

# ***COE Handbook: Section Eleven***

## *NEXT Steps*

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## PART I: NEXT STEPS ACADEMIC POLICIES

### A. Academic Honesty

#### 1. Definitions

- a. Plagiarism  
Using the ideas, data, language, media, or images of another source and representing it as one's own original work, without specific and proper acknowledgement.
- b. Self-Plagiarism  
Using large parts of your own previous work again without saying where it came from (by citing the original work) or without getting permission from your instructor.
- c. Cheating  
Using or attempting to use materials, study aids, or technologies for help in testing or other work not authorized and/or specifically prohibited by the instructor, including artificial intelligence technology.
- d. Fabrication  
Deliberately submitting false, fraudulent, or altered information in any academic work.
- e. Misrepresentation of Academic Records  
Tampering with any portion of a student's record.
- f. Unfair advantage  
Exercising or attempting to exercise unauthorized or unfair academic advantage over others or impeding the academic work of others.
- g. Facilitating academic dishonesty  
Knowingly helping or attempting to help others violate any provision of this academic dishonesty policy.

#### 2. Education Regarding Academic Honesty Policy

Messiah University is responsible for making sure students know about the Academic Honesty Policy. They do this by including it in the academic catalog and informing new students through orientation or first-year courses. Instructors should also mention the policy in their course syllabi. However, it's the student's responsibility to understand and follow the policy.

#### 3. Procedures for Perceived Violations of Academic Honesty

- a. If a possible violation is suspected, the instructor should talk to the student(s) to determine whether it is likely that a violation happened. If the instructor believes that it is more likely than not that the student is not responsible for the violation, they will let the student know in writing. In this case, no report of the incident or the meeting should be sent to the Director of NEXT Steps.
- b. If the instructor believes a violation likely occurred, they must fill out an Academic Integrity Violation Report and submit it as instructed on the form.
- c. The instructor should keep copies of any tests, papers, or other materials that show the violation. After the case is finished, these materials should be sent to the Registrar's Office, not kept by the instructor.

- d. With issues related to misrepresentation of academic records, the case may be referred to the Dean of Students.
- e. The student may appeal in writing to the academic department chair, and the director of NEXT Steps. The appeal will be considered, and a final decision will be made. The Registrar will be notified and determine if this is a first or second violation.

#### **4. Procedures for Multiple or Serious Violations of Academic Honesty**

- a. If a student has committed two or more academic honesty violations or if the violation is serious, the director of NEXT Steps will meet with the student. This meeting will happen after the appeal process unless the violation is serious.
- b. The director of NEXT Steps will decide on appropriate consequences, in consultation with the Associate Provost and/or Dean of Students.
- c. The student can appeal the director's decision in writing to the Provost, and the Provost's decision will be final.

#### **5. Penalties for Violations of the Academic Honesty Policy**

The University aims to be supportive and corrective, rather than just punishing students. We believe that ignoring a violation is not helpful or fair. So, if a student has a second violation or if the director believes the violation is serious, the University may respond with various actions like suspension, probation, or other suitable disciplinary actions.

- a. First Violation  
The instructor will assign sanctions within the context of the course.
- b. Second Violation: The director of NEXT Steps will assign appropriate sanctions that go beyond the course.

#### **6. Time and Record-Keeping Considerations**

- a. Violations should be processed in a timely manner
  - (1) Instructors should report academic honesty 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.
- 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 Reported" until the investigation and possible appeals are complete.
- c. Violations will continue to be processed if the student withdraws from the course.
- d. Results from reviews and appeals should be filed with the Registrar.
- e. A record of academic honesty violations will be maintained by the Office of the Registrar in accordance with the University's Schedule for Records Retention.

## **B. Academic Petitions**

Students requesting an exception to an academic policy complete the “Academic Policies Petition” from the Office of the Registrar’s website. The director and assistant director of the NEXT Steps program make a determination of the decision and inform the Registrar’s Office. The Registrar’s Office notifies the student of the decision via electronic form.

### **C. Academic Progress, Satisfactory**

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is measured for all students. This policy governs a student’s eligibility to receive federal aid funds and any other student aid sources that base eligibility on federal or institutional financial aid SAP Standards.

***1. Each component of the program’s course of study will be assessed to determine SAP across all domains. All the following components apply directly to NEXT Steps students in the Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP).***

**a. Pace of Completion**

A completion pace of at least 67% ensures that students in NEXT Steps complete the program within the maximum timeframe. Pace of completion is determined by dividing the successfully completed hours by the cumulative hours attempted, expressed as a percentage. Percentages can be rounded.

(1) Maximum Timeframe: Federal regulations relating to federal student aid require that students complete their program within a maximum timeframe of 150% of the published length of a program. NEXT Steps is a two-year/four semester program, giving students a maximum timeframe of three years/six semesters to meet the program requirements, using a credit hour measurement.

**b. University Catalog Coursework**

Students will participate in 1-2 university inclusive courses per semester. They will be assessed using a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading system. Students will not receive a GPA. In each course, students will be expected to receive satisfactory scores on academic course grading rubrics provided by the NEXT Steps director and demonstrate progress toward inclusive course objectives.

**c. Vocational Development**

Students will participate in the employment readiness component of the program each year. Students are expected to participate in career readiness activities as well as on and off campus internships with a job coach. Satisfactory completion of weekly reports from job coaches based on student progression in workplace behaviors and completion of work tasks. Internships will be graded using a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading system using performance rubric.

**d. Independent and Community Living**

Students will reside on campus and participate in university-based social activities with peers. Peer mentors and resident advisors will complete weekly reports based on student engagement and independent living skills. Input from NEXT Steps director and assistant directory, using observational data will also be a part of weekly reports. Independent Living and Community Engagement will be graded using a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading system using a performance rubric.

**e. Person Centered Goals**

Each semester students will set goals which will have action steps. NEXT Steps advisors will complete weekly reports based on student progress with their PCP goals. Students will earn Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory based on achievement, demonstration of learning and attendance to advising sessions.

**2. Academic standing is calculated at the end of fall and spring semesters. When students are placed on academic warning, academic probation or academic dismissal, the student, their NEXT Steps advisor and financial aid staff are notified by the Office of the Registrar. If the student has signed a FERPA waiver, designated a proxy, and/or has provided direction in other legal documents, the advisor will notify the parents/guardians and other designated persons.**

### **3. Implementation**

#### **a. Academic Update**

If a student is struggling in a course (like low test scores, missing assignments, or poor attendance), the instructor should send an "Academic Update." This notice goes to the student and relevant NEXT Steps staff. The goal is to encourage the student to get help and inform others in the campus community who interact with the student.

#### **b. Academic Warning**

Students who earn a grade of (U- Unsatisfactory) in any one class in one semester receive an academic warning, and their NEXT Steps advisor is notified. Students receive normal financial aid while on academic warning.

#### **c. Academic Probation**

Students who earn a grade of (U-Unsatisfactory) in any two classes in one semester are placed on academic probation. A student on academic probation will be advised to take a maximum of 14 credits per semester while on probation. Their financial aid will not be affected. They will continue to participate in co-curricular activities since such participation earns academic credit towards the NEXT Steps Certificate.

#### **d. Academic Suspension, and Dismissal**

Students who earn a grade of (U-Unsatisfactory) in any four classes may be subject to academic suspension or dismissal. Academic dismissal of any student is the decision of Messiah University Registrar. Academic warning and academic probation may not always precede academic dismissal.

#### **e. Cocurricular and Athletic Eligibility**

A NEXT Steps student is expected to continue to participate in cocurricular and athletic commitments, if such participation is considered a curricular requirement to earn the Career and Personal Development certificate. The student must be receiving a grade for participation.

#### **f. Academic Appeals of Suspension or Dismissal**

Appeals of academic probation and dismissal must be submitted in writing to the Academic Appeals Subcommittee and must include an explanation of why minimum academic requirements were not met, a detailed plan for improvement, and why an exception is warranted. Appeals must be received within the time limit stated in the suspension notification.

## **D. Attendance, Course**

### **1. Assumption of Responsibility**

Students must assume full responsibility for class attendance in a way satisfactory to the instructor and for work missed due to absence(s).

- a. Course policies on class attendance are decided by the instructor. NEXT Steps students are required to follow attendance policies set forth in course syllabi and discussed at the beginning of the semester with advisor.
- b. If an out-of-class requirement in one course conflicts with the class time of another course, the instructor making the out-of-class requirement must provide additional ways to fulfill that requirement.

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

- a. Steps will be taken to minimize student absences related to University-endorsed activities.
  - (1) All athletic contest schedules will be reviewed and approved by the Athletic Director and the Faculty Athletic Representative prior to the beginning of the semester.
  - (2) All artistic performance programming will be reviewed and approved by the Dean of the School of Arts, Culture and Society prior to the beginning of the semester.
  - (3) All student absences due to student professional presentations will be reviewed and approved by the appropriate School Dean at least one month prior to the activity.
- b. All parties involved will be made aware of the scheduled absences well ahead of the date(s) of absence.
  - (1) To the extent it is possible, absences due to University-endorsed activities will be identified at the beginning of each semester or term.
  - (2) At the beginning of each semester, the Faculty Athletic Representative will send all teaching faculty the approved dismissal times for all scheduled athletic contests.
  - (3) At the beginning of each semester, the Dean of the School of Arts, Culture and Society will send all teaching faculty a schedule of approved performances which may result in class conflicts.
- c. Students involved in University-approved activities must notify their instructor at least a week in advance if they will miss class. They are also responsible for discussing how to make up any missed work or assignments according to the course's attendance policy.

### **3. Absence due to student illness or critical illness/death in immediate family**

In case of a family death or emergency, students should contact the director of the NEXT Steps program who will work with the Office of Student Success and Engagement to send official notice to faculty. The student will be responsible for working with faculty for making up missed assignments, exams, etc. For long-term medical absences, students should check the policies for Medical Leave, Medical Absence, and Medical Incomplete, and contact the Engle Center for help.

### **4. Appeal process:**

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

### **5. Make Up Work**

Arrangements for make-up work are to be made between the student and the instructor.

## **E. Auditing a Course**

NEXT Steps Students are not permitted to audit courses.

## **F. Certification, Application for**

Students working toward a certificate must file an application for certificate with the Registrar's Office at the beginning of their second year. This requires the completion of a minimum of 26 credits at the completion of their first year. Applications require the approval of the Academic Council and the Community of Educators Senate before students are formally admitted to certificate candidacy.

## **G. Concentration, Change of**

After having declared a concentration, students may change to another concentration. To change a concentration the student completes the online Update of Major/Minor/Concentration form available on the Office of the Registrar's website. This process includes the review/electronic signature of the student. NEXT Steps students will retain their same academic advisor as previous concentration. The student is informed when the process has been completed.

***NEXT Steps students are only permitted to declare one concentration.***

## **H. Definitions, Academic**

### **1. Academic Sessions**

The traditional undergraduate academic calendar at Messiah consists of two semesters, one in the Fall, and one in the Spring. These semesters are comprised of 16 instructional weeks. (See the academic calendar <https://www.messiah.edu/academic-calendars/>) NEXT Steps students are only enrolled during the Fall and Spring semesters.

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

### **2. Classification of Students**

- a. First Year - satisfaction of entrance requirements
- b. Second Year - Minimum of 26 credits earned from core and inclusive courses.
- c. Full-Time Status. Students who carry an academic load of 12 or more credit hours are considered full-time students, charged at the full-time student rate. All NEXT Steps students are required to be full-time status each semester they are enrolled in the program.

Note: In order to maintain eligibility for federal government funding and certain types of financial aid, all students must meet the standard of [Satisfactory Academic Progress](#) outlined in this catalog.

### **3. Courses**

#### **a. Course Types**

##### **(1) NEXT Steps Core Course**

Program specific courses in which NEXT steps students are enrolled together, typically by cohort. Instructors for core course are NEXT Steps staff. Students are scored based on the academic rubric provided.

##### **(2) NEXT Steps Inclusive Course**

Undergraduate academic courses in which NEXT Steps students will enroll inclusively as students. Students enrolled will have learning objectives different from those of traditional students enrolled in the course, and faculty will score students based on the academic rubric provided.

#### **b. Course Coding**

The courses listed in the Catalog are coded as follows:

##### **(1) Courses numbered 010-099 are associated with the NEXT Steps program.**

These courses consist of NEXT Steps core courses as well as inclusive courses.

##### **(2) Courses numbered 100 to 299 are designated as lower division courses.**

##### **(3) Courses numbered 300 to 499 are designated as upper division courses and are generally restricted to junior and senior undergraduate students.**

##### **(4) The credit value of each course appears parenthetically following the course title in the course descriptions. The unit of credit is the semester hour.**

#### **c. Credit Hour**

A credit hour is a unit of academic work consisting of 50 minutes of instructional time, or two or three such periods of laboratory work per week, throughout the standard 15-week semester. In addition to the in-class work, the student is expected to spend at least two hours outside of class. For terms other than the standard 15-week semester, an equivalent amount of instructional time is required. One credit hour, for NEXT Steps students, also consists of independent living, community activities, as well as employment readiness work.

### **4. Concentrations and Certificates**

#### **a. Concentration**

Students will complete the credit requirements within the four NEXT Steps concentrations (Liberal and Applied Arts, Human Services, Business, Government and Public Administration and Health and Wellness), earning a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 24 credits. See NEXT Steps curriculum course sheets for requirements. Students can only declare one concentration.

#### **b. Certificate**

Students will earn a Certificate in Career and Personal Development through completing all required academic components within their concentration and required NEXT Steps program courses, earning a minimum of 54 credits.

## **I. Exams**



### **1. Class Examinations**

When students miss a class examination, the instructor decides whether they can make-up that examination.

### **2. Final Examinations**

Students attend the final examination period. NEXT Steps students will take modified final examinations based on their course syllabus modifications.

## **J. FERPA**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, (“The Act”) is a federal law enacted to establish procedures for disclosing information contained in student records and to protect the privacy of these records. The Act applies to currently enrolled students, when the student attends class for the first time, and former students. FERPA rights continues while the student or former student is living. The Act does not apply to individuals who have applied for admission but never attended Messiah University or applicants for admission who are denied enrollment. Information obtained on a former student subsequent to graduation or termination of enrollment is not covered under The Act (e.g., data accumulated on alumni).

### **1. Definitions**

- a. Eligible Student  
A student who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.
- b. School Official
  - (1) A person employed by Messiah University in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position including security and safety personnel and health services staff.
  - (2) A person or company with whom Messiah University has contracted, such as auditors, attorneys, or the National Student Clearinghouse.
  - (3) A person serving on the Board of Trustees.
  - (4) A student serving in an official committee or assisting another University official in performing his or her tasks.
- c. Education Records  
Records that directly relate to a student and are maintained by an educational institution.
  - (1) Education records may include:
    - (a) Class lists
    - (b) Grade rosters
    - (c) Student schedules
    - (d) Correspondence
    - (e) Data in an electronic database
  - (2) Education records do NOT include:
    - (a) Records about students made by instructors, professors, and administrators for their own use and not shown to others (sole possession records).
    - (b) Office of Security and Safety records maintained solely for law enforcement purposes and kept separate from the education records described above.

- (c) Employment records, except where a currently enrolled student is employed as a result of his or her status as a student.
- (d) Records of a physician, psychologist, or other recognized professional made or used only for treatment purposes and available only to persons providing treatment (while not education records, these records are subject to FERPA).
- (e) Records that contain only information relating to a person's activities after that person is no longer a student at the University.
- (f) Financial information submitted by parents(s)/guardian(s).
- (g) Directory information not restricted by the student.
- (h) Confidential letters and recommendations placed in the student's record if the student has waived in writing his or her right to inspect those letters and recommendations. Students may revoke such a waiver at a later time, but the revocation must be in writing and is only effective with respect to actions occurring after the revocation.
- (i) Grades on peer-reviewed papers/assignments before they are collected and recorded by the teacher.
- d. Personally Identifiable Information  
All information that is directly related to a student. This information includes both "directory information" and "non-directory information."
- e. Directory Information
- f. Information contained in a record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. At Messiah University, directory information includes:
  - (1) Student's name
  - (2) Home and campus address
  - (3) Telephone listing
  - (4) Campus electronic mail address
  - (5) High school attended
  - (6) Photograph or digital image
  - (7) Degree for which student is a candidate
  - (8) Academic major and concentration
  - (9) Academic advisor
  - (10) Academic awards or honors received
  - (11) Grade level (first year, sophomore, etc.)
  - (12) Full-time/part-time enrollment status
  - (13) Dates of attendance
  - (14) Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- g. Non-Directory Information  
Any personally identifiable student information that is not directory information. At Messiah University, non-directory information includes, but is not limited to, a student's Social Security number or student identification (ID) number.
- h. Legitimate Educational Interest

A school official's need to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. A school official has legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities to Messiah University.

## **2. Student Rights**

- a. Currently enrolled and former students have the right to:
  - (1) Look at and review information contained in education records within 45 days after Messiah University receives a request for access.
  - (2) Ask for the amendment of the student's education records that a student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights.
  - (3) Consent to disclosure, subject to certain exceptions specified in The Act, of personally identifiable information from education records.
  - (4) File a complaint with the Department of Education concerning an alleged failure by Messiah University to comply with The Act.
- b. Procedure for Inspecting Records
  - (1) Students must ask for permission in writing to look at their records and must present that request to the Registrar's Office, who will coordinate the inspection of records.
  - (2) The records will be made available to the student for inspection not more than 45 days following the receipt of the request.
  - (3) A student may look at records of disclosure, which will be kept by the office in which the record is maintained unless such inspection is prohibited under the terms of a court order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- c. Procedure for Requesting the Amendment of Records
 

With the exception of grades or disciplinary actions, if a student believes that information in his or her record is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of his or her privacy rights, he or she may request that a change in the record be made.

  - (1) Such a request must be in writing, clearly identify the part of the record the student wants changed and submit the request to the appropriate University official in whose office the record in question is located.
  - (2) If Messiah University decides not to amend the record as requested, the University will notify the student in writing that he or she may make a written request to that official for a hearing to contest the record.
  - (3) A hearing will be conducted within 30 days of the written request (or as soon thereafter as is practical) with the student having an opportunity to present all relevant evidence. The hearing panel will consist of the University official in charge of the record in question and two other officials selected by the official in charge.
  - (4) The student will be notified in writing within two weeks of the hearing (or as soon thereafter as is practical) as to the decision of the official or hearing panel. The decision of the hearing panel is final.

- (5) If the student disagrees with the action taken by the hearing panel, he or she may place a statement in his or her educational record giving the reasons for disagreeing with the decision.
- d. Procedure to Request Withholding of Directory Information
  - (1) Students may request to withhold disclosure of Directory Information by indicating as such on the Directory Profile located on the Personal Information tab in Self-Service Banner.
  - (2) Messiah University will continue to honor a student's last request with regard to the disclosure or non-disclosure of Directory Information made while the student was in attendance at Messiah.
  - (3) A student who is no longer enrolled cannot request that Directory Information be withheld.
  - (4) A student who is no longer enrolled can rescind their request to withhold Directory Information.

### **3. Parent Rights**

- a. The Act generally does not guarantee any rights to parents or guardians of students who are attending post-secondary institutions.
- b. However, at Messiah University's discretion, The Act does allow the University to provide parents with access to their student's educational records provided the parents claim the student as a dependent on their federal income tax return. If a student is claimed as a dependent for federal income tax purposes by either parent then, at the University's discretion, the University may disclose information in the student's education records without the student's consent.
- c. As a matter of general practice, Messiah University does not release student education records to parents of dependent students without the student's written authorization. Messiah University does provide all students with the ability to give parents and other third parties online proxy access to their education records.

### **4. Disclosure of Education Records**

- a. Conditions Under Which Directory Information May Be Released  
Directory Information may be released at the discretion of University officials without the written permission of the student, unless the student has requested that directory information be withheld. If the student has requested that directory information be withheld, the information will not be released without their written consent.
- b. Conditions Under Which Directory and Non-Directory Information May Be Released -- Directory and Non-Directory Information may be released without the written consent of the student to:
  - (1) Authorized representatives of the Comptroller General of the United States.
  - (2) The Attorney General of the United States.
  - (3) The Secretary of Education.
  - (4) State or local educational authorities, for audit and evaluation of federal- and state-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with federal legal requirements that related to those programs.

- (5) Messiah University personnel or other school officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the records. This category includes a person or organization retained to be an agent for, or under contract with, Messiah University, such as financial auditors, attorneys, or National Student Clearinghouse. Disclosure to a school official having a legitimate educational interest does not constitute institutional authorization to transmit, share, or disclose any or all information received to a third party.
- (6) Officials of another school in which the student seeks to enroll.
- (7) Persons or organizations involving financial aid in order to determine the student's eligibility for financial aid; to determine the amount of financial aid; to determine conditions to be imposed regarding financial aid; and to enforce conditions of financial aid.
- (8) State and local officials as allowed by state statutes concerning the juvenile justice system.
- (9) Organizations that are conducting studies to develop, validate, and administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; and improve instruction. Those organizations cannot redisclose personally identifiable information of students.
- (10) Accrediting agencies carrying out their accrediting functions.
- (11) Parents of dependent students (that is, students who are claimed as dependents on their parents'/guardians' most recent federal tax return). However, as a matter of general practice, Messiah University does not release student education records to parents of dependent students without the student's written authorization.
- (12) To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. The University will notify the student when such a request occurs without the student's knowledge unless prohibited by law.
- (13) Appropriate persons in a health or safety emergency. If Messiah University determines that there is an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals, it may disclose information from educational records to any person whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or others, provided that Messiah University will only exercise this authority for the duration of the emergency.

The University can release information related to a student contained in law enforcement records so long as such records are created by a law enforcement unit, created for a law enforcement purpose, and maintained by a law enforcement unit in a manner that segregates them from records maintained by other components of the University.

### ***5. Other Faculty and Staff Responsibilities***

Messiah University will notify students annually of their rights under The Act by publishing such information in the University catalog and electronic announcements. A complete policy is available from the Office of the Registrar. Messiah University will maintain a record of requests for access to and disclosure of a student's Non-Directory Information to anyone other than:

- a. The student
- b. University officials with a legitimate educational interest
- c. A party with the student's written consent
- d. A party seeking or receiving the records as directed by a court order or lawfully issued subpoena that directs the University to refrain from disclosing the contents of the subpoena or the information furnished in response to the subpoena.

#### **6. Enforcement**

Enforcement of this Act is the responsibility of the Family Policy Compliance Officer, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-5901.

Further information concerning The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act is available at [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov).

### **K. Grade Appeal Procedure**

If a student disagrees with their grade and it's confirmed that there was no mistake, they can start the grade appeal process.

#### **1. A student talks informally with their instructor.**

If this talk leads to a grade change, the teacher submits a change request through Self-Service Banner. If the student is still not satisfied, they are directed to the department chair. Students can choose to have a NEXT Steps staff member to assist with informal conversation.

#### **2. A student should talk informally with the department chair about a grade issue.**

The chair will then talk to the instructor. If this leads to a grade change, the instructor submits a request for it. If the student is still not satisfied, they will learn about the formal appeal process. This first informal talk must happen before the end of the semester after the grade was received. Students can choose to have NEXT Steps staff member to assist with informal conversation.

#### **3. The department chair needs to set up a meeting with the student and instructor to talk about the issue.**

If they decide to change a grade, the instructor will submit a request through Self-Service Banner. The student must be notified in writing about this change. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, they should be informed in writing of this, along with their options. Students can choose to have NEXT Steps staff member present to assist with communication.

#### **4. Students can appeal in writing to the department chair.**

This appeal must be submitted within ten working days after the student is notified of the outcome. Within ten working days of receiving the appeal, the department chair must inform the instructor and share a copy of the appeal. The instructor then has ten working days to write an explanation of the student's grade. The department chair has ten working days to hold a meeting (without the student or instructor) to review the case, using the student's appeal and the instructor's response. The department chair will notify the student of the decision in writing, also informing the instructor and the Director of NEXT Steps. If the grade changes, the department chair will send a grade change request to the Registrar along with the response given to the student.

**5. *Students can appeal in writing to the Associate Provost if they are not satisfied with the department's decision.***

This appeal must be written and sent within ten working days of receiving the chair's letter. The associate provost will provide a written decision within 30 days, which will be final.

**6. *If the instructor is the department chair, the appeal will be heard by the Dean of the School.***

## **L. Grading**

Courses are graded on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis as indicated below.

GRADE	DEFINITION
S	Satisfactory
U	Unsatisfactory
I	Incomplete
W	Withdrawal

### **1. Credits**

Credits cannot be transferred from other institutions and/or inclusive post-secondary programs. Credit awarded for inclusive and core courses goes towards the Certificate in Career and Personal Development plus concentration area.

### **2. Repeating Courses**

A student can retake any inclusive course in which they earned a U. When a course is repeated, the new grade will be used to award credit towards Certificate in Career and Personal Development. All repeated courses must be taken at Messiah University. Students are required to repeat a required course in which they earned a U.

### **3. Auxiliary Symbols**

**a. I = Incomplete.**

The grade I is given when a student can't finish a course on time due to significant reasons like illness. It should be used rarely and not for students who are careless or do not plan well. To earn credit, the I must be changed by the fourth week after the course term ends; if not, a U will be given.

**b. S = Satisfactory**

The cut off to receive a Satisfactory is 65% in the course. Credits in which the students receive a “S” count towards the total number of credits required for program completion.

- c. U = Unsatisfactory  
The student earns 64% or less in the course.
- d. W = Withdrawal  
During the middle third of the semester, students may withdraw from courses with a grade of W.

#### **4. 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](mailto: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.

## **M. Graduation Requirements**

NEXT Steps advisors provide counsel to students regarding choice of curriculum and of each semester's program of courses. Final responsibility for the fulfillment of all requirements for graduation rests with the student, who is expected to seek advice when needed. Any changes from the requirements require the approval of the NEXT Steps director and the Registrar.

### **1. Application for Certificate**

Students working toward a certificate must file an application for certificate with the Registrar's Office at the beginning of their second year. This requires the completion of a minimum of 26 credits at the end of their first year. Applications require the approval of the Academic Council and the Community of Educators Senate before students are formally admitted to certificate candidacy.

### **2. Graduation Attendance**

Graduating students are expected to participate in the Commencement exercises. Exemption requests should be directed to the director of NEXT Steps.

### **3. Requirements for Certificate plus concentration**

- a. Completion of all NEXT Steps program requirements, including 42 credits for certificate

- b. Minimum of 12 credits completed in selected concentration

## **N. Medical Leave**

Medical leave is available for students who, due to documented serious physical or psychological illness, need to leave the University during the semester without completing their course work or to withdraw from the University for no longer than two consecutive semesters. Medical leave may be voluntarily requested by a student or, in certain circumstances, may be determined to be required for a student when the student's psychological or medical condition renders him or her a threat to the safety, health, or well-being of any person or of the campus community, or causes a significant disruption of the educational and other activities of the University community.

Medical Leave, whether voluntary or required, is not a substitute for appropriate disciplinary action although disabilities may be considered mitigating factors in a disciplinary proceeding. A student suffering from a medical or psychiatric disorder who is accused of a disciplinary violation will not be exempted from the disciplinary process unless, as a result of the medical or psychiatric disorder, the student: (1) lacks the capacity to respond to the allegations, (2) did not know the nature and the quality of the action in question or (3) approved accommodations through the Office of Academic Accessibility were not implemented and failure to provide such accommodations resulted in the disciplinary violation.

Students on medical leave are not regarded as having permanently withdrawn from the University and need not apply for readmission through the Admissions Office. However, students must be approved for fitness to return to campus through the process described in the policies below. A student may request a more limited medically excused status if he or medically unable to complete the final forty percent of a semester but intends to return to the University at the beginning of the following semester. The request is initiated in the same manner as described below in the voluntary medical leave section. A student approved for medically excused status need not request permission to return to the University for the following semester unless conditions for returning had been stipulated by the University at the time of departure.

A student on medical leave (regardless of whether voluntary or required) will retain all accrued seniority for housing and registration purposes and may register conditionally for courses if he or she intends to return for the following semester. Any money paid to the University as deposits against tuition or charges anticipated for the following semester will be refunded in full if the student is not approved to return. Documentation for determination of fitness to return must be received by the deadlines listed above and approval to return granted in order for registration to be considered final. Seniority for housing preferences cannot be guaranteed for students who do not meet these requirements.

### **1. Financial aid implications**

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the Financial Aid Office individually to discuss the implications of medical leave on his or her financial aid.

### **2. Refund of tuition and fees**

Students who take medical leave during the first five weeks of the semester may be eligible for some refund. Please see the Business Office website for specific information: [www.messiah.edu/offices/business/student\\_accounts/#refund](http://www.messiah.edu/offices/business/student_accounts/#refund)  
No refunds will be given for students who are granted medical leave during the final 10 weeks of the semester.

### **3. Voluntary Medical Leave**

The following policy establishes the procedures under which a voluntary medical leave may occur, as well as the process for return from leave.

#### **a. Initiation of Request**

A student requesting medical leave must make the request in writing to the Director of Health Services. The request may be for either one or two semesters. The student may be required to provide appropriate documentation from a physician, therapist, or other qualified caregiver. The Request for Medical Leave, and all other medical leave documents can be found at:

[https://www.messiah.edu/info/20898/educators/1432/medical\\_leave](https://www.messiah.edu/info/20898/educators/1432/medical_leave)

#### **b. Determination of request**

A decision approving or disapproving the medical leave request will be made by the Director of Health Services. If there is a pending academic or disciplinary proceeding that could result in a suspension from the University, medical leave requests will not be considered until the proceeding has concluded. A student under suspension from the University is ineligible for medical leave. As part of receiving medical leave for mental health reasons, if indicated, the student may be asked to sign a behavioral agreement regarding ongoing treatment during the time he or she is on medical leave. Failure to comply with this treatment would result in a termination of the medical leave and mandatory withdrawal from school.

When a student has been approved for medical leave, the Director will provide a copy of the decision to the Registrar. The Registrar will notify appropriate offices on campus of the student's status and send a copy of the decision to the student for his or her records. Copies of the decision will be maintained in the student's academic and student life files. Original documentation from the student's medical records will be maintained by the Director of Health Services.

A request for medical leave for the current semester must be made prior to the last week of class in the fall or spring semester.

#### **c. Effective date of medical leave status.** A student whose request for medical leave is approved during the first sixty percent of the semester will be deemed to have medical leave status as of the date on which his or her request was made to the Director of Health Services. The student will remain on medical leave status for the balance of that semester and may request an extension for the next semester by filing a request as described below.

During the final 40 percent of the semester, a student may request medical leave incompletes in one or more courses. Approval for medical leave incompletes is arranged by the Registrar's Office and the professor.

#### **d. Extension of medical leave status**

A student on medical leave status may request a one-semester extension by providing new documentation to the Director of Health Services by August 1 for the fall semester or December 1 for the spring semester. A decision approving or disapproving the request will be made by the Director of Health Services. The Director will provide a copy of the decision to the Registrar, who will notify appropriate offices on campus. Medical leave status may continue no longer than two consecutive semesters. After this time, a student who does not return to the University will be deemed officially withdrawn. Students who are approved for more than one medical leave during their time at Messiah University may be subject to different degree requirements than when they originally entered the University. Different degree requirements may extend the amount of time it takes for a student to complete his/her degree. Students returning from a second medical leave are encouraged to consult with the Registrar's Office about their degree requirements.

e. Grades and completion of medical leave work

A student whose request for medical leave is approved during the first sixty percent of the semester will be given a grade of "W" (Withdraw) in each course for which he or she is registered. No "MI" (Medical Incomplete) grades will be given. No credit will be earned for any course, and a prorated refund of charges will be made as determined by Student Financial Services. During the final 40 percent of the semester, a student may request medical leave incompletes in one or more courses. Approval for medical leave incompletes is arranged by the Registrar's Office and professor. 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 "MI" for that course will be changed to a "W."

f. Determination of fitness to return to campus

A student requesting to return from medical leave will be asked to sign a release allowing the Director of Health Services to communicate with the physician, therapist, or other caregiver, as well as with other persons at Messiah University involved in determining the student's fitness to return. The student must provide documentation from his or her physician, therapist, or other caregiver concerning current medical status by August 1 to be considered for approval to return for the fall semester, or by December 1 to be considered for approval to return for the spring semester. The student also may be required to have an interview with the Director of Health Services and/or the Director of Student Success. The University reserves the right to require the student, in order to return to and remain in classes, to be in ongoing treatment as well as other necessary stipulations. All information will be reviewed and a decision regarding fitness to return will be made by the Director of Health Services, who will notify the Registrar. The granting of medical leave by the University does not guarantee that the student will be allowed to return.

#### **4. Required Medical Leave**

The following policy establishes the procedures under which a required medical leave may occur, as well as the process for return from leave. Its requirements and procedures are applicable to all students with or without disabilities.

a. Standards for a Required Leave

Typically, a Required Medical Leave is invoked when a student exhibits acute or persistent health or behavioral problems which arise from physical or mental health issues. Each situation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The University may initiate the Required Medical Leave process if, in the judgment of the Dean of Students, a student meets one or more of the following criteria:

- (1) The student is deemed a direct threat to the safety, health, or well-being of any person. A direct threat to others includes any danger of suicide, self-mutilation, accident, or assault that cannot be mitigated by reasonable accommodations or necessitates unusual measures to monitor, supervise, treat, protect, or restrain the student to ensure his or her safety and the safety of those around the student.
- (2) The student's behavior is disruptive to others and negatively affects the community. Disruptive behavior is that which causes emotional, psychological or physical distress to fellow students or staff substantially above that normally experienced in daily life. Such disruption may be in the form of severe distress associated with one or more behavioral incidents, or somewhat less severe but persistent distress over a more extended period.
- (3) The student refuses to cooperate with recommended assessment or treatment and his or her physical or psychological disorder seems likely to deteriorate to the point of permanent disability, disfigurement, impairment or dysfunction without such assessment or treatment, thus presenting a direct threat to the safety, health, or well-being of any threat to person. Where standard assessment is impossible because of the student's resistance, indirect behavioral observations will constitute the basis for judgment.

b. Procedures for a Required Medical Leave

When conditions allow for an investigation, including an individual assessment of the student's health status, resolution of the situation will first be sought with the student's cooperation if at all possible. Voluntary leave is encouraged to preserve, to the extent possible, confidentiality, and to maximize the participation of the student or his or her family. If the student declines voluntary medical leave, he or she may be involuntarily withdrawn from the University. The involuntary medical leave process can be initiated by any University official who believes a student meets one or more of the standards described in paragraphs 4a.(1), (2), or (3) above. University officials with concerns about student safety will contact the Dean of Students, who will coordinate the Required Medical Leave process. When the Dean of Students becomes aware of a student who may fit the standards for required medical leave, she will request an individualized physical or mental health assessment from the Director of Health Services and will conduct a community impact review. When possible, this should begin with a one-on-one meeting with the identified student. The individualized health assessment will include relevant records from on- and off-campus treatment providers. The community impact review will include relevant information from employees and students having interaction with the student. If the Dean of Students deems the student does not meet any of the standards for a Required Medical Leave, this process will terminate and the Dean of Students, Director of Health Services, and/or the Director of Academic Success will meet with the student to develop reasonable accommodations necessary for student success and community safety. The student will be required to adhere to the established accommodations. Failure to adhere to the established parameters could result in the student being required to take a medical leave.

If the individualized health assessment and community impact review result in a recommended medical leave, and the student refuses voluntary medical leave, then a Health Review Team will be established. The Health Review Team will be comprised of the Dean of Students, an Engle Center representative, and the Director of Academic Success.

The Health Review Team will review the individualized health assessment and the community impact review and will invite the student to meet with the team. At that time, the student may provide additional information for consideration. The Team may require a further assessment of the student by a medical/psychiatric provider identified by the Team to determine if the student meets the standards above.

The work of the Team will be guided by the following:

- (1) Each student's situation is different, and an individualized determination must be conducted in each case, considering the stressors faced by that student.
- (2) The nature, duration, and severity of risk to self or the community must be considered.
- (3) A consideration will be made of reasonable accommodations which may mitigate risk and contribute to student success and community safety

- (4) Emphasis must be placed on the student's observed conduct, actions, and statements, as opposed to primarily on speculation, inferences and assumptions.

If the Team concludes that the student does not meet any of the standards for a Required Medical Leave, it will inform the student in writing and establish reasonable accommodations for student success and community safety.

If the Team concludes that the student does meet one or more of the standards for a Required Medical Leave, the Team will notify the student of its decision in writing and will include its reasons for this conclusion, the effective date of the medical leave, the conditions for return (if applicable), and the appeal process to be followed by the student. The Team's decision will become effective immediately upon deposit in the mail or hand delivery.

c. Interim Measures

In all cases where a Required Medical Leave is being considered, the University will undertake an appropriate review and take prompt and effective action to support and protect the student(s) involved. This includes taking appropriate interim measures before the final decision is made. If the Dean of Students has reason to believe, based on information available, and in consultation with professionals with appropriate expertise, that the student's continued presence on campus poses an imminent threat of significant harm to self or others in the community, the University may take immediate action to remove the student from campus pending receipt and review of relevant information. This temporary removal may remain in place pending completion of any appeal process. Accordingly, the University may impose a "no contact" directive, which will typically include a directive that the involved parties refrain from having written, verbal, phone/text, or physical contact with one another, directly or through a third party, pending an individualized health assessment and community impact review and final decision. The University may also take any further protective action that it deems appropriate concerning the student pending the Health Review and final decision, including, without limitation, directing the appropriate University officials to alter the student's class schedule, housing (including restriction from University housing), and/or access to the campus (including class attendance).

d. Access to Campus During Leave

In certain circumstances, the student on medical leave may have their access to campus and other students limited during the time they are on leave. If these stipulations are established, they will be communicated in writing. Upholding or not upholding these parameters will have a measure of influence the recommendation for a return.

e. Student Appeal Process for a Required Medical Leave

The Health Review Team's decision may be appealed by the student to the Vice President for Human Resources and Compliance within five (5) business days of the decision. Such appeals should be in writing and include specific points the student wishes the Vice President for Human Resources and Compliance to consider. The Vice President for Human Resources and Compliance will make a decision based on the record. Additional evidence may be submitted, but it does not need to be considered.

The Vice President for Human Resources and Compliance has seven (7) business days to review the record and inform the student of his or her decision in writing. The Vice President for Human Resources and Compliance may (a) uphold the decision of the Team, (b) refer the matter back to the Team for further proceedings, or (c) reverse the decision of the Team and reinstate the student. The decision of the Vice President for Human Resources and Compliance is final.

f. Process for Return to the Campus after a Required Medical Leave

Permission to return for a student who has been placed on a Required Medical Leave will follow the guidelines for returning from voluntary medical leave, with the approval of the Dean of Students and Director of Health Services. Typically, at a minimum, conditions for return to class may include medical or psychiatric treatment during the period of leave and verification of compliance with recommendations of treatment providers. Other conditions for return may include examinations by independent or University-employed medical health professionals, release of relevant medical records, demonstrated ability to meet the University's academic and conduct standards, interviews with University officials, personal statements, and a decrease in the conduct resulting in the Required Medical Leave. The amount and nature of material requested, and the breadth of the review, will be based upon the nature and severity of the student's condition at the time Required Medical Leave was taken. Approval to return will be granted only if the Dean of Students and Director of Health Services determine that the conditions that led to the Required Medical Leave are no longer present or are mitigated to the extent that the student does not meet one or more of the standards in Paragraphs 4a.(1), (2), or (3) above.

The Dean of Students and Director of Health Services will consider recommendations of the student's care providers regarding return, but will make determinations independently and in accordance with all available information and expertise. Thus, a recommendation for return from a student's healthcare provider(s) is not in itself sufficient grounds for return. Failure of the student to cooperate in these procedures, to comply with required conditions of the leave or withdrawal, or to provide accurate and complete information is grounds for reconsideration of the student's status. Once all the relevant information has been considered, the Dean of Students and Director of Health Services will make a recommendation to the Dean of Students, who makes a final determination regarding the student's return from Required Medical Leave. Approval to return may include stipulations concerning class schedule, extracurricular activities, place of residence or other conditions as may be judged to be appropriate to the safety, health, and well-being of all persons in the campus community.

g. Confidentiality



If the student has been treated at the Engle Center, treatment records may be used in determining the outcome of the Required Medical Leave process. Under such extreme conditions that a consideration for Required Medical Leave is necessary, the Director of Health Services may decide that confidentiality must be waived, as is indicated in the “Client Consent” form signed by the student at the initiation of counseling. All records concerning Required Medical Leave will be kept in accordance with University policy. Required Medical Leave will be recorded on the transcript as a withdrawal from current courses.

## **O. Registration**

### ***1. Registration and Dropping/Adding Courses:***

Course registration for currently enrolled NEXT Steps students occurs during a registration window for the upcoming semester. Students must consult with their assigned advisor and obtain his/her approval before registering for classes. Prior to registering for classes, a student’s account must be paid to date, and all health records must be complete in the Engle Center. Students are considered actively enrolled the first day of classes. NEXT Steps is a Fall Semester start only program.

- a. Adding a course: Students are not permitted to add a course after the start of the semester. The deadline to add a course is the day before the start of the semester.
- b. Dropping and Withdrawing from a Course: Students can drop courses in the first third of the term without it showing on their transcript. In the second third, they can withdraw, and it will show as a “W” on their transcript. Academic status considers all credits attempted, including withdrawn ones. Students are not permitted to drop below 12 credits in the NEXT steps program.

## **P. Repeating Course Work**

A student may repeat any course in which they earned a U or W. Only the second grade will count toward the student’s credits earned toward their Certificate in Career and Personal Development. All repeat courses must be taken at Messiah University.

## **Q. Transcripts**

Upon written request from students, the Office of the Registrar issues transcripts of academic records. Contact the Office of the Registrar at [www.messiah.edu/registrar](http://www.messiah.edu/registrar) for transcript fees. Before transcripts can be issued, a student must have a clear account with the Falcon Exchange.

## **R. Transfer Credits**

- 1. Credits earned from previously attended inclusive post-secondary programs do not transfer to the NEXT Steps program.***
- 2. Credits earned from all undergraduate programs do not transfer into the NEXT Steps program.***
- 3. Credits earned from NEXT Steps program do not transfer into an undergraduate program at Messiah University.***

## **S. University Records, Access to**

Messiah University respects student rights guaranteed by law and appropriate to a private, Christian educational setting. Messiah University maintains student records under the guidelines of the Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), which gives enrolled students the right to inspect their “education records” and to restrict the release of those records. Education records are defined generally as records, files, documents, and other materials maintained by the University which contain information directly related to the student and from which a student can be individually identified. Examples include academic records, student account records, and many records maintained by Student Success and Engagement. Education records do not include personal records of instructors or administrators, medical records, financial records of parents, or Department of Safety records created for the purpose of law enforcement. Education records may be released to parents/guardians only with the written consent of the student or upon written evidence that the student has been declared as a dependent on the parent/guardian’s most recent income tax return.

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, home address, campus address, home telephone number, campus telephone number, campus email 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, 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 may opt for directory privacy by going to the Student Directory Profile (Privacy Settings) found in BANNER Self-Service. This option allows students to block any or all of the directory information that appears in the campus wide online directory. Students who opt to block all of their directory information will be excluded from any lists that may be provided to authorized internal and external departments. Thus, information that may otherwise be communicated to a student’s parents/guardians/spouse (campus events, commencement, etc.) will not be. Any student who for legal or other legitimate reasons requires the highest level of privacy must meet with the Dean of Students and the Registrar to discuss the circumstances involved.

## **T. Withdrawal and Termination**

Students who want to leave the University during the semester must officially complete the Withdraw/Transfer form on FALCONLink. If a student withdraws from the University prior to completion of the semester, the liability of tuition is placed on the student. The government entity (if applicable) will not pay due to services not being rendered in total. The remaining charges are the responsibility of the student/family. Students in residence halls must move out within 48 hours of withdrawing. Unofficial withdrawals will result in a U grade. If students do not plan to return to Messiah University next semester, they need to fill out the Withdraw/Transfer form before the end of their last enrolled semester. They can submit this form by the Friday before the

last week of regular classes. It's recommended that students talk to the director of NEXT Steps before submitting the form to discuss their withdrawal reasons. After submitting, the director of NEXT Steps may follow up for an exit interview.

## **PART II: NEXT STEPS ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

### **A. Advising**

NEXT Steps program staff serve as academic advisors to the students in the program. Academic advising at Messiah University helps students explore and develop their interests and skills, preparing them for future careers and community involvement. Advisors guide students in planning their education, but students are responsible for planning their own academic path and activities to meet graduation requirements and discover their calling. This process is a partnership where students take charge of their plans, and advisors offer support to ensure those plans align with their goals.

#### **1. Academic Advisors Should:**

- a. Understand certificate requirements and concentration requirements, as well as the overlap between the two;
- b. Understand academic policies and procedures;
- c. Assist students to make academic goals compatible with the student's life goals;
- d. Encourage students to improve academic performance and seek academic challenges;
- e. Assist students to develop course schedules which consider the student's academic goals and background
- f. Assist students in the course registration process
- g. Assist students in modifying course syllabi and identifying course accommodations
- h. Monitor student academic progress and encourage good academic work;
- i. Encourage students to pursue appropriate educational opportunities;
- j. Refer students to appropriate resources available to help students solve individual problems and identify, plan, and explore educational opportunities.
- k. Encourage student applications, if appropriate, for scholarships and awards

#### **2. Students Should:**

- a. Take full responsibility for all academic choices; academic advisors will help by presenting options and identifying resources;
- b. Prepare for advising sessions and bring materials (i.e. pen/digital device timetable of classes, catalog, completed registration form, etc.);
- c. Attend each scheduled advising session
- d. Follow through on things talked about during each advising session or other communication;
- e. Discuss and explore personal values, abilities, interests, and goals during their time at Messiah University;
- f. Learn about and follow institutional policies, procedures, and requirements;

- g. Review eligibility requirements for scholarships and awards and when appropriate, discuss options with advisor in a timely manner;
- h. Evaluate advisors and the advising system when asked.

**B. Office of Academic Accessibility**

Students in the NEXT Steps program will not go through the Office of Academic Accessibility for accommodations in classes. Students who feel they need additional accommodations, other than what is provided in their modified syllabus, should contact their NEXT Steps advisor.