

REFORMED  THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

WASHINGTON DC

student Handbook



1028 Balls Hill Rd • McLean, VA 22101
phone: 703.448.3393 • fax: 703.738.7389 • www.rts.edu/washingtondc

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Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to the Washington DC program of Reformed Theological Seminary! This handbook is provided so that you might make the most of your time while studying at RTS. It is designed to help you know what to expect in seminary as well as what is expected of you. Please read it carefully and keep it for future reference.

Reformed Theological Seminary is a distributed seminary with multiple campuses and extensions. As a student at RTS Washington DC, you are a member of the combined student body of Reformed Theological Seminary. You are welcome as a student at every RTS location. The RTS *Catalog* is the official document governing your study program. This handbook is intended for use as a supplement to the *Catalog*. The policies and procedures described in the RTS *Catalog* remain applicable to you as a student at RTS Washington DC.

Contact Information

Reformed Theological Seminary Washington DC

1028 Balls Hill Road

McLean, VA 22101

Voice: 703-438.3393 or 800-639-0226

Fax: 703-738-7389

www.rts.edu

admissions.washington@rts.edu

Executive Director: Hugh Whelchel (hwhelchel@rts.edu)

Director of Admissions & Registrar: Geoff Sackett (gsackett@rts.edu)

Associate Professor of Systematic Theology and Academic Dean: Howard Griffith (hgriffith@rts.edu)

Assistant Professor of Old Testament: Peter Lee (plee@rts.edu)

Office Administrator: Jennifer McGahey (jmcgahey@rts.edu)

Facilities

The RTS Washington DC office and classrooms are in McLean, Virginia, just inside the Washington Beltway (I-495). The address for this building is 1028 Balls Hill Road, McLean, VA 22101. Our office and classrooms are housed in the Lodge just to the left of the McLean Presbyterian Church.

Our courses are held primarily in the facilities of McLean Presbyterian Church, as well as in other local churches in the Washington and Baltimore areas. While using these facilities, please be respectful of their property and grateful for their

generosity.

Campus and Student Life

Accommodations

Overnight accommodations are available at the Kenwood Golf and Country Club, 5601 River Road. Bethesda, MD 20850, located approximately three miles from our facilities. Room reservations can be made by calling RTS at 703-448-3393.

The cost is \$90.00 a night.

If you are seeking long-term housing in the greater Washington DC area, you may wish to consider these websites:

- www.gracedc.net/classifieds.asp
- www.kairosonline.org/old/index.html (look under "Housing Postings")
- <http://mcleanpres.org/resources.htm> or call 703-821-0800 to speak with someone about posting a housing need.
- Call 301-320-3434 x223 to post an ad and to subscribe to 4th Presbyterian Church's "Switchboard", a classifieds insert in their monthly newsletter.

Course Offerings

Course schedules and class syllabi are posted to the RTS website approximately 6 weeks prior to the beginning of each semester. Be sure to consult the website as you plan your class schedule. Your advisor is also available to you for assistance in planning your course schedule.

Typical Class Schedules

Each course meets twelve and a half classroom hours for each semester hour of credit offered. A classroom hour includes fifty minutes of teaching time. Thus, three credit-hour courses normally meet for thirty-seven and a half classroom hours, and two credit-hour courses normally meet for twenty-five classroom hours. These classroom hours may include examinations or other types of student evaluations at the discretion of the professor.

Scheduling formats used most often at RTS Washington DC are either evening, weekend or one-week intensive (i.e. modular) schedules. However, we are beginning to offer more daytime classes as well. *Evening* courses generally meet one evening each week. Three credit-hour courses meet for three classroom hours an evening for thirteen weeks. Two credit-hour courses will meet for either two classroom hours per evening for thirteen weeks or for three classroom hours for eight weeks. Due to the nature of the subject matter, language courses meet two evenings per week for thirteen weeks.

Weekend format classes are scheduled three or four weekends over the span of six to ten weeks. While there are variations in schedules, a three credit-hour course

typically meets four weekends with the following format:

Friday	7:30 – 10:00 p.m.
Saturday	9:00 – 12:00 p.m.; 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

A two credit-hour course typically meets in a similar format over three weekends. *One-week intensive* (or modular) classes are normally completed within a single week. For example a 2-credit class might meet Monday through Friday, 8:30 - noon and 1:00 - 3:45. Modular classes are offered in January and then again in May and June. The modular format allows persons who do not live in the Washington/Baltimore area to nevertheless work toward a degree through intensive weeks during winters and summers on campus.

Registration and Tuition Payment for Courses

To see what courses are being offered currently and in upcoming semesters, please visit the RTS website. (Campuses Near You > Washington D.C.> Upcoming Classes). To register for classes, students must use the **Self-Service Portal** located at <http://selfservice.rts.edu>. For step-by-step registration instructions, please see the Appendix. Please come approximately 30 minutes before class begins in order to pay your tuition balance, pick up course materials, and settle any other unfinished business.

Tuition for each class is expected to be paid by the end of the first day of that class, unless you are on a payment plan. If you fail to submit payment by that point, you will be dropped from the course and charged a drop fee. Finance charges of 1% are assessed after one month of non-payment. Jennifer McGahey can send you an electronic receipt if desired.

You may pay for your courses at any time on Self-Service. (See Appendix for step-by-step direction for making payments). Tuition is not assessed until one week prior to the start of the term, therefore, you will not see charges on Self Service until that time.

Note on Scholarships: Scholarships are also not assessed until one week prior to the start of the term. Therefore, if registering for classes after this date, you will not see the appropriate charges or credits on your account until the close of business hours on the day that you register.

Weather-Related or Emergency Cancellations

To find out if a class has been cancelled, call 703-448-3393 and wait for the outgoing message. Should there be a need to communicate quickly to students regarding class cancellation, either a phone call will be made or an email will be sent. Announcements are also made on www.rts.edu and the RTS- Washington DC Facebook group.

Meal Times During Weekend and Modular Classes

One of the best opportunities for talking about issues which are of concern to you is the meal times during weekend and modular classes. You are encouraged to gather with other students and your instructor for fellowship and informal discussions.

Peer Interaction

Some of the best resources at RTS Washington DC are the other students. A typical student is in his or her late 20's and is more mature than what you find at most residential seminaries. The variety of experiences and other differences among our students greatly strengthens the program. This allows the classroom itself to be a forum of interaction between the practical and the theoretical based on the experience and maturity of the students themselves.

Study Time

Failure in academic work is most often linked with neglecting to devote enough time to study or not using study time efficiently. With the increased tempo and quantity of academic effort in Seminary, and with the typically increased demands of life on part-time students it becomes even more important that you discipline yourself in this regard and work hard at efficiency in study. Graduate credit expectations include a minimum of two hours of work outside the class for each hour of class participation. Often the time requirements will be more extensive. This includes reading, projects, research for and writing of papers, as well as preparing for examinations.

Children on the Campus

Because of the many seminary activities usually in progress, as well as the lack of supervisory personnel available, students, faculty, and staff are discouraged from bringing their child(ren) on the campus except for activities that involve children such as parties and picnics. It is recognized that there are certain times when an individual has to have their child(ren) with them on campus; and, when this is the case, the individual should make certain that their child(ren) stay with them and are not allowed to wander unattended around the campus or in any seminary buildings.

The Abundant Life of the Seminarian

The Whole Person. God's call to service normally leads along the path of preparation. That preparation involves the whole person. The most obvious dimension of your preparation at RTS is your intellectual preparation. God's call to study demands our commitment to excellence. This has long been a part of our reformed heritage. All truth is God's truth and the study of God's truth requires energy and discipline.

Yet when the best and most important parts of life are distorted they become deformed and dangerous. That is why seminary study is not safe. The Word of God is never safe. It always makes demands on us, and if we fail to change in those godly ways we become hardened to God and his word. Your commitment to growth in holiness must be not less than your commitment to academic excellence.

These two are not contradictory pursuits. God made both mind and heart; God has redeemed your mind and your heart; and God calls on you to love him with all your mind and all your heart. As Archibald Alexander, the first professor of Princeton Seminary put it, "Truth is in order to holiness and between truth and holiness there is an indissoluble connection." Your pursuit of academic excellence and progress in godliness cannot be carried out in isolation. God didn't make you that way. Truth and holiness can be found only in connection with each other.

Priorities in Seminary. During your time studying at RTS you will be faced with many questions regarding priorities. Judgments about balance and appropriateness must be made according to careful consideration and dependence upon God. The foundation of all such difficult decisions must be the Word of God. Our maturing wisdom and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit leading us through the Word are essential in determining what is appropriate.

You must be careful to avoid ungodly temptations to falsely define "balance." Balancing commitments does not mean loving God with half your mind and half your heart. Biblical balance is the whole pursuit of God's blessing on the whole person in order to minister to the whole world.

"Watch your life and doctrine closely," Paul wrote to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:16a). While RTS will help you watch your doctrine, your personal walk with God merits your first priority. If your academic studies, even of Scripture and its teaching, take the place of your private devotions and personal Bible study, your spiritual life will quickly become dry and joyless. You can expect this to happen to you unless you take some steps to prevent it:

Remain Active in your Church Community. At RTS Washington DC, it is

expected that students are involved in a local body of believers with whom to worship, fellowship, socialize, and observe models of spiritual and ministry development. It is essential that you maintain or establish an active involvement in a church in your community. Regular participation in worship, ministry, fellowship, and celebrations of the Christian community is essential for well-rounded spiritual development. Careful planning may help you to make courses match ministry opportunities in the church.

If you are not committed to a church in your community, the faculty and administration of RTS would urge you to become an active participant in one. If you desire suggestions we would be very pleased to recommend excellent churches in your community. Just as the students on an RTS campus are given the opportunity to determine a level of participation in the RTS community, you have the same options. In both cases, the wise student will be the person who takes advantage of all opportunities for growth available to him or her.

Let your church and/or parachurch agency know that you are a student at RTS. Others may want to audit at the same time. This also helps them to be understanding of the unique demands on you as a seminary student. They should be invited to pray and be given periodic updates of progress. Giving them samples of your work may help them to understand and support the training.

Always show appreciation for opportunities that a church provides for training and service. It is their investment in future ministry.

Spend time with God. Do not neglect to examine yourself, to pray, and to seek the Lord in his Word. Knowing God is not the same thing as knowing about him. As the Word of God shapes your mind, the Spirit of God is at work to shape and transform your heart. “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life” (Prov. 4:23). How is the Holy Spirit currently at work to form Christ within you?

Develop honest relationships with others. RTS is more than an academic institution; it is a community of believers who help each other on to godliness. “But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness” (Heb. 3:13). There is no sweeter fellowship with others than that of intimate, broken-hearted prayer to the Father. Who can you pray with in this way?

Maintain a regular Sabbath rest. Set aside Sunday as a day for rest and worship.

Don’t forget your family. Sometimes the families of seminary students feel that they have been orphaned and/or divorced during seminary. It is important that

families be committed to the process of seminary, even if it is only part-time. And that commitment grows best when your family is involved.

There are many ways to involve your family in the seminary community. Husbands and wives sometimes audit courses at the same time while their spouses earn credit. Children and parents of students are also welcome to visit classes. Devotional lessons based on parts of coursework provide tangible, immediate benefit to families. Regular, fervent prayer by a family for you can reap eternal rewards as well as allow God to develop internal commitment in those who pray.

You should make sure that you keep any promises made during courses. If, as a father, you promise to take your kids to an amusement park after final exams are done, you should stick to that promise. A broken promise is worse than no promise at all. Although school is important, your family should not feel that it has been relegated to second place.

Spouses and children are great aides also. If you prepare good notes and study sheets, spouses and older children can serve greatly in helping your review and quizzing you. This also provides valuable learning for them.

Make the Most of your Present Community. Your peer group should be used as an environment for testing material and seeing immediate fruit from work in the program. The process of obtaining feedback as work is being done will help you produce better products. Some papers are to be written so that someone in the church who has not been trained in seminary can understand the subject. In these cases, make a few copies and distribute them to people in the church. This will add a very real practical touch to course work.

If you work in a non-Christian environment, working on readings and assignments during lunch can open great opportunities for talking with others about the Christian faith. The academic nature of the program may make it more approachable for the non-Christian who is not comfortable with personal Christianity.

You may find yourself in peer groups that include those who have already been to seminary. In these instances, you have great resources at your disposal. These friends may have books for loan. They may be able to assist in curriculum planning and goal setting. They may answer questions and provide sounding boards for issues. Usually, seminary graduates are delighted to pass along their wisdom to others.

Remember your present vocation. In view of all that has been said above, remember that study is your immediate stewardship. Thorough preparation for class may be a spiritual exercise to the glory of God. This is the present vocation that your enrollment at RTS indicates.

Remember God's grace. Finally, it is essential that we remember the grace of God as we seek to live the abundant life of theological education. Most students at RTS Washington DC work full-time while studying at the seminary. Such an arrangement is always very demanding. Demands at home, in the church, in the workplace, and in the classroom compete with equal force for our time and energy. These challenging demands are opportunities to experience His grace anew. Jesus perfectly fulfilled the righteous demands of the law in perfect obedience to the Father. As Christian believers united with Jesus, we receive the benefits of his perfect fulfillment of God's demands, and we are given grace for the demands upon our own lives. Throughout your time at RTS, always turn to Christ each day as your example, savior, and supplier of all that you ever need.

The faculty and staff of RTS Washington DC regularly pray that our students might flourish in their studies and be used by our heavenly Father to further his kingdom. Likewise, we covet your prayers as we endeavor to faithfully execute our own vocation to provide excellent, accessible Reformed theological education in the Washington DC area.

Policies

Class attendance

You are responsible to attend class, even when term papers or exams are pending. If you must miss a class, please alert your instructor via email in advance, unless you are physically unable to do so.

Auditing Courses

Students are encouraged to take classes for credit. However, the nature of adult learners is such that on occasion the learning objectives for certain students may be met through auditing courses. Contact the Registrar for more information.

Financial Aid

Some Financial Aid is available for those who qualify. For more information, contact Geoff Sackett, Director of Admissions.

Insurance

Medical insurance must be maintained by all full-time students. In addition, full-time international (F-1 or non-resident) students who receive any form of financial aid or work scholarship employment from the seminary are required to maintain insurance coverage for their families. If you have such coverage now,

and it can be continued at reasonable rates, it is wise to keep it. If you have none, a student accident and sickness policy is available to RTS students. Details may be obtained from the Registrar's Office.

Graduation

Although students may complete their degree programs at any time of year, the official program completion date at RTS Washington DC is typically in June at the conclusion of the Spring semester. As a student approaches the completion of his or her program, the Registrar must be notified using the Request for Graduation form provided in the back of this handbook. The notification deadline each year is December 31 prior to the graduation year. Notification of graduation prompts a "graduation review" by the Registrar's office to ensure that all requirements have been or are being met. Of course, it is to the student's advantage to schedule the graduation review as early as possible so that any deficiencies can be remedied. A commencement ceremony is held for RTS Washington DC graduates every year in June. This is an important service of worship, thanksgiving and celebration before the Lord for what he has done in establishing this seminary and enabling students to complete their degree programs. It is expected that all students will attend the commencement ceremony every year, regardless of when they may graduate.

Continuing Education Units

Students who need CEUs to fulfill denominational or local church requirements should submit a written request to the Registrar. In such cases, the student is expected to attend each class session and submit all written materials (e.g., projects, term papers) for review and comment. Examinations and quizzes are not administered to CEU students.

Written Work

Unless directed otherwise, all term papers must conform to the thesis style as presented in *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (5th Edition) by Dr. Kate Turabian. At their discretion, instructors may reserve the right to retain term papers and other written materials handed in as class assignments. It is the responsibility of the professor to announce such a policy at the beginning of the course. If you then wish to reserve a copy for yourself, you must prepare two copies of such written work.

Plagiarism

Research papers require borrowing other people's ideas and words. However, the source of such borrowing must be acknowledged properly so that your

ideas are clearly distinguished from ideas that you borrowed. If the source is not acknowledged properly, your work is plagiarism. For an excellent summary on what constitutes plagiarism, see Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (rev. by Wayne C. Booth, etc.; 7th ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 77-80 (section 7.9).

Plagiarism includes word-for-word copying, lifting terms, restatement of someone's argument or line of thought, etc. – all without acknowledgment of source. Plagiarism also includes giving a source partial credit when more is taken from that source than indicated.

Plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, is very serious. All plagiarism cases are referred to the Academic Dean for resolution. Consequences may include some of the following:

- * repeat the assignment and receive a maximum of a D on the assignment
- * receive an F on the assignment
- * receive an F in the course
- * expulsion from the seminary

Sexual Harassment

The seminary expects all members of its community to apply sanctified common sense and Biblical principles to their relationships. It will not tolerate offensive or inappropriate sexual behavior and requires all faculty, staff and students to refrain from any action or conduct which could be viewed as sexual harassment. Any such harassment is contrary to and prohibited by seminary policy and will be considered grounds for disciplinary action. It should be noted that for academic purposes, some appropriate teaching and discussion of sexual information may occur, particularly in a counseling program; however, these discussions are necessary for the formation of a competent counselor or pastor and therefore does not constitute sexual harassment.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other offensive verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature is expressly prohibited. Examples of prohibited conduct include but are not limited to lewd or sexually suggestive comments; off-color language or jokes of a sexual nature; verbal, graphic or physical conduct inappropriately relating to an individual's gender; or any display of sexually explicit pictures, greeting cards, articles, books, magazines, photos, computer images or cartoons.

The seminary must have the cooperation of all faculty, staff and students in order to implement its sexual harassment policy. It is the individual's responsibility to report immediately any incident which they believe to constitute sexual harassment. Even if they believe the act is isolated or infrequent, they should report it to the campus Dean of Students or President. The seminary will promptly investigate the situation and take whatever corrective action is necessary and appropriate. The seminary prohibits any retaliatory action against persons reporting conduct which is believed by the reporting individual to be in violation of this policy.

Inactive Status

Students admitted to the seminary who do not enroll in courses for the period of one full year are considered to be inactive. Prior to enrolling in subsequent courses, inactive students are usually asked to request re-admission. The process for requesting re-admission begins with the submission of a letter explaining why the student has been inactive during the past year. Other information may be required at the discretion of the Registrar. In any case, re-admission is not guaranteed.

Taping of Courses

The video taping of RTS courses by students is prohibited. Audio taping is by permission of the instructor and is allowed if the taped material is to be used solely for personal study and spiritual edification and is not distributed privately or publicly in any manner.

Withdrawal from Courses

The drop deadline for any course occurs after the completion of one-third of the total classroom hours.

- For a course that meets over five weekends, you must notify the registrar of your intention to drop the course *before* the second Saturday meeting.
- For a course that meets over three weekends, you must notify the registrar *before* the second Friday.
- For a one-week intensive course, you must notify the registrar *before* Wednesday (the third day of class).
- For a course that meets once a week for thirteen weeks, you must notify the registrar *before* the fifth meeting.
- For a course that meets twice a week for eight weeks, you must notify the registrar *before* the sixth meeting.

Intention to drop a course must be put in writing and signed by the registrar or the dean of students. If a student drops a course prior to the drop deadline, the course is erased from the student's permanent record. If a student withdraws from

a course after the drop deadline, a failing grade will be entered on the student's permanent record. The instructor should be consulted whenever a student considers withdrawing from a course.

Privacy of Student Records

RTS maintains the security and confidentiality of student educational records.

All student records are kept in locked rooms and in locked file cabinets. In addition, all transcribed information for current degree-seeking students is digitally "backed-up" at an off-site location.

Since RTS does not accept Title IV student loan monies, RTS is not bound by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). However, RTS' confidentiality policies are generally consistent with FERPA. RTS policies are as follows:

A student may inspect and review his/her academic file and transcript after a written request has been made to the Registrar's office. The Registrar will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. The Registrar will be present during this inspection and review.

If a student believes his/her academic file and/or transcript are inaccurate or misleading, the student may request to amend the file and/or transcript. The student should write the Registrar, clearly identifying the portion of the record that the student wishes to change and specifying what is inaccurate or misleading. If RTS decides not to amend, the student may use the appeal process outlined elsewhere in this Handbook.

RTS will not disclose, without the student's consent, personally identifiable information found in the student's academic file or transcript, excepting legitimate educational interests and directory information.

Directory information includes, but is not limited to, name, address, telephone number, email, date and place of birth, spouse's name, home state, previous schools attended, denomination and presbytery affiliation, grade level, dates of attendance, photo and photo of spouse, degree program, enrollment type (full-time, part-time), and degrees with date of graduation.

Academic Services

Library

Three types of library resources are available to you:

1) **Washington Theological Consortium**

The Washington Theological Consortium is an interfaith group of theological schools in the DC area that cooperate and share resources. As a member institute, RTS students are able to access other member libraries. A list of these libraries is available at www.washtheocon.org. In order to check out a book through these member libraries, students must have a valid RTS Student ID and fill out a borrowing form, available in the RTS office.

2) **American Theological Library Association (ATLA)**

ATLA Religion Index and other online databases allow students to search for periodical articles and dissertations by several different search keys (author, title, subject, keyword, etc.). If an article you want is located only at another RTS campus, fill out an Inter-Library Loan form located next to the ATLA workstation and give the form to a library staff member. Contact library staff to obtain the login and password information for these databases. (www.rts.edu/site/resources/library/research.aspx)

3) **RTS Inter-Library Loan System**

In addition, the Inter-Library system of RTS is accessible to all RTS students. Please see our site for more details: http://www.rts.edu/site/resources/library/interlibrary_loan.aspx.

The RTS libraries have a combined book catalog (library.rts.edu). The catalog lists all titles from all campuses. If you need a book from another campus, fill out an inter-library loan request form and give the form to library staff. Books sent from other campuses usually arrive in 10-14 days; articles, 2-3 days.

The RTS Libraries website (www.rts.edu/site/resources/library.aspx) has an extensive listing of added resources for study, many of which are online. This includes a listing of periodicals owned by all three campus libraries.

Course Materials and Textbooks

Self Service is used for the posting of course materials including course syllabi and lecture outlines. (If you do not have a Self Service account, e-mail Jennifer McGahey at jmcgahey@rts.edu about obtaining your RTS ID number and account-setup instructions.) To access course syllabi and lecture notes, you must first be registered for that particular course. A syllabus for each course is also available through www.rts.edu as well as the Registrar's office six weeks prior to the first

class meeting.

Textbooks are available through RTS' virtual bookstore: **Mindandheart.com**.

Grades

Grades are posted approximately 8 weeks after the last class in any semester. The grades will be made available to you on your Self Service account. Please remember for courses with long papers to be graded, or with a large number of students, grades may not be available as quickly.

Grading System

RTS Washington follows the same grading system used at other RTS campuses:

1. Grading Scale Grade Percentage

A	(4.0)	97-100
A-	(3.7)	94-96
B+	(3.3)	91-93
B	(3.0)	88-90
B-	(2.7)	86-87
C+	(2.3)	83-85
C	(2.0)	80-82
C-	(1.7)	78-79
D+	(1.3)	75-77
D	(1.0)	72-74
D-	(.7)	70-71
F	(0.0)	0-69

2. Other Nomenclature

(I) Incomplete - The grade "I" indicates that the work required for the course was not completed. It is given only when special, extenuating circumstances (such as illness) prevent the student from completing the work or taking the examination. A written request for an extension must be submitted prior to the due date of the work concerned. If the request is granted, it remains the responsibility of the student to complete all work for the course as soon as possible. In any case, an "I" grade must be removed within the extension time granted; otherwise it will be changed to "F."

(W) Withdraw - The grade "W" indicates that a student has withdrawn from a course after the drop deadline. This grade is granted by the academic dean only in extenuating circumstances.

A grade of C or better is required to continue in the sequence of language courses.

GPA

A Student whose GPA falls below C (2.0) after completing 18 hours of coursework is permitted to continue studies for one semester. If the average remains below 2.0, the student is dismissed. After a period of one year, those dismissed for academic reasons may apply for readmission.

Registrar

For advising, you should first consult your *Catalog*, this Student Guide, and your program advisor. The Registrar's Office is the official repository of enrollment records, student files, and transcripts. All requests for transfer credit, enrollment confirmation, graduation review, or sending of transcripts must be made to the Registrar. The Registrar is also an important source of counsel on a wide range of academic questions. The Executive Director is also ready to help.

Transcripts

For official transcripts, please complete and send the transcript request form to the RTS Washington DC office along with a check made payable to RTS. The current form and fee amount is available on the RTS website at <http://www.rts.edu/site/academics/transcript.aspx>. Once your form has been received, it will be put into a queue which can take up to two weeks to process. If you need an unofficial transcript, please use Self Service.

Other RTS Campuses

RTS Washington DC students are eligible to take courses at other RTS campuses, including the RTS Virtual Campus. To learn more about course offerings at other sites, visit the website at www.rts.edu and click on Courses. Please consult with your program advisor or the Registrar prior to enrolling in courses at another campus.

Accreditation

RTS is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, and by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. RTS is certified to operate in Virginia by State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) 101 N 14th, Richmond, VA, 23219 (804.225.2600).

Transfer Credit (to RTS)

Transfer credits are determined by the Registrar and Academic Dean on a case-by-case basis in view of the core competencies required for a particular degree. General guidelines for transfer credit from other accredited graduate schools

may be obtained from the Registrar. Courses to be transferred must match the program requirements listed in the RTS *Catalog* for them to be considered. Official determination of transfer credit is made only after a student has been admitted to a degree program at the seminary.

Transfer Credit (from RTS)

Any courses taken at RTS may be transferred for graduate credit to other accredited schools at the discretion of the Academic Dean (or Registrar) at the school of transfer. Transcripts may be issued by the Registrar for students who have enrolled in RTS courses and are in good standing with the institution (academically and financially). To request a transcript, refer to “Transcripts” on p.16.

Student Appeals & Grievances

Students’ Role and Participation in Institutional Decision Making

The seminary recognizes that students may contribute positively to institutional decision making. Therefore, an open-door policy exists throughout the institution, through which students may voice their concerns, suggestions, and needs. In addition, pertinent matters may be brought to the attention of the faculty, administration, or Board of Trustees through the student government and its officers.

Resolving Conflicts

Let a staff person or an instructor know if you are having difficulty. If your problem involves only one class, consult that professor. If the issue is broader, you should consult the Registrar who will help you with the problem or direct you to an appropriate person within the faculty or administration.

Student Appeals

An appeals process exists to resolve any behavioral or academic problem that cannot otherwise be settled in a Biblical manner and assures fairness to all parties concerned. This process is rarely needed and should only be used after all other means have been exhausted. For example, in academic matters that pertain to a class or a grade, the student should first work directly with the professor and/or Registrar. Concerning behavioral or community issues, the student should first consult with the Dean of Students.

If the matter cannot be resolved by the above means, the following appeals process exists:

1. The student should submit a written appeal to the Academic Dean regarding the issue. Depending on the issue, the Academic Dean may request input from the Faculty. The Academic Dean will render a written decision.
2. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Academic Dean, then the student may submit a subsequent written appeal to the campus President requesting a hearing. The campus President may or may not grant the request. If granted, the campus President will appoint an ad hoc committee that may consist of trustees, faculty, staff, and/or institutional officers to hear the case. This committee is authorized to meet with any or all concerned parties to resolve the issue and will render a written decision concerning the case.
3. The decision of the President or the ad hoc committee is considered final, subject only to review by the Executive Committee of the Board to affirm the appeals process was properly observed.
4. If you still feel a problem is unresolved after all the above appeals have been exhausted, you have the right to contact SCHEV (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia) to file a complaint and will not be subject to unfair actions from RTS as a result (804.225.2600).

Incompletes and Extensions

Permission to postpone the completion of course requirements beyond this time or to change the time for the final examination is granted *only for emergencies* and must be requested *prior to the last day of classes* unless physically unable to do so. The Registrar also has the discretion to grant permission for extensions or changes in the time of final exams (up to two weeks) in conjunction with the course instructor. For an extension beyond two weeks, a student must request an incomplete in the course. An incomplete is given only when special, extenuating circumstances (such as illness) prevent the student from completing the work or taking the examination. A written request for an extension must be submitted to the Registrar prior to the due date of the work concerned. If the request is granted, it remains the responsibility of the student to complete all work for the course as soon as possible. At the end of the extension period the appropriate grade will be assigned. Normally grade penalties will be involved. In all cases, students have the right of appeal to the Academic Affairs Committee.

Any changes of time for mid-terms, examinations, quizzes, and deadlines for written work before the end of the semester are at the discretion of the instructor.

Non-Compliance with Accreditation Standards

Reformed Theological Seminary maintains a goal to comply fully with the standards of accreditation of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in the United States and Canada and the Commission on Colleges of Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Students who believe that RTS has violated ATS and/or SACS standards in any way should submit their complaint in writing to their respective campus Academic Dean. The Dean will consult with the Chief Academic Officer, who serves as the coordinator of matters related to institutional accreditation. The complaint will be reviewed and a written response provided to the student in a timely fashion related to the receipt of the complaint.

At this point, if the student is not satisfied with the written response from RTS, the student may file a complaint directly with ATS and/or SACS. Contact information for ATS and SACS may be found in the RTS Catalog.

About the Master of Arts (Religion) Degree Program

The Master of Arts (Religion) is a foundational program of general theological studies. As such its primary purpose is not the training of ministerial professionals but rather the equipping of lay leadership for life and service in the Church and society.

In order to achieve this purpose, the Master of Arts (Religion) program provides concentrated work in theological studies building upon a background of biblical studies with a view toward cultural and social concerns. It is designed to strengthen the religious basis for life and work in secular careers and some positions on a church or parachurch staff. It is also sometimes taken as a prelude to further graduate studies.

The MAR program may be completed in four years if the student enrolls in six classes each year. Of course the program may be shortened or even extended over a longer period of time. The majority of students in the program are lay women and lay men who desire to enhance their service in both their secular careers and church ministry. A smaller number of students may be involved vocationally in a variety of non-ordained Christian ministries.

The course requirements for the Master of Arts (Religion) are listed in the RTS *Catalog*. With the exception of the integrative paper, these courses may be completed in any order. Your academic advisor will guide you in selecting the most appropriate courses each semester.

Please note, for extension students, all work for the MAR degree must be completed within seven years from the time of initial enrollment.

Integrative Paper

The integrative paper is a thesis to be written in the student's final academic year. It is to be 60 pages in length (excluding bibliography and footnotes). The topic should be in one of the following fields: theology, bible, history or ministry.

Criteria for Paper

The integrative paper is a thesis, not a research paper. The difference between the two is that a thesis seeks to demonstrate or prove a point while a research paper seeks to report or compile information. The goal of a thesis is to contribute to knowledge. Such contributions may include:

- Discovery of new facts.
- The establishment of new relations among facts already known.
- The solution to a problem or problems hitherto unresolved.

Initiating the Process

Work on the integrative paper cannot be started until a student has reached his or her final academic year. Once registered (see C. below), the student has nine (9) months, equivalent to one academic year, to complete it. To initiate the process, the student needs to:

- A. Contact the Director of Student Services, Geoff Sackett (gsackett@rts.edu), for consultation on finding an appropriate thesis advisor. Contact Mr. Sackett at least four (4) weeks before you plan to start your research.
- B. Submit a thesis proposal (see section below). Both the student and the thesis advisor need to sign the proposal before submitting it to Mr. Sackett for approval.
- C. Register and pay with the Office Administrator, Jennifer McGahey (jmcahey@rts.edu). The nine months begins once you have been registered.

Thesis Proposal

The thesis proposal should contain the following elements:

- A. A cover page with the date, your name, number of credit hours completed, title of the proposal, your contact information, the name of your advisor, and a space for the advisor's signature.
- B. A brief (4-5 sentences) statement of the problem to be studied and the

background of the problem which has led the student to propose its study.

C. A description of the methodology to be used.

D. A brief selected bibliography (4-5 works) of the most important primary and secondary sources relevant to the study.

Completing Your Work

As you near the conclusion of the paper, a draft of the paper should be provided to your advisor for review. The draft should be submitted by March 15 if you plan to graduate in June. No student will be permitted to graduate who misses this deadline. It should be typed, double-spaced, and follow the style defined in Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (6th Edition, University of Chicago Press). Your advisor should then interact with the overall project and provide you with a list of recommendations for how the paper should be improved.

Submission of the Paper

When all revisions are complete, you will prepare an original copy of the paper with title page. This original will be given to the advisor for approval and evaluation. The advisor shall forward the paper and a written evaluation to Mr. Sackett.

About the Master of Divinity Degree Program

The MDiv curriculum is designed to offer training for the pastoral ministry. Concentrated study in three basic areas- Bible, systematic theology and practical theology- characterizes this three year program. In addition to training for pastoral ministry, the curriculum is designed to aid in the student's sanctification.

The MDiv degree requires four hundred hours of field education experience. RTS provides a booklet regarding this requirement. Contact Peter Lee (plee@rts.edu) for more information.

Although the curriculum is designed to be completed in three years, many students choose to complete the curriculum in four or more years. All students must complete degree requirements in eight years.

A MDiv degree from Reformed Theological Seminary indicates that the graduate has completed the requirements for the course of study. Although the MDiv degree meets the standard educational requirements for ordination in most denominations, the degree does not certify that the graduate necessarily possesses all the biblical qualifications requisite for the ministry or adheres to the Reformed faith. Graduation from Reformed Theological Seminary with either the MDiv degree or diploma should not in itself be construed as a recommendation for the ministry.

Ecclesiastical bodies and pulpit committees are responsible for applying their own requirements for ordination to determine the doctrinal soundness, suitability, and readiness for ministry of a particular graduate.

Master of Divinity Program Tracking Sheet

Required CoursesRequired Courses Requirement: **106 hours.****Theological Studies (22 hours)**

_____	ST502	Intro to Pastoral & Theological Studies	3
_____	ST504	History of Philosophy and Christian Thought	3
_____	ST510	Systematic Theology I	3
_____	ST514	Systematic Theology II	2
_____	ST520	Systematic Theology III	3
_____	ST524	Systematic Theology IV	2
_____	ST526	Principles of Sanctification	1
_____	ST528	Pastoral and Social Ethics	3
_____	ST530	Apologetics	2

History (9 hours)

_____	HT502	History of Christianity I	3
_____	HT504	History of Christianity II	3
_____	HT508	Classics of Personal Devotion	1
_____	HT506	Church & the World	2

Biblical Studies (40 hours)

_____	OT502	Hebrew I	3
_____	OT504	Hebrew II	3
_____	OT506	Hebrew Exegesis	2
_____	OT508	Genesis-Joshua	3
_____	OT510	Judges to Ester	2
_____	OT512	Poets	2
_____	OT516	Isaiah - Malachi	3
_____	NT502	Greek I	3
_____	NT504	Greek II	3
_____	NT506	Greek Exegesis	2
_____	NT508	Gospels	3
_____	NT516	Acts & Romans	2
_____	NT520	Pauline Epistles (MAR has Acts & Pauline Epistles)	3
_____	NT522	Hebrews to Revelation	3
_____	ON504	Advanced Biblical Exegesis/Macro Hermeneutics	3

Requirements continued on next page

Master of Divinity Program Tracking Sheet (con't.)

Required Courses

Required Courses Requirement: **106 hours.**

Practical Theology and Missions (27 hours)

_____	CE514	Educational Ministry of the Church	2
_____	MS508	Evangelism	2
_____	MS518	Missions	2
_____	PT506	Introduction to Preaching	2
_____	PT508	Communications I	2
_____	PT510	Communications I Lab	2
_____	PT512	Leadership	2
_____	PT516	Pastoral Counseling	3
_____	PT518	Pastoral Ministry	2
_____	PT520	Church Polity	1
_____	PT522	Communications II*	2
_____	PT524	Communications II Lab*	2
_____	PT526	Worship	3
_____	PT534	Field Education Seminar	0
_____	PT536	Field Education Internship	0

Free Electives (8 hours)

Semester	Course #	Course Title	Hours

Successful completion of a comprehensive examination in biblical content is required prior to graduation. This examination may be repeated until it is passed. A grade of 'C' is considered a passing grade.

*Must successfully complete the Westminster Shorter Catechism examination before taking Communications II and Communications II Lab.

Instructions for Self-Service

Self-Service is located at <http://selfservice.rts.edu/>.

To Request an Account:

1. At home page, click **Request Account**, located under the Log In box on the left.
2. Fill in the information requested. The “System ID” is the RTS ID that you were given when you applied and it is located on your acceptance letter.
3. When finished, click **Request Account**. You will be emailed your user ID and password. If you fail to receive your login information, please contact Jennifer McGahey (jmccahey@rts.edu).
4. Once logged into the system, you may be immediately prompted to change your password. If you are not prompted and want to change your password, please proceed to the “My Profile” tab on menu.

To Register for Classes:

1. Click the **Register** tab.
2. Under **Traditional Options** you will see what **Year/Term** periods are available to be registered for at this time.
3. Use **Section Search** to search for courses, add them to your cart, proceed to checkout and officially add them to your course schedule.
4. You can also search for courses via the **Search** tab.

Between the time you register online and the start of class, you may add or drop courses at will, without penalty. After the course begins, however, you will have to contact the RTS office in order to drop.

To View Schedule:

1. Once registered, click **Classes**.
2. Click **Schedule**.
3. Click **Student Schedule**.
4. You will then see your current schedule. You can also change the Period in order to see past and future schedules.

If a teacher has set up a course homepage, you will be able to see a link called [Go to Course Home Page](#). Here, course documents can be downloaded, student correspondence can take place, files uploaded, course announcements posted, etc. Grades can be found under the **Grades** tab.

Instructions for Self-Service (cont.)

Paying Your Tuition:

1. Click the **Finances** tab. You can view your overall balance, statements, and other financial information.
2. Click **Make a Payment**. A simple credit card entry will process your transaction and post it on your account.

If you have any questions about Self-Serve, please contact Jennifer McGahey (jmcgahey@rts.edu).

Nearby Restaurants in McLean, VA 22101

- A Greek Taverna
6828 Old Dominion Dr (703) 556-0788
- B Endo Sushi
6828 Old Dominion Dr. (703) 883-2001
- C McDonalds
18010 6920 Old Dominion Dr (703) 827-9571
- D Pasa Thai Cuisine
1315 Old Chain Bridge Rd (703) 442-0090
- E Chesapeake Bagel Bakery
6815 Old Dominion Dr (703) 506-0536
- F Boss Hog's Smoke BBQ
6811 Elm St (703) 821-1869
- G Chicken Out Rotisserie
1443-A Chain Bridge Rd (703) 917-8646
- H Papa John's Pizza
1300 Old Chain Bridge Rd (703) 448-7400
- I Rocco's Italian Restaurant
1357 Chain Bridge Rd (703) 821-3736
- J Subway
6829 Elm Street (703) 506-8500
- K Peking Imperial
6827 Redmond Dr (703) 448-09281
- L Boston Market
1408 Chain Bridge Rd (703) 848-9700
- M Domino's Pizza
1420 Chain Bridge Rd (703) 847-0500
- N Cafe Taj
1379 Beverly Rd (703) 827-0444
- O Moby Dick House of Kabab
6854 Old Dominion Dr (703) 448-8448



**Reformed Theological Seminary
Application for Graduation**

Last Name _____

Student ID# _____

Important Notices:

1. Students must file this Request for Graduation on or before December 31 for a June graduation. (In order to postpone a June graduation request previously filed, students must alert the Registrar prior to May 1 for a refund. Students who notify the Registrar after May 1 will forfeit the Graduation Fee and will be charged an additional Graduation Fee for the subsequent graduation year.)
2. The Seminary subsidizes the cost of graduation for each student by several hundred dollars. Nevertheless, some fees must be passed along to the student. Fees for graduation and thesis binding are will be charged to student accounts in May. Be sure to consider this as you make plans to pay your account in full prior to commencement.

Gown Information:

Height: _____ Weight: _____

Diploma Information: (Please print your name as you wish it to appear)

Name: _____

Degree Program: _____

Expected Graduation Year: _____

Commencement Program Information:

Country Citizenship: _____

Home City: _____

Home State: _____

Church Membership: _____

Denomination: _____

Future Plans: _____

Previous Degrees to be noted:

Degree _____

Name of University _____

Date Rec'd _____ Location _____

**Reformed Theological Seminary
Application for Graduation (pg 2)**

Last Name _____

Student ID# _____

Address until graduation:

Street: _____

City: _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone: _____

Mailing address for diploma:

Street: _____

City: _____ State ____ Zip _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Courses to complete:

Final GPA: _____

Final Graduation Clearance (Check if OK)

- ____ Passing GPA
- ____ Integrative Paper
- ____ Catechism Exam
- ____ English Bible Exam
- ____ Graduation Fees
- ____ Binding Fees

Cleared to Receive Diploma:

- ____ Records
- ____ Accounting
- ____ Financial Aid

