

Academic Policies

Student Academic Integrity Policy

Eastern Mennonite University fosters a culture where faculty, staff, and students respect themselves and others. In this culture, faculty, staff, and students gain confidence in their desire and ability to discover their ideas, construct new knowledge, and think critically about their own ideas and the ideas of others. In doing so, EMU community members grow as competent thinkers and writers.

EMU faculty and staff care about the integrity of their own work and the work of their students. They create assignments that promote interpretative thinking and work intentionally with students during the learning process. Honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility are characteristics of a community that is active in loving mercy, doing justice, and walking humbly before God.

At EMU, academic integrity means

- honesty in producing one's own work.
- use of documented course information and aids.
- submission of work that is one's own.
- honesty in representation of research results, one's credentials, and facts or opinions.
- honesty in use of technology, including cell phones and the Internet.
- honesty in acknowledging sources used in research and presented in papers and other assignments.
- honesty in establishing and maintaining the appropriate parameters of collaborative work.

Academic integrity includes

- using accurate quotations. When used, quotations are exact, word-for-word as they appear in the original document. Every quotation, including a short phrase or a single word if it is unusual, includes the required citation and quotation marks.
- using appropriate paraphrasing with documentation. Paraphrasing is more than rewording the original material. It must be nearly entirely in the writer's own words, using new phrases and synonyms. The writer may repeat technical terms. Place quotation marks around any exact words that are retained. The sentence structure should not be the same as in the source. In the paraphrase, do not add interpretations, ideas, and assessment that are not in the original source.
- documenting and citing work that was created for a previous assignment, whether for the current course or for another one.
- using appropriate documentation when using words from a class speaker, including the class instructor, in an assignment, i.e. cite professors' lectures.
- using common knowledge appropriately. Common knowledge is information that is easily observed, commonly reported facts (George Washington was the first president of the United States.), or proverbs. Common knowledge does not need to be cited, but be certain that these words are in the public domain. When in doubt, ask the professor.
- using a dictionary to produce original work in a second language. When using software like Google Translate, to translate words, sentences, or paragraphs from one's native language to the second language, the student is copying and not learning the language or applying skills learned in the classroom. Use a translation dictionary (i.e. English-Spanish, English-Bulgarian) to find the precise word or idiom needed to construct a sentence. Entries in a dictionary are more accurate than software that translates phrases and paragraphs. Professors would like to see your original work, not the work of a machine.

EMU defines plagiarism as occurring when a person presents as one's own someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source (adapted from the Council of Writing Program Administrators, 2005, www.wpacouncil.org).

Academic integrity violation for students may be evidenced as a:

Minimal Violation

A minimal violation of academic integrity codes includes doing the following without appropriate documentation:

1. using a minimal number of distinguishing words from a source.
2. rearranging the word order of a sentence.
3. producing a similar sentence or style from a source.
4. using an idea or argument from a source.
5. reproducing one's own work from a previous work.

(These items are adapted from "Westmont College Plagiarism Policy" (2002), www.westmont.edu.)

Substantial Violation

A substantial violation of academic integrity codes includes (but is not limited to):

1. cheating on a quiz, test, or exam.
2. copying or attempting to copy someone else's work, including paraphrasing or quoting a professor's classroom lectures, handouts, and presentations without appropriate documentation.
3. falsifying results and credentials, withholding data, misrepresenting facts.
4. using someone else's work as one's own work.
5. using quotations with no documentation.
6. using an online source by copying and pasting with no documentation. Online sources may appear free. In this case, *free* means economically free. While a source may not be paid for, it is to be used only for its specified use. A citation must be given if words, graphics, or ideas are used.
7. presenting material as one's own from a site that sells essays. Some of the papers-for-sale sites do have disclaimers that state the work must be cited. Remember, if a source can be found, the professor can also find it.

8. frequently committing minimal violations within a single document or repeatedly over time.
9. Assisting another student to cheat or to copy one's own or someone else's work without appropriate documentation.
10. Using Google Translator or other software to translate work from one's native language to the language of instruction and submitting the work as one's own work.

Undergraduate academic departments and graduate units are responsible for establishing right-of-use parameters for non-print materials (e.g. presentations).

Procedures (Graduate, Seminary, and Undergraduate)

When a student violates academic integrity values, the student and professor/advisor will work together to restore the student to community.

Procedures for Minimal Violations

When a first-time minimal violation is noted, the professor will use this as an opportunity to teach the student/s explicitly about academic integrity. A minimal violation should be reported to the respective dean's office using the Academic Integrity Violation form. When a second minimal violation occurs, either within the same class or in multiple classes with the same instructor, faculty will document this as a substantial offense using the Academic Integrity Violation form.

Procedures for Substantial Violations¹

At EMU, when academic integrity codes are violated to this level, the following procedure will be followed.

The professor will:

- notify the student of the violation.
- determine whether the student is guilty of the violation.
- contact the respective chair or program director's office to check on previous student violations in order to determine first, second or third offense.
- document the finding and the action either taken (First-time offense) or repeated (Second and Third-time offenses) on the Violation of Academic Integrity Record.
- meet with the student to obtain the student's signature, either acknowledging her/his violation or acknowledging discussion in which the professor explained the charges to the student. In the event that a student refuses to sign, the professor will document that the violation was discussed with the student and the student refused to sign. (Under some circumstances, the professor may want to request another professor present as witness. Students have the option to include a faculty or staff member, e.g. academic advisor, student life personnel, coach.)
- submit the Violation of Academic Integrity Record to the respective chair or program director. Copies are forwarded to the dean.

The dean will:

- for undergraduate students, inform the Vice President for Student Life of violations and actions taken.
- for all students, follow steps described below for Second and Third-time offenses.

The student will either:

1. accept the decision or
2. submit an appeal to the respective dean in writing within five (5) working days following notification of the Academic Integrity Violation report. Reasons for the appeal must be clearly stated and based on one of the following:
 - a. Significant and relevant new evidence,
 - b. Alleged procedural error that may have affected the decision, or
 - c. Unduly harsh and arbitrary consequences of the academic integrity violation.

On the basis of these factors, the dean will review the appeal and, in consultation with the course professor, make a decision to uphold or modify the academic integrity violation record. This decision will be communicated to the student in writing within five (5) days after the receipt of the appeal. The decision is final.

Each dean will maintain a database recording all violation of academic integrity reports. Reports of substantial violations will be kept as part of the student's permanent record, unless a report is withdrawn following appeal.

Consequences for Undergraduate Students

- **First-time substantial violation:** If a student cheats on a quiz, test, blog, forum, other online assignments, or exam or plagiarizes material in an assignment, assignment receives an F or 0 grade at faculty discretion. For an extreme first time offense, a professor may give the student an F for the course (e.g. essay taken from Internet, test answers from another source). At the discretion of the professor, educational and restorative outcomes could include enrolling in an Academic Integrity workshop, provided by EMU's Writing Program Director, revising and re-submitting the assignment.
- **Second-time substantial violation:** If the student repeats the above violation in the same or another course or commits another violation in the same or another course, a professor may give the student an F for the course, and the student may receive a Letter of Probation.
- **Third-time substantial violation:** If the student commits the violation for the third time, the professor may give the student an F for the course, and the student may receive a Letter of Indefinite Suspension/Disciplinary Withdrawal.
- Letters of Probation and Indefinite Suspension/Disciplinary Withdrawal will be sent by the dean of the school which houses the student's major.
- Upon re-enrollment and a subsequent violation, the professor may give the student an F for the course, and the student may be subject to a Letter of Dismissal at the discretion of the university.
- When a professor gives a student an F for the course, the student will not be allowed to withdraw from the course. The student is prohibited from attending class after the professor assigns the F grade. The course continues to apply towards the number of credits the student is pursuing that semester.

Consequences for Graduate Students

- **Educative violation:** At the faculty member's discretion, this first-time violation may be used for the purpose of instruction when a student plagiarizes any type of assignment (quiz, test, blog, forum, other online assignments, or exam or plagiarizes material in an assignment). At the discretion of the professor, grade consequences may occur and educational and restorative outcomes could include enrolling in an Academic Integrity workshop, provided by EMU's Writing Program Director, revising and re-submitting the assignment.
- **First-time substantial violation:** If a student cheats on a quiz, test, blog, forum, other online assignments, or exam or plagiarizes material in an assignment, a professor may give the student an F for the course (e.g. essay taken from Internet, test answers from another source) and the student may receive a Letter of Probation. When a professor gives a student an F for the course, the student will not be allowed to withdraw from the course. The student is prohibited from attending class after the professor assigns the F grade. The course continues to apply towards the number of credits the student is pursuing that semester.
- **Second-time substantial violation:** If the student commits the violation for the second time, the student may receive a Letter of Indefinite Suspension/Disciplinary Withdrawal. (See *Student Handbook*, University Policies.)

Faculty and staff who violate academic integrity codes are subject to review by the provost's office.

The graduate, seminary, and undergraduate units use this policy for processing academic integrity violations with the exception of student appeal (see above). This policy appears in yearly course catalogs; the *Student Handbook*; on graduate, seminary, and undergraduate websites; and at <z://provost/policies>. The Academic Integrity Policy flow chart is also available at <z://provost/policies>.

¹ Adapted from *American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (2007) Academic Dishonesty: Developing and Implementing Institutional Policy*

Responsible Party

The provost is responsible for this policy.

Policy Review

This policy is to be reviewed annually.

*Reviewed by Undergraduate Council, Graduate Council, and Faculty Senate
Approved by Academic Cabinet, March 25, 2009 and revised October 6, 2010
Revised by Academic Cabinet, February 26, 2013
Revised by Academic Cabinet, November 19, 2014
Revised by Provost's Council, December 16, 2015
Revised by Graduate Council, April 1, 2019 and approved by Provost's Council, April 10, 2015*

Registration

Registration dates for the beginning of each semester are designated on the seminary calendar. Registration happens after students meet with their assigned adviser and are given registration clearance. Dropping and adding courses can happen online up to the first day of the semester. After that students must work through the registrar's office.

Classification

A student who registers for at least 9 hours a semester shall be considered a full-time student and is classified according to the number of hours completed and recorded in the Registrar's Office at the beginning of the semester. Anyone taking less than 9 hours is a part-time student.

Credit Outside of EMS

Advance approval should be secured from the dean or associate dean of the seminary before enrolling for work in other institutions with the intention of transferring credit to Eastern Mennonite Seminary for graduation, keeping in mind that the majority of credits toward a degree at EMS must be earned at EMS.

Residency Requirement

The seminary recognizes the value of residential studies to students but also the convenience of distance learning courses and non-campus-based programs, such as conference-based pastoral training programs. In order to insure a quality seminary education, a minimum of one academic year with full-time enrollment (27 credit hours) is required on campus to earn a degree. And when deemed appropriate, residency course requirements can be met by face-to-face class experience with EMS professors in other locations. Transfer credit from non-traditional learning modes (e.g., distance learning courses) is limited to one academic year (27 credit hours).

Student Authentication Policy

While we recognize that it is very difficult to guard against all forms of student fraud while enrolled in an online course, the ultimate goal of EMU is to verify that the online student who is registered for a particular course is, in fact, the same student who is performing the work. To meet that goal we will do the following:

1. All online courses are required to have one synchronous video session at the beginning of the course.
2. Hybrid students are required to get a picture ID while on campus.

Video Conferencing Policy

In light of the fact that Seminary culture increasingly includes video conferencing, we need to have in place policies that will guide how video conferencing is used. Our goal is to both make it easier for students' to take courses and also make the instructor's experience work as smoothly as possible.

1. If any student has a legitimate reason why they must be absent from a particular class session and notifies the instructor in advance, video conferencing software may be used in place of in-person attendance.
2. With agreement from the instructor prior to the start of the course, students who reside at least 75 miles from campus may connect to the class sessions via video conferencing on an ongoing basis. Students need to keep in mind that connecting via video conferencing for 50% or more of class sessions will mean that the course does not count toward residency for their degree program.
3. Students using video conferencing are responsible to have appropriate technology and setting to connect by video and audio to class sessions without foreseeable interruption.
4. Faculty are encouraged to develop pedagogy that allows for video conferencing in each of their courses, and, as necessary, to set appropriate limits to the number of students per course connecting in this way and/or to the number of sessions students may attend via video conferencing.

Advanced Standing Credit for Study

In select cases, the seminary awards credit by examination, credit for noncredit study, or credit for studies that were completed as a professional certificate.

Students who feel they have competency in a seminary level course may, on an exceptional basis, receive advanced standing credit by examination. Determination of a student's competence will be made by appropriate written and/or oral assessment that the student has the knowledge, competence, or skills that would normally be provided by the specific course under consideration. This credit will not be automatically granted on the basis of ministerial or life experience or the content of undergraduate work but on the basis of an examination set by the professor of the course. The Dean's approval is required before an examination is arranged.

On rare occasions, coursework taken at a non-accredited study center will be evaluated by the Associate Dean to determine whether it can be considered as *credit for study*. With the submission of a certificate of completion and a recording fee, a student can request that such nontransferable credit be applied toward advanced standing provided at least 45 hours were invested per credit hour granted, faculty had the required credentials, the reading, writing and research projects were appropriately rigorous for graduate level studies and the content meets degree requirements. No more than one-sixth of the total credits required for a degree will be granted as advanced standing credit.

The seminary awards credit for Clinical Pastoral Education units offered by a CPE Center accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education other than EMS. With the submission of a CPE professional certificate of completion and the payment of a recording fee, a student will receive 6 semester hours of credit for a CPE unit applied toward the relevant degree at EMS.

Grading System and Quality Points

The seminary maintains both qualitative and quantitative requirements. Daily classwork, tests, examinations, attendance and attitude all enter into the determination of standing and credit. Since seminary students are working at the graduate level, it is expected that many will earn *A*'s and *B*'s. Grade *C* is minimally acceptable in that it reflects some deficiency. Therefore, consistent work at *C* level is inadequate for graduation. A grade point average of 2.50 is the minimum requirement for graduation from a degree program. This means that the average student will perform at the level of 2.50 GPA or above.

A- Superior performance; represents excellence in mastery of course objectives. Four quality points per semester hour.

B- Commendable performance; adequate fulfillment of course objectives. Three quality points per semester hour.

C- Marginal performance; represents some areas of deficiency. Two quality points per semester hour.

D- Inferior performance; may be given for course papers or projects but not as a final grade as this level of performance will be considered a failure to pass the course.

F- Failure to pass course. No quality points.

I- Incomplete. Each student is expected to complete all course work on time and to the satisfaction of the instructor. Incompletes will be allowed only in cases of emergency, when circumstances beyond the control of the student prevent completion of course requirements on time. An incomplete shall be requested one week before the end of the term and must be approved by the instructor and the associate dean of the seminary. An incomplete must be removed within six weeks after the close of the term in which it was obtained. A grade will be assigned based on the work completed.

P- Passed. Applies only to approved courses. No quality points.

SP- Satisfactory progress. Given at a terminal point in a unit course when it is impossible to give a graded rating. This is not a final grade.

W- Withdrawal. Indicates student withdrew from the course between the fifth and ninth weeks of the semester. No quality points.

A plus or minus behind the letter grade reflects some deviation from the middle of the grade category. These designations may be used by the instructor to distinguish more precisely the level of achievement.

Grade Appeals

A student who believes that a grade received for a course does not accurately reflect his/her achievement of course requirements and expectations should:

1. Confer with the teacher who assigned the grade, stating the reason(s) she/he believes a grade change is warranted.
2. If the teacher does not agree to change the grade, the student may appeal to the seminary dean. This appeal must state in writing the evidence the student believes indicates that a grade change is warranted. The dean's decision will be final.

All grade changes must be authorized by the person who agreed to the change and use the formal grade change process of the seminary registrar's office.

An appeal to any grade assigned between September 1 and December 31 must be initiated no later than February 15 of the following year; an appeal to any grade assigned between January 1 and May 15 must be initiated by July 1; and an appeal to any grade assigned between May 16 and August 31 must be initiated by October 15.

Graduation

Residence requirements are specified in each program description. Students expecting to graduate must file applications on official forms provided by the Dean's Office of the year in which the degree is to be conferred. Anyone choosing to walk in the commencement ceremony must plan to fulfill all degree requirements by the end of the summer term.

Course Expectation

Instructors will prepare a syllabus for each course describing its purpose, requirements, objectives and other appropriate information, such as bibliography and schedule. In general, 500 through 700 courses represent increasing levels of difficulty. Students may request to see course syllabi when making course selections. Such requests should be made to the Dean's Office.

The seminary has established the following guidelines for instructors to use in setting course requirements:

Research and Learning Projects

Daily assignments and/or a term project are assumed. However, the ratio of such work to reading and other requirements is arranged at the discretion of the instructor. Where term projects represent 50 percent beyond daily requirements, a guideline is 5-7 pages of double-spaced typed text per credit hour.

Reading

Assigned reading is expected in all courses. Where reading assignments constitute 50 percent of the total course requirements, the guide is 500 pages or 15 hours per credit hour.

Academic Probation

A student whose last 9 credit hours or cumulative GPA falls below 2.5 will be placed on probation for the next term. If sufficient progress is not made to remove the probation, continuation at seminary will be reviewed in Academic Committee where members of the Admissions Committee and an SCC student representative are also present. Three or more F's in an academic year will place a student on academic probation.

Adding and Dropping Courses

It is advantageous to be in attendance from the beginning of a course, but students may add a course through the sixth day of the semester (the Tuesday of the first full week of classes). A student is permitted to drop a course through the fourth week with that course not appearing on the permanent record. Courses dropped the fifth week through the ninth week of the semester are recorded as W (withdrawn). No change is permitted after the ninth week. The after the first day of the semester official drop/add requests must be made in the seminary Registrar's Office. During the summer term comparable dates for changes are in effect (see Student Handbook).

If a student does not receive a passing grade in a course which has not been officially dropped, F will be entered on the grade report and permanent record.

Attendance and Absences

Students are required to attend class meetings of all courses for which they are enrolled unless excused for satisfactory reasons. Work missed by late entrance or absence must be completed to the satisfaction of the instructor.

Excuses may be secured for sickness, funerals in the family and similar circumstances. Each faculty member is responsible for granting excuses. Students should not absent themselves from classes without clearance from their respective professors.

If absences persist, the seminary associate dean and Academic Committee may counsel the instructor on the student's class standing or determine the student's future enrollment status.

Study Time

Students should expect to spend 2.5 hours of study outside of class for every 1 hour of credit.

Outcome Assessment

The university reserves the right to require students to participate in institutional testing programs as part of ongoing assessment of student outcomes.

Student Advising and Assessment

Each student is assigned a faculty advisor who will assist in course selection and be available for general guidance and consultation. Advisors will seek to discern what areas of significant experience students bring with them that could impact course selection. The general process is for students to take core courses as listed in each degree program; adjustments recommended by the advisor can be made with approval from the associate dean.

The seminary faculty will work with students in a number of ways to evaluate their competency for ministry. The students will have the opportunity to do self-evaluation as well as to receive formative evaluation from faculty advisors. There are a variety of questionnaires and interviews faculty use to gather information which can be helpful to the student and the seminary for assessing both the students' competency in ministry formation and the seminary's role in that process.

Degree Candidacy

Normally when nearing the completion of 20 semester hours of work, the formative process leads to a decision on degree candidacy. For transfer students, degree candidacy isn't granted based on transfer credit. Degree candidacy represents a significant point of accountability in which the faculty together decide whether or not the student appears qualified to successfully complete a given degree program. The decision will be in the form of approval, approval with qualifications, or denial of degree candidacy. The decision is made in a regular faculty meeting.

Summative Evaluation

In the students' final year, the faculty also do a summative ministry competency evaluation or competency in their chosen field of study for students preparing to graduate and make a recommendation indicating readiness for ministry in a faculty meeting where SCC student representatives are also present. The recommendation is placed in a student's ministry file.

Moving from Certificate to Degree

A student who chooses to pursue the **General Theological Certificate** ([Certificate Program](#)) with the desire to pursue a graduate seminary degree should plan on the following sequence:

1. Admission as a certificate student with the intent of pursuing a degree
2. successful completion of the certificate (24sh)
3. presentation by adviser to the faculty as a degree candidate

Normally degree candidacy is discerned when seminary students have successfully completed 20 sh of course work. The general theological certificate student, in consultation with their adviser, may pursue degree candidacy at 20 sh through a letter of request to the seminary associate dean. Assuming faculty approval of degree candidacy, the certificate will be awarded when the requisite number of courses are successfully completed.

A student admitted into the **Graduate Certificate in Christian Studies** ([Certificate Program](#)) may transfer all successfully completed courses toward a master's degree if requested within two years of the completion of the certificate. The student will proceed through degree candidacy at 20 sh (**Degree Candidacy**).

Participation Audit

Students and community members may enroll in seminary classes (excluding courses in the Formation sequence) as participant auditors. The level of participation will be negotiated between the auditor and the course instructor. The participation fee is two-thirds the regular tuition rate. An audit designation will appear on their transcript. If a student chooses to complete all required coursework and get credit for a course previously audited, full tuition will be charged.

Senior citizens (65+) may audit a course with the permission of the instructor, at no charge.

Withdrawal from Seminary

A student considering withdrawal from EMS is asked to counsel with the associate dean or the dean of the seminary. They may be in a position to make suggestions which enable a student to remain in school.

Transcripts of Credit

Students desiring transcripts of credit should make written requests to the university Registrar's Office. There will be a \$7 charge for each copy. Cash settlement of accounts will be required for release of transcripts.

Assistance for Students with Special Learning Needs

Eastern Mennonite Seminary is committed to working out reasonable and acceptable arrangements for satisfactory completion of course requirements for students with learning difficulties. When the student or instructor becomes aware of such difficulties, the instructor may refer the student to the [Academic Success Center](#). In consultation with the student and the Academic Success Center, the instructor will develop reasonable and appropriate alternatives for course requirements which are directly affected by the disabilities. The student's advisor and the associate dean should be informed of these arrangements. In case of failure to reach agreement, the student may appeal to the Seminary Academic Committee.

Inclusive Language

Statement of Commitment

We recognize that all human beings are persons of infinite worth created equally in the image of God. Accordingly, we recognize that the language which we use to speak about each other is no negligible matter but one of crucial importance. The words by which we name and address each other are no less than the means by which we can recognize each other mutually as persons created in God's image, and the means by which we can empower each other mutually to live out the potential God has given each of us.

Eastern Mennonite Seminary is an institution dedicated to the task of “equipping persons for ministries in the service of the kingdom of God.” As teaching faculty we recognize the centrality of language to our task. We are equipping persons to communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ to the church and unchurched alike in our communities and around the world. And because our task is that of equipping communicators, we recognize the crucial importance of language, the words which we use, to proclaim the Good News which we wish to communicate. We therefore commit ourselves:

1. To work together and encourage our students toward greater inclusiveness in our language within the classroom setting:
 - in our syllabi
 - in our lectures
 - in our class discussions and student presentations
 - in the papers which we write and the sermons which we prepare
2. To work together and encourage our students toward greater inclusiveness in our language within the worship setting:
 - in our public address to each other and in our prayers
 - in our creation of litanies, worship responses, etc.
 - in our reading of Scripture
 - in our choice and in our use of hymns and other worship materials
3. To work together and encourage our students toward greater inclusiveness in our language within the administrative setting:
 - in our literature introducing and publicizing the seminary
 - in our in-house communications to each other
 - in our personal contacts with potential students
4. To work together and encourage our students toward greater inclusiveness in our language within the community setting:
 - in our personal contacts with each other in the EMS community
 - in the public context of our social gatherings

Class Privileges of Spouses

The spouses of full-time EMS students may attend classes in the seminary as visitors, with the permission of the teacher. Such attendance is on a non-credit, non-audit basis and is without registration, cost or credit. Registration and payment of tuition are required to receive credit. Spouses are invited and encouraged to participate in other seminary activities such as chapel and colloquiums.

Privileges of Senior Citizens

Eastern Mennonite Seminary welcomes senior citizens, 65 years of age and older, to visit classes, with the permission of the instructor, on a non-credit basis. Individuals who would like access to course materials through the learning management system (Moodle) are asked to register to audit the course.