



STUDENT HANDBOOK

June 2024

updated August 2025

Message from the Associate Academic Dean

Welcome to Oblate School of Theology! May you be blessed in your time of theological study at Oblate.

You are taking your place among thousands of women and men who have been educated for ministry over the more than 100-year history of the school. Since its founding in 1903, ordained and lay graduates of Oblate have gone all over the world to serve the church. Oblate continues this tradition of reaching out to the global community in the twenty-first century by adding the use of new technology and electronic communication to its strong academic foundation.

This handbook serves to introduce you to the school's policies that affect you as students. It gives you an orientation to procedures that will serve to facilitate your time with us. It is our hope that it will provide you with the information you need to guide you through the details of academic and community life at Oblate.

Individual programs may also have handbooks with policies and procedures that are specifically directed to the requirements and expectations for students enrolled in them. Check for these handbooks with your program director. Where policies or procedures for a specific program diverge from the policies or procedures from the OST Student Handbook, the program handbook takes precedence. These specific policies or procedures are clearly indicated in the program handbooks. The Dean adjudicates any questions that may arise regarding policies or procedures that are specific to a program.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or other members of the faculty or administration if you have questions, concerns, or suggestions to better our collaborative effort of studying, learning, and praying together.

Please drop by my office on the first floor of the Benson Theological Center – I am always delighted to talk with students and to hear your thoughts.

With every blessing for your studies,

Sr. Linda Marie

Linda Marie Bolinski, SS.C.M.

Associate Academic Dean

Foreword

The *Student Handbook* provides information on the main areas that affect the life and work of students at OST. This *Student Handbook* was prepared with the purpose of making the most current information available and assessable to students. The policies and procedures in these pages are constantly being evaluated and improved. The electronic version of the *Student Handbook* and the *OST Catalog* are updated annually and are available online at www.ost.edu Together they comprise much of the information needed by both students and faculty.

This handbook serves as a reference guide for many policies that can be found elsewhere in materials readily available to OST students. Detailed information on procedures that students may find helpful is included in this handbook. Other detailed information referring to particular courses, programs, use of Library, etc., are available in the *OST Catalog* and *Library Handbooks*.

OST reserves the right to change any and all contents without notice.

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Chapter 1

Student Participation in Governance and Administration

Section 1.1 Overview of OST Governance: The Board of Trustees

Oblate School of Theology is established under a charter issued in 1968 by the State of Texas to the Missionary Society of the Oblate Fathers of Texas. The Provincial and Council of the U.S. Province of Oblates of Mary Immaculate constitute the Members of the OST Corporation. The Board of Trustees is established through the by-laws of the corporation and entrusted by the members with the legal responsibility of operating the school in accordance with the terms of the charter.

The trustees of the school are so called because, as in all professional schools, colleges, and universities, they are involved in trust relationships. Among the trust responsibilities are those to manage the school in the interest of the wider Church as well as in the public interest, to account to official bodies and to the public for actions taken, to carry out the ethical responsibilities involved in theological education, and to administer the endowment funds of the school.

The membership and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are delineated in its by-laws. The board's primary concern is in the area of policies. Board policy-development guides the administration and directs the school's pursuit of its mission. The board entrusts the conduct of the administration to the president and the administrative officers and, through the administration, the conduct of teaching and formation to the faculty. The board reviews appointments to the full-time faculty.

In addition to the official duties stated in the by-laws, the board serves as a link and interpreter between the school and the wider Church, as well as between the school and the community, defending and explaining the institution on the one hand, and on the other presenting the concerns of the Church community and of society beyond the campus to the school.

Section 1.2 Student Participation in Institutional Governance

A. Institutional Commitment to Collaboration

Oblate School of Theology is appreciative of its students' own commitment to Christian ideals and to ministry in the furtherance of God's reign. The school recognizes that its students have already spent years in education; some come to OST after years in professional life. One of the greatest resources the school has is the mature self-understanding and life-shaping commitment of members of its student body. Oblate School of Theology is eager, therefore, to have the collaboration of its students in its daily operation and its long-range vision. The participation of the students in OST's governance is accordingly highly valued.

B. Joint Committees of Faculty and Students

Four OST committees enjoy representation from the student body as well as from faculty and administration. The Academic Committee, the Library Committee, the Worship Committee, and the Integrity of Creation Council are so constituted that they operate by collaboration among those three constituencies of the School. Student participation is integral to the functioning of these

committees. The responsibilities of these committees and the role the students have in their workings are described below.

C. Academic Committee

The Academic Committee is a standing committee of the faculty. The committee is guided by the statement of purpose of Oblate School of Theology and the standards of our accrediting agency.

1. Its function is to discuss matters pertaining to the development of the academic life at Oblate School of Theology, including degree programs, requirements for admission, curriculum academic policies, and quality of instruction.
2. Membership of the committee:
 - a. Academic Dean (Chairperson)
 - b. Associate Academic Dean
 - c. Three faculty members elected by the faculty
 - d. One Ph.D. student appointed by the PhD faculty
 - e. Three students representing a cross-section of the student body including students from the M.Div. and M.A. programs
3. Process of Student Representative election:
4. All students vote on representatives from all three categories:
 - a. One student from Assumption Seminary
 - b. One student from a religious house
 - c. One student not from Assumption Seminary or a religious house
5. M.Div. and M.A student members are elected annually with elections in the Spring for the following year. In order to provide for committee continuity, during the first meeting of each year, one student is selected to serve a two-year term. The Ph.D. student is appointed by the Ph.D. faculty and is normally the chair of the Ph.D. Program Advisory Committee. Faculty membership consists of two members serving two-year terms on a staggered basis and one member serving a one-year term, elected accordingly.
6. Faculty members represent the general views of the faculty. The Ph.D. student represents the needs of both Ph.D. and D.Min. students. The M.Div. and M.A. students represent the views of the student body. It is important that the elected representatives seek the views of other constituencies on pertinent matters prior to the scheduled meeting.
7. The committee will normally meet three times a semester during the academic year. The agenda will be published with sufficient notice so constituencies can be consulted.
8. Minutes of the meeting are distributed to the faculty after each meeting. If no faculty member objects to the recommended action within five school days, the recommended

action is considered approved by the faculty. If a faculty member objects to the recommended action so passed, by informing the academic dean, the matter will be referred to the faculty for discussion at the faculty meeting. Major policy decisions (e.g. the inauguration or cancellation of degree programs, major curriculum revisions, etc.) must be formally presented to the faculty for decision and approved by a majority of the faculty present at a faculty meeting.

9. The administrative assistant to the dean's office normally takes the minutes. The minutes are kept on file in the dean's office.

D. Library Committee

The Library Committee is a standing committee of the faculty.

1. Functions of the committee:
 - a. discuss matters relating to library policies, procedures, and services
 - b. review requests for purchases
 - c. review library holdings and periodical subscriptions
 - d. deal with agenda items submitted by committee member
 - e. ensure all purchases are available to the academic community
2. Membership of the committee:
 - a. Director of Library (Chairperson)
 - b. Associate Director of the Library
 - c. Assistant Director of the Library
 - d. Academic Dean
 - e. Two faculty members elected by the faculty
 - f. One Ph.D. student, appointed by the Ph.D. faculty
 - g. Two students, one of whom is a M.Div. student, elected by the student body in accordance with normal student election procedures
3. The assistant director will normally act as secretary. Minutes will be kept on file in the office of the director of library.
4. The committee will meet once each semester or more frequently as needed.
5. The committee minutes will be distributed to the faculty within a reasonable time after each meeting.
6. If no faculty member objects to any motion made by the committee within five school days after the minutes have been distributed and posted, that motion will be considered approved by the faculty. If a faculty member objects to a motion so passed by informing the academic dean the matter will be referred to a meeting of the Faculty for further study. Major policy decisions (e.g. acquisitions and removal policies) must be reviewed and approved by a majority of the faculty present at a faculty meeting.

E. Worship Committee

The Worship Committee is a committee of the OST community, responsible to the Administrative Council of the school. The purpose of the committee is to assure on-going facilitation, evaluation, and support of the school's worship life.

1. Functions of the Committee:

- a. Organizing and planning properly and adequately the liturgies of the school community, including the convocation and baccalaureate celebrations
- b. Developing and implementing methods for involving members of the school community in the various functions of planning and celebration for the school's worship, including areas such as environment, music, readers, and presiders/preachers
- c. Evaluating regularly the School's liturgical events so as to guide future planning accordingly
- d. Supervising the provision of worship aids, ensuring their quality and legality

2. Membership of the Committee:

- a. Associate Academic Dean (chairperson)
- b. Three students representing a cross-section of the student body including students from the M.Div. and M.A. programs. A Ph.D. student may also serve on this committee.
- c. The Director of Chapel (ex-officio)

3. Process of Student Representative Elections:

4. All students vote on representatives from all three categories

- a. One student from Assumption Seminary
- b. One student from a religious house
- c. One student not from Assumption Seminary or a religious house
- d. A Ph.D. student may be appointed to this committee by the Associate Academic Dean.

5. Committee Meetings:

- a. The Committee will be convened once each semester and according to need. A secretary will be appointed by the Chair to keep minutes. Minutes will be approved by the Committee and kept in file in the Associate Dean's Office.
- b. Any major policy decisions by this Committee will be formally referred to the Faculty and to the Administrative Council for their deliberation.

F. Integrity of Creation Council

The Integrity of Creation Council is a consultative body to the President. The purpose of this Council is to help OST develop practices that reflect an awareness of the integral connection between human behavior and the flourishing of Earth, specifically in regard to how we care for and respect the creation entrusted to us.

1. Its functions are to:
 - a. Share information about integrity of creation efforts at Oblate campus wide.
 - b. Recommend to the president an on-going plan for deepening Oblate's commitment to integrity of creation
 - c. Assess the feasibility of implementing specific integrity of creation efforts
 - d. Tend to agenda items submitted by Council members
 - e. Other functions pertaining to integrity of creation as requested by the president
2. Membership consists of:
 - a. President
 - b. Associate Academic Dean
 - c. Two faculty members elected by the faculty
 - d. Two staff members elected by the staff
 - e. Two students elected by the students
 - f. One Ph.D. student may be appointed to this committee by the Associate Academic Dean
 - g. Others as appointed by the President
3. The Integrity of Creation Council normally meets twice a semester. Sub-committees may meet more frequently as required by specific projects.
4. The Associate Academic Dean normally serves as chair.
5. The Chair is responsible for collating agenda items from members and taking and distributing minutes. Minutes are kept on file in the Associate Dean's office.

Chapter 2

Academic/Professional Information

Information on admissions, registration, grades, and degree requirements may be found in the current *OST Catalog*. Specific policies and procedures relevant to a particular issue are also made available here, particularly procedures for students. An effort has been made to not repeat information available elsewhere. Information available in the current catalog is listed as such.

Section 2.1 General Academic Policies

A. Academic Advising

Academic advising allows students to enter into an extended conversation with their faculty advisor as they progress through their degree programs. A student will be able to express interests in specific areas of theology and ministry and the academic advisor will be able to guide the student accordingly. During the designated registration periods, the student will also be able to raise concerns and questions about the academic program. The student should expect to develop a degree plan with the advisor. The advisor is the first contact point for the student for all academic policies.

The Office of the Academic Dean will assign each student an academic advisor. The M.Div. Director(s) will advise new M.Div. students in their first semester. These students will be assigned to another faculty member after that first semester. Students in the D.Min., Ph.D., MAPM, MA (Theology) and (Spirituality) will have the director of their program as academic advisor. They may also request that another faculty member be their advisor after the first year of study.

B. Process for Student Advising

1. Students are assigned an academic advisor by the academic dean.
2. Students may make appointments with the advisor anytime during the semester to discuss academic matters.
3. Students make an appointment before each registration week to complete the registration for the next semester. At the time of the appointment, the academic advisor will register the student via the faculty portal.

C. Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Students at OST are expected, according to principles prevalent in the United States, to maintain ethical standards in their academic endeavors. Academic integrity is key to all teaching and learning at this institution. Failure to maintain such integrity is a violation of the institutional conduct policy.

Academic integrity also applies to the use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) tools. Students are responsible for confirming with their instructors the use of AI for assignments: *if* it may be used, *when* it may be used, *the extent* to which it may be used. The *OST Style Guide* shows how to footnote AI-generated material.

D. Intellectual Property Rights

The vitality of any institution of higher learning depends intrinsically on the quality and robustness of the processes of research and creative communication which characterize its life. Oblate School of Theology seeks to encourage those processes among faculty, students, and staff in every aspect of its institutional life. One measure of that encouragement is the protection that is afforded to the intellectual property of each and every constituency in the School.

The term “intellectual property” is understood to include all written or orally communicated results of scholarship, research, teaching or other intellectual pursuit by faculty, students, or staff.

Oblate School of Theology recognizes that full rights of ownership of all such work belong to the creator of such work. The single exception to this policy concerns those productions which fulfill responsibilities of employment by the School and can rightly be understood as “works for hire” under United States law. In those cases, ownership will be exercised by Oblate School of Theology.

Intellectual property produced by faculty or students, including course-work, lectures, and other class-related materials are covered by this policy and may not be copied, recorded nor disseminated in any form, including the internet, without express permission of the producer of the property.

E. Verifying Student Identity in Distance Learning Courses

OST uses a secure login name and password in order to verify student identity. It is the responsibility of each user within the OST Learning Management System (email, Moodle, Student Portal, etc.) to maintain the security of usernames, passwords, and other access credentials. OST does not charge additional fees related to identity verification.

Students are expected to act with integrity in all academic work. This includes presenting one’s identity in an honest fashion. Non-compliance with this policy is considered an act of plagiarism and a violation of the Academic Integrity policy at OST.

F. Copyright Infringement and Fair Use

Using the protected works of others without the appropriate permissions may lead to infringement liability unless the use falls within the exceptions outlined in current copyright law. Fair use doctrine provides limited copying of copyrighted works without permission of the owner for certain teaching and research purposes. In determining fair use, the purpose and character of the use, the nature of the copyrighted work, the amount and substantiality of the portion used, and the effect of the use upon the potential market for, or the value of, the copyrighted work must be considered. When in doubt, the user should obtain permission to use the material in question.

Definitions

Falsification

Falsely representing one’s academic work for academic gain is unacceptable. Instances which violate this policy include lying to or deceiving others in matters relating to a course, presenting

work completed for another course or by another person without due credit and authorization, falsifying records or data, intentionally assisting another in such activity, or similar actions.

Cheating

Cheating involves the use of unauthorized or unethical assistance in completion of assigned work. Instances include unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes or examinations and the acquisition, dissemination, or use of tests or other academic materials belonging to an instructor or a member of the staff without prior approval.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of another's work as one's own. This may include, but is not limited to, the use of quotations from a text without properly noting the author and/or source according to the approved style manual. All sources must be properly noted including electronic data from websites or databases, interviews, unpublished material, etc.

Such offenses are considered serious violations of institutional policy and may result in failure, suspension, or expulsion from the school. If detected as an occurrence in the past, such a violation may result in the revocation of credit or a degree.

Procedures to handle violations:

If a faculty member suspects that academic integrity has been violated by a student, the following procedure will take place:

1. The faculty member will notify the student and the academic dean of the suspicion.
2. The student has three days to respond to the faculty member regarding the allegation.
3. After three days, if the faculty member remains convinced that unethical academic conduct has occurred, the faculty member and the academic dean will consult to determine the credibility of the allegation.
4. If the allegation is found credible:
 - a. The faculty member meets with the student to discuss and sign the *Violation of Academic Integrity Report*.
 - *If the student refuses to sign the Violation of Academic Integrity Report, the matter will be immediately escalated to the Dean. The Dean, in consultation with the faculty member, will determine the next steps.*
 - b. When the terms of the report have been completed, the report is sent to the academic dean, who keeps it filed until the student has graduated.
 - *If the student does not fulfill the agreed-upon terms in the report, the assignment is given a failing grade.*

c. If the student has a second credible allegation, the academic dean, depending on the seriousness of the offense, will impose a penalty on the student, which could be probation or dismissal from OST.

5. If the allegation is not found to be credible, the faculty member is to grade the work as submitted without prejudice or penalty to the grade of the relevant assignment or the course as a whole.
6. A student who wishes to dispute the grade will need to follow the Grade Grievance Policies in the Student Handbook.
7. The academic dean will keep a record of all cases of academic dishonesty found to be credible.

G. Americans with Disabilities Act

Oblate strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let the Registrar know immediately to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with your professor as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion.

H. Use of Digital Media Policy

Face-to-face courses:

Students may not record (audio or video) or take digital images (via personal devices or screenshots) of any portion of a course or members of the course without advance permission.

Students may only make recordings of a course or a specific part of a course with the prior consent of the professor and of all the students in the course. In order to receive this consent, please ask the Registrar for the appropriate form for the professor and the students to sign.

Students may only take a digital image during a class with the advanced permission of the professor, any students who are visible in the image, and when appropriate, the student whose content is visible on the overhead screen at the time.

The professor has the right to record the course or any portion of the course for academic purposes. Students will be made aware of this decision in advance of the course. The recording(s) will be made available via the Learning Management System (LMS) currently in use at that time.

Online courses – synchronous and bichronous:

When registering for a synchronous or bichronous course, students shall understand that the online portion of the course could be recorded via the online web conferencing platform currently in use by OST at that time. In this case, permission of the students in the course is not required. The professor makes the final decision whether or not the online course will be recorded. If it is recorded,

the recording(s) will be made available via the Learning Management System (LMS) currently in use at that time.

Students may only take a screenshot and/or digital image during an online class with the advanced permission of the professor, any students who are visible in the screenshot and/or image, and when appropriate, the student whose content is visible on the screen at the time.

Students may not make personal recordings and/or copies of any part of the online course environment for any purpose.

Face-to-face and online courses:

While the course is active, the use of course recordings and/or digital images is limited to the personal, academic use of the course participants. The course recordings and/or digital images are not available once the course is completed.

Public release, including to personal social media accounts, of any course or class recording and/or digital images is prohibited. The OST administration may take course images or recordings for the purpose of advertisement, marketing, or other OST-sponsored activities. Students have the right not to participate in these types of activities.

Non-compliance

Any student found in non-compliance of this Digital Media Policy may face disciplinary consequences.

I. Student Complaint System

(For the Grade Grievance policy see section 2.3 of this Student Handbook)

(For the Harassment policy see section 3.9 of this Student Handbook)

(For complaints about privacy of student records see section 2.6 of this Student Handbook)

Oblate School of Theology is committed to the quality of our students learning. We strive to have online, hybrid, and in-person classes that are academically rigorous, efficient, and fair, and to provide all support services necessary to promote student learning. If current students have an issue with a course and feel that it has not lived up to these standards, they are encouraged to make the situation known and work towards a satisfactory resolution.

As a member of NC-SARA, which is committed to improving the quality of online distance programs, Oblate School of Theology will work to address complaints related to distance learning in an equitable manner. Students who believe that a complaint filed with Oblate School of Theology, and which falls under the terms and conditions of NC-SARA, was not resolved fairly may check <https://nc-sara.org/sara-student-complaints-0> for additional options.

Filing a Grievance

1. If there is a problem with a course, contact the instructor or appropriate office to discuss and resolve the problem.
 - To contact the instructor, use her or his ost.edu email address found on the course syllabus and in the [Faculty Directory](#) on the OST website

- For online support services or other technology issues related to an online course, contact Mr. Erik Myers, at ITSupport@ost.edu.

2.

- For issues related to financial aid or billing, contact Robin Rodriguez, Comptroller, at rrodriguez@ost.edu
- For issues regarding registration or student records, contact Brenda Reyna, Registrar, at breyna@ost.edu
-
- For help with accommodations due to documented disabilities, contact Brenda Reyna, Registrar, at breyna@ost.edu

3. If contacting the instructor or office proves to be ineffective or is not the appropriate way to solve the issue, students (with the assistance and knowledge of their formation teams, if applicable) are then encouraged to contact the Dean, Sr. Susan Pontzat srsusanpontz@ost.edu.

3. If there is a serious complaint or concern that has not been properly addressed by the school, students may file a complaint at with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Their Student [Complaints](http://www.highered.texas.gov/links/student-complaints/) page [<http://www.highered.texas.gov/links/student-complaints/>](http://www.highered.texas.gov/links/student-complaints/) contains information about filing a complaint and the process involved.

J. Policy on Weapons

Although the Texas Legislature passed the Campus Carry Bill (SB 11) allowing license holders to carry concealed handguns on *public* college campuses, *private* schools have the right to prohibit guns and other weapons on their property. Therefore:

Pursuant to Section 30.06, Penal Code (trespass by license holder with of license to carry a concealed handgun), a person licensed under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code (concealed handgun licensing law), may not enter this property with a concealed handgun.

Pursuant to Section 30.07, Penal Code (trespass by license holder with an openly carried handgun), a person licensed under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code (handgun licensing law), may not enter this property with a handgun that is carried openly.

At the Oblate School of Theology, the possession of a firearm, illegal knife, or prohibited weapon anywhere on the campus is not allowed. You should never bring weapons onto campus and you should always follow safety protocols if you see an armed individual. The following weapons are prohibited: armor-piercing ammunition, chemical dispensing devices, club or night stick, compound bow, explosive weapons, firearms, firearm silencer, illegal knives, knuckles, machine guns, short-barreled firearms, swords, and switchblade knives.

The carrying or possession of any type of weapon or firearm (including pellet guns and BB guns) on the premises of Oblate School of Theology is strictly and absolutely prohibited by institutional policy. This prohibition expressly includes those persons licensed to carry concealed firearms (with the sole exception of licensed peace officers). For purposes of this policy, the premises of OST are designated as any property, building or portion of a building or property that OST manages or

occupies, whether on a temporary or permanent basis, and any off-site premises where OST is conducting any activity sponsored by OST. This includes all parking lots, parking areas, sidewalks and walkways, and all vehicles and equipment owned by OST.

OST asks every employee and student to voluntarily comply with this policy for his or her own safety, for the safety of others, and for the good of the institution. To reduce or prevent violations of this policy, OST reserves the right to conduct searches of the premises where employees work, students study or gather, and of all employees and other persons on the premises, including the personal effects and vehicles of those individuals, and including locked or secured areas. OST may conduct its searches without prior notice.

Anyone found to have violated this policy, or who refuses to allow OST to conduct a search as described in this policy will be required to leave the school's premises immediately and will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or dismissal.

K. Atmosphere and Order in Class

Students have a right to expect a classroom atmosphere where all participate fully in the learning experience and where there is respect for others' opinions. Behavior not conducive to a positive learning environment will be addressed on an individual basis.

Students may use laptop computers in the class to take notes. The professor may specify the acceptable use of technology in the classroom.

L. Class Attendance

Students are expected to attend all meetings of a course for which they are registered. Professors may establish specific attendance requirements for their classes. A student who has three unexcused absences in succession may be administratively dropped from the course. Repeated absences during a semester may result in a failing grade.

Concern over repeated absences will be discussed with the Academic Dean.

It is a courtesy to notify the instructor when an absence may occur, even in emergency situations. It is entirely appropriate to have another student contact the instructor if need be.

A student is not formally withdrawn from a course until it is documented in the registrar's office with all of the proper signatures. (See below: *Withdrawal from Courses*).

A student who is not registered for a course/class but attends will not receive credit.

M. Institutional Review Board

The Oblate School of Theology Institutional Review Board serves to ensure compliance with appropriate regulations with respect to human-subjects research. The IRB works to ensure compliance with federal, ecclesial, and moral guidelines with respect to human-subjects research. Information about IRB procedures is available on Moodle.

N. Academic Probation

Students are expected to maintain the grade point average required for graduation under their degree program. If at the end of a grading period, the student's cumulative grade point average falls below the grade point average required for the degree, the student is placed on academic probation.

MDiv and MAPM students are expected to maintain a cumulative 2.5 GPA. MA students must maintain a 3.25 GPA. Students in the dual program M.Div./MA must maintain a 3.0 GPA for all courses. PhD students must maintain a 3.3 GPA. Students who do not maintain the required cumulative GPA will be placed on academic probation until the cumulative GPA meets the standard for their degree. Students on academic probation who fails to maintain the minimum semester GPA for two semesters will be suspended for a semester. Such students may apply for readmission.

The situation of international students with an F1 status attending OST and who have been placed on suspension will be reviewed on an individual basis.

After readmission, failure to maintain the grade point average for the semester will result in dismissal from the degree program and the school.

Maintaining the minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 or the 3.25 for the MA is required for both candidacy and graduation. Being removed from academic probation may not satisfy all of the degree requirements and is not a guarantee of candidacy for graduation.

Part-Time Students: Probation will not be levied until four courses have been completed. After one semester below their degree program GPA, part-time students will be alerted to the danger of possible probation.

O. Transferring from one Master's Program to another Master's Program

Students moving from one master's program to another master's program must apply for admission to that program. The full policy may be found in the current catalog under *Academic/Professional Information*.

Section 2.2 Policies and Procedures Regarding Courses

A. Policy to Define a Credit Hour

Oblate School of Theology follows the Carnegie unit (750 minutes per credit hour) to determine contact time within courses. This applies to all courses regardless of delivery method. Mandatory examinations may be counted toward the class time.

Independent study, that is, student work accomplished under the guidance of an instructor, may contribute toward contact time. The general guideline is that each credit hour of independent study would require significant reading and research which would be reported to the instructor by means of written or oral exams, papers, presentations, or *practica*. It is expected that each clock hour of class time would be replaced by equivalent research and/or reading in addition to the usual expectation of two hours of outside work for each hour of class time per credit hour awarded.

Intensive courses, which are offered on a two-week schedule, must meet the above requirements by totaling the effect of:

1. Instructional minutes
2. Additional independent study
3. Final course project and/or examination

Meeting times for courses are measured by the Registrar according to the above definitions. The course schedule for each semester, intercession, or summer session is posted online on the school website. The academic calendar for each academic year is also posted online. It is the responsibility of the Registrar in consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs to ensure the calendar meets institutional requirements.

B. Auditing Courses

With the permission of the professor of the course and the dean, students may audit certain courses. Auditors are expected to attend class sessions and keep up with assigned readings but are not required to take examinations or fulfill other course requirements. Courses taken for audit cannot be counted for credit at a later time. Audit courses are entered on the transcript but are not counted as fulfilling degree requirements. Tuition and registration rates for auditing courses may be found on the current Financial Information card or on the OST website.

Oblate School of Theology assumes that auditors are capable of performing at the academic level of the course offering. Auditors should normally possess a bachelor's degree. Auditors are present at the pleasure of the school and the instructor, and their participation level will vary according to the demands of the course. An instructor may determine if his/her course may be audited. Doctoral courses are generally closed to auditors. The prime focus of all course offerings is degree-seeking students accepted into such programs at Oblate School of Theology.

The following courses are never offered for audit:

TS 8296	Integration of Theological Studies
TS 9377	Thesis MA (Spirituality)
TS 9681	Thesis M.A. (Theology)
PS 6192	Orientation to Supervised Ministry I
PS 6193	Orientation to Supervised Ministry II
PS 6350	Basic Pastoral Care
PS 7334	Introductory Preaching / Predicación Introductoria
PS 7235	Liturgical Preaching / Predicación en la Litúrgica
PS 7351	Pastoral Counseling
PS 9195	(2nd year Theology, 1st semester) Theological Field Education
PS 9196	(3rd year Theology, 1st semester) Theological Field Education
PS 9295	(2nd year Theology, 2nd semester) Theological Field Education
PS 9296	(3rd year Theology, 2nd semester) Theological Field Education
PS 9379	Practicum in Theological Education and Scholarship PS
9699	Ministerial Internship

NC 9002 Pastoral Practicum NC
9003 Thesis

C. Course Numbering System

Course numbers indicate the level of study as well as the number of credit hours awarded for the course.

4000-level courses are undergraduate courses.

6000-level courses are introductory and usually are required before taking other courses in the same area. 7000-level courses are the majority of courses for graduate study.

8000-level courses are advanced courses requiring more research and/or writing and/or presentations.

9000-level courses are doctoral courses.

The second digit of the four-digit course number indicates the number of credit hours awarded for the course. Thus 7193 indicates a mid-level graduate course for 1 credit hour.

The prefix used in course numbers indicate the particular area of study of the course

CH	Culture and History
DSC	Doctoral Studies Core
DSE	Doctoral Studies Elective
IPE	Intensive Pastoral English
IPS	Intensive Pastoral Spanish
PS	Pastoral Studies
PSC	Pastoral Studies on Campus (D.Min.)
PTA	Pastoral Theology in African American Pastoral Leadership (D.Min.)
PTF	Pastoral in Faith Formation (D.Min.)
PTH	Pastoral Theology in Hispanic Ministry (D.Min.)
PTS	Pastoral Theology in Spirituality and Ministry (D.Min.)
PL	Philosophy
RS	Religious Studies
SS	Sacred Scripture
TS	Theological Studies

D. Credit for Courses at Non-Accredited Institutions

Credit may be granted for courses taken at certain non-accredited institutions of higher learning, e.g. The Ecumenical Center, Lebh Shomea, etc. The following procedure is to be followed:

1. The course must be pertinent to the student's degree program.
2. The faculty member of the other institution must send his/her curriculum vitae and OST must accept that person's credentials in line with ATS and SACS accreditation standards.

3. A syllabus for the course must be sent to OST. The Academic Dean's office will be responsible to verify that the course is equivalent to a graduate level course. The syllabus must include information concerning how the student will be evaluated. The syllabus should also include a class schedule and requirements. An assignment of credit hours will then be made. Ordinarily, these first three steps should be completed by OST's registration day. In any event, approval must be given before the course starts.
4. OST will charge the student 20% of the normal tuition.
5. The other institution will send a final grade to the OST Registrar. The deadline is one week after the close of the OST's semester or summer session or one week after the end of the course.
6. A student may take no more than six credit hours toward a degree under this policy.

E. Core Course Challenge

Oblate School of Theology students who hold a B.A. and have had course work appropriate to the core (6000 level) course which they wish to challenge for credit may apply to do so.

The student must have met the following prerequisites for a credit challenge: (1) Earned a 'B' grade or better in the core course area at the undergraduate level. (2) Not have already registered for credit in the course being challenged. A course challenge should be completed before the semester in which the course is taught. The deadline is the final registration date for the semester. In the case that a student wishes to challenge a course in his/her first semester at OST, the student needs to register as a challenge student and attend the course to be challenged until the grade of the written examination is recorded in the registrar's office.

For a successful challenge, the student must earn an evaluation of 'B' in the written examination. When successfully challenged, the core course will be recorded on the student's permanent record for credit. An unsuccessful challenge may not be repeated.

All who challenge a core course must pay 20% of the normal tuition.

Courses successfully challenged shall earn credit applicable toward the student's degree. No student can earn credit for more than three courses by challenge.

F. Procedures

1. Faculty who teach core courses are free to determine what the format of the evaluation process to handle the challenge will be. It will include a written record of the process. This will facilitate administrative and faculty review of the quality of challenge evaluations.
2. The student may at any time discuss the possibility of challenging a course with the instructor of that course. To formally challenge a core course, a student must have approval from his/her academic advisor and then submit a written request to the Dean's office. His/her eligibility will be reviewed. If eligible, the student will meet with the course instructor for final approval of the challenge. The student can expect some study guides and

a bibliography from the instructor. The student will apply to register for the challenge at the registrar's office by the ADD/DROP date of the current semester. The student will receive materials from the instructor within five working days of registering for the challenge.

3. When the student judges that he or she is ready, the student will arrange with the course instructor a mutually acceptable date for the evaluation. The challenge is to be completed by the third week after the ADD/DROP date. When the instructor has graded the challenge, s/he will report it to the registrar's office.

Upon verification of fees paid, the registrar will record the grade for credit in the student's permanent record.

G. Off Campus Study: Taking Courses off the OST Campus

Graduate courses in theology or religious studies may be taken at other colleges and universities and credits applied to the degree program at Oblate. An inter-institutional registration arrangement among the Catholic colleges of San Antonio (Oblate School of Theology, University of the Incarnate Word, Our Lady of the Lake University, St. Mary's University, Mexican American Catholic College) can also be used. This arrangement is simpler and more convenient than the regular matriculation and transcript-forwarding procedures.

The registrar will assist the student and provide the appropriate forms and instructions for registration and transfer of grades.

A student who wishes to take a course during the summer away from campus must meet with his or her advisor *prior* to registering for the course, complete the *Request to Transfer Courses to OST* form, and submit that form to the registrar. After the course is over, students should officially request that their transcripts be sent to the registrar at OST.

Students who attend the *Institute of Priestly Formation* at Creighton University may transfer two credit hours for elective credit only. A grade of 'B' or better must be achieved for transfer of graduate credit.

H. Withdrawal from Courses

Students may withdraw from or change status (audit to/from credit) in courses prior to the eighth week of the semester.

Withdrawal from a course within the first week will not be noted on the student's transcript. After the first week, however, the transcript will indicate withdrawal from the course. A withdrawal from a course before the mid-semester break is recorded as a WP (withdrawal passing). A withdrawal after the mid-semester break is recorded as a WP (withdrawal passing) or WF (withdrawal failing) as determined by the course professor.

Refunds for courses dropped are prorated according to the weeks of the semester.

Section 2.3 Policies and Procedures Regarding Exams and Grading

A. Grading Policy

If a grade of “D” or “F” is received in a core course (as specified in the degree plan), the course must be repeated. When an acceptable grade is achieved, it will be computed in the GPA. The “D” or “F” remains on the transcript but no longer affects the GPA.

If the grade for an elective course is a “D” or “F” it will negatively affect the GPA and will remain on the transcript. The course may be repeated or another course may be taken to improve the GPA.

If the elective course is repeated, the “D” or “F” remains on the transcript but no longer affects the GPA.

Grade Points:

A	95-100	4.00
A-	90- 94	3.50
B+	87- 89	3.25
B	83- 86	3.00
B-	80- 82	2.50
C	75- 79	2.00
C-	70- 74	1.50
D	60- 69	1.00
F	0- 59	0.00

Other policies on grades may be found in the current catalog under *Academic/Professional Information*.

B. Grade Grievance Appeal Procedure

If a student at Oblate School of Theology considers that a professor has unfairly evaluated him or her in a course, and if discussions between the student and the instructor prove inadequate to resolve the matter satisfactorily, the student may follow the steps in the Grade Grievance Appeals Process. This procedure is to begin within ten working days after receiving the grade in question. The burden of proof lies with the student. Therefore, the student's paperwork and/or other evidence of prejudicial judgment on the part of the instructor must be available to the dean and other persons involved in the process.

Step 1: The student, not having obtained satisfaction in dealing directly with the instructor in question, may approach the academic dean with the matter.

Step 2: The academic dean will serve as a mediator between the student and the professor.

Step 3: If, at this level, individual mediation fails or seems unlikely to resolve the dispute, the dean appoints a committee of two faculty members familiar with the academic area in question. This committee reviews the evidence, and, to the extent feasible, hears the testimony of both parties regarding the charges of unfairness and/or prejudice. Subsequently, it makes its recommendations

to the dean who will decide whether to change the grade. The dean in turn communicates the decision to the student and the instructor. If the grade is to be changed, the registrar is instructed to make the necessary adjustment to the student's records.

Step 4: If the student or instructor communicates dissatisfaction in the dean's decision after Step 3, the dean brings to the school president all the evidence, the recommendations of the faculty committee, the dean's decision, and the written response of the student and of the instructor. The school president makes the final decision, which is communicated to the instructor and the student.

C. Scheduling of Final Examinations

All final examinations, if required by the professor, will be held during exam week, the final week of the semester. No regular classes will be scheduled that week. Written exams will be given at the regularly scheduled class meeting time. Oral exams, or other suitable forms of evaluation, may be scheduled at any time during that week convenient to both student and instructor. The dean's office needs to be notified of examination arrangements outside of these provisions.

D. Semester Grades and Reports

Final grades should be submitted by the faculty to registrar's office via the Faculty Portal no later than one week after the end of a semester or a summer school course. Students can access their final grade report as soon as the grade has been posted by the instructor.

Section 2.4 Additional Academic Requirements

A. Language Proficiency Requirements

Oblate School of Theology recognizes the growing pluralism in Church and society in the United States. *The Program of Priestly Formation* of the USCCB emphasizes this reality by stating,

“The theological curriculum, both in its planning and its execution, should address the unique needs of a multicultural society. The study of the Spanish language and Hispanic cultures as well as other pastorally appropriate languages and cultures is essential for most dioceses and is strongly recommended for all seminarians” (*The Program of Priestly Formation*, #228).

The Mission Statement of Oblate School of Theology states: "The pastoral orientation of OST requires careful and critical attention to the complex historical and cultural dimensions of church and society, with special emphasis on the Hispanic reality of the Southwest." For these reasons, Oblate School of Theology requires all Master of Divinity Degree graduates to normally be able to minister in both the English and Spanish languages. The detailed policy on language proficiency requirements may be found in the current catalog under *Admissions* and *Master of Divinity*.

B. Style of Academic Papers

OST uses Turabian *A Manual for Writers* 9th Edition and the *Chicago Manual of Style* 17th Edition as its official style sheet and follows the option for footnotes rather than in-line citations. Students

are expected to learn Turabian style and use it in all academic papers. The *OST Style Guide*, found on OST's Moodle and Library webpages, provides additional information about writing preferences at OST and gives examples of citations for Catholic documents. Guidelines for binding final thesis and professional papers are also included.

Additionally, OST subscribes to Grammarly, an automated grammar checker and writing support tool. Students are encouraged to use Grammarly to edit papers and strengthen writing skills. This service is free to all OST students. For information on how to enroll, see Grammarly in the Student Services section of this handbook.

Section 2.5 Progress Toward Completion of Studies

A. Final Projects for MA and MAPM/MAMP Degree Programs

The program director for each degree program has developed a set of guidelines for the final project. These guidelines are often presented in the context of a handbook which may include additional tools and information regarding the completion of the final project for a given degree. These guidelines include specific details informing the student of deadlines for completion and formatting requirements such as title page information, places for appropriate signatures, and binding of the completed document. All documents to be bound must be printed on 100% cotton, acid free, watermarked, white paper, with a minimum weight of 20 lb.

The graduation fee includes the cost for one bound copy of the final project for the library. Students who wish to have one or more copies bound need to pay an additional fee for each copy; which includes the binding and the handling fees. Unbound copies are taken to a designated librarian who receives payment for the binding at the time of the request. The student presents the final unbound thesis copy to the project director, who then checks that all is in acceptable order and signs off on the title page. The project director then gives the copy to the program director who checks off that an acceptable copy has been submitted. In turn, the program director gives the copy to the designated librarian who sends it to the bindery at a specific time, usually before July. Students may obtain additional information from their program director.

B. Integration of Theological Studies: MDIV Portfolio

This seminar course serves as the capstone course for the MDiv program. Granting of the MDiv degree is contingent upon successful completion of this course. The course, which begins in the Fall of the fourth year and ends in the Spring before graduation, involves the assembling, editing, and presentation of a portfolio containing three artifacts drawn from a student's prior classwork or internship year experience. The artifacts that comprise the portfolio include one of each of the following:

1. Homily (text plus video)
2. Theological Field Education Note
3. Catechesis (text plus PowerPoint/Keynote/Prezi)

Students are advised upon entering the MDiv program that their work in the three above “fields” will be the material from which they will draw their artifacts for the capstone seminar.

The official seminar process of assembling the portfolio begins in the Fall of the fourth year. Students first meet with the ITS director during the seminar time to be informed of what artifacts are needed and what are the rubrics (expectations) are for field. Students then consult with their faculty advisor and a faculty member in each “field” (that is, Homiletics, TFE, and Catechesis) to help make the selection from the student’s previous work.

After the process of selection is complete, the student begins revising and editing the artifacts based first upon the recommendations of the faculty advisor and the faculty member of the field whom they consulted. In addition, the weekly seminar, facilitated by the ITS faculty director, functions as a peer-review opportunity in which students evaluate and provide feedback on each other’s work over the course of the semester.

The process of selection, revision, and peer feedback is repeated for each of the three fields. The seminar sessions continue weekly while all three artifacts of each student have been peer-reviewed. This process should be complete by early Spring (late February-early March).

In the Spring, seminar students focus on preparing and giving the presentation of the portfolio. The presentation includes a brief summary in which the student articulates how reflection on the three artifacts, as well as the seminar process itself, have helped inform the student about

1. his or her own self-understanding of ministry
2. his or her ability to integrate theology into pastoral practice, and
3. his or her ability to function collaboratively in ministry.

At this point, boards of three faculty members (one being the student’s faculty advisor, the second and third being appointed by the ITS director and the dean) are constituted for each student. Students submit their finished portfolios to their respective boards two weeks in advance of the presentation session for prior review. Students prepare for an hour long evaluation session, with 15-20 minutes for the student to present the portfolio, 30-40 minutes for a faculty board Q & A, and 5-10 minutes for deliberation and announcement. Upon completion of the presentation, the board will award the candidate with one of the following designations: Pass with Distinction, Pass, Fail with Right to Revise, Fail with no Right to Revise. Given the amount of consultation and editing involved prior to presentation it is expected that no student will receive a failing grade short of failing to complete the portfolio itself.

C. Graduation

Formal graduation is held in May and diplomas are conferred at that time. All graduating students are encouraged to attend their commencement exercises. A graduation fee is charged whether or not students are present for the commencement exercises. If a student finishes all class work in summer or fall and requires verification of completion of studies, the registrar will provide the

student with a copy of the permanent record and a letter verifying completion of studies, but the degree is not conferred until graduation in May.

D. Process for Applying for Candidacy

After a period of successfully completed course work at Oblate School of Theology, a student will be eligible to apply for candidacy for the degree(s) sought. Candidacy must be granted prior to the awarding of the degree. The various degrees have certain requirements that must be met prior to applying for candidacy.

Students are responsible for making the application for candidacy for the degree. Students need to check the appropriate degree description in the current catalog for candidacy requirements. Forms are available in the registrar's office. The application must be signed by the appropriate degree program director before it is submitted to the registrar's office.

The granting of candidacy for the degree will take into account the student's progress toward completing all requirements for the degree including grade point average, language proficiency, spiritual formation, and ministerial leadership. The admissions committee formally approves a student's status as a candidate for a degree.

E. Student Awards

The Outstanding Scholarship Award

The Award for Outstanding Scholarship at Oblate School of Theology is offered on occasion for exemplary achievement. The names of the awards for each degree program are:

Fr. Theodore Labouré, OMI Award for the Doctor of Ministry Fr.
Pierre Keralum, OMI Award for the Master of Divinity
Sr. Dorothy Folliard, OP Award for the Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry
Bishop Sinforiano Lucas, OMI Award for the Master of Arts (Theology) Fr.
Kelly Nemeck, OMI Award for the Master of Arts (Spirituality)

Criteria and process:

1. The award is granted in recognition of outstanding academic achievement for the final written component of the Doctor of Ministry, Master of Arts in Theology, Masters of Arts in Spirituality, Master of Divinity, and Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry degrees.
2. The director of the student's academic project or thesis, or any faculty member involved with a student's MDiv Integrative Portfolio, submits the work to the academic dean at least one month prior to graduation. This submission is subject to agreement between the director of the project or thesis and the second reader or readers that the work merits consideration. Directors are encouraged to submit every work of outstanding merit.

3. The faculty members of the academic committee will use the criteria of the goals and objectives of each degree program as set forth in the current OST Catalog to judge the worthiness of the work for an award.
4. The academic dean will notify the faculty of the granting of the scholarship award.
5. The award will be presented at the annual graduation ceremony.
6. The honor for this achievement will consist of an OST logo desk award that celebrates the academic achievement of the recipient. Notation of the granting of the award will be made in the academic record of the winning student. OST Publications will offer a limited hardcover binding of an MA thesis, including one copy for the OST Library and up to three copies for the Award recipient or the costs thereof.

Offerings' Student Writing Award

A student's 10 to 30-page paper (or comparable creativity) of graduate quality which is recommended by any OST faculty member to the three-member committee from the board of OFFERINGS is eligible for the OFFERINGS' Student Writing Award of \$200 presented at Convocation. Deadline for submission is commencement day. Submissions from the previous 12-month period are accepted.

Section 2.6 Policy on Student Records and Transcripts

A. Student Records

Oblate School of Theology maintains educational records for all current and former students who are officially enrolled. Student records at the School are subject to the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended. Students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning compliance issues. The name and address of the appropriate office is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

B. Review of the Educational Record

Students have the right to inspect and review their educational record. All requests must be in writing to the Registrar and must identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the students of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the School official to whom the request was submitted, that official shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed. The response from the School official will be within 45 days of the receipt of the request for access.

C. Education Records on Campus

Educational Records on campus are those records directly related to a student for the purpose of recording the *educational* endeavor of the student. They do not include law enforcement records, employment records, medical records, alumni records, or faculty advisor/instructor notes. Educational records may be stored in many mediums and are not limited to an individual file.

D. Amendment of the Educational Record

The student may request an amendment to the educational record if he or she believes it is inaccurate or misleading. The amendment of the educational record *does not* pertain to the grade assigned by the faculty. The student should write to the Registrar to request the amendment. The request must clearly identify the portion of the record s/he wants changed, specifying why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the School does not amend the record as requested, the School will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.

E. Directory Information

At the beginning of each semester, the registrar's office compiles and makes available to OST students, faculty, administration, and staff, a new edition of the Oblate School of Theology Directory. It is not sold for distribution nor given to companies for promotions. The directory includes the names, local address, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of members of the student body. The Oblate School of Theology Directory is for the use of students, faculty, administration, and staff. Students and faculty can view the OST Directory via the Student Portal. A physical copy can be seen in the Registrar's Office.

The Oblate School of Theology will not disclose any personally identifiable information about students (except directory information listed below) without the written consent of the student.

Directory information at the Oblate School of Theology has been identified as:

1. Student's name
2. Address
3. Telephone listing
4. Electronic mail address
5. Photograph
6. Degrees, honors, and awards received
7. Date and place of birth
8. Major field of study
9. Dates of attendance
10. The most recent educational agency or institution attended

Each student has the right to restrict the release of any or all of this information by submitting a written request to the Registrar's Office. School officials with legitimate educational interests may have access to educational records, without the students' consent, if the record is needed in order to

fulfill his or her professional responsibilities. School officials are identified as: a person employed by the School in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position, a person or company with whom the School has contracted, a person serving on the Board of Trustees, or a student serving on an official committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

Students may also grant access to their academic record to others however must provide written authorization, indicating what information will be released and to whom. Students in formation communities are required to fill out the Student Release Form.

Any student may withhold the release of directory information via the methods listed below. To do so, requests must include the student's name, social security number, and date of birth. *The restriction will remain in place until student authorizes removal.* Requests can be made using the following methods.

Via email:

Registrar@ost.edu

In Writing:

Registrar's Office 285

Oblate Drive

San Antonio, Texas 78216

Section 2.7 Evaluation and Assessment Process

A. Purpose

The purpose of doing assessments is to systematically gather information regarding the accomplishment of our goals and objectives. Responses are used to improve the curriculum and educational experience at OST.

B. Process

Entrance Level Assessment — Entering Student Questionnaire

1. New students are emailed information about the Association of Theological Schools' Entering Student Questionnaire (ESQ). This note includes a hyperlink to the ESQ and instructions for completing and submitting the questionnaire.
2. The Associate Academic Dean tracks the electronic submission of the ESQ to insure full student participation.
3. The Association of Theological Schools compiles data from the ESQ and prepares a report for review by OST faculty and administration.

Exit Level Assessment—Graduating Student Questionnaire and Focus Groups

The Graduating Student Questionnaire is used to gather information about students' general experience during their time at OST.

1. Graduating students are emailed information about the Association of Theological Schools' Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ). This note includes a hyperlink to the GSQ and instructions for completing and submitting the questionnaire.
2. The Associate Academic Dean tracks the electronic submission of the GSQ to insure full student participation.
3. The Association of Theological Schools compiles data from the GSQ and prepares a report for review by OST faculty and administration.

Focus Groups are used to assess the students' experience of their specific degree programs.

1. Graduating students are invited to participate in focus groups to discuss their experience of their degree program with their program director.
2. Information from this discussion is summarized and passed on to faculty and administration.

Course Evaluations

1. Students have the opportunity to evaluate each of their courses. The course evaluation is completed in class at the end of the semester.
2. Evaluations materials are distributed by the faculty. Paper evaluations are returned to the Dean's Office by a student in the course. Online evaluations are emailed to the Dean's Office.
3. Faculty review the evaluations after grades are submitted.

Chapter 3

Policies Relating to Student Life

Section 3.1 Student Rights and Responsibilities

Students belong to the community of Oblate School of Theology, which has as its stated purpose theological education for pastoral ministry. Participation in the community is both a right and responsibility. When students qualify for study they have the rights necessary to successfully complete their degree plan. It is a responsibility that students abide and accept the philosophy and standards of the school. Procedures and policies are given to enhance excellence in all teaching and learning in the realization of the goals of the school.

It is a responsibility that all students abide by the rules of conduct and treat all members with respect and human dignity. Every student has the right due him or her of mutual respect proper to a school of theology. All instances of misconduct, as outlined in the conduct policy and in the harassment policy, will involve investigation and admonition. Oblate School of Theology views students as adults and responsible for their actions.

Regulations regarding honesty and integrity in course work are formed to promote growth in the educational community.

Actions that indicate an intolerance of others' religion, race, sexual orientation, gender, or disability are unacceptable. Status as students does not exempt persons from either the rights or responsibilities as citizens or guests of this country.

Students have the right to participate in the governance of the institution through school committees. They have the right to due process to address grievances as described in the *Grievance Appeal Procedure*. Federal law guarantees certain rights to students regarding student records. OST honors these rights as described in the *Policy on Student Records and Transcripts*. Students have the right to receive information pertinent to their program of studies such as requirements for completion and financial information. OST seeks to provide for these rights by publishing this information in the current catalog, the Student Handbook, and on the OST web site.

Section 3.2 Services for Students

A. Benson Student Lounge

The Benson Student Lounge is located in the basement level of OST's main building. The lounge has a piano, fuse-ball table, Ping-Pong table, and TV, as well as space for students to eat, relax, or study. Students are welcome to use the lounge whenever the main building is open.

B. Beverages and Food

Coffee and tea are available in the Benson Student Lounge and the Whitley Lounge. Vending machines for beverages and snacks are located in the hallway outside of the Benson Lounge and outside the Whitley Conference Rooms. Coffee and other beverages are permitted in the classrooms. Beverages are allowed in the library only if they are in containers with lids.

C. Comprehensive Fee

Each student is charged a comprehensive fee each semester based on the number of credit hours for which s/he is registered. This fee helps defray a percentage of the costs associated with the following activities or services provided by OST: information technology and e-mail service, chapel service, free public lectures, coffee, swimming pool, commencement dinner, the Convocation Mass and dinner, photo IDs, photo copies of course hand-outs by faculty, and a portion of designated social activities.

D. Copy Machine and Scanner

There are copy machines and scanners in the library near the circulation desk and in the periodical reading room. These machines are for the use of the students. Seminarians and members of religious communities may charge their copying costs to their houses.

E. Counseling and Guidance

There is no formal program for personal counseling offered at OST. Faculty members, however, are available upon request for personal, vocational, and spiritual counseling. All full-time faculty have posted office hours.

Aptitude testing and counseling services of many kinds can be arranged off-campus. In any matter related to counseling, the office of the academic dean is pleased to offer information and assistance.

F. Donald E. O'Shaughnessy Library

The Donald E. O'Shaughnessy Library at Oblate School of Theology is a resource center for the reading, research, and study for the OST community. All students are encouraged to make good use of the wealth of material available there. In addition to the material at hand on the OST campus, there are extensive facilities for inter-library loans and the Tex-Share program. The library catalog and circulation are fully automated using the Voyager system. Copy machines and computer services are also available in the Library.

1. The policies of the library, its hours and the services it provides are detailed in the OST Library Handbook available at the circulation desk. The library staff also provides orientation sessions and tours for incoming students. Throughout the year, they remain eager to be of any help they can.
2. Students are encouraged to make suggestions to the library director and staff for any acquisitions they consider would be helpful. The library staff has forms available for book suggestions.
3. The library maintains reading lists for the courses offered at OST. Many of the materials that professors put on their reading lists are available at the circulation desk in the main room of the library.
4. Overdue Book Fees

- a. A library staff person issues an overdue notice the day after a book is due and not returned. Each book is \$.35 a day. Students may not check out additional books if there is an outstanding overdue fee. Overdue fees are paid to the library staff at the circulation desk. Periodically, students receive a statement of copy expenses and overdue fees.
- b. Notices of outstanding fees are sent to the registrar's office. Students must clear all financial obligations each semester. Students cannot register for a new semester until library overdue fees are cleared.
- c. The finance office will inform the library when an outstanding bill is paid. The library can then allow the student to check out books.

The O'Shaughnessy Library is here to serve you, the patron. The director and associate director, as well as all library staff, are always ready to assist.

G. Emergency Notification System

OST has an emergency notification system that sends text messages, voice mail, and/or email to your devices in case of emergencies on the OST campus and class cancellations due to weather. You must, however, enroll to receive notifications.

To sign up:

- go to the OST web page
- click on MY OST and then STUDENTS and scroll to the bottom of the page
- click on EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION then OMNI ALERT and scroll to USER SIGN UP FORM

Once you are on the signup page, simply follow the prompts to create your account.

All members of the OST Community are encouraged enroll

H. Exercise Room

The exercise room is located in the basement level of the main building behind the student lounge. Students are required to sign waivers before accessing the exercise room. Waivers and more information about the exercise equipment are available in the business office. Students who have signed waivers are welcome to use the exercise room whenever the main building is open.

I. Grammarly.com/edu

All members of the OST community have free access Grammarly, an automated grammar checker and writing support tool. To edit your papers and strengthen your writing skills, go to www.Grammarly.com/EDU/ and click "Join Your Organization" button at the top of the page. Using your ost.edu email address will give you free access to OST's account. Once you have registered, you will receive a confirmation email. Click on the link in the email and you will have full access to Grammarly at no charge.

N.B. If you go to Grammarly.com rather than Grammarly.com/EDU/ you will land on a page asking you to pay for a subscription. Be sure to sign up for free through Grammarly.com/EDU/

J. Housing and Board

Oblate School of Theology is a non-residential institution. Lunches are available in the Oblate Renewal Center after the Tuesday liturgy. Meal tickets for lunch on other days may be purchased in the OST Finance Office. Coffee, soft drinks, and snacks may be obtained in the basement of the main administration building and in the Whitley lounge.

K. Identification Cards

All students are issued photo identification cards during the registration process of their first semester at OST. This card is valid for the entire time someone is a student at OST. Students are required to carry their ID cards while on campus or while off campus and acting as a student of OST -- such as on a field education site. The ID card serves as a library card and must be presented in order to check out materials. It provides students access to the Whitley Theological Center, the Benson Theological Center, and the Donald E. O'Shaughnessy Library. The cost for the initial ID card is covered by the Application Fee. Replacement cards are available for a \$25 fee.

L. Information Technology

OST Information Technology (IT) resources are made available to all students in order to share information, improve communication, and exchange ideas. All students, faculty, staff, and administrators are provided with access to the OST computer system. All policies relating to IT resources concerning legal and ethical issues are intended to be within the context of the OST mission statement. The IT department is here to provide service and assistance to all members of the OST community who use OST IT resources. Questions regarding IT use or issues may be addressed to the staff of that department.

1. An authorized user of the OST computer system is a current student with privileges to access the OST network, both from the LAN (local-on campus) and WAN (internet) for the purpose of exchanging data. Each student will be assigned a user account, e-mail address and password to use while accessing the OST computer system. This information will be provided by the IT department through the Registrar's office. The OST e-mail account should be used for all OST school business and school related communications. Students are expected to use these resources in accordance with current legal and ethical constraints. Additionally, students should not give out password information to anyone except authorized IT personnel. Privileges to use the OST computer system are extended to currently enrolled students who are in good standing. User accounts will remain active from semester to semester and will be closed upon graduation or withdrawal. User e-mail data and personal files stored on OST computers will be deleted three weeks after graduation or withdrawal unless prior arrangements with the IT department are made.
2. Students must recognize there is no guarantee of privacy associated with their OST user account and its privileges. OST reserves the right to access equipment (hardware and software) which it owns at its convenience when necessary. OST may find it necessary to view electronic data and could be required by law to allow third parties access to that data (e.g. electronic data may become evidence in legal proceedings). It is possible that others could view electronic data. Each student should be respectful of the privacy of others,

behave ethically, and comply with all legal restrictions regarding the use of electronic data.

3. Each student is accountable for his or her OST user account activity; therefore, students' responsibilities include but are not limited to:
 - a. Respect of intellectual property
 - b. Adherence to software licensing (EULA-End User License Agreements) requirements
 - c. Responsible for backup of personal data
 - d. Using the OST computer system for legal and ethical endeavors in light of the school's mission
 - e. Log off computer system when not in use

OST is not responsible or liable for time or data loss incurred while using the OST computer system.

M. International Full-Time Non-Immigrant Students

The Designated School Official (DSO) at Oblate School of Theology is responsible to know and follow all U.S. Federal Government laws pertaining to the non-immigrant full-time students. The DSO represents Oblate in all dealings with the Bureau for Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) and international students. One of the DSO's main responsibilities is to keep student information current in the computerized U.S. tracking system to monitor non-immigrant students. This computer system is called Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

International students in the F-1 category are responsible to let the DSO at Oblate know of any changes to: name, sponsorship, current U.S. address and phone number, degree program, number of credit hours registered for each semester, trips planned outside of the San Antonio area, transfer to another U.S. school, or any changes to their status as full-time students. Non-immigrant, full-time students **must** have the DSO's permission to: (1) drop or withdraw from a class that will make the student less than full-time, or (2) seek employment in the US. **Students who do not inform the DSO risk being "out of status" and subject to deportation.**

The DSO also needs to know when the student will apply for a U.S. Social Security number, what courses are being taken at another school in San Antonio, and Summer plans. Attendance at meetings that the DSO offers is **mandatory** for each international student. An appointment must be scheduled to meet with the DSO; there is a form to request an appointment.

Services that OST's DSO provides are: the SEVIS Form I-20, visa information, coordinating courses that an OST student will take at any other school in San Antonio, a letter to apply for U.S. Social Security number, information about U.S. income tax, a letter to re-enter the U.S. at the border, U.S. federal government forms that the international student needs, and more.

N. Parking

Student parking is located behind the library and the Whitley Theological Center. For the safety of all, OST has a one-way traffic pattern. When entering the school from Oblate Drive, drive

counter-clockwise around the main building to enter the parking lot. Parking for the Grotto can also be reached by driving behind the main building. The speed limit on campus is 20 miles per hour. Please respect all parking signs including handicapped parking, visitor parking, and fire lanes.

O. Recycling

Recycling containers are located near each classroom and around the campus. Please place all paper, aluminum, and plastic in these containers. Lightly used paper plates and cups may be recycled. Students are welcome to deposit paper from home in the paper recycling dumpster in the parking lot.

P. Smoking

Smoking is not permitted inside the buildings. Smoking is permitted outside in designated places only.

Q. Student Health Insurance

OST has a health insurance requirement for enrollment. In order to WAIVE OUT of the OST Consolidated Health Plan, students must complete a waiver process by the published deadline each semester. Students are able to “waive” out of the premium by providing information that they have current health insurance that meets the Affordable HealthCare standards. Waiver forms are available on the OST Website under Student Resources.

A health insurance premium will automatically be included in tuition for the following student designations:

- All International Students
- All Masters, DMIN, and PhD students
- Credit/Audit students enrolled in 8+ hours

EXCLUDED from this are:

- Any part-time OST student (7 hours or less)
- Any 100% online students

BENEFITS INFORMATION

Information regarding insurance benefits and costs are available on the OST website.

R. Swimming Pool

The pool is open from April through September. It is available to currently enrolled students and their dependents, OST faculty, staff, and their dependents. Similar privileges are extended to the staff and dependents of various other Oblate entities in the area. The OST student or employee must be present when family members are using the pool. Reservation of the pool for special gatherings may be made by contacting the receptionist. All users of the pool are cautioned that

lifeguards are not provided. The combination for the lock on the pool gate may be obtained from the receptionist.

S. Whitley Lounge

The Whitley Lounge is located in the Whitley Theological Center. This lounge has a TV, coffee, and a microwave. The “Whit” provides the OST community a place to gather or study inside or on the patio.

Section 3.3 Worship Gatherings of the OST Community

Public worship is organized at OST each Sunday and each Tuesday during the Fall and Spring semesters for students and faculty members who wish to participate. All in the OST community are encouraged to participate in the Tuesday liturgy and to attend the luncheon immediately following.

Eucharistic liturgies are also regularly available at the Saint Joseph Chapel and the Grotto.

Spiritual counseling and the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation are available from members of the faculty and administration upon request.

Section 3.4 Other Regular Activities of the OST Community

The school administration sponsors the celebrations of the convocation of the school year and the commencement exercises at the end of the year. The Tuesday luncheons, however, are self-supporting and are planned for the number of people expected. Students are encouraged to join the OST community for these lunches.

There are no organized athletic programs at the school. There are, however, facilities on campus for swimming, which are available to students and faculty at no further charge. The OST student activities coordinator (currently, the associate academic dean) coordinates student activities with representatives of the various houses of formation, other interested students, and OST students are welcome at all times to suggest ideas for activities to the student activities coordinator.

Section 3.5 Faculty Evaluation of Seminarians and Sankofa Scholars

A. Purpose

Seminarian evaluations are provided to seminarians near the beginning of the Spring semester to give them feedback on how they are perceived by the faculty. The evaluation is intended to assist students in personal, spiritual, and professional growth. It is meant to be a positive aid as well as to point out areas for improvement and concern.

B. Process

Evaluation sessions are scheduled by the Dean's Office in January.

Faculty receive a schedule for the sessions, a copy of the seminarian evaluation instrument, a list of students by year, and a copy of the list of characteristics of suitability for ministry (as listed in the current OST Catalog) for their review during each evaluation session. Faculty may attend the sessions or complete an evaluation for each of his/her students and submit them to the dean for use during the sessions. The seminarian evaluation sessions are listed on the OST public calendar.

During the sessions, the consensus faculty reach on each seminarian is recorded in an evaluation form along with faculty individual comments. An evaluation form is sent to each seminarian via his OST email. A cover note accompanies each student's evaluation explaining the evaluation process.

Students are given time to review their evaluations and an opportunity to seek further clarification from the academic dean concerning their evaluation. Copies are then made and sent to appropriate formation directors with a note explaining the evaluation purpose and process.

Copies of evaluations are stored electronically in a restricted access Faculty Drive for use by OST academic advisors.

Section 3.6 Faculty Evaluation of MAPM/MAMP and MDiv Students

The faculty offers an evaluation of MAPM/MAMP and MDiv students according to the criteria, or list of ministerial qualities, found in the current OST catalog. The evaluation is intended to assist students in personal, spiritual, and professional growth. It is meant to be a positive aid as well as to point out areas for improvement and concern.

This evaluation is done formally after each semester of the Pastoral Formation Seminar and as a part of the MAPM/MAMP Practicum process. In each case, the instructors, the field supervisor, and the student employ written forms.

The faculty may, at any time, raise concerns or compliments with the director of the MAPM/MAMP or the MDiv regarding a particular student. It is the responsibility of the director to communicate these issues to the student. If deemed necessary or helpful by the faculty member, the director, or the student, a written record may be maintained in the student's official file.

Section 3.7 Anti-discrimination Policy

In administering its affairs, the School shall not discriminate against any person on the basis of gender, race, creed, color, national or ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, disability, or any other inherent personal characteristics protected by law except when moral or religious behaviors are in contradiction to the School's values and ethos.

Section 3.8 Conduct Policy

Conduct at a graduate school of theology will need few regulatory prescriptions considering the maturity and the calling of the students.

1. Unsatisfactory conduct includes but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Disregard for academic integrity by cheating, collusion, or plagiarism in exams, essays, projects, term papers, or comprehensive exams
 - b. Abusive conduct toward students, school officials, or school employees
 - c. Harming or threatening to harm students, school officials, or staff
 - d. Presence on school property under the influence of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs
 - e. Possession of illegal substances or weapons on school property
 - f. Theft of property belonging to school, staff, employees, or students
 - g. Willful destruction of or tampering with property belonging to the school, staff, employees, or students, to include computer hardware and/or software
 - h. Conduct that is detrimental to the best interest of the students and the School
 - i. Violation of the School's Harassment Policy and/or Code of Ethics
2. Students who violate any of the above will be placed on probation, normally for the remainder of the semester or a period of time determined by the academic dean. Further violations during this probationary period will result in dismissal. Depending on the severity of the initial violation, as determined by the academic dean, the student may be dismissed immediately.
3. The student may appeal the probation in accordance with the appeals policy as detailed in the Harassment Policy. The full appeals procedure may be obtained from the associate academic dean or the academic dean.
4. Students who are dismissed due to unsatisfactory conduct may apply for readmission no earlier than thirty days after termination. Any reinstatement will be effective the following semester. Readmission will be approved at the discretion of the academic dean.

Section 3.9 Policy on Harassment

Oblate School of Theology strives to provide a workplace and educational environment for all faculty, administration, staff, and students that is free of unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment. Unlawful harassment is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated by any faculty, administration, staff, or student. The Institution will also attempt to protect students from unlawful harassment by non-students in the school.

All students must adhere to OST's policy prohibiting discrimination and harassment while on the institution's premises or while engaging in school-related activities. They are also required to adhere to the policies at Institution sponsored training or other functions and non-OST activities when conduct at those activities may affect the educational environment. All students are prohibited from discriminating against or harassing OST employees, OST students, guests, retreatants, suppliers, and vendors. A violation of the institution's non-discrimination and non- harassment policy may result in corrective action, up to and including expulsion from the School.

In alignment with requirements of the Archdiocese of San Antonio, students in ministry placement are required to complete the three-part Virtus training or a similar program acceptable to the archdiocese in their first semester of courses at Oblate.

The Associate Academic Dean is the designated resource person to educate students regarding this policy.

A. Harassment Defined

1. Unlawful harassment includes any speech or conduct that is intended to, or has the effect of, abusing or harassing anyone because of his or her race, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, physical, mental or emotional disabilities, or religious beliefs. This may include racial slurs, ethnic jokes, posting of offensive statements, posters, cartoons, or other similar conduct.
2. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1991. The 1972 amendment to the 1964 Civil Rights Act (Title IX) prohibits sexual discrimination and sexual harassment of students and all employees in academic institutions. This applies to students who are harassed whenever they are working and/or studying through Oblate School of Theology either on or off campus. Sexual harassment can occur in many forms, including but not limited to, unwelcome physical contact, verbal abuse, written communication of a sexual nature, leering, gestures, and more subtle advances or pressure inviting sexual activity. Such conduct is unlawful where:
 - a. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or educational experience.
 - b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting an individual.
 - c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work, academic performance, participation in extracurricular activities, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment.

Oblate School of Theology is in compliance with the policy on sexual misconduct of the Archdiocese of San Antonio. All new OST students must participate in a workshop given by OST and the Archdiocese. A certificate is awarded each participant and a copy is kept in the student's TFE file.

B. Reporting Incidents

Any person in the academic community may initiate the complaint process. The following procedures represent the internal institutional process. Oblate School of Theology encourages faculty, staff, and students to use the internal system before exploring external means.

Oblate School of Theology will investigate all reported harassment incidents thoroughly and promptly, with as much confidentiality as possible. If, after investigation, it is established that unlawful harassment has taken place, OST will take prompt corrective action against the harasser. The corrective action may consist of verbal or written warnings or other action, up to or including expulsion, depending on the circumstances.

General Information

1. If a student feels that he/she has been unlawfully harassed, or a student witness's unlawful harassment, the student should report the incident immediately to the associate academic dean. If the associate academic dean is the subject of the complaint, the student should report the incident to the academic dean.
2. Persons who receive complaints are responsible for reporting the incident to the human resources director for the purpose of beginning an investigation of the incident. Failure to report a complaint of harassment to the human resources director may result in corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.
3. To the extent possible in the implementation of this policy, the rights of confidentiality of all parties involved in a harassment charge shall be strictly observed.
4. Filing a complaint in good faith or otherwise reporting harassment shall not affect the individual's current status as a student. Retaliation against a person filing a complaint is grounds for a subsequent harassment complaint and is strictly forbidden.
5. No action will be taken against the accused until such time as the complaint is evaluated unless the behavior is egregious. If the behavior is judged egregious the designated administrator may enforce prompt and effective remedial action pending the formal review. Retaliation against the accused party is grounds for a subsequent harassment complaint and is strictly forbidden.
6. A false allegation of harassment is a violation of this policy and is itself subject to the procedures and sanctions mentioned later in this policy. To constitute such a violation, however, the complaint would ordinarily need to be false as to specific allegation of fact. The standard to determine if a complaint is a violation will be based on evidence of a conscious and willful intent to distort or exaggerate the allegation and damage the accused party. A complaint lodged in good faith is not considered a violation of this policy. The investigating party or committee may agree on factual matters alleged but differ in their judgment or interpretation of the incident(s) and conclude that it did not constitute harassment. This situation would not necessarily make the complaint a violation apart from the standard previously cited.

Informal Process

In most cases, complaints of harassment can be dealt with informally. The informal process will be initiated within three (3) months of the alleged incident(s). Informal resolution may take place in one of two ways. It should be noted that attempts at direct resolution are strictly voluntary on the part of the complainant. There is no requirement that the informal process be used.

Option 1. The complaining individual may immediately voice concern, either face to face or in writing, to the person whose actions are unwelcome. Writing a letter, while not necessary, establishes an initial level of documentation of the incident(s). If this route is

chosen, a third party (colleague or faculty advisor) should accompany the complainant when hand delivering the letter to provide independent verification that a letter was delivered on a particular date should further action become necessary. A written record of a verbal attempt at resolution or a copy of the written letter will be kept and filed with the office of the president.

Option 2. The complaining student may seek assistance from the associate academic dean. The associate academic dean will contact the accused party and notify his/her direct supervisor of this action. The associate academic dean will meet with the complainant and the accused party within 10 working days from the complaint. A written record of this attempt at resolution will be kept and filed with the office of the president.

When complaints are judged valid and are resolved informally, the accused party should be cautioned that repetition of such conduct could lead to formal investigation and sanctions. In cases of egregious behavior or repetitive violations of the policy, the accused party is subject to additional sanctions including, but not limited to, suspension and/or dismissal. When complaints are found not to constitute harassment, the complaining party will receive an explanation concerning the reason for the decision.

Whatever option above is selected; the complainant should make the following points in communication with the accused party either verbally or in writing:

1. The date, time, and place the incident(s) of harassment is alleged to have occurred
2. The specific behavior of the accused party, which the complainant found offensive
3. The effect the behavior had on the complainant:
 - a. How the complainant felt (e.g., embarrassed, uncomfortable, humiliated, etc.)
 - b. What the consequences were for the complainant
 - c. What the complainant did or considered doing as a result of feeling this way (e.g., dropped a class, performed poorly on an exam, paper or work assignment, lost sleep, had difficulty concentrating).

The purpose of informal consultation is to resolve problems, heighten awareness, and achieve changes in behavior without resorting to formal investigatory or disciplinary proceedings. Nothing in this section should be construed as discouraging more formal procedures. Serious or repetitive behavior makes the formal process a more appropriate course of action, as does the complaining party's dissatisfaction with the proposed resolution.

Formal Process

Filing a Complaint

A student who wishes to file a formal complaint of harassment must submit a written or oral description of the unwelcome behavior and the circumstances surrounding it to the associate academic dean. The associate academic dean who receives a formal oral complaint will assist the complainant in formulating a written complaint. The associate academic dean will either aid the

complainant in drawing up a written statement or draft a statement for the approval and signature of the complainant. This same administrator will make an initial determination whether immediate action is required by the nature of the allegation. If so, the administrator is empowered to enforce prompt and effective remedial actions. Such actions will remain in place until the recommendations of the investigation are received and acted upon.

Complaints about the president are filed with a member of the executive committee of the board of trustees; about administrators are filed with the president; about faculty with the academic dean; about staff with the director of finance/personnel; about a student with the associate academic dean. If the accused is the administrator who is designated to receive the complaint, the complaint is made directly to the president. The complaint will be filed within three (3) months from the date of the alleged incident(s). The associate academic dean will initiate the formal investigation process. This administrator will notify the president (or the chair of the board or his designate if the accused is the president) of the reception of a complaint and its general nature. The administrator will notify the accused party and provide him/her with a copy of the statement and the identity of the party making the complaint and request a written response to the complaint.

Investigative Team

A three-person investigative team (at least one member must be of the same status as the accused and as the complainant; except in the case that either party is the president) will be appointed as follows:

- a. For allegations against faculty members, the investigative team will be composed of three members chosen by the academic dean.
- b. For allegations against administrators, the investigative team will be composed of three persons chosen by the president.
- c. For allegations against staff, the investigative team will be composed of three persons chosen by the director of finance/personnel.
- d. For allegations against students, the investigative team will be composed of three persons chosen by the associate academic dean.
- e. For allegations against the president, the investigative team will be appointed by, either the chairperson of the board of trustees, or a member of the executive committee of the board identified by the chairperson.

The investigative team will be appointed within 10 working days of receiving the initial complaint. The administrator appointing the investigative team will designate one member of the team as the chair. Prior to initiating its investigation, the team will be briefed by legal counsel as to their responsibilities and duties, including but not limited to, the need for confidentiality, the possibility that their words, work, and process may be reviewed by a trial court through compelled testimony or discovery of the process and/or contents of the investigation and the report.

Investigation of harassment claims by legal counsel may occur in conjunction with or as an alternative to the procedures outlined in this section (Investigative Process) when recommended by legal counsel and approved by the president (chairperson of the board if the accused is the president) or his designee. The investigation will be conducted as expeditiously as possible, and the appropriate provisions of the remaining sections shall apply in all cases.

Investigation

The purpose of the investigation is to establish whether there is a reasonable basis for believing that the alleged violation of this policy has occurred. The investigative team will meet within 10 working days of receiving their appointment.

The team may conduct its own inquiry, including setting up a hearing, calling witnesses, and gathering whatever information it deems necessary to assist it in reaching a determination as to the merits of the allegations.

Hearing

The parties to the dispute shall be invited to appear before the team. The hearing must be a private hearing and no public statements should be made about the case by the investigative team or the parties involved.

The team conducts the hearing, calls witnesses and questions them, and attempts to certify the facts. In no event will the lack of a written response to the allegation or failure to appear at the hearing on the part of the accused party delay the process from proceeding.

Record of Hearing

The investigative team must see that an adequate record is made regarding the hearing, its proceedings, finding, and recommendations. This record is filed with the office of the president, unless the president is a party. If the president is a party, the record is filed with the chairperson of the board.

Findings of the Investigative Team

The investigative team will report its findings and recommendations as soon as possible and in no case more than 30 days following their appointment as an investigative team. The findings and recommendations will be reported to the academic dean (accused is a faculty member); president (accused is an administrator); chair of the board (accused is the president); director of finance/personnel (accused is a staff member); or associate dean (accused is a student). All reports of the investigative team will be filed with the office of the president.

Action

Where allegations are found valid, the administrator noted above is responsible for taking appropriate action, including changes in employment or academic status. Such action will be immediately communicated to the investigative team, the complainant and the accused.

Sanctions

Where the charge of harassment is found to be valid, the accused individual will be subject to actions such as the following:

1. Initial and/or ongoing counseling by a professional counselor
2. Letter of reprimand (a copy of which must become a part of the accused individual's record)
3. Enforced disciplinary withdrawal for repeated, but less-serious harassments
4. Expulsion for flagrant and/or repeated serious offenses

Appeal by the Investigative Committee

Final decisions by the administrator may be appealed by the investigative team to the president of Oblate School of Theology, or in the case of the president to the chairperson of the board. [Decisions of the president regarding administrators are appealed directly to the chair of the board of trustees]. The investigative team must file the appeal within five (5) working days of receiving notification of the action by the administrator. The decision of the president (or the chair of the board of trustees in the case the accused is the president) is final.

Appeal by the Accused of the Complainant

The complainant or the accused party may also file an appeal. The appeal is initially filed with the president [if the complainant or accused is the president, the appeal is filed with the chairperson of the board; if the administrator who made the initial decision is the president the appeal is filed with the chairperson of the board] who must render a decision upon the appeal within 10 working days. A further appeal may be made to the executive committee of the board of trustees. To be timely an appeal must be filed within 10 working days of receipt of notice of the previous action taken. The executive committee must issue its decision within thirty days. The decision of the executive committee is final.

Chapter 4

Financial Information

Section 4.1 Financial Assistance

The Office of Financial Assistance supports OST graduate students seeking the means to fund their education. The most common mechanism for graduate students are loans available from the federal government, often at a low interest rate.

A. Application for Federal Student Aid

To be considered for financial aid, a student must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at www.fafsa.ed.gov/. The results of the FAFSA will be used to determine financial aid eligibility. Please list Oblate School of Theology, federal school code # 003595, as one of the schools to receive your application information.

For questions concerning financial assistance at OST, please call the Office of Financial Assistance at (210) 341-1366 ext. 229.

B. Return to Title IV Funds (R2T4) Policy

How Withdrawal Affects Financial Aid

Federal regulations specify how Oblate School of Theology (OST) must determine the amount of Title IV program assistance that a student has earned if he or she officially withdraws, stops attending, or is dismissed. The Title IV programs used by OST are governed by this law.

Title IV (federal) financial aid funds are awarded under the assumption that a student will remain in classroom attendance for the entire period (semester/term) for which the funds were awarded. When a student withdraws from all courses, stops attending, or is dismissed, the amount of assistance that the student has earned is determined on a prorated basis. The student may no longer be eligible for the full amount of Title IV funds originally awarded. The return of funds to the federal government is based on the premise that a student earns financial aid in proportion to the length of time during which he or she will have earned at the time of full withdrawal. Once a student has successfully completed 60 percent or more of the payment period, he or she has earned all the scheduled assistance for that scheduled period. If the student withdrew and did not receive all of the assistance that was earned, a post-withdrawal disbursement may be due.

How the Date of Withdrawal is Determined

- **Official Withdrawal Process**
The date the student officially notified the Registrar's Office (in writing) of the intent to withdraw.
- **Unofficial Withdrawal Process**
If the student doesn't notify the Registrar's Office of the intent to withdraw, the Registrar will contact the student's instructors to determine the last date of attendance. The latest date reported by an instructor that a student attended a class will be used as the last date of attendance. If no instructors report a last day of attendance to the Registrar's Office, it will be assumed that the student did not attend any classes. Students in this scenario will owe

100% of financial aid funds disbursed, including non-refunded tuition. Leave of Absence (LOA)

Students requesting a leave of absence may do so by contacting the Registrar's Office. A withdrawal is not the same as a leave of absence. If a student does not return to OST at the expiration of an approved LOA (or a student takes an unapproved LOA), the student's withdrawal date will be the date the student began the LOA.

How Earned Financial Aid is Calculated

To determine the amount of federal financial aid earned through the date of withdrawal, the Business Office will use the Department of Education's Title IV Refund Worksheet. The calculation is as based on dividing the number of calendar days you attended classes by the total number of calendar days in the semester/term (less any scheduled break of five days or more). The resulting percentage is then multiplied by the total funds that you accepted. This calculation determines the amount of aid that you earned and are allowed to keep.

This policy can result in you owing Oblate School of Theology tuition that was not covered by financial aid and/or owing the Department of Education for funds you received that were not earned. If you are determined to be in a position where you were over-awarded, you may become ineligible for future Title IV financial aid and a financial hold will be placed on your account by the Business Office until such time as the over award has been resolved.

Oblate School of Theology must return any unearned Title IV funds it is responsible for as soon as possible but no later than 45 days after it is determined that the student withdrew from all courses.

Post-Withdrawal Disbursement

Students who are eligible to receive Title IV Aid but who did not receive their aid prior to making a complete withdrawal may be eligible to receive a disbursement of financial aid funds. If your post-withdrawal disbursement includes loan funds, OST must get your permission before it can disburse them. You may choose to decline some or all of the loan funds so that you don't incur additional debt. OST may automatically use all or a portion of your post-withdrawal disbursement to cover outstanding balances for earned tuition, fees, and room and board charges (if applicable).

Order of Return to Federal Aid Program

In accordance with federal regulations, unearned aid will be returned to the federal Title IV programs the School is eligible to participate in the following order:

- Federal Direct Loans (unsubsidized)
- Federal PLUS Loans

Exception to the "Return of Title IV Funds" Policy

If a student whose tuition and fees are paid in full withdraws from all his or her courses after 60% of the semester/term (in calendar days) has passed, the "Return of Title IV Funds" policy does not

apply. The student will not owe a repayment to the Department of Education, nor will he or she owe the School for tuition and fees.

C. Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for Graduate Students Receiving Financial Aid

When students accept financial aid, they also accept responsibility for making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). This policy is intended to help Oblate School of Theology students understand the requirements for satisfactory academic progress associated with receiving financial assistance.

Federal and State regulations explicitly state that OST must monitor SAP, which is monitored through a qualitative component which includes academic achievement (i.e., grades) and a quantitative component which includes credit hours as well as the number of terms that students have been enrolled.

These criteria are set by OST in order to maintain a high standard of student excellence and success. State and Federal regulations require that the SAP Policy must be as strict or stringent than the OST Academic Progress policy.

Graduate students in the MA (Theology) and MA (Spirituality) programs must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.25. Graduate students in the MDIV and MAPM programs must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5. If a student's cumulative GPA falls below the minimum standard, financial aid will be cancelled immediately. Further, financial aid will be cancelled immediately for any student who is suspended or dismissed.

Each semester (fall, spring, and summer) a graduate student must earn a minimum of 75% of the attempted credit hours registered for at the end of the add/drop date (please check with the registrar's office each semester for the official add/drop date. This calculation is performed by dividing the number of credit hours earned by the number of credit hours attempted. Graduate students must enroll in at least 3 credit hours per semester.

In compliance with federal regulations, the following procedures will be used in evaluating earned credits. In addition to the hours completed for a letter grade, the following types of credit will count as well: (1) transfer credits or hours completed at another school and accepted for credit at OST, (2) in progress (IP) grade will be posted for a thesis, dissertation or research project until the thesis, dissertation or research project has been completed and approved by the thesis/dissertation committee, (3) an incomplete grade issued for a class in which a student has not completed the necessary course work, (4) withdrawal, that is, when students withdraw from a course after the add/drop deadline, and (5) repeat courses taken by students.

Non-credit (NC) and audited (AU) courses do not count towards the calculation of attempted hours.

The OST Financial Aid Office will notify students of their failure to meet the standards of this policy. Students are responsible for knowing their own status, whether or not they receive notification from the Financial Aid Office. Students who fail to meet the standard of this policy

may reestablish their financial aid eligibility by doing the following: students can earn the number of credit hours for which they are deficient or improve their GPA without financial aid (these credit hours may be earned at OST or they may be earned at another institution and transferred to OST for any term after the deficiency occurs). Students should get prior approval from the Registrar's Office to ensure that courses taken at another institution will be accepted. After the deficiency or extenuating circumstance is resolved, the student must submit a written appeal requesting the Financial Aid Office to review their eligibility to receive financial aid.

Appeals must include a detailed description of the extenuating circumstances that occurred during the semester in which the student failed to meet this policy. The appeal must also include all necessary documentation to support the existence of the circumstances described and evidence that the circumstances have been resolved. It must also describe a plan for ensuring satisfactory academic performance in the coming academic term. Events and circumstances that merit an appeal are personal or family emergency, unanticipated, serious medical difficulty (excluding chronic conditions – students are responsible for properly balancing work with known chronic conditions), and/or serious psychological difficulty.

Students seeking to reestablish financial aid eligibility will remain ineligible to receive financial assistance or deferment of payment until the appeal process is complete and a decision has been made by the Financial Aid Office. Students in this position should be prepared to pay tuition, fees, and other educational expenses until they have been approved to receive financial aid again.

Section 4.2 Tuition and Aid Program for On-Campus Study

The Tuition Aid Program is offered to assist those students who are in need of financial support while in studies, to attract certain types of students, and/or to provide for greater service to the Church. The table below summarizes the tuition assistance offered directly by OST. Check the "Who's Eligible" column to see which may apply to you. Applications for each are available in the Finance Office and on the OST website.

In addition to these listed below, the school also participates in the Federal School Loan program, military and VA benefit programs, and other programs provided by governmental and ecclesial agencies. For more information, contact the Finance Office or your program director.

Tuition assistance, grants, and scholarships do not cover fees. They are applied only to tuition.

Section 4.3 Catastrophic Events Policy

This policy defines a catastrophic event as one that severely impacts Oblate School of Theology's (OST) ability to provide services to students. Examples of this could include natural disasters, extreme financial crises or any other unforeseen circumstances that could substantially and negatively attenuate OST's operations.

In the event that, despite preventive measures, a catastrophe occurs that affects regular academic activities, all courses would move online. If courses cannot be moved online, and no other option is available for students to complete their courses, students' tuition would be refunded for the number of weeks left in the semester. All efforts would be made to ensure a smooth transition to another academic facility, if needed. If at least half of the course has been completed, half credit

will be awarded. If the course is near completion, the Dean, in conjunction with the faculty, may make other determinations. A primary goal of strategic planning is Business Continuity, academic and financial. In trying to assure that OST will be able to operate academically and administratively after a catastrophe, steps have been taken to try to diversify how services are provided and where data is stored.

In planning for continuity of education of our students, OST has attempted to reduce or eliminate single point of failure risk by using multiple cloud-vendor Software as a Service (SaaS) providers for managing student services, Learning Management platforms and Financial Accounting.

OST also keeps both hard copy and digital documentation of student records in secure storage in the event of cloud service failure or dissolution.

Tuition Aid Programs for On-Campus Study			
Scholarships	Who's Eligible?	Amount	How to Apply
Women Religious and Parish Personnel	<p>From the same Community</p> <p>From the same Parish Enrolled in the MAPM or MA (Theology).</p>	<p>10% for 2 students</p> <p>20% for 3 students</p> <p>30% for 4 students</p> <p>35% for 5 or more</p>	Complete the Tuition Discount Eligibility Form available from the Finance Office. Deadline for application is the drop/add date of the applicable semester.
Permanent Deacons from the Archdiocese of San Antonio	Permanent Deacons as referred to OST through the Archdiocesan Office of the Permanent Diaconate.	10% for each student.	No Application needed. Student must register for the class in the Registrar's Office.
Seminarians	Seminarians from the same diocese or religious community.	<p>10% for 10-14 students</p> <p>20% for 15-19 students</p> <p>30% for 20-25 students</p> <p>35% for 26 or more</p>	Diocese or Religious Community completes the Tuition Discount Eligibility Form available from the Finance Office.
Formation Directors	Formation directors collaborating with OST.	50% tuition discount.	Complete the Tuition Discount Eligibility Form available from the Finance Office.
Tuition Waivers	Who's Eligible?	Amount	How to Apply
Audit Tuition Waivers	TFE and MAPM Field Supervisors, LMI Field Supervisors, and Adjunct Faculty.	Covers the tuition cost of auditing one course within 12 months of certificate issuance. Additional cost for credit is student's responsibility.	No application process. Eligible supervisors are issued a waiver certificate by the program director.

Tuition Waivers	Adjunct Faculty.	Covers the tuition of one course within 12 months of teaching course.	No application process. Eligible adjunct faculty are issued a waiver certificate by the dean.
OST Employees and Dependents, Oblate Hill Full-Time Employees, and Board of Trustees	All regular OST, ORC, PGC employees and spouses, Oblate Hill F/T Employees, and any member of the OST Board of Trustees.	Covers tuition and fees for OST Employees and covers Tuition only for Oblate Hill Employees and members of the OST Board of Trustees.	No application process. Finance Office verifies name of employee and/or Trustee.
Tuition Assistance	Who's Eligible?	Amount	How to Apply
OST Tuition Assistance	Any Student in any degree or non-degree program at OST.	Up to 1/3 of total tuition costs for a semester.	Complete the Tuition Assistance/Grant Form available from the Finance Office. Deadline for application is August 1st, January 2nd, or May 1st.
Tuition Grants	Who's Eligible?	Amount	How to Apply
OST/VIVA! Tuition Grants	Any student in any degree program at OST.	Up to \$500 per semester per applicant subject to available funds.	Complete the Tuition Assistance/Grant Application Form available from the Finance Office. Deadline for application is August 1st, January 2nd, or May 1st.
Jack Joyce, OMI Tuition Grant	Participants in the Ministry to Ministers program who are native to or have served in Zambia or Africa.	1/2 the tuition cost for Ministry to Ministers.	No Application process. Director of MTM makes the grant known to applicants and notifies the Finance Office of recipient.

Jim Sullivan Grant	Participants in the Ministry to Ministers sabbatical program.	Up to \$1000 for Ministry to Ministers.	No application process. MTM Director makes availability known to potential recipients.
Kenedy Grant	Participants in the Lay Ministry Certification Program	Up to amount of cost of program (varies depending on number of students)	No application process. LMI Director makes availability known to potential recipients.
Scholarships	Who's Eligible?	Amount	How to Apply
Pat Guidon Scholarship	Students continuing from the Lay Ministry Institute to the MAPM degree program. Grant covers MAPM degree credit only.	Covers all tuition for the MAPM degree. Grant is forfeited if student fails to register in two consecutive semesters.	Complete the Pat Guidon Scholarship Application Form available from OST Website or the Finance Office and return to MAPM Director by August 1st.
OST PhD - Spirituality Scholarship	Students pursuing a degree in PhD - Spirituality. Scholarship covers PhD course tuition and fees	Covers tuition and fees for the PhD Spirituality degree. Scholarship is forfeited if student fails to register in two consecutive semesters and/or GPA falls below 3.0.	No application process. Program Director makes the scholarship known to PhD students and notifies the Finance Office of recipient into the program.

Mildred Whalen Scholarship Fund	Any Student in any degree program at OST.	Five Scholarships per academic year up to \$10,000 each.	Use the Mildred Whalen Scholarship Application Form available from the OST Website or the Finance Office. Deadline for application is August 1st, January 2nd, or May 1st.
Lewis Family Scholarship	Any Student in any degree program at OST.	Up to \$2,300 per academic year.	Use the Lewis Family Scholarship Application Form available from the OST Website or the Finance Office. Deadline for application is August 1st, January 2nd, or May 1st.
Gordon Family Scholarship	Any student in any degree program at OST.	Up to \$500 per academic year (depending on fund availability).	Use the Gordon Family Scholarship Application Form available from the OST Website or the Finance Office. Submit application by August 1st, January 2nd, or May 1st.
Friends of Oblate Scholarship	Any student in any degree program at OST.	Up to \$500 per academic year (depending on fund availability).	Use the Friends of Oblate Scholarship Application Form available from the OST Website or the Finance Office. Submit application by August 1st, January 2nd, or May 1st.
Trustee Scholarship	New, first-time OST student enrolling in a degree program. Student must have undergraduate/graduate GPA of 3.9	Full cost of tuition (excluding fees) for 1st semester enrolled in degree program.	No application process. Registrar advises new/prospective students. Registrar provides Finance office with list of eligible students and supporting documents.

President's Scholar Award	New, first-time OST student enrolling in a degree program. Student must have undergraduate/graduate GPA of 3.75	1/3 of cost of tuition (excluding fees) for 1st semester enrolled in degree program.	No application process. Registrar advises new/prospective students. Registrar provides Finance office with list of eligible students and supporting documents.

Chapter 5

Where to Find More Detailed Information

Section 5.1 General Information

This section seeks to assist students with finding the appropriate office, person, or location where information on various topics may be found. Much of this has been covered in this Handbook or in the current Catalog. Almost all of it is also available on the OST web site – www.ost.edu. It is listed here for your convenience.

Academic Programs	Current Catalog
Academic Calendar	OST web site
Admissions Procedures	Current Catalog or Registrar's Office
Alumni Programs Development Office	
Continuing Education	OST web site
Evaluation and Assessment of Academic Programs	Academic Dean
Field Education TFE Handbook or TFE Director	
Financial Aid Finance Office	
Financial Information	Finance Office
Final Projects for Master Degrees	Program Director and current Catalog
Fund Raising Programs	Development Office
Harassment Policy Associate Academic Dean	
Information Technology Issues	IT department
International Student/Immigration Issues	Registrar's Office
Military or VA Benefits	Registrar's Office
Other Programs at OST such as MTM, LMI, IFP	Current Catalog or Program Director
Semester Schedule OST website	

See your Advisor

First for help with any issue you may have regarding selection of classes, and development a plan of study for your degree.

See your Program Director

With questions regarding your degree program or to investigate other programs.

See the Office of the Academic Dean

If you need further assistance, if your advisor recommends you do so, or if the policy you are following calls for you to do so.

See the Registrar's Office

For information on immigration status, military or VA benefits, for documentation of any kind for just about anything.

See the Finance Office

With any questions about billing, payments, or financial aid.

Section 5.2 Abbreviations and Acronyms

ATS	Association of Theological Schools
BTC	Gayle and Tom Benson Theological Center
Cand	Candidate (for a degree)
CCVI	Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word
CELAM	Latin American Bishops' Conference
CICM	Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary -- Missionhurst
CMF	Congregation of the Sons of Mary -- Claretians
COSTS	Council of Southwestern Theological Schools
CPE	Clinical Pastoral Education
CPS	Certificate of Pastoral Studies
CSB	Congregation of St. Brigid -- Brigidine Sisters
CSC	Congregation of Holy Cross
CSsR	Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer -- Redemptorists
DMin	Doctor of Ministry
DD	Doctor of Divinity
EdD	Doctor of Education
ESL	English as a Second Language
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974
FTE	Full Time Equivalency
GED	General Equivalency Diploma
GPA	Grade Point Average
GRE	Graduate Record Exam
HECSA	Higher Education Council of San Antonio
IFP/PFI	Instituto de Formación Pastoral / Pastoral Formation Institute
JCD	Doctor of Canon Law
JCL	Licentiate in Canon Law
JD	Doctor of Jurisprudence (Civil law)
LMI	Lay Ministry Institute
MA	Master of Arts
MACC	Mexican American Catholic College
MAPM	Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry
MA (Spirituality)	Master of Arts (Spirituality)
MA (Theology)	Master of Arts (Theology)
MCL	Master of Canon Law
MDiv	Master of Divinity
MEd	Master of Education
MLS	Master of Library Science
MRE	Master of Religious Education
MS	Master of Science
MSF	Missionaries of the Holy Family
MTM	Ministry to Ministers
MTS	Master of Theological Studies
OCLC	On-Line Cataloging Library Center

OFM	Order of Friars Minor
OFM Cap	Order of Friars Minor Capuchin
OFM Conv	Order of Friars Minor Conventual
OLLU	Our Lady of the Lake University
OMI	Oblates of Mary Immaculate - Missionary Oblates
OP	Order of Preachers - Dominicans
ORC	Oblate Renewal Center
OST	Oblate School of Theology
OSST	The Order of the Most Holy Trinity (Trinitarians)
PFS	Pastoral Formation Seminar
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PhL	Licentiate in Philosophy
PPF	Program of Priestly Formation (of the U.S. Bishops)
PsyD	Doctor of Psychology
RCIA	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
SACS	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test (or: San Antonio, Texas)
PSS	Society of Priests of St. Sulpice - Sulpicians
SSCM	Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius
SSL	Licentiate in Sacred Scripture
STB	Baccalaureate of Sacred Theology
STD	Doctor of Sacred Theology
STL	Licentiate in Sacred Theology
TFE	Theological Field Education
ThD	Doctor of Theology
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TOR	Third Order Regular - Third Order Franciscans
UIW	University of the Incarnate Word
USCCB	United States Catholic Conference of Bishops
VA	Veterans' Administration
WTC	Whitley Theological Center

Many of the abbreviations, initials, and acronyms listed above can also be found with periods after each letter.