



# Student Handbook

*MDiv* ❖ *MCL* ❖ *MTS*

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*Admissions, Registration,  
and Academic Life Policies and Procedures*

**Updated August 2025**

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## **1.1 BST DEGREE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS & PROCESS**

[Please refer additional questions to the Office of Admissions]

### **1.2 The Master of Divinity (MDiv) Degree, The Masters of Arts in Community Leadership (MCL) Degree, and The Masters in Theological Studies (MTS) Degrees**

All MDiv, MCL, and MTS applicants should possess an accredited B.A. or B.S. degree (or a BA/BS equivalency).

Students admitted to the BST MDiv, MCL or MTS degree program, whose undergraduate GPA is below the normal requirement of 2.5 (on a 4 point scale) or its equivalent, will be placed on academic and financial aid probation during their first year of course work until they have completed at least six courses (or 18 units) with a GPA of not less than 2.5.

Applicants denied entry to the MDiv, MCL or MTS program due to inadequate academic preparation may be reconsidered for admission after successful completion (with a grade of B or better) of an advanced level writing course and/or critical thinking course at an accredited college or university.

Applicants will be admitted pending the completion of a background check (MDiv and MCL programs only). In order to ensure the participation of all students in such a process, Berkeley School of Theology will have on file the results of such a background check for each student by the end of the first semester or applicable term in which a student has been admitted to a degree program. (See Appendix C.)

Transfer applicants should look at section 6.0 (Academic Policy) for additional information.

International Applicants should look at section 4.0 (International Students) for specific requirements.

Applicants should send the following documents to the attention of the BST Admissions Office:

- Application Form
- Autobiographical Statement (giving background, Christian experience, reasons for desiring a ministry-related vocation)
- Academic references from two college professors. Applicants who have completed their undergraduate work more than four years prior to application may submit references from two business or professional persons.
- Reference from pastor

- Official transcripts of **all** academic work beyond high school
- Resume/CV
- Non-refundable application fee

All documents submitted become the property of BST and are subject to the rules of confidentiality and privacy outlined in the Buckley amendment passed by the U.S. Congress in 1987.

Although applications will be considered at any time prior to August 1, persons desiring campus housing, work study or Stafford Loans should make requests to the Admissions Office by June 1. Loans will continue to be processed throughout the academic year, but in order to receive the first check in time for Fall Registration, please observe the **June 1** date. The deadline to apply for Spring semester is **December 15**. The deadline to apply for BST summer school is **May 1**.

### **1.3 The Concurrent MDiv/MCL or MDiv/MTS Program**

The concurrent MDiv/MCL or MTS program is designed for those wishing a combination of academic and professional programs, and requires one year (24 units) beyond the MDiv, i.e. a total of 96 units for the joint MDiv/MCL and an additional 18 units for a total of 90 units for the MDiv/MTS. Participation in the MDiv/MCL or MDiv/MTS may be consecutive or concurrent and successful completion results in two separate degrees. Students that are enrolled in either program wishing to enter the concurrent degree program must apply and be accepted to the other degree program before graduating.

## **2.0 NON-DEGREE ADMISSIONS**

### **2.1 Unclassified Students**

There are two categories of **Unclassified** students:

- Persons whose application for admission to a BST degree program is pending, having not been completed prior to the deadline for the semester's registration.
- Persons not enrolled in a BST degree program who are taking courses for audit or for credit under special circumstances, or enrollment in a degree program from another school outside of GTU.

Normally, academic admission requirements for Unclassified students are the same as for degree students. In some cases (to be determined by the Academic Dean), applicants may be admitted to **Unclassified** status through a modified admissions process. This would include submission of the application fee, official transcripts showing B.A. or B.S. completed and autobiographical statement.

Admission to **Unclassified** student status is made on a semester-by-semester basis. Unclassified students receive no guarantee of subsequent admission to a degree program.

Unclassified students may take a maximum of 6 units per semester (except by permission of the Dean), and no more than a total of 12 units may subsequently be applied toward a BST degree program, upon submission of evidence the student has adequately completed all course requirements.

**Unclassified** students are not eligible for BST financial aid or campus housing.

## **2.2 Continuing Education**

BST offers courses that may be taken for CEUs on a regular basis. One CEU is awarded for 10 hours of class contact time. In order for CEUs to be received, there can be no more than three absences for a 3 unit course; and not more than one for a 1.5 unit course.

The normal expectation is that CEU applicants will hold graduate level degrees in theology (e.g., MA, MDiv). Submission of application, an application fee and an official transcript verifying that the applicant has an MDiv or MA degree is required. See Continuing Education Handbook for current tuition charges.

CEU students are not permitted to take advanced/doctoral level courses.

## **3.0 FINANCES**

For additional questions, please contact the BST Financial Aid Office at [finaid@BST.edu](mailto:finaid@BST.edu) or the BST Business Office

### **3.1 Eligibility**

All students enrolled in a BST degree program and taking at least 6 units of coursework are eligible to apply for financial aid.

Note: Courses taken for audit, students with special status, or students on academic probation for a second semester are not eligible for BST financial aid.

### **3.2 How Much BST Financial Aid**

Based on demonstrable financial aid, all degree students will be eligible to receive a financial grant from BST when taking six (6) or more units. The percentage of grant available can be found in the current BST catalogue. Application for financial aid is made annually. Applicants must submit a FASFA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) application (this can be completed on-line). The BST school code is G01120.

### **3.3 Financial Aid Deadline**

All students enrolling in the fall semester must submit the financial aid applications before April 15. New students entering during the spring semester, must apply for financial aid by November 15. Applications received after the deadline are subject to available grant monies.

### **3.4 Financial Assistance**

- All students enrolled in a BST degree program are eligible to apply for financial aid (see 3.1. Eligibility).
- Students admitted on a probationary status will be denied Government Guaranteed Student Loans (GSL) until the probation has been removed.
- Courses taken for audit do not qualify for financial aid.

### **3.5 Appeal Process for Financial Aid Grants**

Students may appeal a financial aid award by completing a Budget Worksheet and submitting it to the Vice President of Advancement. Please include any additional information such as employment changes, illness, etc. that would contribute to your need for additional assistance. Once a semester, the Financial Aid Committee convenes for the purpose of reviewing all appeals. Appeals are granted on the basis of demonstrated need and availability of funds.

Five types of financial assistance are available:

#### 1. BST Tuition Grants:

All BST students enrolled in the MDiv, MCL, MTS or BST/GTU MA degree programs will be eligible to receive aid depending upon demonstrable financial need and availability of funds. Application is annual. Courses taken for audit do not qualify for financial aid. Applicants must submit a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) application and a GTU Supplemental Form. The BST school code is G01120.

#### 2. Scholarships

Students are encouraged to apply for scholarships. A list of scholarships is available in the Financial Aid Handbook or on the GTU Financial Aid website ([www.finaid@gtu.edu](http://www.finaid@gtu.edu)). Students are also encouraged to seek assistance from sending churches, denominational sources, civic groups, trust funds or foundations. Students may subscribe to the Scholarship Listserve by sending an email to [finaid@gtu.edu](mailto:finaid@gtu.edu).

#### 3. Federal Loans

BST participates in the Stafford Student Loans (subsidized and unsubsidized) program. Information is available from the BST Recruitment Office, or Business Office. All application materials are submitted to the Admissions Office. The loan period is for the academic year (summer through spring), but loan checks are disbursed only twice a year—at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. FAFSA must be submitted with the BST school code G01120.

#### 4. BST Work Study Program

BST also has a Work/Study Program. Students work on campus. Persons interested in Work/Study jobs should contact the BST Business Office. Jobs are assigned according to the needs of the Seminary. Priority is given to international students due to employment limitations.

### 5. Additional Aid

American Baptist students can apply for the Seminarian Support Program (SSP) offered by the American Baptist Churches of the USA. This program provides grants to match scholarships given by local churches to seminarians, dollar for dollar, up to a maximum of \$1000.00 per semester. To be eligible, a student must be a member of an American Baptist Church for at least one year and taking at least nine (9) units per semester. For more information about this program, please contact your local church or the Business Office of BST. Pledges for the fall semester must be received before August 1 and January 2 for the spring semester.

## **3.6 Financial Obligation**

[Please refer additional questions to the Business Office]

### ***3.6.1. Student Payment Policy***

**All tuition and fees (including health insurance when applicable) are due at the time of registration. Registration cannot be completed until these charges have been paid.**

If a student is unable to pay all fees due at the time of registration, the following policy shall apply in all cases of deferred payments.

- The student must sign the deferral agreement at the time of request, and this shall constitute his/her agreement to the conditions stated in this policy. One-quarter of the tuition charges are due upon registration with subsequent payments of one-quarter of the balance on the first of each month following.
- Subsequent registration for a later term will not be allowed until all existing financial obligations have been fulfilled.
- A student who has not met the obligations required under the deferred payment plan will not be eligible to participate in deferred payment the next semester that the student enrolls.
- Rent, utilities, and parking fees are due monthly. Persons who ignore responsibility for keeping such charges current will be asked to vacate campus housing, and future lease agreements will not be offered.
- BST does not withhold diplomas or confer degrees based on outstanding student debt, If you have satisfied all academic requirements, your diploma will be issued regardless of any amount owed to BST—consistent with

California law. However, please note: For active term enrollment, unpaid tuition or fees may result in a “**drop for nonpayment**” and may prevent continued registration or participation in courses. Additionally, if institutional debt remains from a prior term, BST is required to offer a **one-time exemption** to allow for reenrollment for registration, under California law.

- . An account in arrears for more than six months is at risk of being sent to collections.
- . **All payments must be made directly to the BST Business Office.**

### ***3.6.2 Refund Policy***

- . Student tuition and fees will be charged at the time of registration.
- . No fee is charged if a student **adds or drops** a course **within the first two weeks** of classes. For summer and intersession, the add or drop must occur prior to the second-class session for a week-long course and prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> session for a two-week-long course. For summer school fees paid to other seminaries, consult the course schedule or contact that school’s business office for refund policy.
- . There is a \$15 Change of Enrollment fee charged if a student adds or drops a course or requests a unit or grading option change **after the second week of classes.**
- . For any enrollment change, the student must file a **Change of Enrollment** form with the Registrar. The student must acquire all signatures indicated on the form before returning the form to the Registrar. To withdraw from *all* classes, the student must file a **Request for Leave of Absence or Withdrawal** with the Registrar. Forms are available in the Registrar’s office, and on the website and must be signed by the Academic Dean, the student’s Academic Advisor and Director of Business Administration before filing. The date of filing with the Registrar is the effective date for tuition refund calculation.
- . A student who withdraws or drops classes within the first two weeks of classes is entitled to a full tuition refund.
- . A student who withdraws or drops classes by the end of the fourth week of classes is entitled to a refund of half the tuition paid.
- . After the fourth week of classes **no tuition refunds are given.** An exception to this policy is for **students enrolling at BST for the first time who receive Federal Financial Aid and withdraw before the end of the ninth week.** Students meeting these criteria will have their refunds prorated and returned to the appropriate party (i.e. lender).

### **3.6.3 Repayment Policy (Attribution Included)**

- 1) The only Title IV aid available is the Stafford Loan program. This program is administered through the BST Financial Aid Office.
  - Funds are disbursed at BST after the file completion is verified by FA Solutions.
  - The student must follow the procedures required by the BST Financial Aid Office when receiving a Stafford Loan.
- 2) If the student received financial aid (loans and grants), any cash refund will depend on the payments made and the amount of financial aid received that term. A portion of any refund will be returned to the various sources of assistance in direct proportion to how the aid was applied to fees.
- 3) If a student withdraws prior to 60% of the term and receives more financial assistance than is required for the time for which they were an enrolled student, an overpayment of financial aid occurs. Overpayment, though rare at BST, could occur if illness or family emergency causes a student to withdraw or take a leave of absence.
- 4) The amount of the overpayment would be determined by the tuition owed as outlined in the **Refund Policy**. Living costs would be prorated according to the number of months in attendance. After the first day of classes, half of the annual book allowance would be allowed for the semester. Costs according to these guidelines would be subtracted from the costs originally allowed for the semester. Any aid received above and beyond this difference must be repaid to the Title IV programs.
- 5) Attribution, Refund and Repayment calculations are made based on forms developed by National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA). Please request these forms from the GTU Financial Aid Office.

### **3.7 Health Insurance Plan**

Any student enrolled for nine or more units in a semester must have health insurance, either their own personal plan or a plan of comparable benefits as found in Covered California.

### **3.8 Policies for Students Eligible for V.A. Benefits**

**The BST Registrar is the certifying official for Veterans Benefits.** Students with previous graduate level course work/training in the program to be pursued will be evaluated upon enrollment and given appropriate credit. Evaluation will be based upon review of academic transcripts. Credit allowed will be recorded in the student's transcripts on the institutional SIS system (currently Populi—accessible 24/7), and the length of the program shortened proportionately. In addition, the student and the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be notified. (Note: all prior graduate level course work and training not used to satisfy another degree will be evaluated.) Upon completion

of the course of study a degree will be conferred.

**Conditions for Resuming Benefits.** After VA has discontinued education benefits because of a student's unsatisfactory attendance, progress or conduct, education benefits may be resumed under the following conditions:

- 1) Payment of educational assistance allowance to a student terminated for unsatisfactory progress may be resumed if the student reenrolls in the **same** school and in the **same** program. VA will resume benefits without further documentation or development relating to the student's new enrollment. The school's certification of the student's enrollment on VA Form 22-1999, by VaCert or VaNetCert (when available) is sufficient for resuming benefits.
- 2) If a student is reenrolling in a **different** program or at a **different** school, after unsatisfactory progress, VA **must** find that the cause of the unsatisfactory attendance, progress, or conduct has been removed. The program of education or training to be pursued must be found suitable to the student's aptitudes, interest and abilities. The **student must request** that the benefits be resumed, preferably by submitting VAF 22-1995 or 22-2495 as appropriate. The school should submit a statement in "Remarks" on VA Form 22-1999, Enrollment Certification: "Student has been counseled concerning consequences of further violations of the school's attendance or progress policy.

#### **4.1 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS (MDiv, MCL, and MTS)**

[Please refer additional questions to the Admissions Office]

#### **4.2 Admission**

International applicants should send the following documents to the attention of the BST Admissions Office:

1. Application Form
2. Personal Statement (giving background, Christian experience, reasons for desiring a ministry-related vocation)
3. Academic references from two college professors
4. Reference from pastor
5. Official transcripts of **all** academic work beyond high school. Equivalency guidelines from the academic institution must be provided with each transcript.
6. Non-refundable application fee
7. I-20 Request Form
8. Certification of Finances

#### **4.3 Employment**

International students are eligible for employment under strict guidelines. For specific questions regarding employment please consult with the BST International Primary

Designated School Official (PDSO). The following employment is allowable:

#### ***4.3.1 Internships***

International students in an internship, as part of their required coursework, must see the BST DSO and fill out Form I-765.

#### ***4.3.2 Off-Campus Employment in Churches***

International students, under special circumstances, may work in church-related jobs or recognized international organizations. To qualify the student must have attended BST for at least nine months and be in good academic standing.

If a student meets these qualifications, then s/he must secure a letter (on employer letterhead) that includes the following: a) the exact job title and description of primary duties; b) a statement assuring that the job is no more than 20 hours a week; and c) the exact beginning date of the job (and ending date if appropriate).

A copy of the letter should be given to the DSO who then writes a letter confirming that the job is related to the student's field of study.

Finally, the student must submit the supporting letters and Form I-765 to USCIS, California Service Center, P.O. Box 10765, Laguna Niguel, CA 92607-1076.

#### ***4.3.3 Off-Campus Employment Due to Severe Economic Hardship***

Under special circumstances, due to economic hardship, international students may seek employment related or not related to their field of study. Please see the DSO for requirements. To qualify, the student must have attended BST for at least one year, be a full time student, and be in good academic standing. If the student meets these qualifications, then s/he must: a) complete Form I-765; b) provide evidence regarding hardship, including affidavits, detailing the unforeseen economic circumstances that caused the request; c) provide evidence of an off-campus employer who has filed a labor and wages attestation; and d) submit forms and evidence to USCIS, California Service Center, P.O. Box 10765, Laguna Niguel, CA 92607-1076.

## **5.0 REGISTRATION**

[Please refer additional questions to the Registrar]

Along with the other schools of the GTU, BST's enrollment process is conducted through General Registration. During the spring semester each year, BST has an academic advising and Registration period for the upcoming summer and fall; during the fall semester each year there is academic advising, and registration for the upcoming intersession and spring courses. All students must participate in General Registration.

Schedules, materials, and detailed instructions for General Registration are distributed (usually via email) to each student by the BST Registrar. Students must obtain their academic advisor's approval before registering on-line.

## **6.0 ACADEMIC POLICY**

[Please refer additional questions to the Academic Dean]

### **6.1 Academic Calendar**

Classes begin the day after Labor Day for the fall semester, the second week of January for Intersession, the first week of February for the Spring semester and the first week of June for Summer classes.

### **6.2 Course Policies**

#### ***6.2.1 Courses at BST***

Students may take up to 15 units per semester; more than 15 units requires permission of the Dean.

BST MDiv, MCL, and MTS degree students are expected to take their required core courses with members of the BST faculty. The faculty encourages students to take some of their electives in their areas of emphasis or open-elective courses from faculty of other GTU schools or centers.

A minimum of 36 course units for the MDiv must be taken with BST faculty, except by written permission of the Dean. MDiv transfer students must take at least 24 units with BST faculty. A minimum of 24 course units for the MCL must be taken with BST faculty, except by written permission of the Dean. Courses for the MTS degree should be determined in consultation with the student's advisor.

Students are expected to take all core requirements with BST faculty, unless certain other courses offered within the GTU are specifically named to fulfill core requirements. Exceptions in which a student seeks to fulfill a core course requirement from outside BST offerings require written permission from the Dean. Such permission should be requested in consultation with the student's Advisor, and it should include a reason for the substitution. Requests for course substitution forms are available in the Registrar's Office and via the BST website.

**Any exception to the above policy requires a petition to the Dean and faculty consultation.**

#### ***6.2.2 Internships***

As an integral part of our BST students' theological education, those undertaking an

MDiv or MCL degree at the seminary are required to complete an internship. Our Contextual Education program at BST strives to help students gain valuable experience in contextual settings outside the seminary walls, such as in congregations, agencies, chaplaincy settings, or other appropriate ministry sites.

MDiv and MCL students receive academic credit toward their degrees by completing a nine-month (one academic year) internship. Here is the process:

1. Upon admission to BST, students should be aware that an internship year will be required. Those who are already part of ongoing ministry work in a particular church or ministry site are strongly encouraged to consider stepping out of that setting when the time comes to do their BST internship work.

The internship involves 8 to 10 hours a week of focused ministry work under the supervision of a pastor or other professional person who is both appropriate to the site and approved by BST. If the internship takes place in a congregational setting, the intern is expected to be present for all Sunday morning church activities, such as worship, Christian education, etc. during the nine months of the internship (which is usually an academic year, September through May).

2. For MDiv students, prerequisites for starting the internship year (normally beginning in September) are:
- . Completion of at least 18 coursework units by May of the previous academic year.
  - . Students must also be in good academic standing at BST, in order to progress to the middler year and an internship.

For MCL students: the internship requirement can be fulfilled by making a plan in consultation with the Director of Contextual Education. MCL students usually complete 12 units of BST coursework prior to beginning an internship and should be in good academic standing before progressing to an internship.

3. Early in the spring semester, the Director of Contextual Education will contact each MDiv and MCL student who is eligible to begin an internship the following September. Students set up appointments for an interview with the Director of Contextual Education to discuss their ideas, hopes, and goals for an internship year. In some cases, BST allows students to remain in a church or ministry setting where they have been serving (such as a student who is the pastor of a church). However, the seminary strongly recommends that students consider an internship in a new setting, one which tests their gifts and encourages growth in their ministry skills.

4. Each year, at their April meeting, the BST faculty will approve a list of students eligible to begin a middler internship in September.

5. By May 15, all student internships will be finalized and approved by

the Director of Contextual Education. This includes a firm commitment from a teaching church or other ministry site, to welcome and work with the BST student for the coming nine-month academic year.

All BST interns must have a qualified person to serve as their ministry supervisor at the internship site. This supervisor helps the intern establish goals for the year, meets weekly with the intern, oversees his/her ministry work, and provides written assessment reports for BST at the end of the fall and spring semesters. BST internship supervisors agree to partner with the seminary and work within the requirements of the MDiv and MCL programs, in overseeing students' ministry for academic credit. For further details about the BST requirements for both interns and supervisors, please ask the Director of Contextual Education for the document "Student Ministry Requirements /Relationship with Ministry Site and Supervisor."

6. Please note that not all churches or ministry sites will qualify as a BST Contextual Education placement for our students, for a variety of reasons. Consequently, your internship placement must be done in consultation with the Director of Contextual Education. Also, BST interns cannot be supervised by a parent, spouse, or other family member during the period of time in which the student is serving in the internship for academic credit.

7. While some teaching churches or ministry sites offer BST student interns a stipend for their work, no internship sites are required by BST to pay the student. BST does not directly compensate our students for their internship work. Any arrangements for pay will be made between the intern and the ministry site. All stipends, salaries, or wages earned by students are subject to the usual income taxes. If you are paid by an internship site, be sure you complete the appropriate paperwork to go on the church payroll. *Again, internship income is taxed the same as any other earnings.*

8. Student background checks are required prior to enrollment in BST's MDiv or MCL programs. See Appendix C for further information about background checks.

Should it be deemed necessary to inform an internship supervisor of concerns about the student's background, BST recommends that the student be the one to disclose such concerns to his/her potential internship supervisor. In any case, BST requires that information be disclosed to a supervisor that is considered crucial to the student's working relationship and ministry with the internship church or ministry site.

9. BST interns work as professional staff members of the church or agency to which they have been assigned, and as a representative of the Berkeley School of Theology. We expect our student ministry interns to conduct themselves in a mature, professional, and exemplary manner at all times while working and ministering.

10. If a conflict arises between the student and a supervisor, or between

the student and another person at the ministry site, and if this issue is something that the student and the other party cannot work out on their own, the BST Director of Contextual Education will make efforts to help resolve the situation through conversation with the parties concerned. If further intervention is deemed appropriate, the situation will be brought to the attention of the BST Academic Dean. If necessary, a formal grievance procedure could be initiated.

11. It is important to plan ahead for the internship year. The 8 to 10 hours a week of supervised ministry work expected of our students, for a full nine months, are in addition to time spent in the classroom and in preparation for class. The internship year can be a particular challenge for those students who work in a fulltime job and must fit the internship requirements into their already busy lives. The BST Director of Contextual Education will be glad to meet with you at any time to discuss your questions about the internship year.

### ***6.2.3 Clinical Pastoral Education***

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is a form of theological education that occurs primarily in clinical settings where ministry is being practiced. CPE is offered in many kinds of settings: in hospitals and health care (including university, children's, and veterans' facilities); in hospices; in psychiatric and community care facilities; in workplace settings; in geriatric and rehabilitation centers; and in congregational and parish-based settings. The textbooks for CPE include in-depth study of "the living human documents," meaning both the people who receive care as well as a study of ourselves, the givers of care. Through the practice of ministry with people who receive care, as well as through reflection with CPE supervisors and peers, the experiential learning that is CPE takes place. This specialized training is ecumenical and often interfaith in nature.

CPE is a program taught in institutions other than BST. However, BST partners with CPE sites and supervisors in order to grant academic credit for the training, as appropriate to our BST students' degree programs. BST does not require CPE training, but highly recommends it, not only for those students planning to pursue ministry in chaplaincy settings, but also for any student called to ministry.

For more detailed information about CPE, go to the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education website: [www.acpe.edu](http://www.acpe.edu). For information concerning accredited CPE sites in the Pacific Region of ACPE, go to [www.pacificregionacpe.org/](http://www.pacificregionacpe.org/).

Since CPE requires a significant commitment of time and focus for those accepted into the program, many BST students wait to undertake one or more units of CPE after graduation. Programs available for application include intensive summer units or twelve- month residency programs. Both are full-time (40+ hours per week). Year-long residency programs usually include a stipend and other benefits. Summer programs do not offer a stipend. A few CPE program sites offer part-time training. Check the website for each CPE program for details about applications, fees, schedules, and site-specific information.

For those students who choose to engage in CPE in the midst of their seminary degree, BST offers the following arrangements for degree credit.

- 6.2.3.1 Students interested in CPE should have a conversation with their academic advisor in order to understand how CPE can best fit into the BST academic programs.
- 6.2.3.2 In consultation with the Director of Contextual Education, BST academic credit may be given for Clinical Pastoral Education training, up to a maximum of twelve BST units. **One unit of CPE training equals three units of BST credit** (a year-long CPE residency program equals four CPE units, or twelve BST units). In general, these units may be applied to the student's elective course credits.
- 6.2.3.3 Students must request an official transcript be sent to BST for the credit hours if they intend to use CPE credits toward their academic program. These units can be applied to either the MDiv or MCL degrees.
- 6.2.3.4 FE2000 is the BST course number for "Clinical Pastoral Education." Students must be accepted into an accredited ACPE program before they can register for FE2000. It is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with accredited ACPE centers and apply for admission. While BST faculty members can provide consultation to students about CPE, neither they nor BST can guarantee that any individual student who applies for CPE will be granted acceptance into any given ACPE center or program.
- 6.2.3.5 Grading for CPE units will be Pass/Fail only.

6.2.4 Students must agree to request and provide a copy of their CPE supervisor's evaluation within sixty days of the completion of each unit of CPE, to be reviewed by the Academic Dean, in order for BST course credit to be awarded.

### 6.2.5 **Special Reading Course (SRC)**

A Special Reading Course will normally be taken with BST regular faculty. **Core Requirements cannot be taken as an SRC.** If a course is not accessible within the GTU or UCB, it may be taken as an SRC. No more than a maximum of 18 units out of the total units taken to complete the MDiv degree (72 units) may be taken as SRC courses. A maximum of 9 units may be taken in MCL or MTS degrees. Letter grades or Pass/Fail grades are acceptable for an SRC course.

### 6.2.6 *Theological Writing Course*

All entering MDiv and MCL students are required to take 3.0 units of the core theological writing course in the fall semester of each academic year.

### ***6.2.7 Cross Registration at the University of California at Berkeley***

Through a cooperative agreement between UCB and the GTU, BST students may take courses at UCB. “Cross Registration” at UCB is open to BST students who:

1. Have an accredited BA.
2. Are full-time students in a degree program.
3. Have the recommendation (approval) of the BST Dean. UCB graduate division courses are open to any MDiv, MTS, or MCL **student who has completed one year of course work**. Consult the BST Dean to ensure that a UCB Course will meet MDiv, MCL or MTS degree requirements.

The BST Registrar has the forms to be used for UCB courses. The student must follow the directions exactly. Students should note that, while the agreement states that **“no fees are charged,”** these classes are **not free**. Students must pay for classes at the per-unit rate charged at BST and must list the UCB course on the **Registration Statement**. Because students do not pay fees directly to UCB they should not request transcripts from UCB. Instead, the UCB Registrar’s office will send a copy of the student’s grade to BST’s Registrar for recording and the BST Registrar issues the grade on the student’s BST transcript.

### ***6.2.8 Transfer Credit***

Students from other accredited theological schools who wish to become candidates for the MDiv, MCL or MTS degree with advanced standing must meet the regular admission requirements. No grade less than **B-** may be transferred for credit. Transfer of credits will not be considered for courses taken Pass/Fail, unless the student is able to obtain from the professor of the course in question a letter-grade equivalent. Communications of the letter-grade equivalent should be in the form of correspondence on institutional letterhead directly from the professor to the BST Registrar. To receive a BST degree, a minimum of 1/3 of the degree’s units of coursework must be completed at BST.

In order to obtain transfer credit, the student must submit syllabi information, a list of books required, and the credentials of the professors (shown in the school catalog) to the BST Registrar for evaluation. It is assumed that the Registrar will already have received a copy of the transcribed course work as part of the normal application documents submitted by the student. The maximum number of transferable units to the MDiv degree program is 48, for the MCL is 32, for the MTS is 24.

**Work completed more than 10 years prior to the date of the student’s enrollment is not eligible for consideration by the Academic Dean for meeting BST curriculum requirements.**

### **6.2.9 Returning BST Students**

Students who have withdrawn from a BST degree program and are looking to reenter must reapply to the program. Students will only be considered for readmission if they left their respective program in good standing. If the student withdrew from their program more than 10 years ago, that student must take at least 12 units in the current curriculum to be considered for graduation.

## **6.4 Coursework**

(See Appendices A & B.)

## **6.5 Satisfactory Academic Progress**

Federal regulations require institutions of higher education to establish minimum standards of satisfactory academic progress for recipients of financial aid. These standards must equal or exceed the academic standards for students not receiving financial aid. In keeping with these regulations, BST has established the following policy governing Satisfactory Academic Progress.

Satisfactory Academic Progress is cumulative and made up of both a qualitative component and quantitative component. Students must meet both aspects of the standard in order to maintain their eligibility during all periods of enrollment, even those for which the student did not receive or request financial assistance.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Some scholarships have additional grade point average requirements that may be higher than those listed below. Review the catalog for the specific grade point average requirements for your scholarship or contact the Financial Aid Office for additional information.

The Higher Education Act and California state government require that in order to receive any Title IV Aid (Federal Direct Stafford Loan, Federal Direct GRAD PLUS Loan), a student must maintain satisfactory academic progress towards a degree. All academic semesters are utilized to determine Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) eligibility regardless of whether federal financial aid was received. In addition, The Higher Education Act standards apply to *all* students, whether or not they have ever received any federal financial aid.

The following criteria apply:

- Full time students are expected to enroll in nine (9) credit hours or more each semester. A full-time student will be allowed four (4) years to complete a two-year program (MCL, MTS); six (6) years to complete a three-year program (MDiv); eight years to complete a four-year, dual-degree program (MDiv/MCL or MDiv/MTS). The maximum time frames for these degrees also apply to part-time students. International students must complete a minimum of twenty-four (24) units per year in order to complete the MDiv degree within three (3) years.

- At the end of each academic semester, full-time students must have earned at least nine (9) credit hours and part-time students must have earned at least 1.5 credit hours, or enough hours to progress toward the completion of the degree within the maximum time frame for the program. All students must complete the required number of hours with a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher for MDiv, MCL and MTS degrees.
- Financial aid recipients must complete 2/3 (67%) of their attempted courses each semester to be eligible for financial aid. Satisfactory Academic Progress is measured after each semester (January term will be paired with spring semester and summer term will be paired with fall semester). Only grades of A through C-, P (pass) or IP (in progress) count as completed credits. Courses with grades of I (Incomplete), F (Fail), NR (None Reported), NS (Not Satisfactory), NC (No Credit), W/F (Withdrawal Fail), W/P (Withdrawal Pass), and W (Withdrawal) are not completed credits.

The number of hours in which a student is enrolled on the day following the published last day to add or drop a class will be used as the official enrollment date for financial aid purposes.

All students are required to meet both cumulative grade point average (GPA) and cumulative hours earned to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress for financial aid. A review will be made at the end of each semester to determine if the student meets the criteria.

Students who do not register for two consecutive semesters will not make Satisfactory Academic Progress unless they have filed the appropriate Leave of Absence forms. (See Leave of Absence policy 6.8 in this handbook.)

### 6.5.1 Grades

Course grades provide the primary qualitative criteria by which the Seminary evaluates a student's Satisfactory Academic Progress toward a degree.

Grades:

	B+ = 3.3	C+ = 2.3	F = 0
A = 4.0	B = 3.0	C = 2.0	
A- = 3.7	B- = 2.7	C- = 1.7	

- A grade of "Pass" (P) will not be counted in computing the grade point average, but it will count toward Satisfactory Academic Progress for elective courses.
- A grade of "In Progress" (IP) will not be counted in computing the grade point average, but it will count toward Satisfactory Academic Progress.
- A grade ranging between "A and C-" will receive course credit and will count

- toward Satisfactory Academic Progress.
- Grades of “F” (Fail), “NC” (No Credit), “I” (Incomplete) and “W” (Withdrawal) do not earn credits.
  - A grade of “F” indicates that student has failed to complete the required course work by the end of the semester and has not petitioned for an Incomplete.
  - “NR” (No Report) indicates that the professor has not turned in a grade for the student.
  - Courses taken to fulfill non-elective core requirements for the MDiv, MCL and MTS degrees must be taken for a letter grade.
  - Elective courses (including required elective courses) may be taken for either letter grade or Pass/Fail.
  - Any student wishing to withdraw from a class after the official drop/add date will receive a W/P or W/F on their transcript. W/Ps and W/Fs will not be counted in the computation of the grade point average. Withdrawals (W grades), which are recorded on the student’s transcript, will be included as credits attempted, and will have an adverse effect on the student’s ability to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress.

**Incompletes:** MDiv, MCL, and MTS students are responsible for completing their work within the semester. Under unusual circumstances, such as severe illness, students may petition for an Incomplete, but must do so no later than the last day of the semester. Forms for requesting an Incomplete are available on the institutional webpage and from the Registrar.

Incomplete work is due to the faculty 3 weeks after term. The faculty is required to submit a new grade by the sixth Friday after the end of the term. **The incomplete grade becomes an “F” if no new grade is received by the end of the sixth week. The “F” becomes permanent on the transcript if the work is not completed by the end of the following semester.**

At the discretion of the instructor, for MDiv, MCL, and MTS students for whom the course fulfills a core curricular requirement, the new course grade may be Pass/Fail.

**Appeal of Grade:** If a student wishes to appeal a grade, he/she goes first to the faculty member involved. If a resolution is not reached, the student can then appeal to the Dean. If there is still no resolution the student can appeal to the full faculty, and the faculty has the final decision.

### ***6.5.2 Maximum Time Frames***

These guidelines apply to all students including those taking guaranteed student loans. At the end of each semester an evaluation will occur to determine if a student is making Satisfactory Academic Progress.



The maximum time frame in which a student is expected to finish his/her program is as follows:

<b>DEGREE PROGRAM</b>	<b>MAXIMUM TIME FRAME</b>
<b>MDiv</b>	6 years
<b>MCL</b>	4 years
<b>MCL/MDiv</b>	8 years
<b>MTS</b>	4 years
<b>MTS/MDiv</b>	8 years

Full-time Masters students (MDiv, MCL, MTS and combined degrees) are eligible for financial aid through the maximum time periods shown above (excluding leaves of absence). If a student has not successfully completed his/her degree within the institution's maximum time frame, he/she is no longer maintaining satisfactory academic progress and is not eligible for Title IV aid.

Satisfactory academic progress towards the completion of the MDiv within a period of three years as a full-time student necessitates a student complete a minimum of 9-12 units per semester [and a total of 24 units per academic year, including Intersession and Summer terms].

Satisfactory academic progress towards the completion of the MDiv within a period of six years necessitates a student to complete a minimum of 12 units per academic year. For example, if a student took 12 units a year for six years, s/he would be on schedule to complete the total 72 units required for the program.

Satisfactory academic progress towards the completion of the MCL and MTS program(s) within a period of four years necessitates a student completing a minimum of 12 units a year.

Satisfactory academic progress towards the completion of the concurrent MCL/MDiv or MTS/MDiv within a period of eight years necessitates a student to complete a minimum of 12 units per year to complete the total of 96 units required for the MCL and 90 for the

MTS concurrent programs.

Since a regular full-time course load would be 24 units per academic year each of the scenarios listed above provides adequate flexibility for the part-time student to complete the program within a satisfactory period of time. If, however, a student should encounter unavoidable obstacles that would impede his/her progress in the program, s/he is able to appeal to the academic dean for an exception/extension to the standards stated above so that s/he might still be eligible for financial aid.

### ***6.5.3 Academic Probation and Financial Aid Warning***

**MDiv, MCL, and MTS:** Students may be placed on academic probation due to unsatisfactory academic progress and/or for academic disciplinary reasons. Full-time students who have earned at least nine (9) credit hours but do not have a 2.5 cumulative GPA; or have a 2.5 cumulative GPA but have not earned nine (9) credit hours; or have not earned at least nine (9) credit hours and do not have a 2.5 cumulative GPA will be placed on Financial Aid Warning for one semester. Part-time students who have earned a minimum of credit hours but do not have 2.5 cumulative GPA; or have a 2.5 cumulative GPA but have not earned a minimum number of credit hours; or have not earned a minimum number of credit hours and do not have a 2.5 cumulative GPA will be placed on Financial Aid Warning for one semester. During the semester a student is on Financial Aid Warning, s/he will still be eligible to receive their federal financial aid. The student will be required to meet with the Academic Dean to develop an academic plan for meeting SAP by the end of that semester. At the end of the semester, if the student has not met the requirements of SAP, the student will become ineligible to receive federal financial aid.

**If the student becomes ineligible for Federal Financial Aid, the student can appeal the decision by following the guidelines as set forth in the Financial Aid Appeal Process.**

### ***6.5.4 Financial Aid Appeal Process***

Waivers for Satisfactory Academic Progress will be considered only under exceptional circumstances (if, for example, the student has suffered undue hardship such as death of a family member, injury or illness of the student, or other special circumstances). Students requesting an appeal must submit a letter to the Academic Dean's Office requesting reinstatement. The letter should explain the circumstances which affected the student's academic performance and provide accompanying documentation.

All appeals should be submitted via email or hard copy to the attention of the Academic Dean. All appeals will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Academic Dean. In some instances, an interview may be scheduled to answer any questions. (Please note that any information mentioned in the appeal is subject to verification and all information will be taken into consideration.)

The financial aid appeal letter must:

- Be properly addressed and should include the student's name, address, phone number, student ID number and Degree program
- State clearly why the student was not able to make SAP (Satisfactory Academic Progress)
- State what has changed in the student's situation that will allow the student to demonstrate Satisfactory Academic Progress at the next evaluation
- Describe what the student will do differently academically if s/he is authorized to continue receiving financial aid at BST

If the appeal is approved, the student will be placed on Financial Aid Probation for one semester. During the student's course of study, the student will not be allowed to appeal a financial aid warning more than two (2) times. Once a decision has been rendered, no further information will be considered

#### ***6.5.5 Financial Aid Probation***

Only students whose appeal has been granted will be placed on Financial Aid Probation. Financial Aid Probation is for one academic semester only. At the end of the academic semester, the student's academic record will be reviewed to determine if the student has met the requirements specified in the academic plan.

#### ***6.5.6 Re-establishing Satisfactory Academic Progress***

Any student whose federal financial aid has been terminated may reestablish Satisfactory Academic Progress by either of the following methods:

- Repeating and passing failed courses
- Removing incomplete grades

Repeated courses will be counted as hours completed only once, provided the student meets all other criteria for Satisfactory Academic Progress.

#### ***6.5.7 Change of Degree***

A student may change from one degree to another during attendance at BST. Students who change from one degree to another are still expected to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress. Students are required to request a Change of Degree form from the Director of Admissions office. They also must complete the course work within the time frame or hours limitation stated unless an appeal is otherwise approved.

### ***6.5.8 Termination of Program***

**Termination of MDiv, MCL, MTS Programs:** MDiv, MCL, and MTS students who do not register for one academic year, take a leave of absence, withdraw, or respond to inquiries from the Academic Dean's Office or the Registrar regarding their status in the program will be terminated. A student whose program has been terminated may petition for reinstatement within two years. This process will be the same as for withdrawn students; if reinstated, such students must pay a reinstatement fee.

## **6.6 Leave of Absence/Withdrawals**

### ***6.6.1 Leave of Absence***

#### **MDiv, MCL, and MTS Students**

Leaves are granted for one semester. No more than two consecutive semesters of leave or a total of four semesters may be granted during the student's entire degree program. More than two consecutive semesters or more than a total of four semesters requires reapplication.

Students with government loans can be given a leave not to exceed 60 days, or not to exceed 6 months if the school's next period of enrollment after the start of the leave of absence would begin more than 60 days after the first day of the LOA; or if the school leave is requested for medical reasons, in which case, the student must provide the school with a written recommendation from a physician for a LOA longer than 60 days.

The student must meet with the Academic Dean and present a written petition as to why he or she is taking leave. Such a letter should be submitted to the Dean prior to the start of the semester for which the leave is requested and should indicate the anticipated duration of the leave and the reasons for requesting the leave. A fee shall be assessed each semester.

Reapplication for admission to the MDiv, MCL or MTS program shall consist of a letter to the Dean formally requesting re-admission to the degree program, and any other supporting documents and materials which the Admissions Committee may deem necessary to decide rather or not to re-admit. If curriculum changes have occurred during the absence of a student who has withdrawn, it is the prerogative of the Admissions Committee, in consultation with the faculty, to determine which curriculum requirements will apply in the case of a re-admitted student.

Students returning from leave status are subject to the policy in effect governing financial aid the semester they return.

## **6.6.2 Withdrawals**

### MDiv, MCL, and MTS Students

For a student to withdraw from the school, a “Request for Withdrawal” form available in the Registrar’s office needs to be filled out and filed with the Registrar. If the student wishes to re-enter BST (with a break not longer than one academic year), he/ she must re-apply to the Admissions office. If any curriculum changes have occurred during the absence of a student who has withdrawn, it is the prerogative of the Admissions Committee, in consultation with the faculty, to determine which curriculum requirements shall apply in the case of the re-admitted student.

## **6.7 Transcript Requests**

Enrolled students are able to request transcripts through the student SIS system (Populi); alum should request transcripts by completing the Transcript Request form found under the Office of the Registrar on the BST website. Transcript Request forms must be signed and emailed to the Registrar. Please include your name and address and the name and address of the institution receiving the transcript. A fee will be charged for each copy.

## **7 VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT**

The BST curriculum is designed so that students have numerous and varied opportunities to reflect on their call to ministry and to assess their ministerial gifts as well as the struggles they likely will encounter in ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. BST is not an institution that serves as a regulatory agency for the denominations we serve; rather, this process is intended to benefit both students and the seminary as students have the opportunity to reflect on their vocational directions, strengths, and challenges throughout their seminary experience.

### **7.1 Profiles of Ministry**

[this process is being updated]

### **7.2. Readiness for Ministry Internship Review**

As an integral part of BST students’ theological education, those undertaking an MDiv or MCL degree at the seminary are required to complete an internship. The Contextual Education program at BST strives to help students gain valuable experience in contextual settings outside the seminary walls, such as congregations, agencies, chaplaincy sites, or other appropriate sites. (See 6.3.2 for details on the Internship process.)

In terms of Vocational Assessment, early in the spring semester, the Director of Contextual Education will contact each MDiv and MCL student who is eligible to begin an internship the following September. Students will set up an appointment for an Internship Interview with the Director of Contextual Education to discuss their ideas, hopes, and goals for an internship year.

All students eligible to begin an internship will be reviewed by faculty in an executive session of the April Faculty Meeting in the semester prior to internship placement. All eligible students will be evaluated for their fitness in their academic program of choice and/or professional ministry. This evaluation will include review of cumulative GPA, review of the Internship Interview with the Director of Contextual Education, as well as a Readiness for Ministry Internship Review. The Readiness for Ministry Internship Review includes an assessment of overall student work, attitude, and performance in the classroom. All eligible students must be approved for Readiness for Ministry Internship by the faculty. The faculty will recommend an alternative plan for any students who are not approved for Readiness for Ministry Internship at the April Faculty Meeting. (See 7.4 Process for Students Having Difficulties Completing the Program.)

### **7.3 Evaluation during Internship**

An important part of Vocational Assessment is the evaluation process. For all internships associated with the Middler year of study, students establish goals and engage in self-evaluation of their experience and performance at their site twice a year. In addition, students meet regularly with their supervisors to discuss issues relevant to their work in ministry. Supervisors also conduct evaluations of students twice a year, incorporating insights and reflections from members of the congregation or agency at which students are placed. These evaluation processes are an integral part of students' continued growth and insight in their vocations.

### **7.4 Process for Students Having Difficulties Completing the Program**

The faculty will meet in executive session to discuss the particularities of the individual situation for any students who are not approved to advance to Internship through the Readiness for Ministry Internship process. Faculty will create a plan that will assist the student in his/her development. Should the student successfully complete the plan, then she/he will, upon approval of the faculty, continue in his/her program as originally scheduled. Should the student not successfully complete the plan, then the faculty will reassess the student's potential for theological education and/or professional ministry. Should the faculty conclude the student is not adequately prepared to complete his/her course of study and/or enter the professional ministry, an alternative course of study/action will be formulated, which will then be communicated to the student by the Academic Dean or by his/her faculty advisor. Should the student disagree with the proposal, she/he may initiate a formal grievance process as outlined in the Policy and Procedures handbook (Section 8.0).

## **8 Disciplinary Action and Grievance Procedures**

### **8.1 Procedure for Disciplinary Action and/or Dismissal of a Student**

Upon enrollment, a student assumes an obligation to conduct him/herself in a manner compatible with the seminary's function as a Christian educational institution preparing persons for ministry, and to act in a manner which supports this function. Students must exemplify the character, personality, spirituality and leadership ability essential to serving effectively in the Christian ministry. Any student who, in the judgment of any faculty member or administrative officer, violates this standard shall be subject to such disciplinary action as may be determined by the faculty, including dismissal.

In any proposed discipline or dismissal for non-academic reasons, the student shall first meet with the Dean. If a resolution is not reached, the student shall be provided with an opportunity for a hearing with the Guidance Committee (a committee of faculty and students, appointed by the Dean). The student shall have the right to present evidence, confront adverse witnesses, and be represented by counsel. A record of such hearing shall be made and kept by the faculty and shall be available for inspection by the student. The student shall furthermore have the right to appeal against any committee decision to the whole faculty by written petition within 10 days after the committee decision. The full faculty shall have authority to confirm, reverse or modify the decision upon a review of the record of the hearing before the Guidance Committee, such review to be no later than 30 days after the filing of the petition for appeal. During this appeal procedure the student shall retain all rights and privileges as a student unless the faculty determines that immediate dismissal of the student is in the best interests of the Seminary. The faculty's decision regarding the appeal is final.

All transactions and decisions of the institution, whether administrative or by the Board of Trustees, are of public record. They are available for review upon written request and by appointment.

### **8.2 Grievance Procedure**

(Grievance procedures in the event of alleged discrimination under Title IX, Section 504)

When a student feels he/she has a grievance, he/she shall within 30 days of occurrence first attempt to resolve it by either or both of the following actions: a) confer with the person against whom he/she has the grievance; b) confer with the Dean.

If a resolution is not reached in the above manner, then the student shall be provided with the opportunity for a hearing with the Grievance Committee. The Grievance Committee shall be comprised of a) two students selected by the Student Council; b) two faculty members selected by the Dean; and c) one person selected by the President

of the Seminary. (Committee members shall select one of their own members as chairperson.)

Within thirty days of the aggrieved student's request a Grievance Committee shall be constituted and shall meet. The student who brings the grievance shall have the right to present evidence, confront adverse witnesses, and be represented by counsel. A record of such hearing shall be made and kept by the Seminary and shall be available for inspection by the student.

The committee shall inform the student in writing of their decision with seven days from the date of the hearing, and the student shall have the right to appeal any committee decision to the President by written petition within ten days after the committee decision. The President of the Seminary may dismiss the charge, reduce the committee's sanctions, or act on the committee's recommendations (adopted April 16, 1985).

## **APPENDIX A: Written Assignments at BST**

[Adopted: 12 May 1993]

**BST courses require a variety of kinds of written assignments. Some ask for creativity pertaining to specific course subjects and goals. These are described in the course syllabus. Among the most common written assignments are two kinds of “papers” – the working/reflection paper and the research paper.**

### **A.1 Working/Reflection Papers**

Many BST courses require students to write one or more working and/or reflection papers. These essays may vary in form and in length from one or two pages to ten or more pages (always double spaced). The assignment asks students to integrate the material of the course (lectures, discussions, readings) into their own thinking and life experiences. The following elements characterize this paper:

- . It is not meant to be a finished product, but rather more like a “progress report” of thinking through issues raised by the course. Therefore proper academic format, such as footnotes or bibliography, may not be required. However, it is expected to be well organized, clearly written, and grammatically correct.
- . It is not meant to be primarily a research paper requiring library research, although it might involve this. It is meant to be more of a reflection on ideas and factual data as these relate to students’ concerns, commitments, and interest.
- . This is an opportunity to be creative and do exploratory thinking that the course suggested. This paper is about what the student thinks, understands, or does not understand, in dialogue with what the professor and/or other scholars are saying.

### **A.2 Research Papers**

Some BST courses require students to write papers involving original research related to the course subject and the interests of the student. The following elements characterize this project:

- . **Structure and Format:** A Research Paper is meant to be more carefully prepared than the “Working Paper.” Therefore, proper academic format, such as footnotes and bibliography, is required. This does not mean that students are not to be thoughtful and creative, but they are to be so within a particular, formal structure and protocol. Proper research methodology should be followed: proper and consistent footnoting, within text reference, or end-noting; proper bibliographic style; and no plagiarism. The research paper should be well-organized, and the agenda proposed in the beginning of the paper should be followed. The conclusion of the paper should refer to the research question and explain how it

and the subsidiary questions have been addressed, resolved, or left unanswered.

- . **Choosing and Defining a Topic:** In choosing a topic for a research paper, students are encouraged to consult their professors. Also, students are advised to consider the topic in terms of its interest to the student, the topic's appropriateness given the student's range of competence, and the student's facility with the chosen research method. The topic should be manageable: appropriately narrow given the available library resources and the assigned length of the paper.
  
- . **Conducting the Research:** The research should begin with the establishment of a working bibliography based upon the initial research questions and hypotheses. The creation of this bibliography ensures that the student has discovered the scope and relevance of materials available for the project. At this stage it is recommended that students consult professors, librarians, as well as the GTU library reference materials (e.g., **Old Testament Abstracts and New Testament Abstracts, GTU's GRACE and CD ROM, and the Papers and Thesis Help Program [PATH]**). Library research will be focused and circumscribed by the length of the paper and the time the student has to devote to it.

Apart from MA Theses, most research papers written at BST will be of relevant research and theory or inductive studies of particular texts, concepts, or terms using the appropriate collection of references. The paper should include an integrated statement explaining why the resources used were considered to be the important ones for addressing the research question. Additionally, the paper should include an evaluation of the relevant literature in general terms.

When comparing points of view, students must read and use the studies and theories as articulated by their originators and proponents, rather than relying on another's paraphrase of the study or theory; otherwise, students should note that their interaction with an original study is secondhand.

### **A.3 Book Reviews**

By way of exposing students to alternative viewpoints and fostering critical thinking, BST instructors often assign book reviews, ordinarily of some 5-7 pages in length. Reviews normally should develop along two avenues. First, the review should indicate a thorough knowledge of the book as a whole, read on its own terms. What is the author's fundamental aim? Central themes? Presuppositions? Method? Second, the review should engage the book critically and personally. Does the book accomplish its aim? How has reading this book shaped you? In what way, if at all, do you regard this as an important book? Whenever possible, the student should set his or her critique of the book within the larger discussion of the subject.

As with any written assignment, book reviews should include proper referencing of direct

citations.

#### **A.4 Documentation of Sources, Notes, and Bibliography**

Citations from other sources should always be given with complete accuracy, within quotation marks, properly noted. Material borrowed from another person, including class lectures or Chatgpt, even when not cited directly, must also be documented.

When are quotations appropriate? Cite another person's work when this seems the best way to represent accurately his or her position. Quote when another person says something in a particularly memorable way. Sometimes another source may be cited for psychological impact to muster support from a well-known authority. You should not assume your point has been made when an "expert" has been cited, however.

Notes are used to document sources from which one has borrowed in the text of a paper. Other uses of notes include the following: (1) to list additional bibliographical material; (2) to develop technical or peripheral issues inappropriate for treatment in the paper's body; (3) to compare alternative opinions; and (4) to refer to another section of the paper.

Every paper that refers to other sources must include a bibliography, but the bibliography includes only those materials actually employed as sources in the paper.

#### **A.5 Academic Integrity (including Plagiarism)**

Maintaining a high standard of personal and academic integrity is central to academic and professional education for ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. For this reason, students are expected to comport themselves with a sense of professionalism in the classroom, at their ministry settings, and in their academic writing.

All academic writing by students is expected to be a true and accurate representation of students' own thinking. Where students draw on the ideas and writing of others, including Chatgpt, proper citation must be used. (See Appendix A, #4 Documentation of Sources, Notes, and Bibliography, above.)

Plagiarism is the attempt to pass off someone else's work as your own. At its most flagrant, plagiarism is an expression of deliberate dishonesty – copying another person's material word for word (including from the internet or from Chatgpt), then submitting it as your own work without the use of quotation marks and formal documentation in the notes to the paper.

In other cases, plagiarism is less explicit and involves unacknowledged borrowing from other sources without quoting them directly yet without moving away from your sources

sufficiently to indicate your own mastery of the material. Organization of material, ideas, and words taken from or inspired by another person's work should always be acknowledged.

Failure to properly cite one's sources, including the use of Chatgpt, leaves the student liable to one or more of the following actions, based on the discretion of the faculty: (1) the student's work may be returned to be rewritten. A failing grade will be kept on record until the rewritten paper is submitted. A student may not receive full credit for the rewritten assignment; (2) a failing grade on the assignment without an opportunity to rewrite; (3) a failing grade for the course in question; (4) academic and financial aid probation for disciplinary reasons (see 6.5 Academic Probation); (5) suspension or dismissal by the Academic Dean from the academic program of the seminary.

Students who have committed plagiarism two or more times in any or all coursework may be placed on academic probation and financial aid probation for one semester (See section 6.4 Academic Probation). Students placed on academic probation due to plagiarism may be required to complete a noncredit course "How to Avoid Plagiarism." After completion of this course, the student must meet with her/his advisor to review definitions and types of plagiarism. After these requirements are met and upon recommendation of the student's advisor and the faculty, the student will be removed from academic and financial aid probation. Students facing disciplinary action for academic reasons a second time may face academic suspension or dismissal. (Revised May 2010)

## **A.6 English as a Second Language**

Students whose primary language is not English will not be penalized for minor grammatical and syntactical errors provided the meaning is clear. With prior permission from the instructor, such students may wish first to write their papers in their primary language, then receive translation and/or editorial help from a friend or fellow student prior to submitting an assignment. In these cases, both papers must be submitted.

## **A.7 Inclusive Language**

The Berkeley School of Theology affirms the policy on inclusive language adopted by the American Academy of Religion as appropriate to all scholarly and written work and oral communication within our common programs, including institutional publications and marketing materials. The AAR statement and policy is as follows:

"For the purposes of this policy, *exclusive language* is defined as a consistent pattern of English usage where the male is taken to be the normative human person, i.e., the "man" connotes both the male and the human being as such. The term "woman" and female pronouns are never used as generic references for human beings but are exclusive to females. This definition is adopted from *The New Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, J.G. Daves, SCM Press, 1986.

It shall be the editorial policy of the publications of the American Academy of Religion [and BST] to avoid the use of the term "man" (including also "men," "mankind," "family of man," "brotherhood," and the compounds "chairman," "clergyman," etc. as a *generic* term, and to use *inclusive* terms (e.g., "human being," "human," "humanity," "humankind," "people," "minister," etc.) to designate both individuals and groups.

Consistent with this policy, the pronoun he is not regarded as generic. Editorial policy is to use appropriate pronouns when the antecedent is known, and to use the gender neutral third person plural (e.g., they, them) when the antecedent of the pronoun is not known. The use of duplicate pronouns or alternated pronouns (e.g., he/she, him/her, s/he consistently or she in one sentence, alternating with he in the next) is permissible, but not preferred. Recommended as a guide to good inclusive style for both editor and author is: Casey Miller and Kate Swift, *The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing*, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1980)."

There is also the issue of exclusive language in reference to God, in translations of scripture, or in formal liturgy and other spoken and written materials. BST -- as an ecumenically diverse Christian community and, as a founding member of the Graduate Theological Union, a multi-faith institution -- respects the fact that different communities have taken different stands on these issues; it intends to enforce no orthodoxy on any religious community. However, in scholarly and other writing and speaking about the theology, scriptures, and liturgies of the communities, it is at least appropriate to be aware of and note the dimensions of the controversy. Whether inclusive language should be adopted in reference to deity, scripture, or liturgical language depends upon the topic under discussion and the tradition out of which the person is writing or speaking. If there are viable reasons why inclusive language is not appropriate, it is well to note them in a non-disruptive way, in a footnote or aside.

## **A.8 Confidentiality**

While BST encourages the practice of Christian reflection within a community context, it also respects individual achievement. Hence, unless prior permission is granted by the student, papers other than MA Theses and papers prepared for seminars submitted to instructors at BST will not be photocopied and will be available for review only by the course instructor. On occasion, however, when issues of academic evaluation are in question, student materials may be shared anonymously with the Academic Dean or other members of the BST faculty.

## **A.9 Standard Reference Works**

On other matters of format and style, see William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White, **The Elements of Style**, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Cartersville, BA: Pearson Higher Education, 2000) and the most recent edition of Kate L. Turabian, ***A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*** (University of Chicago Press). As of Fall 2021, the most recent edition of *A Manual for Writers* is the 9<sup>th</sup> edition.

## **APPENDIX B: Policy Statement on Use of Copyrighted Material**

Adopted by the Board of Trustees (October 1, 1993)

Berkeley School of Theology is committed to full compliance with all pertinent laws and regulations pertaining to the use of copyrighted material. Sources for BST's commitment are as follows:

Isaiah 65:21-22

Luke 10:7

Constitution of the United States of America, Article I, Subsection 8

Copyright Act of 1978

Berne Convention Implementation Act of 1988

Copyrighted materials include but may not be limited to the following:

Printed material, including books, magazines and included articles, newspapers and included articles, musical scores and librettos, and so forth, including online publications.

Material recorded on magnetic, optical, or other media, including works on analog disks, digital ("compact") disks, magnetic tape cassettes and microcassettes, magnetic disks ("floppy disks"), video tape, and so forth. (Note: Prohibitions and restrictions prescribed herein also apply to video tapes which are licensed only for private, "in-home" viewing.)

Computer software and accompanying documentation.

Faculty, Students, Administration, and Staff of BST will comply with the procedures contained in BST's Guidelines for Use of Copyrighted Material. Because of the complexity of the laws, situations not covered in the Guidelines will be referred to the Business Office for resolution. Willful infringement of copyrights using BST equipment, or on behalf of BST using other equipment can be cause for termination of employment or expulsion from the student body.

### **BST Guidelines for Use of Copyrighted Material**

#### ***Introduction***

A new, complex U.S. Copyright law went into effect on January 1, 1978. On March 1, 1989, the United States became a party to the "Berne Convention." which further tightened the restrictions on the use of copyrighted material. These policy and procedures guidelines are written to provide help in applying copyright laws in BST, primarily to cover the photocopying of printed material. All prohibitions and restrictions contained herein, however, apply to the copying by any means of any copyrighted

material on any media. Faculty, Administration, Staff, and Students will be guided accordingly. The basic rule which must always be followed is: If in doubt, do not copy the material.

***Photocopying which is Completely Unrestricted:***

**Published Works Which Were Never Copyrighted:** Anyone may reproduce without restriction works which were never copyrighted. To determine if an item has been copyrighted, look at the front pages of the item for a copyright notice, which consists of the letter “c” in a circle, the word “copyright”, or the abbreviation “copr.”, plus the year of first publication and the name of the owner of the copyright. Writings published before January 1, 1978, without copyright notices generally are not protected. Works first published between January 1, 1978, and February 28, 1989, without a valid copyright notice generally lost copyright protection unless they were registered with the U.S. Copyright Office within five years of first publication and a valid notice was added to all copies distributed after discovery of the omission. Mandatory notice of copyright was abolished for works published for the first time on or after March 1, 1989. Failure to place a copyright notice on copies of works that are publicly distributed can no longer result in the loss of copyright. In summary, one cannot assume that a work is in the public domain merely because it does not contain a valid copyright notice.

**Published Works Whose Copyrights Have Expired:** Anyone may reproduce without restriction published works whose copyrights have expired. All copyrights dated earlier than 1906 have expired. Copyrights dated 1906 or later may have expired because the initial period of copyright protection is 28 years. Copyrights can be renewed, however. One cannot discern whether a copyright dated after 1906 has expired or been renewed. Copiers must either assume that copyright protection is still in effect for copyrights dated after 1906 or ask the owner of the copyright or the U.S. Copyright Office whether or not the item is still protected by a copyright.

**U.S. Government Publications:** U.S. Government publications may be copied freely because such publications cannot be copyrighted. This rule applied to publications prepared by officers of the U.S. Government as part of those officers’ duties. This rule does not extend to publications made by others with the support of U.S. Government grants or contracts. Such publications may or may not be copyrighted, and it is incumbent upon those who wish to copy such publications to determine if copyright protection exists.

***Photocopying which is Partially Restricted***

Teachers may photocopy copyrighted works for classroom use and for research without paying royalties when the circumstances amount to what the law call “fair use.” It is generally fair use for teachers to photocopy supplementary items for such purposes as

filling in missing information or to bring material up to date. Fair use is a complex issue, however, and to have benefit of fair use, copiers should observe both the spirit and the letter of the following guidelines:

1. **Single Copies:** For teaching, including preparation and for scholarly research, a teacher may make, or have made, a **single** copy of a) a chapter from a book; b) an article from a journal, periodical, or newspaper; c) a short story, essay, or poem; and d) a diagram or picture in any of those works.
2. **Multiple Copies:** **For one-time distribution in class to students**, a teacher may make, or have made, multiple copies if he or she a) makes no more than one copy for each student; and b) includes the notice of copyright (writes it on the first sheet or copies the page on which it appears); and c) is selective and sparing in choosing poetry, prose, and illustrations, taking no more than one of two excerpts from the same author nor three from the same volume during the class term; and d) makes no charge to the student beyond the actual cost of the photocopying.

The right to make copies is strengthened if the copying will not have a significant effect upon the potential market for the work (probably the most important factor) or if there is insufficient time to seek permission from the owner of the copyright. Please note that this provision is for **one time** only and does not include the right to make multiple copies in subsequent class terms without permission from the copyright owner.

3. **Definitions:** Excerpts should be confined to 1,000 words or 10 percent of the entire work, whichever is fewer. Short poems are defined as having fewer than 250 words and 1 or 2 pages; excerpts of longer poems should meet the same limits. Short prose is 2,500 words or fewer.

### ***Photocopying for which Permission Should be Obtained***

1. **Repetitive Copying:** Teachers who wish to make multiple copies for more than one class term must obtain permission from the copyright owner.
2. **Copying for Profit:** Teachers should not charge students more than the actual cost of photocopying and should not make copies for students who are not in their own classes without obtaining permission from the copyright owner.
3. **Unpublished Works:** One should obtain permission from owners of unpublished works to copy such works since the “fair use” doctrine has only limited application to such works. The law gives automatic copyright protection to unpublished works from the time they are created until they are published.

Subject to some qualifications, at the time of publication owners must assert their copyrights through notice or they may lose them. “Publication” typically occurs

when copies are distributed to the public by sale; free distribution may or may not constitute publication. Public performance or display of a work does not, of itself, constitute publication.

4. **Consumable Works:** Teachers need to obtain permission before making multiple copies of copyrighted works which are intended to be consumed in classroom activities, such as workbooks, exercises, and standardized tests and their answers.
5. **Copying According to an Overall Plan:** Teachers may make fair use of copyrighted material if they photocopy on their own initiative. It is not fair use to copy according to a plan designed by others, including academic superiors or administrators.

### *How to Obtain Permission*

The office of the Academic Dean and the Business Office have information available for the use of anyone who wishes to use copyrighted materials for which permission is required. Such requests must be for the use of specific material for a specific project. Blanket permission cannot be obtained.

### *Infringement*

Because of the vagueness of the “fair use” provisions in the law, teachers may innocently infringe upon copyrights. If copying is held to be infringement, the law exempts such teachers from statutory damages and limits their exposure to actual damages if the teachers believed their copying was fair use and they had reasonable grounds for their belief. Adhering to the guidelines herein should afford reasonable grounds for believing one is engaging in fair use. Infringement as a result of copying without compliance with these guidelines can be found to be willful and can subject the individual involved to damages which can range up to \$100,000 and to termination of employment or expulsion from the student body. Any unauthorized use of copyright materials within BST is at the individual’s own initiative and will not be permitted or condoned by the Seminary.

### *Photocopy Warnings*

The following notice will be posted on all copying machines in BST:

**NOTICE: THE MAKING OF A COPY MAY BE SUBJECT TO THE COPYRIGHT LAW. REFER TO THE BST POLICY STATEMENT ON USE OF COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL.**

## APPENDIX C

### **C.1 The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act**

For purposes of this statement, “students” will include only those individuals who are or have been enrolled in the Master of Divinity, Masters in Community Leadership, Master in Theological Studies are governed by BST policies.

The term “student” includes an individual who has been admitted to and has enrolled in or registered with, an academic program at BST, as defined above. The term “student” does not include an individual who has not attended BST. An individual who is or has been enrolled in one program of an institution, who applies for admission to a second program, has no right to inspect the records accumulated for the second program until enrolled therein.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, is a federal law which states (a) that a written institutional policy must be established and (b) that a statement of adopted procedures covering the privacy rights of students be made available. The law provides that the institution will maintain the confidentiality of student education records.

BST accords all the rights under the law to students who are declared independent. No one outside the institution shall have access to nor will the institution disclose any information from students’ education records without the written consent of students except to personnel within the institution, to officials of other institutions in which students seek to enroll, to persons or organizations providing students financial aid, to accrediting agencies carrying out their accreditation function, to persons in compliance with a judicial order, and to persons in an emergency in order to protect the health or safety of students or other persons. All these exceptions are permitted under the Act.

Within the BST community, only those members, individually or collectively, acting in the students’ educational interest are allowed access to student education records. These members include personnel in the Dean’s office (including the Registrar/Admissions/Financial Aid Offices) and the Business Office, and academic personnel within the limitations of their need to know. Educational records are available in the Registrar’s office.

At its discretion the institution may provide public information in accordance with the provisions of the Act to include: student name, address, telephone number, date of birth and place of birth, year in school, dates of attendance, degree program(s), religious affiliation, scholarships and honors, most recent previous degree and school, country of citizenship, school/schools of affiliations. Students may withhold public information by

indicating it on the Student Information Form completed upon matriculation.

Request for non-disclosure will be honored by the institution for only one academic year; therefore, authorization to withhold public information must be filed annually in the Registrar's office. Exception: If during the senior or last year of attendance, the student requests on the Non-disclosure Form that certain information not be given out, that information cannot be disclosed thereafter to anyone, including prospective employers, other schools, persons wishing to award scholarships, etc. The school's alumni office would also not be allowed to give any information. BST response to all inquiries would be that we have no information. Non-disclosure is in effect until the student rescinds the request.

The law provides students with the right to inspect and review information contained in their education records, to challenge the contents of their education records, to have a hearing if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the challenge, and to submit explanatory statements for inclusion in their files if they are dissatisfied with decisions of the hearing panels. The BST Registrar has been designated by the institution to coordinate the inspection and review procedures for student education records, which include admissions, personal, academic, and financial and placement records. Students wishing to review their education records must make written requests to the head of the appropriate office as listed in the Directory of Student Educational Records, listing the item or items of interest. Only records covered by the Act will be made available within forty-five days of the request. Students may have copies made of their records with certain exceptions (e.g., a copy of the academic record for which a financial "hold" exists, or a transcript of an original or source document which exists elsewhere). Student education records do not include records of instructional, administrative, and educational personnel which are the sole possession of the maker and are not accessible or revealed to any individual except a temporary substitute for the person who made the record; do not include employment records; and do not include alumni/ae records.

Students may not inspect and review the following as outlined by the Act: confidential letters and recommendations associated with admissions, employment or job placement, or honors to which they have waived their rights of inspection and review; or education records containing information about more than one student, in which case the institution will permit access only to that part of the record which pertains to the inquiring student. The institution is not required to permit students to inspect and review confidential letters and recommendations placed in their files prior to January 1, 1975, provided those letters were collected under established policies of confidentiality and were used only for the purposes for which they were collected.

Students who believe that their education records contain information that is inaccurate or misleading or is otherwise in violation of their privacy or other rights may discuss their problems informally with the Dean. If the staff decisions agree with the students'

requests, the appropriate records will be amended. If not, the students will be notified within a reasonable period of time that the records will not be amended; and they will be informed by the Dean of their right to a formal hearing. Student requests for a formal hearing must be made in writing to the Dean, who, within a reasonable period of time after receiving such requests, will inform students of the date, place, and the time of the hearings. Students may present evidence relevant to the issues raised and may be assisted or represented at the hearings by one or more persons of their choice, including attorneys, at the students' expense. The hearing panels which will adjudicate such challenges will be appointed by and chaired by the Dean. The hearing panel will consult with legal counsel as appropriate.

Decisions of the hearing panels will be final, will be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing, and will consist of written statements summarizing the evidence and stating the reasons for the decisions, and will be delivered to all parties concerned. The education records will be corrected or amended in accordance with the decision of the hearing panels, if the decisions are in favor of the students. If the decisions are unsatisfactory to the students, the students may place with the education records statements commenting on the information in the records, or statements setting forth any reasons for disagreeing with the decisions of the hearing panels. The statements will be placed in the education records, maintained as part of the students' records, and released whenever the records in questions are disclosed.

Students who believe that the adjudications of their challenges were unfair or not in keeping with the provisions of the Act may request, in writing, assistance from the President of the institution to aid them in filing complaints with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-5920.

## **C.2 Policy Statement on Drug-Free Campus and Workplace**

(Adopted by the Board of Trustees on October 1, 1993)

Berkeley School of Theology is committed to maintaining a campus and workplace in which students, faculty, administration, staff, residents and tenants live and work together in an atmosphere free from drugs and alcohol. The Drug Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989 (PL101-226) requires all schools which receive federal funds of any kind, including federally guaranteed student loans, to certify to the U.S. Government that the campus and workplace is in compliance with the law. This policy statement implements BST's commitment and the federal law within the BST community.

Unlawful possession, manufacture, use, dispensation, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol or abuse of drugs or alcohol by students, faculty, administration, staff, residents, and tenants is prohibited on any BST or GTU member properties or anywhere as any part

of any BST or GTU member school activities. As a condition of enrollment in BST or employment by BST, a member of the student body, faculty, administration, or staff will notify the institution of any criminal drug statute conviction occurring in BST no later than five days after such conviction. Any member of the student body, faculty, administration, staff, resident, or tenant who engages in conduct prohibited by this policy may be subject to immediate dismissal from the student's program of study, termination of employment, or cancellation of lease or other rental agreements as applicable.

The Personnel Officer will, in cooperation with the GTU and member schools, inform each member of the BST community of the legal sanctions which may be imposed upon violators of drug and alcohol laws under local, state, and federal laws; of the descriptions of the health risks associated with drug or alcohol abuse; and of the availability of drug and alcohol counseling, treatment and rehabilitation programs.

### **C.3 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

We want to assist all students. Please let us know if you have any special needs as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504. Students should contact the Registrar. The Registrar serves as the Disabilities Resource Officer (DRO) to begin the assessment process.

The GTU participates in a consortium-wide "Students with disabilities" policy which benefits from a collaborative arrangement with the University of California at Berkeley in extreme situations (effective, fall, 2006). The policy strives for consistent and equitable student access to educational opportunities throughout the GTU. In particular, it addresses a differently-able student's ability to fulfill degree and certificate course and program requirements.

The policy does cover GTU library use, student advising, GTU classroom activities and requirements, program exams, and capstone experiences such as theses and dissertations. It does not address extracurricular events sponsored by GTU member institutions, student housing, and administrative activities (e.g. registration, access to facilities, etc.).

The DRO verifies accommodation eligibility and recommends accommodation options based on consultation received from the student's physician(s). Eligibility verification and recommendations for accommodations are based on availability of institutional resources.

#### ***Student Request***

The student is responsible for fully participating in the process and exercising due diligence to ensure that the provision of accommodation is successfully accomplished. The differently able student who wishes to request accommodations with their academic

work submits a request form to the BST DRO (the form is available on [BST's website](#)). The student needs to include official written documentation with the form from a professional who has the credentials and expertise to diagnose the student's condition (form for this step is available on the BST website).

The student is responsible for incurring any cost associated with the documentation. The DRO informs the student's institutional contact that a request has been made and forwards the form and supporting documentation to the BST Students with Disabilities Program Office for review. The BST office judges whether the student's disability is eligible for accommodation and recommends a variety of accommodations.

Accommodations are not intended to give differently able students an unfair advantage, but to remove barriers that prevent differently able students from learning and from demonstrating what they have learned, in the context of their formal degree or certificate program.

### ***The Timing of a Student Request***

The differently able student should request accommodations in advance of when the accommodation is needed. The student needs to factor in the amount of time required to secure written documentation from an appropriate professional. The student needs to appreciate that the DRO and institutional contact person have other responsibilities and require a reasonable amount of time to integrate student requests within their workload. Students eligible for academic accommodations will normally have their request reviewed and, if appropriate, approved no more than three weeks after submitting the request.

### ***Decision***

The DRO works with the institutional contact to consider all data received. If the DRO recommends approval, the DRO works with the institutional contact to finalize accommodation options in the context of institutional resources and culture and to assure consistency and equity across the consortium. An accommodation is not "reasonable" if it will necessitate modifications of the essential nature of a program or activity or would place undue financial or administrative burdens on the institution.

Next, the institutional contact works with the student and appropriate faculty to make sure recommended accommodations can be implemented and do not compromise the academic integrity of the educational opportunity (a form for this step in the process is available on the BST website).

The DRO conveys the official decision and, if appropriate, recommended accommodations to the student by email, who then uses written confirmation to work with appropriate staff and faculty on the implementation of accommodations.

### ***Implementation***

Accommodations will apply to all educational events described in the DRO's email for up to three years. Students should use the DRO's email to work with faculty and staff to arrange accommodations as needed.

### ***Appeal***

The differently able student and/or faculty involved with the student may not agree with the DRO's decision for accommodations. If a faculty member disagrees with and/or refuses to provide the recommended accommodations, the DRO and institutional contact should work with the faculty member to resolve their concerns. If a resolution is impossible, the differently able student can seek remedy from the faculty member's school's academic grievance policy.

If a student disagrees with the DRO's decision and/or recommended accommodations, they can appeal the decision through their own school's academic grievance policy. Again, the DRO and institutional contact should work with the student first to find ways to resolve the student's concerns.

## **C.4 Policy for Background Checks for BST Applicants**

### ***Purpose***

Berkeley School of Theology is a Christ-centered school committed to preparing leaders for ministry in the the 21<sup>st</sup> century. BST partners with churches and local agencies to provide a thorough educational setting that is both theoretical and practical. The communities in which students learn and to which they are called to serve need to be safe places for all persons. Both for the sake of our mission and the larger mission of the Church, BST is committed to strengthening congregations in becoming safe places and to being a safe place itself for all students, staff, faculty, and associated individuals. In order to best fulfill these commitments, each MDiv and MCL applicant shall submit to a background check. All applicants shall authorize Berkeley School of Theology and any third party authorized by Berkeley School of Theology to conduct the background check by submitting a signed release form.

The Office of the Admissions is the administrative office responsible for the implementation of this policy on background checks. All records obtained as a result of a background check will be maintained in secure files in the Admissions office and will be held in strict confidence.

Failure to have indicated criminal convictions on application materials will put the student at risk for immediate dismissal based on false application.

This policy went into effect as of July 1, 2010, and applies to all entering, MDiv and MCL matriculated students in the year 2010 and forward.

### ***Content of Background Checks***

Students and applicants must undergo a background check by a reputable screening agency selected by the school. The background check will address a seven-year period including, but not necessarily limited to, a criminal history database search and a county record criminal check.

### ***Procedure for Background Checks: Applicants***

- . Applicants will be admitted pending the completion of a background check. In order to ensure the participation of all students in such a process, Berkeley School of Theology will have on file the results of such a background check for each student by the end of the first semester or applicable term in which a student has been admitted to a degree program.
- . Upon acceptance, applicants are notified that the background check is required. Applicants will sign a release authorizing the background check, including the release of the report to the school. Background checks will be conducted using a reputable screening agency selected by the school. Applicants will provide the information necessary to obtain the check (e.g., all names used, previous addresses, social security number).
- . An applicant's results will be maintained, in strict confidence, by the Office of Admissions. After completion of the admissions process, an applicant's results will be maintained in secure files in the Office of Admissions. Absent any adverse events in the background check, the results will be stored for three (3) years after the student leaves Berkeley School of Theology and will then be shredded.
- . In cases in which an adverse event is identified, a copy of the report will be given to the student within ten (10) business days of its receipt via an "Adverse Letter of Notification" and a required interview with the Academic Dean and one other member of the Admissions & Curricular Oversight Committee and/or the Director of Contextual Education will result. It is at this step that the applicant has the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of the information obtained in the report. Consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis of the (a) nature, circumstances, and frequency of offense, (b) length of time since the offense, and (c) documented successful rehabilitation.

- . Berkeley School of Theology reserves the right to take appropriate action, in its discretion, including but not limited to, a determination that (1) no further action is warranted, (2) further investigation is warranted, (3) the applicant may be denied admission. If the student is admitted to the school, it will be up to the discretion of the Academic Dean and the Director of Contextual Education to inform any future Ministry and/or Internship Supervisors of the results of the Background Check.
  
- . The student shall be notified within ten (10) business days of the interview with the Dean et al of any action to be taken.

### ***International Students***

International students and international applicants have a background check as part of their visa application and entry into the country. However, if an international student or international applicant has resided in the United States for more than two (2) years, they must submit to a background check in compliance with this Policy.

**Note:** Any identified misrepresentation, falsification, or material omission of information from the student’s application discovered during the background check process may result in the recommendation for dismissal of the student.

### ***Required Updates***

All applicants and students are required to update information in their background check file with the Office of the Academic Dean to reflect any criminal charges, convictions, non-routine motor vehicle citations (e.g. D.U.I., reckless driving, etc.), and/or any allegations of inappropriate conduct in the workplace, which occur subsequent to the date of the completion of the background check. Failure to update information will be cause for disciplinary action up to and including denial of registration or removal from the program.

### ***Amendments to Policy***

Berkeley School of Theology reserves the right to modify, amend, or terminate this policy at any time.

## **C.6 Use of Technology & Electronic Communications Policy**

### ***Statement of Policy***

BST is committed to providing an environment that encourages the use of computers and

electronic communications as essential tools to support the instructional, research, administrative, and other work or mission related activities of the Seminary. In utilizing the Seminary's computers and electronic communications systems, such as electronic mail, Moodle, and access to the Library and the Internet, it is important for all users to be aware of the Seminary's policy regarding responsible use. It is the responsibility of each user to ensure that this technology is used for proper and lawful purposes and in a manner that is responsible and does not compromise the confidentiality of sensitive information, the security of the Seminary's systems, or the reputation, policies or mission of the seminary.

### ***The Need for Computer and Internet Access as a Seminary Student***

Students enrolling in a seminary degree program should consider that obtaining a computer and reliable, high-speed-internet access is an integral part of their education expenses. Seminary education increasingly relies on and draws from the use of computers and the internet in the classroom and beyond. BST and the GTU provide limited access to computers in the student lounge at BST and in the library of the GTU. Students who face unique challenges in accessing computers and/or the internet should contact student services for assistance.

### **Responsible Use of Electronic Communication**

*(includes, but not limited to e-mail, instant messaging, chat, and threaded discussions)*

#### ***Students are Responsible for Regularly Checking Email***

Upon enrollment at BST, students will be assigned a BST email address ([name@ses.bst.edu](mailto:name@ses.bst.edu)).

***Students are responsible for checking this email address daily*** for official correspondence from the school, faculty, or from the Graduate Theological Union. Increasingly email is the only means of communication used by BST and GTU Faculty and staff. Students will be held responsible for being aware in a timely manner of any and all correspondence sent via email. Students can set up their ses.bst.edu email addresses so they will automatically forward all your email to the email address you use most frequently. Instructions for how to do this are included in the appendix of this handbook.

#### ***Electronic Communications should be used for School-related Purposes***

The principal purpose of electronic communication is to facilitate instructional, research, and other work- or mission-related communications by and among Seminary employees and students. While the Seminary permits reasonable personal use of electronic communication, such use must not disrupt the work of other users. Users should not use their student BST e-mail addresses to widely broadcast chain letters, bulk e-mail (or "spam"), or other non-seminary related messages.

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#### ***Standards of Confidentiality and Security must be Observed***

Communication that contains confidential information must be treated as confidential.

Users may not share Web Advisor or Moodle passwords, provide e-mail access to an unauthorized person, or access another user's account without authorization.

***Offensive, Demeaning, Harassing, Defamatory or Disruptive Communications are Prohibited***

Electronic communications, including on social networking sites associated with BST, such as Facebook, Twitter, and the BST Blog, should conform to the same standards of propriety and respect as any other verbal or written communication at the Seminary.

Offensive, demeaning, harassing, defamatory or disruptive messages are prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, messages that are inconsistent with the Seminary's Student Handbook guidelines and "Sexual Harassment Policy." Users who become aware of or receive prohibited messages should notify Computer Services. Inappropriate use of electronic communications may be grounds for discipline, up to and including dismissal from the Seminary.

***Anti-Virus Software must be Installed and Up to Date***

To prevent computer viruses from spreading within the BST network, all computers connected to the Network are required to have a current, up-to-date anti-virus application installed. It is the person owning the system's responsibility to purchase and maintain this software.

***Printing***

Standard printing is available from computers in the BST Computer Lab and in the GTU Library. The BST printers are made available as a convenience for students and are intended for reasonable printing projects for academic papers and assignments. These printers are not intended for personal use. Nor are they intended for large printing projects (for example, more than twenty-pages). In this latter case, students need to save a copy of the readings and have them printed at a local copy shop or at home.

***Moodle***

Moodle is an online course management system used by BST and all the schools of the Graduate Theological Union. Students who enroll in courses that use Moodle are responsible for enrolling in the electronic portion of the class within the first week of the course or prior to the first assignment due on Moodle, whichever comes first.

Instructions for enrolling in the online portion of the course will be given at orientation and in the first class session. Extensive help is available to students on the GTU website: <http://www.gtu.edu/library/students/moodle-help>.

When Moodle is employed in a course, it is considered to be an extension of the classroom. Students are expected to engage one another's work with respect and

professionalism. Postings and responses to Moodle forums should conform to the same standards of propriety and respect as any other verbal or written communication at the Seminary. Offensive, demeaning, harassing, defamatory or disruptive messages are prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, messages that are inconsistent with the Seminary's Student Handbook guidelines and "Sexual Harassment Policy."

Students should understand that anything they post to Moodle Forums would be visible to other students in the class. Students should consider one another's work confidential but should not have an unreasonable expectation of privacy. Assignments uploaded to Moodle (but not posted to forums) are visible only to Professors or other instructors for the course.

### **C.5 Title IX Policy**

Title IX refers to a section of the Education Amendments of 1972 law that prohibits sex discrimination in educational programs and activities at schools that receive federal financial assistance. Sex discrimination includes sexual harassment and sexual assault or violence, all of which are prohibited by the Berkeley School of Theology (BST).

#### ***BST Non-Discrimination Policy***

It is the policy of the Berkeley School of Theology not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, creed, marital status, registered domestic partner status, age, sexual orientation, national origin ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws in its educational programs, student activities, employment or admission policies, in the administration of its grant and loan programs, or in any other school-administered programs.

This policy complies with requirements of the Internal Revenue Service Procedure 321-1, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, and the Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments as amended. BST prohibits unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment and sexual violence and will respond to violations of Title IX by protecting the victim and conducting a prompt and thorough investigation.

As a community of scholars devoted to teaching, learning, and research, BST is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of all forms of harassment, exploitation, and intimidation. Every member from the BST community should be aware that such behavior is prohibited by law and school policy. BST will not tolerate sexual misconduct or harassment in any form, including acquaintance or date rape or violence, sexual assault, stalking or domestic violence. BST will take appropriate action to prevent, correct, and discipline behavior that is found to violate school policy or laws proscribing such activity.

### ***Title IX Coordinator***

BST has a Title IX Coordinator who is responsible for ensuring that BST complies with Title IX. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for investigating complaints of harassment, discrimination, and other sex-based complaints from students, staff, and faculty. The coordinator is also responsible for ensuring that BST community is properly trained on the importance of complying with Title IX.

The Title IX Coordinator has ultimate oversight responsibility for matters related to Title IX and has authority and the responsibility of ensuring that BST has policies and procedures in place that comply with the provisions of Title IX and other relevant laws and regulations.

Title IX Coordinator for BST:

Yvonne Watson  
Vice President and Chief Financial Officer  
2606 Dwight Way  
Berkeley, CA 94704  
(510) 841-1905 ext. 225  
[ywatson@BST.edu](mailto:ywatson@BST.edu)

### ***Sexual Misconduct and Harassment***

Sexual misconduct can include a wide range of behaviors, including sexual assault or harassment, partner violence, stalking, voyeurism, and other behaviors that have the effect of threatening another person. Not all misconduct involves sexual contact, as in the case of threatening speech or displaying photographs or other material of a sexual nature.

Many forms of sexual misconduct are also prohibited by federal law, including Title IX of the Higher Education Act of 1965, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2013, and California State laws. Violation of these laws could result in criminal prosecution, civil liability, and disciplinary actions by BST.

If you have been sexually assaulted, you are encouraged to call 911 and report it to the Berkeley (or your local) police Department. You should also report it to the Title IX Coordinator listed below.

### ***How to File a Complaint***

If you have a Title IX complaint, BST encourages you to report it directly to BST's Title IX Coordinator or to a BST Administrator who will contact the Title IX Coordinator.

### ***Confidentiality***

BST will make reasonable efforts to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the

Individuals involved in any report of alleged sexual misconduct or relationship violence to the extent possible and allowed by law. The Title IX Coordinator cannot guarantee confidentiality, however, and must evaluate any request for confidentiality in the context of the Seminary's responsibility to provide a safe and nondiscriminatory environment. In the event a victim requests confidentiality, BST's ability to respond to allegations may be limited.

### ***Accommodations***

In the event an individual has been the victim of prohibited conduct, BST will take appropriate, reasonable, and feasible actions to ensure the safety of the victim. These accommodations could include class reassignments, no contact letters and directives, removal of the perpetrator from the BST community, and changes to BST's policies, practices, procedures, and training to prevent sexual misconduct or discrimination.

### ***Retaliation***

BST prohibits retaliation against any person making a complaint of prohibited conduct, or against any person participating in the investigation of an allegation of prohibited conduct. Retaliation by any student, faculty, or staff member is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from BST and termination of employment.

### ***Where to Get Help***

If you have been the victim of a sexual assault or rape, you are encouraged to get to a safe place and seek help immediately. BST does not maintain any on campus counseling services, but there are other options available to you:

- Contact your health care provider
- Call 911 and report it to Berkeley (or your local) Police Department
  
- Contact BST Title IX Coordinator (510) 841-1905 ext. 225
- Bay Area Women Against Rape, [www.bawar.org](http://www.bawar.org) (510) 845-7273
- Alameda County Medical Center, Highland Hospital Sexual Assault Center, (510) 437-4688
- National Domestic Violence Hotline, (800) 799-SAFE (7233)
- National Sexual Assault Hotline, (800) 656-HOPE (4573)
- Stalking Resource Center, (202) 467-8700

## **C.6 Policy on Possession of Firearms**

*Adopted by BST Board of Trustees, October 25, 2014*

Berkeley School of Theology does not tolerate firearms on campus. Violators are subject to arrest and prosecution according to federal, state, and local laws.

### ***California State Law and Amendments:***

The California Gun Free School Zone Act of 1995 prohibited transportation and possession of firearms on school grounds or within school zones. This legislation and its amendments, chaptered in California Penal Code Section 626.9 states, in relevant part:

Any person who brings or possesses a loaded firearm upon the grounds of a campus of, or buildings owned or operated for student housing, teaching, research, or administration by, a public or private university or college, that are contiguous or are clearly marked university property, unless it is with the written permission of the university or college president...shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for two, three, or four years. Cal. Penal Code Section 626.9(h)

Similar prohibitions apply to the transportation and possession of unloaded firearms. Assembly Bill 2609, enacted in 1998, specified that the law applies to off-site seminary properties that may be a part of a central campus or contiguous to a campus, such as off-site student dormitories, campus apartments, staff and student on site houses.

The law also requires that the Seminary post a prominent notice of primary entrances to all clearly marked noncontiguous property stating that unauthorized transportation and possession of firearms on Seminary -owned or operated property is prohibited pursuant to California Penal Code Section 626.9. To comply with this new requirement, such President shall make arrangements to post appropriate signage at subject property.

In limited special circumstances, the President or his/her designees may grant written permission to an individual for lawful possession of a firearm on Seminary property. Law enforcement officers or security guards licensed to carry weapons do not need special permission. The President's staff shall work closely with University of Berkeley campus police and local police departments to identify those circumstances when permission is warranted, such as to university and seminary employees who may work in remote and potentially dangerous locations. Campus police departments are encouraged to develop measures promoting public safety for those instances where authorization is approved, including fingerprinting, weapon inspections and the institution of gun safety measures.

### **C.7 California State Authorization and Complaint Policy**

If you believe BST's administration processes or educational programs are compromised and not up to the required minimum standards, you may notify the State of California, Department of Consumer Affairs, Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education. An individual may contact the Bureau to file or review a complaint.

The Bureau may be contacted at:

Bureau of Private Postsecondary Education  
Suite 400  
2335 Capitol Oaks Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95883

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Telephone: (916) 431-6924  
Fax: (916) 431-1897  
Website: <https://www.bppe.ca.gov/>

## C.8 **State Authorizations**

State authorization is a regulation of the Department of Education that requires institutions offering online or distance learning programs to be authorized by each state in which the institution enrolls students (if such authorization is required by the state).

The Berkeley School of Theology is in a continuous process to comply with regulations pursuant to state authorization, including applying for and maintaining approval or exemption status for our online offerings in other states. While BST would like to make our online programs available to all students across the country, some states have enacted regulations that make it prohibitive for us to do so.

### Notice to Students Who Relocate

If, while enrolled in an online program with the Berkeley School of Theology, you relocate to a state in which we are not in compliance, you may lose eligibility to remain enrolled in your course of study.

Please speak with your program coordinator if you anticipate relocating while you are completing your degree. Prospective students who have not yet enrolled should consider this regulation prior to applying, especially if there is a possibility of relocating to a restricted state prior to program completion.

### ***States with which BST is Working***

Below is the list of states in which BST may enroll online students:

Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut\*, Delaware,  
Florida, Georgia\*, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky  
Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri,  
New Mexico, North Carolina\*, Texas\*, Wisconsin,  
New Jersey, Ohio Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee,  
Utah, Washington

### ***States with which BST is NOT Working***

Below is the list of states in which BST may not enroll online students:

Kansas, New York, Michigan, Puerto Rico, Virginia

### ***State Authorization Details***

#### **Connecticut**

Prospective students from Connecticut should contact the CT Office of Higher Education:

Emily Bjornberg – Senior Consultant, Academic Affairs  
Connecticut Office of Higher Education  
450 Columbus Blvd, Suite 707, Hartford, CT 06103  
860-947-1824 (office) [Emily.Bjornberg@ct.gov](mailto:Emily.Bjornberg@ct.gov)

## **Georgia**

Complaint/Grievance Procedure Addendum: The Minimum Standards state that institutions must provide the following: 1) Notification of right to appeal final institutional decision (of your institutional grievance procedure] to GNPEC. And 2) GNPEC contact information including agency name, phone number, and website link for the complaint form must be provided. That information is as follows: Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission (GNPEC), 770-414-3300, and the link for the complaint form is here: <https://gnpec.georgia.gov/student-resources/complaints-against-institution>.

## **North Carolina**

Exemption: Degree programs of study offered by Berkeley School of Theology have been declared exempt from the requirements for licensure, under provisions of North Carolina General Statutes Section (G.S.) 116-015 (d) for exemption from licensure with respect to religious education. Exemption from Licensure is not based upon assessment of programs quality under established licensing standards.

Disclaimer: North Carolina students are unable to enroll in the Masters of Community Leadership Program or any degree program offered at Berkeley School of Theology that is not listed as “Theology, Divinity or Religious studies.”

### Complaint Policy:

The State Authorization Unit of the University of North Carolina System Office serves as the official state entity to receive complaints concerning post-secondary institutions that are authorized to operate in North Carolina. If students are unable to resolve a complaint through the institution’s grievance procedures, they can review the Student Complaint Policy (PDF) and submit their complaint using the online complaint form at <https://studentcomplaints.northcarolina.edu/form>.

### For more information contact:

North Carolina Post-Secondary Education Complaints  
223 S. West Street, Suite 1800  
Raleigh, NC 27603  
(919) 962-4550

To file a complaint with the Consumer Protection Division of the North Carolina Department of Justice, please visit The State Attorney General’s web page at: <http://www.ncdoj.gov/complaint>. North Carolina residents may call (877) 566-7226. Outside of North Carolina, please call (919) 716-6000. En Espanol (919) 716-0058. If you choose to mail a complaint, please use the following address:

Consumer Protection Division  
Attorney General's Office  
Mail Service Center 9001  
Raleigh, NC 27699-9001

## **Texas**

BST does not offer in-person classes within the state of Texas, but does offer online classes to all residents.

### **C. 10 BST Student Council**

The purpose of the BST Student Council shall be to further the Seminary's mission by serving the student body primarily through the following activities:

- Foster a spirit of community and spiritual wellness within the student body.
- Coordinate and promote student-led activities, collaborate with Faculty and Administration as appropriate.
- Facilitate interaction between administration, faculty, and the student body.
- Address any areas of concern regarding BST student life, as outlined in the BST handbooks.
- Represent students in systemic but not individual areas of academic concern, as outlined in the BST handbooks.
- Seek to include members who are in every degree or certificate program.
- Assist BST Worship and Student Life Committee with worship or chapel services, as requested.
- Student Fees are paid to BST by students each semester for council activities and the benefit of the student body.
- Student Council treasury funds are used annually to offer a gift to graduating seniors, whether local or remote and occasional gifts of up to \$200 to BST students in need (application for need based gifts required). The BST Student Council as a whole will consider each application.

The application process includes the following:

- A one-page essay which includes what the need is for requesting assistance and how this gift will be utilized.
- The essay should include the student's contact information. i.e. first and last name, school and personal email address, phone number and mailing address. The students should let the council know the best way to communicate with them and the best way to send their gift, if approved.
- The student council meets monthly during the academic school year. If the student has an emergency need, they are asked to contact the Moderator.
- The application does not guarantee that a gift will be rewarded.

## **C. 11. Berkeley School of Theology Attendance and Withdrawal Policy**

### **Non-Attendance Taking Institution**

Berkeley School of Theology is designated as a non-attendance taking institution. The institution is not required by an outside entity (such as the institution's accrediting agency or a State agency) to take attendance. However, for program or course-specific attendance policies, students should refer to the instructor's syllabus. Each instructor has the right to establish their own attendance policy for a course. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw from classes if they choose not to continue. Merely not attending classes does not constitute an official withdrawal (please refer to the *Class Drop or Withdrawal* section of the student handbook). Failure to officially withdraw may result in the mandatory payment of tuition and fees and/or receiving a failing grade for the course. The institution reserves the right to administratively withdraw a student from classes due to non-attendance, in accordance with institutional policies.

### **Verification of Enrollment**

While Berkeley School of Theology is not required to take attendance regularly, we do have an obligation during the beginning of each semester, known as the Verification of Enrollment period. During this period, faculty are required to report on students who have never attended the class or shown evidence of participation in the course. Evidence of participation may include activities such as submitting assignments or engaging in class-related activities.

### **Instructor Attendance Policies**

Faculty members at Berkeley School of Theology may establish their own attendance policies, which must be clearly communicated to students and applied consistently. Instructors are responsible for maintaining accurate attendance records if they choose to implement an attendance policy. However, instructors may not drop students from a class based solely on poor attendance. Students who remain enrolled in a class, regardless of their attendance record, must be allowed to continue attending and take the final exam, even if their poor attendance has resulted in a failing grade.

### **Withdrawal from Classes**

It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw from any class they do not intend to complete. Simply not attending classes does not remove a student from the course roster or relieve them of the financial obligations associated with the course. Students should follow the official withdrawal procedures outlined in the student handbook to avoid any negative academic or financial consequences.

**Manual Updated August 2025**  
**Revisions and clarifications will be published as experience warrants.**  
**Updates to the Policy and Procedure Manual are**  
**distributed annually to all students.**