

# ACADEMICS

## Academic Policies And Procedures

**Doctoral Student** — A doctoral student is one who has earned a master's degree and is enrolled in the Doctor of Arts, Doctor of Ministry, or the Doctor of Philosophy program.

**Post Master's Coursework** — A minimum of 12 credits of graduate work following an earned master's degree.

**Graduate Student** — A graduate student is one who has earned a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college, is not pursuing a second bachelor's degree, and is enrolled in graduate-level work.

**Second Degree Student** — A second degree student is one who has earned a master's degree and seeks another master's degree in a different program. The second degree student must complete the entire program of study and may not transfer courses from the first master's degree. When competencies have been met by prior course work, a department chair/program director will require alternate course work to ensure that the degree program meets all standards for content and credits.

**Full-time/Half-time Student** — Graduate students are full-time when enrolled in 6-12 credits in a regular semester/term; they are considered three quarter time with 4.5-5 credits per semester, and they are considered half-time when enrolled in 3-4 credits per semester. Students registered for 1-2 credits in a semester are considered less than half time.

Doctoral students are full-time when enrolled for at least 1 credit in each regular semester.

**International Student** — An international student is an F-1 visa holder. F-1 students must be enrolled full-time.

## Academic Calendars

Dates of course offerings and periods of enrollment are determined by the academic calendars approved by the faculty.

Student enrollment is reported according to the official beginning and ending dates of the academic session, term, or semester, not according to individual course dates. A student's degree date and eligibility to participate in commencement exercises is based on the last date of the final academic session, term, or semester, even if course work is completed prior to that date.

## Maximum Course Load

Graduate students are limited to a maximum of 18 credits in a regular semester and 6 credits in each summer session. Graduate students enrolled in term-based programs are limited to six credits in each accelerated term. Graduate students enrolled in residency programs are limited to the course load and credit hours specified for the term in their program of study.

## Transfer of Credit

A maximum of nine graduate semester credits may be transferred from another accredited graduate program with the approval of the director of the appropriate program and the dean. An official transcript for this course work must be received by Eastern in order for the course to

be transferred. No credit will be granted for courses taken at another institution in which the student has earned less than a grade of "B."

Course work to be taken at other institutions during the student's enrollment at Eastern must be approved in advance. Permission forms are available on Eastern's Web site at [www.eastern.edu/registrar](http://www.eastern.edu/registrar) (<http://www.eastern.edu/registrar/>). Course grades and credits for transfer courses approved by the student's program appear on the Eastern University transcript and the quality points are calculated into the student's cumulative grade-point average.

## Credit Hour Policies

### Credits

Eastern University grants credit for academic work on the basis of the semester credit hour, which typically corresponds to forty-two (42.0) hours of faculty instruction over the course of fifteen weeks, plus a final exam period. Instructional hours in the University's seven-week "block" term meets the same requirement in an accelerated format. The instructional requirements for a given course may be higher but never lower than this minimum standard, which is established in the federal and state requirements.

### Definition of An Instructional Hour

Federal guidelines for an instructional hour are deliberately flexible. Guidance from the Department of Education states that "the regulations are grounded in commonly accepted practice in higher education, do not intrude on core academic decisions made by institutions and their accrediting agencies, and are completely consistent with innovative practices such as online education, competency-based credit, and academic activities that do not rely on 'seat time.'" (from US Department of Education, Guidance to Institutions, 3/18/2011)

In keeping with these requirements, faculty instructional hours at Eastern University include traditional lectures but are not limited to them because, as the requirements recognize, student learning, curated by the faculty, can be achieved through a broad range of other types of student experiences. These experiences include but are not limited to internships, field trips, group projects, laboratory work, rich-media experiences, student research, and assessment experiences.

### Instructional Hours in Online and Blended Courses

Courses offered wholly or partly in online learning environments must meet the instructional requirements outlined above. For the specific online instructional equivalencies, contact the University's Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology at [brightspace@eastern.edu](mailto:brightspace@eastern.edu).

### Alternative Credit Pathways

The University currently offers several pathways to earn credit for student learning. For more on these options, see the course catalog for your academic program.

## Online Learning Expectations

Courses will be delivered fully on-ground, blended/hybrid (part on-ground, part online) or entirely online. A level of technology competency and access to a computer are required to function effectively. Students become familiar with technology requirements and expectations for course work by reading the Disclosure of Online Learning Expectations prior to their first registration.

## Change of Major After Admission

Acceptable scores on required admissions tests (e.g., GMAT) must be obtained before a request to change majors will be reviewed. Approval

must be granted by the original advisor and the program director of the new major. Some programs have established deadlines for changing majors. It is the student's responsibility to consult with the program advisor to clarify eligibility and procedures.

## Class Attendance

Attendance at all class sessions of accelerated courses is considered a critical element in the accomplishment of learning outcomes.

Students are accountable for all work missed because of class absence. Instructors are under no obligation to make special arrangements for students who were absent.

Class attendance for online courses is defined as an online presence demonstrated by active participation in all threaded discussions and virtual chats as required by the instructor. Failure to fulfill requirements within the parameters of each session will result in the student being marked absent.

It is recognized that class absences are sometimes necessary for extenuating professional or personal reasons. It is for these reasons that policies and procedures are established and published by the departments responsible for each program. Please consult your department's Web page or posted/printed materials for specific attendance expectations for your program.

## Inactive Status

A student who is not enrolled in a current semester, term, or academic session will be reported as "Withdrawn" for enrollment purposes but may register for the following period without applying for readmission. If no enrollment occurs in a period of twelve (12) months, the withdrawal will be recorded on the academic record and the former student will need to apply for readmission.

## Readmission for Additional Coursework after Program Completion

Former students who completed all program/degree requirements and wish to complete a new program or degree must apply for readmission through the Admissions Office. Special rules apply for financial aid eligibility.

## Time to Complete Master's Degree Program

All requirements for a graduate degree, including courses, comprehensive exams, internships and thesis, must be completed within seven (7) years of enrollment as a degree candidate. All requirements for students enrolled in the M.Div., M.T.S., and M.P.T. must be completed within ten (10) years of enrollment as a degree candidate.

## Time to Complete Doctoral Degree Program

All requirements for the doctoral programs, including courses, comprehensive exams and thesis, must be completed within ten (10) years of the first enrollment.

## Academic Advising and Student Responsibility

Students are responsible for all courses for which they are registered, except for courses they officially dropped by written notification to the Registrar. Advisors, program directors and the Registrar's representatives make every effort to assist students in satisfying course requirements in the desired time period, but it is ultimately the student's responsibility to meet all academic and financial requirements for the program of study.

Students are required to inform the University when their home address changes.

## Dropping/Withdrawing from a Course

- Through the second week of a semester, or the equivalent time in other sessions, a student may drop a course online through Student Planning or by submitting a signed Add/Drop Form to the Registrar's Office.
- A grade of "W" will be entered on the academic record of any student who withdraws from a course before the course has been completed. Courses carrying a grade of "W" receive no credit and are not counted in the grade-point average, even though they may carry a financial obligation. Students must turn in a signed Withdrawal Form to the Registrar's office to withdraw from a course. Informing the instructor is encouraged but not sufficient to withdraw from a course.
- Students are advised to contact the Financial Aid Office to determine the impact of the withdrawal on overall aid eligibility.
- When a student drops or withdraws from a course they will no longer be able to access the course in Brightspace with immediate effect.

**Note:** A student who fails to officially drop/withdraw from a registered course will receive a grade of "F" for the course.

The ability to withdraw and receive refunds for programs vary based upon the established policies of these courses. Grades of "W" are taken into consideration in the calculation of Federal Title IV eligibility. They are also taken into consideration when determining if a student has made Satisfactory Academic Progress.

## Directed Study

Some departments offer a directed study course for students with demonstrated ability and special interests. This course is appropriate when a student has a specialized and compelling academic interest that cannot be pursued within the framework of the regular curriculum or a regular course. Graduate students need to have earned a minimum of 6 credits before attempting directed study.

## Individualized Instruction

Individualized instruction is the teaching of a regular catalog course to a single student. Individualized instruction is offered only when the University has failed to offer a course according to schedule or with sufficient frequency **and** it is needed by a student for a critical reason (e.g., impending graduation or job). Both criteria must be met. Severe course conflicts and other student or faculty emergencies may be approved by the appropriate dean on a case-by-case basis as reasons for individualized instruction if no appropriate substitute course can be found.

## Instructional Delivery of Accelerated Courses

Courses consist of at least 14 hours of instructional time for each credit awarded. Each accelerated course is seven weeks in length. Each week of instructional activity begins on Monday and ends the following Sunday at 11:59 p.m. Courses are delivered in the following formats in addition to on-ground classroom instruction:

**Online** – Online instruction occurs when the learner and the instructor are not in the same physical location, and the instruction is delivered through asynchronous and/or synchronous modalities via the Internet. Synchronous modalities allow individuals to interact online at the same time versus asynchronous modalities that allow individuals to log on at different times.

**Blended** – Blended instruction includes a combination of online (asynchronous and/or synchronous) delivery and on-ground classes (when the learner and the instructor are in the same physical location and meet in real time as scheduled). Online synchronous classes and on-ground classes are offered in real time as scheduled. Online delivery will not be greater than 49% of total class time.

## Course Repeat Policy

- Graduate students may repeat courses in which they earned grades of “B -” or lower. Only two courses in the graduate program may be repeated. The same course may be repeated only once, including withdrawn courses.
- Course Repeat Policy for School Nurse Certification Students: The minimum passing final grade for all graduate school nursing courses is a “B.” Any student who receives a grade below a B must repeat the course.
- Course Repeat Policy for All Graduate Nursing Courses: The minimum passing final grade for all graduate school nursing courses is a “B.” Any student who receives a grade below a “B” must repeat the course.
- A student who has received a grade of “F” in a required course cannot graduate unless this deficiency is corrected. The course must be repeated at Eastern.
- When a student repeats a course, only the higher grade is used in calculating the grade-point average, but both grades appear on the transcript.
- Credit is granted once for a repeated course, unless the course description specifically allows accrued credit.

## Course Repeat Policy for Seminary Students

Seminary students may repeat any course in which they have received a C- or below. There is no limit on the number of times a course may be repeated.

## Academic Appeals and Grievances

An appeal is defined as a request to a higher authority to change a decision that was made, typically a decision that the student believes adversely affects her/his academic career. A grievance is a complaint or concern of a student regarding a faculty or staff member at the university. For any academic appeal or grievance, if a student is enrolled in class(es)

while the case is being heard, the student is responsible for the policies and procedures associated with the class(es).

Students wishing to appeal a course grade should follow the process listed under “Grade/Evaluative Action Appeal Process.” The process for redress of grievances is found in the Student Handbook, under “Student Rights, Freedoms, and Responsibilities.”

If a student wishes to appeal an academic decision other than a grade/evaluative action, the student shall make written appeal to Dean of the College in which the student is enrolled. The letter of appeal should include the date of the letter, the student’s full name, the Eastern University student identification number, the action requested, and detailed reasons for the request, including all supporting documentation. The appeal should be complete, since once submitted, the student will not be able to submit further evidence or request reconsideration by the Dean. The Dean may, at his/her discretion, limit his/her review to the written record provided, seek a meeting (in person or telephonically) with the student, and/or draw on a faculty group to review and advise. Within fifteen (15) business days of receipt during the academic year, the Dean will notify the student in writing of the Dean’s decision with respect to the student’s appeal.

## Academic Petitions (Request for Exception to Policy)

If a student wishes to petition for an exception to an academic policy, the student shall petition the Dean of the College in writing. The Exception to College Policy form can be found in the Registrar’s Office and on the Registrar’s Web page at eastern.edu (<https://www.eastern.edu/registrar/>). The request should include detailed reasons for the request, including all supporting documentation. The petition should be complete, since once submitted, the student will not be able to submit further evidence or request reconsideration by the Dean. The Dean may, at his/her discretion, limit his/her review to the written items provided, seek a meeting (in person or telephonically) with the student, and/or draw on a faculty group to review and advise. Within fifteen (15) business days of receipt during the academic year, the Dean will notify the student in writing of the Dean’s decision with respect to the student’s petition.

## Procedure for Student Appeals to the Provost

To appeal a decision by an academic dean (including a decision on an academic petition) the student may appeal to the Provost of the University. Within 7 days of the Dean’s transmittal electronically or by mail of his/her decision to the student, the student may appeal the Dean’s decision by sending a letter by certified mail or overnight courier or e-mail with a return receipt requested to the Provost, with a copy to the Dean. In this letter or e-mail of appeal, the student shall state in detail why the decision by the Dean lacks substantial evidence or was capricious or discriminatory. The student shall include the student’s full name, the Eastern University student identification number, the College the student is enrolled in, and an explanation of the grievance and supporting documents.

The Provost may, at his/her discretion, limit his/her review to the written record provided, seek a meeting (in person or telephonically) with the student, and/or draw on a faculty group to review and advise. The Provost shall affirm the decision of the Dean unless the Provost determines that the Dean’s decision is arbitrary and capricious or otherwise lacks

substantial evidence, in which case the Provost may remand the matter to the Dean with instructions. The decision of the Provost shall be final.

## Policies and Procedures on Mediation, Correction, and Discipline for Seminary Students

Please see the Seminary's Seminary Handbook for information.

### Grading System

Following are the grades and the quality points assigned to each.

**Grades** – Grade points per semester hour

Grade	Meaning
A+, A, A-	Excellent 4.0, 4.0, 3.7
B+, B, B-	Good 3.3, 3.0, 2.7
C+, C, C-	Fair 2.3, 2.0, 1.7
F	No Credit/Fail 0
I	Incomplete 0
P	Pass
W	Withdrawn
WF	Withdrawn Failing 0

### Credit/No Credit Grades (Seminary Students)

- To receive credit (CR):
  - a student must complete the basic course requirements within the allotted time, including attendance, participation in class and assignments, and
  - the quality of the work must be congruent with graduate work standards, given the criteria specified for the course.
- Receipt of no credit (NC), indicates that:
  - the student has failed to complete the course requirements as outlined above and/or
  - quality of work is not congruent with graduate work standards listed above.

Unless the course syllabus states otherwise, any non-required elective may be taken credit/no credit if requested by the student during the first class period. A grade must be given for any course taken as a required core course or as a required area elective.

### GPA

The total quality points divided by the total credit hours which the student has attempted yields the grade-point average. Foundation courses are not considered in calculating the grade-point average, nor are courses graded Pass.

### Incomplete

The grade "I" is given when a student fails to complete course requirements because of extreme and unforeseen extenuating circumstances that may have affected academic performance. The "I" must be approved by the professor teaching the course. 75% of the course should be complete before an "I" grade should be considered. In an effort to provide interim assessment during the incomplete period, the professor will provide a completion outline with a timeline

of deliverables during the makeup period. This form must be signed by the professor and student before the end of the semester/session. The incomplete is recorded at the end of the semester/session and must be removed within 60 days. The "I" grade automatically becomes an "F" if the student does not complete course requirements and a change of grade is not submitted within the time frame stipulated above. In the case of persistent or additional extreme and unforeseen extenuating circumstances, an extension of the incomplete or a "W" (Withdrawn) grade may be authorized. An "Exception to Policy" form, available from the Office of the Registrar Web page, [www.eastern.edu/registrar](http://www.eastern.edu/registrar) (<http://www.eastern.edu/registrar/>), should be completed and submitted to the Dean, along with documentation of the persistent or additional extreme and unforeseen extenuating circumstances. "W" grades will be awarded only for the course the student was passing at the time he/she became incapacitated. Courses carrying a grade of "W" receive no credit and are not counted as hours attempted.

Field Placements can be a special situation with extended time required to fulfill the work. Therefore, extensions for incompletes in field placement courses will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

At the time of review of academic progress and before the start of the next session (see Academic Standing section) graduate students having more than one Incomplete in a semester will have their records reviewed. This review may include contacting the professors of record who granted the Incompletes. The dean is authorized to place students with more than one Incomplete on academic probation.

Students who have been granted an incomplete for a class, or multiple classes, may receive a letter informing them that they have not met the "Minimum Standard for Academic Progress" when grades are checked in May. The student must contact the Office of Financial Aid, informing them of the status of the incomplete class(es). If the student does not make up the deficiency in the required timeframe, he/she may be ineligible to receive any type of aid for the upcoming semester(s). For more information, please read "Measurement of Academic Progress" and "Grade-Point Average Requirements" in the Financial Assistance section of the catalog.

### Requests for Incomplete Grade/Extensions for Seminary Students

The completion and submission of course work in accordance with the course syllabus is an important measure of dependability and ability to plan ahead, both of which are qualities important in ministry. The Seminary's policy on the awarding of incomplete grades/extensions for coursework is found in the Seminary's Student Handbook.

### Grade Change Policy

A grade awarded other than an "I" is final. Final grades will be changed when a clerical or computational error has been determined. If the student believes there is an error, the student must report the alleged error in writing to the professor as soon as possible. If a grade change is warranted, the instructor must submit a change of grade request to the Registrar.

### Grade/Evaluation Action Appeals Policy

The Grade Appeals Policy applies only to questions of faculty evaluation of student performance. Since evaluation involves issues of judgment, action to revise a grade in the student's favor will not be recommended unless there is clear evidence that the original grade was based on

prejudiced or capricious judgment or that it was inconsistent with official policy.

## Grade/Evaluation Action Appeals Policy for Seminary Students

If a student has questions about a grade or wishes to contest a grade, she or he must first consult the professor who assigned the grade. If the student still has questions, she or he may report this to the Dean who will mediate if appropriate. The formal grievance procedure is not appropriate for appealing grades.

### Procedure

The main concern in any grievance or appeal procedure is to bring reconciliation and growth in ways that enhance community. The first approach to any appeal should be non-adversarial and open, undertaken with careful attention to fostering understanding and problem solving. The expectation is that the majority of appeals can be resolved through a flexible process at the first or second steps outlined here. Students shall have protection against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation through the publication of clear course objectives, grading procedures, and evaluation methods.

In accordance with Matthew 18, the process of appealing a grade or evaluative action is as follows:

**Step 1:** As stated above, the student should communicate with the instructor for an explanation of the grade or evaluative action.<sup>1</sup> On rare occasions, a student and instructor fail to resolve the grade or evaluative action appeal through these informal measures, and in these cases, the student may then proceed to step 2. However, the formal appeal in Step 2 must begin within four weeks of the beginning of the following semester.<sup>2</sup>

**Step 2:** A student may initiate a formal appeal by completing the Grade/Evaluative Action Appeals Form ([https://www.eastern.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/Grade\\_Appeal\\_Form.pdf](https://www.eastern.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/Grade_Appeal_Form.pdf)) (Appeals Form) and submitting it to the course instructor. The Appeals Form must be submitted within four weeks of the beginning of the semester immediately following the semester in which the grade/evaluative action was received. The Appeal Form must include all necessary documentation and evidence to support the grade/evaluative action appeal (Note: no additional documentation may be submitted beyond this step). The student should keep a copy of the form and attachments in the event that the student chooses to proceed to Step 3. The instructor will respond to the Appeal Form and accompanying documentation in writing within two weeks of receiving the Appeal Form.<sup>3</sup>

**Step 3:** If the student is still not satisfied with the resolution, the student must make a written request to the instructor involved to submit the Appeal Form and accompanying documentation to the departmental chairperson/program director. The instructor will then forward the Appeal Form and all accompanying documentation to the chairperson/ program director of the program. This written request must be forwarded to the chairperson/program director within one (1) week following the due date of the instructor's decision. The departmental chairperson/ program director will submit a written response to the student within two (2) weeks following the student's written request for an appeal. A copy of the response will be provided to the student, instructor, and program Dean.<sup>4</sup>

**Step 4:** If, after receiving a reply from the departmental chairperson/ program director, the student is still not satisfied with the resolution, the student must make a written request to the departmental chairperson/ program director to submit the Appeal Form and accompanying

documentation to the program Dean. The written request must occur within one (1) week of receiving the departmental chairperson's/program director's decision. Upon receipt of the written request from the student, the departmental chairperson/program director will inform the program Dean that the Appeal Form and accompanying documentation will be forwarded. The student's written request will be attached as a cover page and then forwarded with the Appeal Form and all accompanying documentation to the program dean. The program Dean will submit a written response to the student within two (2) weeks following the student's written request for an appeal. A copy of the response will be provided to the student, instructor, and program chairperson/program director.

**Step 5:** If, after receiving a reply form from the program Dean, the student is still not satisfied with the resolution, the student must make a written<sup>1</sup> request to the program Dean to submit the Appeal Form and accompanying documentation to the Academic Appeals Committee. This written request must occur within one (1) week of receiving the Dean's decision. The Dean will then forward the Appeal Form and all accompanying documentation to the Academic Appeals Committee. The student's written request will be reviewed at the next scheduled Academic Appeals Committee meeting. The Academic Appeals Committee will hear a presentation by the student of his/her case and will consider the recommendations from Steps 2, 3 and 4. The Academic Appeals Committee will then decide the merits of the case. The decision of the Academic Appeals Committee will be final.

<sup>1</sup> May be satisfied by use of the eastern.edu email account and becomes a part of the appeals documentation.

<sup>2</sup> Semester refers to the period of time in which the course is instructed and evaluated.

<sup>3</sup> If the faculty member involved in the appeal is the departmental chair/ program director, the student should go immediately to Step 4.

<sup>4</sup> If the faculty member involved in the appeal is the program Dean, the student should go immediately to Step 5.

Go to [www.eastern.edu/registrar](http://www.eastern.edu/registrar) (<http://www.eastern.edu/registrar/>) to download the Grade/Evaluative Action Appeals Form.

## Final Grade Reports

At the end of each semester or other session, students may access their academic records in Student Planning which can be accessed through the MyEastern portal at eastern.edu (<http://www.eastern.edu>).

## Satisfactory Academic Progress

Graduate students other than Seminary students must achieve a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA once 12 credits are earned. 2.75 GPA is acceptable for less than 12 credits. Specific programs may enforce additional policies based on external accreditation and professional standards for satisfactory academic progress.

## Probation for Seminary Students

The Seminary's Review and Guidance Committee considers students' academic, personal and relational growth important. When a student experiences serious difficulties in any of these areas, he/she may be placed on probation.

Any one of the following circumstances will result in a student being placed on probation:

- the student fails one or more courses in a semester or term
- the student's cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) is less than 2.0
- the student's semester GPA is less than 2.0
- there are serious problems observed in moving toward readiness for ministry

See further details regarding conditions that may trigger probationary status, as well as the conditions typically imposed upon students on probation, in the Seminary's Student Handbook.

## Academic Probation

Students who fail to achieve the required grade-point average for their level of credits will be placed on Academic Probation. The Registrar will record the probation at the end of the semester/session and students will have 180 days in which to return to good academic standing. Students with two or more incomplete grades may be placed on probation when normal progress toward graduation is in jeopardy.

The student's academic program handbook may announce more stringent standards for satisfactory academic progress, especially as they apply to program accreditation. Graduate students in Counseling Psychology and Education programs who are placed on Academic Probation will be limited to two courses of any kind (graduate or undergraduate), or a maximum of 6 credit hours, until they return to good academic standing. Students enrolled in the Master of Data Science and/or MBA programs are limited to one course per 7-week block, for a total of two courses in one semester.

## Academic Amnesty Policy for Graduate Programs

There may be occasions when a student is academically unsuccessful in completing a specific degree program but is able to achieve higher academic performance in another degree program within Eastern University. Given the policy requiring a GPA of 3.0 to complete a graduate degree, a low GPA resulting from coursework in one program will hinder the student in attempting to change from that program to another degree. A policy of academic amnesty addresses that challenge.

Under an academic amnesty policy, any grades a student has received in courses taken specific to and required by an initial degree program will not be considered in the calculation of that student's GPA or assessment of academic progress if the student changes to another degree program.

The following conditions apply to the application of the policy:

1. The student must be changing from one graduate degree program to another graduate degree program within Eastern University.
2. Students are only eligible for one application of academic amnesty for the duration of their time at Eastern University.
3. Grades in courses from the previous degree program will be excluded from the calculation of GPA and the assessment of academic progress for the new degree program, but will remain on the student's transcript.
4. This policy will not apply to courses that are shared in any way between the two programs.
5. Grades from the previous degree program would still be considered in financial aid academic progress determinations.

6. If a student is changing from a dual degree to a single degree, this policy will only apply to grades in courses for the degree that is dropped.

## Process for requesting Academic Amnesty:

1. The student will work with their advisor to file a Petition for Academic Amnesty while also completing a Change of Degree form.
2. The petition will be reviewed for approval by the Deans of the colleges in which the initial and new degree programs are housed, and will then be forwarded to the Provost for final review.
3. Petitions will be forwarded to the Registrar, who will notify the student of the outcome of the petition.

## University Handbook

All students are responsible to read, understand and abide by the Student Handbook ([www.eastern.edu/handbook](http://www.eastern.edu/handbook) (<http://www.eastern.edu/handbook/>)). Students are responsible for these regulations and others announced to the student body.

## Handbook for Seminary Students

All students are responsible to read, understand, and abide by the Seminary Student Handbook (<https://www.palmerseminary.edu/student-life/office-registrar> (<https://www.palmerseminary.edu/student-life/office-registrar/>)). Students are responsible for these regulations and others announced to the student body.

## Dismissal

Students may be dismissed from Eastern for failure to maintain the required cumulative grade-point averages, for ethical misconduct, or for failure to complete graduate degree requirements within the allowed period of seven years. There is no provision for re-admission following dismissal for ethical or academic reasons once the appeal process has been exhausted.

The Dean makes dismissal decisions when it is highly unlikely for the student, under present circumstances, to complete the requirements for graduation. The Dean will consider more stringent standards for satisfactory academic progress announced in the handbook of a student's academic program, especially as they apply to program accreditation.

Students receiving one or more failing grades in a session or semester will have their cases reviewed. The dean has the option to require immediate withdrawal regardless of prior academic performance when there is little or no likelihood of success following two or more failing grades.

Also, a violation of integrity and honesty is a serious offense, considered sufficient basis to terminate enrollment.

Students who receive VA benefits will be dismissed because of any of the circumstances listed above.

## Appeal of Dismissal

A student may appeal a dismissal decision to the Academic Appeals Subcommittee (convened for such appeals, as needed) by submitting an Academic Dismissal Appeal letter. This letter should:

1. explain and document perceived irregularities in the application of the academic dismissal policies and procedures, which had the effect of rendering the dismissal decision arbitrary or capricious,
2. present new information which was not available at the time of the dismissal, and/or
3. explain extreme and unforeseen extenuating circumstances that may have affected academic performance.

In the letter, the student should propose plans to address previous difficulties to ensure future success. All supporting documentation should be included or attached to the letter.

Appeal letters must be received within two weeks of receipt of notification of dismissal. Letters should be sent to the University Registrar, who will forward them to the chairperson of the Academic Appeals Subcommittee. The decision of the Subcommittee following the appeal will be final.

## Graduation

Students must provide written notification to the Registrar's Office of their intention to graduate at least six months in advance of the anticipated graduation date. A form is available on the Registrar's Web page [www.eastern.edu/registrar](http://www.eastern.edu/registrar) (<http://www.eastern.edu/registrar/>). In order to graduate, a student must fulfill all requirements for the intended degree, including total semester credits; residency requirement; core curriculum; major curriculum; total grade-point average of 3.0 for graduate degrees or a 2.0 for seminary degrees; and any test/field experience required by the academic department. (Consult your academic advisor for specific requirements of the intended degree.)

Degrees are awarded to qualified graduates on January 31, March 31, May 31, August 31, October 31, and December 31 each year. Diplomas are normally distributed by U.S. mail within 60 days following the degree date except when graduates have unpaid bills or other obligations.

Commencement ceremonies are held each May to recognize students who complete degree requirements in the past year. Participation in the ceremony celebrating the student's graduation is encouraged, but optional. A student may not elect to participate in a ceremony for which he/she is not eligible. Although attendance is voluntary, the cost of participation is factored into student charges.

## Transfer of Credit (Seminary Students)

Credit will be granted for work done at other theological schools accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), or cognate graduate programs approved by an accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education (DOE), provided that:

1. The student has had an official transcript sent to the Registrar's Office (if it is not already on file), and notified the Registrar's Office of the request.
2. The transfer credit requested should have been completed within ten years' time prior to the student's date of matriculation at Palmer Seminary.

3. The work for which credit is requested is appropriate for the degree program being pursued at Palmer Seminary and for the course for which credit is granted.
4. A grade of 2.0 (C) or better was earned in the course. If the transfer credits are to be considered for core courses, a grade of 3.0 (B) or better would be required.
5. The Dean and the Registrar's Office determine the request is appropriate, based upon the nature of the course work. An instructor in the relevant discipline will be consulted as needed. Further supporting materials such as a course description and/or course syllabus may be requested of the student if these are required to make a more fully informed decision regarding transfer of coursework.

## Taking Coursework at Other Institutions for Seminary Students

Students are permitted to pursue coursework at other institutions which may be applied toward their degree at Palmer. Coursework pursued in this manner may only be:

1. denominational coursework,
2. "free" elective coursework for M.Div. students, or
3. required MTS concentration elective coursework.

Completing core required coursework at another institution is generally not permitted and is determined on a case by case basis. Contact the Registrar's office if you have questions.

## Advanced Standing (Seminary Students)

Credit for advanced standing may be granted under the following conditions:

1. Advanced standing may be granted for both core and elective courses, provided the subject matter is appropriate to the M.Div. or M.T.S. programs.
2. Entering students wishing to be admitted with advanced standing for undergraduate work must pass written and oral exams prior to the commencement of their classes at the Seminary.
3. Entering students must apply no later than August 1 for Fall semester or December 1 for Spring semester to take advanced standing exams.
4. The Dean and a professor in the relevant area will screen applications.
5. All exams, written and oral, will be administered at the Seminary during the week before on-site orientation in the Fall semester and in late December for the Spring semesters.
6. The Dean's Office will schedule all written exams, notifying students of the date, time, and room in which exams will be administered. All written exams in any given subject area will be administered at the same time.
7. Written exams will be evaluated by appropriate Seminary professors, who will then schedule oral exams with each student.
8. All exams, written and oral, must be evaluated by the end of Fall or Spring orientation week and results reported to the Dean's Office.
9. Standards of evaluation will be coordinated within departments, using area competencies as guidelines.
10. Adjunct professors will be involved as needed.
11. Students will be charged \$40.00 per exam taken, regardless of whether or not advanced standing is awarded.

12. Students in the M.Div. degree program may receive up to 15 credit hours of advanced standing and M.T.S. students may receive up to 9 credit hours.

## Waivers of Required Courses (Seminary Students)

When a student has taken undergraduate coursework comparable to a required Seminary course, permission to waive such a course may be granted. The process for requesting waivers is outlined in the Student Handbook. Academic credit is not awarded for waived courses; students must complete other coursework (usually a higher level offering in the area of the waived course) to earn the number of credit hours required for their degree.

## Seminary Writing Course

INTG 510 A Guide to Seminary Writing is a three-credit course required of all master's students unless they test out of it during the orientation period.

1. Students must complete this course within the first two semesters of enrollment at the Seminary. It may also be a condition of a student's acceptance into a degree program at Palmer that they complete this course during their first semester of coursework.
2. This course must be successfully completed in order to meet graduation requirements for both the M.Div. and M.T.S. degrees.

## Independent Studies for Seminary Students

Independent Study/Reading courses are generally considered only for summative MTS coursework or in extenuating circumstances, and are negotiated with individual professors. Special request forms for this purpose are available online at the Seminary website and must be approved by the Academic Dean. Normally, only students who have a 3.0 (B) average or better and have completed at least 24 credit hours (M.Div./M.T.S.) are permitted to pursue an Independent Study; students on probation are normally not permitted to engage in an Independent Study. Core required coursework is typically not permitted to be pursued on an Independent Study basis. The process and all requirements for engaging in an Independent Study are outlined in the Seminary's Student Handbook.

## Instructional Delivery of Seminary Intensive Courses

Intensive courses are structured differently than semester courses and are offered Summer terms, as well as through the West Virginia program. Pre-class and after-class assignments are required in all intensive courses. The proportion of pre- and after-class assignments is approximately 1/3 and 2/3 respectively. For more information on Intensive courses consult the Seminary's Student Handbook.

## Course Repeat Policy for Seminary Students

Seminary students may repeat any course in which they have received a C- or below. There is no limit on the number of times a course may be repeated.

## Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure

Eastern University desires for members of its community to strive for original thought in pursuits of academic inquiry. We believe that each individual has been made in the image of God and possesses a unique vantage point on aspects of faith, reason and justice. As such, assigned coursework should provide an opportunity for that perspective to be expressed. In addition, Eastern University seeks to provide students with an understanding of emerging technologies and opportunities to embrace their ethical and professional uses. To that end, the university policy on academic integrity aims to ensure academic integrity, promote learning, and maintain fairness in the evaluation process.

## Expectations for Faculty

All Eastern University instructors commit to educating students on the university standards regarding academic integrity. To that end, faculty are required to do the following:

- Affirm academic integrity as a core institutional value.
- Include links to the academic integrity policy in their syllabus and the university's LMS.
- In courses requiring documentation, define the preferred documentation style for the course (MLA, APA, Chicago Style, etc.)
- Provide students with their preferred resource for documentation guidelines, along with any adaptations of those guidelines in written form.
- Communicate their role as a guide and mentor, explaining how to ask questions regarding academic coursework and academic integrity proactively.
- Provide information about Eastern University's Writing Center support
- Articulate acceptable or unacceptable use (see table below) of generative software (e.g. large-language model AI) for the course as a whole and/or for individual assignments, presentations and assessments. (Unless otherwise specified, the default expectation for courses is that generative AI should not be used.)

## Expectations for Students

Eastern University students are expected to complete all academic work as individuals unless otherwise specified in assignment, presentation or assessment guidelines. To that end, students are required to do the following:

- Present work such as but not limited to words, pictures, ideas, data, and artwork that are one's own in written, audio and/or visual form.
- When incorporating work that is not one's own in written, audio and/or visual form, document those sources appropriately, following the citation guidelines provided.
  - Direct language taken from an outside source must be enclosed in quotation marks and cited properly. To omit quotation marks for a phrase that is taken word-for-word from a source is plagiarism.
  - Ideas taken from an outside source must be paraphrased and cited properly. To paraphrase without citing is plagiarism.



- Assume that all tests, assignments, presentations and in-class work are meant to be completed by the individual unless otherwise specified by the instructor.
  - To complete an individual test, assignment, presentation or in-class work in a group or to have someone else complete the test, assignment, presentation or in-class work on the student's behalf is plagiarism.
  - To borrow all or part of another individual's work on the same test, assignment, presentation or in-class work is also a form of academic dishonesty.
- Submit new work to one's instructor. Assignments, presentations or assessments that were completed for another class are not accepted unless explicit knowledge and consent of the instructor is given.
- Ensure that one's own work is not improperly used by others by not sharing assignments, presentations, or assessments to students enrolled in different sections of the course.
- Use technology responsibly, including generative artificial intelligence tools

## Policy on AI

Generative Artificial Intelligence is an emerging technology that more closely approximates human reasoning through engaging in a variety of tasks. While AI has the power to innovate research and analysis, it also has the potential to serve as a shortcut to human reasoning. Therefore, it is important for students to learn how to use AI ethically and effectively. Eastern University is committed to teaching students how to pursue understanding and excellence in and beyond their studies with the recognition that AI technology is highly integrated into their daily environments. This means teaching students to live with integrity and discernment as many classes incorporate the skills of AI use into their curriculum.

Acceptable AI usage is dependent upon a variety of factors, including discipline, instructor and context. Classes that incorporate AI into learning will specify in assignment, presentation or assessment guidelines how it can be used to enhance student work. If an assignment, presentation or assessment guidelines do not indicate permissible AI implementation, students must assume no AI can be used.

In some courses where concepts, theories and application are first introduced, AI usage may be less encouraged and/or outright forbidden. This is to encourage students to build a foundation of original thinking before deepening that thinking with artificial intelligence tools. However, in other courses and/or disciplines where AI is deemed an essential tool, students can expect clear guidelines on how to initiate AI usage, validate its findings, integrate it into their own thinking, and attribute sources.

Instructors are encouraged to use the following designations on assignments, presentations and assessments:

- **No AI Assistance(NAA):** An assignment, presentation or assessment in which no use of an AI tool is allowed beyond spelling and grammar checking features.
- **AI Augmented Labeled(AAL):** Students are free to seek assistance from AI generative tools to augment their own work in tasks such as idea generation, outlining, basic copywriting, graphic design, and reference identification. However, the contributions must be clearly

labeled by the student regarding which elements were produced with the assistance of an AI tool.

- **AI Augmented- Non Labeled(AANL):** Students are free to seek assistance from AI generative tools to augment their own work in tasks such as idea generation, outlining, basic copywriting, graphic design, and reference identification. In this designation, the contributions do NOT need to be clearly labeled.
- **AI Generated(AIG):** This designation indicates that the assignment can be fully generated through the use of an AI tool.

These labels are not meant to be comprehensive. Students should consult assignment, presentation or assessment guidelines for more detailed guidance on AI usage in each context.

Unless stated in the assignment guidelines, students are prohibited from using AI or AI-enabled generative tools to replace aspects of academic assignments, presentations and assessments, including but not limited to full or partial automated text generation, plagiarism detection evasion, or unauthorized data analysis. Students must not submit content generated by AI systems without proper attribution and citation. The use of AI tools to aid in content creation should be within the bounds permitted by the instructor, and must be used only to supplement, and not replace, the student's own knowledge, understanding, and effort.

A note about Grammarly and other related AI-assisted tools:

For courses that prohibit the use of generative AI, Grammarly Premium and similar tools that use AI to generate content are prohibited. Grammarly has other uses (e.g., correcting grammar and sentence structure); however, anything other than adjusting slight spelling and grammatical concerns would be considered AI generation. (If students no longer wish to use Grammarly's generative AI features, in "Account Settings," click on "Feature Customization," and turn off the generative AI settings.)

## Use of Google Docs/Microsoft:

Students are highly advised to use either Google Docs or Microsoft 365 for written assignments. Both tools allow students to keep a history of their drafts and edits. On rare occasions, an AI detector may flag documents falsely, and the use of these tools can help to show students' multiple drafts and the originality of their work.

Tiers of Academic Dishonesty

Eastern University situates incidents of academic dishonesty within three tiers with varying levels of intentionality and corresponding consequences.

## Tier One Offenses may include the following:

- misuse of paraphrasing
- citation errors
- recycling old work
- other non-malicious errors
- use of AI or AI-enabled generative tool(s) in contradiction to class expectations to replace minimal elements of an assignment, presentation or assessment in contradiction to class expectations

- A Tier One AI offense might be something like this:
  - Using AI to generate some content used in an assignment, presentation or assessment.
  - Using AI to produce an anecdote or hypothetical example for use in an assignment, presentation or assessment.

This tier should be viewed as rehabilitative and educative.

## Tier Two Offenses may include the following:

- a student's second minor offense, of the same or differing nature from the first
- plagiarism, particularly in one or more small portions of an assignment
- cheating on an exam; including utilizing notes, study aids, or another's work when sitting for online or in-person examinations or quizzes, unless otherwise directed by the instructor
- assisting or contributing to academic dishonesty through helping or attempting to help others commit an act of academic dishonesty.
- use of AI or AI-enabled generative tool(s) to replace significant aspects of an assignment, presentation or assessment in contradiction to class expectations
  - A Tier Two AI offense might be something like the following:
    - Using AI to generate a significant portion of an assignment, presentation or assessment
    - Using AI to generate an entire project that the student then paraphrases themselves.

This tier should be viewed as rehabilitative and educative. For Tier Two AI offenses, a report of >50% of AI detection may prompt the instructor to require additional information from students, such as a Google Docs history.

## Tier Three Offenses may include the following:

- paying someone to complete an assignment or assessment
- copying the majority of an assignment, presentation or assessment from an outside source, including AI generative tools in contradiction to class expectations
- submitting an assignment, presentation or assessment that was largely completed by someone else
- fabricating or falsifying data, evidence, statistics, or material to augment one's original research or idea.

### Academic Penalties for Academic Dishonesty

Academic integrity is vital to any university community. The Eastern University student is expected to live a life of honesty and integrity consistent with the demands of Christian discipleship. Therefore,

dishonesty is regarded by Eastern University as an egregious violation of both the academic and spiritual principles of this community.

A student who commits an act of academic dishonesty will receive disciplinary sanctions, which may include educational initiatives, failure of the assignment, failure of the course, or separation from the University. Given the serious consequences of academic dishonesty, the student is encouraged to discuss any course-related difficulties openly with the appropriate instructor instead of resorting to dishonest conduct.

## Process for Adjudicating Academic Dishonesty

All cases of academic dishonesty will be reviewed and adjudicated by the instructor. The instructor will submit the Academic Dishonesty Form. Academic dishonesty constitutes a violation of both the academic and spiritual principles of the University community. This report will be sent to the Academic Deans and/or the Office of the Provost, who will interface with the Office for Student Development as needed. As such, disciplinary action may occur at both the course and University level.

The Provost and Academic Deans have the discretion to modify the following procedures at any time during a specific investigation or adjudication, as circumstances warrant. Nothing contained in these procedures is intended to create, or be interpreted as creating, any contractual rights on the part of any student.

When the academic integrity policy is violated, according to the definition adopted by the faculty and any additional definition(s) the instructor has published to their students, the instructor should follow these steps:

1. Communicate with the student about the instance of academic dishonesty, particularly if AI usage is suspected. In this communication, faculty may want to inquire about the writing process and/or key content elements of the assignment. For suspected AI usage, faculty may want to ask students to provide access to the document history.
2. Gather evidence. Instructors should prepare a summary of their conversation with the student, along with documentation from Turnitin for non-AI-related offenses. For AI-specific violations, the summary of the student conversation, along with a document history, are essential for corroborating any AI detector report.
3. Fill out the Preliminary Academic Integrity Form.
4. The instructor will receive an automatic email letting them know whether or not this was the student's first offense, along with a link to the Academic Integrity Report Form. (This automatic email will include how many times the student has been reported for academic dishonesty, and the number is inclusive of the instructor's report, e.g. when an instructor reports a student's first offense, they will receive an email saying that the student has been reported (1) time.)
5. The instructor will fill out the Academic Integrity Report Form, in which they will choose one of the following penalties according to their assessment of the severity of the infraction and any extenuating circumstances:
6. Assign a grade of F or zero on the paper, project or examination but allow resubmission, resulting in a maximum grade of C. (Recommended for TIER ONE OFFENSES)
7. Required referral to the Director of the Writing Center (or their designee), for additional education on academic integrity (Recommended for TIER ONE and TIER TWO OFFENSES)

8. Assign a grade of F or zero on the paper, project or examination without the opportunity for resubmission. (Recommended for TIER TWO OFFENSES)
9. Assign a grade of F in the course. (Recommended for TIER THREE OFFENSES)

In all cases, the instructor will submit evidence of academic dishonesty through the Academic Integrity Report Form. The instructor is responsible for all communication with the student. This includes the preliminary conversation and the delivery of academic consequences.

#### Appeals Procedure

Students may appeal the allegation of academic dishonesty and their grade through the University procedure for resolving grade disputes.

## Student Rights

- The right to choose whether to respond to faculty communication and/or meeting request(s) regarding the allegation, with the understanding that findings and sanctions may be imposed with or without participation.
- The right to notice of the allegation that a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy has taken place.
- The right to notification of meeting opportunities with the instructor related to the complaint and of the prompt timeframes anticipated for major stages of the complaint process.
- The right to notice of the factual allegations that form the basis of the complaint.
- The right to a prompt and impartial response and resolution of complaints.
- The right to have the University or the Complainant bear the burden of proof by a preponderance of the evidence.
- The right to present relevant statements, materials, and witnesses during the conduct review proceedings in communication and/or meeting with the instructor.
- The right to review all written statements and materials related to the allegation.
- The right to notification of any finding of responsibility.
- The right to be free from retaliation for participating in the University's investigation and fact-finding process.
- The right to appeal, consistent with the provisions outlined within this policy and the Student Code of Conduct.