

Advising FAQs for Masters' Level Work at ATS

Q: *How do I find out who my advisor is?*

A: This information may be obtained through your [WebAdvisor](#) account (choose <Academic Profile><My Profile>) in about the middle of your first quarter. Questions about advisor assignments should be directed to the registrar.

Q: *Am I required to meet with my academic advisor?*

A: Although you are not technically required to meet with your academic advisor, one has been assigned to you in order to help you traverse the path of your seminary journey and avoid obstacles and pitfalls. It is highly recommended that a student have an advising session at least once a year. Please [contact](#) your academic advisor.

Q: *Who is available for academic advising?*

A: The coordinator of academic support services is also available for academic advising.

Q: *How can I get the forms I need from the registrar's office?*

A: Electronic copies of almost every form are available at the [registrar's web page](#). Paper copies are also available in the registrar's office in the lower level of the [seminary's administration building](#).

Q: *What GPA (grade point average) am I required to maintain while in seminary?*

A: The overall seminary policy is that students must maintain a cumulative average of at least 2.0. However, individual degree programs may require a higher GPA to remain in their programs. Students who are below the required GPA for either the seminary or an individual degree program will be placed on academic probation and will be in danger of dismissal. **Be aware that the university financial aid requirements may be higher than the seminary requirements, meaning that you may be allowed to take classes, but you might not receive financial assistance to do so based on your GPA.**

Q: *Do I have to attend new student orientation?*

A: All new students are required to attend the general seminary orientation as well as any orientations provided specifically by program (for instance, all counseling programs offer a specialized orientation). Students are held accountable for the information presented at the orientation sessions and in the orientation packets.

Q: *What is the difference between dropping a class and withdrawing from a class?*

A: Dropping a class is only allowed during the first two weeks of the quarter. If the class has been attended, tuition is prorated based on attendance. See the refund policy in the [Student Handbook](#). Withdrawing from a class may be done up until the last day of a class with the professor's permission, but the student is still responsible for paying the tuition and course fees.

Q: *When and how can I drop or add a class in my schedule?*

A: The add/drop deadline for each quarter is posted on the [seminary calendar](#). It is usually two weeks from the date classes started for the quarter. A registration change form should be submitted to the registrar's office for any class(es) added or dropped.

Q: *Can I repeat a course in order to attempt to raise my grade?*

A: A student may repeat any course in seminary. Both the original and the new course grade will appear on the transcript, but the original course grade will not be calculated in the GPA.

Q: *What should I do if I am failing a seminary course currently in progress?*

A: Students who are struggling in a course should consult with the class professor to determine if any additional class work may be done to put the student in better standing. There is also the possibility of finding a tutor to help you understand course materials. To find a tutor, check with the course professor for recommendations, consult with the coordinator of academic support services, or advertise on your own. Please note that arrangements for the scheduling of and remuneration for these tutors is left to the responsibility of the student. Students who are in danger of failing a class may also desire (perhaps even be required) to meet with the academic dean.

Q: *What do I do if a class I want or need is full?*

A: You may request that the registrar add you to a waiting list if any spaces become available in the class. You may also find that the course is offered at another time or at another seminary location. Finally, you may be able to take the class in another quarter.

Q: *How far back can my grades be changed?*

A: After the deadline for grades has past, changing of grades is at the discretion of the professor of your class and the academic dean.

Q: *How can I change my degree program while at seminary?*

A: The form for changing your degree program is available from the [registrar's office](#). However, there is no guarantee that you will be accepted into a different degree program just because you are currently a seminary student. You must have approval from the department into which you wish to transfer before making such a change. Even within the same department, such as counseling, you may be required to complete admission requirements for a specific degree. Final approval is made by the academic dean. Please contact the department chair of the degree program in which you are interested.

Q: *What happens if the curriculum and/or requirements for my degree program change while I am in the process of taking a degree at the seminary?*

A: When you are admitted to the seminary, you come in under the catalog which is current at that point in time and you are guaranteed availability of your program while you attend seminary. However, there are often advantages which new degree programs offer and you are always offered the opportunity to switch to a new catalog and its corresponding degree programs. If you do switch programs, it may extend your time at seminary in order to fulfill different requirements.

Q: *How many course credits can I receive for a lecture series and when and how do I register for it?*

A: Most lecture series are offered for both 2 and 4 credit hours, depending on the amount of course work you are willing to do. If you are taking a lecture series for a credit, you should register with the registrar's office at least two weeks before it starts.

Q: *May I take a course as a Pass/Fail option?*

A: (From the seminary catalog): "Students may designate one non-core, non-concentration course in each level (junior, middler, senior) of their academic program as pass/fail. These courses would apply toward graduation requirements but would not affect grade point average. Students are required to declare the pass/fail option at registration and may not change after the drop/add deadline."

Q: *How does a Pass/Fail grade affect my GPA?*

A: Although courses taken as pass/fail count toward graduation requirements, they do not affect grade point average.

- Q: *How long do I have to complete the requirements for I (Incomplete) and E (Extension) grades?***
A: An incomplete must be changed to a grade within 30 days from the beginning of the following quarter. An extension must be changed to a grade by the end of the following quarter. After the deadline for either an I or E grade passes, the course grade will automatically be changed to an F.
- Q: *Can I get credit toward my degree at ATS for other master's degree courses I have taken?***
A: You may be able to get credit for other master's level work if: 1) the courses are pertinent to your degree, 2) the courses are from an accredited institution, 3) your degree program has room for these credits to be transferred, and 4) your grade(s) for the course(s) are adequate (at least a B-). Decisions regarding transfer of credits are made by the academic dean and/or the director of admissions.
- Q: *Will the courses I have completed at ATS transfer to other graduate schools?***
A: Because Ashland Seminary is accredited with the Association of Theological Schools, courses taken here should readily transfer to other graduate level programs provided the following: the student has achieved an adequate grade in courses as determined by the receiving school, the course content sufficiently matches the courses under consideration for transfer credit, and there is room for course credits within the considered degree program. The final determination about which credits a student may transfer to another graduate school is at the discretion of the receiving institution.
- Q: *If I have already completed an undergraduate course which is similar to one at the seminary, can I get credit for that course or test out of it?***
A: Although you will not be able to receive graduate-level credit for an undergraduate course, you may be able to test out or be individually considered for a higher level course at the academic dean's discretion. This option allows every student to be able to gain greater knowledge while at seminary. The exam for testing out of a course is held prior to the fall quarter each year. Arrangements for the test are made with the registrar. Advanced placement testing can only be done prior to matriculation.
- Q: *Can I get credit for life experience (e.g., years of pastoral service)?***
A: No. Ashland Seminary's accrediting agencies do not allow us to offer such credits.
- Q: *What is the difference between a part-time and full-time student?***
A: For financial aid purposes, you are considered full-time if you take 8 or more credits per quarter. However, for the purpose of seminary tuition billing, there is a comprehensive fee (an overall reduction per course) for students taking between 10 to 16 credit hours per quarter, which is considered full time.
- Q: *What is the difference between directed and independent study of a course and how do I register for such a course?***
A: A course taken as a directed study is one which is listed in the catalog but which a student pursues with the guidance of a professor outside of classroom time. An independent study is an opportunity for a student to design a course which is not listed in the catalog in order to pursue specialized research interests. Both independent and directed study courses must have approval of the overseeing professor and the academic dean and the courses must be applied for on the appropriate form available through the registrar's office. There is an additional \$100 fee for each directed and independent study that a student takes.
- Q: *How many courses may I take as either directed or independent study?***
A: (From the seminary catalog): "An M.A. student is limited to three Independent or Directed Studies courses. An M.Div. student is limited to four Independent or Directed Studies courses."

Q: *How do I determine what load of courses to take?*

A: The answer to this question varies widely, but there are certain factors to help you determine your course load. Take into consideration your job, family, and church responsibilities to determine how much time you will be able to allot to seminary studies. The general rule is to plan on about 3 hours of outside class work for every hour spent in class. This means that you should plan on spending an average of about 10 to 12 hours per week for each 4 credit course. It is true that some course loads are heavier than others. Your academic advisor can help you determine a course load which is appropriate for you.

Q: *Can I take more than 4 classes per quarter?*

A: You may take more than 4 classes per quarter if you have the academic dean's permission. Be aware that there is an additional tuition charge for taking more than 4 classes in a quarter for credit.

Q: *Is there a certain order in which I should take my classes?*

A: There are several courses which require a prerequisite, which will be denoted as such in the [seminary catalog](#). A student who desires to complete a degree program within the minimum allotted time should ideally follow the conspectus of courses in the catalog. Certain degrees require a student to participate in a cohort program at a certain point in their time here. Beyond this, which courses you take each quarter is primarily up to you, although there are certain courses which will be most beneficial and effective at a certain time during your degree program. Your academic advisor can help you plan a schedule that is best for you.

Q: *If I transfer from one degree program to another within the seminary, will I get credit for the courses I have already taken?*

A: You will certainly get credit for all completed courses which are required in both degrees. Beyond this, many degree programs allow for elective credits, so many of your non-required courses may be credited there. (The number of elective credits you may receive depends on each degree program, so consult the seminary catalog.) You may even be able to get credit for other courses which do not fit either of the above descriptions if the course content allows for it. All of these issues should be directed to the academic dean's office for final approval.

Q: *What do I do if I want to take a break from classes for a quarter (leave of absence)?*

A: It is recommended that a leave of absence be approved by the academic dean and notice given to the registrar.

Q: *How often are classes rotated at each location?*

A: Ashland is on a 1 year rotation, Detroit is on a 2 year rotation, and Cleveland and Columbus are on a 3 year rotation. This means that most non-core classes are only offered once a year, every other year, and every third year, respectively. More specialized courses are offered on a less frequent basis as demand and schedule dictate. Students who expect to graduate within a certain timeframe should take course availability into account when planning their own schedule of classes during their seminary career.

Q: *How can I know what specific courses are offered in each location?*

A: The seminary publishes its annual [schedule of courses](#) (covering classes from the fall through the following summer) in the spring of each year. Many courses are offered on a rotation basis (once a year, every other year, or every third year), especially at the extension sites. Your academic advisor and the academic dean's office can help predict the scheduling of future courses, as necessary.

Q: *Will courses taken as directed study count toward my on-campus requirement?*

A: No.

Q: ***Once I complete a certificate program at the seminary, can I go on to pursue a master's degree?***

A: You may be considered for master's level work as a special student status, so you will want to perform well in your certificate program due to the high level of competition for these spots. (At any given time, no more than 10% of students in a degree program can be "special student status." Therefore, the number of students admitted with special student status varies from year to year.) Please note: Credits earned in a certificate program cannot be transferred into a master's degree program.

Q: ***Do I need to apply for graduation?***

A: Yes. Every student who expects to graduate must apply for graduation. The deadline to apply is typically prior to the quarter before one expects to graduate (check the [academic calendar](#) for the specific date). There is an application fee of \$100 for students applying for graduation.

Q: ***May I take the Formational Prayer Seminar for credit?***

A: The [Formational Prayer Seminar](#) (offered by the Institute of Formational Counseling) may be taken as an independent study for 4 credits with prior approval from the director. Be aware, though, that you must pay the seminar fee plus the course fee and any additional fees required for taking the course as an independent study. Contact the office of the [Institute of Formational Counseling](#) for more information.

For EMERGE students:

Q: ***Where must I take my non-EMERGE classes?***

A: You must take all your non-EMERGE courses at the Ashland main campus.

For United Methodist students:

Q: ***When should I take the courses specific to the United Methodist denomination?***

A: If you are planning to graduate from the M.Div. program in 3 years and are in the ordination track, you must take the Methodist course offered each fall quarter.

Q: ***As a United Methodist student, how many classes do I have to take on the main Ashland campus?***

A: You must take at least 50% of your courses at the main Ashland campus.

For Brethren students:

Q: ***When should I take the courses specific to the Brethren denomination?***

A: If you are planning to graduate from the M.Div. program in 3 years and are in the ordination track, you must be sure to complete the three Brethren courses (Doctrine, History, and Polity & Ordinances) offered in the spring and summer quarters.