

# Grace School of Theology

## Student Handbook

2023-2024



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## A Word from Our Provost

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**Mark Haywood, DMin**  
*Provost & CAO*  
*Professor of Bible Exposition*

Dear New and Current Students,

It is a joy to welcome you to Grace School of Theology. Whether you are entering seminary for the first time, transferring from a seminary, or a returning student, we are pleased that you have chosen to continue your academic and personal development here at Grace School of Theology. Our faculty, staff, students, and alumni receive you into our Grace family.

The seminary you are joining believes your potential for growth and constant learning is unlimited. To assist you with your transition, we offer you this Academic Catalog that sets forth critical seminary policies and procedures, important services, and other useful information such as student involvement, technology requirements, and financial considerations.

I encourage you to become an active member of this great institution by taking advantage of our programs, activities, and services. I am certain your effort to be involved will be most rewarding. Remember, however, that these opportunities are coupled with the responsibility to familiarize yourself with our policies and procedures as well.

In closing, I want to reiterate how very excited we are about your presence and how eager we are to serve you.

Please do not hesitate to reach out for our assistance.

Only by His grace,

**Mark “Dean” Haywood**  
*Provost and Chief Academic Officer*

## General Information

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### History

American Christian higher education has deep religious roots. In the nation's early development, it was churches and denominations that led in establishing the first seminaries. Grace School of Theology, a direct product of that history, is founded on a free grace tradition based upon Biblical principles and the conviction that individuals have freedom of conscience before God and humankind. This freedom, absent from many traditions, affirms each person's ability to read and understand the Scripture without the mediation of other human beings. This emphasis ultimately led Grace School of Theology to challenge any teaching that does not recognize free grace as the only means to eternal salvation. Grace School of Theology is, therefore, founded upon the belief that eternal salvation is received solely as a free gift from God by believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Savior for mankind. Grace is committed to Christian scholarly endeavor in the free grace tradition.

Grace School of Theology is a private, non-denominational, institution of higher learning governed by a dedicated Board of Trustees. The institution had its beginnings in early 2002 when a pastor and laypersons in the Houston area committed themselves to realizing their vision of a local evangelical Christian institution emphasizing free grace. At the encouragement and advice of Dr. Charles Ryrie, Grace School of Theology began as Houston Theological Seminary as the result of the planning and visionary work of seven men who constituted the initial Board of Trustees: Dr. Dave Anderson, Dr. Glenn Darby, Mr. Larry Allbritton, Mr. Mark Rae, Mr. Jeffe Ready, Mr. Bill Diamond, and Mr. Bob Winslow. Of the original seven Trustees, Dr. Dave Anderson now serves as the President of Grace.

Grace School of Theology is a work of God's grace. God placed the burden for this educational ministry upon the heart of Dr. Dave Anderson who, for twelve (12) years planted churches in southern Texas and then, for eighteen (18) years, served as Senior Pastor of Faith Bible Church of The Woodlands, Texas. The discussions between Drs. Anderson and the full Board of Trustees led to the beginning of Houston Theological Seminary. The first seminary classes were held in Faith Bible Church of The Woodlands, Texas, and Cypress Bible Church of Cypress, Texas.

Houston Theological Seminary received its certificate of incorporation from the State of Texas effective May 29, 2001. The first students began classes in the fall of 2002. After Texas enacted a state law prohibiting the use of the term "seminary" in an institution's title without state approval, the name Houston Theological Seminary was changed to Grace School of Theology in a Certificate of Amendment issued by the State of Texas in March 2003. The Texas Supreme Court overruled this unconstitutional law in the fall of 2007, but the seminary elected to retain its current name.

Grace is strategically located in the Houston, Texas metropolitan area. The main administrative offices are located in The Woodlands, Texas and include classrooms, faculty offices, and the main Library.

The purpose of Grace School of Theology is to teach Christ and empower and inspire students for Christian service and lifelong learning. We are praying that God will allow us to train people who have a global vision for reaching out in the name of Christ. From the first few students to our current graduates, God has brought us quality individuals who are serious about the study of the Word of God. The students come from many backgrounds, some with years of experience and some as recent High School and Bible college graduates. Many are current church staff members serving as pastors, youth pastors, and Christian educators. Some are businessmen and laypersons interested in and challenged to utilize their ministry gifts in service for Christ. Every student is important to us at Grace. In the classroom, students are challenged to understand the Word of God as we teach a consistent and uniform system of theology.



In individual, one-on-one conversations the students are pointed to the Word of God by dedicated faculty and staff. All of this inter-action, classroom and individual, culminates in the preparation of students to minister in a real world to real people with the love of God, a love that cannot be earned or lost. This is the vision, purpose, and the challenge of Grace School of Theology.

## Foundational Standards Preamble

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### Calling

We are called to glorify God by instilling in our students the Gospel message of Jesus Christ and educating the next generation of Christians. Our calling includes both introduction to and encouragement to remain in a life of full devotion to Jesus Christ. We are charged with educating, encouraging, equipping, and serving our students and their families, which are an integral part of Grace School of Theology (GRACE). We do this by directly instilling our Christian philosophies, values, mission and goals in our students through offering a Christ-centered education. Overt liturgical religious purpose activities (preaching, worship, Bible instruction, communion, baptism) as well as related non-liturgical religious purpose activities (social service activities, weddings, teaching, ministry, or events) all serve as methods that GRACE utilizes to instill our religious values and beliefs. Even non-liturgical ministries are grounded in the *Policies Manual*, *Board Manual*, *Academic Catalog*, *Employee Handbook*, *Faculty Handbook*, *IE Plan*, *Strategic Plan*, *Student Handbook*, *Doctrinal Statement*, *Mission Statement*, *Vision Statement*, *Core Values*, *Purpose and Objectives*, *Philosophy of Education*, and *Ethical Values and Standards of GRACE*, and are therefore subject to all of its ministerial, enrollment, discipline, termination and expulsion policies.

### Community and Partnership

We believe that our religious activity and education derives meaning in large measure from participation in a larger religious community. For this reason, parents and family of our student body play a large role in furthering our mission and viewpoint as a school. We exist to foster a Christ-like, educational environment of persons subscribing to our religious beliefs and faith. GRACE seeks to instill Christian values in students by having faculty and staff spend time with the students, instructing and engaging them in the learning process. In this way, we transmit our Christian system of values to the next generation.

Associating with like-minded Christian families reinforces GRACE 's Christian purpose and is vital to our educational mission to perpetuate the faith. We are committed to being and educating disciples who understand what it means to follow Jesus Christ into a life of worship, fellowship, sacrifice, service and being led by the Spirit. (*Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8, John 15:16, Mark 16:15*) Our mission as part of the body of Christ is to participate, share, and encourage each other toward spiritual growth. (*1 Thessalonians 5:11, Hebrews 10:23-25, Colossians 3:16*) For these reasons, participation in our school requires a tangible commitment to our beliefs, purposes, and mission as outlined in GRACE's Written Foundational Standards, which are incorporated herein by reference, as if fully set forth herein.

### Expression of Faith

GRACE intends to transmit our system of religious beliefs, tradition, Christian morals, reverence and values. We do so by engaging in the community and students' lives, acts of worship, and through all activities, educational and otherwise, in which we participate. Likewise, we believe that all behavior of students and staff of GRACE is communicative in nature, exemplifying and expressing our faith, both publicly and privately. Any student or employee who propounds a point of view contrary to our beliefs as stated in our referenced written Foundational Standards, will impair GRACE 's integrity and ability to educate in accordance with its religious views and message.



## **Outreach Ministry**

We take very seriously GRACE 's charge to be a Christian presence in a secular world. Therefore, all activities that GRACE engages in are intended to further its religious purpose, as stated in our Purpose Statement. As such, all of our programs are considered an outgrowth of the mission of GRACE to preach, teach, evangelize and instill the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

# **Foundational Standards**

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## **Mission Statement**

Grace School of Theology is an evangelical Christian institution of higher learning and has as its purpose the offering of programs of study in an environment where academic excellence is emphasized, and a biblically based perspective is maintained. GRACE is committed to enriching its students spiritually, intellectually, and professionally, and to preparing students to serve God in a global and culturally diverse society.

## **Vision Statement**

Grace School of Theology's vision is to develop spiritual leaders in every nation who can teach others about the love of Christ, a love that cannot be earned and cannot be lost.

## **Purpose and Objectives**

Grace School of Theology is committed to living, learning, and worshipping as a community of faith based upon the grace of God. Through the faculty, staff, administration, and trustees, GRACE strives to lead students to a correct understanding of doctrine with the necessary skills to communicate the Truth. We live by the spirit of God to love one another, to challenge one another for greater growth in the Lord, and to walk together with integrity in this world. Grace School of Theology seeks to prepare others to proclaim God's Truth courageously to a world that is in need of hope. We want to glorify God by walking in God's grace, ministering God's Word, and equipping God's people.

As an academic community of faith, GRACE seeks to guide students:

- ❖ To develop a personal Christian philosophy of service and an ethical and spiritual commitment which is based upon and examined in the light of biblical revelation.
- ❖ To grow in an understanding of the Word of God that is textually based, theologically consistent, and scripturally sound.
- ❖ To develop effectiveness in the use and understanding of communications, both written and spoken, employing analytical and logical thinking in the process.
- ❖ To become a contributor to God's kingdom in a manner consistent with historical, conservative, evangelical Christian principles, leading and participating responsibly in local church, community, and world affairs.
- ❖ To accurately handle the Word of God in ministries appropriate to their calling.
- ❖ To grow in understanding, appreciation, and application of biblical exegesis, biblical and systematic theology, biblical interpretation, hermeneutics, history, the church, and global ministry opportunities.
- ❖ To prepare students to make life-long commitments and investments of their lives in Christian ministries.
- ❖ To prepare students for continuing study by becoming acquainted with electronic technology resources and methods of scholarly research.

## Core Values

- ❖ Grace School of Theology is committed to and intentional about our Christian faith.
- ❖ Grace School of Theology will responsibly teach the Truth of the Gospel.
- ❖ Grace School of Theology strives for excellence.
- ❖ Grace School of Theology believes in the importance and cultivation of Christian character.
- ❖ Grace School of Theology believes in impacting and changing the world for Christ.
- ❖ Grace School of Theology believes in and affirms God's free gift of grace for mankind.

## Philosophy of Education

We believe that mankind was created in the image of God and was given the responsibility of caring for all things that God has created (*Genesis 1:27*). We believe that all people have many abilities and that we need to help them to develop these God-given talents. These principles apply equally to men and women, young and old.

Because of our high calling, we need to excel in all educational programs, providing a systematic and comprehensive training in the Word of God from a Cristo-centric perspective. Therefore, it is imperative to have professors and staff that are competent in their respective fields, who receive evaluation regularly, and who constantly seek ways to improve professional skills.

Our Christian philosophy is reflected in the Bible-centered curriculum taught by well-trained and dedicated Christian professors. Our faculty uses textbooks authored by scholarly writers that maintain a commitment to the Bible as the divinely revealed guide for all people.

The faculty teaches and students study without fear of their academic freedom being violated and without fear of any kind of discrimination. Each student is granted the right to learn, to inquire, and to explore without restraint. This freedom is guaranteed when a corresponding liberty of instruction is granted to instructors. These rights are extended to the student and faculty members within the parameters of sound scholarship and within the appropriate framework of Biblical foundations and institutional sphere granted by the Board of Trustees.

## Ethical Values and Standards

Grace School of Theology is an institution that emphasizes the importance of the Christian perspective in all of its academic endeavors. At the heart of its mission and purposes is the School's commitment to the values and principles of the Christian faith through grace. By accepting the identity of being Christian, GRACE makes both explicit and implicit promises about the relationship between its words and actions. This means that integrity defines the very core of its existence as an institution of higher learning.

GRACE recognizes that it must demonstrate integrity in its practices and relationships. It is necessary that the School be able to show not only that it has policies and procedures, but also that those policies and procedures reflect the values and practices of its mission.

GRACE demonstrates integrity by its classroom performance, public representations, distribution of information, business practices, contractual arrangements, and relationships with internal and external constituencies. We adhere to the code of ethics accepted by the academic community as well as its specific standards of Christian behavior.

Academic integrity is inherent in the nature of our educational tasks. This is reflected not only in the unique relationship between faculty and student but in the manner in which the School represents itself to the public. GRACE identifies itself as an evangelical Christian institution of higher learning, which indicates that the academic programs are developed and implemented for a perspective that is distinctly Christian. GRACE believes this perspective is consistently expressed in its written documents, academic programs, and in the conduct of its faculty, staff, administration, and students.

Every faculty, staff, and administrator at GRACE is required to be a Christian in practice and belief and must give a statement of faith as part of the overall interview process for employment consideration. Students are informed about the ethics and values of GRACE and agree to abide by the codes of conduct as described in the *Student Handbook*. GRACE believes that Christian values and practices form the basis of all academic and administrative departments.

## **Doctrinal Statement**

### **The Bible**

We believe that the words of the Bible, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, are “God-breathed.” They give humankind His authoritative revelation, wholly without error of any kind on every topic discussed in the original writings. We believe that the Bible must be interpreted as language is normally used, recognizing the importance of dispensational distinctions.

(*Psalm 12:6; 119:89, 130; 160; Isaiah 40:8; 55:8-11; Luke 24:27, 44-47; John 5:39, 17:17; Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 2:9-10, 13; Ephesians 1:10; 3:9; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:10-12, 23-25; 2 Peter 1:19-21*).

### **God**

We believe in one God eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each of whom possess equally all the attributes of deity and characteristics of personality and with each having specific work to perform. We believe that God is a personal being who is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

(*Matthew 3:16; John 10:30; 14:10; 14:26; 15:26; Ephesians 1:3-4; 6-7; 13-14*)

### **Jesus Christ**

We believe that God the Son, Jesus Christ, became flesh through His miraculous conception in a virgin by the Holy Spirit and His birth. He is, therefore, perfect and complete deity and perfect humanity, these being united without mixture in one person forever. We believe that He lived a sinless life and voluntarily and vicariously paid for the sins of all mankind by dying on the cross. We believe in the resurrection of His crucified body, in His ascension to heaven, in His present ministries in heaven, and in his future literal return to the earth.

(*Psalm 2:7; 110; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:18-25; 28:19; Luke 1:26-35; 2:52; John 1:1-3, 14, 18; 3:16; 8:58; 10:30; 17:5; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 15:1-20; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 1:14, 15-17; 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:5; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:1-3, 6, 8-12; 4:15; 13:8; 1 Peter 1:1; 2:22; 1 John 2:1-2; 3:16; 4:10, 5:20; Revelation 1:17-18; 19-20*)

### **The Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is God and that He has come to reveal and glorify Christ, to convict sinners of sin, righteousness, and judgment, to regenerate, indwell, seal, and baptize believers into the body of Christ, impart gifts to believers, and to enable them to live holy lives.

(*Genesis 1:2; Psalm 139:7; Isaiah 40:13-14; Matthew 1:18-20; 28:19; Luke 1:35; John 1:13; 3:3-8;*

6:63; 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15, 13; Acts 2:1-4; 5:3-4; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 2:9,10, 12; 6:19; 12:13; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2:22; 4:30; 5:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:7; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 9:14; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 1 John 2:20, 27)

## **Creation**

We believe that the Genesis account of creation is to be understood historically and literally and not allegorically or figuratively. We believe that man was created in the image of God and that the first man, Adam, sinned, bringing spiritual death to all, who, therefore, stand condemned and in need of Christ's salvation.

(Genesis 1; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:15-20; Romans 5:12; Romans 7)

## **Salvation**

We believe that God saves by grace alone, apart from works (whether past or future), those who put their faith in Christ alone as God and Savior from sin. Initial faith resulting in justification and regeneration is not a gift of God. That is, fallen humanity when persuaded by the illuminating and convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit and the drawing ministry of the Father still possesses the capacity to believe in Christ. Such faith precedes regeneration. At the moment of belief, Christ imputes His righteousness to believers and keeps them secure eternally. Based on the promises of God (not works), we believe a person can and should have complete assurance of his or her Eternal Life the moment he or she believes in Christ.

(Isaiah 55:8-11; Matthew 4:4; 26:28; John 1:4, 9, 12; 3:5, 16, 18, 36; 5:24; 6:29; 14:6; 16:8; 17:17; Acts 4:12; 13:38-39; 16:31; Romans 1:7, 16-17; 3:22, 26; 4:4-5; 5:1, 6-9; 6:11-13, 23; 8:2-4, 9, 12-13, 29-30, 32; 10:4, 17; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 8; 6:11; 12:13; 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 5:21; 7:1; Galatians 2:16; 5:13-26; 6:15; Ephesians 1:3, 7; 2:8-9; 4:22-24; Philippians 3:4-9; Colossians 1:22; 2:6, 10; 3:1-7, 16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 4:3-4; 5:23; Titus 3:5-7; Hebrews 4:12, 10:10, 14; 12:14; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:18-19, 23; 2:2, 11; 1 John 1:5-7; 3:2, 5-9; 5:13; Jude 24)

## **The Christian Walk**

We believe that although sinless perfection is not possible in this life, all believers are called to live holy lives in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

(John 17:17; Romans 8:1-17; Galatians 5:13-25; Ephesians 5:26-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; Hebrews 10:10, 14; 1 John 3:2)

## **Marriage and Human Sexuality**

We believe that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of Holy Scripture, which is our infallible guide. (2 Timothy 3:16-17) Since the Holy Bible does speak to the nature of human beings and their sexuality, it is imperative that we correctly understand and articulate what the Bible teaches on these matters.

We are committed to the home and family as set forth in Holy Scripture. We believe God has ordained and created marriage to exist between one man and one woman, with absolute marital fidelity. The Bible sets forth specific home and family values, which include the distinct roles of husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, and children. It is our firm conviction that we uphold the dignity of each individual as we embrace the unchanging and longstanding principles of scriptural truth.

Based on Holy Scripture and the constant moral teaching of the universal Church, we believe:

### **Marriage**

We define marriage as the legal permanent, exclusive, comprehensive, and conjugal "one flesh" union of one man and one woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and

in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother, and child.  
(*Genesis 1:27-28, Genesis 2:18-24, Matthew 19:4-9, Mark 10:5-9, Ephesians 5:31-33*)

### **Sexual Immorality**

We believe that sexual acts outside marriage are prohibited as sinful. Consequently, GRACE members must resist and refrain from any and all sexual acts outside marriage — including but not limited to adultery, fornication, incest, zoophilia, pornography, prostitution, voyeurism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, sodomy, polygamy, polyamory, sologamy, or same-sex sexual acts.  
(*Exodus 20:14, Leviticus 18:7-23, Leviticus 20:10-21, Deuteronomy 5:18, Matthew 15:19, Matthew 5:27-28, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-13, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Hebrews 13:4, Galatians 5:19, Ephesians 4:17-19, Colossians 3:5*)

### **Sexual Identity**

We believe that God created mankind in His image: male (man) and female (woman), sexually different but with equal personal dignity. Consequently, GRACE members must affirm their biological sex and refrain from any and all attempts to physically change, alter, or disagree with their predominant biological sex — including but not limited to elective sex-reassignment, transvestite, transgender, or non- binary “genderqueer” acts or conduct.  
(*Genesis 1:26-28, Romans 1:26-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11*)

### **Sexual Orientation**

We believe that God created and ordered human sexuality to the permanent, exclusive, comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” union of man and woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother, and child. Consequently, GRACE members must affirm the sexual complementarity of man and woman and resist any and all same-sex sexual attractions and refrain from any and all same- sex sexual acts or conduct, which are intrinsically disordered.  
(*Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, Mark 10:5-9, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Ephesians 5:25-27, Revelation 19:7-9, Revelation 21:2*)

### **Sexual Redemption**

We believe that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and should seek redemption and harmonious relationship with God through confession, repentance, baptism, and faith in Jesus Christ. Consequently, GRACE members must welcome and treat with respect, compassion, and sensitivity all who experience same-sex attractions or confess sexually immoral acts but are committed to resisting sexual temptation, refraining from sexual immorality, and conforming their behavior to GRACE’s Statement of Faith.  
(*Matthew 11:28-30, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:1-10, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 2:17-18, Hebrews 4:14-16*)

### **Celibacy**

We believe that Holy Scripture grants two life-enhancing options for human sexual behavior: (1) the conjugal “one flesh” marital union of one man and one woman, and (2) celibacy. Either is a gift from God, given as He wills for His glory and the good of those who receive and rejoice in His gift to them. Celibacy and faithful singleness is to be celebrated and affirmed within Grace School of Theology.  
(*Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18, 21-24; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:5-8; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 7:1-8; Matthew 19:12; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Romans 12:10; 1 Timothy 5:1-2*)

## **The Church**

We believe that the church, the body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost and is composed of all who receive Christ through faith. We believe God's program for the Church is distinguished from His program for Israel described in Daniel 9. We believe that all believers should assemble regularly in local churches for worship, for observing the ordinances of water baptism and the Lord's Supper, for mutual encouragement and discipline, and for carrying out God's purposes in this world.

*(Acts 2:41-42; 10:44-47; 11:15-17; Romans 6:4-5; 12:3-8; 16:1, 5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-31; 12:12-13, 27; 16:19; Galatians 3:27-28; 6:2; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:16-22; 5:24-25, 30; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 5:11; Hebrews 10:24-25)*

## **The Future**

We believe that the personal and imminent return of Christ to rapture His church will be followed by a period of tribulation on this earth. At the conclusion of this period, Christ will return triumphantly and inaugurate His millennial reign over this earth. We believe in the everlasting conscious blessedness of the saved in the New Jerusalem and the everlasting conscious punishment of the unsaved in the lake of fire.

*(Matthew 24:21, 29-30; 25:31, 46; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; 5:4-10; Titus 2:13; Revelation 3:10; 20:1-6, 11-15)*

## **Satan**

We believe that at some time in the past Satan led a rebellion, including a host of angels, against God and was expelled from the heavenly kingdom. Satan, also called other names including the Devil, is a real being who has tremendous, but limited power, and is the true adversary to God's people. Satan is destined to be judged and will endure eternal punishment in the lake of fire.

*(Ephesians 6:12; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 20: 1-3)*



# Accreditation

## Standards

Accreditation is based upon well-defined Foundational Standards and Operational Standards. The Grace School of Theology Mission Statement serves as the guide in the Seminary's strategic planning process. Grace School of Theology is working to join a number of evangelical institutions of higher learning across the United States and the world that have already demonstrated high standards of operations including administrative services, academic excellence, financial stability, excellent student services, and institutional effectiveness. The Seminary has demonstrated a commitment to provide quality post-secondary education within the context of Christian values.



### TRACS

Grace School of Theology is a member of the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) (15935 Forest Road, Forest, VA 24551; Telephone: (434) 525-9539; e-mail: [info@tracs.org](mailto:info@tracs.org)], having been

awarded Reaffirmation I of its Accredited Status as a Category IV institution by the TRACS Accreditation Commission on April 25, 2017. This status is effective for a period of ten years. TRACS is recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDOE), the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).



### ATS

Grace School of Theology is accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools. [10 Summit Park Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15275; Telephone 412-788-6510] The Commission granted

accreditation on June 2, 2017 for a period of seven years. The following degree programs are approved by the Commission on Accrediting: Doctor of Ministry, Master of Theology, Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Military Chaplaincy, Master of Arts (Biblical Studies), Master of Arts in Chaplaincy, and Master of Ministry. Complete information for the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada can be found at the ATS website: [www.ats.edu](http://www.ats.edu).

Program Level	TRACS Accredited	ATS Accredited
Undergraduate	Certificate in Black Church Studies Biblical Studies Certificate Diploma in Biblical Studies Associate of Arts in Biblical Studies Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Studies	
Graduate	Master of Ministry Master of Arts (Biblical Studies) Master of Divinity Master of Theology	Master of Ministry Master of Arts (Biblical Studies) Master of Divinity Master of Theology
Doctorate	Doctor of Ministry	Doctor of Ministry



# Institutional Policies

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Students are responsible for reading and being familiar with current policies and procedures contained in the Academic Catalog and Student Handbook. There will be no retroactive application of any changes in policies. However, future change may supersede policies and procedures published herein. Policies and procedures included herein apply to Grace School of Theology.

## Non-Discrimination Policy

Grace School of Theology strongly believes that it exists to prepare men and women to share the true Gospel of Free Grace to those from “every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9). Grace desires to admit and enroll potential and current students who have a thirst for the Word and meditate in it (Psalm 1:1-3), who “fear the Lord” knowing it is “the beginning of knowledge” (Proverbs 1:7), and who are faithful, teachable, and desire to teach others (2 Timothy 2:2), irrespective of their various backgrounds. Grace also understands that those who it employs must agree with its Foundational Statements above all other criteria (2 Corinthians 6:14-15), knowing that God looks on the heart.

Therefore, guided by the Scriptures, Grace provides equal treatment and opportunity to all persons without regard to race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, age, disability, or veteran status except where such distinction is required by law. This statement reflects compliance with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of Educational Amendments of 1972, and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Furthermore, Grace School of Theology, in compliance with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Executive Orders 11246 and 11375 and Section 402 of the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974, does not discriminate against any employees or applicants for employment on the basis of age or because they are disabled veterans or veterans of the Vietnam era.

This non-discrimination policy covers admission, access, and treatment in programs and activities, and application for and treatment in employment that includes the selection, retention, and advancement of staff, faculty, and administrators. Ultimate responsibility for achievement of equal employment and educational opportunity at Grace School of Theology rests with the President. The President, Vice President of Operations, and the Provost delegates the responsibility and authority to direct these activities.

## Honest Communications

Grace School of Theology strives to communicate its programs and policies honestly in all of its publications and in its website. Every effort has been made to ensure that this publication contains only clear, accurate and current information. Readers are invited to bring errors and suggestions for improving this publication to the attention of the Dean of Students. To the extent an inconsistency is found to exist between the information in this publication and the actual policy or procedure, the actual policy or procedure governs.

## Nonbinding Communications

No oral or written communication made by any employee of Grace, including faculty, shall be binding on Grace without the express approval of the Board of Trustees or the Executive Leadership Team, as appropriate, and no contract is expressed or implied by this publication or any other Grace informational publication or its website.

## Reasonable Accommodation Policy

Grace School of Theology will reasonably accommodate otherwise qualified individuals with a disability unless such accommodation would pose an undue hardship or would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of its services, programs or activities, or in undue financial or administrative burdens. Changes in teaching techniques occur continually as instructors discover new ways to aid handicapped students. The term “reasonable accommodation” is used in its general sense in this policy to apply to employees, students, and visitors.

Student requests for reasonable accommodation should be addressed to the Dean of Students. A student must self-identify as an individual with a disability and provide appropriate diagnostic information that substantiates the disability. The Student Services Division will then assess the impact of the disability on the student’s academic program and record the required academic accommodations. The Disability Accommodation Request form is found on the Student References form on the Grace website. Individuals who have complaints alleging discriminations based upon a disability may file them with the Dean of Students.

## Facilities for the Physically Handicapped

The Grace School of Theology facilities in The Woodlands, Texas are accessible to the disabled using the ramp in the front of the school. All classrooms, offices, and restrooms meet the state requirements for disabled accessibility and are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## Disability Access Policy

The Disability Access Policy aims to remove administrative, procedural, and physical barriers that prevent equal access to services for people with disabilities. It is designed to reflect the Seminary's commitment to independent access for all staff, faculty, students, board members, donors, and members of the community. The policy aims to integrate an awareness of disability issues into policies, practices, and procedures in all areas of service provision. It also gives some guidance as to how this might be achieved and links to other policies and strategies where appropriate. It aims to improve access, prevent discriminatory practices, and ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

This policy supports a social model view of disability where disability is defined as the loss or limitation of opportunity to take part in society on an equal level due to barriers in society and/or the environment.

### General Principles

It is the Seminary's policy to:

- ❖ Actively promote disability awareness and equality ensuring that it continues to be an integral part of our strategy, service delivery and future developments.
- ❖ Continue to audit current provision to ensure that the best opportunities are taken to improve physical access to premises, the built, transport and rural environments, and prioritize future works and refurbishments.
- ❖ Be aware that any change in services might have an effect on service delivery for disabled people.
- ❖ Ensure that current information is accessible and available in appropriate formats.
- ❖ Use all available guidance, examples of good practice and of best value to ensure a corporate response to disability access issues.
- ❖ Involve our staff and customers in the process of developing and delivering the policy and procedures.
- ❖ Develop ongoing training opportunities, monitor, and share examples of good practice.

### Contact and Further Information

If you require any further information, advice or guidance please contact the Student Services Division.

## Changes to Operations Policy

Grace School of Theology reserves the right to change at any time and without notice any aspect of its operations, including changes to personnel, programs, costs, policies, and procedures. Changes may affect faculty, staff, enrolled or prospective students, or some combination thereof, as the administration determines, and will be published as soon as practicable.

## Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness

Grace School of Theology is constantly working to improve our academic programs, student services, and operations. From time to time students are asked to help by completing course evaluations, surveys, and similar questionnaires. These provide rich data on student learning and student satisfaction. Departments also conduct SWOT analyses in order to improve quality, efficiency, and effectiveness. Assessment results and summaries are available on the website.

## Student ID and Email Requirement

When communicating via telephone, students will be required to identify themselves with their student ID number, GSOT email, or (birthdate and mailing address) that can be found in their Student Profile in Populi.

**Students will be required to communicate with faculty and staff using only their official GSOT student email address when communicating via email.**

# Student Life Policies

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## Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this section is to assist students in understanding student life at Grace School of Theology. Here, we continue to strive for a spirit of community by focusing on Jesus Christ and creating an atmosphere that fosters spiritual maturity and intellectual excellence. The goal of community is the collaborative responsibility of faculty, staff, and students.

With the spirit of community, the seminary has nurtured a climate of academic freedom and of freedom of inquiry. In so far as possible, this climate should enable Grace School of Theology to solve its own problems, to the extent that they are peculiar to the nature of a seminary, in an atmosphere of considered deliberation in which all interested parties can participate by means of legitimate representation. This is the purpose of the Student Life Policies.

Within these policies, we strive to achieve conflict resolution by defining as clearly as possible the distribution of authority, the identification of rights and responsibilities, the determination for accountability, the application of sanctions, and the mechanisms and guidelines that will support a healthy environment for all. These policies are intended to stimulate intellectual and spiritual excellence in an atmosphere of freedom and to protect the integrity of the seminary community.

Members of the seminary community share the same responsibilities of citizenship as other members of the broader community. Which means, students, faculty, and staff members are all subject to the same local, state, and federal laws and ordinances. To this end, Grace does not stand between national, state, or local law enforcement agencies and persons who break the law. Persons who break the law on the campus are subject to action by these agencies and, when appropriate, to Grace's internal discipline policies and procedures.

## Student Development and Involvement

### *Discipling & Mentoring with Grace*

Jesus provided the model that showed how to build His Church. He disciplined his followers first, and they then disciplined the next generation, who in turned disciplined... You get the idea. This is how we change the world with the gospel message.

At Grace, a student's mind is sharpened in the classroom. But we also strive to sharpen a student's approach to effective ministry through our Discipling & Mentoring with Grace program.

Discipleship is about relationship. Discipleship groups are made available throughout the week so that each student can choose the best and most convenient time to participate weekly. This allows the group's members to grow together.

### **Discipleship Ministry Preparation**

The Discipling and Mentoring with Grace Program provides the following three Building Blocks (BB) for effective ministry preparation that complements a student's academic program.

BB #1: GROW - Students will experience discipleship in their discipleship groups.

BB #2: TRAIN - Students will be trained to lead a Grace student discipleship group.

BB #3: LEAD - Students will lead Grace Discipleship Groups as part of their preparation to lead in their ministry context.

### **Discipleship Group Policy Guidelines**

1. Discipleship Group participation is required during each Module One and Module Three throughout a student's undergraduate or graduate programing.
2. Students in other programs or special status students are welcomed to join on a voluntary basis.
3. Exemption is given to Chaplaincy students in an undergraduate or graduate program taking CPE class for that Module only. Undergraduate: CH-411, CH-422. Graduate: CH-611, CH-622, CH-633, CH-644
4. Discipleship Group attendance guidelines require that the student be present for six out of the eight Group sessions.
5. A *Pass* grade is given to a student who meets the attendance guidelines.
6. Students are excused from a group session for ministry, work, family emergency, and health reasons. It is best to communicate with the Director of Discipleship before the missed session, when possible.

7. Any student who misses signing up for a Discipleship Group or receives a Fail grade for a Group Module term is required to make up each missed or Failed term before graduation.
8. Discipleship Groups are offered throughout the week so students can select a good day/time to attend weekly.
9. Module Five (the summer term) Discipleship Groups are offered to all students on a voluntary basis. No student is required to attend in Module Five.
10. Module Five Discipleship Groups are available as well for students who need to make up a missed or failed Discipleship Group.
11. Students are encouraged to be trained as a Group leader with the goal of leading a Grace Discipleship Group while a student.

### **Counseling Services**

There are numerous services available to students who desire to receive counseling. Professors are prepared to give general counsel to students regarding personal, spiritual, or theological matters as needed.

The Ambassadors of Grace strengthen the student body by developing accountability through spiritual counseling as well as leading and participating in prayer support. Ambassadors encourage other students to model conduct consistent with the teachings provided by GRACE.

In addition, the seminary maintains a list of recommended professional counselors for those desiring specialized counseling.

### **Ambassadors of GRACE**

The Ambassadors of Grace is a program comprised of students who believe in the message of GRACE and are willing to share that message with others. Students are invited to be a part of the Ambassadors of GRACE Program by invitation only.

Prospective Ambassadors must possess the following additional qualifications to become team members:

- Have been a student at GRACE for at least 2 semesters;
- Have a minimum of a B average (for current students);
- Possesses a positive attitude;
- Believe in the ministry here at GRACE;
- Complete the *Ambassadors of GRACE Commitment Form*.

The Ambassador team serves as the student government organization for the seminary, provides peer-to-peer tutoring and mentoring, and assists in recruitment of new students through individual and collective marketing efforts. The Ambassadors also help inform the overall student body regarding special programs and events via person-to-person conversation, online communication, social media etc. The Ambassadors of GRACE team will elect a governing board and meet at least twice a year.

### **GRACE Alumni Association**

Grace School of Theology has a growing alumni association whose members continue to support Grace as they serve in leadership roles in ministry. Grace alumni support the seminary in various capacities at several events throughout the calendar year. These events come in the form of Grace Day recruiting activities, the annual fund-raising banquet, and other opportunities as requested.

Many Grace alumni currently serve in ministry leadership roles. These roles include senior and associate pastors, Christian Education Directors, Sunday School teachers, Women's Ministry leaders, etc. As such, these alumni members continue to promote Grace to those in their sphere of influence by encouraging consideration of or enrollment into the seminary.

The alumni association is formally celebrated and recognized annually through a Seminary-sponsored banquet. This banquet helps to maintain connectivity between past graduates, current student body, and the Grace administrative staff and faculty.

### **Religious and Social Outreach Services and Opportunities**

Church and para-church organizations periodically contact the Student Services Division seeking applicants for positions within their organization. These positions may be part time or full-time opportunities. Grace School of Theology actively

assists current students and graduates with related short term and permanent employment. Local and distant intern or part time positions, as well as full time positions, are continually posted on the Grace website and within the Populi System to inform candidates of employment opportunities.

The Student Services Division also maintains communication with affiliated pastors to encourage the hiring of current Grace students or graduates to fill part-time or permanent staff positions. This is a component of our ongoing effort to assist students and graduates in attaining degree-related employment.

## ***Student Government, Clubs, and Organizations***

The Ambassadors of Grace serve as our on-campus student government and leadership component. As such, the Ambassadors offer tutoring, peer-to-peer mentoring and counseling, and prayer support as means of sustaining and enhancing spiritual and academic excellence for all students. This organization plans for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and opportunities. This student organization holds meetings each academic term. The students and student service staff are responsible for planning spiritual and social events, visits to local area churches, and supportive campus ministries.

The Seminary currently works through the Ambassadors of GRACE to communicate with the student body across campuses and teaching sites. The Ambassadors also work with Student Services in producing student events designed to facilitate a sense of community for students at multiple teaching sites. Major student-centered events, such as Student Appreciation Week, are opportunities whereby the Ambassadors serve as important liaisons between GRACE staff and the student body. There are no other student clubs or organizations available at the present time.

## **General Student Policies**

### ***Freedom of Expression***

Grace School of Theology is committed to fostering a learning environment where free inquiry and expression are encouraged. Grace expects that persons engaging in expressive activities will demonstrate civility, concern for the safety of persons and property, respect for Grace activities, respect for those who may disagree with their message, and compliance with Grace policies and applicable local, state, and federal laws. Grace School of Theology maintains its right to place reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on expressive activities. Additionally, any activities that are unlawful or disruptive to the normal operations of Grace including classes and business activities will not be tolerated. The purpose of the Freedom of Expression Policy is to provide for organized expressive activities to be conducted on the grounds of the school in a manner consistent with these principles. Groups or individuals engaging in disruptive activities or failing to comply with Grace policies and applicable local, state, and federal laws may face immediate removal from the campus and other appropriate actions by Grace officials.

The Freedom of Expression Policy is applicable to Grace School of Theology students who wish to engage in extracurricular, organized, and expressive activities including public speaking, literature distribution, poster displays, sign displays, any other type of graphic exhibitions, expressive performances, petitioning, or similar noncommercial activities at locations on Grace property. This policy does not apply to official Grace activities. School grounds and buildings are reserved for use by Grace School of Theology students, faculty, and staff, except as otherwise permitted by policies of Grace. Expressive activities permitted under this policy do not imply official endorsement by the school. Groups or individuals engaged in expressive activities are responsible for the content of the expression.

### ***Resident Life and Automobile on Campus***

There are no dorm facilities available for students. Parking is available for students who take courses at one of the campuses or sites, but the Seminary does not possess a special policy regarding parking regulations.

### ***Health Services and Student Insurance***

Grace School of Theology does not require or provide student health insurance. It is highly encouraged for students to find a best solution that fits their needs. If a student needs help in regard to this personal need, someone within the Seminary staff can provide assistance.

## ***Administrative Services & Bookstore***

Grace School of Theology campuses and teaching sites provide copying machines, printers, and mail services to students. Moreover, we offer a limited supply of book sales at the Main Campus and at various teaching sites to students.

## ***Soliciting of Funds, Selling of Non-Food Items***

Persons wishing to solicit funds, sell printed matter or other nonfood items, or distribute or post advertising dealing with noncommercial items or services must seek approval in advance from the Senior Director of Operations. Except for newspapers, these activities must be sponsored by the Seminary or a registered student organization, and the individuals engaged in these activities must be currently enrolled at the Seminary. State law prohibits the Seminary from permitting its facilities and grounds to be used for personal gain. The distribution or posting of commercial literature and/ or other items for personal gain on campus is prohibited.

## ***Copyright Laws***

The U.S. Copyright law (title 17 U.S. Code) governs the making of photocopies of and copyrighted material. Photocopies may be made for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research as long as the reproduction or distribution is made without any purpose of direct or indirect commercial advantage. Grace School of Theology subscribes to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act for handling certain copyright complaints.

Students must be keenly aware that any unauthorized use, illegal downloading, or distribution of copyright material, including unauthorized peer-to-peer file sharing when using the school's information technology system, may result in disciplinary action that includes a failing grade, suspension, and/or expulsion. Additionally, the following civil and/or criminal penalties may apply:

### **Civil Penalties**

The civil penalties for copyright infringement not registered with the Library of Congress include actual losses sustained by the copyright owner as the result of the infringement. When it comes to a registered copyright filed with the Library of Congress, the copyright owner can also obtain triple damages above and beyond actual damages, together with attorney fees in a copyright infringement case.

### **Criminal Penalties**

The maximum penalty for a criminal conviction in the area of copyright infringement may include up to five years in prison and up to a \$250,000 fine.

### **Copyright Policy**

Grace School of Theology waives its right to all copyright in papers, theses, and dissertations written by a student to earn credit in Grace courses or otherwise to satisfy the degree, certificate, or program requirements.

## ***Security***

### **Identification**

Students are required to obtain and show proof of some form of valid, legal identification and present it upon request of a seminary official.

### **Search and Seizure**

Students may be subjected to searches and seizures as authorized by seminary policies and federal, state and local laws.

### **Security Sensitive Positions Policy**

In accordance with Grace School of Theology Security Sensitive Positions Policy a criminal history record investigation will be conducted for student workers in certain security sensitive positions. Failure to successfully pass the criminal history record investigation or falsification of the Authorization to Conduct a Criminal History Record investigation form may result in disqualification from employment or termination. For more information, contact Human Resources.



# Computing Facilities User Guidelines

## Article 1: Introduction

Grace School of Theology computing facilities exist to provide computing services to the seminary community in support of instructional, research, and seminary business activities. These guidelines are intended to improve the computing services offered and provide these services in a cost-effective manner. Seminary computing facilities are a public resource.

## Article 2: Violations of Conditions of Use

In accordance with established seminary practices, allegations or unauthorized use of the computing facilities may also result in being charged with violations of the student disciplinary code, which could lead to expulsion from the Seminary, termination of employment and/or legal action.

## Article 3: General Computing

Grace School of Theology computing facilities exist to provide computing services to the Seminary community in support of instructional, research, and Seminary business activities. These guidelines are intended to improve the computing services offered and provide these services in a cost-effective manner. Seminary computing facilities may not be used for personal or corporate profit. These guidelines apply to all Seminary computing facilities. The guidelines of each facility are enforced by a facility manager.

Within the limits of available resources, Grace School of Theology has a responsibility to provide service to users in an efficient and equitable manner. Any user, who believes that these access guidelines are not being followed, or that they fail to recognize the needs of a group of users, should address their concerns to the facility manager. If the user and the facility manager cannot reach an agreement concerning user access, either the user or the facility manager may ask the Senior Director of Operations to assist in resolving the problem.

The Seminary computing facilities service students, faculty, and staff. All users have the responsibility to use the Seminary computing systems in an effective, efficient, ethical, and lawful manner. The ethical and legal standards that are to be maintained are derived directly from standards of common sense and common decency that apply to the use of any public resource. The following conditions apply to all users of the computing facilities. Violations of any of the conditions are considered unethical and may also be unlawful.

## Article 4: Conditions of Use

As a condition of use of any of the computing facilities, the user agrees: To respect and follow state and federal laws related to integrity, confidentiality and safeguarding educational information of former and current students, financial and protected health information against unauthorized access and destruction. The Board of Trustees requires the Seminary and its employees to protect the integrity and confidentiality of information and to take measures to protect information resources against unauthorized access and destruction.

## Article 5: Gramm-Leach-Bliley (GLB) Act

Requires the Seminary and its employees to safeguard personal financial information that it collects and/or maintains in electronic and paper forms.

## Article 6: Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Requires the Seminary and its employees to protect educational information of both former and current students.

## Article 7: Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

Requires the Seminary and its employees to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of protected health information that it receives, creates, collects, transmits and/or maintains and to protect such health information from reasonably anticipated threats, uses and disclosures.

- To respect the privacy of other users; for example, users shall not intentionally seek or reveal information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, tapes, or passwords belonging to other users, or misrepresent others, unless explicitly authorized to do so by those users.
- To respect the legal protection provided by copyright and license to programs and data; for example, users shall not make copies of a licensed computer program to avoid paying additional license fees or to share with other users.
- To respect the intended usage for which access to computing resources was granted; for example, users shall use computing resources authorized for their use by the individuals responsible for these resources only for the purpose specified by that individual. Examples of inappropriate use may include the use of computing resources for purely recreational purposes, the production of output that is unrelated to the objectives of the project, and, in general, the use of computers simply to use computing resources.



- To respect the integrity of computing systems; for example, users shall not intentionally develop or use programs that harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computing system and/or damage or alter the software components of a computer or computing system. Any defects discovered in system accounting or system security should be reported to the appropriate system administrator so that steps can be taken to investigate and solve the problem.
- To respect the financial structure of a computing system; for example, users shall not intentionally develop or use any unauthorized mechanisms to alter or avoid charges levied by the Seminary for computing services.
- To respect the shared nature of the computing resources; for example, users shall not engage in deliberately wasteful practices such as printing large amounts of unnecessary listings, performing endless unnecessary computations, simultaneously queuing numerous batch jobs, or unnecessarily holding public workstations, scanners, or network bandwidth for long periods of time when other users are waiting for these devices.
- To respect the rights of other users; for example, users shall not engage in private or public behavior that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for other users. Users of computing resources should be aware that although they may perceive the security of files, account numbers, and passwords to be secure, security can be breached through actions or causes beyond the reasonable control of the user. Users are urged, therefore, to safeguard their data, to take full advantage of file security mechanisms, and to change account passwords frequently.

#### **Article 8: E-Mail Distribution of Information**

Users of e-mail systems should be aware that e-mail is not a secure form of communication by default. Sensitive information including social security numbers, payment card numbers and other forms of confidential information should not be distributed via email. Users are strictly prohibited from sending an individual's name and restricted personal information which includes an individual's social security number or data protected under state or federal law (e.g. financial, medical or student data) via email unless the data is encrypted.

#### **Article 9: Violations of Conditions of Use**

Violations of these conditions -- e.g., unauthorized use of another user's account; tampering with other users' files, tapes, or passwords; harassment of other users; unauthorized alteration of computer charges; unauthorized copying or distribution of copyrighted or licensed software or data; deliberately wasteful practices; accessing pornography; online behavior that intimidates or offends -- are certainly unethical and may be violations of Seminary policy or may be criminal offenses. Users should report information they may have concerning instances in which the above conditions have been or are being violated to a Seminary official.

When possible, violations of these conditions of use are reported or discovered, the Seminary reserves the right to commence an investigation of possible abuse. In this connection, the Seminary, with due regard for the rights of privacy and other rights of users, may be given the authority to examine files, passwords, accounting information, printouts, tapes, or other material that may aid the investigation. Examination of user files must be authorized by the VP of Operations or the Provost, or a designate. Users, when requested, are expected to cooperate in such investigations. Failure to do so may be grounds for cancellation of access privileges.

## **Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention**

In accordance with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989, Grace School of Theology provides the following information to provide a campus environment free of illicit drug use and alcohol abuse and to prevent the abuse of alcohol and drugs by students, faculty, and employees.

Grace School of Theology believes that illegal drugs and abuse of alcohol have no place in the college environment. The unauthorized manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance or alcohol is strictly prohibited in all facilities of the college, in all places where employees/students work/attend, including all state-owned vehicles, and as any part of the college's activities. As a condition of employment/enrollment, all employees/students shall abide by this prohibition and notify the college of any criminal drug or alcohol use. Violation of such prohibition shall result in action against the employee/student, which shall include action up to and including termination/expulsion, and/or satisfactory participation in an approved drug or alcohol abuse assistance or rehabilitation program. Participation in such a program shall not be paid for by the college but may be covered by an employee's/student's health insurance policy.

No student may engage in the unlawful manufacture, possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol on the Grace School of Theology's property or as part of any of its sponsored activities.

Such unlawful activity may be considered sufficient grounds for serious punitive action, including expulsion. Disciplinary sanctions for students convicted of a felony offense involving alcohol or the manufacture, distribution, sale, possession or use of marijuana, controlled substances or other illegal or dangerous drugs shall be immediate suspension and denial of further

state and/or federal funds from the date of conviction. Specifically, in the case of a drug related offense, the student shall minimally be suspended for the remainder of the term and forfeit all academic credit for that period.

GRACE shall notify the appropriate state/federal funding agency within 10 days after receiving notice of the conviction from the student or otherwise after receiving the actual notice of conviction.

Within 30 days of notification of conviction, Grace School of Theology shall with respect to any student so convicted:

1. Take additional appropriate action against such student up to and including expulsion as it deems necessary.
2. Provide such student with a description of any drug or alcohol counseling treatment, or rehabilitation or re-entry programs that are available for such purposes by a federal, state or local health, law enforcement or other appropriate agency.

## ***Health Risks Associated with the Use of Illicit Drugs and the Abuse of Alcohol***

The use of illicit drugs and the abuse of alcohol can, and in many instances, very probably will, lead to serious health problems, chemical dependency, deterioration of the quality of life, and, if untreated, early death.

**Cocaine** provides a short-lived "high" followed by depression, paranoia, anxiety, guilt, anger and fear. It can cause rapid physical and psychological addiction. In some instances, cocaine may cause a heart attack or sudden death, even on the first use. The dangers of this highly addictive drug and its close derivative, "crack", are evidenced daily through the news media. Overdose of cocaine (or other stimulants) can cause agitation, increase in body temperature, hallucinations, convulsions and possible death.

**Marijuana**, like cocaine, provides a short-term high, and like cocaine, is addictive. While the "high" may last only a short time, traces remain in the body for a month or more, inhibiting short-term memory, reducing reaction time and impairing visual tracking. It may also cause an inability to abstract and understand concepts. In some instances it can depress the immune system, increase the risk of heart attack, contribute to lung diseases, and infertility. Marijuana and other cannabis can cause euphoria, relaxed inhibitions, increased appetite and disoriented behavior. Overdose can cause fatigue, paranoia and possible death.

**Depressants** such as barbiturates, chloral hydrate, benzodiazepines, etc., can cause slurred speech, disorientation and drunken behavior without the odor of alcohol. Overdose can cause shallow respiration, clammy skin, dilated pupils, weak and rapid pulse, coma, and possible death.

**Hallucinogens** such as LSD, Mescaline and Peyote, amphetamine variants, etc., can cause illusions and hallucinations, and poor perception of time and distance. Overdose can cause longer, more intense illusionary hallucinatory episodes, psychosis and possible death.

**Narcotics** such as opium, heroin, morphine, and codeine can cause euphoria, drowsiness, respiratory depression, constricted pupils and nausea. Overdose of narcotics can cause slow and shallow breathing, clammy skin, convulsions, coma and possible death.

**Prescription** drugs, used improperly, can cause tiredness, or hyperactivity, impaired reflexes, brain damage, and, in some instances, addiction or death.

**Alcohol**, used abusively, will impair judgment, result in anxiety, feelings of guilt, depression and isolation. Prolonged use may cause liver and heart disease, cancer, and psychological problems and dependency in the form of alcoholism. Alcohol used by pregnant women is the leading preventable cause of mental retardation in children.

## ***Simple Drug Possession in Texas***

Texas state law imposes penalties that range from a relatively minor misdemeanor to severe felony charges. Depending on certain factors or circumstances charges could be drug possession or drug possession with intent to distribute.

Determining factors are:

- quantity
- how the drug was concealed or stored
- possession of drug with paraphernalia (scale)
- drugs found with large amount of money
- past convictions

As you can tell from the specific statutes below, the penalties can be serious. If you find yourself facing drug possession charges in Texas, it is in your best interests to get advice from a lawyer as soon as possible.

### **Marijuana Possession Penalties**

Considered as a class on its own, possession of Marijuana has its own penalties that are not the same as other drugs or substances.

The most common marijuana possession offense of under 2oz have a maximum penalty of 180 days in jail. However, in most situations, you can negotiate a deal for probation in exchange for a drug treatment program, and successful completion of such a program can result in the charges being dropped.

If you are accused of being in possession of more than 2oz, Texas marijuana penalties range from 180 days in jail up to 20 years in prison with fines of up to \$10,000.00. However, the illegal possession of more than 2,000 pounds of Marijuana may result in a life sentence.

### **Possession of Cocaine, Heroin, Methamphetamine**

Known in Texas under “Penalty Group 1”, minimum penalties could be two years in jail and \$10,000.00 fine but it may run up to a maximum of life imprisonment for possession of 400 grams or more.

### **Possession of LSD**

Held under Penalty Group 1A, hallucinogens like LSD could result a penalty of two years to life imprisonment with fines imposed of up to \$250,000.00.

### **Possession of Ecstasy, PCP, Mescaline (Group 2)**

Penalty Group 2 under Texas drug laws includes ecstasy, mescaline, and PCP. Ecstasy or MDMA (also called “Molly”) in particular is a common club drug and is regularly charged in Texas courts. Hashish and forms of cannabis with resinous or extracted THC are also in this felony category. These drugs carry two-year jail sentences for less than one gram, and maximum sentences of life imprisonment and fines up to \$50,000 for 400 grams or more.

### **Possession of Valium, Ritalin, various chemical compounds**

The final category (Penalty Groups 3 and 4) includes common prescription drugs and could result in minimums of one year in jail and fines of about \$4000; maximum sentences are given for amounts over 200 grams and are in the area of 20 years in prison and \$10,000 in fines.

## ***Controlled Substances Delivery & Manufacture (Drug) Laws in Texas***

The punishment for manufacture and delivery of controlled substances vary depending on the type of drug and the quantity involved in the offense. Texas drug laws (The Texas Penal Code and Texas health and safety code) divide the offenses and punishment in four penalty groups by drug classification. Penalties for felony drug offenses include imprisonment of up to ninety-nine years in jail and fines of up to \$250,000.00.

### **Narcotics**

Narcotics are made or derived synthetically from opium. Examples include opium, morphine, codeine, hydrocodone, fentanyl, and many others.

### **Depressants**

Depressant are drugs that slows the functions of the body. Medically taken to calm people down or help a person to sleep. Examples are barbiturates, inhalants and Chloral Hydrate

### **Stimulants**

Tend to increase alertness and physical activity. Amphetamines are the most common of these “uppers” and cocaine.

### **Hallucinogens**

These drugs alter perception (visual), mood and thought. Examples are LSD, PCP and Marijuana.

## ***Public Intoxication and Driving While Intoxicated in Texas***

Under Texas law, you can be charged with public “drunkenness” (intoxication) for being “high” in public.

Under the Texas Penal Code the term **intoxication** is deemed not only to have its general meaning of intoxication by alcohol. It also means “*not having the normal use of mental or physical faculties by reason of introduction of alcohol, a controlled substance or drug*”.

Under the Texas Penal Code, It is an offense for a person to appear in a public place while intoxicated to the degree that such appearance may cause danger to him or to another unless such intoxication may be explained to have been administered for therapeutic treatment and such other medical reasons. Appearing in public while intoxicated is a **Class C misdemeanor**.

### **Federal Law**

The use, possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensing, and trafficking of illegal drugs is prohibited by federal law. Strict penalties are provided for drug convictions, including mandatory prison terms for many offenses. The following information, although not complete, is an overview of potential federal statutory maximum penalties.

However, precise federal sentencing is governed by the Federal Sentencing Guidelines. Please note that sentencing under these guidelines can result in penalties that are more severe than the federal statutory maximums and which are more severe than the penalties imposed under state law under certain circumstances.

A federal drug conviction may result in the denial of federal benefits, such as student loans, grants, contracts, and professional and commercial licenses, up to one year for first offense, up to five years for second and subsequent offenses [21 U.S.C. sec. 853]. Moreover, any person convicted of a federal drug offense punishable by more than one year in prison will forfeit personal and real property related to the violation, including homes, vehicles, boats, aircraft, or any other personal belongings [21 U.S.C. sec. 853(a)(2), 881(a)(7) and 881(a)(4)].

Further, persons convicted on federal drug trafficking within 1,000 feet of Grace School of Theology may face penalties of prison terms and fines that are twice as high as regular penalties for the offense, with a mandatory prison sentence of at least one year [921 U.S.C. sec. 845(a)].

### **Drug and Alcohol Abuse Education Programs**

A variety of counseling services and treatment centers are available throughout the state for anyone experiencing problems related to substance abuse. Although most counseling and treatment centers charge for their services, some programs are free of charge. Faculty, staff, and students should avail themselves of sources to identify the services or programs that most closely meet their specific needs.

The following agencies can be contacted for assistance with drug/alcohol abuse related issues:

<b>Organizations:</b>	<b>Website:</b>	<b>Phone Number:</b>
Alcoholics Anonymous	<a href="http://www.aa.org">www.aa.org</a>	
Narcotics Anonymous	<a href="http://www.na.org">www.na.org</a>	
Al-Anon for Families of Alcoholics	<a href="http://www.al-anon.alateen.org">www.al-anon.alateen.org</a>	1-800-356-9996
National Directory of Hotlines & Crisis Intervention Centers		1-800-999-9999
Drug & Alcohol Rehab/Treatment Referral Service		1800-662-HELP
National Cocaine Hotline		1-800-COCAINE
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline		1-800-9-HEROIN
Drug-Free Workplace Help		1-800-WORKPLACE

### **Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator**

Sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) [www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov) or 1-800-662-HELP.

### **GRACE is a Tobacco Free Campus**

Grace School of Theology is a tobacco free campus. Smoking and the use of other tobacco products will not be permitted on any college campus to include but not limited to, campus buildings, sidewalks, parking lots, building entrances, common areas, and college-owned vehicles.

## Want to Quit?

Contact the American Cancer Society Quit-line for free and confidential counseling services, support and information:  
**1-877-937-7848**      **TTY: 1-866-228-4327**

You can also visit [www.yesquit.com](http://www.yesquit.com)

## Resources

- Texas Department of State Health Services
- SmokeFree.gov
- American Lung Association

# Sexual Assault and Harassment

## Sexual Assault Policy

Sexual assault is a non-consensual sexual act involving force, manipulation, or coercion; it is an act of aggression, violence and power. The perpetrator can be a stranger, relative, acquaintance, or date. Grace School of Theology is committed to providing a working and learning environment free from sexual assault. Sexual assault is a criminal act that can devastate victims physically, violate their sense of safety and trust, and interfere with personal and educational goals; as such, it can damage the educational atmosphere for the entire seminary community. Grace School of Theology has a zero tolerance for sexual assaults, as it is a serious and flagrant violation of seminary rules of conduct for faculty, staff, and students. The seminary will vigorously investigate all allegations of sexual assault; it will treat victims with respect, make their legal rights and options clear, and fully cooperate with them in their exercising of those rights. Procedures protecting the rights of sexual assault victims and those accused of sexual assault have been established, are readily available, and will be enforced rigorously.

### Article 1: Definition

A stranger or acquaintance commits sexual assault through forcible sodomy, forcible sexual penetration, however slight, of another person's mouth, anal or genital opening with any object. These acts must be committed without the victim's consent either by force, threat of force or violence, intimidation or through the use of the victim's mental or physical helplessness of which the accused was aware or should have been aware. Sexual assault also includes the touching of an unwilling person's intimate parts (defined as genitalia, groin, breast or breasts, or buttocks or clothing covering them) or forcing an unwilling person to touch another's intimate parts. These acts must be committed either by force, threat, and intimidation or through the use of the victim's mental or physical helplessness of which the accused was aware or should have been aware. Rape is a form of sexual assault involving sexual intercourse without the victim's consent. It includes being coerced through force or threats of force or having sexual intercourse with someone who is unconscious or incapable of giving consent.

### Article 2: Comments and Statutory References

Sexual assault is non-consensual acts involving psychological manipulation, physical force, or coercion. It is an act of aggression and violence, and a crime punishable under the laws of the State of Texas by fines and incarceration up to 20 years of confinement. Grace School of Theology definition of sexual assault captures the essence of the Texas criminal definition, found in Section 22.011 of the Texas Penal Code.

The perpetrator can be a stranger, relative, acquaintance, or a date. Sexual assault is not limited to non-consensual sexual intercourse but involves touching of various body parts without consent. Under the definition sexual assault has occurred if there is not consent. Voluntary undressing could indicate consent, but even such consent does not deprive the person of the right to change his or her mind and halt the activity; failure to acquiesce to the expressed desire to stop would constitute a sexual assault. Sexual misconduct without physical contacts as defined above is not deemed sexual assault but may violate seminary regulations and state criminal laws. Similarly, sexual misconduct, which is lewd, exhibitionistic, voyeuristic, or similar such conduct which does not involve physical contact may violate seminary student life policies or state and seminary prohibitions against sexual harassment.

Grace School of Theology provides sexual assault awareness at the New Student Orientation at the main campus by a seminary representative, and it will be recorded so that each student has access to this information. The seminary will also have additional sexual assault information available to all students who ask for it.

### 2.01 If you are Sexually Assaulted

- GET TO A SAFE PLACE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
- TRY TO PRESERVE ALL PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

- SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION as soon as possible. It is important to seek immediate and follow-up medical attention for several reasons: a. to assess and treat any physical injuries you may have sustained; b. to determine the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, Hepatitis B or pregnancy and to take appropriate medical measures; and c. to gather evidence which would aid criminal prosecution. Physical evidence should be collected immediately, ideally within the first 24 hours. It may be collected later than this, but the quality and quantity of evidence may be diminished.
- SEEK COUNSELING by calling the Rape Crisis Center at 713-528-RAPE, 528-7373 or the Houston Area Women's Center at 713-528-6798. Counselors will maintain confidentiality, help explain your options, give information, and provide emotional support.
- CONTACT THE SCHOOL'S TITLE IX COORDINATOR. This office has staff specially trained in how to advise victims of sexual misconduct.
- CONTACT SOMEONE YOU TRUST to be with you for support. If you are Accused of Sexual Assault Consider the Following Options
- CONTACT AN ATTORNEY. Accusations of sexual assault can invoke criminal and administrative processes that can lead to criminal confinement, fine and administrative sanctions including expulsion from the seminary. Thus, a person accused of sexual assault should contact his or her attorney. If the accused has no attorney, referrals can be received from the Houston Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service at 713-237-9429.
- DO NOT TALK TO SEMINARY STAFF ABOUT THE FACTS SURROUNDING THE ALLEGATIONS until you have fully considered the fact that those staff persons can all be forced to testify as to what you said should there be a criminal prosecution.
- DO LEARN ABOUT THE SEMINARY PROCEDURES for handling allegations of sexual assault on campus through campus disciplinary procedures.

### **Article 3: Sexual Assault Complaint Procedure**

Grace School of Theology provides procedures by which victims may file a complaint and seek administrative sanctions against an accused perpetrator. These procedures apply where the accused is a Grace School of Theology student, faculty or staff member.

All sexual assault complaints should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator. Allegations of staff-to-student or faculty-to-student sexual assault complaints will be addressed utilizing the *Sexual Harassment Policy* below.

Allegations of student-to-student sexual assault will be directed to the Dean of Students. Student-to-student sexual assault complaints will be adjudicated via the *Student Disciplinary Policies and Procedures*. The Dean of Students will inform and consult with the Provost regarding student-to-student sexual assault complaints. Sexual assault complaints may defer, if necessary, to any criminal investigations.

## **Sexual Harassment Policy**

Grace School of Theology is committed to providing a professional working and learning environment free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is illegal. Sexual harassment on a campus most often exploits a relationship between individuals of unequal power and authority (as, for example, between an employee and supervisor or between a student and teacher) but may also occur between student peers or employees of equal rank. At a seminary, sexual harassment also constitutes unprofessional conduct that compromises the seminary's commitment to the integrity of the learning process. As such, Grace School of Theology will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment. The Seminary is prepared to take preventive and corrective action in the case of sexual harassment; any individual who engages in such misconduct and/or retaliation will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or expulsion from the Seminary. Failure to investigate allegations of sexual harassment or failure to take timely corrective action is considered a violation of the Seminary's sexual harassment policy and may also violate federal and state laws.

### **Article 1: Definition**

Sexual harassment consists of the following:

1. unwelcome sexual advances,
2. requests for sexual favors,
3. verbal and written comments of a sexual nature,
4. and/or physical conduct of a sexual nature; when such conduct:
  - a. Is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of instruction, employment, or participation in a seminary activity; or
  - b. Is used to be a basis for evaluation in making academic or personnel decisions affecting an individual; or



- c. Has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive seminary environment; or has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's employment or learning. In relation to the foregoing statements, sexually harassing behavior may include, but is not limited to, the following:
- Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, propositions, or leering; favoritism based on a sexual relationship (or adverse impact on other members of a group);
  - Verbal remarks of a sexual nature whether directed to an individual or a group, or in the guise of humor, including sexually explicit derogatory remarks, suggestive comments, demands, or jokes found to be offensive or objectionable to the recipient;
  - Use of sexually oriented photos, posters, cartoons, materials, or themes unrelated to instruction and/or the pursuit of knowledge;
  - Graphic or degrading verbal, written, or electronic comments of a sexual nature about an individual or the individual's appearance;
  - Any suggestive or unwelcome physical contact; any aggressiveness such as touching, pinching, or patting; or
  - Actual or threatened physical assault. Sexual harassment, it must be understood, is not limited by gender of either party, nor by superior-subordinate relationships. The fact that the parties may have had a previous consensual sexual relationship shall not be a defense against a complaint based on subsequent unwelcome sexually harassing behavior.

Grace School of Theology's Sexual Harassment Policy does not proscribe all conduct of a sexual nature on the campus; thus, it is important to clearly define sexual harassment: only unwelcome sexual conduct constitutes a violation. Conduct is unwelcome if the recipient did not solicit or incite it and regarded the conduct as undesirable or offensive. In other words, it is not the intent behind the sexual behavior that controls rather; it is the impact on the recipient, i.e., the unwelcomeness of the behavior that matters.

## **Article 2: Seminary Action**

The Seminary is prepared to take preventive and corrective action in cases of sexual harassment; individuals who engage in such misconduct and/or retaliation are subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, and/ or the expulsion from the Seminary.

## **Article 3: Responsibility of Seminary Employees**

Seminary policy commits the institution to preventing and eliminating sexual harassment in the seminary community. Seminary supervisors, administrators, and faculty have the responsibility of preventing and eliminating sexual harassment within the areas they oversee.

In addition, the Seminary may be legally liable if a person with supervisory responsibility knows or should have known about the sexual harassment and fails to take any action to stop it. Seminary procedures do not require a grievant to file a formal complaint in order to trigger the Seminary's responsibility to take some kind of action. Seminary supervisors, administrators, and faculty must report immediately any and all incidents or complaints of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator, even if such complaints or incidents have been resolved within the department. Seminary employees are encouraged to report immediately any and all incidents of sexual harassment to a supervisor, an administrative officer or to the Title IX Coordinator.

## **Article 4: References**

Harassment on the basis of sex may be discrimination in violation of title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 2000e, and Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1681. In addition, sexual harassment by a public servant may be a criminal offense under Texas Penal Code Sec. 39.02, and sexual harassment by any individual may constitute assault, sexual assault, public lewdness, or indecent exposure under Chapters 21 and 22 of the Texas Penal Code or sexual assault under Grace School of Theology's Sexual Assault Policy.

Additional avenues for filing a complaint at any time before, during, or after use of the Seminary Sexual Harassment Procedures, but within time limits required by law, include but are not limited to, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; the Texas Workforce Commission Civil Rights Division, the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs and, for students, the Office of Civil Rights, and the U.S. Department of Education.



# Student Conduct, Due Process, & Grievances

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## Student Code of Conduct

For the testimony of the Lord and the Seminary, we ask you to walk worthy of the vocation for which you are preparing. There are certain things expected of those in the Lord's work that may not be expected of the average believer (1 Timothy 3:1-8 and Titus 1:6-9). We trust your Christian maturity has allowed you to accept that responsibility and rejoice in it. It is our desire that your life on and off campus radiate Jesus Christ, demonstrate commitment and dedication to spiritual things, and be characterized by the heartbeat of the apostle Paul when he said, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). In light of our commitment to biblical living, the Seminary asks that students conduct themselves according to the highest standards of Christ-like behavior. Students whose testimony becomes a hindrance to the work of the Gospel and the reputation of the Seminary may face disciplinary action according to the guidelines stated in the Student Handbook.

**Be Respectful:** Respect the learning/classroom environment and the dignity and rights of all persons. Be tolerant of differing opinions.

**Be Courteous/Considerate:** Extend courtesy in discourse. Please do not interrupt speakers. Avoid distractions such as cell phones, beepers, and irrelevant discussions. Do not eat or drink in class without permission.

**Be Supportive/Caring:** Exhibit concern for others and promote a caring environment. Think about how your behavior affects others. Help distressed peers find appropriate resources/assistance.

**Be Informed:** Familiarize yourself with the course and instructor expectations. Read the course syllabus.

**Be Honest and Fair:** Grades should reflect individual work, unless group work is authorized. Maintain the code of academic honesty.

**Be Attentive:** Mentally prepare yourself for listening. Resist distractions, emotional reactions, or boredom.

**Be Punctual:** Attend classes regularly and on time. Instead of closing your notebook early, listen carefully to information given near the end of class; summary statements and instructions may be important. Moreover, leaving class early distracts from a lecture.

**Be Organized/Prepared:** Prepare for class by completing readings and assignments. Avoid procrastinating and set realistic goals.

**Be Participatory/Curious:** Contribute and participate in class discussions; Display interest during class by raising thoughtful and relevant questions that enrich discourse.

**Be Communicative:** Interact with the instructor and discuss assignments, grading and subject matter. Express complaints and concerns in a calm and respectful manner.

**Be Enthusiastic:** Enjoy the educational experience. Seek ways to make your coursework meaningful and relevant. Give your best effort.

**Be Dedicated/Committed:** Show initiative and desire to excel and make your studies a priority. Avoid over-committing your time to activities that do not support your goals.

## Student Disciplinary Policies and Procedures

Grace School of Theology, as an educational institution, has a special set of interests and purposes essential to its effective functioning. These include (a) the opportunity for students to attain their educational objectives, (b) the creation and maintenance of an intellectual and educational atmosphere throughout the Seminary, and (c) the protection of the health, safety, welfare, property, and the property of the seminary itself. The Seminary has a clear responsibility in the area of student conduct to protect and promote the pursuit of its goals. The Student Disciplinary Policies and Procedures emphasize the Seminary's obligation to promote the personal freedom, maturity, and responsibility of students.

The Student Disciplinary Policies and Procedures set forth those acts that constitute unacceptable conduct for students of the Seminary. All alleged violations of the Student Disciplinary Policies and Procedures might result in referral to the Dean of Students. The Seminary does, in addition, reserve the right, for educational purposes, to review any action taken by civil authorities regarding students. It also has the obligation to introduce counseling and/or disciplinary action if the student's conduct has interfered with the Seminary's exercise of its educational objectives or responsibilities to its members. Disciplinary action taken on this basis shall conform to the terms of the Student Disciplinary Policies and Procedures.

Grace School of Theology supports the concept of educational discipline. When a student is not a danger to the seminary community, or when a repetition of misconduct is unlikely, the Seminary will make an effort to educate the student through a sanction; but should the student demonstrate unwillingness to obey the rules governing conduct, he/she will be treated in the same manner as one who has failed academically. Students are expected to adhere, and will be held accountable for adhering, to all federal, state, and local laws in addition to all seminary policies and regulations not mentioned herein.

A student admitted to Grace School of Theology accepts the responsibility to conform to all Grace School of Theology rules and regulations. Proven failure to meet this obligation will justify appropriate disciplinary actions including, but not limited to, expulsion, suspension, disciplinary probation, or reprimand. The Seminary will make every reasonable effort to make the rules and regulations available. Students are responsible for becoming familiar with Grace rules and regulations.

Grace School of Theology Judicial System is the responsibility of the Provost and the Dean of Students.

### **Article 1: Gender of Pronouns**

Whenever appearing, the pronouns, "he," "his," or "himself" shall be considered gender neutral and shall refer to persons of both genders.

### **Article 2: Definitions**

- "Provost" means the Provost. "Dean of Students" means Dean of Students. "Board" means Seminary Hearing Board.
- "Code" refers to this Disciplinary Code.
- "Handbook" means the Official Student Handbook.
- "Hazing" means those activities defined in the Texas Education Code Sec. 37.151 et seq.
- "Hearing Authorities" include the Provost, Dean of Students, and Hearing Board.
- "Notice" means correspondence delivered to addressee by mail or in person.
- "Policy" means the Student Disciplinary Policies and Procedures.
- "Preponderance of the evidence" means that the proof need only show that the facts are more likely to be so than not so.
- "Record" means all documents, forms, copies, reports, statements, tape recordings, or tangible evidence presented in a disciplinary hearing or conference.
- "Referral Notice" refers to the notice initiating disciplinary action.
- "Respondent" means accused student.
- "Sanction" means penalty for violation of Disciplinary Code.
- "Seminary" means Grace School of Theology.
- "Seminary officials" means those persons who have been given the authority and the responsibility by the appropriate agency or person, including regents, officers, faculty, and administrative staff.
- "Seminary grounds" means property owned, controlled, used, or occupied by the Seminary including property physically removed from campus.
- "Will" and "shall" are used in the imperative sense.

### **Article 3: Violations**

#### **3.01 *Unauthorized Use of Seminary Keys***

Unauthorized use, distribution, duplication, or possession of any key(s) issued for any building, facility, room, or other seminary property.

#### **3.02 *False Report of Emergency***

Causing, making, or circulating a false report or warning of a fire, explosion, crime, or other catastrophe.

#### **3.03 *Misuse of Safety Equipment***

Unauthorized use or alteration of firefighting equipment, safety devices, or other emergency equipment.

- 3.04 *Possession of Dangerous Weapons*  
Unauthorized possession of a firearm, weapon, dangerous chemicals, or any explosive device of any description (including compressed-air guns, pellet guns, BB guns, shotguns, or illegal knives) or the ammunition of any firearm or other dangerous weapon or explosive device on Seminary grounds. (A weapon in your vehicle constitutes possession.)
- 3.05 *Manufacture, Distribution, Sale, Offer for Sale, or Possession of Controlled Substances or Drug Paraphernalia*  
The manufacture, distribution, sale, offer for sale, or possession of any controlled substances, including but not limited to, barbiturates, hallucinogens, amphetamines, cocaine, opium, heroin, or marijuana. Controlled Substances and Drug Paraphernalia are defined by Texas law.
- 3.06 *Unauthorized Use of Alcoholic Beverages*  
a. Possession, distribution, or consumption of alcoholic beverages and/ or failure to comply with state or seminary regulations regarding the use or sale of alcoholic beverages.  
b. Public Intoxication-Presenting a threat to oneself or others due to being under the influence of alcoholic beverages.
- 3.07 *Failure to Comply or Identify*  
Failure to comply with directions of seminary officials, police, or any other law enforcement officers acting in the performance of their duties, or failing to identify oneself to these persons when requested to do so.
- 3.08 *Failure to Appear*  
Failing to appear at the request of any hearing authorities or failure to schedule an appearance with a hearing authority as directed by police or any other seminary official.
- 3.09 *Misuse or Abuse of Computers*  
Unauthorized use or misuse of any computer, computer system, service, program, data, network, cable television network, or communication network.
- 3.10 *Falsification of Records*  
Altering, tampering, forging, or knowingly using falsified documents or records of the Seminary; being party to falsification; giving or providing false statements, written or oral; and/or providing false information during any seminary proceeding or to any seminary official.
- 3.11 *Misuse of Identification*  
Transferring, lending, or borrowing seminary identification.
- 3.12 *Violation of Established Seminary Policies and Procedures*  
Violation of seminary policies and procedures as established in the Grace School of Theology Student Handbook, Academic Catalog, and other policies that relate to student behavior.
- 3.13 *Violation of Criminal Law*  
Alleged violation of any criminal law where the student's conduct interferes with the Seminary's exercise of its educational objectives or responsibilities to its members.
- 3.14 *Aiding and Abetting*  
Assisting, hiring, or encouraging another person to engage in a Code violation.

#### **Article 4: Disciplinary Code**

The following acts are defined by the seminary to be unacceptable. Being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol does not diminish or excuse a violation of the Disciplinary Code. The list may not be all-inclusive.

- 4.01 *Violation of Probation*  
Violation of the code while on probation, or violation of the terms of that probation.
- 4.02 *Disruption/Obstruction*  
Obstructing or interfering with seminary functions or any seminary activity. Disturbing the peace and good order of the Seminary by, among other things, fighting, quarreling, disruptive behavior or excessive noise, including but not limited to, a disruption by the use of all types of cameras, cell phones, and/or communication devices.

- 4.03 *Mental or Bodily Harm*  
 a. Intentionally inflicting mental or bodily harm upon any person;  
 b. Taking any action for the purpose of inflicting mental or bodily harm upon any person;  
 c. Taking any reckless, but not accidental action from which mental or bodily harm could result to any person;  
 d. Engaging in conduct (including, but not limited to stalking) that causes a person to believe that the offender may cause mental or bodily harm;  
 e. Any act that demeans, degrades, or disgraces any person. "Any person" as used in this section may include oneself.
- 4.04 *Discrimination*  
 Intentional discrimination against a person on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, veteran status, except where such distinction is allowed by law.
- 4.05 *Destruction of Property*  
 Intentionally or recklessly damaging, destroying, defacing, or tampering with seminary property or the property of any person or business on campus.
- 4.06 *Theft*  
 Theft, or attempted theft, of property or services from any person or any business on seminary property.
- 4.07 *Possession of Stolen Property*  
 Possessing property known to the possessor to be stolen and that may be identified as property of the seminary or any other person or business.
- 4.08 *Forcible Entry or Trespass*  
 Forcible or unauthorized entry to any building, structure, or facility and/or unauthorized entry to or use of seminary grounds.
- 4.09 *Unauthorized Use of Property or Service*  
 Unauthorized use of property or services or unauthorized possession of seminary property or the property of any other person or business.
- 4.10 *Sexual Immorality*  
 Propounding a point of view, conducting oneself, or exhibiting a lifestyle contrary to the beliefs outlined in the *Marriage and Human Sexuality* section of Grace School of Theology's Doctrinal Standards.

#### **Article 5: Disciplinary Action Initiated**

Any person may bring charges under this code, and that person may be required to supply information pertinent to the case.

#### **Article 6: Notification and Procedural Interview**

- 6.01 A procedural interview will be scheduled with the Dean of Students within three business days after the respondent is notified in writing of an alleged violation of the policy.
- 6.02 Failure to appear at the procedural interview shall constitute a separate violation of this code and may result in further disciplinary action.
- 6.03 Copies of the following documents will be made available to the student at the time of the interview:  
 a. A copy of the Student Disciplinary Policies and Procedures.  
 b. A copy of the referral notice.  
 c. A copy of the Students' Rights and Responsibilities form from the Student Disciplinary Code Review and Standards Committee.
- 6.04 Within five business days of the procedural interview the student is required to choose either a hearing before the Hearing Board or a disciplinary conference with the Dean of Students. The student shall indicate his choice in writing.
- 6.05 The Dean of Students shall notify the student of the time, date, and place of the disciplinary conference or hearing.

### **Article 7: Disciplinary Conference**

Students electing to participate in a disciplinary conference with the Dean of Students are afforded the following procedural protections:

- Written notice of the alleged violations at least three business days prior to the scheduled conference.
- The right to be accompanied and assisted by an advisor as provided herein.
- The right to have access to the case file prior to and during the conference.
- The Dean of Students will investigate the complaint, including interviewing witnesses. Before a decision is rendered, the respondent will be given an opportunity to respond to the information obtained by the Dean of Students.
- The Dean of Students will advise the student in writing of the decision within 10 business days from the close of the investigation. At the same time, will make a copy thereof available to the respondent in the Dean of Students office.

### **Article 8: Seminary Hearing Board**

- 8.01 A Hearing Board shall be composed of two students appointed by the President, two faculty members appointed by the Provost, and two staff members appointed by President.
- 8.02 There will be one alternate appointed by the President.
- 8.03 A quorum shall consist of four persons, at least one of which shall be a student and one shall be faculty or staff. If a quorum is not met and at least three people are present with one being a student, the respondent can request the hearing proceed with those in attendance.
- 8.04 The Chair will be selected by the board members to serve for an academic year.
- 8.05 The Provost may remove a board member for justifiable cause.
- 8.06 If a board member resigns, cannot serve, or is removed from office, the Provost will select one of the alternates to fill the vacancy.

### **Article 9: Hearing Procedures**

The following procedural guidelines shall be applicable in disciplinary hearings:

- Three business days prior to the hearing, the Dean of Students will make available, to the respondents, copies of documents relevant to the case and a list of witnesses and a summary of their expected testimony.
  - The respondent is entitled to an advisor, who may be an attorney, but who sits in an advisory capacity and who addresses the board only upon permission from the Chair. Respondents who wish to have an attorney attend the hearing as their advisor shall notify the Dean of Students of the attorney's name and phone number three business days prior to the hearing. Advisors may not appear in lieu of respondents.
  - In the event that the Seminary chooses to proceed through legal counsel, the respondent will be notified three business days prior to the hearing and shall also have the right to proceed through counsel. Counsel may not appear in lieu of the respondent.
  - Hearings will be closed to the public except when the respondent requests an open hearing. This request must be made in writing to the Dean of Students at least three business days prior to the hearing.
  - If a respondent fails to appear, the hearing may proceed without him/her.
  - The Provost, Dean of Students, or designate may present the case for the Seminary or the complainant. Prospective witnesses, other than the complainant and respondent, may be excluded from the hearing during the testimony of other witnesses. All participants shall be excluded during board deliberations. The hearing will be held in two parts: Determination of violation; Determination of sanction.
- 9.01 The Chair will exercise control over the proceedings. Any person disrupting a hearing or who fails to adhere to the rulings of the Chair may be excluded from the proceedings
- 9.02 Any party may challenge a board member on the ground of personal bias.
- 9.03 The burden of proof shall be on the complainant or Seminary, whichever is applicable, to prove the case by a preponderance of the evidence.
- 9.04 The Chair shall determine what evidence is admissible. Formal rules of evidence shall not apply.

- 9.05 Respondent, complainant, and board members may examine the written evidence offered and may question all witnesses.
- 9.06 Respondent, complainant, and witnesses may speak on their own behalf; however, they will not be forced to testify against themselves and their silence shall not be used to their detriment.
- 9.07 Individuals referred to in the statements of respondent, complainant, and witnesses have a right to respond briefly.
- 9.08 Individuals wanting to exercise this privilege during the hearing must direct their request in writing or orally to the Provost in attendance who shall notify the hearing Chair. The hearing Chair shall determine the length of the response and when it shall be heard during the hearing.
- 9.09 At the conclusion of the presentations, the board shall deliberate in closed session. After deliberation and a vote, the decision of the board will be announced to the participants.
- 9.10 The board may hear evidence concerning the appropriate sanction if the respondent is found to have violated a student life policy. The board may consider the respondent's prior disciplinary record only in order to recommend an appropriate sanction.
- 9.11 Decisions by the board shall be by majority vote. In the event of a tie, the Chair will vote to break the tie.
- 9.12 Hearings will be recorded and, upon request, the respondent will be afforded the opportunity to listen to and review the recording in preparation for an appeal. The only recording devices allowed in the hearing are those provided by the Provost's Office. Any violation of this section will be deemed a new and additional violation.
- 9.13 The board's recommendation will be forwarded to the Dean of Students for further action. The Dean of Students will advise the respondent of his decision in writing within seven business days of the hearing and, at the same time, will make a copy thereof available to the respondent in the Dean of Students office. The accused and the accuser will be notified of the result of the hearing.

### **Article 10: Sanctions**

Factors to be taken into consideration when issuing sanctions include, but are not limited to: the respondent's motivation for displaying the behavior; the respondent's disciplinary history; the extent to which the behavior jeopardizes the safety and security of Grace School of Theology community; and, the likelihood of the behavior occurring again. One or more of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- Expulsion prohibits the student from ever attending the Seminary and from being present without permission on seminary property. Expulsion will be noted on the student's permanent record.
- Suspension prohibits the student from attending the Seminary and from being present without permission on seminary property for the duration of the sanction, which shall not exceed a period of more than one calendar year following its effective date. The Dean of Students will determine the effective date.
- Disciplinary Probation indicates to a student that his behavior has resulted in a sanction close to suspension. Any further misconduct while on probation may result in expulsion from the Seminary. It is imposed for a definite period of time.
- Other sanctions may include, but are not limited to, restrictions from participating extracurricular activities, restitution, monetary fines, and community service. Students may also be required to meet periodically with a person designated by the Dean of Students.
- Reprimand is an official written notification to the student that his behavior has been unacceptable.
- Verbal Reprimand is used to advise/counsel a student about his behavior.

### **Article 11: Interim Suspension**

- 11.01 The Dean of Students or designate may in the interim suspend a student prior to a hearing if the student's conduct presents a danger to himself or the seminary community.
- 11.02 The Dean of Students will immediately notify the student(s) of his interim suspension. This notice will include a statement of the regulations that the student allegedly violated, a specific statement of the facts constituting the alleged violation, the time and place of the hearing, and a copy of the Seminary Student Disciplinary Policies and Procedures.



- 11.03 An extension may be granted to either party by the Provost or Dean of Students for good cause. If either party fails to appear at a scheduled hearing without a cause, the hearing may proceed in his absence.
- 11.04 The hearing shall be conducted according to the procedures set forth in Article 8 and 9 above.
- 11.05 The student may appeal the decision as provided for in Article 16.
- 11.06 If the decision is to suspend or expel the student, the sanction takes effect from the onset of the interim suspension.
- 11.07 In the event a lesser sanction is imposed, the interim suspension will not become part of the permanent record.

#### **Article 12: Counseling Referrals**

The Dean of Students may refer any student who exhibits behavior that interferes with the student's normal functioning for counseling with a person designated by the Dean of Students. This person, with written permission of the student, may discuss the results of the referral with the Dean of Students. The student may refuse to submit to the counseling without penalty, at which time the disciplinary process will continue as if no referral were made.

#### **Article 13: Reporting at the Request of the Dean of Students**

A request to meet with the Dean of Students or designate shall be heeded by the students at the time and place set and shall have priority over other duties unless arrangements are made because of extraordinary circumstances.

#### **Article 14: Seminary Hearing Board Appearances**

The Chair of the Seminary Hearing Board shall have the authority to require a student to appear before the board at a designated time and place when the student's presence is necessary to resolve a question, which is before the board. The Chair shall have the authority to require the student to produce such items as are relevant to the adjudication.

#### **Article 15: Official Withdrawal from Grace School of Theology**

- 15.01 The Dean of Students may place a disciplinary hold on the records of any student who withdraws prior to the resolution of pending disciplinary action.
- 15.02 The Dean of Students may also place a notation on the student's official transcript indicating "disciplinary proceedings are pending at Grace School of Theology."

#### **Article 16: Appeals**

Respondents may appeal the decision of the Dean of Students by filing a written notice, a detailed explanation of the reason for the appeal, with the Dean of Students within 15 business days from the date of the receipt of the letter notifying the respondent of the sanction.

#### **Article 17: Student Organization Discipline and Organizational Responsibility for Violations**

Registered student organizations may be charged with violations of this Disciplinary Code or Seminary Policy. An organization violates a Disciplinary Code or Seminary Policy, when:

- One or more of its officers or authorized representatives acting in the scope of their organizational capacities commit(s) the violation;
- One or more of its members commit(s) the violation after the action that constitutes the violation was approved by majority vote of the organization present and voting members;
- One or more members of a committee of the organization commit(s) the violation while acting in the scope of the committee's assignment;
- A member of an organization acting with apparent authority of the organization commits the violation; • one or more members of an organization or its officers permit, encourage, aid, or assist any of its members in committing a violation;
- One or more members of an organization or its officers, under circumstances where such persons knew or should have known that an action constituting a violation was occurring or about to occur, fail(s) to prevent that action; or
- One or more members of an organization fail(s) to promptly report to appropriate Seminary or civil authorities their knowledge or any reasonable information about a violation.



### *17.01 Disciplinary Procedure*

When the Dean of Students office receives a Student life Referral indicating that an organization has allegedly violated a Disciplinary Code or Seminary Policy, the Dean of Students shall follow the Disciplinary Procedures set forth in Articles 4-15. Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, the Dean of Students may take immediate disciplinary action, pending a disciplinary conference or hearing, against an organization that violates a Disciplinary Code or Seminary Policy when, in the opinion of the Dean of Students, the interest of the Seminary would be served by interim action. See procedures set forth in Article 10 and 11. A student may be disciplined for a violation under the Student Disciplinary Code even if the organization of which the student is a member is penalized under these procedures for the same violation.

### *17.02 Disciplinary Sanctions*

The Dean of Students may impose one or more of the following sanctions on the organization for violation of a Disciplinary Code or Seminary Policy. Failure to meet the conditions of the sanction imposed may be considered an additional violation:

- Letter of Reprimand;
- Social Probation;
- Require restitution, educational seminars, and/or community service;
- Suspend or cancel the organization's registration for a defined period of time;
- Bar future registration of the organization;
- Deferred suspension/cancellation of the organization's registration
- Suspend the organization's right to do one or more of the following:
  - publicly post signs;
  - set up a table or exhibit;
  - publicly raise funds or make a solicitation;
  - reserve the use of Seminary rooms or spaces;
  - hold events for a defined period of time

### *17.03 Notice*

The Dean of Students shall notify the President of the accused organization by letter of his or her decision. The letter may be sent to Seminary Advisors, Chapter Advisors, the National Headquarters and the governing council of the organization if applicable.

## **Article 18: General Procedures for Appeal**

An organization may only appeal to the Dean of Students. See procedures set forth in Section 16. The Dean of Students may uphold, overturn or modify the decision in question. The decision of the Dean of Students shall be final. However, the Dean of Students may refer the matter to the Provost.

## **Article 19: Status of Students Suspended for Disciplinary Reasons**

Students under disciplinary suspension are required to disassociate themselves from the Seminary except for appointments that have been made to conduct official seminary business approved in advance by the Dean of Students or his designate.

## **Student Grievance & Complaint Procedures**

A *grievance* is a just or supposed basis for complaint arising out of any alleged unauthorized or unjustified act or decision made by a member of the Grace community that in any way adversely affects the status, rights, or privileges of a student. An aggrieved student may complain to the administration to correct the problem. The burden of proof is on the individual who submits a complaint. The grievance process is *not* the correct means for appealing disciplinary actions, for contesting a grade, or appealing an academic decision. (See separate policies within the Catalog and/or Student Handbook: Student Disciplinary Policies and Procedures; Article 16, Contesting a Final Grade, or Academic Appeal Process).

### **Step 1. Informal Action**

Seek resolution first through direct, informal communication with the responsible person (Matthew 18:15). Discussion between those involved is encouraged at all stages but is essential in the early stages of resolution. Following an unsuccessful attempt to resolve the conflict one-on-one, students are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Dean of Students. After the student has made every available effort to resolve the conflict in an informal manner, formal action may be taken.

### **Step 2. Formal Action**

The following procedure is used to resolve a formal complaint.

1. State the grievance in writing (write a complaint) within 60 days of the alleged event and submit the complaint to the Dean of Students. No special form is needed, but the complaint must include:
  - ❖ The date you submit the complaint;
  - ❖ A description of the grievance that includes all relevant information such as date(s) when the problem was evident, evidence substantiating the grievance, and witnesses; and
  - ❖ A proposed resolution, that is, what you want to happen to resolve the grievance.
2. The Dean of Students has two working days from the date of receipt to forward the grievance to the administrator who will serve as mediator to resolve the matter. Care will be taken to ensure that the mediator has the expertise necessary to resolve the grievance.
3. The mediator has two working days from the date of receipt to:
  - ❖ Send to the student an acknowledgement that briefly summarizes the grievance and informs the student that a resolution will be sent within ten working days, and
  - ❖ Forward to the Provost and President a copy of the grievance and acknowledgement.
4. The mediator has ten working days from the date of receipt to:
  - ❖ Investigate the alleged basis for the complaint;
  - ❖ Investigate previous efforts taken to resolve the grievance
  - ❖ Investigate any contingencies and take such action that may help resolve the grievance;
  - ❖ Send to the aggrieved student a *formal response* (a statement describing what was or will be done to resolve the grievance); and
  - ❖ Forward to the Provost and President a copy of the formal response.
5. If the student is satisfied with the formal response, the grievance is resolved.
6. If the student is not satisfied with the formal response, a request for a hearing may be made to the Grievance Committee, which:
  - ❖ Shall be given a copy of the case to date;
  - ❖ Shall schedule a hearing date and time within seven working days of the request and notify all concerned (but not necessarily invite them to attend);
  - ❖ May invite the student and any witnesses to attend the hearing—the student does not have a right to attend;
  - ❖ Shall conduct the hearing as informally as possible, while reviewing and evaluating the case;
  - ❖ Shall keep its deliberations confidential; and
  - ❖ Shall, by majority vote, recommend to the Dean of Students, Provost and President a course of action to finally resolve the grievance.
7. The President will issue a decision, which shall be final, in writing to the student within three working days of the hearing.

The Dean of Students is tasked with the overall responsibility for collecting and securing documentation, and for ensuring confidentiality of all matters related to any filed grievance or complaint. Formal grievances and complaints are retained in the Dean of Students office. The Dean of Students may delegate these responsibilities.

In accordance with requirements issued by the U.S. Department of Education, any student who has already followed the Grievance/Complaint Procedures as noted above, and feels the issue is not resolved, may contact our accrediting agency:

Transnational Association of Christian Colleges & Schools (TRACS)  
 15935 Forest Road, Forest, Virginia 24551  
 Phone: 434-525-9539 Fax: 434-525-9538  
 E-Mail: [info@tracs.org](mailto:info@tracs.org) Website: [www.tracs.org](http://www.tracs.org)

OR may make a complaint to the State of Texas by contacting:

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
 P.O. Box 12788  
 Austin, TX 78711  
 Phone: 512-427-6101

For states and territories other than Texas, please go to <http://www.gsot.edu/grievance-policy> to obtain the correct contact for your location. A printed copy of the complete grievance policy with all locations is available free of charge upon request by contacting [info@gsot.edu](mailto:info@gsot.edu).

#### **Title IX Coordinator**

Clint Dixon- *Senior Director of Operations*

[cdixon@gsot.edu](mailto:cdixon@gsot.edu)

713-897-8301

#### **Dean of Students**

Willie Gaines

[wgaines@gsot.edu](mailto:wgaines@gsot.edu)

713-897-8293

## **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**

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Grace School of Theology maintains a variety of records relating to students. The Registrar's Office retains the official file, which includes the student's original application for admission, recommendation forms, transcripts and other pertinent information. These records are available to faculty and staff who have legitimate educational interests.

FERPA is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records, both financial and academic. For the student's protection, FERPA limits the release of certain student record information without the student's explicit consent. However, the law also considers some student information to be Directory Information and is considered public. A student is covered by FERPA at the time of his/her enrollment in courses at the seminary.

Directory Information includes: name, address, e-mail address, phone number, dates of enrollment, enrollment status, major, program, academic awards and honors, and degrees received. This means Grace School of Theology can release this information to anyone who requests it.

Educational records are released to outside individuals or agencies only with the student's written permission. The only exceptions are those specifically required in Section 438 of the General Provision Acts. The Student Handbook contains more detailed information about FERPA.

### **FERPA Request to Suppress**

A student has the opportunity to suppress parts or all of this information from public release. To request this a student must complete the *FERPA Request to Suppress Form* and submit it to the Registrar's Office. This form may be found electronically on the website or in Populi.

### **FERPA Request to Release**


A student may waive this protection and give access to his/her records to individuals of his/her choice. This release allows the individual(s) named to access educational or financial records as defined. For this to happen, students must complete the *FERPA Request to Release Form* and submit it to the Registrar's Office. This form may be found electronically on the website or in Populi.

### **FERPA Rights**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. These rights include:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the Seminary receives a request for access. <sup>[SEP]</sup>A student should submit to the registrar a written request that identifies the record(s) the student wishes to inspect. You may do this by emailing [Registrar@gsot.edu](mailto:Registrar@gsot.edu) or by visiting the registrar's office. The registrar's office will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records

may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the registrar's office, the student shall be advised of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.
  - A student who wishes to ask Grace School of Theology to amend a record should write the registrar's office, clearly identify the part of the record the student wants changed and specify why it should be changed.
  - If the Seminary decides not to amend the record as requested, Grace School of Theology will notify the student in writing of the decision and the student's right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to provide written consent before the Seminary discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
  - Grace School of Theology discloses education records without a student's prior written consent under the FERPA exception for disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by Grace School of Theology in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom Grace School of Theology has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using Grace School of Theology employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.
  - A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities for Grace School of Theology.
  - Upon request, Grace School of Theology also discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Seminary to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:  Family Policy Compliance Office U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202-5901.

## General Academic Policies

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### Governing Catalog

*Governing Catalog* means the catalog in effect at the time of first enrollment that states the graduation requirements to which a student is subject. If the graduation requirements change, the student will automatically remain subject to the original governing catalog but may petition to continue studies subject to the new one. In no case may a student revert to an earlier catalog. Students who have not been enrolled for three semesters or more and return will be subject to the catalog at the time of readmission. Students are automatically subject to other revisions such as policies, procedures, etc. Students are encouraged to communicate regularly with their Academic Advisor regarding their degree plan.

### Academic Advising

If you have ministry, personal, or spiritual issues you wish to discuss, please feel free to contact the Student Services Division. All information shared with staff in such cases will be held in the strictest confidence.

Initial academic advisement for new students' first semester is available through the Student Services' personnel who will guide the student toward course registration. Once admitted, the Registrar assigns a faculty-qualified Academic Advisor to each student based on his or her enrolled program, language of study, and location. The name and contact information for the Academic Advisor is communicated to the student in the Registrar's initial acceptance email. All students are encouraged to seek out their Academic Advisor in planning their educational program.

Academic Advisors counsel students on the best sequencing of their course selections based on each student's unique personal needs and help them prepare to complete their chosen academic program within the stated time limit. Each student is responsible for being familiar with and following (as much as is possible) the recommended course sequence for their academic program. Course Progression Charts are found below in this Catalog and are available from the assigned Academic Advisor, appropriate Dean, and/or Registrar.

Academic Advisors have access to students' files that display contact information, current degree plan and degree audit, a history of documents archived, and comments made to the student since they first applied. Because advisors have years of ministerial experience and are expected to demonstrate a servant's heart, Academic Advisors are encouraged to offer prayer and counsel as the Holy Spirit leads.

## Academic Appeal Process

Other than contesting a final grade (see separate policy below), students may appeal academic decisions such as the evaluation of transfer credit and academic dismissal, based on extenuating circumstances, by following the proper steps:

1. Submit a detailed letter, with supporting documentation, to the Academic Dean within ten (10) business days of the decision.
2. The Academic Dean will convene the Academic Committee no later than two weeks after receiving the student's appeal in writing.
3. The Academic Committee will notify all concerned of its decision no later than two weeks after convening. The judgment of the Academic Committee is final.

## Classification of Students

The academic year runs from the beginning of the fall semester through the end of the summer semester in the following year.

### Graduate Students

- ❖ Full-time graduate students are those enrolled in nine (9) or more credits per semester, at least 18 credits per school year.
- ❖ Half-time graduate students are those enrolled in four (4) credits per semester, at least 8 credits per school year.

### Undergraduate Students

- ❖ Full-time undergraduate students are those enrolled in twelve (12) or more credits per semester, 24 or more credits per school year.
- ❖ Half-time undergraduate students are those enrolled in six (6) credits per semester, at least 12 credits per school year.

## Definition of Credit Hour

A credit hour is one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction with a minimum of two hours of out-of-class work each week of a semester. Grace offers classes in 8-week modules and 16-week semesters. Most courses are 8 weeks in length while courses such as biblical languages and internship are 16 weeks long. These classes may be offered completely in the classroom (depending on teaching location), completely online, or a combination of both (hybrid) using asynchronous and/or synchronous video streaming. Faculty members are responsible for developing their course so that it meets the following course-hour equivalency.

Irrespective of the location, mode of delivery, or length of course, for the purposes of calculating an institutionally established course-hour equivalency,

- ❖ A 1-unit course would reasonably approximate a minimum of 45 course hours.
- ❖ A 2-unit course would reasonably approximate a minimum of 90 course hours.
- ❖ A 3-unit course would reasonably approximate a minimum of 135 course hours.

### Eight-week, 3-Unit, Module Class Example:

A typical unit of credit equates to approximately 5.6 hours of student work per week (1 hour lecture plus 4.6 hours of homework). For this class with 24 hours of in-class time, another 111 hours of assignments such as reading, research and writing, exam preparation, and online discussion boards would be needed to complete the minimum requirement of 135 course hours. Lecture time may be adjusted accordingly depending on the assignments given in addition to the lectures.

### Sixteen-week, 3-Unit, Semester Class Example:

A typical unit of credit equates to 3 hours of student work per week (1 hour lecture plus 2 hours of homework assignments). For this class with 48 hours of in-class time, another 87 hours of assignments such as reading, research and writing, exam preparation and online discussion boards would be needed to complete the minimum requirement of 135 course hours. Lecture time may be adjusted accordingly depending on the assignments given in addition to the lectures.

# Admissions

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## General Admission Requirements

### *Personal Enrichment*

There are no degree requirements for those wishing to take classes only for enrichment. Anyone can apply to become a non-credit/audit student in an undergraduate or graduate class. Applicants must complete the non-credit application for admission before his/her acceptance is considered.

### *Undergraduate Program*

Anyone with a high school diploma, GED, or equivalent education can apply for the Undergraduate Program offered at Grace for credit. Applicants must complete the Undergraduate application for admission before his/her acceptance is considered.

Undergraduate applicants who cannot provide a valid High School transcript or proof of passing the General Education Development Test (GED) will be required to successfully pass the Ability to Benefit Test (ATB) that is administered by a third party.

### *Graduate Program*

Applicants for the Graduate Program must have earned a baccalaureate degree from an USDE accredited college or university, or its equivalent. The student's undergraduate overall grade point average must be 2.0 or higher for admittance.

Applicants for the Master of Theology must have completed the Master of Divinity (a minimum of 90 credit hours, including one year each of biblical Greek and Hebrew), or equivalent, with a minimum 3.0 GPA, prior to enrollment. Those who have not completed the biblical language requirement may still enroll but must complete the first-year language requirements before proceeding to subsequent years of language study. This may be accomplished concurrently while enrolled.

Applicants who have recently graduated from the bachelor's program at Grace only need to complete a new admissions essay (stating their rationale for entering graduate studies) and an updated pastoral or church recommendation.

### *Doctorate Program*

#### **Acknowledgment and Respect of Grace's Doctrinal Statement**

It is expected that a student who applies to the Doctor of Ministry Program at Grace School of Theology has carefully read its Doctrinal Statement and has prayerfully decided that further doctoral education and training at Grace is a benefit to one's ministry.

Grace admits students into all of its academic programs who may not be in total agreement with its theological position on the condition that they acknowledge Grace's beliefs, respect them, and respect fellow students, faculty and staff who hold to the Grace position.

During the learning experience, it is expected that there will be collegial respect for each other's positions within the framework of the authority of Scripture.

Grace welcomes robust critical thinking and discussion as part of its educational philosophy but reserves the right to dismiss any student who causes division or dissension in the classroom, through online discussion boards, or in social media communications.

#### **Academic Preparation**

Admission to the Doctor of Ministry program requires a TRACS, Regional, or ATS-accredited Master of Divinity degree (a minimum of 90 semester credit hours), or its equivalent, including at least one year (2 semesters) of Greek, with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) from an accredited or equivalent institution. The Master of Divinity degree must be of comparable educational content (biblical, theological, ministerial) to that of Grace. Applicants who do not meet these requirements may petition the Admissions Committee for consideration.



## Ministry Experience

Applicants to the Doctor of Ministry program must normally have at least three years of ministry experience completed after receiving the Master of Divinity and evidence of capacity for an advanced level of competence and reflection. Ongoing engagement in ministry in a specific ministry context is required for continuance in the program. Evidence of mature Christian character and significant ministry achievement must be demonstrated in the application.

## Evidence of Research and Writing Ability

Applicants must submit a ten-page research paper (excluding title page, table of contents, and bibliography) that exegetically and theologically explains the biblical position on one of the following topics: openness theology, prosperity theology, homosexuality, and philosophy of leadership. The paper must interact with different Christian viewpoints and must utilize at least ten different resources. The paper must be footnoted and follow the *Turabian* (Chicago 9<sup>th</sup> Edition) style manual.

Students who have completed a graduate thesis (Master's level or higher) in a theological discipline requiring competent exegesis and theological reflection may submit it in lieu of the research paper for consideration in meeting this requirement. This paper will be utilized to assess student proficiency in written English, critical thinking skills, exegetical ability, and theological competence. If upon review this paper does not demonstrate an appropriate level of these abilities, the student may be admitted into the program but will not be allowed to begin work on their final project until improvement has been shown through the papers that will be written in the three Core courses. If the student still has not shown improvement after the three required courses, it will be incumbent upon the student to obtain outside training in these areas and demonstrate proficiency to the Dean of DMin Studies. Only after this recourse will the student be allowed to register for their final project.

## The Application Process

### Academic Programs for Credit

Applications for Grace School of Theology may be obtained on its website ([www.gsot.edu](http://www.gsot.edu)). Once the Admissions Office has received the application and all necessary information, the Admissions Committee will review the application and notify the applicant in writing regarding admission status. Application fees are listed in the financial information.

Anyone who wishes to enroll in an Academic Program for credit at Grace School of Theology must follow the steps in the Admissions Process outlined below.

**Visit the Grace School of Theology website ([www.gsot.edu](http://www.gsot.edu)) and click on the Apply button at the top right corner of the page.**

The Application for the **Undergraduate Program** includes the following:

- a. Admissions Essay
- b. Official transcripts from where an applicant received a High School Diploma or GED is required. Official transcripts are also required from any Undergraduate work completed higher than High School.
- c. One Personal Recommendation form (can be completed online)
- d. One Pastoral or Church Recommendation form (can be completed online)
- e. Copy of a government-issued ID with photo
- f. Spousal Statement (if applicable) (can be completed online)

The Application for the **Graduate Program** includes the following:

- a. Admissions Essay
- b. Official transcripts from where an applicant has completed his/her Undergraduate Studies. Official transcripts from any institution post High School are necessary for applications to be considered.
- c. One Personal Recommendation form (can be completed online)
- d. One Pastoral or Church Recommendation form (can be completed online)
- e. Copy of a government-issued ID with photo
- f. Spousal Statement (if applicable) (can be completed online)

The Application for the **Doctorate Program** includes the following:

- a. Admissions Essay
- b. Official transcripts from where an applicant has completed his/her Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies. Official transcripts from any institution post High School are necessary for applications to be considered.
- c. One Personal Recommendation form (can be completed online)
- d. One Pastoral or Church Recommendation form (can be completed online)
- e. Copy of a government-issued ID with photo

- f. Spousal Statement (if applicable) (can be completed online)
- g. Statement of Ministry Experience
- h. Evidence of research and writing ability (For further details see General Admission Requirements for Doctorate Program.)

Once the Admissions Department receives all application components (including transcripts and recommendation forms), the completed application is sent to the Admissions Committee.

### ***Academic Courses for Enrichment (Auditing a Course)***

Anyone who wishes to enroll in courses for enrichment purposes (auditing) at Grace School of Theology must follow the steps in the Admissions Process outlined below.

1. Visit the Grace School of Theology website ([www.gsot.edu](http://www.gsot.edu)) and click on the Apply button at the top right corner of the page.
2. Choose the program titled Non-Credit Enrichment Applicants (Audit/Enrichment). Applicants applying to audit courses must only complete the online components of the application for admission.

## **Special Admissions**

### ***Ability to Benefit and Undergraduate Probationary Admittance***

Grace accepts students into the Undergraduate Program, on a limited basis, who have not earned a high school diploma or do not possess a GED. Applicants who are eligible for Title-IV Financial Aid based on their status as a citizen of the United States and do not possess a GED or valid high school diploma must take and successfully pass the Ability to Benefit (ATB) test in order to qualify for those Title-IV benefits. Once a student has completed all the other admissions requirements, they will be accepted on Probationary Status. Applicants who wish to be admitted into the Ability to Benefit (ATB) program must first take the ATB test. Requests to take the test must be made with the Director of Admissions and Enrollment in Student Services. There is an additional fee for this service that is determined by the test administrator.

Certain exceptions may be made for applicants who are not eligible for Title-IV Financial Aid (based on their status as a US citizen) to be admitted on Probationary Status without taking the ATB test. These applicants will not qualify for Title-IV benefits.

Undergraduate students admitted on Probationary Status must complete 12 undergraduate credits of satisfactory work with a minimum overall grade point average of 2.0 in order to be changed from Probationary status to Full Admission status. The Registrar's Office will monitor student's progress in the student information system (grades and progress) and keep the student's Academic Advisor informed of the status.

Through various ministries, facilitated by Student Services, students in the ATB program may obtain tutorial assistance in areas such as academics, ministry and life matters. The aim of the seminary is to provide learning helps in order to develop a wide range of life skills that will prove beneficial to the student's personal and professional purposes and goals. Writing tutors are available for all students through the Writing Center.

### ***Graduate Probationary Admittance***

If a graduate student's undergraduate grade point average is below 2.0, then the student may be admitted on a limited Probationary Status. Graduate students admitted on probation must complete 9 graduate credits of satisfactory work with a minimum overall grade point average of 2.0 in order to be changed from Probationary status to Full Admission status. However, a graduate student admitted on probation to the ThM program must complete 9 graduate credits of satisfactory work with a minimum overall grade point average of 3.0, in order to be changed from Probationary Status to Full Admission status. The Registrar's Office will monitor all students' progress in the student information system (grades and progress) and keep the student's Academic Advisor informed of the status. The student's status will be stated in the acceptance letter.

### ***Provisional Entrance***

If an applicant wishes to take classes within a semester BEFORE the student has been officially accepted, the applicant will need to submit an Admissions and Exception Petition explaining the reason why the applicant wishes to be considered for entrance without all necessary documents.

Provisional entrance is only for students applying for either the undergraduate or graduate programs. The Admissions and Exception Committee will vote on provisional entrance and notify the applicant of the decision.

If an applicant is approved for provisional entrance, then all application documents must be received within one semester. Students may not register for subsequent semesters until their application is complete. The Admissions Department will monitor and collect the appropriate application documentation for students who are accepted provisionally.

### Special Status

If an applicant does not intend to earn a degree or enroll in an academic program but would like to earn credit, he may be admitted as a special status student. These students must meet the same entrance requirements as degree-seeking applicants. Course grades are based on the same criteria applied to students in degree programs. Students may later apply to enter a degree program based on the entrance requirements in this publication. If the application into a degree program is approved, credits earned under special status will be evaluated for transfer based on the rules for transfer credit.

### English Language Proficiency

All applicants and enrolled students whose primary language is not English and who desire to take courses taught in English must demonstrate English language proficiency, regardless of citizenship. Such students must complete an English language assessment before enrolling in Grace or registering for courses taught in English.

Grace has access to the International Test of English Proficiency (iTEP) at a reasonable price. This exam measures listening, reading comprehension and grammar. All students must have a comprehensive overall score of 3.5 or above in order to enroll at Grace.

Official score reports for alternative language tests approved by Grace, such as TOEFL, TOEIC, PTE, IELTS, FCE, CAE, and CPE may be submitted to the Student Success Division for further evaluation. A prospective student with an alternative test score equivalent to the overall iTEP level of 3.5 is eligible for full admission in graduate programs.

Applicants to Grace with a satisfactory assessment score may continue the matriculation process and take courses as soon as enrollment is completed. Grace requires a passing score as a condition for full admission status and/or continuation and reserves the right to make the final determination in such cases. Students who fail to show sufficient mastery of English (or other subjects) will be required to do further preparatory work until registering for additional courses.

Applicants to Grace with an unsatisfactory assessment score have two options:

1. They may take English language courses or undergo ESL/EFL training in their own country. The courses may be from adult or continuing education programs, or equivalent courses for credit at an internationally recognized college or university. *The programs of these ESL training centers must have a CEFR-based curriculum.* They may also take classes and/or tutorials in an internationally accredited language school and must present the following documents:
  - ❖ Proof of taking the course or training and passing it, such as transcript, certificate, or letter from the tutor/teacher with the dates of participation and completion, along with their overall CEFR score
  - ❖ Certification of ESL training center/tutor/instructor as an accredited center of CEFR-based curriculum

Upon submission of pertinent documents, they may take the iTEP exam again, free of charge.

2. They may complete prescribed courses in the Grace English Language Program (GELP) and pass post-program assessment. For more information, please contact the Student Success Division at [studentsuccess@gsot.edu](mailto:studentsuccess@gsot.edu).

Applicants may be exempt from English language proficiency assessment if any of the following criteria (or conditions) is true:

- ❖ The applicant holds an undergraduate or graduate degree from an American college or university deemed acceptable by Grace.
- ❖ The applicant has worked for three or more years in an American company, ministry, and/or agency that has used state requirements for foreign workers, or in any similar agency from United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, or Canada.
- ❖ The applicant speaks English as a first language and was raised in an English-speaking country like the United States, Ireland, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, or Canada.
- ❖ The applicant is only enrolling in a non-English degree program such as Spanish or Korean.

## Dual Enrollment

Students who desire to enroll in a graduate program and who have up to six credits to complete before they receive their undergraduate degree may concurrently enroll in a graduate degree program and register to take up to six credits per semester for a maximum of two semesters.

Students must meet (no exceptions) the cumulative GPA requirement for admission in good standing into a graduate program to be eligible to register under dual enrollment for that program. Students must meet all other admissions requirements as stated herein.

Students must provide, along with their application, a current official undergraduate transcript (sent directly from their school to the Registrar's Office), a letter from their current Registrar's Office indicating their current Grade Point Average (GPA), the specific degree they are pursuing, the estimated date of undergraduate graduation, and the number of remaining credit hours for degree completion. Students must complete the *General Petition Form* requesting Dual Enrollment and submit it to the Registrar's Office for final approval. Once all documents are received by the Registrar's Office a decision will be made by the Academic Dean.

## Exceptions to General Admissions Requirements

Applicants for the degree programs may apply for an exception to the General Admissions Requirements by submitting a detailed explanation in the Admissions and Exception Petition Form to the Admissions Office for approval from the Admissions and Exceptions Committee. Details must contain:

1. What exception is requested: and,
2. Rationale why Grace should grant the request.

## Transfer of Credit

Grace School of Theology makes all attempts to be just, equitable, and apply the guidelines for transfer equally. The school generally accepts transfer credit from institutions of higher education that have accredited or pre-accredited status through an accrediting agency that is approved by the U.S. Department of Education, or its equivalent, such as qualified foreign institutions of higher education. The accredited status of the institution is important when considering the transfer of credit, but it is not the sole determining factor.

The passage of time is not a factor when determining the transferability of credits. However, students desiring to transfer in biblical languages may do so if the courses completed are within ten years of applying to Grace. Students who have completed biblical language credits more than 10 years ago may take a challenge exam and thus enable Grace to accept those credits previously completed if the exam is passed.

Transfer from unaccredited institutions is typically difficult unless Grace has already verified comparability. The Provost's Department has a list of such schools that have been verified. Students should be aware that there are limits to the number of transfer credits. In general, up to 50% of any given graduate program and 75% of any undergraduate program can be transferred. For the maximum allowable transfer credit for each program, please refer to the appropriate academic program description. Any undergraduate credit awarded by examination, on the bases of certificates, or by assessment of prior learning, must be within the guidelines of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). Results will be added to the student's permanent file. Grace does not award any credit for prior experiential learning at the graduate level.

Students are responsible for ensuring that official transcripts of their credit are sent directly from the institution to the Registrar. Unofficial transcripts will not be officially evaluated. Students should be aware that reasons for the refusal of transfer credit are course-to-course incompatibility, the institution's accredited status, course description and requirements, final grade, etc. No credit will be awarded until official transcripts have been received and evaluated. Current students who desire guidance on transferring Grace credit to another institution are encouraged to contact the appropriate Dean or the Registrar's Office. The acceptance of the transfer of credit from Grace is determined by the receiving institution and not by Grace.

Transfer of credit will be determined based on an evaluation of the course description and/or course syllabus and its comparability and equivalency with coursework and/or the purpose of the program at Grace. Coursework must be validated through an official transcript and must be for work of "C" grade (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) or higher for graduate (MM, MA(BS), and MDiv) and undergraduate credit and a "B" grade (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) or higher for ThM and DMin credit.

Exceptions to these guidelines may be granted. Questions regarding the transfer of credit should be addressed to the Academic Dean. Students may appeal the evaluation of transfer of credit. Please see the section in this Catalog entitled *Academic Appeals Process*.

## Articulation Agreements

Grace School of Theology has articulation agreements with the following institutions:

- ❖ Chafer Theological Seminary
- ❖ Escola de Pastores da Primeira Igreja Batista de Atibaia, Brazil
- ❖ Grace Biblical Seminary
- ❖ Instituto Ministerial Rios de Aceite
- ❖ Maryland Bible College –Seminary
- ❖ New Brunswick Bible Institute, Canada
- ❖ New Tribes Bible Institute
- ❖ New Tribes Mission Missionary Training Center
- ❖ Ohio Theological Institute
- ❖ Seminario Evangélico de Caracas, Venezuela
- ❖ Woodlands Seminary

## Diploma and Transcript Verification

As a direct response to the increase in the number of online high school and college diploma-issuing companies (diploma mills), the federal government has suggested that each Title IV-issuing educational institution develop a standard policy to better identify valid high school and secondary education transcripts. While we are fully aware that a traditional high school degree may not be obtainable for all, we strongly suggest completing a state-issued GED as an alternative if the traditional high school completion option is not realistic.

If we suspect that a transcript submitted is not from a legitimate school (such as a diploma mill/degree mill), we will proceed in the following manner:

1. If the applicant is applying to be a part of the Graduate Program, the Registrar's Office will look up on the Council for Higher Education Accreditation site ([www.chea.org](http://www.chea.org)) for the name of the school where the Applicant received his/her bachelor's degree. If the name of the school does not appear on the list, then the Registrar will research further to verify accreditation and then supply the official transcript to the Graduate Dean for further evaluation.
2. If the applicant is applying to be a part of the Undergraduate Program, the Registrar's Office will supply the Applicant's official transcript to the Undergraduate Dean for further evaluation.
  - ❖ Below are some key items that must be listed on the high school transcript for Grace to certify it as valid:
    - Name, address and phone number of the high school from which the applicant graduated
    - Four (4) years of high school credits
    - Graduation date
    - School seal and/or signature of school official
    - High school diplomas may only be used for verification of high school completion if special circumstances prevent the submission of the official high school transcript.
  - ❖ There are also some key items that Grace will look for in determining the validity of an online diploma:
    - Was the diploma obtained from an online high school that does not operate in the state of the applicant's primary residency?
    - Did the student pay a sum of money (other than standard transcript request fee) in order to obtain the diploma?
    - Was any work required in obtaining the diploma and can the student show proof of the work that was completed?
    - Is the high school accredited by an agency approved by the U.S. Department of Education or another equivalent accrediting body?
    - Is the diploma recognized or approved in the state from which it was granted?

If it has been determined that an applicant's transcript is submitted from a school that is not legitimate, then the Admissions Committee Representative will contact the applicant and let him/her know about the discovery. Grace reserves the right to be cautious in accepting high school transcripts that may not meet the requirements as put forth by the federal government in helping to determine eligibility for Title IV funding. The applicant may be instructed to submit a petition to be accepted under the Ability to Benefit status.

## Advanced Standing

Applicants who have graduated from a Bible college with a degree in Bible or biblical studies, or possess an equivalent biblical studies degree, and who enroll in the Master of Arts in Biblical Studies (MA(BS)) program may be eligible for up to 12 units of advanced standing, and students who enroll in the Master of Divinity (MDiv) program may be eligible for a maximum of 24 units of advanced standing, based on courses taken at the undergraduate level. Successfully completed courses comparable to the 500-level courses in the MA(BS) or MDiv programs at Grace may receive advanced standing. Courses for which advanced standing is sought must be equivalent in both content and theological viewpoint to courses taught at Grace and must have been earned with a grade of C+ (2.5 on a 4.0 scale) or better.

## Transfer of General Education (GENED) Credit

Students may transfer an appropriate number of General Education credits into the AABS and BABS Degree Programs. The AABS requires that students complete 18 credits, and the BABS requires that students complete 30 credits of GENED. The general education core includes a minimum of three semester hours in each of the humanities/fine arts, behavioral/ social sciences, communications, and natural sciences/math.

Core Components	Sample courses that qualify	Minimum Number
Humanities/Fine Arts	Humanities, Music, Art, Philosophy, Foreign Languages	3
Behavioral/Social Sciences	Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Government, Psychology, Sociology, History	3
Communications	English, English Composition, Speech, Communications	3
Natural Sciences/Math	Any Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Environmental Studies, Physics	3
Other acceptable GENED transfer credit	Accounting, Computer Technology, Literature	

# Registration and Enrollment

## Enrollment Deadlines

The **self-registration period** normally begins nine weeks before the first day of the coming semester and lasts seven weeks.

The **assisted-registration period** begins two weeks before the first day of the coming semester. Once this begins, registration can only be completed by contacting the Registrar's Office at registrar@gsot.edu.

During fall registration, students register for Modules 1 and 2 classes. During spring registration, students register for Modules 3 and 4. During summer registration, students register for Module 5.

## Enrollment Process

A student is enrolled in a course when he/she has registered and has final approval from the Registrar. The registration process includes the following steps:

1. Self-register in Populi during the self-registration period or email the Registrar once the assisted-registration period has begun.
2. Once enrolled, the Registrar will verify that the courses selected are within the student's academic program and still needed. If there are questions regarding the student's choices, the Registrar will notify the student's Academic Advisor for advice, clarification, and approval.
3. Once final approval is given by the Registrar, the student is billed and notified by the Bursar. Registration is not complete until all invoices are paid (current) unless acceptable arrangements with the Bursar have been made.

## Adding and Dropping Courses

The processes are important for enrolling and withdrawing (adding and dropping) students from a course according to rules formulated to maintain orderliness and academic quality, with lawful refunds of tuition and fees when applicable. No late fees will be charged against a student during the self-registration period.



## Adding a Course

A student may add a course according to the deadlines stated in the Academic Calendar and upon approval by their Academic Advisor. This is to ensure that students have enough time to order and receive textbooks and to prepare for the first class session. To add a course after the Registrar has confirmed a student's registration, the student must contact the Registrar's Office.

## Dropping a Course

Students are not considered as 'dropped' from a course if they:

- ❖ No longer attend the course; or
- ❖ Communicate their desire to drop the course to their professor, faculty member, or other employee; or
- ❖ Communicate their desire to drop the course other than submitting the Drop/Withdrawal Form.

If a student does not attend a course for the first two weeks, he/she will automatically be dropped by the Registrar. Only 75% of the course's tuition is refundable. The Administration Fee and Technology Fee are non-refundable.

If a student stops attending classes, then the Registrar will apply the Student Attendance Policy to determine the last date of attendance and will assign the notation F/A (Failure to Attend) to the student's record. Students who do not use the Drop/Withdrawal Form are not eligible to receive any refunds.

## Officially Dropping a Course

*Official drop* means that the approved procedure to withdraw from a course was followed by the student. During the Self-Registration via Populi, students can simply add and drop courses in Populi themselves. However, once a student has received registration confirmation from the Registrar or the Assisted-Registration period has begun, the student must contact his/her Academic Advisor to drop a course. The advisor will initiate the Drop/Withdrawal Form in Populi, a link to the form will be sent to the student's email for completion, and then once the student submits the form it will be processed by the Registrar's Office. This applies to all courses, irrespective of delivery mode or course length. If the student would like to change courses during the Assisted-Registration Period, the student must contact the Registrar at registrar@gsot.edu.

## Student Course Overload

The maximum course load per semester in graduate programs is 14 credits. The maximum course load per semester in undergraduate programs is 15 credits. Any student who desires to enroll beyond this maximum course load must first gain the approval of their Academic Advisor and final approval from the student's Dean.

## Frequency of Required Course Offerings

Grace makes every attempt to offer a wide range of courses at its locations, online (synchronously), and via archived video (asynchronously). Some courses are offered multiple times per year, but the majority are offered one time per academic year. Following the appropriate Course Progression Chart is important in order to complete the desired academic program in a timely manner.

## Course Sequencing

Some courses within programs contain prerequisite requirements. Students are responsible for reading the course descriptions carefully, determining which courses have prerequisites, and are responsible to register for courses in their required sequence. Course Progression Charts are found below in this Catalog and are available from the assigned Academic Advisor, appropriate Dean, and/or Registrar. Students should become familiar with and follow (as much as possible) the recommended course sequence for their academic program.

## Undergraduate Programs' Foundational Courses

The foundational courses of the school's undergraduate programs are designed to equip the students with:

- ❖ the knowledge and skills necessary for undergraduate studies;
- ❖ an understanding of the doctrine of salvation; and
- ❖ an understanding of the importance of Christian character development.

These courses are the following:

**RS-210: Research Writing and Technology**

A course designed to teach the serious student of the Word proper research methodology, review of college-level writing skills, and the effective use of technology for conducting research, following *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* by Kate L. Turabian. Methods for using technology to discover information appropriate for college-level research through the use of electronic databases, Internet resources, library collections, and information literacy are addressed.

*This is a prerequisite course. The student should take this prior to enrollment in Systematic Theology and Bible courses, preferably during the first semester or as soon as possible.*

**TH-310: Principles of Biblical Interpretation**

A directed study of the principles of the literal-grammatical-historical (L-G-H) system of biblical interpretation, with guided practice in using those principles in interpreting representative passages.

*This is a prerequisite course. The student should take this prior to enrollment in Systematic Theology and Bible courses, preferably during the first semester or as soon as possible.*

**TH-330: The Doctrine of Salvation**

A study of the doctrine of salvation. Topics include election, faith, regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, assurance of salvation, eternal security and glorification. *Prerequisites: RS-210 and TH-310*

*Since this is a foundational course, this should be taken by the student preferably within their first academic year in the school. The other options would be for the student to either take this before enrolling in any Systematic Theology and Bible course or take this simultaneously with any Systematic Theology and Bible course.*

**TH-300: The Life of the Believer**

This course is a practical study of the biblical principles and practices that develop Christian character and service, with emphasis on the primacy of the Scriptures and the building of a devotional life, as well as challenges in the Spiritual Life. The goal is a personal devotional method which can be used throughout your life. *Prerequisites: RS-210 and TH-310*

*Since this is a foundational course, this should be taken by the student preferably within their first academic year in the school. The other options would be for the student to either take this before enrolling in any Systematic Theology and Bible course or take this simultaneously with any Systematic Theology and Bible course.*

## **Graduate Programs' Foundational Courses**

The foundational courses of the school's graduate programs are designed to equip the students with:

- ❖ the knowledge and skills necessary for graduate studies;
- ❖ an understanding of free grace theology; and
- ❖ an understanding of the importance of Christian character development.

These courses are the following:

**RS-503: Research Methods, Writing, and Technology**

A course designed to introduce the student to the skills necessary to produce graduate level research papers and projects. This includes the proper formatting of papers (Turabian), source documentation, and thesis formation. How to effectively read for comprehension and how to express oneself properly is explored. Methods for using technology to discover information appropriate to graduate work through the use of electronic databases, Internet resources, library collections, and information literacy are addressed.

*This is a prerequisite course. The student should take this prior to enrollment in Systematic Theology and Bible courses, preferably during the first semester or as soon as possible.*

**TH-560: Hermeneutics**

A directed study of the principles of the literal-grammatical-historical(L-G-H) system of biblical interpretation, with guided practice in using those principles in interpreting representative passages.

*This is a prerequisite course. The student should take this prior to enrollment in Systematic Theology and Bible courses, preferably during the first semester or as soon as possible.*

### TH-568: Soteriology

A study of the doctrine of salvation with special attention given to the work of Christ, the nature and extent of the atonement, the terms of salvation, election and human responsibility, and the eternal security of the believer. *Prerequisites: TH-560, TH-565, and RS-503.*

*Since this is a foundational course, this should be taken by the student preferably within the first half of their program.*

### SF-550: Spiritual Life

This course is a practical study of the biblical principles and practices that develop Christian character and service, with emphasis on the primacy of the Scriptures and the building of a devotional life, as well as challenges in the Spiritual Life. The goal is a personal devotional method which can be used throughout your life. *Prerequisites: RS-503 and TH-560*

*Since this is a foundational course, this should be taken by the student preferably within their first academic year in the school. The other options would be for the student to either take this before enrolling in any Systematic Theology and Bible course or take this simultaneously with any Systematic Theology and Bible course.*

## Independent Study

An Independent Study is an education option for a student who needs to finish his/her required course(s) before the graduation date of the same academic year. It is an exclusive class designed only for one or up to three students.

For an Independent Study offering to be considered, a student must initiate a request before the self-registration period ends and the assisted-registration period begins for that said semester. The student in this case will lose the benefit of classroom interaction with the professor and other students. The request should be submitted to the Registrar's Office via the General Petition form which can be found at [www.gsol.edu/student-references/#studentforms](http://www.gsol.edu/student-references/#studentforms).

This option is granted only in extenuating circumstances. It is not to be undertaken solely for personal convenience, because an appropriate faculty member must be willing to teach an Independent Study before approval is given by the appropriate Dean. Grace cannot guarantee that a suitable faculty member will be willing and/or available at the time a student desires to take the course.

## Matriculation

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### Degree Completion Limits

Grace recognizes that the majority of its students are adult learners with very busy schedules. Students, therefore, are encouraged to take courses and complete programs at a reasonable, but constant pace in light of family, work, and ministry responsibilities. Maintaining a constant and continuous pace toward the completion of any program will create better success as the student grows spiritually, becomes more solidly grounded in the Scriptures, and becomes more and more effective in ministry. With this in mind, certain limits are in place to program completion.

From the initial semester of acceptance into Grace:

- ❖ All work leading to a Certificate must be completed within three years.
- ❖ All work leading to the DBS, AABS or MA(BS) degree must be completed within six years.
- ❖ All work leading to the MM degree must be completed within five years.
- ❖ All work leading to the MDiv degree must be completed within eight years.
- ❖ All work leading to the ThM degree must be completed within three years, non-inclusive of MDiv work.
- ❖ All work leading to the BABS, ThM, DMin degree must be completed within ten years.

Periods when students have petitioned and received a 'Leave of Absence' will not count toward the limit. Extension of any of these limits requires a recommendation from the student's Academic Advisor and approval from the Academic Dean, in consultation with Student Services, as appropriate.

### Change of Degree Program

The process of changing to/from a certificate or degree is a formal procedure requiring official approval and documentation. Students must submit a Degree Program Change Request Form to the Registrar's office which can be found at

[www.gsot.edu/student-references/#studentforms](http://www.gsot.edu/student-references/#studentforms). Approval from the Academic Dean is required. Students should consult with their Academic Advisor first of their intention to change for help with this process.

Students changing degrees within the seminary shall meet the same entrance requirements as students seeking admission to Grace from outside the seminary who have completed the same number of semester credits. When students change to a different academic program, they come under the Catalog that is in effect when that change is made.

## Withdrawing from the School

Any student desiring to permanently withdraw from Grace School of Theology must complete the online General Petition Form. Under the section Matriculation-Related Request, check the box labeled withdraw entirely from the school, and include the starting date of the withdrawal. This is not the procedure for dropping an individual course. In order to drop a course please refer to the section titled *Dropping a Course*.

## Readmission

### General Readmission Process

Readmission of returning students is subject to review by the administration. A student who withdrew from Grace, has graduated, has been dismissed for academic or disciplinary reasons from Grace, or has been absent for 6 or more consecutive semesters (without an approved leave of absence), and desires to be readmitted, must reapply.

Students who did not apply and are not approved for a leave of absence but have been absent for 3-5 consecutive semesters do not need to reapply for admission to the seminary. However, they will be subject to the current catalog at the time of their return.

- ❖ Absent: 6+ semesters **without** approved leave of absence = Readmission required and subject to latest catalog program requirements
- ❖ Absent: 3-5 semesters **without** approved leave of absence = No readmission required but subject to latest catalog program requirements
- ❖ Absent: 3-6 semesters **with** approved leave of absence = No readmission required and subject to original catalog program requirements

If a student withdraws from all courses during the first two weeks of a semester, the semester is included in the withdrawal or absent period.

The Readmission Application requires a student to provide transcripts from all schools attended subsequent to withdrawal from Grace, a recommendation from the applicant's pastor or church, and a brief essay by the applicant on his/her activities and spiritual growth since withdrawal from Grace School of Theology. The Readmission Application must be completed (required documents included) by the application deadline.

For questions regarding the readmission application, please contact the Admissions Office at [admissions@gsot.edu](mailto:admissions@gsot.edu).

### From Leave of Absence

A leave of absence may be permitted for a period of up to 6 consecutive semesters. Students desiring a leave of absence must file a General Petition Form with the Registrar. When students on an approved leave of absence desire to return to Grace, they need to complete another General Petition Form and submit it to the Registrar for registration materials. They do not need to reapply for admission to the seminary if they enroll before the 7th semester registration period ends.

Students, when they return, will register for classes in the same manner as a continuing student and continue under the Catalog that was in force when they left. Students who take a leave of absence are encouraged to discuss plans for their leave with their Academic Advisor prior to leaving the seminary.

If a student withdraws from all courses during the first two weeks of a semester, the semester is included in the leave of absence period.

### After Academic or Disciplinary Dismissal

A student who has been academically dismissed may apply for readmission only after a full academic year (three semesters). He then must submit the General Readmission requirements (as stated above), give evidence of potential for academic success,

and receive approval from the Academic Dean. The student returnee will be on probationary status and should pass all the courses while on probation. His GPA after three semesters should be 2.0 or above.

A student who has been dismissed for disciplinary reasons may apply for readmission after three semesters. He then must submit the General Readmission requirements (as stated above) and receive approval from the Academic Dean.

## **“50% Rule” – Limitation of Courses Taken at Teaching Sites**

Students enrolled in any program must take less than 50% of their program’s courses (from a live professor) at an extension site or any combination of extension sites. Conversely, students enrolled in any program must take 50% or more of their program’s courses at the main campus, online, streaming video (synchronous or asynchronous/archived), or any combination thereof. The Registrar monitors these numbers and will notify students accordingly.

# **Coursework**

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## **Distance Education**

Distance Education courses deliver instruction synchronously and/or asynchronously through varied technologies. Our policy is to regularly and substantively offer interaction among the students and the instructor. To this end, students are expected and required throughout the course, regardless of modality, to participate in one or more of the following: discussion board assignments, group projects, collaboration pages, assignment feedback from students and/or instructors, or student conferences with instructors via telephone, chat, or video conference.

## **LOGOS Bible Software Requirement**

Beginning Fall 2022, the Logos Bible Software is required for students in the MABS, MDiv, ThM, and DMin programs. Through a special partnership developed between Grace School Theology and Faithlife, all Grace students have the option to purchase the software at a discounted price, and students in the programs requiring it will also have the option to lease it.

If you do not have the Logos Bible Software already or you do not have a license yet, we recommend that you avail of the exclusive Grace School of Theology Logos package for only \$205. This package is tailored to guide you through your courses. Students in the programs requiring it can make payments each year to utilize the software and have the option of converting that to a permanent license upon graduation.

For students enrolled in degree programs not requiring the software, you are also welcome to take advantage of the special package offering.

For more information, please see the Grace website at [www.gsot.edu/logos-exclusive/](http://www.gsot.edu/logos-exclusive/) or contact the Dean of Students, Willie Gaines, at [wgaines@gsot.edu](mailto:wgaines@gsot.edu).

## **Attendance**

Grace School of Theology believes that interaction between the professor and students is a vital part of training. This interaction may occur in the classroom and/or online. All classes utilize Canvas as the online Learning Management System (LMS), whether the student is attending in the classroom, only online, or a blend of both. All students are expected to participate in/attend the course weekly. Faculty prepare assignments that are typically due on a weekly basis. Attendance at Grace is defined as academic participation in coursework such as:

1. discussion board assignments
2. submission of other assignments as required in the course syllabus
3. completing tests and quizzes

Clarifications:

1. Student communication (email or texting) to the professor does not in itself constitute attendance.
2. Watching videos synchronously or asynchronously will not be used as a basis for attendance unless the class requires its students to report their watching to Canvas in a verifiable manner.

If a student needs to plan an absence for personal reasons, he/she should notify the professor as soon as the specific date(s) is known so that the student can work ahead and not fall behind. Professors will take into account personal, family emergencies, but it is the student's responsibility to notify the professor as soon as possible of any potential disruption in their studies. Informing the professor does not, however, guarantee a present mark on their attendance.

If a student does not attend a course for the first two weeks, he/she will automatically be dropped by the Registrar and the Bursar will adjust his invoice. The student is still responsible to pay for 25% of the course's tuition, plus the technology fee and administration fee.

If a student stops attending, then the Registrar will apply the Attendance Policy to determine the last date of attendance and will assign the notation F/A (Failure to Attend) to the student's record. Students who do not use the Withdrawal Drop Form are not eligible to receive any refunds.

### **Module Classes (8-weeks)**

Students enrolled in modular classes (8-weeks) who do not attend (as defined above) for 14 days in succession will receive a final grade of F/A (Failure to Attend) for the class.

### **Semester Classes (16 weeks)**

Those students enrolled in semester-long classes who do not attend for 21 days in succession will receive the same final grade of F/A.

Note: A student's GPA and financial aid benefits (if applicable) will be affected when a student receives the F/A grade. The professor determines attendance and is responsible for reporting attendance to the Registrar on a weekly basis.

### **Intensive Classes (3-5 days)**

Intensives are defined as the presentation of lectures with appropriate assignments within an 8-week Module, condensed for 3-5 days. Professors who teach intensive courses determine attendance and are responsible for reporting attendance to the Registrar on a regular basis. Student communication (email or texting) to the professor does not in itself constitute attendance.

Students enrolled in an intensive class who do not attend (as defined above) for 14 days in succession will receive a final grade of F/A (Failure to Attend). A student's GPA and financial aid benefits (if applicable) will be affected when a student receives the F/A grade.

DMin courses include pre-residency, residency, and post-residency time frames. For DMin courses, intensive classes are referred to as "residency period." This period lasts for 4 to 5 days where the professors conduct live classes and facilitate engaging discussions. While professors may or may not assign additional coursework during this time, it serves as a focused period of instruction. The residency period is then followed by a post-residency phase which lasts for approximately 2 months.

It is important to note that due to the distinct and advanced nature of DMin courses, student attendance is not reported to the Registrar.

## **Academic Integrity**

### **Plagiarism**

According to the *American Heritage Dictionary, 2nd College Edition*, plagiarism is defined as "taking and using as one's own the writings or ideas of another." Plagiarism includes failure to use quotation marks or other conventional markings around material quoted from another source, paraphrasing a specific passage from a source without indicating accurately what that source is, and/or letting another person compose or rewrite a student's written assignment.

### **Falsifying Information**

Falsifying information includes submitting another's work as one's own, or otherwise providing false or misleading documentation.

### **Usage of Generative AI and LLM**

Students must act in the usage of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Large Language Models (LLM) products to support the values of Grace School of Theology (GSOT) and the communities we serve.



Generative AI and LLMs (ChatGPT, Bard, Dall-E, Codex, GPT-3, etc) must not be the primary and sole basis of students in researching and completing coursework deliverables. Students must not claim contents created by AI as their own and must not generate and submit any coursework deliverables using generative AI or LLM products without providing references and citing the source.

## **Anti-Plagiarism & Anti-AI-Generated Content Software**

Grace utilizes anti-plagiarism software within the Canvas LMS. Assignments submitted by students will be checked by the *Turnitin* software to look for content that is copied from other primary sources or other students' work. Professors will then look for proper footnoted citations in Turabian format.

Turnitin also already has a feature that can detect contents that are generated by AI or LLM products.

## **Other Forms of Academic Dishonesty**

During examinations, academic dishonesty includes referring to written information not specifically permitted by the instructor or syllabus, receiving unauthorized written or oral information from a fellow student or proctor and/or stealing, buying, selling, or transmitting a copy of any examination.

Any student proven to have committed a type of academic dishonesty such as plagiarism, cheating, or falsifying information will result in disciplinary action depending on its severity and pattern. First infraction of academic integrity will result either an automatic zero for the assignment or, at the discretion of the faculty member, resubmission of the assignment with a grade reduction. Second infraction will result in automatic failure of the course. Third infraction will result in academic dismissal. After one year from the dismissal, the student may be readmitted to his or her program on the condition that any further infraction results immediate and permanent expulsion from school.

## **Copyright Policy**

Grace School of Theology waives its right to all copyright in papers, theses, and dissertations written by a student to earn credit in Grace courses or otherwise to satisfy the degree, certificate, or program requirements.

## **Grade Reports**

Faculty members are required to submit final grades to the Office of the Registrar within two weeks of the completion of modular and semester courses. Grades will be processed and recorded in the student's electronic file. All grades will be available for the student's viewing through their student profile on the Populi system.

## **Grading System**

The grade point average (GPA) is a numerical representation of a student's overall academic achievement. It is obtained by assigning point values to specific grades and multiplying these values by the number of semester hours received in that course. The total number of grade points earned for one semester or for all semesters at Grace School of Theology is divided by the total number of semester hours.

Grades of I and WP are not assigned grade point values and are not used in the computation of the grade point average. A grade of WF is assigned a grade point value of zero (0). At the graduate level (not including ThM), no points are given for a grade lower than a C- (1.7 grade points) and at the undergraduate level, no points are given for a grade lower than a D- (0.7 grade points). At the doctorate level and in the ThM graduate program, no points are given for a grade lower than a B- (2.7 grade points). Any required failed course must be retaken until passed. The retaken grade will automatically replace the original failed grade.

The grade point values are as shown in the following chart. The F/A grade (Failure to Attend) is assigned when students have not participated in the course for 14 days in succession in a modular course and 21 days in succession in a semester-long course. A grade of F/A is assigned a grade point value of zero (0).

A+ 99-100	B+ 91-93	C+ 83-85	D+ 75-77	F 0-69 Undergraduate	AUD Audit	I Incomplete
A 96-98	B 88-90	C 80-82	D 72-74	F 0-77 Graduate	WP*****	IP Class in Progress
A- 94-95	B- 86-87***	C- 78-79**	D- 70-71*	F 0-85 Doctoral	WF*****	F/A Failure to Attend

\* D- is the lowest passing grade at the undergraduate level.

\*\* C- is the lowest passing grade at the graduate level (not including ThM).

\*\*\* B- is the lowest passing grade at the doctoral level and in the ThM graduate program.

\*\*\*\*Withdrawal during the first eight weeks of a 16-week course or first five weeks of an 8-week course.

\*\*\*\*\*Withdrawal after the first eight weeks of a 16-week course or first five weeks of an 8-week course.

### Honors by Program

Graduate Honors	Required GPA*
Highest Honor	4.00
High Honors	3.85-3.99
Honors	3.70-3.84

Undergraduate Honors	Required GPA*
Highest Honor	3.80-4.00
High Honors	3.65-3.79
Honors	3.50-3.64

\*The required GPA is calculated using grade points earned from Grace School of Theology courses only. It is not calculated using transfer credits from other institutions.

## Coursework Extensions/Incompletes

In the case of serious illness, family emergency or other extenuating circumstances, students may request for an extension that will allow them to complete their coursework beyond the end of the course. The request for extension must be approved in advance by the instructor for the course and may be granted for up to 30 days beyond the end of the course. Instructors are not obligated to approve any petition of extension. If an extension is approved, the student will be given a temporary incomplete grade for the course. If the student fails to complete the work by the end of the extension, the incomplete will be changed to a failing grade, unless the professor provides a different final grade. A student may not enroll for the following semester with more than two incompletes.

## Academic Warning, Probation and Dismissal

The student's academic record is reviewed each semester. Graduate students in MM, MA(BS), and MDiv programs and undergraduate students are considered "in good standing" when they maintain a minimum 2.0 grade point average and when ThM students maintain a 3.0 grade point average.

Once a student falls below the minimum GPA, he/she will be placed on **Academic Warning** the following semester. If after one semester the student has not achieved the minimum but has improved their GPA, he/she may continue on Academic Warning.

If a student has not improved his/her GPA, he/she will then be put on **Academic Probation** for one semester and the student's respective Dean must approve his/her course registration.

If no academic progress is made after 2 semesters of probation, then the student will be dismissed. Once a student is dismissed for not meeting academic standards, he/she may appeal by using the Academic Appeals Process. A student who has been academically dismissed may apply for readmission only after a full academic year (three semesters). For further details, see the section in this catalog on **Readmission**.

## Contesting a Final Grade

Students are given up to 30 days to contest a grade after its issuance. To contest a grade, the student must take the following steps:

1. Meet with the professor and ask to reconsider the grade based on the possibility that, in light of the course requirements as defined in the syllabus, a mistake may have been made, or to reconsider the grade based on other facts that the student believes to be relevant.
2. If the professor changes the grade, the professor will notify the Registrar who will update the grade in Populi. If the professor does not change the grade, the student may appeal the decision to the Academic Committee.
3. Appeal the decision to the Academic Committee no later than two weeks after the professor's decision by stating the case in writing and submitting it together with any supporting documentation to the Academic Dean.
4. The Academic Dean convenes the Academic Committee no later than two weeks after receiving the student's appeal in writing.
5. The Academic Committee notifies all concerned of its decision no later than two weeks after convening. The judgment of the Academic Committee is final.

## Satisfactory Academic Progress

### Quantitative Academic Progress

- ❖ Students must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 67% of the cumulative number of credit hours attempted each term.
- ❖ Transfer credits on the student's record are included as attempted/completed hours when computing the student's completion rate. Remedial credits are also included in the calculation of the cumulative completion rate.
- ❖ Course and/or program withdrawals during the drop/add period will not be counted in the calculation of academic progress.
- ❖ Grades of F, WF, and I are not considered as satisfactory completion and will count against the student in calculating the completion percentage.

### Qualitative Academic Progress

In order to meet satisfactory academic progress requirements for Federal Aid, Veteran Benefits, and Institutional Scholarships, a student must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) as outlined below:

1. Graduate degree students enrolled in the Master of Ministry, Master of Arts (Biblical Studies), and Master of Divinity must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 for all credits attempted. Graduate degree students enrolled in the Master of Theology must maintain a 3.0 for all credits attempted.
2. Undergraduate students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 for all credits completed.

If a coursework extension is approved, an Incomplete will be given for 30 days and will not be considered in the GPA. If the Incomplete is changed to Failing, it will be calculated into the GPA.

Withdrawal during the first five weeks of an 8-week course or first eight weeks of a 16-week course will be marked as WP and will not be calculated into the GPA. Withdrawal after five weeks of an 8-week course or eight weeks of a 16-week course will be marked as WF and will be calculated into the GPA.

If a course is repeated resulting in an improved grade, it will replace the previous grade and be calculated in the GPA.

## Taking Courses for Audit/Personal Enrichment

Most of our courses may be taken for personal enrichment rather than for credit. Taking a course for "enrichment" is the same as "auditing a course." The enrichment student does not complete any of the assignments for the course.

Audit/personal enrichment students do not have access to course materials within the Canvas LMS. Courses taken for enrichment do not count towards any degree or certificate program.

If the student wishes to convert an enrichment course to a credit course, he/she must request to do so during the first two weeks of the course. The student must make up any previously assigned material, pay the difference in tuition and fees due for credit enrollment, and comply with all applicable requirements of the seminary and the professor. Further, conversion of a course taken for enrichment to a credit course is ultimately up to the discretion of the professor teaching the course and the student's Dean.

If a student wishes to convert a credit course to an enrichment course, he/she must request to do so before the withdrawal date for that particular course by submitting the Course Status Change Form. There is no refund of tuition or fees for this change.

# Graduation

## Graduation Requirements

To qualify for degree conferral, students must:

1. Give evidence of biblical understanding, godly character, and readiness for ministry.
2. Complete the prescribed course of study and achieve a minimum GPA of 2.0 for undergraduates and graduates (MM, MA(BS), and MDiv), and 3.0 for the ThM and DMin.
3. Settle all financial obligations, including payment of the graduation fee.
4. Receive the recommendation of the Faculty and approval by the Board of Trustees for graduation.
5. Submit an official Intent to Graduate Form to the Registrar's Office prior to enrolling for the final semester.
6. Attend commencement exercises. Permission to graduate in absentia may be granted on a case-by-case basis. Such request should be submitted in writing to the Academic Dean at least two months prior to commencement.

Students who have not completed all academic requirements may petition to participate in commencement if the remaining requirements will be completed by the end of summer semester and if 6 credit hours or less remain for completion. Students must enroll in and pay in advance for any such pending classes. The diploma and transcript will not be issued until all pending academic requirements are completed. Commencement exercises are held only at the end of the spring semester.

## Transcripts

Grace School of Theology students and alumni may receive transcripts of their completed coursework. Upon the receipt of a written request from the student via the signed Transcript Request Form, the Registrar's Office will issue an official transcript to appropriate institutions, places of employment, or individuals. Transcripts will not be issued for students who have not met their financial obligations. A transcript fee is charged.

# Financial Considerations

Grace School of Theology seeks to offer a high quality of training in a cost-effective way. A significant portion of the cost of training is paid for through the generous gifts of God's people. This allows us to keep students' cost to a minimum.

## Tuition and Fees

The schedule of charges reflects tuition as determined by credit status. The Seminary reserves the right to change tuition and other charges without notice as necessitated by Seminary or Board action. Incidental fees, and cost of books and supplies are examples of additional fees other than the mandatory fees listed.

### *Tuition and Fees Refund Policy*

If a student drops a course before the start of a scheduled course, he will be refunded 100% of his tuition plus the technology fee. If a student drops a course after the first class-session has begun but before the Drop Date for the module/semester, the student is still responsible for 25% of his tuition plus all the fees. After the Drop Date there will be no refunds. All refunds must be requested from the Registrar's Office. Refunds are based on the amount billed, not on what has been paid.

## Graduate and Undergraduate Programs

TUITION AND FEES		
Non-Credit/Audit Tuition	\$60	Per credit hour (for 15 weeks, or a 1-week intensive accelerated course)
Non-Credit/Audit Tuition	\$30	Per credit hour (for 8-week course)
Credit Tuition	\$260	Per credit hour
Application Fee	\$55	One-time charge, any program (Credit and Non-Credit/Audit Students)
Administration Fee	\$40	Per course (Credit and Non-Credit/Audit Students)
Technology Fee	\$100	Per semester (Credit and Non-Credit/Audit Students)
Graduation Fee	\$145	Per Program

Transcript Fee	\$20	Per Transcript Request
Late Registration Fee	\$35	Per Semester (Credit and Non-Credit/Audit Students)
Challenge Exam		\$250 per credit hour, no Administration Fee or Technology Fee
Ability to Benefit Test		Set by the test administrator
<b>TUITION REFUND POLICY</b>		
Before Scheduled Course Begins		100% tuition and \$100 technology fee
After First Class Session Begins but Before the Drop Date		75% tuition, no fees
After Drop Date		0% tuition, no fees

## Doctorate Program

<b>TUITION AND FEES</b>		
Credit Tuition	\$400	Per credit hour
Application Fee	\$55	One-time charge (Credit and Non-Credit/Audit Students)
Administration Fee	\$40	Per course (Credit and Non-Credit/Audit Students)
Technology Fee	\$100	Per semester (Credit and Non-Credit/Audit Students)
Binding Fee	\$150	Charge for binding of the Applied Research Project
Extension Fee	\$300	Flat fee charge to re-take DM-990 or DM-991
Graduation Fee	\$145	Per Program
Transcript Fee	\$20	Per Transcript Request
Late Registration Fee	\$35	Per Semester (Credit and Non-Credit/Audit Students)
<b>TUITION REFUND POLICY</b>		
Before Scheduled Course Begins		100% tuition and \$100 technology fee
After First Class Session Begins but Before the Drop Date		75% tuition, no fees
After Drop Date		0% tuition, no fees

## Billing, Payment Plans, and Collections

### Billing

The Bursar's Office is responsible for maintaining financial records for all students through the use of a centralized billing system. This department is also responsible for processing refunds and providing payment plans to any student who wishes to utilize this method of payment. If you need to speak with someone about your account, please contact the Bursar's Office.

Enrolled students' statement of account is available in the Bursar's Office. The Seminary cannot accept responsibility for the non-notification of student bills to students, both current and former, due to incorrect address or e-mail. Each student is therefore required to have a current e-mailing address on file in the Bursar's Office. The Bursar's Office will not remove late fees from a student's account in cases where a student claims not to have seen a statement. It is the student's responsibility to know the due dates for all payments.

### Payment Plans

The Seminary requires that all students must complete their arrangement to pay for the semester prior to the first day of classes. This means that the student must either pay 100% of all tuition and fees due or enter into the payment plan for that semester. In no case will the payment plan cover prior semester charges. Any prior charges must be paid in full.

### Collections

Failure to legitimize payment within the time allotted will result in financial disenrollment. Failure to pay within the time allotted will also result in a hold on the student's record, and the student may not register until all fees are paid.

## Financial Aid

### Financial Aid Program

Grace School of Theology is offering Title IV Financial Aid for Undergraduate and Graduate degree programs. We do not extend Title IV benefits to our Biblical Studies Certificate, Diploma in Biblical Studies, Certificate in Black Church Studies or Doctor of Ministry programs.

### Financial Aid Application Process

1. Apply for an FSA ID: <https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm>
2. Complete FAFSA and sign with FSA ID: <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>
3. For Direct Loans: Complete Entrance Counseling at <https://studentloans.gov>
4. For Direct Loans: Sign the Federal Direct Loan MPN at <https://studentloans.gov>
5. Complete [Voluntary Consent](#) to Participate in Electronic Transactions form.

Grace works with Campus Ivy, a third-party processor. After you have completed the steps above, and are enrolled as a student at Grace, you will be added to the CORE system. This will generate your login information for your student portal with Campus Ivy. There you will receive additional items and verification that need to be completed before packaging.

## Other Tuition Assistance Opportunities

### GRACE Tuition Assistance Program

Students can apply for tuition assistance by completing the application for tuition assistance form online. Students may be asked for an interview at the end of this process. Please contact the Student Success Division for details.

The awarding of tuition assistance, if any, is for the current semester registration only. Students only need to complete the application once per academic year, but it will be evaluated each semester. *Please note:* Tuition assistance is not guaranteed. If you have any questions, contact the Student Success Division for details.

### Veteran's Benefits for Credit-Seeking Students

Veteran's benefits are available for eligible Grace students. Veterans who have not applied for VA benefits need to go to [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov) and fill out the requested information. Once the student receives the certificate of eligibility, the Seminary can proceed with certifying the student under one of our programs. For more information, contact Alyssa Himebaugh, [ahimebaugh@gsot.edu](mailto:ahimebaugh@gsot.edu) or 713.897.8295.

The student will need to provide Grace School of Theology with the following:

1. Certificate of Eligibility (go to <http://www.gibill.va.gov/> to obtain)
2. DD-214 (go to <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>)
3. Military Transcripts (go to <https://jst.doded.mil/smart/signIn.do> to obtain)
4. Transcripts from all post-secondary schools (anything above high school)

### Texas Hazelwood Act

The Hazelwood Act is a State of Texas benefit that provides qualified Veterans, spouses, and dependent children with an education benefit at public institutions of higher education in Texas. Because the Hazelwood Act is available only for use at a Texas public college or university, it is **not available** and does not apply to Grace School of Theology students and programs.

### Military Tuition Assistance

#### Students' Semester Responsibility

Students using Military Tuition Assistance must do the following each semester prior to the due date for tuition and fee payment:

- ❖ Read and complete the Sponsor/Third-Party Payment Authorization Form found at [www.gsot.edu/student-forms](http://www.gsot.edu/student-forms)



- ❖ Submit a copy of the Tuition Assistance Voucher or letter to our Bursar – must specify what the military will pay and how Grace should invoice the military to receive funds

Once our Bursar has the Tuition Assistance Voucher and Third-Party Agreement on file, we will place an estimated payment placeholder on the student's account based on the approved level of benefits. It is the student's responsibility to notify the military and the Bursar of schedule changes in circumstances where the military pays based on the student's class schedule. Military students must pay any charges not covered by tuition assistance or set up a payment plan by Grace's established due date to avoid late fees and holds for balances due.

### **Student Recruitment**

Grace School of Theology student recruiters and advisors do not participate in any high-pressure recruitment tactics such as making multiple unsolicited contacts, including contacts by phone, email, or in-person, and engaging in same-day recruitment and registration for the purpose of securing Service Members enrollments.

When speaking to an interested Service Member, student recruiters and advisors, need to instruct the Service Member to contact their Educational Services Officer (ESO) or counselor within the Military Service to receive approval prior to enrollment at Grace School of Theology.

### **Return of Tuition Assistance**

Military Tuition Assistance (TA) is awarded to a student under the assumption that the student will attend school for the entire period for which the assistance is awarded.

When a student withdraws, the student may no longer be eligible for the full amount of TA funds originally awarded. To comply with the new Department of Defense policy, Grace School of Theology will return any unearned TA funds on a proportional basis through at least the 60% portion of the period for which the funds were provided. TA funds are earned proportionally during an enrollment period, with unearned funds returned based upon when a student stops attending.

If a service member stops attending due to a military service obligation, and the service member notifies the school of their obligation, Grace School of Theology will work with the affected service member to identify solutions that will not result in a student debt for the returned portion.

### **Calculation**

When a student “officially” withdraws from a course, the date of withdrawal will be used as the last date of attendance (LDA).

If a student receives a “F/A” (failure to attend) or a “WF” grade for a course, that is considered an “unofficial” withdrawal. For unofficial withdrawals, Grace School of Theology will determine the last date of attendance (LDA) by reviewing the last date of activity within a course. For online courses, Grace School of Theology will determine LDA based on the last date a student made a contribution to the class or submitted an assignment. For face to face courses, Grace School of Theology will reach out to the professor to determine the LDA.

Once LDA has been determined, Grace School of Theology will recalculate your TA eligibility based on the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Number of days completed}}{\text{Total days of the period (start to end date)}} = \text{percent earned}$$

### **Return of funds**

Determining eligibility for TA is class specific. The start and end date will be used for each class to determine eligibility. Using the formula above, Grace School of Theology will be required to return some or all of the TA awarded to service members that did not complete at least 60% of each course; possibly creating a balance on your Grace School of Theology student account.

#### **8 Week Course Withdraw Submitted**

Before classes begin	100% return
During weeks 1-2	75% return
During weeks 3-4	50% return
During week 5	40% return (60% of course is completed)
During weeks 6-8	0% return

16 Week Course Withdraw Submitted	
Before classes begin	100% return
During weeks 1-2	75% return
During weeks 3-4	60% return
During weeks 5-8	50% return
During week 9	40% return (60% of course is completed)
During weeks 10-16	0% return

### **Readmission Policy**

If a Service Member has been activated for deployment and has been out for more than a year, he/she will be required to apply for readmission to Grace School of Theology through the Admissions Department. He/she can complete the readmission application by going to [www.gsot.edu](http://www.gsot.edu) and clicking on the “Apply Today” button.

### **Raising Support**

Students can ask their church/ministry leaders as well as family and friends to support them financially to continue their theological training.

### **Tuition Benefits for Spouses**

In order to encourage spouses to participate in training, Grace School of Theology offers a special tuition benefit. Spouses of credit students taking 6 or more credit hours in a semester may take courses for non-credit/audit in that semester with no charge for tuition (fees still apply).

## **Student Resources**

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### **Student Success Division**

The Student Success Division seeks to enhance the lives of our students, strives to ensure their overall health, walk with them to the completion of their program, and connect them to our Alumni Association. In addition, we want to know how we can be praying for you on your journey at Grace.

Anyone who needs help with academic research and writing and wishes to avail of English language training at GSOT please contact our staff at [studentsuccess@gsot.edu](mailto:studentsuccess@gsot.edu).

Success Program offerings include the following:

- ❖ Grace English Language Program
- ❖ Grace Coaching Services
- ❖ New Student Orientation
- ❖ Student Technology Efficiency Program
- ❖ Counseling Services
- ❖ Special Training/Webinars
- ❖ Financial Aid

There are several videos and documents available inside of Canvas to assist you on your journey!

### **Grace English Language Program (GELP)**

Formerly known as the Grace ESL Program, GELP offers customized and remote one-on-one English language coaching and group classes to international students. This program is designed for international students taking courses in the English programs and whose native language is not English. GELP offers English language training to both graduate and undergraduate students, as well as to international GSOT staff and community members. For inquiries, send an email to Fatima B. Villanueva at [fvillanueva@gsot.edu](mailto:fvillanueva@gsot.edu).

### **Grace Coaching Services (GCS)**

GCS is an on-demand academic coaching program that is open to international and US-based students. It offers synchronous and asynchronous coaching for GSOT students in the undergraduate level. Academic coaching is adapted to

students' individual needs and focuses on academic research and writing only. Coaching may be in person or remote via BlueJeans and offered in one-on-one or group sessions. Students seeking academic coaching assistance may also opt to join GELP courses for self-enrichment. For more information on available coaching services, they may send an email to GCS at [gracecoaching@gsot.edu](mailto:gracecoaching@gsot.edu).

### **New Student Orientation (NSO)**

All incoming students are required to participate in the New Student Orientation (NSO) at least once and are encouraged to attend as many times as possible in order to remain informed regarding important matters. NSO will cover major student topics from the Student Handbook as well as from the Academic Catalog (e.g., student life and conduct, staff and faculty, academic policies and advisors, financial information and student record, library services, and other information). Recorded archives of the sessions are available to students who are unable to attend or those who desire to review the contents. Additional tutorials related to systems and operations are available to help students understand the information systems utilized by the seminary. These archived videos will be available through the student information system, as well as through other avenues of communication to students, as needed.

### **Student Technology Efficiency Program (STEP)**

STEP is a technology training with the purpose to:

- ❖ Assess the technological readiness of Grace students
- ❖ Arm students with the needed knowledge and skills to be technologically successful at Grace
- ❖ Address common technological struggles early to ensure student retention

Those who will participate in STEP will be:

- ❖ New Students
- ❖ Returning Students (withdrawn from Grace for more than 2 years)
- ❖ Students identified as having technical concerns by faculty in the Provost's Department

## **Library and Learning Resources**

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The Grace School of Theology main library is located at The World Headquarters in The Woodlands, Texas. No matter the location, all currently enrolled Grace students have access to library resources and services. Library staff are eager to help you achieve your educational goals and are available to help with research for papers or course projects. Librarians can help you understand your assignments, limit your topic, and find research materials in physical and electronic libraries. Never wait until the last minute to get the library information and the help you need!

### **Library Contact Information**

**Phone: 713-897-8025**

**Email: [Library@gsot.edu](mailto:Library@gsot.edu)**

### **Library Catalog**

The Grace Library contains thousands of books, eBooks, videos, and audio resources that are appropriate to biblical and theological study.

The library catalog can be located online from the school's website and through Canvas, the school's Learning Management System.

- ❖ Located at the bottom of the GSOT.edu website there is a STUDENT LOGIN where you can choose the [Library Login](#).
- ❖ Located in Canvas there is a link to [Library Resources](#) in the left-hand column of every course's homepage.

### **Checking out Books in Person**

Materials may be checked out, put on reserve, held, or renewed by emailing the library staff. Books checked-out in person are due in two weeks but may be renewed for additional weeks by emailing or calling the library staff.

To check-out a library book in person, simply email library staff and provide the following:

1. Name
2. Phone number
3. Book title
4. Book author

### **Checking out Books by Mail**

Students who are not near the physical library may also check out books found in the online Library Catalog. Books will be mailed to you. Resources checked-out by mail, may be checked out for three weeks or more to make sure transit time does not cut into the students' research time. Up to five resources may be checked-out at a time. When a student returns one or more books, more resources may be checked-out. All books must be returned at the end of each module.

To request or check-out a library book by mail, simply email library staff and provide the following:

1. Name
2. Mailing Address
3. Phone number
4. Book title
5. Book author

### **Library Databases**

Grace School of Theology students have access to many electronic databases that offer full-text online books, scholarly articles, and citations from academic journals. Passwords are required to access the databases, and use is restricted to current Grace students, staff, and faculty.

Passwords are located in Canvas on the [Library Resources](#) page.

It is unethical and illegal to allow anyone who is not a student, faculty member, or staff member at Grace to use the usernames and passwords. Please do not share login and password information with anyone outside of Grace School of Theology.

### **Library Training Videos**

There are training videos located in Canvas on the [Library Resources](#) page. Look for the tab [How To Videos](#) to learn how to use the library catalog and how to use the library databases.

### **The Writing Center**

Grace School of Theology offers an online Writing Center that can be found in every Canvas Course.

This Writing Center shows examples of Turabian format for footnotes and bibliography. There are also excellent samples of research papers which can be used as examples for writing your own papers at GRACE. The school also provides a coaching service whose staff will be happy to assist you with the technical details of composing and documenting your college research papers. Please use the contact information under "The Writing Center" to make an appointment with our Writing Tutor who is available in person, by email, and by telephone.

## **Technology Services**

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The Grace School of Theology (Grace) Technology Services (TS) department plays an integral role in a student's education process. TS facilitates the use of current and emerging information and educational technology resources that promote excellence in teaching, learning, research, and the administrative operations of the institution. Additionally, the TS department provides the necessary support for Grace systems utilized by students (i.e. Email, LMS, Video Conferencing platform and SIS).

Grace maximizes a blended learning environment where students can participate in the class face-to-face (in the physical classroom) or online through video conferencing. The video conferencing platform enables students to (1) interact with the class real-time by joining the live session and/or (2) watch the recorded interactive session.

Grace uses cloud-based (SaaS) platforms; therefore a reliable **internet connection is necessary in order to seamlessly access Grace's technological systems**. Even for on-site courses with students participating in the physical classroom, professors will

provide course work and assignments via the online Learning Management System (LMS). All students are expected to check their email regularly and turn in assignments within the LMS.

## Minimum Technical Requirements

Students are expected to use a computer (desktop/laptop) with hardware and software that meet minimum standards as well as possess the needed technical skills. Internet connectivity should be through Google Chrome or Firefox rather than Internet Explorer or Safari.

The following are the necessary minimum hardware and software requirements:

- 1.6 GHZ or Faster Multi-core processor (AMD or Intel)
- 8 GB of RAM (Memory)
- 64 GB of free Drive Storage Space
- Higher Resolution Monitor, 16-bit color
- High Speed Internet Service (10 Mbps download speed)
- Webcam with microphone
- Headset with microphone recommended for video conferencing BlueJeans sessions

The following are some of the expected software/applications:

- Google Chrome browser
- Microsoft Office (or any other productivity suite)
- Adobe Acrobat (PDF) Reader or Apple Preview reader
- BlueJeans application

The following are the necessary minimum technical skills for students:

- Basic word processing
- Presentation (may be optional)
- Sending and receiving emails
- Uploading and downloading files
- Sending and receiving attachments, and
- Navigating and conducting research on the Internet
- Video conferencing

**While some mobile devices such as tablets and mobile phones (i.e., iPads and iPhones) can access Grace systems, they have limitations and students may not be able to fully take advantage of the system features needed for the class which includes, but not limited to, accessing recorded sessions, completing assignments, etc.**

## Grace Technology Systems

### *Populi (Student Information System)*

Grace uses *Populi*, a Student Information System (SIS), to give students the ability to register for classes, access transcripts with final grades, review academic program degree audits (courses taken and needed for an academic program) and perform financial functions. *Populi* is the place for all things related to student information. Upon acceptance to Grace, a login specifically for *Populi* is provided by the Registrar's Office. *Populi* also enables students to access their GSOT email.

#### **Website:**

<https://grace.populiweb.com/>

#### **Features:**

Registration Tab (path: My Profile, Registration)

Financial Tab (path: My Profile, Financial)

Invoices

Payments

Financial Aid

1098-T Form

Transcript Tab (path: My Profile, Student, Transcript)  
Transfer Credits  
Courses Taken  
Grades  
Grade Point Average  
Attempted Credits  
Earned Credits

Degree Audit Tab (path: My Profile, Student, Degree Audit)  
Program Requirements  
Catalog Year  
Courses Taken  
Courses Remaining

Dashboard (path: Home, Dashboard, The Feed)  
Form Links  
Job Opportunities  
Library Logins

## Canvas (Learning Management System)

Classes at Grace are administered within *Canvas*, a Learning Management System (LMS). *Canvas* is where students access syllabi, course content and materials, assignments, class videos, and current course grades. Within *Canvas*, there are many student resources available to aid students in being successful at Grace including the Student Success Hub, Library, Research and Writing Hub and Logos Center. Upon acceptance to Grace, a login for *Canvas* is provided by the Registrar's Office. Make sure to check out the Student Success Hub and other resources as soon as you receive access!

### Website:

<https://gsot.instructure.com>

### Features:

Courses Tab (path: Courses DropDown Menu)  
Canvas Student Learning Center  
Library Learning Resources  
Writing Center

Syllabi (path: Login Screen, Browse courses)

Students may also access course syllabi without logging into *Canvas*! At the beginning of each semester, syllabi are available at [https://gsot.instructure.com/search/all\\_courses](https://gsot.instructure.com/search/all_courses).

## BlueJeans (Video Conferencing System)

*BlueJeans* is Grace's interactive Video Conferencing Solution (VCS). This application allows students to join the real-time (live streaming) *BlueJeans* sessions, while interacting with professors and other students, as well as to view the archived videos (previously recorded) within a *Canvas* course. *BlueJeans* is fully integrated inside *Canvas* but students are encouraged to download the *BlueJeans* application on to their computer for efficiency. The *BlueJeans* app is available at [www.bluejeans.com](http://www.bluejeans.com). Because this tool is integrated with each course, downloading the app allows students to need only the link or meeting id associated with the course. **A separate login for this app is not required.**

## Technical Support

Grace's TS Technical Support Team is available for all technology-related questions, including assistance accessing and using Grace technology systems (*Populi*, *Canvas*, *BlueJeans*). You may send your technical concerns to [support@gsot.edu](mailto:support@gsot.edu). For urgent assistance during class time, you may call our support hotline at 1-832-610-3723. For course-related concerns such as, but not limited to, assignment, extensions, and other course work issues, the professor is always ready to help."



*Our 3rd Party providers also provide helpful resources and excellent support for other system-wide issues. Please refer to the information below.*

### **Populi Support**

*Student Information System (SIS)*

If you have questions or experience technical difficulties with *Populi*, you may choose to [Open a Support Request](#), [Search the Knowledge Base](#), or [Visit the User Forum](#) by locating the Help button within the *Populi* system.

### **Canvas Support**

*Learning Management System (LMS)*

If you experience technical difficulties with *Canvas*, please contact the Canvas Support Team by locating the Help button within the *Canvas* system. You may choose to [Chat with Canvas Support](#) or call the [Canvas Support Hotline](#) at 855-619-4947. Canvas Support Team is unable to assist with any course related or video concerns. Those issues should be directed to the Technology Services Support Team.

### **BlueJeans Support**

*Video Conferencing System*

For technical difficulties while using the *BlueJeans* Video Conferencing System, please contact BlueJeans Support at [support@bluejeans.com](mailto:support@bluejeans.com).

## Administrative Services

<u><a href="#">Student Services</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Financial Services</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Academic Affairs</a></u>
<b>Dean of Students</b> Willie Gaines <a href="mailto:wgaines@gsot.edu">wgaines@gsot.edu</a> 713-897-8293	<b>Bursar</b> Rolly Salono <a href="mailto:rsalono@gsot.edu">rsalono@gsot.edu</a> 832-548-4303	<b>Academic Dean</b> Fred Chay <a href="mailto:fchay@gsot.edu">fchay@gsot.edu</a> 713-897-8306
<b>Registrar</b> Kristi Russell <a href="mailto:krussell@gsot.edu">krussell@gsot.edu</a> 832-610-2747	<b>Assistant Bursar</b> Martina Cabanillas <a href="mailto:mcabanillas@gsot.edu">mcabanillas@gsot.edu</a>	<b>Graduate Dean</b> Peter Oh <a href="mailto:poh@gsot.edu">poh@gsot.edu</a> 858-335-1356
<b>Assistant Registrar</b> Lara Montecalvo <a href="mailto:lmontecalvo@gsot.edu">lmontecalvo@gsot.edu</a> 281-205-0506	<u><a href="#">Library Services</a></u>	<b>Undergraduate Dean</b> Ezekiel Serrato <a href="mailto:eserrato@gsot.edu">eserrato@gsot.edu</a> 713-897-8297
<b>Director of Discipleship</b> Steve Norris <a href="mailto:snorris@gsot.edu">snorris@gsot.edu</a> 713-897-8291	<b>Library Contact Information</b> <a href="mailto:Library@gsot.edu">Library@gsot.edu</a> 713-897-8025	<b>Academic Specialist</b> Eleanor Olano <a href="mailto:eolano@gsot.edu">eolano@gsot.edu</a> 832-648-3339
<u><a href="#">Student Success</a></u>		<b>Academic Advisor</b> Delora Simbajon <a href="mailto:dsimbajon@gsot.edu">dsimbajon@gsot.edu</a> 832-917-5926
<b>Director of Student Success</b> <i>(Financial Aid)</i> Alyssa Himebaugh <a href="mailto:ahimebaugh@gsot.edu">ahimebaugh@gsot.edu</a> 713-897-8295	<u><a href="#">Technology Services</a></u>	<b>Academic Advisor</b> Alberto Morlett <a href="mailto:amorlett@gsot.edu">amorlett@gsot.edu</a> 619-240-8780
<b>Student Success Program Coordinator</b> Fatima Villanueva <a href="mailto:fvillanueva@gsot.edu">fvillanueva@gsot.edu</a>	<a href="mailto:support@gsot.edu">support@gsot.edu</a>	<b>Exec. Assistant to the Academic Dean</b> Joy Mendoza <a href="mailto:jmendoza@gsot.edu">jmendoza@gsot.edu</a> 281-973-2327
<b>Student Success Representative</b> Ivory Gatdula <a href="mailto:igatdula@gsot.edu">igatdula@gsot.edu</a> 281-602-3958 +639171539288 (Philippines)		
<u><a href="#">Title IX Coordinator</a></u>	<u><a href="#">International Programs</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Customer Service</a></u>
<b>Senior Director of Operations</b> Clint Dixon <a href="mailto:cdixon@gsot.edu">cdixon@gsot.edu</a> 713-897-8301	<b>Dean of International Programs</b> Juan Sanchez <a href="mailto:jpenasanchez@gsot.edu">jpenasanchez@gsot.edu</a> 832-995-6308	<a href="mailto:info@gsot.edu">info@gsot.edu</a> 877-476-8674 <a href="http://www.gsot.edu">www.gsot.edu</a>

# Emergency Procedures

## Building Evacuation

Evacuation routes and procedures are clearly posted at the door of each classroom. All personnel have been familiarized with evacuation routes. An Area Monitor (plus an alternate) is designated for each area of each building, and an additional person is designated as the Campus Recorder.

### 1. Procedures

- At the sound of an evacuation alarm, each person should exit the building at the nearest exit.
- Personnel and students should congregate on the driveway near the parking lot.
- The **Monitor** is to be the last person to exit the area after having checked all rooms (including restrooms and closets) to make sure the area has been completely evacuated.
- All **Monitors** report to the **Recorder** that their areas are clear. The **Monitor** for the office complex and classroom may indicate “all clear” by holding arms horizontally to the side forming a “T” with their body.
- **NO** personnel should re-enter any building until the **Recorder** signals “all clear.” In case of actual emergency, Emergency Officials will indicate when it is safe to re-enter any building.

## Take Cover (Shelter in Place)

Take cover procedures may be activated by impending severe thunderstorm that may be accompanied by high winds and/or hail or by tornado warnings/watches. Drills will be conducted on a random and regular basis.

### 1. The weather Emergency Plan may be activated by:

- The local Weather Warning Sirens (a 3 minute steady sound)
- NOAA radio and/or
- The designated weather spotter

### 2. Procedures

- The Logistics Manager at the Main Campus will inform all personnel of the locations of designated safe areas. An announcement will be made and the designated official for each area in the building will check all rooms for personnel. All occupants should proceed immediately to the safe areas located in the building.
- The following areas are the designated areas at the Main Campus where building occupants should go in case of a potential weather emergency: Restrooms and Book Hallways
- In the event that persons are caught OUTSIDE in a weather emergency and cannot make it to an interior safe area, they should seek the lowest area on the ground, lie down as flat as possible and cover their head.

## Emergency Lockdown

While these situations may seem to be distant from GRACE, the possibility of these occurrences does exist. Hostile individuals do attempt to enter buildings for a variety of reasons. If it is recognized by a staff member that a hostile individual or group is attempting to enter or has already entered a building:

### 1. Communications

- Call 911, with as much information as possible.
- Quickly and clearly announce by voice or intercom that a lockdown situation exists.

### 2. Procedures

- Lock all exterior doors and windows.
- Lock all interior doors.
- Close curtains, shades and blinds.
- At night, turn off lights.
- Remain quiet and do NOT enter hallways.
- Crouch down in areas that are out of sight from doors and windows.
- If the fire alarm sounds, do NOT evacuate the building unless:
  - You have firsthand knowledge that there is a fire.
  - You have been told to do so by emergency personnel.
    - If you go outside a building, leave the area as quickly and quietly as possible.
    - Do NOT attempt to enter a building.
    - Instructors should account for all students/visitors in their charge.

# Active Shooter Policy

## How to respond when an active shooter is in your vicinity

Quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life. Remember that customers and clients are likely to follow the lead of employees and managers during an active shooter situation.

### 1. Evacuate

*If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises.*

*Be sure to:*

- Notice the escape route posted in every common area
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow
- Leave your belongings behind
- Help others escape, if possible
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be
- Keep your hands visible
- Follow the instructions of any police officers
- Do not attempt to move wounded people
- Call 911 when you are safe

### 2. Hide out

*If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you. Your hiding place should:*

- Be out of the active shooter's view
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (i.e., an office with a closed and locked door)
- Not trap you or restrict your options for movement
- To prevent an active shooter from entering your hiding place:
  - Lock the door
  - Blockade the door with heavy furniture

*If the active shooter is nearby:*

- Lock the door
- Silence your cell phone and/or pager
- Turn off any source of noise (i.e., radios, televisions)
- Hide behind large items (i.e., cabinets, desks)
- Remain quiet

*If evacuation and hiding out are not possible:*

- Remain calm
- Dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter's location
- If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen

### 3. Take action against the active shooter

*As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:*

- Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her
- Throwing items and improvising weapons
- Yelling
- Committing to your actions

## How to respond when law enforcement arrives

Law enforcement's purpose is to stop the active shooter as soon as possible. Officers will proceed directly to the area in which the last shots were heard.

- Officers usually arrive in teams of four (4)
- Officers may wear regular patrol uniforms or external bulletproof vests, Kevlar helmets, and other tactical equipment
- Officers may be armed with rifles, shotguns, handguns
- Officers may use pepper spray or tear gas to control the situation
- Officers may shout commands, and may push individuals to the ground for their safety

*How to react when law enforcement arrives:*

- Remain calm, and follow officers' instructions
- Put down any items in your hands (i.e., bags, jackets)
- Immediately raise hands and spread fingers

- Keep hands visible at all times
- Avoid making quick movements toward officers such as holding on to them for safety

*Information to provide to law enforcement or 911 operator:*

- Avoid pointing, screaming and/or yelling
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating, just proceed in the direction from which officers are entering the premises

The first officers to arrive to the scene will not stop to help injured persons. Expect rescue teams comprised of additional officers and emergency medical personnel to follow the initial officers. These rescue teams will treat and remove any injured persons. They may also call upon able-bodied individuals to assist in removing the wounded from the premises.

Once you have reached a safe location or an assembly point, you will likely be held in that area by law enforcement until the situation is under control, and all witnesses have been identified and questioned. Do not leave until law enforcement authorities have instructed you to do so.

## **“Quick Check” List for Emergency Procedures**

### **CALL 911 FIRST!**

#### **Building Evacuation (Escape Routes Posted by Doors)**

- Pull fire alarm nearest you and advise the central office.
- Instructors carry out class lists.
- Close the windows and doors as exiting the room.
- Instructors check restrooms and closets.
- Exit building in an orderly, calm manner.
- Assemble at designated areas, where instructors will take role to account for all in their charge. Instructors will keep their students together.
- Do NOT re-enter buildings until seminary officials or emergency response team approves.

#### **Weather Emergency (Take-Cover Procedures)**

- Move quickly, calmly to nearest take-cover area.
- Instructors take their class lists
- Close doors and windows; turn off lights.
- Instructors check restrooms and closets; take role at designated area.
- If possible, kneel against wall and cover head.
- Outside personnel should take cover in the nearest building. If that is not possible, lie flat in the lowest ground away from trees and other structures.
- Remain in take-cover area until university officials or emergency response team indicated “All clear.”

#### **Lockdown**

- Lock all doors and windows, both exterior and interior.
- Close curtains, shades, and blinds.
- Turn off lights.
- Remain quiet and do not enter hallways.
- Crouch down in areas that are out of sight from doors and windows.
- Do not respond to a fire alarm unless you are certain of a fire or are instructed by emergency personnel to do so.
- Instructors should account for all persons in their charge.