



Franciscan School of Theology  
at the UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

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## Academic Policies

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## INTRODUCTION

These *Academic Policies* supplement the Franciscan School of Theology catalog, which is the primary source for information about academic policies. The policies were developed from the norms and regulations of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and the Western Association of Colleges (WASC), the two agencies that accredit FST. Students will be promptly informed of any changes to published policies.

### Curricular and Service Affiliation with the University of San Diego

The Franciscan School of Theology enjoys a curricular and service affiliation with the University of San Diego, which applies to all incoming students. The agreement makes available to FST students multiple services of the University, access to the [Copley Library](#), and for students enrolled in degree programs, a number of courses that may be taken in the University's graduate programs, including courses offered at the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, the School of Leadership and Education Sciences, and other masters' degree programs.

### Degree Programs

The Franciscan School of Theology offers degree programs to serve the ministerial and academic needs of our students. For specific information about the scope and requirements of these degree programs, consult the current FST Catalog.

- **Master of Arts (MA).** The MA degree is a two-year academic degree designed for students preparing for teaching at the secondary level or in two-year college programs. The MA also serves as an appropriate graduate research degree in preparation for a doctoral program. The FST Master of Arts degree allows for specialization in the area of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition, especially its theology, history and spirituality. Such a specialization is useful for those preparing to work in programs of religious formation, in translation and publication of theological and historical texts, and preparation of printed and electronic resources to enhance awareness of significant authors, texts and themes of the Franciscan Tradition.
- **Master of Theological Studies (MTS).** The MTS is a two-year academic degree providing a breadth of theological understanding for general education purposes. One major function of this degree is to strengthen the religious basis for the student's life or work in a secular career or in church ministry.
- **Master of Divinity (M.Div.).** The M.Div. is a three-year professional degree, preparing students for Church ministry. It offers appropriate preparation for those intending to serve in lay ecclesial ministries. Those preparing for ministry as priests complete the MDiv degree and enhance it with the Certificate in Priestly Formation. (See below.)

### Degree Program Time Limits

- **MA/MTS.** Students in the MA or MTS program must complete all requirements for the degree within four years of the first semester of registration after acceptance into a program.
- **M.Div.** Students in the M.Div. program must complete all requirements for the degree within

six years of the first semester of registration after acceptance into the program.

## **Non-Degree Programs**

Those students who wish to study at FST, but who are not interested in pursuing a degree may enroll as non-degree students. Non-degree students may not take classes at the University of San Diego.

### **Certificate in Priestly Formation**

Those seeking ordination in the Roman Catholic Church will be required to earn a Master of Divinity plus a 19.5-unit Certificate in Priestly Formation in the sciences and skills necessary for ordination. Note that completion of the M.Div. and Certificate does not entitle the recipient to ordination. Admission to ordination is the decision of local diocesan ordinaries or superiors of religious orders who may have further requirements or expectations.

### **Certificate in Theological Studies**

The Certificate in Theological Studies recognizes graduate-level coursework in theological disciplines for students not receiving an FST graduate degree. To earn a Certificate in Theological Studies, students must:

- Enroll in FST under the status of a Special Student
- Complete 24 semester units for a letter grade (12 of which must be from FST, no more than 3 units may be from an online course, and only 3 units from a Special Reading Course)
- Complete all course work within three academic years
- Maintain an overall 3.0 grade point average
- Complete at least one major paper for a course in an area of special interest

International students seeking to fulfill requirements for a year of study abroad may qualify for this program.

In the event that a student completes all the coursework for the M.Div. or MTS degrees, but withdraws before completing the final synthesis project or thesis, the student may request a Certificate in Theological Studies. At the discretion of the Academic Dean, and in consultation with the faculty, FST may grant the Certificate in Theological Studies.

### **Future Degree Students**

Students who intend to pursue a degree but have not yet selected a program may enroll as non-degree students in order to begin taking basic courses. Up to 24 credits may be transferred to a degree program.

### **Individualized Programs**

FST offers individualized programs consisting of one or more semesters of course work taken outside a degree or certificate program. Religious men and women, priests on sabbatical, and those wishing to pursue courses for personal growth, theological enrichment, or to update theological thought and practice may participate in the individualized program. Courses may be taken for credit or on an audit basis.



### **Clare of Assisi Scholar Program**

Graduates of FST may audit one class per semester with the permission of the professor for a reduced fee.

### **ACADEMIC ADVISING**

Upon admission to FST, students are assigned a faculty advisor to assist in selecting courses that fulfill the requirements of their degree programs, and to provide other academic consultation. Advisors are chosen with a student's degree program and educational goals in mind.

## **ADMISSIONS**

### **FST Application Requirements**

All applicants to degree programs must submit a completed Application for Admission consisting of:

- Application form
- Statement of purpose
- Application fee
- Official transcripts of all previous academic work
- Three letters of academic or ministerial recommendation from present or former supervisors or professors

Applications are available from the Admissions Office or can be downloaded from the website.

**Non-degree applicants** submit the above, but only one letter of academic or ministerial recommendation from a present or former supervisor or professor.

### **Special Requirements for MDiv Applicants**

- Applicants to the MDiv program are required to have nine undergraduate semester credit hours in philosophical topics, for example, history of philosophy, ethics, and systematic philosophy. Candidates who wish to pursue the M.Div. degree, but feel they do not meet this criterion should contact the Academic Dean.
- Non-TOEFL students must take the GRE.

### **Special Requirements for Certificate in Priestly Formation Applicants**

Applicants to the Certificate in Priestly Formation program must present:

- A letter of approval from their ordinary or religious superior
- A certificate of completion issued by the applicant's ordinary or religious superior stating that the applicant has taken a minimum of 30 semester credit hours of undergraduate philosophy or its equivalent as prescribed by the USCCB Program for Priestly Formation

### **Special Requirements for International Applicants**

In addition to the application elements listed above, international students must:



- Demonstrate the ability to speak, read, and write English either by TOEFL score, by successful course work in English at an accredited college or university, or by another measure deemed acceptable by the Academic Dean
- Supply official translations of transcripts written in a language other than English
- Submit a financial declaration in US dollars attesting to the availability of funds sufficient to cover personal and academic expenses for the duration of their stay

### **Association of Theological Schools (ATS) Standards**

FST adheres to the requirements regarding admission to post-baccalaureate degree programs published in *Degree Program Standard ES 7.1.1-7.1.4, 2012* by the Association of Theological Schools of the United States and Canada, specifically:

- **Admission of Students with Baccalaureate Degree.** Students must possess a baccalaureate degree from an institution of higher education accredited by a US agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, or approved by a Canadian provincial quality assurance agency, or the demonstrated educational equivalent of a North American baccalaureate degree

Educational equivalency for a baccalaureate degree shall be determined by the institution. The institution shall demonstrate that its means for determining equivalency requires formal post-secondary education consisting of general and specialized studies comparable to the baccalaureate degree.

- **Admission of Students without Baccalaureate Degree.** Persons admitted without possession of the baccalaureate degree or its educational equivalent shall possess the knowledge, academic skill, and ability necessary for post-baccalaureate studies. Admission of such applicants should be restricted to persons with life experience that has prepared them for theological study at the graduate level. An institution admitting persons without a baccalaureate degree or its educational equivalent shall demonstrate that its process and criteria for evaluating academic ability are educationally appropriate and rigorous.

### **Application Deadlines**

FST has rolling admissions for its MTS, MDiv, and non-degree programs.

### **Proof of Admission**

Only a written notice from the Academic Dean is valid proof of admission to the Franciscan School of Theology.

### **Registration**

#### **Schedule of Classes**

A clearly identified schedule of FST classes is available on the USD website. Courses are referenced by discipline, faculty, course title, time, and location. The listing is updated constantly and provides the most accurate information.

#### **Registration Periods**

Registration for fall semester begins mid-term of the previous spring semester, and at mid-term of



the fall semester for the following spring. The specific dates for each academic year are posted on the Academic Calendar.

### **Changes in Enrollment**

Students making changes in enrollment (adding a class, dropping a class, changing units or grading option) will be assessed a fee for each change after the end of the second week of classes. No change of enrollment will be permitted after the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the term, except under circumstances approved by the Academic Dean.

### **Registration Holds**

Students who have unpaid library fines, unpaid tuition, or any other indebtedness to FST or the University of San Diego will not be permitted to register for the following semester.

### **Intersession Courses**

FST students enrolled full time in Fall semester may take 1.5 credits during intersession at no charge.

### **Tuition and Fees**

All student accounts are due on or before the first day of classes each semester. Accounts may be paid in cash, check, or money order. Because of the high processing fees, FST does not accept credit cards for payment of tuition and fees.

If full payment of current tuition and fees by the first day of classes is not possible, students must make a payment plan arrangement with the Chief Financial Officer at the beginning of each semester.

Unpaid balances cannot be carried over from semester to semester. Any unpaid balances will be subject to finance charges and collection procedures. Students with unpaid balances will not be permitted to register for the following semester. Diplomas or transcripts will not be issued unless all accounts are paid in full. Students must pay all published fees. No fees will be waived.

Tuition will be refunded at the following rates for students who formally withdraw from FST or from individual courses. Other fees will not be refunded.

Through first week of semester	100%
Through second week of semester	75%
Through third week of semester	50%
Fourth week of semester and beyond	no refund

### **Leave of Absence**

Students who intend to interrupt their studies must request an official Leave of Absence for each semester from the Academic Dean. Normally academic leaves are not granted for more than two consecutive semesters. Students who neither register for classes nor request an official leave for a given semester may be required to reapply for admission before resuming their studies.



## ACADEMIC STATUS AND CREDITS

### Full-Time Enrollment

Nine units per semester is considered full-time enrollment. Twelve units per semester is the maximum credit load allowable without special permission from the faculty advisor and the Academic Dean.

### Transfer Credits

At the discretion of the Academic Dean, up to one year's course work (24 credits) from another comparable graduate institution may be transferred provided the student earned at least a B, and the course has not been used as credit toward any other degree. To request transfer credits, complete a Request to Transfer Courses and present it to your faculty advisor and the Academic Dean. Upon approval from the Academic Dean, the Registrar will apply the transfer credits to the student's transcript.

### Non-Degree Students

Non-degree students who eventually enroll in a degree program may request that up to 24 credits be applied to the degree program.

### Auditing Courses

Students may audit courses instead of enrolling for credit with the permission of the professor. Auditors have the same privileges as students who take courses for credit, but they are not held to final examinations, and do not receive a final grade or credit. The fee for auditing a class is full tuition.

### USD Cross-Registration

Student enrolled in degree programs may cross-register in graduate-level courses at USD with a maximum of 13.5 USD semester credits for MTS students, and 19.5 for MDiv students.

## COURSES

### Course Syllabi

At the initial class meeting, professors distribute a written course syllabus describing the goals and objectives of the course, the principal requirements including papers, reports, required reading, and examinations. This does not preclude the addition of other later assignments at the discretion of the professor.

### Class Scheduling

Once class schedules are finalized, classes meet at the published times and places. In exceptional circumstances, faculty members may request changes from the Academic Dean.

## Core Courses

Core courses are those identified by topic (such as, Introduction to Old Testament) that FST requires for a specific degree program as published in the FST catalog for the MTS and MDiv degrees. Core courses must be taken for a letter grade.

## Special Reading Courses

**Note:** This section excludes courses with enhanced requirements for a higher course level (“bump-up courses”), Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), and MA in-thesis registrations.

Special reading courses are designed with a professor to meet needs and goals of a student not covered by regularly offered courses. They may not be used to fulfill core requirements without permission from both the faculty advisor and the Academic Dean.

- **Professors.** FST professors may teach up to two special reading courses per semester. Course Scheduling forms for special reading courses must contain a full bibliography and indicate the minimum number of meetings with the student. For non-core curricular courses, at least ten class meetings of forty-five minutes each (or the equivalent) must be scheduled.
- **Students.** Students may take only one special reading course per semester. In the course of a two-year program, only two special reading courses may be taken; in the course of the three-year MDiv program, three may be taken.

## MTS Thesis Requirements

By the end of their second semester of study, MTS students must select a thesis director and a second faculty reader, prepare a thesis proposal, obtain approval from the Academic Dean, and negotiate commitments and schedules with the director and reader. The *MTS Thesis Guidelines*, available from the FST registrar or on the FST website, contains further details for this process and the preparation of the thesis.

## STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

### Satisfactory Academic Performance (SAP), Probation, and Dismissal

An overall 3.0 or “B” average is required to achieve satisfactory academic progress. Students falling below an overall “B” average in any semester will be placed on academic probation by the Academic Dean in discussion with the student and faculty advisor. Satisfactory work in subsequent semesters will result in the student’s removal from academic probation. Failure to show sufficient improvement may result in dismissal, which will be determined by the Academic Dean in consultation with a faculty committee.

### Class Attendance

Students are expected to attend classes regularly, and to inform professors with a phone call or email if they must miss a class.



## Tardy Work

Faculty members will inform students of their policy regarding accepting tardy work during the opening week of classes.

## Cheating and Plagiarism

Students are expected to submit only work that is their own, and to acknowledge materials consulted in preparing all assignments. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Professors have the right to sanction students for cheating or plagiarism by requiring revision of course work, and/or by means of the course grade, whether for a specific assignment or for the entire course. All incidents of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the Academic Dean. Cheating or plagiarism may result in dismissal, which will be determined by the Academic Dean in consultation with a faculty committee.

If a student is suspected of plagiarism in a course taken at the University of San Diego, the following protocol will be followed:

1. The faculty member teaching the course will notify his or her dean that an FST student is suspected of plagiarism.
2. The USD dean will notify the dean of FST that the student has been suspected of plagiarism.
3. The USD faculty member will follow the USD policy in regard to possible consequences within the context of the course (for example, failing grade on the assignment, failing grade for the course). See the USD website for the Office of the General Counsel, *USD Policy Manual 4.8 Academic Integrity: College of Arts & Sciences, School of Business Administration, School of Leadership and Education Sciences, School of Nursing and Health Science, School of Peace Studies, School of Engineering*.
4. FST will be responsible for following its own policy as stated above in regard to possible consequences beyond the context of the course (eg, warning, academic probation, expulsion).

## Grading

Professors are responsible for assessing, and supporting the competencies and progress of students using various approaches such as discussions, written assignments, projects and adequate testing. At the end of each semester, faculty enter final grades into the Banner system by the date indicated by USD.

In case of an error in filing a grade, faculty obtain a *Change in Grade* form from the Registrar, complete it showing both the incorrect grade and the new one, get the approval of the Academic Dean, and submit it back to the Registrar for correction in the Banner system.

The following grading system is in effect at FST:

GRADE	GRADE POINT
A+	4.0
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0

B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7

- **Pass/Fail.** With the permission of the Academic Dean an elective course may be taken pass/fail. A grade of “P” (pass) is considered “B” work or better. Work below “B” is considered fail. Core courses may not be taken pass/fail.
- **Incomplete Work.** Students are expected to complete all required assignments on time. Students who are doing passable work, but cannot complete it on time, may submit a Petition to take an Incomplete to the professor and Academic Dean by the last day of the semester. All work must be completed within three weeks. The professor then has three weeks to submit a *Change in Grade* form to the Registrar.

### Grade Point Average (GPA)

Only units earned with a letter grade (including “F”) are used to compute grade point average (GPA). Transfer units, units with “I” (Incomplete), Pass, or AUD are not included. GPA is calculated by adding the grade points, and dividing the sum by the number of units carrying a letter grade carried to two decimal places.

### RUBRICS FOR WRITING PROJECTS

	“A” Range	“B” Range	“C” Range
<b>Thesis and Purpose</b>	The thesis and purpose of the project are clearly expressed.	The thesis and purpose are somewhat clear, with the boundaries and scope a bit vague.	The thesis is unclear and the purpose of the project is ill-defined.
<b>Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of the thesis is well thought-out, includes all relevant evidence, and respects the inner logic of the material.</li> <li>• Use of quoted material does not substitute for student’s own development of the thesis.</li> <li>• The paper is convincing, leaving no important aspect of the topic unaddressed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting details are adequate though some important material is missing.</li> <li>• Resources are too limited.</li> <li>• Paper shows understanding of relevant issues but lacks depth.</li> <li>• Uses too many direct quotes to substitute for developing own argument.</li> <li>• Some of the key connections between</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting material is disorganized and inadequate.</li> <li>• Analysis is superficial, shows signs of struggling to understand the relevant issues.</li> <li>• Lacks connections between related ideas, concepts, and themes.</li> <li>• Uses too many quotations so that own development gets</li> </ul>



	<b>“A” Range</b>	<b>“B” Range</b>	<b>“C” Range</b>
		ideas and concepts are missing or stand in isolation from others to which they are logically connected.	lost, or uses no quotations to make own development the sole authority.
<b>Organiza- tion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction draws the reader in, and the conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of resolution.</li><li>• Material is presented in an orderly fashion.</li><li>• Paragraphs are well-focused and coherent.</li><li>• Transitions are thoughtful and show how ideas are connected with major sections and subdivisions clearly marked.</li><li>• Major points are clear with the subordinate points clearly distinguished from the key, controlling ones.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction does not create a strong sense of anticipation and the conclusion does not tie the paper together into a coherent whole.</li><li>• Ideas generally ordered, though key connections between ideas are missing.</li><li>• Transitions leave connections between ideas fuzzy.</li><li>• Opening paragraph(s) do(es) not give clear direction of project and conclusion does not bring together key themes.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is no clear set-up of the project and the conclusion does not wrap things up.</li><li>• Logical ordering of material is vague with major points undeveloped.</li><li>• Transitions are absent or weak.</li><li>• Introduction does not capture the scope of the project and conclusion lacks focus.</li></ul>



	<b>“A” Range</b>	<b>“B” Range</b>	<b>“C” Range</b>
<b>Style</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses English effectively to communicate thesis.</li> <li>• Paragraphs are well-focused and coherent.</li> <li>• Uses technical terms accurately.</li> <li>• Few errors of grammar and punctuation guide the reader through the text.</li> <li>• Correctly uses headings and subheads.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of English is generally effective.</li> <li>• Grammatical and punctuation errors distract from the flow of the presentation.</li> <li>• Use of technical terms is confusing.</li> <li>• Headings and subheads do not effectively present the relation of the material.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English is poorly used.</li> <li>• Too many grammatical and punctuation errors.</li> <li>• The material is not properly subdivided with headings and subheadings.</li> <li>• Quotations and summaries break the flow of the piece and do not seem to fit.</li> <li>• Errors in grammar distract and interfere with meaning.</li> </ul>
<b>Documentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All sources are clearly cited according to the Turabian style.</li> <li>• Footnote and bibliographic form follow Turabian style.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citations are generally good.</li> <li>• Citations are too limited for the scope of the project.</li> <li>• Use of Turabian style is inconsistent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacks appropriate citations.</li> <li>• Documentation form is inadequate.</li> <li>• Turabian style is ignored.</li> </ul>

## GRADUATION

### Intent to Graduate

Students who intend to graduate in a given semester must complete a Notice of Intent to Graduate form by September 30 for December graduation, or February 28 for May graduation. Students must be enrolled in the semester during which they finish their courses of studies.

### Diplomas

FST’s graduation ceremony takes place before grades from the final semester have been posted. At the ceremony, participating students are presented with a notice stating that they will receive a diploma upon successful completion of all course work and settlement of all indebtedness to FST and USD. Diplomas are mailed after grades are reported, eligibility for graduation is verified, and all account are settled.



## Transcripts

Transcripts must be requested in writing using the Transcript Request form. The first transcript requested is free; there is a nominal charge for subsequent requests. Transcripts will not be issued to students who have not cleared all indebtedness to FST and USD. Note that grades of “F” appear on transcripts.

**Note:** On transcripts before Fall 1983, units are in quarter units. Quarter units and semester units are to be treated separately. If both units appear on a single transcript, convert quarter units to semester units for total units, and to compute grade points. Semester units equal  $2/3$  quarter units.