

# ACADEMIC POLICIES

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Cornerstone University and Grand Rapids Theological Seminary are committed to a high standard of academic honesty and integrity among its students. Academic integrity is absolutely necessary in the search for and advancement of truth. Dishonesty in any form (i.e. cheating on examinations or quizzes, plagiarism on papers, reports or thesis, and all other forms of compromise in academic integrity) is not acceptable. Plagiarism includes using another person's words or ideas and passing them off as your own. Self-plagiarism, "double dipping" and duplicate publication (using your own work in duplicate contexts without citation of the previous use) is also prohibited. Penalties for academic dishonesty will be administered according to the following:

First offense - The penalty for first offense academic integrity violation includes failure in the course assignment or failure in the course; enrollment limitation; and academic probation for one academic year. Penalties are imposed by the individual faculty member and the academic dean. Continuing enrollment following such violation requires a letter acknowledging that one understands what constitutes an academic integrity violation, taking full responsibility for the present offense and pledging to avoid such conduct in the future. A meeting with the course professor and academic dean is also required.

Second offense - The penalty for second offense academic integrity violation includes failure in the course and suspension from program for one academic year. Penalties for second offense violations are imposed by the individual faculty member and academic dean. Readmission following a second offense violation requires a letter acknowledging that one understands what constitutes an academic integrity violation, taking full responsibility for the present offense and pledging to avoid such conduct in the future. Readmission will also require a meeting with the GRTS admissions committee and the meeting of all conditions stipulated in the letter of suspension. No coursework, internships or field education completed at other institutions during the period of suspension may be transferred to GRTS for credit or used to fulfill GRTS degree program requirements.

Third offense - The penalty for third offense academic integrity violation includes failure in the course and permanent suspension from program. Penalties for third offense violations are imposed by the individual faculty member and academic dean.

Students seeking to appeal academic integrity disciplinary decisions should consult and employ the policies and processes outlined in the GRTS Academic Catalog under the heading "Student Appeal Process."

## ACADEMIC PROBATION, SUSPENSION, AND DISMISSAL

Any student who does not achieve the minimum required cumulative grade point average of 2.50 after attempting nine credits will be placed on academic probation. Students placed on academic probation will be notified in writing immediately following the determination, usually at the close of an academic semester. Students on academic probation will not be allowed to enroll in more than six credits per semester, will not be allowed to enroll in distance education or independent study courses, and may be required to take remedial courses or work with an academic tutor. Probation is not designed to punish students, but rather to serve as an indication to students that they are not progressing at a satisfactory rate towards graduation.

Students who, after one semester of academic probation, fail to achieve the minimum required cumulative grade point average of 2.50 will be academically suspended. Students placed on suspension will be notified of such action in writing immediately following the determination. Academic suspension means that the student will not be permitted to enroll in courses on a credit or audit basis throughout the duration of the suspension. Students on suspension may be considered for readmission after one semester. Readmission of suspended students will require the approval of the admissions committee. In addition, any student suspended for a second time will be dismissed from Grand Rapids Theological Seminary with no option for future enrollment. Student appeals concerning academic probation, suspension and dismissal should be put in writing to the attention of the GRTS academic appeals committee within 5 days of the date of notification of probation, suspension or dismissal. The judgment will be rendered within 10 business days of receipt of the appeal. The response to the appeal will be in writing and all judgments of the academic appeals committee are final.

## ACADEMIC TRANSCRIPTS

The academic records of Cornerstone University students and alumni, including the students and alumni of Grand Rapids Theological Seminary, are maintained at the CU Registrar's Office. Requests for official transcripts should be directed through the National Student Clearinghouse. Instructions are located on the Registrar's page of the CU website. Enter "transcript" in the search box on the main website. Requests can also be made in person using cash or personal checks directly through the Registrar's Office.

## ACADEMIC TUTORING

Academic tutoring is available on a limited basis to students in need of academic assistance. Students struggling with the academic demands of the courses at GRTS should first communicate with their professors and academic advisor. Professors can then make a referral to the Associate Dean for the student to receive tutoring. The student will receive a letter from the Associate Dean advising them to contact the appropriate tutor to schedule sessions. Students on probationary status due to academic performance will be assigned an academic tutor and encouraged to take full advantage of this valuable resource. Tutors are upper level GRTS students who have excelled in coursework, possess the appropriate disciplinary expertise, and demonstrate the relational gifts essential to the task of tutoring.

## ADVANCED STANDING

Advanced standing credit is available to new students for certain undergraduate courses completed within 10 years prior to graduation at GRTS. These courses must be completed at regionally accredited institutions, institutions accredited by the Association of Biblical Higher Education, and other institutions approved by Cornerstone University. In keeping with accrediting standards (The Association of Theological Schools), GRTS limits advanced standing credits to 1/4th of the graduate degree program. Consideration for advanced standing credit is limited to 300/400 level undergraduate courses in which a grade of "B" (3.0) or better was achieved in an equivalent course. Evaluative judgment for advanced standing is made on the basis of examination in the content area or by assessment of a relevant sample of student work. New students have one calendar year from their original matriculation date at GRTS to apply for advanced standing credit. Credits granted by advanced standing will appear on the student's academic transcript and contribute to program completion, but will not be included in the student's cumulative grade point average calculation.

At GRTS, advanced standing is assessed and administered by two means. First, the granting of advanced standing credit is determined by way of examination. The GRTS faculty has identified

a select grouping of courses for which advanced standing by examination is permitted. Advanced standing exams will be offered at the beginning of each semester. Faculty member approval is required to sit for an advanced standing exam. New students are encouraged to work with an admissions representative to coordinate this process. A non-refundable \$50.00 fee, payable to GRTS prior to taking the advanced standing exam, is charged for each exam administered. All advanced standing exams will be graded on a pass/fail basis. Students are limited to one attempt on any given exam.

Second, the granting of advanced standing credit is also determined by assessment of sample student work from the relevant undergraduate course. In these cases, students are responsible to provide the GRTS professor with a copy of the undergraduate course syllabus and all course related assignments, submitting an electronic copy of documents wherever these are available. In turn, the professor will review the sample student work to assess student knowledge and competency in the given content area based on parity in content and methods with the seminary course for which advanced standing is sought. Students are encouraged to work with an admissions representative to coordinate this process. A non-refundable \$50.00 fee, payable to GRTS prior to the completion of the advanced standing assessment, is charged for each assessment administered. All advanced standing assessments will be graded on a pass/fail basis.

## ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. For full-block courses, courses meeting one time per week, a maximum of one absence will be allowed without grade implication for work conflicts, sickness, scheduling conflicts and all other reasons. For split-block courses, courses meeting twice per week, two absences will be allowed without grade implication. Exceeding the allowable absences noted above carries grading implications according to the chart below. Students should communicate with the course professor concerning anticipated absences (planned or unplanned) in advance of the session in which the student will be absent. Three tardies will equal one absence. After 15 minutes, it is regarded as an absence. Individual professors may implement an alternative attendance policy within their courses. When the attendance policy embedded within a given course syllabus differs from the institutional attendance policy, the policy listed within the given syllabus is authoritative.

### **Full-Block (meet once per week)**

- 1 absence – no grade reduction for course
- 2 absences – 1 letter grade reduction for course
- 3 absences – 2 letter grade reduction for course
- 4 absences – "F" course letter grade

**Split-block (meet twice per week)**

1-2 absences - no grade reduction for course  
 3-4 absences - 1 letter grade reduction for course  
 5-6 absences - 2 letter grade reduction for course  
 7 absences - "F" course letter grade

**AUDIT POLICY**

Course audits are available for those seeking to obtain course content without course credit towards a degree. Course audits are permitted under certain conditions and with specific expectations. Certain courses may require professor approval prior to enrollment. The extent of participation in the given course by an auditing student should be arranged in advance with the course professor. In the event that a course reaches capacity, an auditing student may be removed from the course to accommodate a credit-seeking student. GRTS reserves the right to limit audit students' course participation or remove an audit student from a course. Students may not audit online courses. The cost to audit a 3-credit course is \$99 (\$33 per credit hour). A course may be changed from audit to credit or credit to audit during the drop/add period only (first week of semester). Courses taken for audit cannot be taken for credit at a later date. Those seeking to audit a course should submit a non-degree seeking application through the GRTS Admissions Office.

**CALENDAR**

The academic year corresponds with the following schedule:

**Fall Semester** - Begins in early September & ends in mid-December.

**J-Term** - Occurs during the second and third weeks of January.

**Spring Semester** - Begins the third week of January and ends late April or early May.

**Summer Semester** - May, June, July and August

See "Academic Calendar" in *Academic Catalog* for complete academic schedule.

**CHANGE OF DEGREE PROGRAM**

Students seeking to change degree programs (e.g., M.Div. to the M.A. or vice versa) or concentration must secure prior approval from their academic advisor and the academic dean. The Change of Degree form is available at the GRTS office.

**CLASSIFICATION OF STUDENTS**

Students are officially classified in accordance with the semester hours of credit they have earned as follows:

**M.A.**

Juniors: 1-32 semester hours  
 Seniors: 33 or more semester hours

**M.Div.**

Juniors: 1-32 semester hours  
 Middlers: 33-62 semester hours  
 Seniors: 63 or more semester hours

**COURSE SCHEDULING**

All GRTS students are responsible for the development of their own course schedules and should monitor the progressive fulfillment of program requirements. Faculty advisors are available to assist in answering questions and providing informed insight into the various scheduling options. Appointments with faculty advisors can be scheduled through the seminary office or by emailing the advisor directly. Course schedules for Summer and Fall semesters will be available in February, since registration for these enrollment periods occurs in early March. Course schedules for Spring semester will be available in September, since registration for this enrollment period occurs in late October. Course planners are available at the Admissions office to aid students in program planning. GRTS course schedules are distributed to GRTS students in advance of registration and are available on the university website (see Registrar's Office).

**COURSE WAIVER**

In order to preclude repetition of previously mastered material, students may apply to waive such a course and replace it with another course. Approval for course waiver is granted by the professor who teaches the duplicate course and by the academic dean. Waivers are processed electronically by faculty as Academic Policy Exceptions (APE's).

**DISTANCE EDUCATION**

Grand Rapids Theological Seminary limits the use of online/distance education courses to a maximum of eight courses per degree (excludes Ministry Residency I-IV, Counseling Practicum, and Counseling Internship I and Counseling Internship II). For purposes of distinguishing resident courses from online/distance education courses, resident courses require at least 51 percent of the instructor driven learning (20.5 hours for a 3 credit course) to occur in situations where both faculty and students are in person on the main school's campus or approved extension.

## DROP/ADD

Courses may be dropped or added without penalty during the first week of classes. After the first week of classes, courses cannot be added and refunds for courses dropped will be calculated using the chart listed under “Withdrawal Refunds.” In regards to course drops, courses will be treated as follows on the student’s official record:

### 15-Week Courses:

#### **Before end of Drop/Add (1<sup>st</sup> 5 business days)**

No record on transcript

#### **Before end of 9<sup>th</sup> week**

W - No effect on grade point average

#### **After end of 9<sup>th</sup> week**

W/P or W/E

W/P - No effect on grade point average

W/E - Treated as “F” for grade point average

#### **After end of 12<sup>th</sup> week**

W/E - Treated as “F” for grade point average (no W/P option)

### 7-Week Courses:

#### **Before end of Drop/Add (1<sup>st</sup> day of course)**

No record on transcript

#### **Before end of 4<sup>th</sup> week**

W - No effect on grade point average

#### **After end of 4<sup>th</sup> week**

W/P or W/E

W/P - No effect on grade point average

W/E - Treated as “F” for grade point average

#### **After end of 6<sup>th</sup> week**

W/E - Treated as “F” for grade point average (no W/P option)

### 2-Week Courses:

#### **Before end of Drop/Add (1<sup>st</sup> day of course)**

No record on transcript

## FINAL EXAMS

The Cornerstone University Registrar develops, publishes, and distributes semester exam schedules several months in advance of the exam dates.

Students are obligated to attend the exam sessions as published. No exceptions will be made to the published dates, times, and locations. This is a University wide policy that is strictly enforced.

## GRADES AND HONOR POINTS

The student’s scholastic standing is indicated both by grades and honor points. The student earns honor points in accordance with his/her grades as follows:

### Grade Interpretation

A - 4.0	C - 2.0	AU - Audit
A- - 3.7	C- - 1.7	CR - Credit
B+ - 3.3	D+ - 1.3	NC - No Credit
B - 3.0	D - 1.0	I - Incomplete
B- - 2.7	D- - 0.7	W - Withdrew
C+ - 2.3	F - 0.0	W/P - Withdrew Passing
		W/E - Withdrew Failing

## GRADUATION

All senior level students are required to file an Application for Graduation by November 1 (for December, May and August graduations). Eligibility for graduation necessitates the completion of all degree specific requirements as outlined in the GRTS Academic Catalog. In fulfillment of degree program requirements, graduates are expected to participate in the commencement exercise, which occurs each year during early May. Approval to participate in commencement exercises prior to the completion of all degree requirements is rare, and requires the approval of the academic dean based on a written request. Such approvals will be limited to six credits or less of outstanding work, substantial rationale for early participation, a plan to complete the work within the next enrollment period, and cannot include an outstanding practicum, internship, ministry residency or thesis. Appeals to waive participation in the commencement exercise must be submitted to the Academic Dean by March 1. Three official graduation dates occur each year: December, May and August.

## GRADUATION & SPRING BANQUET AWARDS

### **The President’s Award**

This award is given annually to the outstanding graduating seminarian in the M.Div. and M.A. degree programs. Selection is made by the president and seminary faculty based on the student’s total seminary experience.

### **Academic Dean’s Award**

This award is given to the graduating senior with the highest cumulative grade point average.

### **Leon J. Wood Award**

This award is given in honor of Leon J. Wood to a graduating senior who has demonstrated outstanding ability in Old Testament studies.

### **Carl B. Hoch Jr. Award**

This award is given in honor of Carl B. Hoch Jr. to a graduate who has demonstrated outstanding ability in Greek and New Testament studies.

### **Baker Book House Award**

This award is given annually to the graduate who is distinguished in biblical or theological study. This award is sponsored by Baker Book House ([www.bakerbooks.com](http://www.bakerbooks.com)) to encourage excellence in biblical and theological study by students preparing for vocational ministry.

### **Zondervan Greek Award**

Given annually to the seminarian who demonstrates the greatest achievement in the study of beginning biblical Greek grammar. Receiving this award reflects the student’s hard work in BBL 510 and BBL 511 (Greek I-II), and his/her receiving the highest grades in those classes. This award is sponsored

by the academic division of Zondervan Publishing House (<http://zondervanacademic.com/>) to encourage the study of Greek by students preparing for vocational ministry.

#### ***Zondervan Hebrew Award***

Given annually to the seminarian who demonstrates the greatest achievement in the study of first-year biblical Hebrew. This award is sponsored by the academic division of Zondervan Publishing House (<http://zondervanacademic.com/>) to encourage the study of Hebrew by students preparing for vocational ministry.

#### ***Zondervan Theology Award***

Given annually to the seminarian who demonstrates the greatest achievement in the study of historical and/or systematic theology. This award is sponsored by the academic division of Zondervan Publishing House ([www.zondervanacademic.com](http://www.zondervanacademic.com)) to encourage the study of theology by persons preparing for vocational ministry.

#### ***Nickolai Wiens Pastoral Award***

This award is given in honor of Nickolai Wiens to a graduate, selected by the seminary faculty, who shows great prospect for effective pastoral ministry demonstrated by spiritual maturity, ability to work with people, and showing passion for the work of the church.

#### ***Strauss Expository Preaching Award***

This award is given in memory of Elsie Strauss to the senior seminarian chosen for excellence in expository preaching.

#### ***William Clarence Haas Award***

This award is given in honor of William Clarence Haas, founder of Baptist Mid-Missions, to a graduating seminarian who has demonstrated outstanding proficiency and promise for missionary service.

#### ***Owen John Lydecker Memorial Award***

This award is given in memory of Owen John Lydecker to a distinguished graduate, as selected by the seminary faculty. The recipient will demonstrate academic proficiency and show excellent potential for local church ministry.

#### ***Educational Ministries Award***

This award is given to a graduating seminarian who has demonstrated outstanding ability in Christian Education.

#### ***Counseling Award***

This award is given annually to graduates of the Master of Arts in Counseling degree who demonstrate outstanding ability in the theory and practice of counseling.

#### ***Intercultural Counseling Service Award***

This annual award is given to a student at GRTS who exemplifies the characteristics of Christ-Centered Intercultural Counseling Service. The recipient of this award exudes compassion, empathy and is

passionate about honoring the diversity of God's Kingdom and protecting the dignity of all people being served. This student promotes equity, social justice and is committed to ensuring that counseling services are accessible to all people equally, while upholding the highest ethical and professional standards in the field of counseling.

## **GREEK & HEBREW COMPETENCY EXAM**

For entering students who have completed a minimum of one year of Greek and/or Hebrew language studies at the undergraduate level and desire to proceed into BBL-672 or BBL-640, language competency must be demonstrated by the satisfactory completion of the Greek and/or Hebrew Competency Exam. Students who successfully complete the particular competency exam will be given permission to proceed into BBL-672 and/or BBL-640, and granted advanced standing credit. Cornerstone University graduates who successfully complete the entire undergraduate Greek and/or Hebrew language sequence (B or better in each course), and immediately proceed into GRTS, are exempt from the Competency Exam Requirement but must complete and submit the Advanced Standing Application.

The Greek and/or Hebrew Competency Exam is also required for entering GRTS students seeking transfer credits and authorization to proceed into the first course of the Old Testament and/or New Testament sequence (i.e., BBL-672 and/or BBL-640) in any of the following instances: when the source of the transfer credits is a non-ATS school; the graduate courses are not comparable to BBL-510/BBL-511 and/or BBL-516/BBL-517; the grades achieved are below the required B grade; or the graduate language courses were not completed within the previous two years. In such cases, the student is required to complete the appropriate GRTS Competency Exam before the transfer credits will be processed and authorization granted to proceed into the first course of the sequence.

Unsatisfactory completion of the GRTS Competency Exam requires completion of BBL-510/BBL-511 and/or BBL-516/BBL-517 at GRTS, and results in the denial of the Greek and/or Hebrew language advanced standing or transfer credit. Greek and Hebrew competency exams are administered during New Student Orientation in the fall and spring. Those students interested and required to sit for one of these exams must complete and submit the Greek and Hebrew Competency Exam/Advanced Standing Application, which can be secured through the GRTS Admissions Office.

## **HEBREW AND GREEK LANGUAGE COMPETENCY**

Students enrolled in Greek language studies with the intent of proceeding into the subsequent exegetical sequence (i.e., BBL-672, BBL-677, and BBL-678) must achieve a grade of "C" or better in BBL-511 Greek II

in order to advance into BBL-672 New Testament Studies I. Similarly, students enrolled in Hebrew language studies with the intent of proceeding into the subsequent exegetical sequence (i.e., BBL-640, BBL-641, and BBL-642) must achieve a grade of “C” or better in BBL-517 Hebrew II in order to advance into BBL-640 Old Testament Studies I. The Bible faculty reserves the right to make exceptions to this policy via the Academic Policy Exception process based upon student competency demonstrated through the administration of the respective Greek or Hebrew competency exam.

## **INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE**

As a commitment to honor God’s image in all people, GRTS is committed to being a community that uses inclusive language with reference to all people regardless of gender, nationality, culture, social class or religion. With these commitments in mind, the seminary’s inclusive language policy is as follows:

Persons in the community are expected to use inclusive language with reference to human beings in the conduct of courses, fulfillment of course assignments and patterns of communication in all facets of the work of the seminary. This means avoiding language that is explicitly or implicitly racist or sexist and avoiding “generic” uses of masculine terms or pronouns.

A few examples are:

- Use “humanity”, “persons” or “people” instead of “man” or “mankind.”
- When giving examples, vary the race and sex of the persons under discussion and avoid stereotypical descriptions.
- Avoid dogmatic generalizations about an entire culture, race, social class, denomination or religious group.

No complete list is possible or necessary in the seminary’s inclusive language policy but all faculty, staff and students agree to exercise care and attentiveness to this priority.

## **INCOMPLETES**

A student is expected to complete all work within the semester. If an incomplete is deemed necessary, permission must be obtained from the professor and the academic dean. Students who are granted an incomplete are ineligible for Dean’s List consideration for the semester in which they receive the incomplete. Grade changes from the fall semester must be turned into the Registrar’s Office no later than March 15. Grade changes from the spring semester must be turned in no later than Aug. 15 and from summer school no later than Nov. 15. Every effort should be made to have incomplete work completed in the shortest time possible following the close of the academic term in which the work is taken. Incompletes will be assigned an

“F” grade after the above dates. The time limit for a student to complete the required course work resulting in the change of an “F” to another grade is one calendar year from the receipt of the initial incomplete.

## **LEARNING DISABILITIES ACCOMMODATION**

Grand Rapids Theological Seminary and Cornerstone University will make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The purpose of accommodation is to provide equal access to educational opportunities to students affected by disabilities, and the university does not intend that the standards be altered, nor that the essential elements of programs or courses be changed.

Students having documented disabilities may apply for accommodations through Student Disability Services (SDS), which is part of the Cornerstone University Center for Student Success located in Miller Hall on the main campus. Disability accommodations for students from the traditional Cornerstone University undergraduate program, Professional and Graduate Studies programs, and Grand Rapids Theological Seminary are addressed centrally in SDS. Accommodations are granted on the basis of determined need and appropriate documentation of disabilities. Students must complete an application and submit appropriate documentation, which will be reviewed by the Accommodations Officer and the Accommodations Review Committee. Upon acceptance, the student will meet with the Director of Student Success to develop an Individualized Student Accommodation Plan (ISAP) based on the ARC recommendations. Students will be given a green verification letter to give to their professors and students should schedule a meeting with each professor at the beginning of each semester to discuss their needs. In the event that students have questions regarding whether they are eligible for accommodations, how they might provide appropriate documentation of disabilities, or how they might handle a disagreement with a professor over questions of accommodation, the Director of Student Success should be contacted immediately at 222.1596 or through email at [student.success@cornerstone.edu](mailto:student.success@cornerstone.edu). If a disagreement arises surrounding eligibility for services, or the manner in which a specific accommodation is being implemented, the student has a right to an informal and formal grievance procedure. A copy of the Grievance Procedures is available at the Center for Student Success in Miller Hall, or online at <https://www.cornerstone.edu/academics/pgs/academic-support/student-disability-services/>.

Please note that the process for determining eligibility for accommodations can take 5-6 weeks. Students should complete an application and submit appropriate documentation well in advance of the semester in which accommodations are required to begin. In most cases, testing and assessment of disability must have been completed no more than 5 years prior to application for accommodations at Cornerstone University. Documentation older than 5 years will in most cases need to be updated, with each situation evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

## MASTER'S THESIS

In preparation for doctoral studies, a select number of qualified students within the Master of Divinity (Academic Track only) or Master of Arts programs may wish to complete a master's thesis as the capstone of their educational experience at GRTS. Students interested in exploring this option should communicate and process this preference with their faculty advisor early in their degree program. The inclusion of a master's thesis in the degree program requires formal faculty advisor approval. Enrollment for a master's thesis consists of two main elements: Thesis Readings (BBL-584, THE-584, COU-584) and Thesis (BBL-792, THE-792, COU-792). Students are encouraged to enroll in Thesis Readings the semester prior to enrollment in Thesis. The required readings course is intended to provide the student an opportunity to expand his/her knowledge base in the specific area of study and to focus the thesis topic. Students are encouraged to work closely with their faculty advisor in identifying and developing an area of study for the thesis.

## MID-POINT AND EXIT ASSESSMENTS

Students enrolled in the Master of Divinity and Master of Arts degree programs must participate in the mid-point and exit assessment processes. The mid-point process is conducted near the middle of the academic program and the exit assessment is typically conducted in the final semester of a student's program. The processes are initiated by the Associate Dean and engage the student along with the student's academic advisor, academic dean, associate dean, ministry residency mentor or practicum/internship supervisor, and the director of Ministry Residencies or Counseling Practicum/ Internship professor. The purpose is to review the student's academic performance, student learning portfolio and overall progress in vocational readiness. Specifically, the team considers the student's progress in disciplinary knowledge and skill (academic performance), faith commitment and personal maturity (Christian character), and progress made in attaining the student learning

outcomes associated with the particular degree (learning, development, and vocational readiness where applicable). At the conclusion of the review process, one of three judgments is rendered by the review team and presented to the student in written form. The range of judgments includes the following: 1) Affirm progress toward vocational readiness, 2) Affirm with reservations progress toward vocational readiness, 3) Do not affirm progress toward vocational readiness. The assessment team engages the student in developing and implementing a growth plan when the second or third judgments are reached in the mid-point process. Consult the GRTS Student Handbook for a more detailed description of the policies, process, judgments and the implications of the judgments.

## RETAKE POLICY

Students are permitted to retake a course in which an unsatisfactory grade was achieved during a previous period of enrollment. In such situations, registration for the course and payment of the related tuition and fees at the current tuition rates are required. The grade achieved by the retake course replaces the initial grade in relation to the grade point average calculation, though the initial grade will remain on the permanent transcript record. Students may only receive federal financial aid when retaking a course if it is the first time they have retaken the course and if the original grade in the course does not meet the minimum grade requirement for a student's program.

## SCHOLASTIC HONORS

Students who attain a grade point average of 3.50 or more and carry a minimum of 9 semester hours are recognized each semester through a published Dean's list. Three graduation honors are recognized at commencement. Those graduating *cum laude* must achieve a cumulative grade point average of 3.60; *magna cum laude*, 3.70; and *summa cum laude*, 3.85. To be eligible for graduation honors, the student must complete a minimum of 36 hours in the Master of Arts in Counseling, 31 hours in the other Master of Arts degrees, 47 hours in the Master of Divinity degree, or 24 hours in the Master of Theology degree at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary.

For purposes of awarding honor cords and recognition at commencement, the determination of those eligible for honors will be made on the basis of the cumulative grade point average from the fall semester. The final transcript and diploma will record graduation honors on the basis of the entire academic record.

## SECOND DEGREES

Students who have completed a first master's degree at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary or another accredited graduate school or seminary, and are seeking a second master's degree from Grand Rapids Theological Seminary are eligible to utilize a maximum of 50 percent of the credits from the first degree towards the completion of the second degree and must complete at least 50 percent of the requirements for the second degree through new courses.

## SEMESTERS AND HOURS

The academic year is divided into three semesters (fall, spring and summer). A typical student takes 6-9 credits during both the fall and spring semester, and 6 credit hours in the summer. A 3 hour residential class generally requires 2 hours and 50 minutes of class time per week and 6-8 hours per week of time on task outside of class. A student seeking the maximum financial aid package and/or veteran's benefits must carry a minimum of 11 credit hours during fall and spring semesters.

## STUDENT APPEAL PROCESS: ACADEMIC

On occasion, existing policy and/or faculty and administrative decisions can conflict with the academic interests of individuals. When such a situation occurs, the student should exhaust all options to resolve the academic conflict at the staff, administrative or faculty level. However, students wishing to appeal beyond the initial level are encouraged to write a letter of appeal. The letter should identify and explain the nature of the conflict, request a review of the judgment and/or action and provide a rationale for the appeal. The letter of appeal should be sent to the Academic Dean of Grand Rapids Theological Seminary. For matters of probation, suspension and dismissal, students should see the above policy on academic probation, suspension and dismissal. For all other cases, the letter of appeal must be submitted to the academic dean. Personal appointments with the academic dean on such matters may be scheduled only after a formal letter of appeal has been submitted. Upon receiving the appeal, the academic dean will engage in an investigation of the grievance and seek to foster an acceptable resolution. If an acceptable resolution to the conflict/grievance is not possible, the academic dean will coordinate a meeting of the faculty academic appeals committee. The committee will review the grievance and the facts of the case and render a judgment. The judgment will be rendered within 10 business days of receipt of the grievance, the response to the appeal will be in writing and all judgments of the faculty academic appeals committee are final.

## STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

In an effort to aid students in cognitive, affective, and behavioral growth and development, a series of student assessments beyond traditional classroom grading are integrated as requirements within the various GRTS degree programs. A brief description of some of these assessments is outlined below:

### ***Entrance Assessment***

A brief introductory meeting with the faculty advisor which allows an assessment about the alignment of the selected degree program with the student's aspirations, capabilities and vocational goals.

### ***MIN-500 Christian Spiritual Formation***

The PRO-D assessment is integrated into this course for the purpose of developing self-awareness, emphasizing strengths and identifying ideal roles.

### ***Mid-Point Assessment***

A formal analysis of the student's academic and non-academic development, and an evaluation concerning progress in vocational readiness. This process involves the academic advisor, academic dean, associate dean, ministry mentor or practicum/internship site supervisor and the director of the Ministry Residency program or Practicum/Internship Professor.

### ***Ministry Residency***

Ministry mentors assess students each semester of enrollment in Ministry Residency (MIN-685, MIN-686, MIN-781, and MIN-782) in regards to the student's contributions, needs and developmental progress as they function within an authentic ministry setting.

### ***Counseling Practicum and Internship I & II***

MA Counseling students participate in one Practicum and two internship placements. Site Supervisors for the Practicum and Internships, as well as GRTS Faculty Supervisors, evaluate the students in regards to their holistic preparation for clinical mental health counseling. Areas of evaluation include but are not limited to (a) self-care strategies as a counselor, (b) multicultural counseling competencies, (c) interviewing, counseling, and diagnostic skills in individual and group counseling sessions, (e) development of case conceptualization skills, (f) developmentally relevant counseling treatment and intervention plans, and (g) development of measurable outcomes for clients.

### ***MIN-711 Program Completion Seminar***

A reflective essay is embedded as a requirement within this course, allowing the student to consider the extent and direction of growth and development while enrolled at GRTS.

### ***Exit Assessment***

This is an opportunity for students nearing graduation to provide substantive feedback about their GRTS experience. The exit assessment is coordinated by the academic dean and associate dean and seeks feedback from the student, academic advisor, ministry mentor or practicum/internship site supervisor and the director of the Ministry Residency program or Practicum/Internship Professor.

## STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE: STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION

As a member in good standing with The Association of Theological Schools (ATS), Grand Rapids Theological Seminary affirms the value of accrediting standards. These standards foster attention to good practices within graduate theological education, providing a structure and guide for institutional integrity, accountability, self-assessment and improvement. Grand Rapids Theological Seminary is committed to honoring these standards in the process and product of its endeavors in theological education. If a student identifies a violation of the accrediting standards of The Association of Theological Schools, it is encouraged to bring this matter to the attention of the GRTS Academic Dean. If compliance with the accrediting standard is not achieved in a reasonable and credible manner, the student can bring this grievance to the attention of the accrediting agency. Specifically, the grievance should be made in writing and a copy should be sent to the academic dean. The grievance should be mailed to the following address: The Association of Theological Schools, 10 Summit Park Drive, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15275-1110. ATS staffers can also be reached by calling 412.788.6505.

## TEN YEAR RULE

In keeping with the policies of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS, A.3.2.2), Grand Rapids Theological Seminary limits the use of credits towards the completion of a degree to those credits completed within 10 years prior to degree completion. This includes transfer credits, advanced standing credits and credits earned while enrolled at GRTS.

## TRANSFER OF CREDIT

Applicants who are transferring from other accredited graduate schools or seminaries are required to have official academic transcripts sent directly to the director of graduate admissions from all schools previously attended. This is a condition for admission.

Transfer credit evaluations are conducted during the admission process, although formal transfer of credit is not posted to the students academic record until after the admission process is complete. Students will be notified in writing concerning the results of a transfer credit evaluation. Transcripts from foreign institutions will be evaluated by an outside agency. The student will be responsible for following the procedure required by that agency.

Grand Rapids Theological Seminary will accept a maximum of 50 percent of the selected degree program requirements through transfer credit, or through a combination of transfer credit and advanced standing, completed within 10 years prior to graduation at GRTS. Transfer of credits will be limited to the following types of schools:

1. All regionally accredited institutions.
2. All Association of Theological Schools (ATS) institutions.
3. All Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) institutions.
4. Non-accredited institutions, if those institutions supply to the director of graduate admissions three letters of acceptance from regional, ATS or ABHE accredited institutions.
5. Those non-accredited institutions due to the nature of their relationship with Cornerstone University.

Students planning to take courses at other institutions for transfer into their degree program at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary should contact the assistant registrar for Grand Rapids Theological Seminary to verify the acceptance of these courses. Transfer credit will not be given for remedial or non-graduate level work or for any course in which a grade lower than a C was received. Grade point average does not transfer with the transfer credits.

Grand Rapids Theological Seminary does not guarantee the State of Michigan, or any other authority, will recognize transfer courses from other institutions for purposes of state licensure in counseling.

## WITHDRAWAL

A student who wishes to withdraw must complete a withdrawal form, available from the seminary office. To complete the withdrawal process, the student should return the completed withdrawal form to the seminary front desk or Admissions Office. Failure to submit this form will result in the student receiving an "F" in the related course or courses. In addition, any student leaving school during the semester without completing the official withdrawal process will be academically suspended.

## WITHDRAWAL REFUNDS

### ***Withdrawal from Individual Courses:***

Students who do not officially withdraw from a course will receive a failing grade for that course. Students withdrawing from individual courses will receive refunds based upon the following schedule:

#### *For 15 Week Courses:*

One week or less.....	100.0% of tuition
Second week .....	86.7% of tuition
Third week .....	80.0% of tuition
Fourth week .....	73.3% of tuition
Fifth week .....	66.7% of tuition
Sixth week .....	60.0% of tuition
Seventh week .....	53.3% of tuition
Eighth week .....	46.7% of tuition
Ninth week.....	40.0% of tuition
More than nine weeks .....	No refund

#### *For 7 Week Courses:*

One week or less.....	100.0% of tuition
Second week .....	70.0% of tuition

Third week ..... 55.0% of tuition  
 Fourth week ..... 40.0% of tuition  
 More than 4 weeks ..... No refund

Appropriate adjustments will be made to financial aid programs following formulas mandated by federal, state and institutional regulations. Students whose enrollment status (i.e., full time, 3/4-time, 1/2-time) would change if classes were dropped should consult with the Student Financial Services Office to determine the extent of these adjustments.

***Withdrawal from the Institution:***

Tuition refunds for students who withdraw from the seminary during the course of the semester, as well as those who are dismissed or suspended, will be computed as follows:

*For 15 Week Courses:*

One week or less ..... 100.0% of tuition  
 Second week ..... 86.7% of tuition  
 Third week ..... 80.0% of tuition  
 Fourth week ..... 73.3% of tuition  
 Fifth week ..... 66.7% of tuition  
 Sixth week ..... 60.0% of tuition  
 Seventh week ..... 53.3% of tuition  
 Eighth week ..... 46.7% of tuition  
 Ninth week ..... 40.0% of tuition  
 More than nine weeks ..... No refund

*For 7 Week Courses:*

One week or less ..... 100.0% of tuition  
 Second week ..... 70.0% of tuition  
 Third week ..... 55.0% of tuition

Fourth week ..... 40.0% of tuition  
 More than 4 weeks ..... No refund

Students receiving financial aid who withdraw from the institution during the semester may be required to return a portion of the aid to the appropriate programs. A calculation will be made based on the student's withdrawal date to see what portion of the financial aid must be returned. Students may request a copy of the Refund and Repayment Policy from the Student Financial Services Office.

***Federal Title IV Aid***

If a student withdraws before completing 60 percent of the semester or period of enrollment, the institution must determine the percentage of Title IV assistance the student has earned. The percent earned is determined by dividing the total number of calendar days in the semester into the number of calendar days completed as of the withdrawal date. Any unearned amount must be returned to the Title IV program(s).

***Institutional Aid***

Institutional financial aid is reduced by the percent of the tuition and fees originally covered by the institutional aid. The student may retain an amount equal to the percent of the actual tuition and fees charged based on the withdrawal date. The remaining amount must be returned to the institutional programs.