

Student Rights/Academic Progress/Formational Probation

General Rights and Responsibilities (page 20 in the NDS Catalog)

Upon entering Notre Dame Seminary, it is the responsibility of each student to be formed as a disciple of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the Church and for the people to whom they will minister. Adhering to this responsibility does not diminish the human and civil rights guaranteed each person by God and by the local authorities of the State of Louisiana.

Accordingly, Notre Dame Seminary further recognizes the following rights for each student:

- ◇ The right to a quality education in line with the orthodox teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. This includes the right to free inquiry within the classroom, and the right to be graded fairly and objectively according to the quality of academic performance.
- ◇ The right to recommend changes in policies so that Notre Dame Seminary might better fulfill the rights stated above. These suggestions are to be made through the various committees which are formed to further student interests and welfare (e.g., Academic Affairs Committee, Faith Life Committee, Library Committee, Social Life Committee, etc.).
- ◇ The right to a fair hearing and the right to appeal the decision when a disciplinary action is applied to the student as an individual or as a group member (see Grievance Policy).

And for students who are seminarians:

- ◇ The right to develop as a virtuous man in accord with the four dimensions of formation of the Program of Priestly Formation [PPF]. This includes the right to a morally conducive environment which is necessary for virtuous development.

In addition, Notre Dame Seminary further stipulates these responsibilities to be accepted by each student so that they might fulfill the demands of formation:

- ◇ The student is to be fully acquainted with all the regulations and policies published in the Notre Dame Seminary Academic Catalog.
- ◇ The student is to recognize that all conduct reflects not just the individual person, but Notre Dame Seminary as an institution and the larger Catholic community, and is to behave with due respect for this larger community.
- ◇ The student is to recognize and obey the local civil laws at all times and fulfill the demands of common decency.

And for students who are seminarians:

- ◇ The student is to dedicate himself fully to the formation program as articulated in the four dimensions of the PPF and as found in the Rule of Life for seminarians.
- ◇ The student is to support the healthy morale of other students and the effectiveness of Notre Dame Seminary by communicating all concerns about their own formational progress, or the formational progress of other students, when appropriate, to the Rector-President or other appropriate administrators.

Academic Progress (pages 34-35 in the NDS Catalog)

Incomplete Work Policy

Any student who fails to complete course requirements, as defined in the syllabus for that course, before the end of the semester automatically receives the grade F for the course in which the delinquency occurs.

A student may be given permission to complete course requirements after the close of the semester. However, incomplete grades are usually only given due to extenuating, unavoidable, or uncontrollable circumstances.

The proper procedure for a student to receive a grade of Incomplete for a course requires the student to receive permission from the professor and the Academic Dean or their respective Directors of the Master of Arts Programs. Once permission is granted, the Registrar is to be informed before the close of the semester. All coursework for the incomplete must be completed six weeks after the end of the semester. A grade for the course is then computed by the professor and sent to the Registrar's Office. The Incomplete grade will become an F if the work is not completed within six weeks after the end of the semester.

Academic Probation Policy

Passing grades are A, B and C. A student is put on academic probation for the following:

A student who obtains a grade of D+ or lower in any course is automatically placed on probationary status and must repeat the course in order to get credit for the course. Students will be allowed to repeat a course only once and the course must be repeated at NDS.

If the student is a seminarian and fails the course a second time, the Rector-President, after consultation with the faculty, will then review the status of the seminarian with the vocation director.

A seminarian whose semester grade point average (GPA) in coursework is below a 2.30 at any time is placed on academic probation. Two or more consecutive semesters on probation may subject the seminarian to be dismissed from academic formation at Notre Dame Seminary. To be removed from probationary status, the seminarian must complete a semester with a GPA of 2.30 or higher.

After each semester, the seminarian's Bishop will receive a copy of his transcript and a review of the seminarian's status.

A student in the Master of Arts (Philosophy for Theological Studies) or the Master of Arts (Theological Studies) program whose semester average in coursework is below a 3.00 at any time after the completion of a semester is placed on probationary status and is not allowed to continue in the program without the permission of the Director of the Philosophy Programs. Moreover, any student who obtains a C or lower in any course is automatically placed on

probationary status. If the student remains on probation for two or more consecutive semesters, he will be automatically dropped from the program.

Subject to review of the Master of Arts Faculty, students may be dropped from programs for factors other than GPA without having a probationary period. The student may then appeal decisions of the Master of Arts Faculty by submitting a written appeal to the Academic Dean.

Formational Probation (pages 109-111 of the Seminarian Formation Handbook)

I. Formational Probation

782. In addition to the academic probation that is outlined earlier in this resource, the formation faculty reserves the right to declare a seminarian on formational probation.

783. Such probation arises when the conduct of a seminarian causes sufficient concern to the faculty that a declaration of this seriousness is warranted. This states that while the department or activity is not of itself sufficient to warrant dismissal from the priestly formation program, its continuance may result in such dismissal.

784. In all cases of formational probation, the seminarian will be given the specific reasons for this action and the specific changes that are required. The Vocation Director will also be notified.

785. Normally, seminarians are given one semester to correct the condition out of which formational probation has arisen. If after the course of one semester the condition has not been corrected, the seminarian is liable for dismissal from the priestly formation program.

J. Withdrawal from the Program

786. A seminarian who decides to withdraw from the priestly formation program is expected to have thoroughly discussed this decision with his Spiritual Director, Formation Advisor, and the Rector-President.

787. When a final decision has been reached, the seminarian is expected to state this fact in writing and offer appropriate reasons for the decision. This written notice of withdrawal is to be given personally to the Rector-President and will be placed in the seminarian's personnel file.

788. The process of discernment may also include a mutual decision between the seminarian and faculty concluding the seminarian is not called to the diocesan priesthood or at least is not prepared to continue in the formation program. The seminarian will still be asked to state in writing his decision to withdraw from the program.

789. The Rector-President will discuss with the seminarian the best way to communicate this decision to the rest of the seminary community. In such cases, the Rector-President has the final decision regarding the process of communication and how best the seminarian can collect his personal belongings so as not to disrupt the community.

K. Dismissal from the Program

790. The faculty may determine after thorough discussion the dismissal of a seminarian from the priestly formation program.

791. The decision for dismissal will be conveyed to the seminarian by the Rector-President with at least one additional faculty member present. At that meeting the seminarian will be given the specific reasons why this action is taking place.

792. The seminarian will also be given a written statement of the decision, a copy of which will also be placed in the seminarian's personnel file.

793. The Vocation Director will be notified immediately when a seminarian is being terminated from the program.

L. Advancement in the Program

794. At the conclusion of each academic year, in the self-evaluation process, the seminarian will be asked to describe his discernment and indicate to the faculty his willingness to continue in the formation program. The formation advisor will already have prepared the seminarian to respond accordingly.

795. The formation faculty will offer a vote recommending if the seminarian should advance to the next year of formation. The vote is to be recorded. The vote is a recommendation since the Rector-President makes the final determination.

796. If the faculty determines the seminarian should be dismissed, the above procedures will be followed. Otherwise, the formation advisor will confirm the faculty's decision to advance the seminarian to the next stage of the formation program when reviewing the report of the evaluation with the seminarian.

M. Seminarian Appeals Process

797. If the seminarian disagrees with a matter of fact or judgment within the written evaluation or any other aspect of the evaluation process he will first seek resolution with his Formation Advisor.

798. If a resolution is not possible between the formation advisor and the seminarian, the seminarian may then appeal to the Rector-President. The Rector-President will handle all appeals of this nature and who makes the final decision on the matter.

799. The final evaluation of the formation advisor will then be revised to incorporate the fact and description of the appeal, and the Rector-President's decision.