluating student work, with the aim of reducing the amount of time the instructor spends assessing students' work.
- (2) Unlike automated grading, which checks a student's answer against a pre-determined, objective answer (e.g., a multiple-choice question in a Canvas quiz), AI-assisted assignment evaluation refers to AI tools that generate written feedback and/or a suggested grade by evaluating a student's work in a more subjective fashion.

b. Concerns and Considerations

- (1) Using AI to evaluate subjective assignments, such as writing assignments, can produce inaccurate, inconsistent, or biased results. AI assessment tools are only as good as the data on which they are trained, which may be limited or biased.

- (2) Student data privacy may be compromised when tools are utilized that lack appropriate privacy safeguards and guarantees.
- (3) Students may respond negatively to AI-assisted assignment evaluation, especially in contexts where they're forbidden to use AI for their assignments.
- c. Guidelines for Utilizing AI-Assisted Assignment Evaluation Tools
 - (1) AI-Assisted assignment evaluation tools may be used by instructors in the process of assessing student work, but human oversight is essential to ensure accuracy and fairness. These tools should not replace the instructor's superintending role, nor should they be utilized without adhering to the following guidelines:
 - (2) AI-assisted assignment evaluation tools need to be vetted by ITS before they can be used.
 - (a) If an instructor is interested in using a particular AI-assisted evaluation tool, they must submit a ticket to techsupport@messiah.edu.
 - (b) ITS will review the tool to make sure it's FERPA compliant.
 - (c) Only if ITS has approved the tool from the standpoint of data security may the instructor utilize the tool.
 - (3) In addition, an AI-assisted assignment evaluation tool must be reviewed and approved by the instructor's department chair or program director.
 - (4) If there's a cost associated with an approved tool that cannot be borne by students in the course (e.g., a textbook-related tool), the instructor will need the permission of his/her department chair or program director to cover the cost before it is purchased or will need to cover it through his/her faculty development funds.
 - (5) Instructors must be transparent in their use of AI-assisted assignment evaluation tools by noting such use in their course syllabus. In particular, the syllabus must tell students when the tool will be used, and how the tool's feedback will be used in assessing their work.
 - (6) It is incumbent upon the instructor to review the tool's generative feedback to ensure its accuracy.
 - (7) An AI-assisted assignment evaluation tool may be used to help an instructor evaluate student work, but the instructor must assign the grade the student receives and must personally generate the written or verbal feedback the student receives, i.e., the tool may assist the instructor, but the instructor must superintend the evaluative process, which includes the assignment of grades and the communication of written or verbal feedback.
- d. Sample Syllabus Statement – The following syllabus statement is not required verbatim, but a statement approximating the one below is required when an instructor is using an AI-assisted assignment evaluation tool.

This course utilizes an AI-assisted evaluation tool in the assessment of the following assignments: [list assignments here]. In each case, the tool will provide generative feedback that will assist me in formulating my feedback, including the grade I assign.

O. Graduation Requirements and Commencement

1. Degree Candidacy

Students working toward a graduate degree or certificate must file an Application for Degree or Certificate with the Registrar's Office within their last full year in the Program. The academic records of students who apply for their degree or certificate are reviewed by the academic advisor, program director and Registrar's Office to evaluate the student's eligibility for earning the credential. Applications require the approval of the Graduate Council and the Community of Educators before students are formally admitted to degree or certificate candidacy.

These procedures identify the potential graduates and keep the Registrar's Office in contact with them prior to graduation.

2. Requirements for Degrees

a. Masters Degrees

- (1) Successful completion of credit hours as defined by each program and faculty, with a minimum of 30 credit hours beyond the baccalaureate level, (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 22 Pa. Code § 31.21(b)(5)).
- (2) A minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 for all coursework listed for the degree.
- (3) Completion of requirements as specified under the department of instruction in which that program falls.

b. Doctorate Degrees

- (1) Successful completion of credit hours as defined by each program and faculty and reflect the recommendations of professional associations or National learned societies, (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 22 Pa. Code § 31.21(b)(6)).
- (2) A minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 for all work listed as requirements for the degree.
- (3) Completion of requirements as specified under the department of instruction in which that program falls.

3. Commencement

Messiah University hosts a commencement ceremony in May for graduate students earning a degree in December, May or August of the academic year in which commencement is held. Graduate students indicate on their Application for Degree whether they will be attending the ceremony. Degree-seeking students who are within nine credits of completing academic requirements for their degree are permitted to participate in the May commencement ceremony, so long as the coursework can be completed by the last day of the summer semester following commencement. These students are required to be registered for the outstanding requirements in order to be eligible to participate in the ceremony. Students who do not complete the outstanding requirements by the end of summer semester may incur an additional fee. Students earning a certificate are not eligible to participate in the commencement ceremony.

4. Late Completion of Requirements

August graduates who are within nine (9) credits of completing academic requirements for their degree are permitted to participate in the May commencement ceremony, so long as the coursework can be completed by August 31 following commencement. These students are required to be registered for the outstanding requirements in order to be eligible to participate in the ceremony. Students who submit an application for degree or certificate with the Registrar's Office, but do not complete requirements by August 31 of that academic year, may incur an additional fee.

5. Awarding/Release of Diplomas/Certificates

Diplomas and certificates are awarded to graduate students in May, August, and December upon successful completion of all requirements in the corresponding semester. In order for diplomas and certificates to be released, the following guidelines must be met:

- a. All course work, including approved transfer credit, must be completed and recorded on the student's Messiah University transcript. The diploma and transcript will reflect a graduation date concurrent with the time in which the work is completed, and in accordance with the certification cycle (i.e., May, August or December graduation).
- b. A deadline of 30 calendar days from the anticipated conferral date will be extended to students with outstanding coursework (i.e., incomplete grade, pending transfer work). If the incomplete or transfer course work is not completed within 30 calendar days from the anticipated date of graduation, the student will be awarded on the next scheduled conferral date.
- c. For students with extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness, emergency) who complete their degree requirements by the middle of the semester (i.e., fall, spring, summer), the Registrar's Office in collaboration with the program of instruction may authorize a mid-semester conferral date. This is to be documented during the degree certification review process and on the student's record.
- d. Students must satisfy all outstanding financial balances with Messiah University.
- e. Diplomas and certificates will be mailed to students upon completion of all requirements.

6. Time to Complete Degree Policy

Upon matriculation it is expected that students remain continuously enrolled. All Messiah University coursework and requirements must be completed within seven years of original matriculation for those earning a graduate degree and within three years of original matriculation for those earning a graduate certificate, including Certificates of Advanced Graduate Studies. Students may request extensions to this policy. Individual programs may establish Program specific degree completion timelines. These are housed in Program Handbooks.

7. Awarding of Posthumous Degrees

The achievements and contributions of Messiah University students are recognized formally at commencement ceremonies. In case of the death of a student who has made substantial progress toward a degree, it is important that the University acknowledge the work of this individual. The Academic Council, Graduate Council and COE Senate may approve conferral of the degree posthumously under the following policy conditions:

- a. The student must have completed as least 75% of the credits of the degree at the time of death.
- b. The student must have been in good academic and social standing at the University at the time of death.
- c. The student was recently enrolled in classes at the University at the time of their death.
- d. As with other candidates for graduation, the posthumous degree candidate will be part of the list of students recommended for degree conferral to the Academic Council, Graduate Council and COE Senate for approval.
- e. In consultation with the family, decisions will be made about whether the student's name will appear in the program, whether the name will be read, if a diploma will be issued, and if someone will attend commencement to receive the diploma.
- f. The transcript will read that the degree was awarded posthumously.

P. Medical Leave

1. Voluntary Medical Leave

- a. A graduate student may request a Voluntary Medical Leave for themselves at Messiah University due to their own documented physical or psychological illness that prevents the graduate student from completing coursework during a part-of-term or semester. The University grants Voluntary Medical Leave for one semester based on the time of request. Students on medical leave are not withdrawn from the University; however, for federal government reporting and loan services, students on medical leave are considered withdrawn from the University.
- b. To request Medical Leave, a student must complete the Request for Graduate Medical Leave form and submit a letter from their medical provider that verifies that the student is under medical care for an illness and medical leave is advisable. This documentation should be sent to SGPS Student Services who will review the request.
- c. SGPS Student Services will approve or deny the Medical Leave request. The director will notify the graduate Registrar's Office who will then notify the student as well as appropriate offices on campus.
- d. Original documentation and copies of the decision will be maintained in the student's file by SGPS Student Services.

2. Deadline for Application for Medical Leave Status

A request for medical leave for the current term/semester must be made during the first two-thirds of the part-of-term or semester, whichever occurs first.

3. Effective Date of Medical Leave Status

A student whose request for medical leave is approved during the first two-thirds of the part-of-term or semester will be deemed to have medical leave status as of the date on which their request was made to SGPS Student Services. The student will remain on medical leave for the balance of that semester and may request an extension for the next semester by filing a request as described below.

4. Grades and Completion of Academic Work

A student whose request for medical leave is approved during the first two-thirds of the part-of-term or semester will be given a grade of “W” (Withdraw) in each course for which they are registered. Incomplete (“I”) grades will not be recorded. A student whose request for medical leave is approved during the final third of the part-of-term or semester are medically excused and the faculty member(s) may submit an Incomplete (“I”) grade for coursework. When an Incomplete (“I”) is not deemed feasible, a Withdraw (“W”) grade will be recorded. Refunds will not be granted for Incomplete (“I”) courses. To receive academic credit for a course, incomplete work must be completed by the final day of the semester following that during which medical leave was approved. It is the responsibility of the student to contact individual instructors to arrange for the timely completion of course work. If the student does not complete work in a course within this time, the grade of “I” for that course will be changed to a “W”.

5. Extension of Medical Leave Status

- a. A student on medical leave may request a one-semester extension. The student must provide additional documentation from their medical provider to SGPS Student Services by August 1 for the fall semester, December 1 for the spring semester, and May 1 for the summer semester. The Director will review the request and notify the Registrar’s Office.
- b. Medical leave status is limited to two consecutive semesters. After the second consecutive semester, a student who does not resume their academic studies will be officially withdrawn from the University.

6. Involuntary Medical Leave

The University may place a student on Involuntary Medical Leave for the following reasons:

- a. A student is deemed to be a danger or a threat to the safety, health, or well-being to themselves or others.
- b. A student has significant health concerns and/or accompanying behavior that are disrupting the educational experience of others.
- c. A student has significant health concerns and/or accompanying behavior that renders the student unfit to complete educational assignments (e.g., clinical, internships, practicums, fieldwork).

When placed on Involuntary Medical Leave, the University will outline the length of leave and criteria to resume academic work at Messiah University. In extraordinary circumstances, the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies may initiate the process for a student’s Involuntary Medical Leave. Such action may be taken in consultation with the Provost and additional appropriate University officials.

7. Returning from Medical Leave

A graduate student must apply to return from Medical Leave (Voluntary or Involuntary) by completing the Return from Medical Leave form. Typically, this includes providing documentation from their physician, therapist, or other healthcare provider which outlines their fitness to return to their academic program. The deadline to submit documentation is one month prior to the start of the next part-of-term or semester. All information will be reviewed, and a decision regarding fitness to return will be made by SGPS Student Services. The graduate Registrar's Office will notify the student and appropriate offices on campus if approval is granted.

A student placed on Involuntary Medical Leave by the University is not guaranteed permission to return.

8. Financial Aid Implications

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the Student Financial Services Office to discuss the implications of medical leave for their financial aid.

9. Refunds of Tuition and Fees

Refunds for students will be provided per the refund policy as published by Student Financial Services.

Q. Online Course Policy

1. Online Course Policies Vis-à-vis Other Messiah University Course Policies

- a. All Messiah University course policies apply to online courses, except when noted otherwise.
- b. Online courses may be bound by unique policies that do not apply to in-person courses; those additional policies are outlined in this policy.
- c. Although methods of delivery differ between online, hybrid, and in-person courses, the course learning objectives for a cataloged course do not change when the course is moved from one format to another format.

2. Administration and Oversight of Online Courses

- a. Authorization to Offer a Course in an Online Format
 - (1) Online Programs. Courses embedded in online programs do not need special authorization to be offered in an online format.
 - (2) In-Person and Hybrid Programs. Courses embedded in in-person and hybrid programs need authorization from the school dean and Associate Provost (in consultation with the department chair or program director) to be offered in an online format.
 - (a) In most cases, this authorization comes in advance of course registration. These courses should be identified as such at the time of registration (including whether the course will be synchronous or asynchronous), so that students registering for the course know the format of the course for which they are registering.

- (b) In rare instances, the decision to deliver a course in an online or hybrid format is made after registration has taken place (e.g., due to instructor availability), or even after the semester has begun (e.g., due to the health of the instructor). In these cases, students enrolled in the course will be notified of this change by the department chair or program director whose department or program is offering the course.
- b. Training for Online Course Instruction
 - (1) Instructors who are teaching online at Messiah University for the first time are required to undergo University-provided training before they develop and/or offer their first online course.
 - (2) This training will be developed by the University's instructional designers, in consultation with the Office of Faculty Development.
 - (3) This training will enable the instructor to learn about the University's LMS and appropriate pedagogy for the online environment.
 - (4) This training will enable the instructor to develop and/or facilitate their first Messiah University online course, which must then be reviewed by an instructional designer (who will provide feedback to both the instructor and the instructor's department chair or program director) and approved by the department chair or program director before the online course is published.
 - (5) In addition to developing training for first-time instructors, the University's instructional designers and the Office of Faculty Development will offer workshops and one-on-one support to instructors who are teaching in an online environment.
- c. Oversight of Online Course Delivery
 - (1) Department chairs, program directors, and school deans will have administrative access to all the courses under their purview hosted on Messiah University's LMS.
 - (2) Department chairs, program directors, and deans may review and monitor the online courses to which they have access, without specifically notifying the instructors that they are doing so.
- d. Evaluation of Online Teaching (Faculty Evaluation)
 - (1) The evaluation of online teaching that is done as part of a faculty member's annual load will follow the same protocol as the evaluation of in-person teaching, as outlined in Section 6B and Section 12 of the *COE Handbook*.
 - (2) If a faculty member's teaching load consists of both in-person and online courses, the courses that are observed or evaluated by the faculty member's supervisors or peers, as well as those evaluated by students, shall consist of both in-person and online courses.

3. Additional Policies for Online Courses

- a. All online or hybrid courses are required to use the University's LMS. Other digital tools may be incorporated into the LMS provided they've been approved by ITS, which ensures that added tools do not compromise the University's cybersecurity or students' personal information as defined by FERPA.

- b. All online courses must be published on the University's LMS prior to the beginning of the course (note: specific programs may establish earlier publishing deadlines for their faculty, e.g., to meet accreditation requirements). When published, the course must include the following:
 - (1) a welcome message from the instructor to students enrolled in the course
 - (2) the instructor's contact information
 - (3) the course syllabus, updated for that particular semester or term
 - (4) information needed to access the communication platform used for synchronous class meetings (e.g., the online meeting link)
- c. Online Course Syllabi – In addition to meeting the University-wide expectations for syllabus content, syllabi developed for online courses must include the following:
 - (1) instructor expectations for student attendance and engagement in the online environment
 - (2) a course schedule that numerically delineates the required instructional time
- d. Instructional Time Requirements
 - (1) According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), each credit earned requires 14 hours of classroom instruction, i.e., a three-credit course would require a minimum of 42 hours of classroom instruction. For each hour in the classroom, students can expect to complete two hours of non-instructional time, or "homework."
 - (2) Messiah University's accrediting body, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, requires institutions that offer online courses to have an institutional understanding of what constitutes instructional time (as opposed to non-instructional time) in the online setting.
 - (a) Instructional Time: At Messiah University, instructional time means activities that entail the direct oversight or input of the course instructor and/or are in some way equivalent to an activity that could be conducted in a physical classroom. Examples of instructional time include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Faculty-supervised icebreakers
 - Lectures via synchronous software
 - Narrated slide-based presentations
 - Faculty-supervised discussion forums
 - Videos (lecture, clips, full length films)
 - Quizzes and tests
 - Faculty-supervised group work
 - Collaboration through the use of synchronous software or the use of shared documents
 - Use of guest speakers through audio, video, or as part of a forum
 - For courses that have a lab component, tasks that would normally be done in the lab

(b) Non-Instructional Time: At Messiah University, non-instructional (activities that are not the equivalent of classroom instruction) means course-related tasks that students typically do on their own without the direct oversight or input of their instructor. Examples of non-instructional time include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Group work that is unsupervised by faculty
- Assigned readings
- Practice quizzes
- Time spent researching and writing papers or essays
- Other kinds of “homework”

(3) The schedule portion of syllabi for online courses must include a numerical delineation of instructional time, demonstrating that the instructional time in that course amounts to 14 hours for each credit hour earned (a numerical delineation of non-instructional time is not required in online course syllabi).

R. Off-Campus Courses Involving Travel Expenses

In off-campus classes for which students pay a course fee – such as cross-cultural study courses – students must sign appropriate forms from the Intercultural Office, which certifies the recognition that the course involves additional expenses.

S. Petitions, Academic

Students who find it necessary to request an exception to an academic policy must send a written petition to the Registrar’s Office stating the request and rationale, in addition to any supporting documentation for the request. The Registrar’s Office reviews the petition and notifies the student and academic advisor of the decision. A copy of the petition and decision is retained in the student’s record.

T. Registration for Courses

1. First Semester Registration

Students admitted to the University register for classes during the academic advising process. Materials and information are provided to newly admitted students from the graduate program in which they are admitted.

2. Subsequent Semester Registration

- a. A student’s financial account must be in good order before they are able to register for courses in the following semester. Proof of payment is required to ensure students do not build up large balances which they are unable to pay.
- b. Academic advising and registration for fall, spring and summer semesters are scheduled as follows:

Academic Advising and Registration Material Distribution	Registration for Following Semester
End of October	Beginning of November
Mid-January	Mid- to End of January
End of March	Beginning of April

c. Procedure

- (1) Registration materials for current students are distributed by the Registrar's Office.
 - (2) Students discuss recommended course selections for the upcoming registration with their academic advisor. The student and advisor should keep a copy or record of the courses approved for registration.
 - (3) Subsequent to the advising meeting, the advisor releases the advisor hold on registration via the student information system so the student is able to register for the courses at the appropriate time.
- d. Uniformity of procedure is required to handle the large volume of students and ensure fairness to all students. Advisor's approval is required to support the student in taking courses appropriate for their program, interests, and abilities.

3. Drop/Add (Change in Registration)

- a. Add – Students may add courses to their schedule using the online student information system through the day before the course/part-of-term begins. Once a part-of-term begins, late registration may be permitted in mitigating circumstances with permission of the instructor, advisor and Registrar's Office. These requests must be emailed to the graduate Registrar's Office and may result in an additional fee.
- b. Drop – Students may drop courses from their schedule using the online student information system through the 100% refund period.
- c. Withdraw – Students may withdraw from a course after the 100% refund period and before the final third of the course. All add, drop and withdrawal dates are published by the Registrar's Office and follow Eastern Standard time.

4. Maximum Credits Per Semester

Graduate students are permitted to schedule up to 18 credits per semester (fall, spring, summer). Students who elect to take more than 18 credits per semester must first obtain approval from their academic advisor, the director of their program and the Registrar's Office. Exceptions include students enrolled in programs with documented curriculum design which requires enrollment over 18 credits in a semester.

5. Graduate Students Enrolling in Undergraduate Courses

When graduate students take undergraduate courses (whether to fulfill prerequisites, to meet certification requirements, or for enrichment), the following policies apply:

- a. Students are classified as graduate-level students.
- b. Students are subject to all graduate academic and student policies.
- c. Students pay the graduate rate for undergraduate credits. Note: In order to receive federal financial aid, the undergraduate course must be required to meet the student's graduate degree/academic requirement and the student must be accepted into the graduate program. Therefore, prerequisite courses may be eligible for federal financial aid.
- d. The undergraduate course and course grade are recorded on the graduate transcript.

- e. If a student's final grade equates to less than a C in an undergraduate course, the graduate transcript will record an F.

U. Repeating Coursework

1. Grade and Credit implications

- a. Students may repeat any course in order to receive a better grade. Only the most recent occurrence of the grade and credits count in the calculation of the student's cumulative GPA. All occurrences of repeated courses will be marked on the transcript.
- b. The credits earned for the first grade remain in the term and cumulative calculations until completion of the repeated course. All courses that are repeated for a better grade must be taken at Messiah University. Courses taken at Messiah University may not be taken at another institution and transferred to Messiah University to fulfill a requirement in their program.

2. Other Considerations

- a. Students need to be advised of possible financial aid consequences of repeating courses for which credits have been earned. Therefore, students using federal financial aid must consult Student Financial Services for details about eligibility of aid.
- b. Some programs do not allow students to repeat courses.

V. Special Courses and Credit Programs

1. Independent Study

a. Policy

Independent study is available to graduate students who wish to explore a particular area of study outside of the current graduate curriculum. Projects must be carefully designed and directed toward a specific goal under the direction of a qualified faculty member who communicates regularly with the student during the study.

b. Procedure

- (1) The student initiates their request with an independent study form available from the Registrar's Office. A syllabus is required to accompany the independent study form.
- (2) The Director/Program Coordinator determines if the request is appropriate and whether the course can be staffed.
- (3) An approved independent study form is forwarded by the Director/Program Coordinator to the Registrar's Office for processing.
- (4) Grades are submitted by the faculty member to the Registrar's Office at the end of the part-of-term.

c. Faculty Compensation

Faculty members who teach an independent study are compensated at the adjunct/overload rate as follows:

$$(\text{overload rate}) \times (1/6) \times (\text{catalog load units for course}) \times (\# \text{ of students})$$

- d. Adjunct faculty members are normally not permitted to lead independent studies. In some circumstances, there might be a program need for this to occur. All such instances must be approved by the appropriate program director, school dean, and the Associate Provost. Such approval should be obtained before an independent study is offered to an adjunct faculty member.

2. Directed Study

a. Policy

Directed study is available to graduate students who need to complete a catalogued course at a time other than when it is offered. Each study must be done under the supervision of a qualified faculty member who will communicate regularly with the student during the study. The number of directed studies a faculty member may teach in a given term or academic year is at the discretion of the school dean (but generally no more than two independent/directed studies per term). Directed studies will be approved only for situations that present extenuating circumstances. Students are expected to make every effort to enroll in required courses at their regularly scheduled times.

b. Procedure

- (1) The Program Director/Coordinator determines if a directed study is appropriate and whether/how the course can be staffed.
- (2) The student initiates their request with an electronic directed study form available on the Graduate Registrar's Office webpage. The student submits the application, which is electronically routed to the appropriate people for review and signature.
- (3) An approved directed study form then routes to the Registrar's Office for processing. When processed, the student and the sponsoring faculty member may access the completed electronic application online.
- (4) Grades are submitted by the faculty member to the Registrar's Office at the end of the part-of-term.

c. Faculty Compensation

Faculty members who teach a directed study are compensated at the adjunct/overload rate as follows:

$$(\text{overload rate}) \times (1/6) \times (\text{catalog load units for course}) \times (\# \text{ of students})$$

- d. Adjunct faculty members are normally not permitted to lead directed studies. In some circumstances, there might be a program need for this to occur. All such instances must be approved by the appropriate program director, school dean, and the Associate Provost. Such approval should be obtained before a directed study is offered to an adjunct faculty member.

W. Syllabi, Course

1. Creating and Publishing Course Syllabi

- a. Instructors must produce a syllabus for each course they are teaching according to the standards listed below, using the university's digital syllabus template. Instructors are not required to distribute paper copies of the syllabus to their students, but they must publish the digital syllabus by the beginning of the course (or earlier, if specified by a particular department or program).

2. All syllabi must include the following items specific to the course:

- a. Course Prefix, Number, and Title
- b. Course Dates (Semester and Year)
- c. Course Location and Meeting Time
- d. Instructor's Contact Information – All course syllabi must include the instructor's Messiah University email address, office location (if relevant) and, if the instructor is a full-time faculty member, the instructor's Messiah University phone extension. Other modes of contact may be added, if desired, but they cannot replace the two modes listed above.
- e. Personal Appointments/Office Hours – All course syllabi must include one or both of the following:
 - (1) Instructions on how students in the course can determine the instructor's availability and set up one-on-one appointments;
 - (2) At least three specified office hours per week.* Fully remote faculty must indicate the video conferencing method for meeting with students during those specified hours.

*This is not three hours per course per week, but is rather three hours per week total (at minimum) when contracted for full-time teaching.

- f. Course Description – As listed in University’s Academic Catalog, including information on the General Education requirements it fulfills (if any) and pre- or corequisites for the course (if any).
- g. Student Learning Objectives – A clear statement of student learning objectives as approved by the department within which the course is housed.
- h. Required Texts and Other Course Materials – The names of textbooks, coursepacks, lab manuals, software, subscriptions, and other materials students must be able to access to succeed in the course.
- i. Course Expectations – Attendance and absence policy, including the effect of attendance on the student’s grade, participation expectations (if any), field trips, etc.
- j. Course Requirements – A clear (though perhaps general) statement of each course assignment or assignment category.
- k. Student Use of AI Tools – A statement about student use of AI tools in the course, which must be one of the following: (1) one of the statements posted on the Faculty Resource and Support Canvas site; (2) a statement that has been developed by your academic department or program; (3) a unique statement developed by the instructor. All statements must specify the range of allowable use, provide a rationale for that range of use, and refer to the University’s academic integrity policy.
- l. AI-Assisted Assignment Evaluation – If the instructor is using an AI tool to assist in the evaluation of student work, the instructor must provide a statement that tells students when the tool will be used and how the tool’s feedback will be used in assessing their work.
- m. Course Grading Policies – A clear statement regarding the faculty member’s policy on makeup work, time extensions, and grading, including the weight that each assignment (or assignment category) has in determining the final course grade.
- n. Course Outline/Schedule – A content outline (schedule) of the material covered and the completion dates for the required assignments. The outline should account for 14 hours of instructional time for each credit earned, and approximately 30 hours of work outside of class for each credit earned. Schedules for online courses must numerically delineate the required instructional time.
- o. Technology Recommendations and Requirements –A clear statement regarding technology skills and access required to fully participate in the course. For instance:
 “Students must possess basic computer skills and have regular access to a computer. Recommended computer specifications that work well with Messiah’s learning management system and synchronous software can be found on the ITS website (please see me if you need help with this). When participating in a course via the Internet from off-campus, please be aware that the quality of your internet connection can be impacted by several issues that are outside of Messiah University’s control.”

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

3. All syllabi must include the following institution-wide statements:

- a. Messiah University's Academic Integrity Policy (or a link to the policy) – see [Academic Integrity](#) policy above for details.
- b. Statement on Confidentiality – Students may be asked to post written work and engage in written dialogue with other class members within an online learning management system. The student should be aware that although confidentiality within the course environment is encouraged, it is possible that users in and outside the course may have access to course content.
- c. Statement on Recording and FERPA Privacy Issues – Classes at Messiah University utilize technologies selected by your instructor that may use your computer's webcam or other tools to monitor and/or record classes, class activities, and assessments. Instructors who record elements of this course may share their recordings with students registered for this course. These recordings, if posted, will be posted only on a secure, limited-access site. Students should treat these recordings with care and not re-share or post them beyond this course. Students are not allowed to audio-record or video-record class activities without the permission of the instructor.
- d. Statement of Copyright Protection –The materials in this Messiah University course are only for the use of students enrolled in this course for purposes associated with this course and may not be further disseminated.
- e. Statement on Accommodations for Students with Documented Disabilities. Messiah University is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, please feel welcome to discuss your concerns with me. If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, you may also want to meet with the Director of the Office of Academic Accessibility, to begin this conversation or request an official accommodation. You can find more information about the Office of Academic Accessibility on their homepage. If you have already been approved for accommodations through the Office of Academic Accessibility, please meet with me so we can develop an implementation plan together.
- f. Statement on Title IX, Violence, and Sexual Misconduct – If I learn of any potential violation of University gender equality and interpersonal safety policies—including potential discrimination, harassment, interpersonal violence, or sexual misconduct—I am required to notify the Title IX Coordinator for the University. Students can request confidentiality from the institution, which I will communicate to the Title IX Coordinator. Confidential resources are available on and off campus. Regardless of whether a student chooses to report, students at Messiah have access to all information and assistance in accessing academic, medical, and other support services. This information is also available online.

- g. Technology Support – Technology Support is available to students every day of the week by calling 717-796-4444 or emailing techsupport@messiah.edu. Students should provide their name, phone number, and a brief description of the issue they are experiencing. They will receive a response during normal business hours; after normal business hours, they will receive a call back as soon as possible.

4. Other Academic Assistance

Depending on the nature of the course, it may be useful to include information in the course syllabus about one or more forms of academic assistance (e.g., the Writing Center) and contact information for the course's liaison librarian.

5. Permissions

Appropriate permission must be gained to use any copyrighted material in the course syllabus.

6. Syllabi for Online Courses

Syllabi for online courses must meet the content requirements which apply to syllabi for all courses, with a few additions. For those additional syllabus requirements, see the [Online Course Policy](#) in Section 10.

X. Textbooks

1. Responsibility for Textbook Selection

- a. Textbooks are typically chosen by the faculty member teaching a course. If a course is a team-taught course, textbooks should be chosen by the team, including cross-disciplinary considerations, when applicable.
- b. In some instances, a course steward (e.g., a program director) chooses the textbook(s) for a cohort of students, and individual instructors do not enter their own adoptions.
- c. Hard-copy options to own or rent, as well as electronic options, may be utilized at the discretion of the person choosing the textbooks.

2. The Role of the Campus Store

- a. Messiah University's Campus Store assists instructors with the text adoption process, manages the course materials list, and facilitates student ordering processes.
- b. The Campus Store communicates with instructors throughout the year, providing advance notice for instructors to identify and order required, recommended, and optional materials.
- c. The submitter is responsible for entering course adoptions via the Campus Store's digital textbook adoption tool.

3. Compliance

- a. The Campus Store is responsible for keeping Messiah University in compliance with the federal government's Higher Education Opportunity Act (2008), which mandates a method for students to view a list of their required course materials in a fully transparent manner.

- b. Instructors must cooperate with the Campus Store to facilitate the adoption of course texts so that students have ample time and opportunity to get the materials necessary to succeed in the classroom.

Y. Tracks and Concentrations

1. Change to Program or Track/Concentration

After admission to a program or declaration of a track/concentration, students who wish to declare a different course of study must obtain permission of the program director(s) using the forms provided by the Registrar's Office. A change of program or track/concentration may impact billing and financial aid eligibility. In addition, not all courses from a previous course of study may be applied to the new course of study.

2. Additional Track/Concentration

- a. Students may upon approval from their program complete more than one track/concentration within their program.
- b. Tracks/concentrations requiring 9-12 credits may share up to three (3) credits to meet a requirement in both areas; concentrations requiring more than 12 credits may share up to six (6) credits.
- c. All tracks/concentrations are noted on the student's academic transcript when successfully completed.

Z. Transcripts

1. Transcript Definition

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.

2. Request for Transcript

Official academic transcripts are issued by the Registrar's Office upon a student's written request and must be accompanied by payment. Associated fees are found on the registrar's website.

- a. The student requests a transcript from the Registrar's Office using the online or paper request form, accompanied by the appropriate fees.
- b. The Registrar's Office sends the transcript to the appropriate recipient and records the date the transcript was issued.
- c. The student is notified by Student Financial Services if an outstanding balance remains on his/her financial account.

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

AA. Transfer Credit

1. Evaluation of Transfer Credits for Incoming Students

Transfer credit is credit earned for coursework completed at another institution and applied to meet requirements at Messiah University. Students may transfer graduate coursework from other institutions under the following conditions:

- a. The coursework must have been completed at a regionally accredited institution
- b. The credits are graduate level
- c. A minimum grade of a “B” was earned for each transferred course
- d. The courses must be completed within the last seven (7) years of matriculation into the degree or certificate program. Some programs may have stricter requirements for transfer credits.
- e. Currently enrolled students who wish to take credits at another institution and transfer them to Messiah University must have written approval of the program director prior to starting coursework
- f. The credits are not among those that must be taken at Messiah University (see the School of Graduate & Professional Studies Catalog for individual program restrictions).
- g. The number of credits transferred does not exceed the maximum allowed in the student’s program (see the School of Graduate & Professional Studies Catalog for individual program information).
- h. Only credits and courses are eligible for transfer. Grades earned at the original institution are not calculated into the student’s Messiah University grade point average.

2. Procedure

- a. When a student applies, they request the former college to send an official transcript to the Graduate Enrollment Office. If the student is currently enrolled at the University, they request the former college to send an official transcript to the Graduate Registrar’s Office.
- b. Students initiate a request for transfer credit by completing the Transfer Credit Approval form available on the Registrar’s website. Approval from the program director is required for the credit and course to be transferred.
- c. Once the transfer credit form and official transcript are received by the Registrar’s Office, the student’s record is updated according to academic policy.

3. Special Cases

- a. Certificates
Transfer credits are not eligible to meet requirements for 9-credit graduate certificates. A maximum of three (3) credits may be transferred to meet requirements for graduate certificates requiring more than 9 credits.
- b. Post-Baccalaureate Teaching Certification
(1) Students completing credits to fulfill a post-baccalaureate teaching certification program will consult with an academic advisor to determine the courses approved to meet certification requirements. In some cases, undergraduate coursework may be accepted to meet Pennsylvania Department of Education certification requirements. In order to meet related graduate degree requirements, students must complete a minimum of 30 graduate level credits.

- (2) The PA Department of Education allows candidates for initial teaching certification to meet required competencies via undergraduate or graduate coursework. As such, Messiah allows post-baccalaureate teacher candidates to complete certification requirements through a combination of undergraduate and graduate level courses. The following policies describe the parameters for these students.
- (3) Students must complete a minimum of 24 credits (graduate or undergraduate) at Messiah in order for Messiah to endorse them for initial teaching certification. As part of these credits, students must complete their student teaching or an internship (if they have already student taught elsewhere) through Messiah.
- (4) Students must complete at least 30 unique credits at the graduate level (500 or higher) to be eligible for the M.Ed. Students must complete 24 of these graduate-level credits at Messiah to be eligible for the degree. These credits may be the same as those listed above as required for certification endorsement. That is, a student could complete 24 graduate level credits and be eligible for certification and for the M.Ed. if they are transferring in the additional credits needed to meet certification and degree requirements.
- (5) To transfer in a course to meet a graduate course requirement for the graduate program in education, students must have met the graduate program requirements for transfer (including being completed at a regionally accredited institution with a grade of B or higher) even if the course they are transferring is an undergraduate course. If the student completed an undergraduate course that is to count for a graduate course with lower than a B, they would need to take the graduate version of that course or complete a substitution course at the discretion of the program director. If they took an undergraduate course that is to meet an undergraduate course requirement (e.g., EDUC 203 or HDFS 210/311), the director has discretion to use the undergraduate course transfer policy of a grade of C or higher.
- (6) Courses to be transferred in should meet the timeline requirements of the graduate program, typically completed within 7 years of program entry. Program directors have discretion to shorten or lengthen that timeframe. Students working in the field most closely related to the course being transferred may be given a longer timeframe as it can be assumed that they are staying current with that field. For courses where the field is changing rapidly, the timeframe may be shorter than 7 years.
- (7) Regardless of the level of the course, all transfer course requests from graduate students should be submitted using the graduate course transfer request form found on the graduate registrar's website.

BB. Withdrawal from the University

1. End-of-Semester Procedure

Students who are not planning to continue their graduate studies at Messiah University should communicate their intent to withdraw from the University by completing the online Notification of Leave of Absence/Withdrawal form. If a student does not complete this form and does not register for coursework, they will be withdrawn by the University. The Registrar's Office informs other administrative offices, program director/coordinator, and student's advisor of the withdrawal.

2. During Semester Procedure (for Medical Leave, see [Medical Leave](#) section above)

- a. Students wishing to withdraw from the University before the end of a semester (fall, spring, summer) must notify the Registrar's Office of their intention by completing the online Notification of Leave of Absence/Withdrawal form.
- b. The date the student submits the withdrawal form is the date used to determine the effective date of the withdrawal. Student Financial Services determines the student's bill and any required adjustments to financial aid. The student receives a statement of balance due or refund once all calculations have been completed.
- c. The Registrar's Office withdraws the student from classes and informs other administrative offices, the program coordinator/director, student's advisor, and the student's professors. Student Financial Services determines the student's bill and sends the student a statement of balance due or refund.

3. Leave of Absence/Stop Out

- a. Students who do not register for a course during a semester but plan to take a course in the subsequent semester are eligible to take a leave of absence/stop out and must notify the Registrar's Office by completing the online Notification of Leave of Absence/Withdrawal form.
- b. Students are only eligible for a leave of absence/stop out one semester at a time and may enroll in courses the semester following stop out or withdraw from the University.
- c. Students are responsible for understanding the implications of a leave of absence on financial aid and registration for future course work. Registration for the following semester will be available as scheduled. If a student does not complete this form or does not register for courses, they will be withdrawn from the University. Students who need to request a leave of absence based on their own physical or psychological illness should submit a Medical Leave Request.

4. Refunds

- a. Refunds for students who withdraw voluntarily or involuntarily are determined, with one exception*, according to the percentage of the semester/part of term completed when a student withdraws from a course. The following chart details the percentages of completion used to calculate the percentage of refunds and offers examples of the most common graduate course delivery models. If the delivery model of a graduate course is not listed below, the refund for such a course will be calculated using the percentage of the semester/part of term that is completed when a student notifies the Registrar's Office of the withdrawal.

*If a student withdraws from an intensive course by 11:59PM EST of the first day of residency, the student will be entitled to a 100% refund (provided the student's other financial obligations to Messiah University have been met in full). If a student withdraws from an intensive course at any time after 11:59PM EST of the first day, the student will not be entitled to receive a refund.

Percent Refund	Approximate Percentage of Course Completed	6 Week Course	8 Week Course	12 Week or Summer-Long Semester Course	Fall or Spring full Semester Course
100%	Up to 7%	Day 1-3	Day 1-4	Day 1-6	Day 1-8
75%	13%	Day 4-5	Day 5-7	Day 7-11	Day 9-15
60%	20%	Day 6-8	Day 8-11	Day 12-17	Day 16-22
50%	27%	Day 9-11	Day 12-15	Day 18-23	Day 23-30
20%	33%	Day 12-14	Day 16-19	Day 24-28	Day 31-37
0%	Over 33%	After Day 14	After Day 19	After Day 28	After Day 37

b. The procedure for a refund is as follows:

- (1) A drop occurs prior to the start of the term in which a student is registered for the class and may be completed by the student in self-service Banner, unless it is the student's only class in that semester. Email gradregistrar@messiah.edu to drop your only class. A withdrawal occurs once the term begins. **All requests for withdrawals must be emailed to the Registrar's Office,** gradregistrar@messiah.edu. 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) For courses with a residency component, a full refund will be granted only if the withdrawal is made prior to 11:59PM EST on the first day of residency. After the first day of residency, 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.
- (3) Lab, music, private music lesson, and all other course-related fees, as applicable, will not be refunded after completion of 7% of the part-of-term.
- (4) Refunds and adjusted bills will be sent to the student's home address following withdrawal from the University. Updated billing statements will be available online for students dropping or withdrawing from courses only. Students will be notified if their change in enrollment has required an adjustment to their financial aid award.
- (5) In accordance with federal regulations, when federal financial aid refunds are involved, the amounts are allocated in the following order: Unsubsidized Federal Direct Loans, Federal Direct PLUS Loans, other Title IV aid programs.

- (6) 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 Federal Direct Stafford Loans, subsidized Federal Direct Stafford Loans, Federal Direct PLUS loans, Federal Pell Grants, Federal SEOG.
- (7) Institutional and student responsibilities in regard to the return of the Title IV funds:
- (a) Messiah University’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 to 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
- (8) Other financial aid will be refunded in proportion to and along the same schedule as tuition.
- (9) Messiah University is not required to pay a credit balance that is less than \$1.00. Credit balances greater than or equal to \$1.00 are automatically refunded to the student upon the student’s graduation or separation from the University.
- c. 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.
- d. Maryland Resident Refund Policy
- Maryland residents have a unique refund policy for their online courses. If a Maryland resident withdraws or is terminated after completing only a portion of a course or term the following refund applies and supersedes the standard Messiah University Graduate refund policy.

Proportion of total course, program, or term completed as of the date of withdrawal or termination	Tuition Refund
Less than 10%	90% Refund
10% up to but not including 20%	80% Refund
20% up to but not including 30%	60% Refund
30% up to but not including 40%	40% Refund
40% up to but not including 60%	20% Refund
More than 60%	No Refund

All refunds to Maryland residents shall be based on the date of withdrawal or termination and will be paid within 60 days from the date of withdrawal or termination.

e. Return of Federal Student Loans

- (1) The return of Federal Student loans has a different rate than the University's refund policy.
- (2) Return of Title IV Funds applies to a Federal loan recipient who withdraws from or leaves school before completing the payment period or period of enrollment.
 - (a) At Messiah University the period of enrollment is a semester.
 - (b) Messiah University will determine the percentage of aid earned by the student by calculating the percentage of the period that the student completed.
 - (i) For credit-hour programs that means the Days Attended/ Days in period = percentage completed.
 - (c) Any unearned funds must be returned. The percentage of loan that a student is allowed to keep may differ from the percentage of tuition remaining on their account per the University's refund policy. This would result in a balance due to the University.
- (3) However, since some graduate programs at Messiah University have multiple parts of term in each semester, there may be situations where a student withdraws from an early part of the term but still plans to attend classes in the latter part of the term.
 - (a) In this case the student is not considered to have withdrawn from the program if the student gives the institution written confirmation that he or she will attend a class in the part of term that begins later in the same payment period or period of enrollment. The situation will change if the student does not attend the class in the later session.
 - (b) This written confirmation must occur at the time that would have been considered a withdrawal.
- (4) Therefore, if a graduate student withdraws from a class or classes part of the way through the early part of the term and gives Messiah University written confirmation (at the time of withdrawal) that they are enrolled in and planning to attend a class or classes in the latter part of the same semester, there is no need to return Federal Direct Loans. However, if the student does not follow-through and attend the later session, the situation would be considered a withdrawal.

5. Grading Policy

Once a part-of-term begins, courses in which the student is registered will be graded with a "W". Courses in future parts-of-term or semesters will be dropped from the student schedule.