

BIRMINGHAM THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2016 - CURRENT

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Welcome from the President

Dear Student:

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ. We are excited that the Lord has prompted you to enroll at Birmingham Theological Seminary and look forward to growing together in the grace and knowledge of Christ. I encourage you to take the time to read the Student Handbook and particularly the information on the history and educational distinctives of BTS. It is these distinctives, as fleshed out in our curriculum and the classroom, which guide our approach to seminary education and which make BTS a truly unique institution.

You will quickly discover that our professors are not only excellent teachers, but also bring years of practical ministry experience into the classroom. Your instructors will be an encouragement to you and a great resource for you during your time at BTS and for many years after you graduate. I encourage you to look for ways to benefit from their experience and wisdom.

We are confident you will be challenged academically in your courses and will also gain practical knowledge for life and ministry. As you dig deeper into the truths of Scripture, I encourage you to diligently and deliberately apply what you learn. Remember, “Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.” (James 2:23-25).

Our staff at BTS is ready to serve you, and I encourage you to contact our office with questions, suggestions, prayer requests and requests for assistance. We pray that your time at BTS will better equip you to lead God’s Church.

May the Lord use you greatly to advance the Kingdom!

In the Service of the King,

Glenn G. Waddell
President

Welcome from the Vice President

Dear Birmingham Theological Seminary student,

Warmest greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! As Vice President at Birmingham Theological Seminary, I personally welcome you! Today you are beginning a significant and unique Christian theological journey that will be academically challenging yet practically applicable; that will not only enrich your personal life but will also equip you to teach and minister God's Word clearly, effectively and boldly.

Your decision to seek an advanced degree is to be admired and respected. BTS in its design presents the opportunity to achieve advanced degrees, while still maintaining family life, ministerial responsibilities, and/or secular employment.

One of the chief strengths of BTS is its faculty. These highly qualified instructors are "pastor-professors," with significant years of ministerial experience. This presents opportunities in the classroom, not only of an academic and theological nature, but for actual, practical, real-life, everyday applications that will come before you.

"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit the same to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." II Timothy 2:2

There are particular and vital components essential to your future success as seminary students: family, personal prayer life, self-study habits, self-discipline and self-motivation. You must develop consistency in your reading, writing, studying, and class participation to think through, critique, synthesize and apply the information given. The Apostle Paul tells us what our study habits and motivation are to be in II Timothy 2:15 and about our personal disciplines in Galatians 5:22-23.

The Administrative staff of Birmingham Theological Seminary is here to help. The Seminary office is open Monday through Thursday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. You can contact me personally at 205-776-5386 or tjames@briarwood.org.

May God bless you and may His perfect peace be with you as you work toward completion of your degree. Do not be discouraged or dismayed; keep your focus on Christ.

In His Service

Dr. Thad James, Jr.
Vice President

DIRECTORY

HOW TO FIND ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, please review the following:

- Student Handbook – Most questions can be answered by using this guide.
- BTS Catalog – Available online at www.birminghamseminary.org or www.btsweb.com
- BTS Website – www.birminghamseminary.org

The BTS Website

BTS's website provides pertinent information to all current and potential students. The complete catalog with degree programs, curriculums, and course descriptions is there. In addition, the website allows students to plan their seminary opportunities up to a year in advance through the online course rotation schedule. Booklists, syllabi, and course rotations are also posted on the website. New students should go to the website and sign up on our e-mail distribution list.

HOW TO CONTACT BTS

Mailing Address

Birmingham Theological Seminary
2200 Briarwood Way
Suite A-203
Birmingham, AL 35243
205-776-5650
205-776-5241 Fax

Email Address

bts@briarwood.org
www.birminghamseminary.org or www.btsweb.com

Contact Telephone Numbers and Email Address

Mr. Glenn G. Waddell
President 205-776-5280
gwaddell@briarwood.org

Dr. Thad James, Jr.
Vice President 205-776-5386
tjames@briarwood.org

Dr. Howard Eyrich
Director, DMin Program, Biblical Counseling 205-776-5344
heyrich@briarwood.org

Dr. Jim Maples
Director, DMin Program, Pastoral Leadership 256-531-6529
jimmaples@charter.net

Mrs. Jackie Hamamatsu
Registrar 205-776-5354
jhamamatsu@briarwood.org

Mrs. Irene Hayes
Administrative Assistant 205-776-5356
btsadmin@briarwood.org

Mr. Brandon Robbins
Director of Distance Education 205-776-5110
brobbins@briarwood.org

Rev. Larry Cockrell
Clinical Advisor, M.A. in Ministry Program 205-836-5758
ldcockrell@aol.com

DEGREE PROGRAM HEADS

Master of Divinity Dr. Dave Matthews	205-776-5211 dmatthews@briarwood.org
Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling Dr. Howard Eyrich	205-776-5344 heyrich@briarwood.org
Master of Arts in Ministry Dr. Thad James, Jr.	205-776-5386 tjames@briarwood.org
Master of Arts in Apologetics Dr. Vic Minish	256-454-5449 vicminish@bellsouth.net
Master of Arts in Biblical Studies Rev. Larry Cockrell	205-836-5758 ldcockrell@aol.com
Doctor of Ministry in Biblical Counseling Dr. Howard Eyrich	205-776-5344 heyrich@briarwood.org
Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Leadership Dr. Jim Maples	256-531-6529 jimmaples@charter.net

If there is someone you are trying to contact not listed here, please contact the seminary office for more information (776-5650).

GENERAL

OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Thursday
8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

Closed on Friday

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

New Year's Day

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

Day after Thanksgiving

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

**BIRMINGHAM THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
SCHOOL CALENDAR, 2016 - 2019**

SPRING TERM 2016

Registration:	January 2016
Classes Begin:	January 18, 2016
Drop/Add:	January 29, 2016
**SPRING BREAK	March 7 – March 11, 2016 NO SEMINARY CLASSES
++Board Meeting:	Thursday, April 14, 2016
Classes End:	April 22, 2016
Final Grades Due:	May 6, 2016*for graduates, April 29 th
Faculty/spouse Dinner	Friday, May 13, 2016 - 5:30 PM
Graduation:	Friday, May 13, 2016 - 7:00 PM
Incomplete Grades Due:	June 3, 2016

SUMMER TERM 2016

Registration:	May 2016
Classes Begin:	May 30, 2016
Drop/Add:	June 10, 2016
Classes End:	August 26, 2016
Final Grades Due:	September 9, 2016
Incomplete Grades Due:	October 7, 2016

FALL TERM 2016

Registration:	August 2016
Classes Begin:	September 5, 2016
Drop/Add:	September 16, 2016
++Faculty Meeting:	Thursday, October 6, 2016 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
**FALL BREAK	October 10-14, 2015 NO SEMINARY CLASSES
++Board Meeting:	Thursday, October 13, 2016
Classes End:	December 9, 2016
Final Grades Due:	December 23, 2016
Incomplete Grades Due:	January 20, 2017

FALL TERM 2017

Registration:	August 2017
Classes Begin:	September 5, 2017 (Tuesday)
Drop/Add:	September 15, 2017
++Faculty Meeting:	Thurs., October 5, 2017 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
**FALL BREAK	October 9-13, 2017 NO SEMINARY CLASSES
Classes End:	December 15, 2017
Final Grades Due:	December 29, 2017
Incomplete Grades Due:	January 26, 2018

**BIRMINGHAM THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
SCHOOL CALENDAR, 2016 - 2019**

SPRING TERM 2018

Registration:	January 2018
Classes Begin:	January 22, 2018
Drop/Add:	February 2, 2018
**SPRING BREAK	March 5 – March 9, 2018 NO SEMINARY CLASSES
Classes End:	May 4, 2018
Final Grades Due:	May 18, 2018*for graduates, May 4 th
Faculty/spouse Dinner	Friday, May 18, 2018 - 5:30 PM
Graduation:	Friday, May 18, 2018 - 7:00 PM
Incomplete Grades Due:	June 15, 2018

SUMMER TERM 2018

Registration:	May 2018
Classes Begin:	May 21, 2018
Drop/Add:	June 1, 2018
Classes End:	August 24, 2018
Final Grades Due:	September 7, 2018
Incomplete Grades Due:	October 5, 2018

FALL TERM 2018

Registration:	August 2018
Classes Begin:	September 4, 2018 (Tuesday)
Drop/Add:	September 14, 2018
++Faculty Meeting:	Thurs., October 4, 2018 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
**FALL BREAK	October 8-12, 2018 NO SEMINARY CLASSES
Classes End:	December 14, 2018
Final Grades Due:	December 28, 2018
Incomplete Grades Due:	January 25, 2019

SPRING TERM 2019

Registration:	January 2019
Classes Begin:	January 21, 2019
Drop/Add:	February 1, 2019
**SPRING BREAK	March 4 – March 8, 2019 NO SEMINARY CLASSES
Classes End:	May 3, 2019
Final Grades Due:	May 17, 2019*for graduates, May 3
Faculty/spouse Dinner	Friday, May 17, 2019 - 5:30 PM
Graduation:	Friday, May 17, 2019 - 7:00 PM
Incomplete Grades Due:	June 14, 2019

**BIRMINGHAM THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
SCHOOL CALENDAR, 2016 - 2019**

SUMMER TERM 2019

Registration:	May 2019
Classes Begin:	May 20, 2019
Drop/Add:	May 31, 2019
Classes End:	August 23, 2019
Final Grades Due:	September 6, 2019
Incomplete Grades Due:	October 4, 2019

FALL TERM 2019

Registration:	August 2019
Classes Begin:	September 3, 2019 (Tuesday)
Drop/Add:	September 13, 2019
++Faculty Meeting:	Thurs., October 3, 2019 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
**FALL BREAK	October 7-11, 2019 NO SEMINARY CLASSES
Classes End:	December 13, 2019
Final Grades Due:	December 27, 2019
Incomplete Grades Due:	January 24, 2020

INTRODUCTION

OUR RICH HISTORY

Birmingham Theological Seminary (BTS) was founded in 1972. Two men, Dr. Frank Barker, Pastor Emeritus of Briarwood Presbyterian Church, and Dr. Bill Hay, Pastor Emeritus of Covenant Presbyterian Church, saw the need for men and women to be trained for full-time Christian service to enrich their personal lives, increase their knowledge of the things of the Lord, and to be better equipped to teach, preach, and witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. These men also saw the need to enable those who felt God's call to study for Christian work to do so on a part-time basis, if obligations would not allow them to study full-time. Students could have the option to work full-time and also to attend classes in the evening.

BTS was initially known as the "Birmingham Extension Seminary for Theological Education," often referred to as "BES." BES began offering classes in the fall of 1972 at the Edgewood Presbyterian Church located in Homewood. The seminary began with two degrees, Master of Divinity and Master of Religious Education. Six classes were offered, with 52 students enrolled: 17 M.Div., 14 M.R.E., and 21 audits. It was the expectation that eventually BES would become the extension of a major seminary. However, in 1980, the name of the seminary was changed to "Birmingham Theological Seminary," and BTS has continued to operate as a separate institution. During its 43 year history, more than 3500 students have taken one or more courses and over 350 students have been awarded Master's level degrees. BTS offers courses in various locations around the state of Alabama and in foreign countries such as New Zealand, Uganda, Cuba, and Australia, by distance education and through relationships with other seminaries.

We are privileged to enjoy a wonderfully diverse group of students and professors.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

BTS adheres to the following Statement of Faith:

God is one Being existing in three Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God is Sovereign; the Creator and the Sustainer of all things. God is the Source of and end of all truth.

The Scriptures are the written Word of God; inerrant in their original writings, and the infallible authority by which He directs and governs all our activities.

Jesus Christ is the eternal begotten Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary - truly God - truly Man. Through Christ's life, death, resurrection and ascension, He accomplished a decisive victory over sin for His people and established His kingdom among men.

Man was created in the image of God as a rational, moral and spiritual being. Man sinned in Adam and fell with him in his first transgression. Man's fall affected him spiritually, intellectually and physically. He is restored only by the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit and the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord will return in glory and triumph for the final judgment and the consummation of His Kingdom.

All members of faculty, coordinators and Board members must also agree and adhere to one or more of the following historic creeds:

- Westminster Confession of Faith
- Philadelphia Confession
- London Confession of 1689
- Heidelberg Catechism

OUR MISSION

Providing sound Biblical and practical theological training to equip leaders for Christ's Church.

BTS is theologically Reformed, evangelistic in focus and committed to the inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture. The seminary strives for academic excellence, through a program of instruction which is practical and useful for effective ministry. BTS maintains relationships with several seminaries overseas and is intentionally engaged in global missions.

The BTS faculty is composed of pastors and others in full-time ministry who serve the seminary on an adjunct basis. Classes are held in existing church facilities in the Birmingham area and at extensions around Alabama. These two unique features combine to produce practical theological training at a cost of less than 20% of the national average for seminary tuition. The faculty and student body represent a remarkable ethnic and denominational diversity.

The BTS student body is composed of lay leaders interested in learning more about theology and individuals called to full-time ministry. Classes are offered in the evenings, early mornings and by distance education. Most BTS students take classes on a part-time basis, and many students are already serving churches as full-time or bi-vocational pastoral staff members.

OUR VISION

Producing leaders for Christ's Church who are becoming spiritually mature as evidenced by effective ministry.

MORE ABOUT BTS

The BTS programs are primarily designed to accommodate those who wish to pursue their studies on a part-time basis. The student may elect to take all their course work at BTS and be granted a degree from BTS. Other students may choose to attend BTS for only a few semesters before transferring to a full time residence program at another seminary. An increasingly popular option is for the student to combine regular campus classes with the BTS Distance Education component to facilitate a more rapid completion of their program while remaining in the work force and active in their home church.

ACCREDITATION

BTS is a charter member of the Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries (ARTS). Although ARTS is an accrediting agency, it has not yet obtained recognition from the U.S. Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The ARTS Board of Directors has directed the ARTS Executive Director of the Accreditation Commission to apply for CHEA recognition. As a religious institution offering graduate degrees, BTS is exempt from Alabama licensure laws. Distance Education students should be aware of the following information related to the issue of accreditation. In response to the proliferation of “diploma mills” around the nation, some states have tightened their laws regarding which out-of-state institutions can offer classes and degrees to their residents. The tendency in those states is to exclude all institutions which do not have an accreditation recognized by CHEA or the U.S. Department of Education. While BTS believes that the classes and degree programs it offers are of very high quality, prospective students should be aware of this issue. If you live in a state which has restrictions on out-of-state institutions of higher education, you should confirm that those restrictions do not affect your ability to earn a degree through BTS before enrolling in any program.

CREDIT TRANSFERS

Credits from BTS have been accepted at several evangelical institutions, subject to the policies and degree requirements of each school. The student who expects to receive a degree from an institution other than BTS should write for specific information concerning applicability of work taken through BTS. Several major

seminaries have been willing to either accept transfer credit from BTS or recognize a BTS degree as the prerequisite for pursuing advanced degrees.

Significant Relationships

The curriculum has been designed to fulfill the requirements of the uniform curriculum of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) and has been approved by the Theological Education Committee of the PCA General Assembly. Thus, Master of Divinity graduates of BTS are eligible for ordination in any presbytery of the PCA.

The PCA adopted an internship program which must be completed prior to ordination in addition to the Master of Divinity degree. BTS is structured to accommodate this additional requirement.

Birmingham Theological Seminary is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation, able to grant degrees in the State of Alabama pursuant to Chapter 46 of Title 16 of the Alabama Code.

DEGREES OFFERED

In addition to the Master of Divinity degree, BTS offers the following Master's degree programs: Apologetics, Biblical Studies, Ministry, and Biblical Counseling. The Master of Arts in Ministry degree program has three areas of focus to choose from: Christian Education, Christian Leadership and Pastoral Leadership. BTS also has a Certificate track that includes Apologetics, Biblical Counseling, Biblical Studies, and Ministry. BTS has a Doctor of Ministry program in Pastoral Leadership and another one in Biblical Counseling. The Certificate of Biblical Counseling is for those desiring the counseling training without the full complement of courses. The Certificate of Ministry offers students a basic theological and practical ministry foundation that will be helpful as they seek to serve in the Kingdom community. The Certificate programs are primarily designed for those students that have not obtained an undergraduate degree. Details of these programs are supplied in the catalog.

The Seminary also offers an online Certificate in Christian Ministry (CCM) to non-U.S. residents only via the internet. Non-U.S. residents may take courses in the Certificate in Christian Ministry curriculum for academic credit and will, upon satisfactory completion of all required courses, earn a Certificate in Christian Ministry from BTS. The specific requirements for each course are set

forth in the syllabus for that course. Academic credits earned in this Certificate in Christian Ministry program may not be transferred to or applied to any other certificate or degree offered by BTS. BTS does not charge fees or tuition for this certificate program.

U.S. residents (regardless of citizenship or immigration status) may **not** take CCM courses for academic credit at BTS or earn the BTS Certificate in Christian Ministry. However, U.S. residents may and are encouraged to view the courses, download the readings and take the quizzes and exams for their own edification.

PRIVACY ISSUES

Due to current privacy concerns, students have the right to review educational records relating to them and the right to request, by informal amendment or by formal hearing, changes in those records if it is believed that the records are inaccurate, misleading or violate the students' rights. **Information about students' records will not be released to third parties without the express written consent of the student (including transcripts and financial records).** However, BTS reserves the right to release such records to its contractors and government agencies as necessary to conduct the ordinary operations of BTS, including tax reporting, compliance with federal and state law and court orders, and financial compilations or audits. BTS will request that such third parties maintain the confidentiality of student records.

STUDENT LIFESTYLES

BTS is a religious, non-profit Seminary representing Jesus Christ to Birmingham and the world. The policies of BTS have been and continue to be in submission to the Word of God. BTS expects its students to conduct themselves in a manner that will not raise questions regarding their Christian testimonies. A Christian lifestyle should reflect the Biblical perspective of integrity and appropriate personal and family relationships, business conduct and moral behavior (1 Corinthians 10:31, Colossians 3:17). Students should be aware that this includes how they utilize such technology as the internet, texting, social networking and blogging. Birmingham Theological Seminary embraces, affirms and teaches the gift of sexuality, divinely designed as an act of intimacy to be embraced only within the bounds of a heterosexual, monogamous, covenantal, conjugal marital relationship. Sexual activity outside of those bounds or advocacy of same is not consistent with the Christian lifestyle BTS expects of students. BTS students are expected to demonstrate a teachable spirit, an ability to share love for others, a willingness to live

contentedly under authority and a commitment to follow Matthew 18 principle when an issue arises with fellow students. The BTS Statement of Faith expects all students to maintain a lifestyle based on Biblical standards of moral conduct in which Christ has pre-eminence (Colossians 1:18)

BTS students are not allowed to bring firearms, weapons, explosives, or other dangerous materials on campus unless certified by the State of Alabama as a Law Enforcement/Peace Officer.

PUBLICATION NOTICE

Every effort is made to provide accurate and up to date information. Birmingham Theological Seminary reserves the right to change statements in the Student Handbook concerning, but not limited to, policies, academic offerings, tuition and fees. BTS will make a reasonable effort to alert current students of any changes. However, it is the student's obligation to review this handbook periodically and be aware of its content. The information in this handbook supersedes and replaces the information in all previous publications. Where there is a conflict between the versions of the handbook, the most current version takes precedence.

STUDENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Current student contact information is necessary for the staff and faculty at BTS to communicate with the students. It is the responsibility of every student to ensure that BTS has accurate postal address information as well as a telephone number and a current email address. Each time their contact information changes students should notify the Seminary Office via email at btsadmin@briarwood.org, or fax at 205-776-5241, or telephone at 205-776-5650.

BTS POLICY ON TAPING CLASSES

If a student has to miss a class, it is his/her responsibility to seek the permission of the professor to tape the class and to arrange with another student to do the taping. No taping equipment may interfere with the professional taping of a class (e.g. no radio or wireless devices). If a student is going to miss a class that has already been produced on DVD, CD-ROM or Dropbox the student may purchase the appropriate DVD, CD-ROM, Flash Drive or Dropbox. The Department of Distance Education will be unable to provide tapes, DVDs, CDs

or Dropbox for a class that is being taped for Distance Education. Only classes that have already been completed for Distance Education are available. At this time, no media are available on a checkout basis, but only for purchase. It is the *responsibility of the student* to make the above outlined arrangements in the case of a missed class.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Students are encouraged to discuss any personal matters and seek desired guidance from any faculty or staff member.

The seminary staff will make every effort to assist student's needs (physical, personal, psychological, emotional, spiritual, practical, or relational), but does not offer counseling services.

POSITION ON ORDINATION

BTS holds itself responsible for providing Christ- honoring studies in accordance with our mission purpose statement. BTS does not ordain clergy or attempt to evaluate an individual's personal calling or position in the body of Christ.

CLAIMS AND DISPUTES

Any claim or dispute arising from or related to the student's relationship to BTS shall be settled by mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, a division of Peacemaker® Ministries (complete text of the Rules is available at www.Peacemaker.net). Judgment upon an arbitration decision may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction. The parties understand that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising out of this agreement and expressly waive their right to file a lawsuit in any civil court against one another for such disputes, except to enforce an arbitration decision.

ADMISSIONS

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Birmingham Theological Seminary admits students of any race, color, sex, handicap, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, and activities generally afforded or made available to all its students. Birmingham Theological Seminary does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, handicap, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational and admission policies. BTS does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational programs or activities including admission or employment, except in the matter of ordination, and certain courses restricted to men, related to the question of ordination. While not being an official agency of the Presbyterian Church in America, BTS is associated with the PCA and adheres to the position of the denomination, which biblically restricts the ordained office to men.

BTS will make every reasonable effort to accommodate disabilities, and disabled students are welcome.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

BTS does not utilize the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Graduate Record Examination, or any other standardized test as a measure for admission. BTS has an open enrollment policy. Any qualified applicant may enroll in courses and/or degree programs however; the applicant must meet the academic, admissions and financial requirements.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

In order to be considered for acceptance, a student applying for enrollment in the seminary must supply the following:

- A. Completed application (application form obtained from the seminary office or the seminary web site.) Applications for admission must ordinarily be in the seminary office one month prior to the start of a semester or the beginning of a directed study or distance learning course.
- B. Official transcripts from previous undergraduate schools should be mailed to the BTS office directly from the school. The official

transcript is due in the seminary office within 30 days of application for admission.

- C. Receipt of \$30.00 application fee (one-time, non-refundable fee). The application fee for doctoral students is \$175.00. The application fee is required when application is submitted and is non-refundable. Payment of the application fee does not guarantee admission to the seminary. A letter of acceptance will be mailed upon the approval of the application for admission.
- D. Applicants must provide three completed reference forms (supplied) from:
- Your Pastor
 - Business or other reference
 - A close friend
 - College professor or other instructor
 - An officer of your church

For those students registering as a degree candidate, an interview with the Seminary President or Vice President may be required prior to admission.

DEGREE- SEEKING STUDENTS

Prerequisite requirements for degree seeking students vary according to degree level. Certificate applicants are required to have a high school diploma or have completed the General Educational Development (GED) test. Applicants for a master's level program must have an earned bachelor's degree from an approved school. However, certificates may be earned without an undergraduate degree. Applicants to the doctoral programs must have a master's degree from an approved school. Additionally, more specific prerequisites may apply to individual programs. Applicants should refer to the degree listings in the catalog for further information. All applications are reviewed by the Vice President. The Vice President evaluates schools to determine acceptability of prerequisite degrees and transfer credits.

As many as 10 percent (10%) of the students in master's level degree programs may be admitted without possession of the baccalaureate degree or its equivalent, provided the applicant can demonstrate by some objective means that he or she possess the knowledge, academic skill, and ability generally associated with persons who hold the baccalaureate degree. Admission of such students is restricted to persons with life experience and sufficient evidence of

undergraduate credits that has prepared them for theological study at the graduate level. The decisions will be made by the President or Vice President.

A limited number of students may be admitted to courses as audit students.

Individuals who apply and are accepted to BTS, but who do not take any courses in a year, must re-apply to BTS. Applications will be kept on file for two years.

Students sometimes find the need to take a break in completing courses due to personal or professional matters. If a student returns to complete a degree with BTS, and has not taken classes in a two year period, the student may return to the seminary but must submit an updated application; new references are not required. In addition, the student must comply with the degree requirements under the current catalog at the time of returning to seminary. Students who have completed a substantial portion of their degree program may request a waiver from this requirement.

Students who have been awarded the BTS Master of Arts in Biblical Studies degree may continue their studies in pursuit of a “higher” Master’s degree, such as a Master of Divinity degree. Because academic credit may not be applied toward two different degrees, the student, upon earning the “higher” degree, forfeits the Master of Arts in Biblical Studies degree and all rights associated with that degree.

NON-DEGREE SEEKING STUDENTS

An individual in the process of completing a degree at another approved institution may apply as a non-degree seeking student at BTS, pending completion of the degree from the other institution. Those not pursuing a degree at the time of enrollment are admitted as non-degree seeking students and must show the Vice President that they have the background and course prerequisites necessary for the courses in which they are interested. This category of enrollment does not constitute admission to the school as a degree seeking student in any BTS program.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

Students who wish to transfer from other graduate institutions should apply for admission in the usual way, submitting with their application and required admission documents a completed transcript of their graduate work. A request

for transfer credit should be accompanied by a catalog containing the course descriptions from the previous institution. The credits must be of a comparable graduate level and the courses must apply to the BTS curriculum.

Credit for work completed in other institutions may be granted after evaluation by BTS. No credit will be given for work receiving less than a “C” or its equivalent. Grade point averages will only be determined by work completed at Birmingham Theological Seminary.

Transfer credit will be given the grade of “TR.” Students are required to pay a posting fee of \$30 per transfer credit hour. Bachelor/undergraduate courses cannot be transferred as graduate courses. Credits are not given for “Life” or ministry experience. Course work completed to earn a Bachelors or Master’s Degree cannot be used toward earning another degree. Core courses in the various degree programs at BTS (equivalent courses at other institutions will be considered on a case by case basis) need not be repeated to pursue another degree. Only professional components of the additional degree must be completed. Some additional work may be required.

Transfer students must complete at least one-third of the hours required for any degree program at Birmingham Theological Seminary. Transfer students may be required to take more than the minimum requirements for graduation because courses taken elsewhere may not be equivalent to those in the BTS curriculum and all courses are transferred at the rate of two (2) credit hours per course.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Upon written request with appropriate documentation, BTS will evaluate whether a student’s ministry experience demonstrates a mastery of skills or competencies sufficient to satisfy some portion of the requirements in a particular course. In that event, the student will be allowed to register for the course as a directed study to complete the remainder of the course requirements. Students who have significant experience in research and writing at the undergraduate or graduate level may request permission to take an elective course in lieu of Communications I (PT5527).

ACCEPTANCE TO SEMINARY

A student is considered fully accepted when all required documentation is received and approved. A student may be accepted to BTS provisionally when

there is outstanding documentation such as an official transcript. Upon acceptance to the seminary, a letter of acceptance is issued to the student.

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS

In order to validate program prerequisites and transfer credits (if applicable), official transcripts are required within 30 days of application. Copies or student-issued transcripts may be used during the enrollment process for preliminary evaluation; however, they are not considered official.

To be considered official, transcripts must be sent to BTS via one of the methods:

- The educational institution sends the official transcript directly to BTS via postal mail, electronically or
- The educational institution sends the official transcript to the student in a sealed envelope, and the student sends the sealed envelope to BTS. (If the seal is broken before arriving at BTS, the transcript will not be considered official)

Students who fail to ensure that all official transcripts have been submitted to BTS: (1) may not be admitted to a particular BTS degree program or be allowed to continue in the program, (2) will not be permitted to graduate until they have ensured that BTS has received all of the required official transcripts.

INTERNATIONAL TRANSCRIPTS

If international transcripts are not in English, an English translation is also required. Whenever possible, BTS will evaluate international credentials in-house. For any international credentials BTS determines must be evaluated by an approved outside evaluation agency, BTS will notify the applicant/student accordingly. The applicant/student will be responsible for contacting the outside evaluation agency, as well as any costs incurred.

THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROGRAM (D.MIN)

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP and BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Please see the BTS Catalog for more specific information on both D.Min programs.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

BTS is authorized under Federal law to enroll nonimmigrant alien students. 8 C.F.R. §214.3 (j) International students seeking admission to BTS should complete all admissions requirements listed in the admission procedures and complete the forms at www.birminghamseminary.org under the Admissions link, click Application and Forms, scroll down to **International Students**.

All International students, who intend to attend classes in the U.S., must apply for admission to Birmingham Theological Seminary. The admission process must be 100% complete prior to the issuance of Form I-20 and before the applicant is eligible for enrollment.

FEES AND TUITION

Application Fee\$30

Doctoral Application Fee\$175

(To be paid once at time of application: non-refundable)

Late Registration Fee\$25 per course

(Applied to accounts not fully paid by the first day of class)

Tuition Charges:

Credit \$100.00/Class Hr.

Non-Credit (Audit). \$40.00/Class Hr.

(Due no later than the first day of class to avoid late fees)

Doctoral Program

Credit \$200.00/Class Hr.

Student Services Fee \$30 Annually

Drop/Add Fee \$15 per course

Outside Reader Fee for Dissertation \$400.00

Transfer Credit/Posting Fees	\$30 per hour
Biblical Counseling Internship Fee	\$100.00
Returned Check Fees	\$35.00
Graduation Fee (required of all graduates)	\$200.00
Duplicate or replacement diploma	\$30.00

Distance Education Fees

Interactive CD-ROM Material Fee	\$40.00
DVD Material Fee	\$80.00
Flash Drive	\$20.00
Dropbox	\$20.00
<i>Audio</i> CD Material Fee (shipping)	\$5.00
<i>DVD</i> Material Fee (shipping)	\$10.00
Extension for Directed Study/Distance Education (30 day)	\$50 per course

WHEN TO APPLY AND ENROLL

BTS operates on a continuous enrollment system. This means that any qualified applicant may enroll in courses and/or degree programs offered by BTS at any time (Except Doctoral Programs). The applicant must meet the established admission requirements.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Approximately, two months prior to the beginning of each semester, the schedule is posted on the BTS web site. One month prior to the beginning of each semester, the semester's course schedule and registration form will be published in the BTS Newsletter. The BTS Newsletter is mailed and e-mailed to all students and BTS alumni. **Pre-registration is strongly encouraged to ensure materials are available the first night of class.** Students may complete a registration form and return it via mail, email, fax, or in person with a live signature not typed. BTS accepts cash, checks and most credit cards. To avoid late charges, fees must be received in the BTS office no later than the first day of class. Students must register before attending class. No student may register for a class after the second week of the semester. Late fees will apply after the first week of the semester. Students may register for a distance education course during Seminary office hours at any time.

STUDENT ID BADGES

BTS requires identification badge and card for each student. Badges must be worn to all classes, as they help identify students at the various seminary locations. The ID cards may also be used to secure students discounts at certain stores and may also allow entrance to certain libraries. All badges and cards expire on August 31st each year.

COURSE MATERIALS

Students are responsible for obtaining all required materials and books for classes. **These should be obtained before the first class.** Textbooks may be purchased at the Briarwood bookstore or at the location of the student's choice. Each semester's textbook list with the current syllabus is published on the BTS website www.birminghamseminary.org or may be obtained from the seminary office.

STUDENT SERVICE FEE

Students will be charged an annual student charge of \$30. This is a general administrative fee and covers the cost of the student ID, most course supplements and other copies provided by the professors. This fee is due at the start of the Fall semester or at the start of the student's first semester of the academic year. This fee will not be pro-rated.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to demonstrate punctuality and attend all class sessions. Any absences should be communicated to the professor and/or seminary office prior to the absence. In the absence of professor approval, a student will be permitted two absences per semester in a course. Tardiness may be recorded and three unexcused tardies will be counted as one unexcused absence. Unexcused absences and tardies exceeding the allowance may result in the student being dropped from the course with an "F" grade.

LOCATION OF CLASSES

Classroom locations will be listed on the course registration forms and semester schedules. Directions to most locations are posted on the seminary web site.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Students need to be aware that the seminary's financial commitment to the faculty is based upon class size. It is therefore extremely important for students to understand the withdrawal policy. If a student finds it necessary to withdraw from a class, he/she must submit a withdrawal request form to the registrar. Forms are available in the seminary office or on the seminary website. If the student simply discontinues attending class after the first week of class or anytime thereafter without submitting a withdrawal request form, the student will be liable for the entire tuition charge for the class and will receive a failing grade for the course. Upon submission of the form, the student will be responsible for tuition in accordance with the policy stated below.

Students withdrawing from courses will receive a 50% financial tuition credit within the first two weeks of the beginning of the semester, for use in future semesters. There will be no financial credits issued after the second week of class.

If a refund is desired, it must be requested in writing by the student; otherwise, any paid tuition will be credited to future courses.

A course may be dropped without penalty through the first two weeks of any regular semester. Unauthorized withdrawal will cause the student to receive a failing grade in the course. Authorized withdrawal later than two weeks will be listed on the student transcript as W (withdrawn).

A course may be changed from Credit to Audit at any time through the end of the second week of the semester. No credit of tuition or refund will be made in the event of such a change. An audit student may change from audit to credit by submitting an approving statement signed by the professor of the course and paying the increased tuition.

DROPPING/ADDING A COURSE

Students may drop and/or add courses until the end of the second week of the semester for a fee of \$15 per course.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Complete financial information may be found in the current catalog, on the website, or in this Student Handbook. Students may also contact the Seminary Office. All fees and charges are subject to change and will be applied according to the most current listings.

NOTE: Course grades, degrees, and transcripts will not be issued until financial obligations (including student file requirements such as a completed application, undergraduate transcript, required reference forms and Library fines and fees) of the student are met. No student may enroll for a class until all financial or other obligations from previous semesters are satisfied.

ACCOUNT INFORMATION

Students may obtain their own account information by contacting the Registrar at telephone 205-776-5354, or fax at 205- 776- 5241. Students must provide proof of identification in order to receive information regarding their financial account.

CURRENT ACCOUNT

A student's account is considered a current account when a student has a zero balance or has preregistered for a semester but has not paid the balance and the semester has not yet begun.

DELINQUENT ACCOUNT

A delinquent account is one with due charges.

Students with delinquent accounts lose the following privileges:

- Not allowed to register for future courses.
- Drop/add and degree change Registrations or Re-registrations may not be prepared.
- An extension may not be given to a student with a delinquent account.
- Materials may not be charged to an account if the account is delinquent. In this case materials must be paid for by cash, money order or credit card (no checks) at time of order.

Students may also lose the privilege to have their lessons graded when accounts are delinquent. When the account is brought to current status, these privileges are regained. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Seminary Office when the account has been brought back to current.

FINANCIAL AID

Because of generous contributions from various churches, foundations, and individuals, BTS is able to keep tuition, fees and other costs to a minimum. The current tuition is approximately 1/5 of other institutions. Funds are not available for financial aid or scholarships to students except through contributions designated for student grants for disbursement of those limited funds.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Students experiencing financial difficulty may petition to have their payments rescheduled. Those students must contact the Vice President to discuss their financial situation.

REFUND POLICY

All refund requests must be in writing.

RETURNED CHECK POLICY

Checks returned for non-payment to BTS will carry a surcharge of \$35.00 that will be billed to the student's account along with the amount of the check. Students demonstrating repeated irresponsibility in this area will be subject to having their program of study interrupted and to being dismissed as a student, or such other action deemed appropriate by the Seminary.

THIRD PARTY FINANCIAL SOURCES

Whether or not the entire amount or a portion of the tuition/fees amount shown on the Registration is to be paid by the third party source, **the person signing the Registration is responsible for fulfilling the financial obligations of the Registration. Payments made by a third party to cover tuition or fees of a particular student are not considered charitable contributions to BTS.**

TUITION CHARGES

Tuition cost is assessed on a semester credit hour basis. An explanation of Tuition Charges follows:

There is a commonly held misconception that tuition charges are based on student progression in a degree program, and that, as long as a student does little or no work, no cost is incurred by the seminary.

Tuition pays for academic services. Many of these services are provided or contracted for at the front end of a degree program and include such things as:

- Curriculum development and review,
- Processing of student materials orders,
- Admissions activities,
- Processing of student records,
- Permanent retention of student records in both electronic and hard copy format,
- Faculty advisors and graders,
- Lecture royalties,
- Physical plant and upkeep, and
- Student materials such as the Catalog and Student Handbook.

Since these services are provided whether or not a particular student takes advantage of them, the additional expenditures generated by a student's actual submission of lessons or other use of any of these services is only a miniscule part of the total operating budget of the seminary.

Since BTS is operated largely on tuition dollars received, if one student fails to pay his/her financial obligation, it adds to the financial burden of the remaining students. Since these students are also actively involved in ministry, often in difficult financial situations, BTS must insist that all students fulfill their financial obligations whenever possible to protect the entire student body from increases in tuition and fees.

BTS tuition is less than one-fifth the national average for seminary tuition.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

CODE OF ETHICS

***Academic Integrity**

BTS assumes that all of its students desire to pursue all academic work with honesty and scholarly integrity. Breaches of academic honesty and integrity are infringements of the mutual faith and trust essential to the academic enterprise.

Activities that have the effect or intention of interfering with education, pursuit of knowledge, or fair evaluation of a student's performance are prohibited.

Examples of activities include, but are not limited to, the following definitions:

- Cheating - Using or attempting to use unauthorized assistance, material, or study aids in examinations or other academic work, or preventing or attempting to prevent another from using authorized assistance, material, or study aids. *Examples: using a cheat sheet in an exam; altering a graded exam and resubmitting it for a better grade, and so on.*
- Plagiarism – Using the ideas, data, or language of another without specific and proper acknowledgement. *Examples: misrepresenting another's work (paper, report, article, or computer work) as one's own original creation and submitting it for an assignment; using someone else's ideas without attribution; failing to cite a reference or to use quotation marks where appropriate, and so on.*
- Fabrication – Submitting contrived or altered information in any academic exercise. *Examples: making up data, misrepresenting data; citing nonexistent or irrelevant articles, and so on.*
- Multiple Submissions – Submitting, without prior permission, any work submitted to fulfill another academic requirement. *Example: submitting the same paper for two different classes without the instructors' express prior approval.*
- Misrepresentation of Academic Records – Misrepresenting or tampering with or attempting to tamper with any portion of a student's transcripts or academic record, either before or after coming to BTS. *Examples: forging a Registration Form or a grade report; tampering with computer records, and so on.*
- Facilitating Academic Dishonesty – Knowingly helping or attempting to help another violate any provision of this code. *Example: working together on an exam or others' assignments intended to be an individual project without the instructor's express or prior approval.*
- Unfair Advantage - Attempting to gain unauthorized advantage over fellow students in an academic exercise. *Examples: gaining or providing*

- unauthorized access to examination materials (either past or present); obstructing or interfering with another student's efforts in an academic exercise; lying about a need for an extension for an exam or paper; continuing to write even when time is up during an exam etc.*
- **Computer Crimes** - Damaging or modifying computer programs without permission. *Examples: piracy of copyright protected software; hacking; constructing viruses; knowingly introducing viruses into a system; copying programs and data belonging to others, and so on.*

Those students whose work definitively can be shown to breach academic honesty or scholarly integrity will face academic investigation. Sanctions will be imposed, ranging from grade reduction to, course failure to dismissal from the school.

*** Proctored Examinations**

Students required to take certain examinations are asked to identify a proctor who is willing to monitor the examination, arrange a test time with the proctor, and provide the proctor's name, address, and occupation. Students may select any responsible adult to serve as proctor to whom they are not related by either blood or marriage. BTS will send the testing materials to the proctor in time for the arranged testing time. The proctor will administer the examination and return it directly to the school. Students are expected to take all exams within two weeks of the receipt of the exam materials.

GRADING SCALE AND QUALITY POINTS PER HOUR

The seminary has adopted a four point grading scale as follows:

A	96-100	=	4.0 Quality Points
A-	90-95	=	3.5 Quality Points
B	85-89	=	3.0 Quality Points
B-	80-84	=	2.5 Quality Points
C	75-79	=	2.0 Quality Points
C-	70-74	=	1.5 Quality Points
D	65-69	=	1.0 Quality Point
D-	60-64	=	0.5 Quality Point
F	Below 60	=	0.0 Quality Points

In addition to the students meeting due dates and using correct English, the following guide will serve as general criteria for grades. Final grades for each course are given at the discretion of the member of faculty responsible for that course.

- A Represents a superior understanding of the subject matter, prompt and complete preparation of assignments, outstanding ability as manifested by such things as original thinking, extra reading or projects, and an interested attitude in and contribution to class discussions (4 grade points per semester hour).
- B Represents a good understanding of the subject matter, prompt and complete preparation of assignments, above average ability as manifested by reading comprehension, and an interested attitude in and contribution to class discussion (3 grade points per semester hour).
- C This work is satisfactory but is lacking in a significant area and does not show a grasp of some basic principles.
- D There is serious problems with this work, though it is still passable. It represents a poor performance in comprehending the course content and only meets the minimal standard of the professor.
- F This work is unacceptable and fails to meet the requirements of the assignment.

In a course in which a failing grade has been received (including an Inc/F), a student who has feasible reasons may ask the professor to grant permission to take a re-examination or complete a reassignment of sufficient quality to raise the grade to an F/D. Such work must be completed within 21 days after notification of the failing grade. If the grade is raised to an F/D, the student receives credit for the course, but no quality points are counted in calculating the student's general standing. When a student repeats a course where he or she has earned an F, the F remains on the transcript but the new grade will be used in calculating the grade point average (GPA).

GRADE POINT AVERAGES (GPA)

Quality points will be computed for each course by multiplying the number of quality points designated for a grade, by the number of course hours. For example, the student takes a two-hour course and receives a "B," which equals

3 quality points for each hour. Since it was a 2 hour course, this equals 6 quality points.

In a given semester, if the student takes 4 two-hour courses and receives an “A” grade on one, a “B” on the next, a “C” on the third, and a “D” on the fourth, this would equate to 8 quality points on the first, 6 quality points on the second, 4 quality points on the third and 2 quality points on the fourth. The hours taken total 8, the quality points total 20. Dividing the 20 quality points by the 8 hours, the average quality points for the semester is 2.5.

All Seminary students are required to maintain an overall cumulative grade point of 2.0. At the end of any semester, a student whose overall average is below “C” will be placed on academic probation. If, after the next semester, the student has not raised the average to at least “C,” the student will be dismissed for academic reasons.

STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Each semester, students are asked to complete an electronic course evaluation for each class. Students will receive an e-mail containing a link to the course evaluation for each course they register for. Participation is strongly encouraged.

SEMESTER GRADES

Course grades will be issued at the end of each semester. Grades will ordinarily be mailed to students the third week after the end of the semester. Permanent records will be maintained for each student. These records will show grades and hours earned. Grades will not be issued, academic credit will not be awarded, and official transcripts will not be issued until all financial and any other seminary related obligations are met.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

Incomplete assignments and grades should always be the exception and not the rule. Should a student find it impossible to complete work on time, the professor should be the first to know. The professor is required to report a grade of an “I” (Incomplete) to the seminary office within two weeks of the end of the semester. The student has six weeks from the semester’s end to have the

professor change the incomplete grade to a final grade. If no final grade is received in the seminary office by the six-week deadline, a failing grade will be posted to the official transcript. It is the student's responsibility to ensure course work is to the professor in time to submit a grade within the six week period.

All course materials must be submitted to the respective professors at the end of the semester (last day of classes). Thereafter, course materials may be submitted for up to six (6) weeks after the end of the semester directly to the offices of the Registrar with the permission of the professor. If a student submits course materials after the end of the semester but within the six (6) weeks period, the student's final course grade will be lowered by one letter grade. The course materials will not be accepted after the six (6) week period and a failing grade will be posted to the student's transcript.

UNSATISFACTORY GRADES

In the event an unsatisfactory grade is received in a class, the student may re-take the course in an effort to improve his or her grade. The student must register and pay for the course again. The unsatisfactory grade from the first course does remain on the transcript and is included with the GPA.

SCHOLASTIC PROBATION

The Vice President has the discretion to place a student on probation based upon poor academic performance and/or academic violation of BTS policies, and/or relevant student improprieties. The terms and conditions of the probation will be documented in writing to the student. The V.P. may place an incoming student on academic probation for an initial period (usually three courses) during which the student will be monitored for satisfactory progress.

WRITING POLICY

BTS has made the decision to adopt the Turabian style of writing format for all research papers, clinicals, and dissertations (DMin). All papers are to be doubled-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman font. This will bring consistency and less confusion for both students and professors. In this technological age, information is readily available; make sure that you understand about giving reference sources the proper recognition.

Please refer to *A Manual for Writer's of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* by Kate Turabian and *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology* by Nancy Vyhmeister.

GRADING CRITERIA AND ASSESSMENT FOR RESEARCH PAPERS

A A-

Thesis sentence/statement is clear/comprehensive. Punctuation, spelling, and grammar are accurate and correct. Writing is even, creative and guides the reader effectively through the paper. Paragraphs are well organized and coherent; paper flows smoothly. Person and format are appropriate for the assignment. Quotes, Scriptures, paraphrases and summaries are used & cited appropriately and with excellence. Research reveals sources (primary and secondary) which clearly support main arguments (Scholarly, Academic and Theological). Turabian's *Manual for Writers* is understood and adhered to.

B B-

Thesis sentence/statement lacks specificity and clarity. Opportunity for significant improvement exists. Minor misspellings and grammar/punctuation mistakes exist that disrupt flow but do not hinder understanding. Paragraph structure is acceptable but not as organized and coherent. Person and format do not work in this particular assignment. Sources adequately support main points, but using greater variety and depth of primary and secondary sources and more critical thinking would have made a more compelling argument. Some minor errors occur but paper generally conforms to Turabian's *Manual for Writers*.

C C-

Thesis sentence/statement is unclear and vague. Numerous misspellings, punctuation and grammar mistakes, difficult to follow reasoning, and flow of reading is disrupted. Paragraph structure is often confusing and inconsistent. Person and format are inappropriate for this assignment. Sources are inadequate and shallow; do not reflect an understanding of the project. Serious research, study and preparation are not evidenced. Ideas presented do not reflect mastery or insight but more manipulation of terms and concepts. Paper does not reflect an adequate understanding or usage of Turabian's *Manual for Writers*.

D D-

Thesis sentence/statement is non-existent. Spelling, punctuation and grammar make it nearly impossible to follow the line of reasoning from sentence to sentence. Paragraphs lack focus, clarity, and are incoherent and without structure or form. Person and format are confusing and totally inappropriate for

this assignment. Insufficient numbers of quotes or quotes are overly used; paraphrases, quotes, summaries, Scripture and sources are improperly used and cited in error. Paper does not conform to Turabian's *Manual for Writers*.

STANDARDS OF WORK

BTS has established minimum academic standards for all students. These standards concern academic progress and evaluation of student work. Students are considered to be making satisfactory academic progress if they maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 for Master's and Doctoral students.

If students fail to maintain the required GPA, they may be placed on academic probation. Academic probation is a period in which students must achieve a prescribed level of academic performance. If placed on academic probation, Master's and Doctoral students must achieve a "B" or better for each of three consecutive courses during the probationary period. Students who fail to demonstrate improved academic performance will be referred to the Vice President for appropriate action.

GRADUATION

The responsibility for meeting the requirements for a degree rests with the individual student. If all requirements are not completed, a degree will not be awarded. It is important for each student to have an understanding of all graduation requirements.

Students must notify the Seminary office of their intention to apply for graduation at least one year before graduation. Formal graduation ceremonies are held in May of each year. Each graduate is required to pay a graduation fee prior to graduation, whether or not the student participates in the graduation ceremony. The fee is determined and reported to prospective graduates the first of each calendar year.

A Pre-graduation assessment is required. Contact the registrar or Vice President for the necessary paperwork.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Grades/Faculty

Students who are dissatisfied with a submission grade or comments received from an evaluator are asked to contact the faculty member of record and discuss the grievance with the faculty member. (Students should contact the faculty member through the Seminary Office.) The faculty member can modify the evaluation by contacting the Vice President, or requesting that the student resubmit the lesson directly to the faculty member for reconsideration.

If the student still believes a lesson submission was unfairly evaluated, he/she may resubmit the original graded copy along with an unmarked copy of the original submission to the Vice President. The second grade becomes the grade of record, even if it reflects a lower score. If this resolution is unsatisfactory, then the parties involved may appeal the decision to a Commission of three board members chosen by the Chairman. The decision of this Commission is final.

Students may request to be assigned to another evaluator by sending a written request stating their grievance with the assigned faculty member to the Vice President. The Vice President will contact the student with a decision regarding the request.

Students are provisionally able to request to resubmit to receive a passing grade, but are not permitted to resubmit lessons merely to receive a higher grade. (Any grade above "F" is considered passing.) If a student's overall GPA falls below the minimum required for graduation, the student should petition the Academic Committee in writing to re-register for the course.

Faculty Initiated Resubmissions

Faculty have the responsibility to evaluate all work sent to them. Faculty cannot return work if deemed unacceptable without first evaluating and making comment on the evaluation form. In some instances, individual faculty members may at their discretion allow papers to be reworked as needed if deemed unacceptable to the faculty receiving the lesson

The faculty member would attach a brief letter to the evaluation form outlining the rationale for why he/she wished to have the student resubmit (should the student take advantage of this option). Students wishing to exercise the option provided by the faculty must then attach the letter from the faculty giving them permission to resubmit along with the original evaluation form when they

resubmit their second attempt. It is up to the faculty as to how he/she will handle the lesson upon resubmission viz., how/if they will adjust the grade. A student who does not wish to exercise the original granted by the faculty member to resubmit would then be assigned the grade according to the original evaluation form. If the student is dissatisfied with the grade received and the faculty option, the student may proceed with aforementioned student grievance procedures.

Other Issues

Grievance relating to other issues, whether academic or non-academic may be submitted in written form to the Vice President. However, students are encouraged to first approach the person with whom they have a grievance (Matt. 18:15) and then consult with the appropriate individuals working in the department relevant to the grievance before filing a grievance. The Vice President will make appropriate inquiries and provide a written response to the grievance. If the Vice President's response is not satisfactory, then the person who filed the grievance may appeal the decision to a Commission of three board members chosen by the Chairman. The decision of this Commission is final.

BTS OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS

Before a student can receive a transcript, official or student copy, all fees must be paid. All financial obligations (including student file requirements such as a completed application, undergraduate transcript, required reference forms and Library fines and fees) of the student must be satisfied.

OFFICIAL COPY:

A written request must be submitted on the transcript request form available in the Seminary office or online at the BTS website. There is a fee of \$10 for each official transcript requested. **Official transcripts are sent to a third party only.**

STUDENT COPY:

There is no charge for student copies of transcripts. Student transcripts are issued each semester once grades are posted or as needed when a distance education course or a directed study course is completed.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

A number of courses offered at BTS are available on CD-ROM, DVD, Flash Drive or Dropbox for the student who is not able to attend a course in a live setting. Students may enroll in a Distance Education (DE) course at any time, one course at a time. There is a separate form to be completed to enroll in a DE course, available in the Seminary office or online. Students are responsible for purchasing textbook(s). Four months is the maximum time allowed for completion of a DE course; however, these four months do not have to correspond with a seminary semester. To obtain a distance education course, please contact the seminary administrative assistant at 205-776-5356 or by email at btsadmin@briarwood.org.

The student is expected to spend the same amount of time that he/she would if they were taking a scheduled class. If a student exceeds the four month allotted time frame, a request for a one-time extension must be applied for with a fee of \$50.00. The extension is for one month. The required extension forms are available on the BTS website or in the Seminary office. If the course is not completed in this time frame it will result in a failing grade, the student must then re-enroll and re-pay the course tuition.

In order to receive exams, a student must select a proctor to request and oversee the administration of the examination. A proctor may be the student's pastor, an elder, deacon, etc. He or she may not be the student's spouse or other family member. Please have the proctor contact the seminary office for the proctor form and request each examination when ready. This may be done via mail, fax, or e-mail to btsadmin@briarwood.org.

CERTIFICATE IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRY (CCM) via DISTANCE EDUCATION

The seminary also offers an online Certificate in Christian Ministry (CCM) to non-US residents only via the internet. Non-US residents may take courses in the Certificate Ministry curriculum for academic credit and will, upon satisfactory completion of all required courses, earn a Certificate in Christian Ministry from BTS. The specific requirements for this program and for each course are set forth in the CCM website and may differ in certain respects from the information contained in this Handbook. For example, exams in the CCM program are taken online and there is no need to request the exam be sent to a proctor. Students must

earn at least a 75 on each exam in the CCM to pass that exam and must have a 75 or better average to pass each course.

Academic credits earned in this Certificate in Ministry program may not be transferred to or applied to any other certificate or degree offered by BTS. BTS does not charge any fees or tuition for this certificate program. US residents (regardless of citizenship or immigration status) may **not** take the CCM courses for academic credit or earn the BTS Certificate in Christian Ministry. However, US residents may and are encouraged to view the courses, download the readings and take the quizzes and exams for their own edification.

DIRECTED STUDIES

To set up a directed study course, contact the Registrar at the Seminary office.

Course Description

Directed studies are course credits obtained by working directly with a professor in a group of 2-4 students or on an individual basis. These arrangements are permitted only for students who cannot schedule a necessary course prior to their planned graduation. Otherwise students are expected to enroll and attend class as scheduled. The course must be completed within a four month time frame.

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain the professor's and the seminary's approval for the directed study.

Guidelines

- 1) Minimum of two book critiques – the combined readings should be 600-1000 pages; each report is to be a minimum of three (3) to five (5) typed pages per instructions given in number three below.
- 2) The book critique must reflect that the student has read and comprehended the materials.
- 3) The critique should demonstrate critical thinking and analysis of thoughts, interaction of student and author, and show application/affect to his/her personal life and or ministry.
- 4) Minimum of two exams is recommended based on course directions of the respective professor. (Type of exams at professor's discretion)

- 5) There will be one course project based on the nature of the course which is to be twelve (12) to fifteen (15) pages in length. (Guidelines to be set by the professor.) The course project is to have an average of two (2) footnotes per page, demonstrating acceptable academic standards. In addition, a bibliography of five (5) to seven (7) books. Journals or periodicals are also to be consulted.
- 6) All research papers must be formatted in accordance with Turabian Chicago standards including the title page. Papers are to include #12 Times New Roman Script font and be double spaced.
- 7) Students will have four months to complete the course. The student is expected to spend the same amount of time that he/she would if taking a scheduled class. If students exceed the four month allotted time frame a request for a one-month extension must be applied for with a fee of \$50.00. Incomplete work at the end of the extension period will result in a failing grade and the course must be retaken to receive credit.
- 8) The professor will set scheduled meeting times with student for guidance, verification, counseling and mentoring.

RESOURCES

STANDARDS FOR RESEARCH PAPERS

BTS uses the Turabian style of formatting as a standard for all research papers, for all classes. However, students should regard individual professor preferences if they communicate any variance in outlining their requirements for papers. Professors retain discretion in determining how “formal” a paper must be, excluding papers (research papers, clinicals, and dissertations) which must be prepared in Turabian format. Beyond those variances, students should follow the Turabian style, as outlined in *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate Turabian. Students may also find it helpful to use the StyleEase formatting software for developing proper citations. An additional book that BTS students will find helpful is *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology* by Nancy Vyhmeister.

LOGOS BIBLE STUDY SOFTWARE REQUIREMENT

All masters and doctoral degree-seeking students are required to purchase any one of the Logos Bible Study libraries and are entitled to the substantial discount Logos affords BTS students. Students must purchase during regularly scheduled semester enrollment periods. Also, Logos will divide payments into 6 equal installments if requested. See the BTS website for additional information.

Students in the Certificate in Christian Ministry program are not eligible for this discount.

Please see the Logos Bible Software link at www.birminghamseminary.org

Students in the Master of Arts Program and Doctoral program in Biblical Counseling are required to purchase the Journal of Biblical Counseling collection.

LIBRARY

The BTS Library is located in the Briarwood Presbyterian Church facility. Students are welcome to check out books as long as they adhere to the rules of the Library. BTS also has library privileges at Southeastern Bible College located on Valleydale Road and Samford University on Lakeshore Drive. Student ID badges must be presented. Any fees incurred are the responsibility of the student.

BTS FORMS

All required forms are available in the Seminary office or online at www.birminghamseminary.org.

