

STUDENT HANDBOOK 2026/2027



YOU BELONG @



MEADVILLE LOMBARD
THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

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WELCOME TO MEADVILLE LOMBARD

OUR MISSION

Meadville Lombard Theological School nurtures learners from diverse faith traditions to embody the collaborative work of liberation through congregational and community leadership.

WE VALUE:

- Integrating scholarly excellence in theological education
- Centering interculturality to deepen spiritual leadership formation
- Honing moral imagination, emotional intelligence, and faithful discernment
- Reshaping and reforming tradition to impel innovative ministries
- Harnessing accountability to repair historical wrongs and present injustice
- Mobilizing ethical leadership to build Beloved Community

STUDENT COVENANT

We call forth each other's full and authentic presence, in the spirit of love and openness to the many different gifts we bring. We covenant to be each other's support and share each other's joy. We trust that doing differently will lead to thinking differently. May we move forward with courage and gratitude for our opportunities to learn and grow.

- We will respect diversity in all its manifestations as a sign of strength; we will honor all contributions to the community.
- We will listen deeply to all points of view.
- We will offer everyone an opportunity, and an invitation, to be heard.
- We will allow and honor silence.
- We will communicate compassionately, directly, and honestly.
- We will use "I" language and speak from our own stories and experiences.
- We will respect confidentiality.

- We will support the structures in our community that actively turn conflict towards healing and growth.
- We will resolve our conflicts proactively. When we need to step back, we will return as soon as it is healthy.
- We will make every effort to settle differences openly: giving and receiving criticism kindly.
- We will confront our assumptions.
- We will accept and forgive imperfections in ourselves and in others.
- We will be open to connection with the full breadth of the Meadville Lombard community.

OUR COMMUNITY

Meadville Lombard is an educational community composed of people from diverse cultures, theological perspectives, and traditions. As a learning community, Meadville Lombard seeks to be a positive and supportive environment that is conducive to all students, faculty, and staff to the exchange of ideas and knowledge, both on campus and off. As a spiritual community, we hold each other accountable for maintaining principles of fairness, civility, and respect for divergent perspectives. As a diverse community, we promote the dignity and worth of all people.

To This End, We Recommend These Guidelines for Right Relations in Community,

Adapted from Rev. David Miller

- Am I reflecting on how my attitude and actions contribute to the tone of our community?
- Am I assuming the good intentions of the other(s)?
- Am I communicating directly with the person with whom I am having the issue?
- Am I resolving issues or am I spreading them through gossip, anger, and/or frustration?
- Am I reflecting on what personal wounds, issues, and tendencies of mine are contributing to the issue?
- Am I willing to be an active participant and to work in good faith to clear up issues?
- Am I projecting onto someone else through my own framework what they are thinking or doing as opposed to engaging them and asking them to share their thoughts and story?
- Am I actively listening to what others are saying and not formulating a response or the next comment or question while they are talking?
- Can I let go of my need to control the situation?
- Can I graciously leave space for others by letting someone else speak first or by not speaking my mind if the point has been raised or made already?
- Can I have disagreements with an individual or group, do so in love and respect, and continue to stay in community?

- Can I take into account the importance of the task in relation to the importance of the relationship?

To support our learning community for all, Meadville Lombard provides:

- A supportive environment that facilitates the educational goals of Meadville
- Lombard on campus and online.
- Access to timely and accurate information.
- Opportunities for leadership development (Student Activities Council, student organizations, etc.).
- Confidentiality of student records (FERPA).
- Reasonable ADA accommodations.
- Due process in disciplinary proceedings.
- Safe physical environment on campus.

Meadville Lombard asks you to:

- Encourage one another in ministerial formation.
- Recognize the value of diversity and an open exchange of ideas in local and global contexts.
- Pursue education and practices that will enhance your understanding about living and working in a multicultural and anti-oppression community.
- Practice high ethical standards through the promotion of honesty, dignity, courtesy, and respect when interacting with other students, faculty, and staff.
- Help keep campus facilities clean and inviting.
- Read and follow the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association Guidelines for the Conduct of Ministry (UUMA Guidelines) <https://www.uuma.org/page/guidelines>.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

CORPORATE IDENTITY AND AUTHORITY

Meadville Lombard Theological School, located in Chicago, Illinois, is an independent Theological School with Unitarian Universalist roots and affiliations. Formally titled “Meadville Theological School of Lombard College”, the institution is more commonly referred to as Meadville Lombard Theological School. It is the surviving corporation of a merger between Meadville Theological School (which was incorporated in Pennsylvania by a Special Act on April 14, 1865) and Lombard College (which was incorporated in Illinois by the Secretary of State on May 15, 1851). This “surviving corporation” operates under the original Lombard College charter and is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

As provided in its charter, the Board of Trustees holds final authority over the institution's governance. It is responsible for appointing the school's chief executive and full-time faculty, approving budgets and faculty salaries, and authorizing both earned and honorary degrees. The Board consists of thirteen to eighteen members: including the President, a faculty trustee, a voting student trustee— who is elected by a majority vote of all students in good standing (pursuant to election rules established by the Student Affairs Council)— and the President of the Meadville Lombard Alumni/ae Association.

The Board elects members to serve a term of three years, with the exception of the President (who serves ex-officio), the student trustee (who serves for a maximum of two, one-year terms), the faculty trustee (who serves for a two-year term), and the Alumni/ae trustee (who serves so long as that trustee holds the Alumni/ae office). Trustees who have completed three terms are not eligible for another term until after a gap of one year. The Board presently meets three times a year. The Executive Committee — composed of the Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, chairs of all other Teams that the Board establishes, one or more at-large members, and the President— carries on necessary business between meetings, and special meetings of the Board may be called on occasion. Other Board committees may also meet between regular Board meetings.

The Board has presently established the following Teams and Committees:

- Executive
- Development and Communications
- Education
- Finance and Administration
- Nominating

Members of these Teams and Committees are either ex-officio or elected by the full Board. Because its primary responsibility lies in the making of policies, the Board is not directly involved in the administrative and academic affairs of the school. Major administrative decisions are discussed with members of the Executive Committee and others as needed.

The Board has a diverse array of duties. These duties include evaluating the Chief Executive; reviewing, providing counsel for, and adopting broad institutional goals and policies; and fundraising. Present and former Board members support the school financially and develop financial support from other individuals and churches. While formal authority rests with the Board, the day-to-day operation of the school is delegated to the President, Administration, and Faculty. For a list of current Board of Trustees members, please visit our website (www.meadville.edu).

PRESIDENT

The President, who is elected by the Board of Trustees, serves as the spiritual leader, chief educational officer, and chief administrator of the school. These responsibilities are carried out through delegation and collaboration.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

The Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs is appointed by the President to oversee the educational program (in consultation with the faculty), accreditation, and the Department of Student Affairs. The Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs is a member of the President's Leadership Team and, as such, is actively involved in decisions regarding the institution's overall administrative policies.

FACULTY

The Meadville Lombard Faculty, which includes the President and the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs meets bi-monthly from August through June. Because the School seeks to provide the best possible educational experience; a considerable amount of time is devoted to meeting with individual students and discussing their first year of study, their experiences in Signature Courses, internships, and Clinical Pastoral Education, and their progress in their degree programs. Moreover, individual faculty members frequently agree to assume tasks—such as the development of draft statements—that might then be referred to a committee within the larger faculty. Finally, individual faculty members serve on school committees, sometimes as the chair of the committee.

MEADVILLE LOMBARD COUNCIL

PURPOSE

The Meadville Lombard Council acts as an advisory committee to the Meadville Lombard President on academic and non-academic issues related to community life. To accomplish this aim, the Council meets monthly from September to May (except January) to discuss and examine issues that Council members deem important. Additionally, the Council will examine issues brought to its attention by community members, provided that the Council members agree that the issue falls within the Council's jurisdiction.

STRUCTURE

Each Council member has one vote. For voting purposes, five Council members constitute a quorum. Council membership consists of:

- Faculty/Staff positions (five votes)
 - The Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
 - The Vice President of Finance and Administration (or representative)
 - The Senior Director of Enrollment Management and Financial Aid
 - One Staff member (elected by the Staff)
 - One Faculty member (elected by the faculty)
- Student positions
 - A representative appointed by the Student Advisory Council
 - The Student Representative to the Meadville Lombard Board of Trustees
- The President (serves ex-officio)

LEADERSHIP

The two offices of the Council are the Chair and the Recording Secretary.

These are one-year terms that are filled by members of the Student Advisory Council; this council will then decide which member fills either role.

OPEN MEETING POLICY

Unless otherwise noted, all Council meetings are open to the entire Meadville Lombard community. Council members oversee the flow of information between their constituencies and the Council.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Meadville Lombard Council is expected to engage in ongoing communication with the President in matters related to its discussions. The Meadville Lombard Council is also charged with annually communicating to the Meadville Lombard community summaries of its deliberations and recommendations after each meeting through the weekly bulletin/newsletter, “This Week @ Meadville Lombard” (see Section 2.4.2), or via the school’s email lists. The Meadville Lombard Council is also expected to provide an “Annual Report” each June to the entire student body. This report summarizes the previous year’s matters and discussions and is delivered via “This Week @ Meadville Lombard” or the school’s email lists.

COMMITTEES

Committee structure within the community is flexible and subject to change to adapt to new concerns or situations that may arise. Special committees appointed by the Council have discussed issues such as course evaluation and spiritual life, and have conducted sessions to provide conflict resolution skills. Frequently, other individuals or groups may assume—or be given responsibility for—some aspect of the school’s life or operations. Committees within the community can be broadly classified into two categories: voluntary and elected. Any committee may have student, faculty, and staff representatives on it.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

The Student Advisory Council (SAC) consists of Meadville Lombard students elected yearly by their colleagues, who represent the interests and concerns of currently enrolled students.

SAC holds monthly meetings which are open to all students, sponsors and organizes events, manages the finances of the student community (including student activity fees), and undertakes other initiatives as needed, determined by the SAC team in covenantal relationship with the student body.

To serve in a SAC leadership role, a student must be registered and in Academic Good Standing as defined by this Handbook.

REGISTERED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

A group of three or more currently enrolled students may form a registered student organization by following these steps:

- Complete a yearly registration form.
- Secure a full-time faculty/professional staff advisor.
- Develop a constitution and bylaws to govern the organization and ensure a version is on file with MLTS. The bylaws must include the following information:
 - Name of the organization
 - Purpose of the organization
 - Eligibility for membership
 - Description of the duties of each officer
 - Voting procedures
 - Schedule of meetings
 - Description of committees and their functions
 - Provisions for amendments to the constitution
- Limit group membership to students, faculty, and staff at Meadville Lombard.
- Extend membership without biases prohibited by applicable law, including, but not limited to, sex, race, color, national origin, religion, age, veteran status, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.
- Agree to conduct organization affairs in accordance with school regulations.
- Understand that only students in Academic Good Standing, as defined by the Student Handbook, can serve in a leadership role in student organizations.

For any questions or assistance regarding student organizations, please contact the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry.

GENERAL INFORMATION

COMMUNICATION

EMAIL

Upon matriculation, you will be given a Meadville Lombard email address. This is usually, but not always, the first initial of your first name, and then your last name .edu (i.e., Jenny Chicago would be jchicago@meadville.edu). This email account is the school's official means of communicating with students, staff members, and faculty, therefore, you are expected to check your incoming mail regularly. A graduating student's Meadville email will remain active for one year after graduation. Near the conclusion of that year, the alum may request continuing access at that time via email to the Registrar.

Students beginning their degree program receive their email addresses immediately prior to beginning the New Student Orientation process. When the email address is created, an eight-character, temporary password will be automatically generated. You will be required to change it to either a password or a passphrase that is something both familiar and strong. Some guidelines, tips, and suggestions follow:

- Passwords:

- The password should be at least eight characters in length and should have a combination of letters, numbers, and symbols.
- Password" is a commonly used passphrase and is easily hackable. A way to strengthen this otherwise weak password would be to replace some of the letters with numbers, such as Pa55w0rd. To make the password even stronger, symbols can be added in, such as P@55w0r&.
- Passphrases:
 - Because passwords can be difficult to remember, many people are moving towards replacing them with passphrases. These are a series of words that make sense to you, but that no one else would think to use.
 - Example: MyFavoriteBirthdayPresentWasABlueBike
 - At 37 upper- and lowercase characters, this example passphrase will be nearly impossible to crack. Additionally, despite its length, it will also be hard to forget because the blue bike used in the example holds a special place in the user's memory.

Meadville email accounts will be the only email address used by staff and faculty to communicate school, course, and formational matters. Meadville email accounts are to be used for coursework and outreach only. They are not to be used for online shopping, registering with non-academic sites, as a personal address for non-Meadville conversations, or anything that could cause spam to be sent to the Meadville domain.

THIS WEEK @ MEADVILLE LOMBARD (AKA "THE BULLETIN")

During the Academic Year, the Communications Office sends out a weekly bulletin titled, "This Week @ Meadville Lombard." The bulletin includes announcements on policy changes, upcoming deadlines, and other news affecting the entire community. This bulletin is the official vehicle for the delivery of such news and is delivered via your Meadville Lombard email account.

POPULI

Our Learning Management System, Populi, is the home for online coursework. Populi enables you to archive and track electronic documents and assignments, participate in forums, and form private online study groups.

Once a student matriculates, they will be issued a Populi account and password by the Registrar.

SOCIAL MEDIA

This Social Media Policy statement provides guidance for students, staff, and faculty as to the appropriate use of social media when connected to their status with the school, or when directly or indirectly referencing the school. The purpose of this policy is to delineate best practices that enrich the MLTS learning community and to provide safeguards aligned with our school mission, educational goals, and covenantal practices. The policy aims to encourage the use of social media that is in compliance

with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and to protect the school's reputation and institutional image, as well as members of its community. It is not designed to foreclose any legal rights of students.

WHAT IS CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA, AND A DEFINITION:

Social Media provides channels of communication between Meadville Lombard Theological School (the institution) students, alums, prospective students, stakeholders, donors, and others. Insofar as social media use may help further the mission and work of the institution, we (MLTS as an institution) are in support of the responsible and free construction of meaning and sharing of ideas and experiences by our students, staff, and faculty.

SOCIAL MEDIA DEFINITION

Social Media is defined as those materials shared and disseminated through digital platforms that open pathways to communication with a wider audience and invite interactions.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, among others.
- Video and photo sharing websites (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram, Flickr)
- Blogging sites (e.g., university blogs, personal or blogs hosted by media publications)
- Forums, discussion boards (e.g., Facebook, Google, or news article comments and online encyclopedias (e.g. Wikipedia)

COMMUNICATING ONLINE

Communicating online is part of our everyday lives. It is important to understand the customary rules of online etiquette, commonly referred to as Netiquette. Netiquette can be summarized by four simple rules:

- Remember that there is a human(s) being on the other end of your communication.
- Treat the human(s) being on the other end of your communication with respect.
- Do not transmit any message that you wouldn't be willing to communicate face to face.
- Do not share private information

NETIQUETTE: GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATING ONLINE

Use common sense! Use good judgment. Think first. Post second. Reflect on how you would wish to present yourself, including to future employers. Once made, posted to social media, it is difficult to fully expunge social media posts even in private groups.

Be mindful of the nuances between intent and impact. There is no excuse for engaging in behavior that is degrading or insulting to others. A free and responsible search for meaning and discussion requires that we act in ways that safeguard dignity and consider potential impact on others.

Some examples of inappropriate behavior include:

- sexual harassment
- racist, sexist, homophobic, or transphobic statements against another
- threatening or intimidating others,
- violating privacy policies/laws, or defamation.
- Be aware of how your actions represent your vocation and the institutions in which you participate.
- The following examples illustrate types of behavior, displayed through social media, which the school considers to be forms of cyberbullying:
 - Spreading rumors, lies, or gossip
 - Intimidating or aggressive behavior
 - Offensive or threatening comments or content
 - Posting comments/photos etc., deliberately mocking an individual with the intent to harass or humiliate.

Meadville Lombard will not tolerate content that is threatening, defamatory, illegal, infringing on intellectual property rights, invasive of privacy, libelous, discriminatory, harassing, bullying, abusive, or hateful to any person or entity, in violation of the school's policy(s), or otherwise injurious. The school reserves the right to remove any content on social media pages or discussion platforms it administers that violates its policies or counters its mission, vision, and values. The school encourages respectful expression of diverse ideas and viewpoints in the course of legitimate social media interactions.

- Be mindful of copyright and intellectual property rights and of school policies regarding those rights.
- The Student Handbook provides students with protocols for communicating concerns they may have with the school or its faculty and staff. For concerns about other students, consult the Student Covenant in addition to the Student Handbook. Staff and faculty should review their respective handbooks for guidance on raising concerns or grievances. Concerns should be raised through these mechanisms first, not on social media.

NON-COMPLIANCE/BREACH OF POLICY

Violations of this policy will result in a review of the incident and may include action under the appropriate Meadville Lombard disciplinary processes. Corrective action may involve a verbal or written warning, suspension, or dismissal and/or termination of educational privileges or employment with Meadville Lombard. This section does not preclude disciplinary action for conduct that involves social media and that also violates other school policies.

ADVISING

At the beginning of each student's first term, the VP of Academic and Student Affairs will assign students to a Faculty Advisor. New students will want to confer with their Advisor as early as possible about vocational and formational plans and concerns. Students are expected to meet with their Advisor on a routine basis, depending on the structure of their degree program, and will need to obtain Advisor approval for exceptions to standard academic requirements as described in this handbook.

A successful advising relationship hinges on regular communication between advisors and advisees, both structured and informal, to establish and reinforce mutual expectations and foster a positive relationship. Some advising needs can be fulfilled through carefully prepared documentation regarding program requirements, recommended course selection and planning, and course descriptions and schedules. These documents are developed to assist students in achieving their academic program goals within a reasonable timeframe, helping minimize the financial burden a graduate education can create. Students and faculty should follow the sequences laid out in these documents as much as possible.

For other advising needs, students are encouraged to begin by recognizing the values, goals, and responsibilities that faculty and students share as part of the Meadville Lombard Theological School experience.

SHARED VALUES

- Educational excellence and rigor
- Academic integrity
- Spirit of collaboration
- Justice, equity, and compassion
- Professionalism in all aspects of advising relationships.

SHARED GOALS

- Academic progress and graduation of students according to the students' desired timeline
- Financial stability
- Mastery of the subject material
- Advancement of knowledge and skills
- Professional development and personal growth
- Career success and satisfaction

SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

- Uphold and abide by department and school policies and procedures.
- Maintain a respectful and inclusive environment.
- Abide by the highest ethical and professional standards.
- Foster a culture of open, honest, respectful communication and collaboration.

To uphold these shared values, goals, and responsibilities, advisors and students must meet the following expectations:

ROLE OF YOUR ADVISORS

- Meet with students. Regularly publicize their availability. Advisors should plan to meet with their advisees twice a year, either by phone, video conferencing, or in person.
- Evaluate students' progress and performance at regular intervals and inform students about their performance in relation to expectations of normal progress and to norms associated with successful degree completion.
- Provide accurate and timely advice. Advisors should prioritize students' timely completion of degree requirements.
- Listen carefully.
- Offer guidance in course selection and insight regarding best study practices.
- Provide formational guidance designed to help the students cultivate skills that are necessary for ordained ministry or vocational service.
- Be familiar with MLTS policies, procedures, and deadlines.
- Advisers should keep their relationships with advisees focused on academic and professional development.
- Address student questions regarding ministry realities.
- Give advice that helps students transition from studies to their professional pursuits.
- Write letters of recommendation at the request of the advisee.
- Collaborate with the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry regarding any changes to a student's status.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

- It is the student's responsibility to make appointments with their advisor, ideally once in the fall and once in the spring. Understand that advisors lead demanding lives and have professional and family responsibilities; it is unreasonable for students to expect immediate access at all times. Request a meeting during the advisor's publicized office hours. If you need to reschedule or cancel a meeting, please notify your advisor promptly.
- For issues related to internships, CPE, internship supervisors or credentialing, consult with the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry.
- Consult with your advisor prior to registering for courses, particularly related to the composition of your concentration.
- Consult the Student Handbook before asking a question of the advisor.
- Come to meetings prepared with questions and ideas.
- Take notes and/or memorize suggestions made by your advisor so you can refer to them later.
- Expect constructive criticism to be part of the advising experience.
- Be attentive and responsive to the advice offered by the advisor.
- Make requests for letters of recommendation well in advance of deadlines whenever possible.

- Take responsibility for your actions or inactions as a student spiritual leader.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries and expectations with your advisor. Academic and formational advising will be provided; however, personal counseling, grief counseling, etc., must be sought outside of the advising relationship.

REMEDIES FOR ADVERSE ADVISOR-STUDENT RELATIONS

In the event that difficulties develop between an advisor and a student, students should contact the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs to determine suitable options (if a student's advisor is the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, difficulties should be brought to the attention of the President) Advisors who experience difficulties with advisees may find it helpful to seek advice from peer faculty. If the issue cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the concerned party, a change in advisors will be recommended by the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs (or the President)

FINANCE POLICY

Meadville Lombard is a non-profit educational institution. For questions about non-confidential budget items, contact the Vice President of Finance and Administration.

TUITION AND FEES

Information on current tuition and fees can be found on our website (<http://www.meadville.edu/becoming-a-student/tuition-and-fees>)

STUDENT ACCOUNTS

Federal financial aid awards are applied to student accounts according to the semester's disbursement schedule and cannot be used to pay outstanding balances from a prior semester.

Institutional tuition reduction awards and scholarships cannot be used to pay fees or prior-year outstanding balances.

TUITION REFUND SCHEDULE

Students may drop classes without academic or financial penalty until the end of the Add/Drop period each term (<https://www.meadville.edu/current-students/academic-calendar/>). After the end of the Add/Drop period, course and program withdrawal requests must be made in writing, on the approved form ([Course Withdrawal Form](#) or [Program Withdrawal Form](#)) and submitted to the Registrar. Normally, no tuition or fee refund will be granted for course withdrawals after the Add/Drop period.

RETURNED CHECK POLICY

Meadville Lombard expects students to be responsible in their financial dealings with the school. However, we understand that on occasion mistakes may result in a check being returned by the bank.

If a check is returned, an additional Returned Check Fee of \$30.00 will be added to the student's account. Checks returned for reasons other than insufficient funds will be charged the Returned Check fee, and the student will be contacted to resolve the issue.

To graduate or register for future courses, accounts must be current.

In the event of a past due balance of any nature on a student's account, diplomas will not be issued, enrollment for subsequent terms will not be allowed, and official transcripts of college credits will not be released until the balance is paid in full. A "hold" will be placed on the student's account. The only exception to this is official transcripts provided directly to a current or potential employer.

Questions regarding student accounts or this policy can be addressed to the Business Office.

EMERGENCY ADVANCE AGAINST FINANCIAL AID

In an emergency, students may receive an advance against their upcoming financial aid award, up to a maximum of \$1,000: if at least that amount of financial aid (\$1,000) has been awarded for living expenses. This request should be submitted to the Financial Aid Office via email. When financial aid is available for release to a student's account, any advanced amounts will be reimbursed to MLTS before a check is released to the student.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Significant aspects of learning for all students will be facilitated through various forms of technological media throughout the degree program. In a distance-learning format, technology and the associated equipment should be considered a "required textbook" for completing the coursework. We strongly suggest that you have reliable, steady internet access, ideally through broadband. Your internet access should allow you to participate in electronic classroom forums, video conferencing, podcasts, chat rooms, and Populi. There will also be times when you will exchange documents with fellow students and faculty and use software such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

MINIMUM SPECIFICATIONS

- **A computer:**
 - You will need a reliable computing device. Because there are wide varieties of computing devices, rather than suggesting hardware, your computing device should be capable of easily handling the specifications and activities outlined here. As a starting point, we recommend a device running a current, supported version of Windows or MacOS.
 - Choose hardware that includes a built-in video camera and microphone as part of the package or purchase an external webcam and microphone that works with your device.
- **Internet Access:**
 - Access to high-speed internet (DSL/Cable/T1), capable of handling video conferencing.
- **Software:**

- Internet browsers such as Firefox, Safari, Chrome, or Microsoft Edge. We recommend that your browser be set to accept cookies and display the latest version of a webpage. We also recommend disabling pop-up blocking features on official websites used for coursework.
- Office software capable of viewing, creating, and editing documents, spreadsheets, and presentations such as any of the following: Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) (free for MLTS students), iWorks (Pages, Numbers, Keynote), Google Suite, or LibreOffice. You will be required to submit assignments in word (.doc/.docx) and PDF formats.
- A PDF viewer such as Adobe Reader or Foxit PDF Reader.
- A media player capable of playing video and audio files such as Windows Media Player, VLC Media Player, or iTunes.
- **Conferencing:**
 - Zoom Video conferencing will be used as a teaching strategy over the course of your study. Students should expect to use Zoom and, if possible, download the application to their computers.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Students are responsible for securing their own health insurance coverage.

CAMPUS SECURITY

SECURITY

It is the policy of Meadville Lombard to make a reasonable effort to provide security for its students, faculty, staff, and authorized visitors to its premises and property. All members of Meadville Lombard are expected to know and comply with the Meadville Lombard security procedures and report any violations or potential problems to the Security Officer, designated as the Vice President for Finance and Administration. It is then the Security Officer's responsibility to respond to reports of security violations.

SECURITY OFFICER

Meadville Lombard has appointed the Vice President for Finance and Administration as the School's Security Officer. The responsibilities of the Security Officer include:

- Recommending, implementing, and enforcing all security procedures, while additionally making periodic audits of existing procedures.
- Coordinating with the building owner, the systems to issue and control school identification devices and keys, and to identify and control Meadville Lombard's physical assets.
- Investigating thefts and acts of vandalism.
- Safeguarding electronic communications and files, confidential information, and the release of sensitive information.
- Communicating security procedures to Meadville Lombard personnel, and training/retraining Meadville Lombard personnel with respect to their security responsibilities.

- All Meadville Lombard personnel are encouraged to report all crimes accurately and promptly to appropriate police agencies and the Meadville Lombard Security Officer.

ACCESS

Meadville Lombard is not a public access facility. Access to campus facilities is limited to members of the Meadville Lombard community and their designated invitees. Private offices are restricted to designated occupants and their invitees. Students and employees are responsible for their guests.

STUDENT ID

Meadville Lombard students can access a virtual ID card via the Populi app. Meadville Lombard does not issue physical ID cards.

CLERY ACT

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act requires that each institution of higher education in the United States that participates in federal student aid programs must prepare, publish, and distribute an annual report containing crime statistics and statements of security policy.

The Campus Crime Statistics and the Annual Security Report are available from the Vice President of Finance and Administration and on Meadville Lombard's Website.

HARASSMENT

All forms of harassment by any member of the Meadville Lombard community are prohibited. These include, but are not limited to, harassment regarding sex, race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, disability, gender identification, or sexual orientation. The intent is to prevent actions that subvert the mission of the school and threaten the well-being, educational experience, and careers of students, faculty, and staff. Please note this is a high-level overview of our Harassment Policy.

This policy also prohibits such harassment of students by individuals who are not Meadville Lombard faculty members, students, or employees (such as donors, visitors, and vendors), and vice versa. If you have any questions about what constitutes prohibited harassment, do not hesitate to ask the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry or the Title IX Coordinator(s). Meadville Lombard also strictly prohibits sexual harassment.

TITLE IX – PROHIBITION OF SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION

Pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the U.S. Department of Education's implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 106, the College's Title IX Coordinator has primary responsibility for coordinating the school's efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under

Title IX, which prohibits sex discrimination in all the operations of this School, as well as retaliation for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX.

Sexual misconduct against students, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape, and sexual exploitation, can be a form of sex discrimination under Title IX. The Title IX Coordinator oversees the school's response to reports and complaints involving possible sex discrimination, monitors outcomes, identifies and addresses any patterns, and assesses their effects on the campus climate, so the School can address issues that affect the wider school community. Additional information on preventing and responding to sex offences can be found in the Safety and Security Information Report.

Inquiries regarding Title IX should be referred to Meadville Lombard's designated Title IX Coordinator(s):

Title IX Coordinator

Jules Taylor

Senior Director of Contextual Ministry

312-546-6482

jtaylor@meadville.edu

180 N Wabash, Suite 700, Chicago, IL 60601

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

For purposes of this policy, sexual harassment is any unwelcome or unwanted conduct of a sexual nature (verbal or physical) that interferes with a student's education by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment or that in any way impacts or influences decisions affecting the terms and conditions of a student's education.

Sexually harassing behavior may include physical, verbal, and nonverbal behavior. Examples of inappropriate sexual behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual advances
- Inappropriate touching or other physical contact
- Demands for sexual favors in exchange for promotion, retention, or tangible employment or educational action
- An employment decision made because of an individual's compliance with or failure to comply with sexual demands
- Repeated sexual jokes, flirtations, advances, propositions, or discussions of sexual activity (whether in conversation or through electronic or other means)
- Abuse of a sexual nature or suggestive, insulting, or obscene comments or gestures
- Display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures

These and similar behaviors are unacceptable at Meadville Lombard and in other related settings, such as Meadville Lombard social events. The Meadville Lombard sexual harassment policy prohibits sexual

harassment by individuals who are not Meadville Lombard faculty, students, or employees (e.g., donors, visitors, and vendors). If you have any questions about what constitutes sexual harassment, do not hesitate to ask the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry or the Title IX Coordinator(s).

REPORTING A COMPLAINT OF HARASSMENT AND/OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Students who believe they have been subjected to unwelcome harassment prohibited by this policy should inform the offender – preferably at the time of the incident – of the specific behavior that is unwelcome and request the offender to stop. Often, this action resolves the problem. However, if this direct approach is uncomfortable, undesirable, or ineffective, please file a complaint with the Title IX Coordinator. Complaints may be made in writing. If the complaint is against the Title IX Coordinator, please file it with the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.

If you become aware of an incident of harassment directed towards another student, faculty member, or Meadville Lombard employee you should report it to the Title IX Coordinator.

ENFORCEMENT OF HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICIES

Meadville Lombard will promptly investigate all complaints and endeavor to handle these matters expeditiously, discreetly, and professionally. Investigation of complaints filed in writing by students against other students will be the charge of the Title IX Coordinator; complaints against faculty or staff will be the charge of the Vice President of Finance and Administration.

To the extent allowed by law, complaints will be kept confidential, and information will be disclosed only as necessary to investigate and act upon the information. The individual against whom a harassment charge is made will be informed of the complaint and given an opportunity to respond. All parties are required to maintain strict confidentiality and fully cooperate with the investigation. After the investigation is completed, if it is determined that harassment has occurred, Meadville Lombard will take the appropriate action, which may include counseling, reprimand, demotion, reassignment, suspension, termination, or expulsion.

PROHIBITION AGAINST RETALIATION

Meadville Lombard strictly prohibits any retaliation against any student who, in good faith, has made a report or complaint or participated in any investigation under the Anti-Harassment Policies. Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy and can result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge or expulsion.

STUDENT RECORDS AND FERPA

The Buckley Amendment, also called the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974

(FERPA), and related federal regulations, establish guidelines protecting the privacy of student records and give a college student the right (subject to certain exceptions) to review their “educational records,” and, within forty-five (45) days of formally requesting to do so, to challenge and/or seek to amend the contents if they believe the records are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights. FERPA also gives students the right to consent to the disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that the law authorizes disclosure without consent.

FERPA permits disclosure of educational records without a student’s knowledge or consent under certain circumstances, including:

- Directory Information (if available).
- Meadville Lombard officials.
- Other institutions of higher learning.
- Federal and State Officials.
- Accrediting Organizations.
- Appropriate officials in case of health and safety emergencies.
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.
- The disclosure is to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student.
- Parents of dependents.

FERPA provides students the right to file a complaint with the Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the Act. Written complaints should be directed to the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C., 20202-4605.

NON-ACADEMIC STUDENT DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Misbehavior relating to moral character can be described in three ways: actions that contravene accepted canons and standards of scholarship, actions that contravene accepted canons and standards of ministerial practice, and actions that seriously disrupt the educational experience of others. Actions that contravene accepted canons and standards of scholarship are covered in the Academic Integrity Policy. Actions that contravene accepted canons and standards of professional and ministerial practice, including unethical conduct violating the rights of another person, may be grounds for disciplinary action by the school. Guides for this category can be found in the “Code of Professional Practice of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers’ Association,” “Ministerial Guidelines,” and the “Ministerial Fellowship Rules and Policies” of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Copies of the guidelines and policies are in the library. Students may also request a copy from the UUA’s Department of Ministry or the UU Ministers’ Association or download them from their respective websites.

Complaints relating to moral character may be brought to the attention of the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or designee by individual students, faculty members, or other members of

the Meadville Lombard community. The complaints will be investigated by the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs and/or the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or designee will investigate, determine whether to proceed with the charges, and, if so, propose the appropriate sanction. Students will have the opportunity to appeal any disciplinary action. The intention of the following procedure is to resolve such issues while providing immediate assistance and confidentiality to those students involved in non-academic disciplinary measures.

The Disciplinary Proceedings at Meadville Lombard include two phases: the Administrative Conduct Procedure and the Hearing Process.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONDUCT PROCEDURE

1. Written Notification.
 - a. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or designee will notify the student about the allegations of misconduct.
2. Investigation.
 - a. Allegations of misconduct will be investigated by the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or designee. Evidence may include statements of charges, police reports, witness testimony, and other relevant data. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs may then consult with outside professional resources, including legal counsel, if necessary. Otherwise, the complaint will be kept confidential with that office.
3. Meeting with Student.
 - a. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or designee will summon the student to appear for the purpose of discussing the allegation. The meeting can take place face-to-face or via an online platform. The refusal of a student to accept delivery of the summons or failure to maintain and read student emails will not be considered good cause for failure to respond.
 - b. If a student fails to appear without good cause, the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or designee may proceed with disciplinary action based upon other information available.
 - c. The student may wish to bring a supportive person to this meeting. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or the designee may wish to include the student's Faculty Advisor. This initial meeting will aim to clarify the specifics of the student's behavior against whom a concern or complaint has been lodged. Ideally, this initial session will lead to a resolution of the problem. A written summary of this resolution will be sent to the student and placed within the student's official Meadville Lombard file within seven (7) days of the resolution.
4. Review of Evidence and Interim Sanctions
 - a. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or designee will review the evidence, determine whether to proceed with charges, and, if so, determine the sanction appropriate to the charges.

- b. The student may be subject to probation, suspension, or dismissal, as decided by the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or designee.
- 5. Uncontested Cases with Agreed Sanctions
 - a. In any case where the accused student elects not to dispute the facts upon which the charges are based and agrees to the sanctions the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or designee assesses, the student may execute a written waiver of the hearing procedures and waiver of any appeals under the policy. This administrative disposition shall be final, and there shall be no subsequent proceedings regarding the charges.
 - b. In those cases, in which the accused student disputes the facts upon which the charges are based, the charges shall be heard and determined by a fair and impartial Hearing Committee in accordance with Section 2.15.2, below.

HEARING PROCESS

1. The formal hearing process is initiated by the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs by means of a hearing form signed by the student. The form must be completed within fifteen (15) working days of the end of the Administrative Conduct Procedure phase.
2. Upon receiving the complete form, the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs shall appoint a three-person Hearing Committee. In the event that the formal complaint involves the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, the President shall assume the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs's functions within this process. Individuals implicated in the complaint cannot serve on the Hearing Committee, and the Hearing Committee shall respond to the complaint in writing within thirty (30) working days from receiving the hearing form.
3. The investigative hearing and decision-making phases of the process shall begin promptly after the signed form is received.
4. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs and the person charged with the misconduct are both to have an opportunity to present evidence to the charge and to respond to evidence presented by the other party. The Hearing Committee shall be responsible for determining what is relevant in each situation. The person charged has the opportunity to be represented.
5. An audio recording of the evidence presented and considered by the Hearing Committee is to be kept under lock in the President's Office.
6. The decision of the Hearing Committee shall be based only on evidence presented to the Hearing Committee.
7. The Hearing Committee has a variety of options available to it following its decision as to the merits of the complaint:
 - a. It may uphold the complaint and recommend to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs that:
 - i. An unrecorded reprimand is given to the one charged.
 - ii. The one charged will be given some recommendations and/or requirements.

- iii. The appropriate body and/or individual be asked to add documents detailing (1) or (2) above to the official record of the one charged.
- iv. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs suggests to the appropriate body and/or individual that disciplinary action be initiated against the person charged.
- v. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs initiates termination of the person charged through the established processes for that constituent group.
- b. It may dismiss the complaint, and:
- c. It may, upon request of the one charged, include that dismissal in the record of the one charged.
- d. It may decide to destroy the record.
- e. It may admonish the complainant.
- f. In extreme cases, it may recommend disciplinary action against the complainant as in (7.a.iv) above.

GRIEVANCE AGAINST FACULTY OR STAFF

If a student's complaint concerns alleged misconduct by school employees, including faculty and staff, the relevant disciplinary procedures should be used to resolve it.

Staff: Alleged misconduct by the school staff or administrators should be reported to the Vice President of Student and Academic Affairs, who will review the facts. If misconduct is found, the staff member's supervisor may take corrective action in accordance with applicable personnel policy.

Faculty: Alleged misconduct by faculty members should be reported to the Office of the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, who will review the facts. If misconduct is found, the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs may take corrective action in accordance with applicable faculty policy.

WHISTLE BLOWER POLICY

This policy applies to all Meadville Lombard Theological School employees and students, including faculty and staff, as well as part-time, temporary, contract, and student employees.

PURPOSE

Meadville Lombard Theological School is committed to the highest possible standards of ethical, moral, and legal business conduct. In line with this commitment and Meadville Lombard's commitment to open communication, this policy aims to provide an avenue for employees and students to raise concerns and reassurance that they will be protected from reprisals or victimization for whistleblowing in good faith.

POLICY

The whistle-blowing policy is intended to cover concerns about actions that could affect Meadville Lombard Theological School. Such actions include those that:

- Are unlawful;
- May lead to incorrect financial reporting;
- Are not in line with School policy; or
- Otherwise amounts to serious improper conduct.

Meadville Lombard Theological School will not make, adopt, or enforce any rule, regulation or policy preventing an employee or student from disclosing information to a government or law enforcement agency if the employee or student has reasonable cause to believe that the information discloses a violation of a municipal, State, or federal law, rule or regulation.

SAFEGUARDS

HARASSMENT OR VICTIMIZATION

Meadville Lombard Theological School will not retaliate against a student for disclosing information to a government or law enforcement agency where the student has reasonable cause to believe that the information discloses a violation of a municipal, State, or federal law, rule, or regulation. In addition, Meadville Lombard Theological School will not retaliate against a student for refusing to participate in an activity that would result in a violation of a municipal, State, or federal law, rule, or regulation.

Students are protected against retaliation for, in good faith, filing, testifying, assisting, or participating in any manner in any investigation, proceeding, or hearing conducted by Meadville Lombard Theological School and/or a federal or state enforcement agency.

This policy also prohibits retaliation against students connected to an investigation.

Students who have a reasonable and good faith belief that a policy or practice of Meadville Lombard Theological School violates legal standards and, based on that belief, oppose, implicitly (e.g., through conduct) or explicitly, that policy or practice, are protected against retaliation, even where Meadville Lombard was acting lawfully. In addition, Meadville Lombard prohibits retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, reports a perceived violation of any Meadville Lombard policy or cooperates with any investigation of such a claim.

Individuals may state their opposition to a specific practice or activity that they believe constitutes an unlawful action(s). Such opposition must be based on a reasonable and good-faith belief. A person claiming retaliation does not necessarily need to be the person engaged in the opposition. Individuals may participate in an investigation, proceeding, hearing, or litigation without fear of retaliation.

PROTECTED ACTIVITY

Protected Activity includes, but is not limited to:

- Initiating an internal complaint or report of discrimination or harassment.
- Filing a claim of discrimination.
- Requesting accommodation for a disability.
- Filing a Workers' Compensation claim following a work-related injury.
- Filing a safety or environmental-related complaint with state and/or federal oversight agencies.
- Reporting perceived illegal acts.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort will be made to protect the complainant's identity consistent with the need to investigate the complainant's allegations fully and fairly.

PROCEDURES

TIMING

The earlier a concern is expressed, the easier it is to take appropriate action.

EVIDENCE

Although the student is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, the student needs to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for concern.

REPORTING VIOLATIONS

Any employee or student who in good faith believes that there is reportable activity taking place or that they or any other students are being subjected to retaliation in violation of this policy or any other Meadville Lombard policy or law is urged to report the situation to the Vice President, Finance and Administration or another member of the Meadville Lombard Theological School Management Team as soon as possible.

Reports will be promptly and objectively investigated in accordance with Meadville Lombard's investigation procedures. If a complaint is substantiated, appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination, will be taken against those who have engaged in such behaviors, as Meadville Lombard deems appropriate in its sole discretion.

Co-workers are legally prohibited from engaging in retaliation against other employees and will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination, for such conduct.

HOW A COMPLAINT WILL BE HANDLED

Action taken will depend on the nature of the concern. The Leadership Team at Meadville Lombard Theological School will receive a report on each complaint and a follow-up report on actions taken, except when the complaint involves a specific member of the Leadership Team. The details of the complaint will not be shared with that member during the initial investigation.

INITIAL INQUIRIES

Initial inquiries will be made to determine whether an investigation is appropriate and the form that it should take. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.

REPORT TO COMPLAINANT

Subject to legal constraints and confidentiality and privacy concerns, the complainant will receive information about the outcome of any investigations. The complainant will be given the opportunity to receive follow-up information regarding their concerns promptly after submitting the complaint including:

- Acknowledging that the concern was received.
- Indicating how the matter will be dealt with.
- Indicating whether initial inquiries have been made.
- Indicating whether further investigations will follow, and if not, why not.

All legitimate concerns will be respected and investigated. However, given that the investigation of concerns will vary depending upon their nature, while an estimate may be provided, no specific timeline can be set.

If, at the conclusion of the investigation, the complainant remains dissatisfied, the complainant should report his/her concern to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The amount of contact between the complainant and the body investigating the concern will depend on the nature of the issue and the clarity of the information provided. Further information may be sought from the complainant.

SANCTIONS

The following sanctions may be assessed singularly, or in any combination, by the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or designee and/or by the Hearing Committee, as applicable, in accordance with these procedures:

- A written warning that further violations may result in a more severe penalty.
- Disciplinary probation. The student is not eligible to register until a plan of action is developed.
- Reimbursement for damage to, or misappropriation of, Meadville Lombard's property.
- Suspension of rights and privileges, including participation in extracurricular activities.

- Suspension from Meadville Lombard for a specified period of time.
- Expulsion (permanent separation from Meadville Lombard) and bar against readmission.
- Other sanctions as deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

APPEAL POLICY

If a student is assigned a disciplinary action after the hearing, the student has the right to appeal to the President based on the following criteria:

- a. New evidence is available that was not submitted at the Administrative Conduct Procedure phase or the Hearing Process.
- b. The conduct process described above was not followed.

The student has seven (7) calendar days from the date of delivery of the decision from the Hearing Committee to file an appeal. Appeal requests may be denied in cases that do not have sufficient grounds in one or more of these areas.

After reviewing the appeal, and depending upon the demonstrated grounds for appeal, the President may take any of the following actions: affirm the charge, impose greater sanctions, or impose lesser sanctions.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY

Meadville Lombard recognizes both alcohol and drug abuse as potential health, safety, and security problems. The school expects everyone to assist in maintaining an environment free from drug and alcohol abuse. Meadville Lombard prohibits all students and employees from the unlawful manufacture, possession, use, distribution, sale, or purchase of alcohol, recreational cannabis, and drugs on its premises, or as part of any School activity, and prohibits work performed under the influence of alcohol, recreational cannabis, or illicit drugs. Meadville Lombard allows moderate consumption and/or possession of alcohol on School premises at approved functions (e.g., receptions) by those legally permitted to consume or distribute alcohol. Such functions must comply with the following guidelines:

- At all events at which alcoholic beverages are available, nonalcoholic beverages and snacks will be made available in quantity and variety.
- At a school-sponsored meal where alcohol is available at the beginning of the gathering, it will not be replenished throughout the duration of the gathering.

All members of the Meadville Lombard community are responsible for being fully aware of the requirements of federal and Illinois statutes and Chicago ordinances concerning the consumption, possession, and sale of alcohol, recreational cannabis, and other drugs. The school expects each member of the community to be responsible for their own conduct and the consequences of that conduct. Various federal and state laws prohibit the possession, distribution, and use of controlled substances, unless in compliance with licensing requirements or a doctor's prescription. Moreover, Illinois law prohibits the consumption and possession of alcohol and/or recreational cannabis by persons

under the age of 21, and the supplying of alcohol and/or recreational cannabis to any person under the age of 21. Additionally, Illinois law prohibits the sale of alcoholic beverages or recreational cannabis except by those licensed to sell such items.

Finally, Illinois law and city ordinances also prohibit public intoxication, operation of a vehicle or bicycle under the influence of alcohol, recreational cannabis, or other intoxicants, and consumption of alcohol in a public place. Violation of these laws or other laws relating to drugs and alcohol may result in probation, fines, imprisonment, and a permanent criminal record.

SANCTIONS PERTAINING TO ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

In addition to legal consequences, the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol, and any violation of the School Alcohol and Drug Policy by a student, will result in appropriate discipline under the student disciplinary procedures outlined in [Non-Academic Student Disciplinary Procedures](#). Sanctions include, but are not limited to, discharge from student employment, probation, suspension, or expulsion from the school. The school retains full and final discretion on whether, when, and under what conditions a student may be reinstated or reemployed after an instance of alcohol abuse and/or improper drug use. Student organizations that violate this policy are also subject to sanctions, including— but not limited to— probation and removal of recognized student organization status. The particular sanction in a given case will depend on such factors as the nature of the individual or organization and may include the successful completion of an approved rehabilitation or chemical dependency program.

In order for Meadville Lombard to comply with federal law, student employees who are convicted of any violation of any criminal drug statute (including misdemeanors) for a violation occurring either on Meadville Lombard property or during working time must notify the Vice President of Finance and Administration within five (5) days of the date of conviction. A conviction includes any plea or finding of guilty, any plea of nolo contendere (no contest), and/or any imposition of a fine, jail sentence, or other penalty. Pursuant to federal law, if the convicted employee is working on a project funded by a federal grant or contract, the school is required to notify the relevant federal contracting or grant agency within ten (10) days of receiving such notice of conviction.

COUNSELING, TREATMENT, AND REFERRAL

Meadville Lombard, as a concerned community, recognizes that in our society and our community, there exist numerous illnesses, among which are alcoholism and other chemical dependencies. It is Meadville Lombard's policy to encourage the earliest possible identification, intervention, and appropriate aid for anyone suffering from these harmful dependencies. Such illnesses manifest in the impairment of one's bodily, mental, social, and spiritual capacities and— unless arrested and treated— can lead to irreparable damage. Extensive experience indicates that persons afflicted with these illnesses are usually blind to developing symptoms in themselves and are rarely capable of effective self-help. Hence, the Meadville Lombard community recognizes the need to develop a procedure to facilitate proper education, intervention, diagnosis, treatment, and recovery.

PROCEDURE

The following procedure is designed to serve as a resource for students seeking aid in recovery:

1. Any student who becomes aware of their own need, or knows someone who suffers from these illnesses, is encouraged to seek advice and/or assistance from the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry; all inquiries are kept confidential.
2. The Senior Director Contextual Ministry, along with the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, will work to obtain a consultant/expert in the area, if needed, to assess the dependency, evaluate its seriousness to the individual, and provide appropriate recommendations/referrals for help.
3. Anyone who is referred, or who seeks assistance, may become a part of the evaluative procedure in determining what course of action is best suited for that individual.
4. Every effort will be made by the school to cooperate with any student undergoing treatment and to minimize disruption of studies during treatment. To further guarantee confidentiality, only the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry and the President (if necessary) will know the reasons for any related leave granted.

The primary objective of this policy is to relieve pain and suffering and restore the individual to health, dignity, and a productive, rewarding involvement in their school, ministry, and/or community.

INTERNATIONAL FORMATION

For more than 130 years, Meadville Lombard Theological School has educated religious leaders in accordance with Unitarian Universalist values of compassion, equality, and justice. Meadville Lombard Theological School seeks to equip ministers and lay leaders with the skills necessary to lead in today's globalized world.

DEGREE-SEEKING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

If you are an international student taking graduate-level classes towards degree completion at MLTS and you intend to travel to the US for any portion of your degree program, you must demonstrate a valid immigration status and maintain it during the time you are enrolled at MLTS.

International students are also welcome to complete their degree program remotely from their home country, in which case no visa will be necessary.

After being accepted into the program, if you plan to travel to the United States for your studies, you must obtain a valid U.S. visa through following these steps:

1. Meet with the Meadville Registrar and Admissions staff to discuss the visa process and review your yearly cost of attendance.

2. Complete the I-20 application form on Populi. Be certain to attach all the required documents, including:
 - a. A copy of your passport
 - b. Confirmation of financial resources (bank statements from you or your sponsor and/or scholarship letter)
3. MLTS will mail the original I-20 form that you will need to apply for your F1 visa.
4. Pay the SEVIS fee. You will need to pay the SEVIS fee at least 3 days before your visa interview.
5. Apply for and receive an F1 student visa. The procedure for applying for an F1 visa varies from country to country. For more information, please visit the website of the American Embassy in your country.
6. International students will always be required to enter the United States with their student visa (F1) and I-20 when traveling to the United States to take classes at Meadville Lombard. If you enter with a different visa, you will not be allowed to attend classes, and you will be automatically unenrolled from the classes you are registered for.

Upon arrival at Meadville Lombard, international students need to report to the Registrar for the required orientation. Be sure to do this before (or on) the first day of classes. This meeting will take approximately 30 minutes and will include an explanation of your rights and responsibilities as an International Student. Please bring with you:

- A copy of your Visa
- A copy of your I-94
- Your I-20

Prior to your departure, MLTS will return your I-20 with an updated signature. Every time you enter the United States, you will need to get a new signature. To maintain your F1 visa, you have to:

- Be enrolled full-time for every semester except the summer semester. Full-time status is equal to 12 credits per semester.
- Any time you leave the United States for more than 5 months, you will need to apply again for an F1 Visa. You will need to request a new I-20 and follow the procedure explained above.
- International students can take no more than one fully online course in a given semester.

HEALTH INSURANCE:

F1 students must have health insurance valid in the United States to attend classes at Meadville Lombard. Please check with your local provider about international coverage.

You will need to provide proof of health insurance coverage that is valid in the United States.

HOUSING:

Students are responsible for making their own housing arrangements. Please visit the MLTS website for information about housing around campus.



ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

DEGREE PROGRAMS

Meadville Lombard offers the following degree programs:

THE MASTER OF DIVINITY

This degree program prepares students for religious leadership and is part of a requirement for ordination in many faith traditions. Graduates of this degree program hold positions as ordained ministers in contexts such as congregations, as leaders of community or not-for-profit organizations, and as chaplains in hospitals, correctional facilities, the military, and hospice centers.

CONTEXTUAL LEARNING MODEL

Under the Contextual Learning Model, the Master of Divinity degree program consists of ninety (90) units anchored by and organized around three years of Signature Courses: Grounding, Vocational Studies, and Leadership Studies. The Signature Courses are multi-unit, interdisciplinary courses that integrate practical fieldwork and seminar learning. In addition to the Signature Courses, students will meet their total unit requirements by taking one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (for which they will receive six (6) units of academic credit) and a combination of required and elective courses.

Full-time students can plan on completing the MDiv degree in three years. For part-time students, it may take as long as six years to complete the MDiv program.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

The Master of Divinity degree curriculum is designed to challenge and support students in an ongoing process of developing their individual and unique gifts for service in the liberal religious community. It provides a foundation of basic preparation for ministry centered in the following values:

- **Liberal Religious Tradition:** Critical and deep understanding of the histories of liberal religion, including Christian history and theology, as part of the larger human religious story.
- **Excellence in ministerial practices:** The ability to demonstrate a significant understanding of, and progress in, the basic arts and skills of ministry. This includes leadership and administrative skills, worship leadership, religious education, preaching, pastoral care, and prophetic ministry in the larger community.
- **Critical Thinking:** The ability and inclination to engage ideas, situations, texts, and contexts and to develop arguments through the lens of critical thinking, interpretation, and reflection.
- **Moral grounding:** A deep, moral engagement with persons and the world, celebrating its rich diversity, and confronting its problems of oppression, injustice, poverty, and environmental degradation.

- **Spiritual and Personal readiness:** Personal self-awareness, resilience, humor, good judgment, spiritual depth, ethical and moral integrity, a well-tested seriousness of intent, and the ability to balance personal needs with the needs of ministry.
- **Interfaith and Intercultural Orientation:** Ability to connect across religious and cultural differences and a broad understanding of global religions and faith traditions.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Master of Divinity students are required to complete 90 units of credit (1 full course = 3 units of credit), divided between required courses (33 credits), Clinical Pastoral Education (6 credits), Signature courses, electives, and 500 hours to 1000 hours of Internship (6 – 12 units of credit). The specific number of credits for the internship and electives will depend on whether students elect the Rooted Path or the Flexible Path for their MDiv studies. All new students will complete Ministry in Context, a year-long course that introduces students to Contextual Ministry at Meadville Lombard Theological School and prepares them for the process of formation and selecting Clinical Pastoral Education and Internship placements. All students will also take Grounding: Theology and Social Praxis, generally in their first year.

MDiv Degree Requirements (Rooted and Flexible Options)			
Required Intensive Courses (33 credits)		Signature Courses, CPE, Electives (57 credits)	
Title	Credits	Signature Courses	Credits
Introduction to Pastoral Ministry	3	Ministry in Context 1 & 2 (Fall & Spring)	3
Constructive Theology	3	Grounding: Theology and Social Praxis	3
Topics in Worship and Liturgy	3	Vocational Studies 1: Formation	3
Preaching as if You Mean It	3	Vocational Studies 1: Communities	3
Faith Formation in a Changing World	3	Leadership Studies 1: Formation	3
Global Religions	3	Leadership Studies 1: Administration	3
Hebrew Scriptures	3	Signature Course Total	18
New Testament	3	Contextual Ministry	
Healthy Boundaries for Leaders	3	Clinical Pastoral Education	6
Introduction to Ethics	3	Internship (Fall & Spring) <i>Flexible/Rooted</i>	6/12
History of Global Christianity	3	Contextual Ministry Total	12/18
		Electives (<i>Flexible/Rooted</i>)	27/21
Required Courses Credits	33	PROGRAM TOTAL	90

INTERNSHIPS

Once students have completed Introduction to Pastoral Ministry, Ministry in Context, Grounding, Clinical Pastoral Education, and 9-15 other credits (24-30 credits in total), they can enroll in Vocational Studies and begin their internship. The structure and duration of the Internship will depend on what option

students choose, either the Rooted program or one of the options in the Flexible path. Students should select their internship option based on their educational timelines and vocational trajectory.

Please note that students seeking ordination with the Unitarian Universalist Association are required to complete 1000 hours of internship at the same site. Students seeking ordination with any other faith tradition must contact the relevant judicatory body for applicable internship requirements and connect them with Meadville Lombard's Sr. Director of Contextual Ministry as part of the Ministry in Context course.

ROOTED PATH

Students on the Rooted path follow a standard approach designed to meet Unitarian Universalist Internship requirements, with a two-year part-time Internship in subsequent years alongside Vocational Studies 1 and 2 in the first Internship Year and Leadership Studies 1 and 2 in the second Internship Year. Rooted program students will complete a 1000-hour Internship across those two years and will receive a total of 12 credits for those two years.

FLEXIBLE PATH

Students on the Flexible path have multiple options for structuring their internship. Students must select one of the following options.

1. Complete one 1000-hour full-time internship (12 credit hours) in one year alongside Vocational Studies 1 & 2. (Meets UUA Internship Requirements)
2. Complete one 500-hour internship (6 credits) + 6 credits of elective coursework
3. Complete one 500-hour internship (6 credits) alongside Vocational Studies + 6 credits earned with a combination of coursework or additional internship as follows.
 1. A second 500-hour (6 credits) Internship alongside Leadership Studies
 2. 250-hour (3 credits) internship alongside Leadership Studies + plus 3 hours of elective coursework

Students who elect to complete a 1000-hour internship on a full-time basis must do so alongside Vocational Studies 1 and 2 and will receive 12 credits for that Internship in one year.

Students who elect to complete only 500 Internship hours (options 2 & 3), may do so because they are pursuing ordination in a faith tradition requiring no more than 500 hours, they are not pursuing ordination at all, or because they plan to complete a second Internship after graduation to meet UU ordination requirements. Those students should work closely with their academic advisor and the Sr. Director of Contextual Ministry to ensure their MDiv coursework fulfills their degree requirements and aligns with their career goals.

Flexible path students may also choose to complete a second 250 **or** 500-hour Internship. This second, separate 250 or 500-hour Internship will be completed alongside Leadership Studies.

See below for a chart showing these options for Rooted and Flexible path students.

	Rooted Path	Flexible Path – Full-Time One-Year Internship	Flexible Path – Alternate Internship	Flexible Path – Electives Only	Flexible Path – Elective/Internship Combination
Vocational Studies Year	1 st Year of Internship (6 credits, 500 hours)	Full-Time Internship (12 credits, 1000 hours)	Internship (6 credits, 500 hours)	Internship (6 credits, 500 hours)	Internship (6 credits, 500 hours)
Leadership Studies Year	2 Year of Internship (6 credits, 500 hours)	No Additional Internship	Additional Internship (6 credits, 500 hours)	No Additional Internship	Additional Internship (3 credits, 250 hours)
Additional Elective Credits	0	0	0	6 (2 courses)	3 (1 course)

TRANSFER CREDITS AND COURSES OUTSIDE MLTS

Students matriculating into the MDiv degree program may transfer up to twenty-seven (27) credits from prior graduate work, with approval from the faculty. Such transfer credit is subject to approval in compliance with the [transfer credit policy](#). Once students matriculate, they may take up to nine (9) credits outside of Meadville Lombard Theological School at another accredited graduate institution. Students may take as many as twelve (12) credits at any of the Association of Chicago Theological Schools member schools.

CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION (CPE)

In addition to coursework, all MDiv students must complete one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). Students are awarded six (6) academic credits for completing one unit of CPE.

Students must complete the Introduction to Pastoral Ministry course before they begin CPE.

Clinical Pastoral Education is a method of learning ministry by means of pastoral functioning under supervision. One CPE unit is 400 hours and typically takes place in a hospital or hospice, although other sites are sometimes utilized. CPE units are administered through the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education <https://www.acpe.edu/> and the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy <http://www.cpsp.org/> in the United States; and the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care <http://www.spiritualcare.ca/>; and the Australia & New Zealand Association for Clinical Pastoral Education <https://www.anzacpe.org.au/>; and the Center for Spiritual Care and Pastoral Formation <https://www.cscpf.org>

Because of the costs, application process, and limited availability of placements, students must be proactive in order to complete this requirement. We require CPE before the internship begins so that a student may enter their internship having worked on their ministerial presence.

Full-time Master of Divinity students must complete one unit of CPE during the summer after their first year in order to be approved to begin an internship in the Fall.

Only one CPE unit may be completed for academic credit.

CPE DEFERRALS & WAIVERS

Deferrals refer to a request to enter internship before the CPE requirement is met. Deferrals may be granted for extenuating circumstances, including, but not limited to: health issues, deaths, and economic hardship. Students seeking a deferral must submit a petition using the CPE Deferral Petition Form to the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry via email, explaining the reasoning for the request. The request will be reviewed and acted on by the Meadville Lombard faculty.

Waivers refer to the request of a student to waive the degree requirement of CPE and replace those credits with other coursework. Waivers are rare and will only be considered for extreme cases. Students requesting a Waiver must complete the Academic Petition Form.

CPE Deferral Request Procedures:

1. Student Submits the CPE Deferral Petition Form
2. The Senior Director of Contextual Ministry will review the request.
 - a. If a deferral request is for an extended unit concurrent with the first year of internship, the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry will talk with the student about the difficulties of doing internship and CPE at the same time. The student must confer with their proposed internship supervisor and obtain written support for the deferral request.
 - b. The Senior Director of Contextual Ministry will bring the petition to the VP of Academic Affairs with a recommendation. The VP of Academic Affairs will bring the petition to the faculty for a vote.
3. If a deferral is not granted, the student will have to delay the beginning of their internship until they have completed the CPE.
4. The student will be notified via email by the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry whether or not the deferral has been granted and for what terms. The Advisor and Registrar will be copied on the email, and it will be posted on the Student's Populi record.

CPE Waiver Petition Procedures

1. Students seeking a waiver of the CPE program requirement must submit a petition using the Academic Petition Form via email to the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry explaining the reasoning for the request.

2. The Senior Director of Contextual Ministry will review requests for a waiver of the CPE requirement and present the request to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Faculty for review, and the faculty will vote on whether to grant or deny the petition.
3. The student will be notified via email whether or not the waiver has been granted. The Advisor and Registrar will be copied on the email, and it will be posted on the Student's Populi record.

CPE WITHDRAWAL & DISMISSAL POLICY

Withdrawing from CPE is read as a red flag that something major is happening in a student's life. Here at Meadville Lombard, we feel it is important to be aware of these issues.

If a student wishes to withdraw from CPE course, they must get approval from the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry. Approval will be based on the reason for the withdrawal.

Students must complete one full unit of CPE. Half-units are not eligible for credit at MLTS.

CPE Withdrawal Procedures:

- The Senior Director of Contextual Ministry will talk with the student to find out the reasons for withdrawing.
- The Senior Director of Contextual Ministry will also talk to the CPE Educator to find out if there are any issues of which we should be aware.
- If the student withdraws from CPE, they are expected to retake CPE in order to complete their full degree requirements. The student is still required to complete CPE before they are eligible to enter an internship.

Dismissal from CPE Program

Since the CPE grade depends on successfully completing CPE, a dismissal is tantamount to failing the CPE program and will be recorded as such on the student's transcript.

- If the student has been dismissed from the CPE program and will receive a failing grade for the CPE course.
- If the dismissal is for behavioral and formation issues that will severely impede a student's ability to minister, a review under the Academic Good Standing Policy will be initiated.

Appeal Procedures

If a student wishes to appeal a decision regarding CPE, they may appeal to the faculty.

1. Submit a letter of appeal to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.
2. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs will bring the letter of appeal and rationale to the faculty.

3. The faculty will decide whether to approve or deny the appeal.
4. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs will notify the student via email whether the appeal has been granted.

INTERNSHIP SITE/INTERNSHIP SUPERVISOR CHANGE POLICY

Internship Supervisors can only be changed in extreme circumstances and must be approved by the faculty. The only reasons a change may be made are if the Internship Supervisor or internship site chooses not to continue, or if there is a major life change.

CONCENTRATIONS

FAITH FORMATION PEDAGOGY

The MDiv with a Concentration in Faith Formation Pedagogy prepares students to hold faith formation leadership roles in a congregational and/or community setting, to direct a faith formation curriculum as part of a congregational or community leadership team, or to provide faith formation leadership at a denominational level. Building upon the learning experience and content of the Signature Courses, this concentration develops principles of engaged/transformational pedagogy. In addition, this concentration builds on religious literacy and intercultural competency, and in the formational growth and community leadership skills, in preparing students to lead faith-based organizations into commitments of being socially inclusive, adaptive, and strategic change communities. To receive a Concentration in Faith Formation Pedagogy, a student must complete three elective courses in the area of faith formation and religious education.

UUA CREDENTIALING REQUIREMENTS

To be granted a Ministerial Fellowship with the UUA, Master of Divinity students must prepare for credentialing throughout their studies, beginning even before they enter the degree program. Meadville Lombard works closely with its students to ensure they have the opportunity to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) credentialing process. MFC guidelines are subject to change, so it is important that students stay up to date with the current guidelines. For the most current and complete information on UUA requirements for UU Fellowship, please see the UUA website (<http://www.uua.org/careers/ministers/becoming>). Among the items that may be found there are “The Requirements for Ministerial Fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association” handbook, forms, and scholarship information. Students pursuing credentialing in other denominations should meet with the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry during the first year of their program to discuss credentialing requirements and how they will relate to the MDiv program requirements.

THE MASTER OF ARTS (RELIGION)

This degree stresses opportunities for personal discernment and in-depth study in specific areas of concentration.

A total of thirty-six (36) credits is required for the Master of Arts degree. Six credits are granted for a thesis or project completed in consultation with a faculty advisor. Students gain a foundation in religious studies by completing four additional required courses in theology, ethics, leadership, and global religion. All students must elect a concentration in either Religious Education or Theology and Ethics. Students will complete 9 credits in their chosen concentration and another 9 credits of elective coursework. Students may transfer up to 6 credits from another institution. Such transfer credit is subject to approval in compliance with the transfer credit policy. Students may transfer up to 6 credits from another institution. Such transfer credit is subject to approval in compliance with the [transfer credit policy](#).

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

- Develop general knowledge and understanding in the areas of liberal religious theology and ethics.
- Develop general knowledge and understanding of global religious history.
- Develop deeper knowledge and understanding in a specific area or areas of theology and ethics, or religious education.
- Apply knowledge and understanding in theology, ethics, and/or religious education through either academic research, critical reflection, and scholarly writing or a practical project, reflection, and analysis

MAR THESIS OR PROJECT

The Thesis or Project consists of 6 credits. These credits are normally completed in sequence across two semesters. The sequencing of work on the Thesis or Project includes drafting a proposal, conducting research, writing, and submitting the final documents.

- **The Proposal** consists of a thesis statement, a summary and outline of the thesis or project, a description of research methods, a bibliography, and a work calendar. This document should be no more than 10 pages in length and should be approved by the student's Thesis/Project Advisor *no later than December 1* before the student's anticipated semester of graduation.
- **The Thesis** should be submitted to the Thesis Advisor in a condition ready for approval (final draft) by mid-April of the spring semester of the student's anticipated graduation. The thesis should be approximately 30-40 pages (double-spaced, 12 pt.), with footnotes and a bibliography. The students should refer to the most recent edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* or Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* for proper methods of scholarly documentation. After the thesis is approved by the Thesis Advisor and any revisions that the Advisor requires are made, the student must send their thesis to the Director of Libraries, Dr. John Dechant (jdechant@meadville.edu) for formatting review.

The student and/or the Library will then submit the work for final review on [Melodic, the Meadville Lombard Digital Commons](#). For more guidance on formatting and submitting an MAR Thesis, go to <https://library.meadville.edu/thesis/>.

- **The Project** is an option for students whose needs and purposes are not best served by a thesis. Students choosing this option might, for example, create Religious Education curricula, write, produce, or direct a theatrical production, or develop and implement a significant community service project. A brief scholarly Commentary (10-20 pp) must also be submitted by students choosing the Project. The Commentary is a brief interpretive paper that situates the Project culturally, pedagogically, and theologically. This paper should be footnoted and include a bibliography. The students should refer to the most recent edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* or Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* for proper methods of scholarly documentation. The Project documentation and Commentary must be submitted to the Project Advisor *no later than mid-April* of the spring semester of the student's anticipated graduation. The project should not include research that requires IRB approval (i.e., research with human subjects). After the project is approved by the Project Advisor and any revisions that the Advisor requires are made, the student must send their project to the Director of Libraries, Dr. John Dechant (jdechant@meadville.edu) for formatting review. The student and/or the Library will then conduct the final submission of the work on [Melodic, the Meadville Lombard Digital Commons](#). For more guidance on formatting and submitting an MAR Project, go to <http://library.meadville.edu/project/>

MAR Degree Requirements	
Required Coursework	Credits 12
Healthy Boundaries for Leaders	3
Constructive Theology	3
Global Religions	3
Introduction to Ethics	3
Concentration Electives	9
Free Electives	9
Thesis/Project	6
Total Credits	36

THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

This degree is an advanced professional degree for religious professionals that deepens students' faith leadership in traditional and innovative ministry settings, including congregational, community, social justice and advocacy, entrepreneurial, chaplaincy, and teaching roles. Coursework and reflection on lived leadership experience provide grounding points for the development of doctoral research and a project attentive to lived questions of theology and praxis informed by interdisciplinary resources.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

- Generate original research to identify challenges in the practice of ministry, develop a coherent and faithful response, and critically reflect on social justice faith leadership.
- Utilize a variety of theological methods and leadership praxes in engagement with diverse faith settings.
- Grow the practice of ministry through contextual analysis of diverse faith settings and community-engaged research and reflection.
- Develop the skills to support continued personal, vocational, and spiritual growth.

DMIN COMMITTEE AND DIRECTOR

The DMin Committee provides oversight of the Doctor of Ministry degree. Members serve on the admission committee, review and approve project proposals, make recommendations regarding program policies, monitor student academic progress, and collect program assessment artifacts. The Director of the Doctor of Ministry program convenes the committee. Decisions of the DMin Committee may be appealed to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs (VPASA). The DMin Committee meets on 2nd Tuesdays during the Fall and Spring semesters. Students must petition the committee regarding curricular and co-curricular exceptions. Petitions must be received by the Director by the 1st Tuesday of the month for consideration.

The Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program collaborates with the VPASA, DMin Committee, and core faculty to design the program, initiate and administer all aspects of it, and serve as the primary academic advisor for DMin students.

CORE CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

The Doctor of Ministry (DMin) is a 30-credit hour advanced professional degree that can be completed in three (3) years. It is designed to support and renew the leadership and ministry of religious professionals. Small, tightly woven student cohorts are led by faculty mentors who engage as a community of learners. Students meet once per week for the duration of their program during the first two years of coursework. The one exception is the elective course in which students choose from a variety of courses offered through Meadville Lombard or the ACTS Consortium in Spring or Summer of their second year. Students take two classes per semester during their first and second years; classes meet synchronously on alternating weeks. Students are required to attend an annual intercohort

retreat. Students must hold a Master of Divinity degree or equivalent and have three years of ministerial experience (ordained or lay) prior to application and matriculation.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The program requires the successful completion of 30 credit hours of coursework and the completion of a DMin Thesis Proposal and Project. Students may transfer up to 6 doctoral credits from another institution. Such transfer credit is subject to approval in compliance with the [transfer credit policy](#).

DMIN Degree Requirements & Sequence	
Year 1	
Fall	Spring
Advanced Methods in Leadership & Ministry (Course 1)	Theories of Liberation (Course 3) or Social Justice Leadership (Course 4)
Spirituality for Social Change (Course 2) or Political Theology & Social Ethics (Course 5)	Elective (Course 8)
Year 2	
Fall	Spring
Spirituality for Social Change (Course 2) or Political Theology & Social Ethics (Course 5)	Theories of Liberation (Course 3) or Social Justice Leadership (Course 4)
Research Methods & Ethics (Course 6)	Leadership & Ministry Research Colloquy (Course 7)
Year 3	
Fall	Spring
Supervised Thesis Research I	Supervised Thesis Research II

FIRST YEAR REVIEW

At the end of a student's first year of studies, or after three completed courses, students are required to complete a first-year review with the DMin Director. Students will be sent a self-evaluation along with scheduling details. The self-evaluation includes the opportunity to develop a brief study overview in which the student (a) articulates a research question; (b) identifies a body of research to ground the question; (c) describes their community of praxis; and (d) identifies two possible readers.

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROPOSAL AND PROJECT GUIDELINES

DMIN THESIS PROJECT PROPOSAL

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

A project proposal is a critical step in conducting research as a minister-scholar. Proposals become a template for the larger project and provide clarity as students take up a question related to social justice leadership. In their first year, students begin to identify and hone an animating question of ministry. Summer after first year is a pivotal moment of integration and deepening thought. Over the second year, students produce a draft project proposal, a draft IRB proposal (if required), and ask core and select affiliate faculty to serve as First Reader. Second Readers are asked to serve after consultation with the First Reader. Students are expected to hone their project and IRB proposals throughout the Fall and early Winter so that they have an approved project before the end of Spring term.

The following serves as a framework for students and faculty in order to meet the requirements of the project; to assist students in describing the importance and relevance of their project; to aid faculty as they offer appreciative, critical, and timely feedback and guidance; and to clearly delineate process, expectations, and responsibilities during the proposal process.

PROJECT PROPOSAL ELEMENTS

A writing style accessible to both experts in the field as well as non-specialists in theology, religious studies, and professional religious leadership and ministry is expected. Please avoid jargon and overly technical language. It is expected that submitted proposals will be cogent, effective, and use standard grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Students should follow the most recent edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style (CMS)* in format and reference. Some students will also find Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (Turabian)* helpful. Students should also refer to the formatting guidelines available at www.library.meadville.edu/project.

Students are required to write a proposal using the "Project Proposal Form." The form is distributed to second year students and guides students through the following topics:

- Project title
- Problem statement
- Research question
- Hypothesis
- Contextual analysis
- Relevant literature related to your question
- Methodology
- Social location as researcher
- Social justice leadership impact
- Chapter outline
- Timeline to completion
- Working bibliography

Students should be in touch with their first reader as they prepare their project proposal. Students should expect their project proposal to go through several drafts upon receiving feedback from their first reader.

TYPES OF PROJECTS AND METHODOLOGIES

Students are encouraged to consider carefully what type of project they have the capacity to support given context and timeline, faculty expertise, and define their method accordingly. Students might offer a specific intervention, hypothesize a theory of change, and implement an intervention and assess its effectiveness; prototype a ministry resource for congregational education and field test it; conduct a mini-ethnographic project, community, or congregational study; or conduct a correlational study and draw out applications and implications related to doing justice as a faith leader. A good DMin project is focused, narrow, and specific to a student's ministry context.

FIRST READER AND SECOND READER

The first reader has a dynamic and special role to play in the formation and education of DMin students. First readers offer subject-matter expertise, insight, encouragement, and guidance as students draft their proposals, conduct research, and write their projects. Students should identify and contact their hoped-for first reader in the Fall term of their second year. Students will also need to identify a second reader in conversation with their first reader. As students prepare their project proposal, it is expected that they will work closely with their first reader to determine the scope and research focus of their project.

SUBMISSION OF THE PROJECT PROPOSAL

When the student's first reader is satisfied with the proposal, the student should submit their project proposal to the DMin Director by email and copy their first reader. Projects are accepted January 1, February 1, March 1, and April 1. The first reader may send additional written comments to the DMin Committee in support of the project proposal. Proposals and any received comments will be circulated to the Committee prior to regular meetings (2nd Tuesdays of the month during the academic year). Project proposals are reviewed by the DMin Committee at committee meetings.

Project proposals will be assessed by the DMin committee using the following criteria:

- Does the project proposal articulate a clear statement of the issue in the practice of ministry that is at the center of the project and proposed research?
- Does the project suggest a coherent and responsive theology and praxis to study this issue?
- Does the project have the capacity to critically reflect on the field of faith leadership?
- Does the proposal use and cite significant scholarly and other resources that will support the execution of the project and its analysis?
- Does the proposal articulate a relevant method and hypothesize a leadership praxis that will support the project and faith setting?
- Does the proposal consider social, cultural, institutional, geographic, theological, and socio-economic dimensions of the problem?

- Does the proposal outline how the student will engage the setting in research and reflection?
- Does the project proposal demonstrate the student's capacity and disposition for growth for social justice leadership as a personal, vocational, and spiritual endeavor?

The Committee may accept the proposal, accept the proposal with required revisions, or reject the proposal. Students may submit up to two times. Failure to gain proposal acceptance by the second submission or by the end of Fall of a student's 3rd year will result in academic review. All decisions will be communicated to both the student and their faculty project advisor promptly by Populi email. Students should normally expect to receive a response from the DMin Committee within three weeks of submission.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is an oversight committee that ensures that any researcher affiliated with the institution treats human subjects in an ethical manner. The IRB at MLTS conducts its business as needed but is heavily weighted to meet in the Spring to support 2nd year DMin students. The IRB consists of five members: the IRB Director, the DMin Director, a core faculty member, at least one other Meadville Lombard faculty or staff member, and one non-MLTS-affiliated scholar. The IRB Chair works closely with the DMin Director to schedule meetings that support the timely progress of students through their studies.

All DMin students will learn about IRBs, but only those students who choose to research human subjects for their DMin Project (as defined by federal regulation [45 C.F.R. 46](#)) will be required to apply for and obtain prior IRB approval for their research. To obtain IRB approval, the student must complete the following before beginning their research:

1. The student must notify their first reader and the DMin director of their intention to engage in human subjects research before the spring semester of their second year.
2. Such students will then receive information on how to complete the CITI Program's Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE) Comprehensive certification course. This is an online course that can take up to five hours to complete. Students must complete this course and submit their completion certificate to the IRB chair (irb@meadville.edu) before or with their IRB proposal.
3. The student must plan out in detail every aspect of their research project as it pertains to their human subjects.
4. The student must complete the IRB research proposal form (available at <https://library.meadville.edu/irb/>) and submit it, along with any other required documents noted in the proposal form (such as subject recruitment scripts, survey questions, interview scripts, etc.) to the IRB chair at irb@meadville.edu. As the IRB Chair may directly contact the student should the proposal be incomplete, students are encouraged to make their submissions as soon as possible but no later than April 1.
5. MLTS's IRB will review all proposals during scheduled committee meetings.. Students will then be notified whether their proposals were:

- a. Approved: the IRB found the research to be ethical and the student may begin their research at once, although the IRB might include revisions to the research project that the student must agree to follow.
- b. Approval pending: the student will be sent detailed instructions of how to provide additional information to the IRB to demonstrate that the research is ethical. The student may not begin their research until they submit this information and get full approval from the IRB.
- c. Rejected: the IRB found the research could not be revised to meet ethical standards. The student must not engage in this research.

If a DMin student believes that their human subjects research is exempt from IRB approval (as defined by federal regulation [45 C.F.R. 46](#)), that student must nonetheless submit an IRB exemption form ([available at the IRB website](#)) to the IRB Chair at irb@meadville.edu. Students seeking exemptions may not begin their research until they receive written approval from the IRB.

For questions, forms, or further information about the IRB and ethical research of human subjects, please see <https://library.meadville.edu/irb/> or contact the IRB Chair at irb@meadville.edu.

DMIN THESIS PROJECT

OVERVIEW AND PROGRAM STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT PROJECT COMPLETION

3rd year students must register for Thesis Research I and II. The courses are offered Pass/Fail. These courses are semi-structured with brief check-ins to ensure project progress. Students should plan on writing regularly and working closely with their first reader as they draft their project, submit their project to their first and second reader, and schedule a public oral review. After a successful oral review, students submit their approved project following library guidelines.

WRITING THE PROJECT AND TIMELINES

The student and first reader will determine the best method for project oversight. Some students and faculty prefer to submit chapter by chapter for accountability, direction, and insight. Others prefer to write the entirety or a significant portion of the project before a preliminary review with their first reader. It is critical that a student make steady writing progress.

Students preparing their projects should consult submission requirements at www.library.meadville.edu/project for formatting matters germane to digital publication. Students are also required to follow the most recent edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Generally, projects are 60-75 pages long, double-spaced, in 12 pt. Times New Roman or Calibri. Inclusive footnotes, endnotes, bibliography, and appendices, projects ought not exceed 100 pages.

In a normal year, the complete first final draft of a student's project is due to their first reader by February 1 to qualify for graduation in Spring. The first reader will offer timely feedback for revisions. Students will circulate their completed draft to the second reader by March 10, pending approval by the first reader. First readers will schedule an online public oral review that consists of the DMin student, first, and second reader. First readers will also invite interested MLTS community members (faculty, staff, and students). Public oral reviews must conclude by April 10.

The oral review is open to the public and is typically scheduled for an hour. During the oral review, the student is invited to give a ten-minute opening statement that (a) describes their problem in ministry, (b) offers a brief explanation of how they responded, and (c) its impact on their leadership and ministry. Reviewers will conduct a review of the project and its impact on social justice leadership with the student. Fifteen minutes before the end of the hour, the oral review will formally conclude, and the Review Committee will deliberate upon the project using the DMin Project Assessment Rubric. The student will be asked to remain in a waiting area and will be invited to meet the Review Committee regarding any remaining changes or corrections to the project thesis or abstract. Following deliberations, the first reader will complete the Thesis Approval Sheet, obtain the required signatures, and return to the student for inclusion with the project. First readers will also complete the DMin Project Assessment Rubric and return to the Registrar and DMin Director.

Successfully reviewed projects must be submitted to the Director of the Library, John Dechant (jdechant@meadville.edu) for formatting review by April 15, after which the student will upload the

final submission onto Melodic, the Meadville Lombard Digital Commons by May 1. See submission requirements at [Thesis and Project Guide](#).

DMin Continuation Fee

Students who do not meet thesis deadlines (full draft due Feb 1, final draft to second reader by March 10, public presentation by April 10, project to Librarian by April 15, upload final approved thesis by May 1) will need to take one or more terms of DMin Continuation to complete the thesis.

DMin Continuation carries a fee of \$450 per Fall and Spring term. Students will be in Continuation status and will be charged the Continuation fee each Fall and Spring term until they have successfully presented and submitted their thesis. Students who will not be working on their thesis in a given semester may request a Leave of Absence using the Leave of Absence form (<https://www.meadville.edu/current-students/student-forms/>). The Leave of Absence carries a \$75 fee per Fall and Spring term.

Students in Continuation status who cannot register for a subsequent term due to an outstanding balance will be placed in Inactive status and will lose library access. Students who have been inactive for over one year will be considered by the faculty to have withdrawn from their academic program.

NON-DEGREE PROGRAMS

Meadville Lombard offers the following non-degree programs:

THE CERTIFICATE OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

The Certificate program offers students the opportunity to complete graduate theological coursework in a seminary setting but outside the context of a degree program. In the certificate program, students can select their own coursework based on their interests and vocational or avocational goals. This program is appropriate for laypeople, those seeking theological education, or those who want to build on prior theological study.

CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

To complete the Certificate of Theological Studies, students must complete 12 credits and maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5. This program can be completed in a single semester or spread across multiple terms and is appropriate for those students who plan to take a single course each term. Students are expected to meet standards of academic and non-academic conduct as outlined in the Student Handbook.

To complete the Certificate, a student can choose to focus their studies via a concentration, or they can select any four courses (12 credits) for a general Certificate without a concentration. Concentrations are available in the following areas:

- Theology
 - Required – Constructive Theology
 - Two courses in Theology or Ethics
 - One elective
- History
 - Required – History of Global Christianity
 - Two courses in History
 - One elective
- Faith Formation
 - Required – Pedagogy for Social Change: Method is the Message
 - Two courses in Faith Formation
 - One elective
- Pastoral Care
 - Required – Introduction to Pastoral Ministry
 - Healthy Boundaries for Leaders
 - One course in Pastoral Ministry
 - One elective

STUDENT AT LARGE STUDIES

Students may apply to take a single course either for credit or as an auditor as a Student at Large (SAL). Student at Large admission is for one term only; students who wish to take courses in an additional term must apply again. Courses taken as a Student at Large for academic credit may be applied to a Meadville Lombard degree program if the student later applies to and matriculates in a degree program.

GENERAL ACADEMIC POLICIES (APPLICABLE TO ALL DEGREE PROGRAMS)

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Students are required to register for classes online (see the following section for instructions).

Under certain circumstances, a student may need to register directly with the Registrar; this can be done via email (from Meadville.edu accounts only).

ONLINE REGISTRATION USING POPULI

- To register for courses, go to your **Profile** and click the **Registration** tab. Courses you are currently registered for will be listed under the **My Courses** header.
- To register for a course section, find it in the Available Courses table and click the  in either the **Enroll** or **Audit** column next to it. The course will appear under My Courses.

- As you select courses, those remaining in the Available Courses section will update their information in relation to your selections.
- If you register for a course section, the “enroll” and “audit” buttons for the other sections of that same course inactivate themselves.
- To drop a course during the registration period, click the  next to the course under My Courses. You cannot drop a course after the semester’s drop/add date without withdrawing and getting a “W” for that course on your transcript. You will also need to pay any fees if applicable.
- To add or drop a course after the registration period has ended, see the [Drop/Add Deadlines and Course Withdrawal Section](#)
- **Don’t Forget to Save!**

ASSOCIATION OF CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS (ACTS)

Matriculated students have the opportunity to cross-register for classes at any of the ACTS schools (Association of Chicago Theological Schools) but are limited as to how many of these classes may be counted toward the completion of their degree program. Students may take as many as four (4) classes at ACTS member schools and as many as three (3) courses at the University of Chicago.

ACTS CROSS REGISTRATION:

Contact the Registrar at Meadville Lombard to discuss your cross-registration plan. Complete ACTS Cross Registration Form (available on the MLTS website); save it as a Word document, then email it to the Registrar. Before completing the form, verify that the desired course is indeed being offered by referring to the most recent course schedules available in the ACTS catalog or on the secondary school's website.

DROP/ADD DEADLINES AND COURSE WITHDRAWAL

The Registration Periods for the Fall, Spring, and Summer Semesters are designated on [the Academic Calendar](#), as published on our website each academic year. Students will receive a full refund of tuition and fees for courses dropped prior to the Drop/Add deadline. After the Drop/Add deadline, a refund will only be granted in cases of a medical or personal emergency, subject to approval by the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.

Students must contact the Registrar in order to withdraw from a course after the Drop/Add deadline. The student will complete a [Course Withdrawal Form](#) and submit it to their Academic Advisor. If the course change results in a tuition/fee adjustment, the adjustment will be made at that time. Withdrawal from a course or courses after the drop/add deadline may impact a student’s financial aid eligibility. For more information about withdrawal and financial aid, see sections on [Withdrawal and Federal Student Aid](#) and [Withdrawal and Institutional Aid](#).

ATTENDANCE

Attendance policies may vary slightly from course to course at the faculty's discretion. Please be sure to review each course's attendance policies for variants.

FALL & SPRING COURSES (APPLICABLE TO BOTH ONLINE AND ON-CAMPUS COMPONENTS):

Attendance is required at all class sessions. Please arrive promptly. Students with more than four unexcused absences (absence = missing half or more of any class session) will receive a failing grade in the course. Email your professor about anticipated and unforeseen absences. Students with excused absences will be expected to work with the instructor to make up the missed course material and time.

COURSES WITH ON-CAMPUS COMPONENTS:

In addition to the above-stated attendance policy for Fall and Spring Courses, students are strongly encouraged to attend the scheduled on-campus component of their courses in full. If you will not be able to be present in person, please inform MLTS in advance. Students who are not present and who have not made alternate arrangements in advance will be withdrawn from the course.

ONLINE SUMMER COURSES:

Attendance is required at all class sessions. Email your professor about anticipated and unforeseen absences. Students with more than two unexcused absences (absence = missing half or more of any class session) will receive a failing grade in the course.

CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT

Students who do not enroll in classes without taking an official Leave of Absence will be considered to have withdrawn from the school after a period of one year.

CREDITS

Meadville Lombard assigns three (3) units of credit to intensive courses that meet for 37.5 class hours. Our credit requirements are as follows:

- Ninety (90) units are required for the MDiv degree.
- Thirty-six (36) units are required for the MAR degree.
- Thirty (30) units are required for the DMin degree.

GRADES

Grades are assigned by the faculty at the end of the semester. A, B, C, D, and P are passing grades. The number values of grades toward a student's grade point average are as follows:

	A = 4.0	A- = 3.67
B+ = 3.33	B = 3.0	B- = 2.67
C+ = 2.33	C = 2.0	C- = 1.67
D+ = 1.33	D = 1.0	D- = 0.67

F = Failing; Non-Credit

P = Pass

AU = Audit; non-credit

W = Withdrew Without penalty; non-credit

I = Incomplete; non-credit unless changed to a letter grade

GRADE AVERAGES

A student matriculating for a degree must maintain an average at or above a "B" (or 3.0 grade point average) in the academic program. A student may repeat a failed course, but cannot receive an Institutional Tuition Reduction for the repeated course. A student's failure to achieve a "B" (3.0 GPA) average by the end of the first year will result in probation. A "B" (3.0 GPA) average must be achieved by the end of the second year of study, or enrollment may be suspended or terminated.

POLICY FOR "P" (PASS) GRADE

Each professor will designate whether they will offer the class for a letter grade or Pass/Fail. If they do not designate on their syllabus what the grading requirements are, the default will be a letter grade. A student wishing to receive Pass/Fail grading in such a class must petition the professor for approval by the posted drop/add date. Students may take no more than half (50%) of their credits for a given degree Pass/Fail.

A grade of Pass will not impact a student's cumulative GPA. A failing grade in a Pass/Fail course will have the same impact on the GPA as a failing grade in a graded course. In order for a student to receive a grade of Pass in a Pass/Fail course, the student must receive a point percentage of at least 75% in course assignments.

GRADE APPEAL

This policy provides a means for a student to contest a final course grade received in credit-bearing MLTS courses only. Grade grievances for courses taken within the ACTS system must be appealed to the institution where they are taught.

Grading is the prerogative of the faculty and is based upon a student's performance against a clearly articulated set of assignments, expectations, and standards. No administrator may overrule an instructor's grade without an official finding of arbitrary grading.

GRADE APPEAL CRITERIA

- Only final course grades may be appealed.
- Students may only appeal grades that they believe to be arbitrarily given. Arbitrary grades are defined as those:
 - assigned to a student on some basis other than performance in the course; or,
 - assigned to a student by resorting to unreasonable standards different from those which were applied to other students in that course or section of the course; or,
 - assigned to a student on the basis of criteria that are a substantial, unreasonable, and unannounced departure from the instructor's previously articulated standards.
- Students must begin the process within 3 weeks of the final grade having been posted unless there are documented extenuating circumstances (extreme illness, accidents, or similar factors).
- Grades that are the result of academic misconduct are not appealable.

INFORMAL RESOLUTION

The first course of action is for the student to discuss their concerns with the instructor. If the instructor is not available, the student should speak with the academic dean.

FORMAL APPEAL

If the student and the instructor are unable to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution, the student may file a written formal appeal with the academic dean. The academic dean should communicate their final decision to the student and instructor in writing within 10 days of receiving the formal appeal.

A formal appeal should include a statement from the student explaining why the final grade is arbitrary or capricious. Include any relevant materials, such as graded assignments, to your appeal and explain their significance. Appeals should be no longer than two double-spaced pages.

REMEDIES

If arbitrary grading has occurred, the academic dean will offer one or more remedies. Remedies may include the following:

- Regrading by another, qualified, disinterested member of the faculty.
- Allowing the instructor the opportunity to change the grade if they see fit.
- A formal appeal may not result in a grade lower than the grade being appealed.

The student may appeal the decision of the academic dean by submitting a formal request to the President within 10 days of the decision. The President should communicate their final decision to the student, academic dean and instructor in writing within 10 days of receiving the formal appeal.

At any time in the process, the student may seek an informal resolution.

All parties involved in grading disputes are responsible for upholding both the confidentiality of the student(s) and the instructor.

PROGRAM CHANGE

At times, a student may decide that their current Program of Study does not align with their personal and/or professional goals. Such a student may elect to request a program change.

Students who wish to change programs must consult with their Academic Advisor first. Once it is determined that a change of program is the student's best option, the student must submit the signed [Program Change Form](#) to their Academic Advisor.

The advisor will submit the request to the V.P. of Academic and Student Affairs, who will notify the student of the final decision.

Changing programs may jeopardize financial aid eligibility. Please check with the Financial Aid Office, VA Representative, and/or SEVIS Administrator.

The submission of the [Program Change Form](#) does not mean automatic acceptance into the program of your choice. Additional admissions requirements and/or information may be requested for acceptance into the new program. Notification of such requirements will be sent to your Meadville Lombard Theological School (MLTS) student email by the V.P. of Academic and Student Affairs or another designated Academic Administrator.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Faculty of Meadville Lombard Theological School acknowledges that there are occasions and circumstances in a student's career in which they may need to take a leave of absence. In such cases, Master of Arts and Master of Divinity students will present a [Leave of Absence Form](#) to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs. Such an application will be taken to the faculty for consideration. If approved, the application will be granted, and the student will be responsible for taking the form to the Registrar for inclusion in their official file. Leaves will be granted for no less than one semester and no more than two years. A non-refundable fee of \$75.00 per semester (Fall and Spring only) will be assessed.

If a Student on Leave of Absence does not return after two years, they will be withdrawn from the degree program by the school. If, after two years, the student wishes to return, they will have to reapply for admission to the program.

Students who are not actively enrolled in coursework for more than one year without an approved Leave of Absence will be withdrawn from the degree program by the school. If the student wishes to return, they will have to reapply for admission to the program.

COPYRIGHT POLICY

Meadville Lombard recognizes the importance of following best practices to comply with copyright law. Thus, in the classroom (in-person and digital), for Meadville publications, on the MLTS website, and during MLTS events, we will follow appropriate procedures to ensure we respect the copyright of authors, musicians, and other content creators. Meadville faculty, staff, and students are expected to ensure that their uses of copyrighted works are covered either by licenses, fair use principles, the TEACH Act, or explicit individual permission from the copyright holder.

Meadville Lombard designates the VP of Finance and Administration as the Copyright Officer, the agent to notify in cases of alleged copyright infringement.

Meadville Lombard designates the Director of Library and Archives as responsible for providing resources and instruction about copyright, permissions, fair use, and licensing to staff, faculty, and students.

Faculty in their educational and advisory roles are responsible for helping students understand the importance and relevance of copyright in their academic and ministerial work.

MLTS has devised procedures to ensure Meadville students, faculty, and staff remain compliant with copyright law. These procedures cover selecting and uploading course readings and using copyrighted texts, videos, music and images in virtual and physical classrooms and worship. More information about copyright be found at: <https://library.meadville.edu/copyright>.

COURSE RECORDING POLICY

As part of Meadville Lombard's commitment to ensuring class environments are accessible for all learners regardless of ability, we have found it helpful to some students who require accommodations that the work done in synchronous class sessions be recorded. Because video recording creates a potentially enduring record of images, the following describes the policies regarding the use of such recordings, confidentiality, security, and retention.

In addition, copies of the policy and form will be provided to individuals with the potential to be recorded to provide consent to being recorded.

The following policy must be understood and adhered to by faculty, staff, students, and applicable speakers and presenters in Meadville Lombard classes.

- 1) Student requesting recordings of class sessions must have demonstrated a legitimate educational need through application and approval for ADA accommodations in accordance with the [ADA Accommodations Policy](#) set forth in the student handbook (page 45).
- 2) Faculty may exercise their discretion in distributing recordings to individual students enrolled in the recorded class, on an ad hoc basis, should they demonstrate an educational need.

- 3) Class session recordings are to be used to aid class participation and comprehension for students who have demonstrated an educational need as described in Section 1) and should not be used as a substitute for actual synchronous class participation.
- 4) Recordings of virtual or hybrid synchronous class sessions, captured via Zoom, are accessible only through the Academic Service Assistant, Executive Assistant to the President (or other authorized Meadville Lombard Staff Members), and/or faculty for the course being recorded.
 - a. Recordings of class sessions will be kept no longer than the duration of the term.
- 5) Class session recordings are for the use of the student(s) enrolled in the recorded course. No student, faculty, staff, or presenter are permitted to duplicate, share, or otherwise distribute class recordings. As applicable, violations will result in disciplinary action as set forth in the Student Handbook or Employee Handbook.
- 6) All enrolled students, faculty, and presenters must consent to be subject to recording for any recording to be performed.

BACKGROUND CHECK

All students (except for international students) will receive a background check as part of their enrollment at Meadville Lombard. Students will fill out the background check paperwork as part of the admissions process. Student Affairs will conduct a background check on the entering students at least one month before the beginning of the student's first term.

SUPPORTIVE SPACE POLICY

We recognize that there may be times when someone feels emotionally raw and vulnerable in the classroom. By its very nature, there are times when ministerial formation and theological education may not feel "safe." However, we strive to make the classroom a supportive space so that we can continue the work of transformation and growth. Please speak with your professor so they can point you toward support and resources. Meadville Lombard provides the following resources for students who may be triggered in the classroom:

- Availability of the chaplain during Fall and Spring Intensives.
- A list of area counseling resources available by request from Student Affairs and the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry.

RESEARCH ON HUMAN SUBJECTS

Meadville Lombard Master of Divinity students may not engage in research that requires an IRB. All MDiv students engaging in any research that may involve human subjects (including oral histories and surveys) must complete and submit the [Meadville Lombard MDiv Student Project Review Form](#) to the Institutional Review Board of Meadville Lombard Theological School to ensure their project **does not** meet the criteria for an IRB.

Students can submit this form by completing it and emailing it to irb@meadville.edu.

Meadville Lombard Doctor of Ministry students may often engage in research with human subjects, particularly as they conduct research for their DMin Thesis Project. DMin students are required to submit an exemption or full proposal to the Institutional Review Board before beginning any research with human subjects. In addition, DMin students applying for IRB are required to have completed CITI training regarding history, ethics, and best practices in research with human subjects. Please see the DMin Project Proposal and Guidelines for detailed information regarding IRB applications and procedures.

PROGRAM WITHDRAWAL

MLTS takes seriously any student's decision to suspend studies and withdraw from their program. If you are considering such actions, you are strongly encouraged to seek your Advisor's advice. To officially withdraw from MLTS, a [Program Withdrawal Form](#) must be completed and submitted to the Registrar's Office. The effective date of withdrawal is the date on which a written statement of withdrawal and the form is submitted and received by the registrar.

If a student withdraws from the academic program after the Drop/Add period in a term for which they are enrolled in courses, the course withdrawal policy applies, along with relevant [Financial Aid policies](#).

FINANCIAL OR PHYSICAL HARDSHIP WITHDRAWAL

Students who must withdraw from MLTS due to a significant financial or physical hardship may request support in limiting their debt owed using the course withdrawal form, if applicable, or by contacting the Registrar or the VP of Academic and Student Affairs. Support is also available for students who seek to re-enroll – see below for the general re-enrollment process.

RETURN AFTER WITHDRAWAL

If a student withdraws voluntarily and seeks to reapply within two years, the student can reapply with a short application and an essay of 500 words. If a student has been withdrawn for more than two years, the student will need to submit a full application.

INCOMPLETE POLICY

An Incomplete is defined as any extension of time to complete class work beyond the last day of the course semester. The mark "I" (Incomplete) on a transcript indicates that a student registered for course credit has not submitted all the evidence required for a qualitative grade, but has made satisfactory arrangements with the instructor prior to the original date when work is due. The mark "I" is given only under special circumstances to students who meet the guidelines listed below. Final determination on granting an Incomplete rest with the instructor. Upon completion of incomplete coursework, the student will be graded Pass/Fail.

- To qualify for an Incomplete, the student must have completed 70% of their classwork with passing grades.

- In any given semester, the maximum number of credits for which a student may request an Incomplete shall be no more than 50% of the credit hours they are enrolled in for the semester.
- Each degree plan has a maximum number of credit hours in Incompletes a student may take over the course of their degree plans. Those maximums are as follows:
 - Master of Divinity students may take no more than 15 credit hours in Incompletes over the course of their degree plan.
 - Master of Arts (Religion) students may take no more than 9 credit hours in Incompletes over the course of their degree plan.
 - Doctor of Ministry students may take no more than 6 credit hours in Incompletes over the course of their degree program.
- No incomplete shall be authorized for the penultimate semester (the semester PRIOR TO THE GRADUATING SEMESTER)

Meadville Lombard Theological School requires that work be completed within the semester immediately following the semester in which the extension was requested, including the summer semester. If the work is not completed and graded satisfactorily by the end of the semester immediately following the semester in which the course was originally taken, the grade will be recorded as “Failure” (F) and no credit will be earned for the course. Both the “Incomplete” (I) and “Failure” (F) grades are considered unsuccessful completions and will affect a student’s eligibility for Federal and Institutional Financial Aid (See the Student Academic Progress (SAP) section of Financial Aid Policies in this handbook). [Student Academic Progress \(SAP\)](#) section of Financial Aid Policies in this handbook.

INCOMPLETE REQUEST PROCEDURES:

The maximum allowable time for an extension is one semester after the end of the semester in which the course was taken (for example: coursework for an Incomplete taken in Spring Semester must be completed by end of Summer Semester).

Before the last day of the semester in which the course is being taught, the student must arrange with the instructor for an Incomplete.

1. Procure an [Incomplete Request Form](#) from the Registrar.
2. Obtain the instructor’s signature and return the form to the Registrar by the last day of the semester; the Registrar then forwards the form to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs for signature.
3. The Registrar sends one copy of the completed form to the Faculty Advisor and files one copy in the student’s record.
4. Upon successful completion of the coursework, the instructor will submit a grade of Pass/Fail to the Registrar (one cannot earn a letter grade for an Incomplete). The Registrar will record the grade and notify the Advisor of the completed work.
5. Failure to complete a course by the end of the next semester will result in an “F” on the transcript; the student will not earn credit for F’s. No Institutional Tuition Reduction Awards

will be awarded for any course taken to replace an F course for which Institutional Aid was given.

FINANCIAL AID IMPLICATIONS OF INCOMPLETES

Please note that the mark “I” on a student’s transcript will count against their “pace” (as defined in the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy) and may result in their ineligibility for Federal Financial Aid and/or Institutional Tuition Reduction during future terms. See Section 4 for Financial Aid Policies.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) POLICY

As an academically rigorous institution, the Meadville Lombard community adheres to a high standard of academic success and professional preparation. We believe that this standard is a combination of classroom success, contextual practice, and, when applicable, ministerial fitness.

In addition to quantitative academic review (as described below), all degree-seeking students at Meadville Lombard are subject to review by faculty concerning their progress in preparation for ministry. Such a review will address student academic progress and formation (personal, emotional, and professional preparedness for ministry), and financial planning. If formation concerns are noted, faculty will notify the student to discuss a means of resolving such concerns. Major formational concerns may affect Academic Good Standing. It is important to note that, depending on the severity of the formational concern, a student may be placed on any adverse SAP status in any order.

While enrolled at Meadville Lombard, students are expected to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress or SAP. As part of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to be considered in “*Academic Good Standing*”, students must meet both Quantitative and Formational guidelines:

1. Quantitative Guidelines
 - Receive no failing (F) grade in a given academic term.
 - Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
 - Successfully complete at least 67% of all coursework attempted during each academic term.*
2. Formational Guidelines
 - Maintain satisfactory professional preparedness.
 - Adherence to the Student Covenant
 - Avoid conduct that creates a hostile or disruptive environment.

**Attempted coursework is defined as any course in which a student is enrolled at the end of the 100% refund period (see Refund Policies 2.8.1). Successful completion of coursework is defined as receipt of a grade of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, or P if a course is taken Pass/Fail. Unsuccessful completion of coursework is defined as receipt of a grade of F, I, PI, or W. Repeated coursework is counted as many times as the course is repeated in the computation of total units attempted. Courses that are assigned an Incomplete grade are included in the cumulative hours attempted but cannot be used as credits earned toward progress standards until a successful grade is assigned. Credit officially accepted in transfer and specifically applied toward a student’s degree program will not be counted toward the pace or GPA.*

Should a student not meet Satisfactory Academic Progress, they will be subject to the guidelines set forth in the Satisfactory Academic Progress Review Policy.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS REVIEW POLICY

Each term, students' cumulative grade point average (CGPA) is calculated based on the letter grades they receive in their classes (See [Grades](#) for point values). Additionally, students must maintain a pace of successful coursework completion which can lead to graduation within an appropriate timeframe. A Student's SAP Status is determined by the results of that evaluation.

WARNING

- If a student receives one or more failing grades (F) in a given academic term.
- If a student's CGPA falls below 3.0, or
- If a student's pace falls below 67%

The students will be notified that they have failed to meet SAP, and Academic Warning Status will be applied to their record. Notification to this effect will be sent to their Meadville email account. A student will regain satisfactory SAP provided they earn a cumulative GPA of 3.0 (B) or higher and meet all other academic good standing requirements in the next term. Warning status may also affect Financial Aid eligibility. For more information, please see Financial Aid Warnings and Appeals.

PROBATION

- After receiving a warning, if a student again fails to meet academic good standing requirements, they will be put on Academic Probation Status.
- Students who demonstrate actions that cause major concerns around formation that could be a detriment to the student's professional ministry will be placed on Academic Probation

When students are placed on Academic Probation, notification of Probation status will be sent to their Meadville email account. A student on Probation for failure to meet the minimum CGPA must raise their cumulative grade point average above 3.0 and may be required to undergo a performance improvement plan that will be developed by their advisor in consultation with faculty.

Students on Probation for Formational concerns are not eligible to register for future courses until after meeting with the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, or a Meadville Lombard designee. Additionally, Meadville Lombard funding (including Federal Aid) may be suspended. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and faculty will develop a series of steps which the student must complete in order to satisfy the probationary status.

Probation status may also affect Financial Aid eligibility. For more information, please see [Financial Aid Warnings and Appeals](#).

SUSPENSION

- If a student fails to meet the terms of Probation or does not meet academic good standing requirements for three consecutive terms, they will be subject to Suspension.
- If a student has not met the conditions of Probation for formational concerns, they may be put under Suspension once [Non-Academic Student Disciplinary Procedures](#) are taken. A student under Suspension is not eligible to return to campus until a set of conditions are met including educational and/or behavioral requirements.

Students who are suspended are not eligible to return for a period of at least one term. The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, in consultation with faculty, determines the length of suspension. In certain cases, students who receive unsatisfactory faculty reviews as a part of contextual education may be suspended. Any Warning notice received in any term after a term of Probation, as described above, results in Suspension. A student under Suspension may be subject to a set of conditions, including educational and/or behavioral requirements, to return to Meadville Lombard. Suspension status may also affect Financial Aid eligibility. For more information, please see Section 4.3 Financial Aid Warnings and Appeals.

DISMISSAL

- Failure to fulfill the quantitative conditions of a completed Suspension is immediate grounds for dismissal. Furthermore, students whose cumulative GPA is 2.0 or below may be dismissed.
 - If a student continues to fail to meet the standards of academic or community life, or that a student's behavior may be destructive to the school, other students, a church, the denomination, or the profession of ministry, the student may be dismissed. Such cases will undergo review in accordance with the Non-Academic Student Disciplinary Procedures.
- Failure to fulfill the formational conditions of Probation may be grounds for immediate Dismissal.

Dismissal is the loss of student status at Meadville Lombard. A dismissed student is not eligible for readmission. Dismissal procedures are reserved for cases in which it is clear to the faculty that the student is failing to meet academic, professional, or formational standards. Failure to fulfill the conditions of a completed Suspension is immediate grounds for dismissal. Furthermore, students whose cumulative GPA is 2.0 or below may be dismissed.

Students suspended or dismissed for unsatisfactory academic performance may request that Meadville Lombard reconsider its action by submitting, in writing, to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, any evidence of extenuating circumstances previously unavailable which would warrant a change in the academic action. A student's written request for reconsideration must be submitted within seven (7) days of their notification of Suspension or Dismissal. The President or a Meadville Lombard designee will review the written appeal and the supporting information of the previous decision. As a final option, the student can register an appeal with the Board of Trustees. The decision of the Board of Trustees is final.

TAKING COURSES AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Students enrolled in a Meadville Lombard degree program may take classes at any of the Association of Chicago Theological Schools (ACTS) by cross-registering through the Meadville Lombard Office of the Registrar. Students cannot take transfer classes in their first semester at Meadville Lombard. Classes taken at any of these seminaries are counted as Meadville Lombard courses and are not calculated as part of the number of credits that students may take elsewhere. However, students are limited to taking four (4) courses at ACTS schools. Each degree program allows a different number of courses from accredited graduate programs (other than the ACTS member schools) to be applied toward the degree, as follows:

Master of Divinity

Once students matriculate, they may take up to nine (9) credits at another accredited graduate institution.

Master of Arts (Religion)

Once they matriculate, MAR students may take up to six (6) credits at another accredited graduate institution.

Doctor of Ministry Once a student matriculates, DMin students may take up to three (3) credit hours at another accredited graduate institution. Normally, this would fulfill the student's elective credit hours.

ADVANCE STANDING/TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY

Students matriculating into a degree program may apply graduate-level work done at other institutions to their degree program. Meadville Lombard limits the number of units that can be applied as follows:

Master of Divinity

In the MDiv, students are allowed up to twenty-seven (27) credits to be transferred in from prior graduate work.

Master of Arts (Religion)

Up to six (6) credits may be transferred into the MAR from prior graduate work.

Doctor of Ministry

Up to six (6) credits may be transferred from another accredited doctoral degree program in a relevant field. The course must have been taken within five (5) years of the date of the request.

TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY

Meadville Lombard Theological School accepts transfer course credit from accredited colleges and universities if the courses are deemed comparable in scope and rigor to courses offered at Meadville Lombard Theological School.

Graduate courses completed at another college or university that is regionally accredited and/or accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (or a recognized foreign institution) may be transferred to the Meadville Lombard Theological School and applied toward a graduate degree program, if these criteria are met:

- The course earned graduate credit at the home institution and is comparable to Meadville Lombard Theological School graduate level work.
- The student earned a grade of A or B in the course (or the equivalent, if another grading system were used).
- The course was taken within 10 years of the date of the request, with the exception of Doctor of Ministry transfer courses.
- For courses taken during a student's program at MLTS, the student receives approval of the transfer course(s) prior to taking it.

Transfer coursework is not computed in the Meadville Lombard Theological School's grade-point average (GPA).

In order for approved transfer credit to be awarded, students must submit an official transcript (a sealed official transcript or an e-transcript) that clearly indicates all of the following information for each course:

- Course codes or numbers
- Course titles or descriptions
- Final grades earned.
- Course credits earned.

DIRECTED STUDY

Directed Study in a course will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances and is up to the discretion of the faculty member. Any Directed Study requires enrollment in an established registration period, execution during an established semester, and payment of the normal per-credit tuition amount. A letter grade is normally awarded for Directed Study.

The Directed Study needs to be administered by a full-time faculty member or by a faculty member who has recently taught the course at Meadville Lombard Theological School.

To register for a Directed Study course, students must complete the [Directed Study](#) form and submit it for approval.

Registration fees and tuition are the same for Directed Study classes as for any other Meadville Lombard course.

ACCESSIBILITY/DISABILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

STATEMENT

Meadville Lombard Theological School is committed to providing a quality theological education to a diverse group of students. This includes a strong commitment, rooted in the school's mission, to providing individuals with disabilities with equal access to programs, services, and activities, consistent with applicable law.

For purposes of this Policy, an individual with a disability is defined as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Individuals meeting this definition are protected against discrimination and are also entitled to reasonable accommodation at their request and pursuant to the criteria set forth in this Policy below. The law and Meadville policy also protect individuals with a history or record of impairment, or who are perceived by others as having such an impairment, from discrimination.

Consistent with this policy against discrimination, Meadville Lombard provides reasonable accommodations as necessary to allow students with disabilities to fully access and participate in the school's educational programs and activities. Depending on a disabled student's individual circumstances and needs, reasonable accommodations may include academic adjustments, examination modifications, or auxiliary aids that allow students to access classroom discussions or online information. Reasonable accommodations do not include modifications that would fundamentally alter the school's academic offerings or that would constitute an undue hardship or burden to the school and its community. Students with disabilities are expected to meet the academic and technical standards of our program, just as employees with disabilities are expected to fulfill the essential functions of their positions. The purpose of reasonable accommodation is to make reasonable adjustment that permit a student or employee to meet these expectations and fulfill these functions.

Below, the School sets forth its policies and practices for addressing requests, confidentiality of information provided, and any grievances or concerns about the administration of this Policy. Meadville Lombard's Section 504 Coordinator is the official responsible for overseeing the School's compliance with disability-related issues. Pamela Lightsey, Vice President of Academic and Student Services serves as our Section 504 Coordinator. Their contact information is plightsey@meadville.edu. The Section 504 Coordinator may be consulted for any questions, concerns, accommodation requests, or grievances.

Disclosure and Process of Requesting Reasonable Accommodation:

Individuals with disabilities are not required to disclose their disability status or to request accommodation. If, however, a student believes they may need reasonable accommodation, self-identification is encouraged at any time and as soon as possible after the student becomes aware that accommodation may be needed. Accommodations, necessarily, cannot be retroactive – so, the sooner a student self-identifies and Meadville Lombard can explore with the student possible reasonable accommodations, the sooner reasonable accommodations may be implemented.

Requests for accommodation should be submitted pursuant to the procedures, and using the Request for Accommodation form is described below and attached to this Policy. These procedures and the applicable form are subject to change going forward. If the School changes its procedures or forms, these changes will be noted on this webpage.

POLICY/PROCESS OF APPLYING AND DOCUMENTING

Meadville Lombard Theological School follows these guidelines and procedures for evaluating requests for accommodation and medical treaters' documentation of disabilities.

A student who wishes to request accommodation based upon a medical or mental condition that may constitute a disability should make a request using the attached "Accommodation Request Form" attached to this Policy. Any questions about this form or what is needed may be addressed to <mailto:plightsey@meadville.edu> Jonathan Shotwell, jshotwell@meadville.edu

1. The clinician/treater selected by the student must be qualified to make a diagnosis and provide accommodation recommendations in the particular area of practice (and cannot be a member of the student's family).
2. The evaluation should be written on professional letterhead, be current (usually within 6 months but no more than one year), and set forth the date of the clinician's last appointment with the student. The clinician should clearly state the medical and/or mental condition(s) for which accommodation is requested and provide relevant medical or other history. If relevant, the evaluation should also discuss current treatments and assistive devices that the student has employed in past educational settings.
3. The evaluation should include a statement from the clinician indicating a timeframe within which the student should be re-evaluated for the medical and/or mental conditions for which accommodation is sought (or indicate why no reevaluation is needed if that is the case). The evaluation should also indicate the length of time for which the reasonable accommodation or accommodations will be needed in the opinion of the clinician, and the evaluation should explain this recommended duration.
4. The evaluation should provide a description of the functional limitations that the student experiences as a result of the medical and/or mental condition(s) for which accommodation is sought, specifically focusing upon a post-secondary educational setting.
5. The evaluation should identify the accommodation(s) being requested and discuss why this relates to and will address the functional limitations described by the medical professional.
6. Should the School need to ask follow-up questions of the medical professional, the student will be asked to give a medical release consent to both the school and the student's medical professional.
7. If documentation, as originally obtained, is unclear or fails to include the information described above, this may delay the school's ability to evaluate the request and grant reasonable accommodations.

FOLLOW-UP AND INTERACTIVE PROCESS:

Once the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs receives the Request for Accommodations form (with the above-stated documentation), the Director reviews it (and may consult on a confidential basis with a disabilities consultant if deemed necessary), and, with the student's written consent, may also consult with the student's clinician (if follow-up or clarification is needed). The Senior Director of Enrollment Management will engage in an interactive process with the student to determine what accommodations will be reasonable and/or appropriate. When several reasonable accommodations have been identified, the School will consider the student's preference in deciding among reasonable options, but ultimately, the School reserves the discretion to decide which accommodation to grant as among several reasonable options for accommodation.

GRANT OF ACCOMMODATION; CONFIDENTIALITY; PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING:

Student requests under this Policy for reasonable accommodations at Meadville Lombard involve the following process: (1) submission of such a request, with documentation, to the Director of Enrollment Management as soon as practicable once a student decides to make such a request; (2) evaluation of the request and related clinical documentation, which may include follow-up with the clinician; (3) an interactive process between the school and student; and (4) a determination as to whether (and which) reasonable accommodation(s) will be granted, which decision is made by the school and communicated to the student and to faculty or staff members who need to know. The evaluation of the request for accommodations may be shared within Meadville Lombard faculty and/or staff as deemed appropriate to make a determination, but information about the student's medical or mental condition and related documentation will only be shared on a strict "need to know" basis, and medical information and documentation will be maintained as confidential consistent with Meadville Lombard policy and applicable law.

When reasonable accommodations are granted, the student will work with the Director of Enrollment Management and the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs to inform individual faculty members and to implement reasonable accommodations.

If a student is dissatisfied with the resolution of an accommodation request or believes they have experienced discrimination on the basis of disability, a grievance may be filed with the Section 504 Coordinator.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Responsibilities of Community Members:

MLTS is an academic community whose most fundamental purpose is the pursuit of knowledge. High principles of academic integrity are essential to the function and continued growth of the community. Students and faculty are responsible for adhering to the principles of the Academic Integrity Policy and MLTS will not tolerate any abuse of its stipulations. Students who engage in any of the prohibited

actions below may be subject to charges under this Academic Integrity Policy. Those who violate these standards should expect to be sanctioned up to and including dismissal from MLTS.

Every member of the MLTS academic community is responsible for upholding the professional and ethical standards set forth in this Policy. Community members are expected to promptly report to the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry any situations or circumstances they believe constitute violations of this Academic Integrity Policy. If a student is unsure whether their actions might constitute a violation of academic integrity, they have the responsibility to consult with the instructor in advance about any ambiguity.

VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

PENALTIES

Breaches of these rules shall be handled according to the procedures outlined in the Student Handbook under the section on Satisfactory Academic Progress. If the faculty, in consultation with the VP of Academic and Student Affairs, concludes that the violation of this policy requires action beyond the scope of the individual faculty member in whose class the violation occurred, the penalty for the student will typically be up to a one year's suspension or full dismissal from the school. Students suspended or dismissed for violations of the Academic Integrity Policy may request that Meadville Lombard reconsider its action by submitting, in writing, an appeal to the school's President explaining any extenuating circumstances previously unavailable, which would warrant a change in the academic action. The student's written request for reconsideration must be received by the President within seven (7) days of the student's notification of suspension or dismissal. The President will review the written appeal and the supporting information of the previous decision. The decision of the President is final.

STUDENT'S DEFENSE

The only adequate defense for a student accused of an academic integrity violation is that the work in question does not, in fact, constitute a violation. Neither the defense that the student was ignorant of the regulations concerning academic violations nor the defense that the student was "under pressure at the time the violation was committed" is considered an adequate defense.

SERIOUSNESS OF THE OFFENSE

Academic infractions are always considered a serious matter, but will be considered especially serious if:

- The student has submitted a paper from another person or agency.
- The student has, on record, a previous conviction for another serious violation.
- The infraction includes the theft of another student's work—even if the paper or assignment is returned after use or consulted without being removed from the other student's physical location, a public location, or from an electronic online location such as a website where work has been placed.

PROCESS

Ordinarily, violations of academic integrity are discovered by the faculty member who has the authority to confront a student, assess the gravity of the instance, and determine the academic consequences within the course in question, up to and including the assignment of a failing grade. The faculty member must report all violations of academic integrity to the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry, providing documentation of the alleged violation and a description of the measures taken by the faculty member, including grade implications. The Senior Director of Contextual Ministry will keep the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs informed in a timely manner of the status of violations of academic integrity.

PROHIBITED ACTIONS

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is using any source in work submitted for evaluation and grading without proper acknowledgment. Sources can be anything ranging from (but not limited to) published and unpublished works, books, articles, sermons, lectures, websites, videos, and even your own previously submitted papers. Plagiarism is an extremely serious offense toward the scholarly community, one that can result in an academic sanction. Ordinarily, instances of plagiarism are discovered by the faculty member who has the authority to confront a student, assess the gravity of the instance, and determine the academic consequences within the course in question, up to and including the assignment of a failing grade. The faculty member must also report all instances of plagiarism to the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry, providing the documentation of the alleged plagiarism and a description of the measures taken by the faculty member, including grade implications. General requirements for the proper acknowledgment of sources of academic work are as follows.

CHEATING

Cheating is the use or possession of inappropriate or prohibited materials, information, sources, or aids in any academic exercise. Cheating also includes submitting papers, research results or reports, analyses, and other textual or visual material and media as one's own work when others prepared them.

FALSE CITATION

False citation is deliberately attributing materials to an improper source or citing a source from which the material was not, in fact, derived.

FALSE SUBMISSION

False submission is claiming as one's own work done by someone else, with or without that person's knowledge. This includes submitting work using commercial paper services and/or AI.

FACILITATION OF DISHONESTY

Facilitation of dishonesty is giving assistance to acts of academic misconduct/dishonesty. This includes deliberately or carelessly allowing one's work to be used by other students without prior instructor approval or otherwise aiding others in committing violations of academic integrity.

UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS/ASSISTANCE/OBTAINING UNFAIR ADVANTAGE

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Forcing or gaining unauthorized access to property, resources, information, or materials (electronic or tangible) that belong to another person or MLTS
- Sharing login credentials to MLTS accounts with unauthorized users
- Unauthorized collaboration on assignments
- Keeping books or other resources from other students
- Deliberately impeding the academic progress of others

FALSIFICATION OF RECORDS AND OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Forging signatures
- Falsifying information on an official academic record
- Falsifying information on an official document such as a grade report, drop/add form, or other school documents
- Falsifying medical documentation that has a bearing on-campus access, the excuse of absences or missed assignments, or ADA accommodations

GENERATIVE AI/CHATGPT & ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Artificial Intelligence (AI), like all tools, has its strengths and weaknesses, and can be used for good and bad ends. It is totally acceptable to use AI-powered search tools or Generative AI as a reference assistant to do tasks such as summarizing large amounts of text or rewriting a run-on sentence. If, however, you wish to reproduce text, images, or other content generated by a GenAI app or tool in one of your assignments, you MUST cite it and explain to your instructor/reader how and why you used it. Such citations and explanations must meet Chicago Style requirements (see CMS 14.112 or [see the GenAI tab on the MLTS Citation Guide for specifics](#)). If you are unsure whether or not your intended use of Generative AI is acceptable or not, then you should discuss it with your instructor or consult a librarian at library@meadville.edu.

As a student at MLTS, any work that you submit—whether a paper, sermon, or even something as relatively informal as a discussion post—must be your own work. Just as you cannot plagiarize someone else's words or ideas, you may not use AI to compose writing—whether a full paper, a paragraph, or an original sentence—and submit it under your own name. Failure to cite content generated by AI is plagiarism and violates Meadville Lombard's Academic Integrity policy. If you are tempted to use a GenAI tool to write for you because you don't think you are a good writer, [schedule an appointment with the writing tutor instead](#)! If you are tempted to use a GenAI tool to write for you to meet an

assignment deadline, talk to your instructor instead! They will prefer receiving a late assignment that you actually wrote as opposed to an on-time submission written by ChatGPT.

AI, as of now, is also an imperfect research tool. Apps like ChatGPT only have access to publicly available content, and therefore not to research that is only available behind password-protected eJournal databases. Most GenAI tools do not show their sources and cannot critically evaluate the quality of sources or authors. Therefore, GenAI is not a substitute for real critical research. If you need help with your research, you are encouraged to email a librarian (library@meadville.edu) for help!

CITATION PRACTICES

To avoid plagiarizing, you must properly acknowledge your sources through citations. Whenever you quote specific words or phrases, paraphrase an author's original idea, or refer to someone's original work—whether that be research data, a creative work of art, a social media post, etc.—you must properly acknowledge from whom and where those words, ideas, data, facts, etc. came from through a citation. This applies to any work you submit or publish as a student, whether it be a thesis, a course paper, or even a relatively informal discussion post. The house citation and formatting style at MLTS is Chicago Style, as outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style* (CMS) and the abbreviated version, Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (hereafter referred to as Turabian). You are required to cite and format your assignments in Chicago Style. You may only use another academic citation and formatting style, such as APA or MLA, with the prior approval of your instructor.

Detailed below are the most salient issues to be aware of when citing resources. For more guidance on when and how to cite a resource, including templates for how to format your Chicago Style citations properly, please refer to the library's Citation Guide at <https://library.meadville.edu/citations>.

QUOTATIONS

Regardless of length, each quotation must be placed in quotation marks or clearly indented beyond the regular margin. Each quotation must be accompanied, within the text or in a footnote, by a precise indication of the source following CMS guidelines. Any sentence or phrase that is not the original work of the student must be acknowledged.

PARAPHRASING

Any paraphrased or summarized material must also be specifically cited in a footnote or in the text, and the source must be acknowledged following CMS guidelines. A thorough rewording or rearrangement of an author's text does not relieve one of this responsibility. Occasionally, students maintain that they have read a source long before writing a paper and have unwittingly duplicated some of its phrases or ideas. This is not a valid excuse. The student is responsible for taking adequate notes so that the use of phrasing may be acknowledged.

BORROWED IDEAS AND FACTS

Any ideas or facts that are borrowed should be specifically acknowledged in a footnote or in the text, even if the idea or fact has been further elaborated by the student. This includes but is not limited to ideas or facts that you have read, heard in a lecture, or seen in a video. Occasionally, a student preparing an essay has consulted an essay or body of notes on a similar subject by another student. If the student has done so, they must state the fact and clearly indicate the nature and extent of their obligation. The name and class of the author of an essay or notes that are consulted should be given, and the student should be prepared to show the work consulted to the instructor, if requested to do so. Some ideas, facts, formulas, and other kinds of information that are widely known and considered to be in the “public domain” of common knowledge do not always require citation. The criteria for common knowledge vary among disciplines; students in doubt should consult a faculty member. For more in-depth information on when it is necessary to cite a source and how to go about properly citing a source in Chicago Style, please refer to the Library’s Citation Guide (<https://library.meadville.edu/citations>) or else ask a librarian for help.

SELF-PLAGIARISM AND MULTIPLE SUBMISSIONS

If you reproduce your own original phrases, findings, or ideas from an earlier submitted final paper, presentation, or published work into a new paper or presentation, you must cite it according to CMS guidelines. Failure to do so is considered self-plagiarism. Under certain conditions, and with the instructors’ permission, the student may be permitted to rewrite an earlier work or to satisfy two academic requirements by producing a single piece of work more extensive than that which would satisfy either requirement on its own. Failure to gain prior permission from the instructors constitutes a breach of academic integrity.

GRADUATION

Degrees are regularly awarded at the May Commencement Ceremony. Students planning to graduate must file an Intent to Graduate Form, which is distributed by the Registrar during the year that they intend to complete their degree program. All books must be returned to the Meadville Lombard Library, and all debts owed to the school — including Graduation and Commencement fees — must be paid on time according to the timeline laid out in the Academic Calendar, typically, three (3) weeks prior to Commencement. Until these responsibilities have been completed, a degree will not be awarded, and the school may prohibit participation in Commencement activities.

Students who are prospective graduates will be contacted in February with further details for the Commencement Ceremony, including times and locations of all Commencement activities, procedures for renting and/or purchasing regalia, and distribution of invitations. Graduation fees are paid by all students regardless of whether they participate in the commencement ceremony.

Questions regarding Graduation should be directed to the Registrar.

UU MINISTERIAL FELLOWSHIP

UU MINISTERIAL FELLOWSHIP PROCESS

There are three stages within the UU Ministerial Fellowship: applicant, aspirant, and candidate status. People who contact the Ministerial Credentialing Office are considered in applicant status. Applicants who successfully complete the required paperwork gain aspirant status. Aspirants who complete their career assessment, have completed at least one year of theological school, and have completed a field education or CPE experience may be eligible to receive candidate status.¹

Aspirant status provides support from the Ministerial Credentialing Office and opens membership to the UU Ministers Association. The designation of candidate status and completion of additional requirements allow a candidate to request an interview with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

Meadville Lombard's policy for course enrollment differs in timing from the UUA. In order to be approved to begin an internship and enroll in the Vocational Studies Signature Course, a student must have completed Clinical Pastoral Education and a Career Assessment.

CAREER ASSESSMENT

The Career Assessment is a component of the UUA fellowshiping process. The Career Assessment Report is an important resource to support students' formational growth and to guide them towards potential CPE and Internship Learning goals.

The school cannot legally require that the student share the full results of the Career Assessment; we do require the student to provide confirmation that the assessment has been completed. Students are, however, strongly urged to do so for the reasons stated above. Students must share the results with the Office of Ministerial Credentialing, however, in order to attain candidate status. The results of the Career Assessment may be shared with the Registrar or Senior Director of Contextual Ministry for addition to the student's confidential record.

FINANCIAL AID POLICIES

Students enrolled in degree programs at Meadville Lombard Theological School may be eligible for Federal Student Aid and/or institutional aid (including scholarships and tuition-reduction awards).

¹ Requirements for Ministerial Fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association, August 2017
https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/requirements_mfc.pdf

All Financial Aid forms can be found on our website at <https://meadville.edu/admission-financial-aid/financial-aid/>

FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FSA)

Students who are matriculated into a degree program at Meadville Lombard are eligible to apply for Federal Student Aid if they meet the basic eligibility requirements, are enrolled at least half-time, and maintain satisfactory academic progress.

The primary form of FSA available at Meadville Lombard is Federal Direct Loans. The U.S. Department of Education (rather than a bank or other financial institution) offers Direct Loans at low interest rates to help students pay for their education. Additional information on Federal Direct Loans is available on the Department of Education's website at <https://studentaid.gov>.

While loans are available to students who meet the requirements, using them can be a burden for graduates as they pursue careers. Many of our students receive institutional aid in the form of scholarships and/or tuition reduction grants, and many receive assistance from organizations dedicated to helping students manage their debt load, such as the Unitarian Universalist Association. Meadville Lombard welcomes and encourages students to seek outside scholarships, grants, and other financial assistance to help them pay for their education.

TYPES OF FEDERAL STUDENT AID

There are two types of Federal Student Aid available to graduate students at Meadville Lombard. Both are Federal Direct Loans: Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loans and Federal Direct Graduate PLUS Loans.

FEDERAL DIRECT UNSUBSIDIZED STAFFORD LOANS

A Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan is a federally guaranteed loan available to graduate students; there is no requirement to demonstrate financial need. Most MDiv students are eligible to borrow up to \$50,000 per academic year. Most DMin & MAR students are eligible to borrow up to \$20,500 per academic year. You are responsible for paying the interest on a Direct Unsubsidized Loan during all periods. However, if you choose not to pay the interest while you are in school and during grace periods and deferment or forbearance periods, your interest will accrue (accumulate) and be capitalized (that is, your interest will be added to the principal amount of your loan). For more information visit: <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/loans/subsidized-unsubsidized>

FEDERAL DIRECT GRADUATE PLUS LOANS

Important: Graduate PLUS Loans are no longer being offered to new students. If you are unsure if you are eligible to continue using the Graduate PLUS Loan, please reach out to the Financial Aid Office. A Federal Direct Graduate PLUS loan is a federally guaranteed loan available to graduate students; this loan is based on financial need. The maximum PLUS loan amount a student can borrow is the cost of

attendance minus any other financial assistance you receive. Because graduate PLUS loan limits vary from student to student, please contact Ashley Senesac, Financial Aid & Student Service Administrator, to determine your eligibility should you desire funds in addition to your Unsubsidized Loan amount. To receive a grad PLUS loan, you must be a graduate or professional student enrolled at least half-time at an eligible school in a program leading to a graduate or professional degree or certificate; not have an adverse credit history (unless you meet certain additional eligibility requirements); and meet the general eligibility requirements for federal student aid. For more information visit:

<https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/loans/plus/grad>

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

To apply for a Federal Direct Stafford Loan, complete the four steps below:

Step 1. Complete the FAFSA Online

If you are planning to receive student loans, you must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the current Academic Year. You can complete the FAFSA by visiting the Federal Student Aid website at <https://studentaid.gov>. Through the Federal Student Aid website, you should also be able to check whether you have already completed a FAFSA for the current academic year. It may take up to 48 hours for Meadville Lombard to receive your FAFSA once you complete it. Please note, you must complete the FAFSA every year you wish to apply for and receive FSA funds.

Step 2. Complete Online Entrance Counseling

If this is your first year receiving a federal loan, please be sure to complete Entrance Counseling. Students who wish to receive an unsubsidized Stafford loan or graduate PLUS loan(s) under the Direct Loan Program must complete entrance counseling before funds can be distributed.

If you have not done so already, please go to <https://studentaid.gov> and click the “In School” Tab then click “Complete Loan Entrance Counseling” and follow the instructions.

Please note, you only have to do this once. Generally speaking, if you have already completed Entrance Counseling at MLTS in a prior year, you do not have to redo entrance counseling each year.

Step 3. Complete and Sign your Electronic Master Promissory Note (MPN)

If this is your first year receiving a federal loan, please be sure to complete a Master Promissory Note, or MPN. Students who wish to receive an unsubsidized Stafford loan under the Direct Loan Program must complete an MPN before funds can be distributed.

To complete an MPN for unsubsidized loans, please go to <https://studentaid.gov> and click the “In School” Tab. Click “Complete Loan Agreement (Master Promissory Note)” and follow the instructions for the appropriate loan.

If you have both an unsubsidized and a PLUS loan, you must complete an MPN for each type of loan. Please note, you only have to do this once for unsubsidized loans and once for PLUS loans. Generally speaking, if you have already completed an MPN at MLTS in a prior year, you do not have to complete a new MPN.

Step 4: Complete the Federal Direct Student Loan Request Form

After you have completed your FAFSA for the current academic year, please complete the Student Loan Request Form found at <https://www.meadville.edu/current-students/handbooks-policies-and-forms/financial-aid-forms/https://meadville.edu/admission-financial-aid/financial-aid/>. Please note, you must complete this form each academic year.

ADDITIONAL APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR GRADUATE PLUS LOANS

This step is only required if you wish to request a Graduate PLUS loan and are eligible. If you are ineligible or do not wish to request a PLUS loan, you can skip this step. If you intend to apply for a graduate PLUS loan, in addition to the requirements above, you must complete the PLUS loan application. Please go to <https://studentaid.gov> and click the “In School” Tab. Then click “Apply for a PLUS Loan for Graduate School” and follow the instructions. **Please note, you must complete a PLUS loan application each academic year you wish to receive a PLUS loan.**

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for Federal Student Aid at Meadville Lombard, a student must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen.
- Be enrolled at least half-time and be matriculated in a degree program.
- Not owe any refunds on a Pell Grant or other awards received, and not be in default on repayment on any type of student loan.

There may be additional requirements that apply to your situation. You can read more about FSA eligibility requirements at <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility>.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Recipients of Federal Student Aid funds must be enrolled at least half-time to be eligible for [Direct Loan](#) Program funds; at Meadville Lombard, a student is considered half-time or higher if they are enrolled in at least 6 credits in the fall, 6 credits in the spring, and (optionally) 3 credits in the summer. Withdrawing from courses after student loan funds have been disbursed may result in all or a portion of those funds being returned to the Department of Education. This may result in a large balance due to the Meadville Lombard.

Coursework must be part of your degree program to be eligible for federal student aid. Courses taken outside or beyond the required courses for your degree are not eligible for federal student aid and therefore do not count towards your enrollment requirement.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) AND FEDERAL STUDENT AID

Recipients of Federal Student Aid funds must meet the standards of [Satisfactory Academic Progress \(SAP\)](#) as outlined in the SAP section of this handbook in order to establish and maintain eligibility for Federal Student Aid. The Financial Aid Warnings and Appeals Policy can be found in the Financial Aid Warnings and Appeals section below.

WITHDRAWAL AND FEDERAL STUDENT AID

Federal rules and regulations stipulate how schools must determine the amount of Title IV program assistance (FSA) that a student earns should they withdraw from school, whether an official or unofficial withdrawal. The Title IV programs that are covered by these guidelines are: Federal Pell Grants, Academic Competitiveness Grants, National SMART Grants, TEACH Grants, Stafford Loans, PLUS Loans, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOGs), and Federal Perkins Loans. When a student withdraws during their payment period, or period of enrollment, the amount of the Title IV program assistance that they have earned up to that point is determined by a specific formula. If the student receives (or if Meadville received on the student's behalf) more assistance than they earned, the excess funds must be returned by Meadville and/or the student (see "Return to Title IV" below). If they received less assistance than the amount that they earned, they may be able to receive those additional funds (see "Post-withdrawal Disbursement" below).

The amount of assistance that a student has earned is determined on a pro-rated basis. For example, if the student completes 30% of their payment period, or period of enrollment, they earn 30% of the assistance they were originally scheduled to receive. Once they have completed more than 60% of the payment period, or period of enrollment, they earn all the assistance that they were scheduled to receive for that period.

RETURN TO TITLE IV (R2T4)

If the student receives (or if Meadville received on the student's behalf) more FSA assistance than they earned, the excess funds must be returned by Meadville and/or the student or perform a "Return to Title IV" (R2T4). After calculating the amount of FSA funds, the student has earned, any FSA funds that were disbursed in excess of the earned amount must be returned by Meadville Lombard to the Department of Education. This may result in a balance owed by the student to Meadville Lombard. If the student received a refund check, they may be required to return all or a portion of those funds to Meadville Lombard.

RETURNING FUNDS

The amount to be returned to Meadville will be determined by the student's tuition and other education-related expenses, any other refunds they may have received for non-educational expenses, and funds that must be returned to the federal government.

The amount to be returned to the federal government will be calculated based on the date that the student officially withdrew from classes or, in the case of an unofficial withdrawal, the last date they were involved in an academically related activity. To determine the amount of aid the student earned up to the time of withdrawal, the Financial Aid Office will determine the percentage of the semester/award period that the student attended. The resulting percentage is then used, along with the student's institutional costs and total federal funds that they received (funds that were disbursed directly to their Meadville student account and/or refunded to them) or that they were eligible to receive, to determine the amount of aid that they are allowed to keep.

Any unearned Title IV aid must be returned to the federal government within 45 days of the date that determines the student's withdrawal. The Financial Aid Office will notify the student with instructions on how to proceed if Meadville Lombard or the student is required to return funds to the government.

Funds that are returned to the federal government are used to reduce the outstanding balances in individual federal programs. Financial aid returned by the student or Meadville must be returned in the following order:

1. Federal Unsubsidized Direct Loan
2. Federal Subsidized Direct Loan
3. Federal Direct Grad Plus

POST-WITHDRAWAL DISBURSEMENT

If a student does not receive all of the Federal Student Aid funds that they earned, they may receive a post-withdrawal disbursement. If their post-withdrawal includes federal loan funds, Meadville must obtain their permission before disbursing them. The student may choose to decline some or all of the loan funds so that they do not incur additional debt. The student's Financial Aid Offer letter serves as the notice of their loan eligibility. Meadville may automatically use all or a portion of their post-withdrawal disbursement of grant funds for tuition and/or fees. There may be some Title IV funds that they were scheduled to receive that cannot be disbursed to the student once they withdraw because of other eligibility requirements.

If a student receives (or Meadville received on their behalf) excess Title IV program funds that must be returned, Meadville must return a portion of the excess, which is equal to the lesser of: the student's institutional charges multiplied by the unearned percentage of their funds, or the entire amount of the excess funds.

If Meadville is not required to return all of the excess funds, the student must return the remaining amount. Any loan funds that they must return, the student repays in accordance with the terms of the

promissory note. The student makes scheduled payments to the holder of the loan over a period of time.

The Requirements for the Title IV program funds when a student withdraws are separate from any refund policy that Meadville may have. Therefore, the student may still owe funds to Meadville to cover unpaid institutional charges. Meadville may also charge the student for any Title IV program funds that they are required to return. If the student needs information about Meadville's refund or withdrawal policies, or if they need more information about post-withdrawal policies, disbursements, and obligations, contact the Senior Director of Enrollment Management & Financial Aid.

RETAKING A CLASS

If a student retakes a class that was not completed successfully, the course will count toward their enrollment status in the new semester; Federal Student Aid may be used for the first retake of a course. However, any third attempt of a previously uncompleted course will not be funded by federal student aid.

EXIT COUNSELING

Federal regulations require that all student loan borrowers must have an exit interview/financial counseling during their final semester at Meadville Lombard. Students may access and complete the Financial Counseling form on the FAFSA website or at <https://studentaid.gov/exit-counseling/>. This will satisfy all requirements for financial counseling and give the borrower up to date information on their student loan balances. This is the quickest and easiest way to satisfy the exit counseling requirement. If a student does not complete the Exit Counseling, a hold will be placed on their Populi record. The hold will not allow the student to receive transcripts or to check grades.

REPAYMENT

Once you graduate, drop below half-time enrollment, or leave school, your federal student loan(s) go(es) into repayment. In most cases, however, you have a [six-month grace period](#) before you are required to start making regular payments. PLUS loans do not have a grace period; but if you received a PLUS loan as a graduate or professional student, you'll automatically get a six-month deferment after you graduate, leave school, or drop below half-time enrollment. For more information visit: <https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/repayment>.

INSTITUTIONAL AID

Questions or concerns related to Institutional Aid should be directed to the [Financial Aid Office](#).

TYPES OF INSTITUTIONAL AID

Meadville Lombard Theological School is pleased to be able to offer students institutional aid in the form of named scholarships and tuition reduction awards. All Institutional aid is subject to both student eligibility and availability of funds.

NAMED SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year, Meadville Lombard offers at least one full-tuition, merit-based scholarship and a number of smaller, merit-based scholarships to full-time students enrolled in a Master's degree program. Named scholarships are subject to eligibility and availability.

Full-tuition scholarships provide students with 100% tuition assistance for the length of their program as long as the student remains full-time, maintains good academic standing, and completes their program as outlined in their financial aid offer letter. Priority consideration is given in the order in which applications are completed.

The following is a partial list of our full-tuition scholarships. Not all scholarships are available every year.

- The Hardy and Betty Sanders Scholarship for Excellence
- The Stanley D. Christianson Family Endowed Scholarship for Excellence
- The Arnold and Julia Bradbury Endowed Scholarship for Excellence
- The Julia Bradbury Endowed Scholarship for Excellence
- The Ed and Betty Law Endowed Scholarship
- The Joseph and Marion Wertheim Endowed Scholarship for Excellence
- The Spencer and Susan Lavan Endowed Scholarship

TUITION REDUCTION AWARDS

Meadville Lombard is able to offer students need-based institutional aid in the form of tuition reduction grants. These grants offer a percentage reduction of tuition charges for the length of your degree program. To be eligible, students must be enrolled in the master's degree program full-time and demonstrate financial need. As with named scholarships, tuition reduction grants are subject to eligibility and availability.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Meadville Lombard uses a rolling application for institutional aid. Students who wish to be considered for Institutional Aid are encouraged to submit their application as soon as they are able.

To apply for institutional aid students should do the following:

1. Complete their [Application for Admission](#)

2. Complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) (US citizens and permanent residents only)
3. Complete the [Institutional Aid Application](#) found at <https://www.meadville.edu/current-students/handbooks-policies-and-forms/financial-aid-forms/>
<https://meadville.edu/admission-financial-aid/financial-aid/>
4. [Schedule a financial aid interview](#) with the Financial Aid Office after your application for admission and institutional aid application is complete.

All applications will be considered for aid once all of the above components are complete. For merit-based aid, consideration is based on the information you provide on your application for admission, the institutional aid application, and your financial aid interview. For need-based aid, consideration is based on the information you provide on your application for admission, the FAFSA, the institutional aid application, and your financial aid interview.

The application for aid may be completed before the student has received an official admissions decision. However, financial aid offers will not be made until a student has been accepted to a program at Meadville Lombard.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for institutional aid, students must have completed all of the components of the Institutional Aid Application Procedures. Students must also be accepted to a Meadville Lombard master's degree program.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Recipients of Institutional Aid must meet the enrollment requirements of their scholarship agreement letter. Students must be continuously enrolled in courses each fall and spring. Summer term coursework is optional. Any coursework completed in the summer will count toward the total required credits for the year. Unapproved leaves of absence will result in a loss of institutional aid. If a student fails to meet this requirement at any point, they may lose their Institutional Aid.

Non-tuition units of credit (CPE for all students) count toward the calculation of a course load.

Institutional Aid will be available only for courses registered and paid for through Meadville Lombard.

Institutional Aid is limited to the number of units of credit required to complete the student's degree program. Courses taken outside of or beyond the required number of credits for the student's degree program will not be eligible for institutional aid.

Institutional Aid will end once a student withdraws from the school (officially or unofficially), transfers to another school, or graduates.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) AND INSTITUTIONAL AID

Recipients of Institutional Aid funds must meet the standards of [Satisfactory Academic Progress \(SAP\)](#) in order to establish and maintain eligibility for Institutional Aid. [The Financial Aid Warnings and Appeals Policy](#) can be found in the next section.

WITHDRAWAL AND INSTITUTIONAL AID

If the student receives Institutional Aid from Meadville Lombard and then subsequently withdraws from the course or program for which the institutional aid was provided, they may be responsible for returning a pro-rata amount of that scholarship as calculated by their date of withdrawal.

RETAKING A CLASS

If a student retakes a class that was not completed successfully, the course will count toward their enrollment status in the new semester. However, institutional aid is not available for classes retaken because of an unsuccessful completion.

FINANCIAL AID WARNINGS AND APPEALS

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) will be reviewed at the conclusion of each term by the faculty. Should a student not meet Satisfactory Academic Progress, they will be subject to the guidelines set forth in the [Satisfactory Academic Performance Review](#) Policy.

FINANCIAL AID WARNING

If a student is placed on Academic Warning, they will also be placed on Financial Aid Warning. While on Financial Aid Warning a student will remain eligible for both Institutional Aid and Federal Student Aid.

If the student is able to meet SAP and be removed from Academic Warning in the following term, they will no longer be on Financial Aid Warning. If, however, they do not meet SAP in a term directly following a warning, they will no longer be eligible for Institutional Aid or Federal Student Aid.

At that time, the Registrar and Senior Director of Enrollment Management and Financial Aid will notify the student via email, at their Meadville mail account, of their ineligibility for further Institutional Aid or Federal Student Aid within one week of the conclusion of the grading period.

APPEALS

Students may appeal for reconsideration of Institutional Aid and/or Federal Student Aid eligibility by submitting a Letter of Appeal to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs. The Letter of Appeal must state the circumstances resulting in the student not meeting SAP. These reasons must be clear and critical, i.e.:

- The death of a relative
- An injury or illness of the student
- Extreme circumstances (flood, fire, etc.)

The Letter of Appeal must also address the change in circumstances that will allow a student to demonstrate Satisfactory Academic Progress by the end of the next term. The Letter of Appeal must be received by email or regular mail within two weeks of the notice of ineligibility.

The appeal will be reviewed by the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, the Faculty Advisor, and the Registrar. The student will be notified of the committee's decision within two (2) weeks of receipt of the Letter of Appeal.

If the appeal is not granted, the student will be ineligible for any further Institutional Aid and/or Federal Student Aid.

PROBATION

If the appeal is granted, the student will be put on Financial Aid Probation and will be deemed eligible for Institutional Aid and/or Federal Student Aid during the term. If the student does not meet SAP at the end of that term, they will be ineligible for any further Institutional Aid and/or Federal Student Aid.

A student whose Institutional Aid or Federal Student Aid eligibility has been reinstated under the terms of an academic plan is considered to be making satisfactory progress. A leave of absence is not sufficient grounds for a waiver of SAP.

SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL

A student who is suspended or dismissed is not eligible for Institutional Aid or Federal Student Aid. Any student who is suspended or dismissed forfeits their institutional aid.

COST OF ATTENDANCE (COA) AND NET PRICE CALCULATOR

Meadville Lombard publishes our annual Cost of Attendance (COA) calculation on our website at <https://www.meadville.edu/becoming-a-student/tuition-and-fees/cost-of-attendance/>.

The school also publishes a Net Price Calculator to assist students in estimating their institutional charges based on their particular course plans. The calculator can be found on our website at <https://www.meadville.edu/net-price-calculator/>.

VETERAN BENEFITS

Meadville Lombard participates in the GI Bill® and other education benefits available through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

VA students can direct all questions regarding veteran benefits to the School Certifying Official (SCO). Elena Jimenez, Registrar, is the SCO at Meadville Lombard.

VA students can submit applications online at <https://www.va.gov/education/how-to-apply/>. If students don't have access to apply online, they can call 1-888-442-4551 and ask that an application be mailed to them.

All VA students must file an application when they first start school before they can receive benefits. Students who have never received VA benefits must file an original application. More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government website at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>.

As of October 16, 2012, "GI Bill" is a federally registered trademark owned by VA.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

OUTSIDE SCHOLARSHIPS AND AID

Other scholarships and aid are also available to Meadville Lombard students including scholarships for Unitarian Universalist ministerial students, scholarships from the John Haynes Holmes Memorial Fellowship, and others. We also accept the vast majority of scholarships and grants that students receive from outside institutions. Fastweb and Cappex are great resources for identifying other forms of available aid.

Meadville Lombard is happy to provide any documentation the students may require from the school when applying for outside scholarships and grants.

EMERGENCY LOAN POLICY

Meadville Lombard Theological School recognizes that there may be times when unexpected financial emergencies may cause undue stress and hardship on our students. To assist those who encounter financial emergencies while enrolled, Meadville Lombard has made available a short-term emergency loan. Reasons such as rent payments, car payments, groceries or other normal bills that are part of the student's regular, monthly expenses are not considered emergencies.

Below is a list of requirements for receiving an emergency loan:

- The student must be enrolled in a Meadville Lombard degree program.
- A student may only apply once per semester.
- The student must complete and submit an emergency loan application to the Financial Aid & Student Services Administrator.
- The maximum amount for a short-term emergency loan may not exceed \$1,000 per semester.

- The short-term emergency loan will be charged to the student's Meadville Lombard account.
- The student is required to repay this zero-interest loan in full within 60 calendar days, or before the first day of the semester that follows the semester in which the emergency loan was received, whichever occurs first.
- No loan will be approved if the student:
 - a. Has an outstanding account with the school that will not be covered by the approved financial aid (i.e. grants, scholarships, or student loans).
 - b. Has written insufficient checks to the school.
 - c. Has defaulted on a previous short-term emergency loan.
- Additional emergency loan funds in a succeeding semester will be approved only if the loan for the preceding semester has been repaid.
- Title IV funds may be applied to any outstanding or defaulted short-term emergency loans on a student's Meadville Lombard account.

To request an emergency Loan students can complete the Emergency Loan Request Form found at <https://meadville.populiweb.com/router/forms/respond/27/3d9939780fa9fd05c9636617673914af>.

SAC HARDSHIP GRANTS

PURPOSE

Any student who meets the eligibility requirements stated below may apply for a SAC Hardship Grant. SAC Hardship Grants may be used for the same purposes as federal financial aid as specified in the Higher Education Act of 1965.

ELIGIBILITY

Any currently enrolled full- or part-time student who is registered for a minimum of one class may request a SAC hardship grant after the drop/add date of their first semester. Students who are the subject of disciplinary action by the Unitarian Universalist Association or the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association or any other professional or accrediting body, or who are under investigation for, or have been charged with, criminal child abuse, sexual assault, or any other violent crime, may not receive a SAC Hardship Grant during the pendency of the action determining their culpability in any illegal or prohibited act, or during the period of any imposed sanction.

AMOUNT

Students may request, and SAC may award, Hardship Grants of up to a maximum of one hundred fifty U.S. dollars (\$150.00) per student, per Fall and Spring terms. A student may not receive more than two Hardship Grants during any SAC Term. (The SAC Term is understood to begin at the installation of newly elected SAC officers and runs until the installation of the officers elected during the next election the following year.)

In its discretion, SAC may award any number of Hardship Grants per SAC Term.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Students may submit a request for a SAC Hardship Grant by email from their official Meadville email account to any SAC officer at their official Meadville email account, or by sending the request to SACofficers@meadville.edu. The names of the SAC officers and their individual email addresses may be found in each “This Week at Meadville” (a.k.a. the Bulletin). Requests submitted from or to non-Meadville accounts will not be considered.

The student should include the amount requested if the request is for less than the maximum amount. If no amount is specified, or if the amount requested is over the maximum, the request will be assumed to be for the maximum Hardship Grant amount.

If a Hardship Grant request is received by a SAC officer other than the Treasurer, that officer will forward the request to the Treasurer directly.

If a member of the Meadville Lombard faculty or staff believes that a student may benefit from a Hardship Grant, they should inform the student of the application process.

REVIEW PROCESS

Grant requests are considered confidential. The SAC Treasurer and SAC Co-Presidents will jointly review and decide Grant requests. In the event either a Co-President or Treasurer are making a Grant request, that person must recuse themselves from the decision-making process and another member of the SAC Executive Team will review and decide on the request in their place. In selecting a replacement for the review process, the other Co-President will be considered first, and if unavailable, the Secretary will participate in the review process.

Up to fifteen (15) Hardship Grants during any SAC Term may be approved by the Co-Presidents and Treasurer. Any additional requests received during the SAC Term must be reviewed by all available members of the SAC Executive Team. SAC Executive Team members reviewing a request may, with the prior consent of the applicant, consult with members of the Meadville-Lombard faculty or staff.

AWARD PROCESS

If a SAC Hardship Grant request is approved, the SAC Treasurer will send a payment request to the SAC student liaison staff person at Meadville. The student liaison will process the paperwork, send the payment directly to the student and notify the SAC Treasurer of the date payment was issued. The SAC Treasurer will contact the student to confirm receipt of the payment.

The SAC Treasurer is responsible for keeping records of all Hardship Grant disbursements made during their term of office. At the conclusion of the SAC Term and as part of the transition process, the outgoing Treasurer will give to the incoming SAC Co-Presidents and Treasurer a report on the Hardship Grant requests and disbursements during the outgoing Treasurer’s term of office.

APPEAL PROCESS

In the event the applicant would like to appeal an unfavorable decision, they should make an appeal request to a Covenant Representative. The appeal request must explain, in detail, why the SAC decision should be overturned. Any request for an appeal must be made using Meadville mail accounts. The names of the Covenant Representatives and their individual email addresses may be found in each “This Week at Meadville” and on the school website at <https://www.meadville.edu>. Decisions of the Covenant Representatives are final.

RIGHT OF MODIFICATION

In its sole discretion, SAC may at any time review and change any aspect of this policy and its procedures.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

The Meadville Lombard Library and Archives is designed to support you in your coursework, formation, and research. Both in Chicago and back home, you will have full access to library and archival resources and services. Nearly all physical library material can be mailed to you anywhere in the United States. We also have extensive digital resources, including ebooks, journal databases, reference material and digital archives that are accessible online anywhere in the world.

LIBRARY

The **Wiggin Library** is the onsite library of Meadville Lombard. Specializing in Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism, Wiggin Library has over 35,000 print books and over 50,000 ebooks. This collection is available to faculty, students, and community members. Most of the books in our collection can be circulated through the mail. A core Wiggin Library service is course reserves. We make accessible at least one copy, often two copies, of every assigned book for a course. When possible, we also acquire access to the ebook versions of the assigned readings.

I-Share Libraries contain over 35 million print books from academic and theological libraries across Illinois. Current Meadville Lombard faculty and students are eligible to borrow I-Share books. We circulate I-Share books to you through the mail or you can pick up and return your library books at the Wiggin Library or at any I-Share library in Illinois.

Digital resources are an important part of the library services available to you. In addition to ebooks, the library provides access to academic journal databases, digital reference material, biblical research tools, and a curated list of over 400 specialized digital resources.

ARCHIVES

At Meadville Lombard, archiving is a form of justice making work. From preservation to digitization, we work to make the richness and diversity of Unitarian Universalism's history freely and easily

available to anyone who seeks it. We have been collecting history for over 175 years and hold material from students and scholars, laity and ministers, and congregations and organizations around the world. As the only exclusively UU archive, we take seriously the trust our community has placed in us to preserve our shared history.

We have over 400 physical and digital archival collections, with topics ranging from Puritanism to Paganism and everything in between. Our emphasis is liberal religion in the west, 20th century Unitarian Universalism, and communities underserved and excluded by traditional archives. We are particularly proud of our UUA Congregational Records, which tell the story of every Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist congregation from the 1920s to the 1990s.

STUDENT PRIVILEGES

Student privileges include access to library staff support, the Wiggin Library (including special material collections), I-Share Libraries, access to OCLC Interlibrary Loan for articles, and all digital resources. In addition, students can receive borrowing privileges from the University of Chicago and any ACTS Library. Students submit a Student Library Account Request form during New Student Orientation. Students will use their Populi login credentials to sign into all online resources. If desired, students must request University of Chicago and ACTS accounts.

Degree Seeking Students maintain their library privileges until graduation. Non-degree Seeking Students (such as students working towards a certificate, auditors, students from other schools, and students-at-large) maintain their privileges for one year from the beginning of their most recent class. Students who are on an approved Leave of Absence will have limited library privileges during that time, provided they are not otherwise disqualified for library privileges because of overdue or lost books. Limited library privileges for students who are on an approved Leave of Absence include a maximum of 3 books checked out at a time from the Wiggin Library. Students on approved Leave of Absence will not have access to I-Share nor to any digital library resources that are limited to active students (databases, digital reference material, etc.). Their library account will be reinstated as a student account with full library privileges if/when students register for courses to continue their studies.

Students who are inactive without an approved Leave of Absence or students who are on Suspension will lose all library privileges until they return to active student status or enter an approved Leave of Absence. Any outstanding fees or account blocks will prevent a student from returning to active status.

FEES AND ACCOUNT BLOCKS

Meadville Lombard Library and Archives does not charge late fees to students. However, students are responsible for damaged and lost books. Students will be billed for the replacement cost of lost or damaged material. Patrons are not responsible for books the library has shipped to them that are lost in the mail, but are responsible for the books they return to Meadville Lombard through the mail.

Students who accrue fines or fees at I-Share libraries are responsible for resolving those fines or fees. Fines and fees at other libraries are administered according to those libraries' policies and not Meadville

Lombard's policies. Patrons are subject to fines and fees for lost or damaged materials from I-Share libraries – I-Share libraries do not charge late fees. Meadville Lombard library staff are not able to intercede on a patron's behalf and cannot accept payment for charges at another library. Patrons must contact the library at which they have outstanding charges for more information about the fees and to find out how to pay the charges.

All patrons with an outstanding balance and/or a book that is 21 days overdue will be blocked from checking out additional items until all books are returned and all fees paid. This block applies to both Wiggin Library and I-Share materials. In addition, Meadville Lombard students with an outstanding balance will be reported to the Business Office and the Registrar. Students will be restricted from graduating and could be restricted from registering for classes until all outstanding balances and returned books are cleared for all Wiggin Library and I-Share material.

Both degree and non-degree seeking students will have a block placed on their library account if a hold is placed on their student account by the Office of Registrar, effective at the end of the term in which the hold is placed or upon withdrawal from all classes. Students with an account hold will be able to return books, but will be unable to check out books, renew books, or use digital resources.

These policies are subject to change. Please see the "Access Policy" available on the library website for the most up to date information.

More Information about using library resources and how to contact library staff can be found at <https://www.meadville.edu/library-and-archives/>

A list of the complete policies of the Meadville Lombard Library and Archives can be found at <https://library.meadville.edu/policies>

LIGHT @ MEADVILLE LOMBARD THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

The *Leadership Institute for Growth, Healing, and Transformation* (LIGHT) is a liberal religious think/act tank that educates and forms values-driven individuals as well as lay and ordained religious leaders for mission. LIGHT offers non-credit bearing workshops, courses, and certificates in such topics as social, economic, and environmental justice; spirituality and contemplation; the arts of ministry; and leadership development. Programs may be fee-based, sliding scale, or offered freely. Students enrolled in degree-bearing programs are invited to participate in co-curricular programming offered by LIGHT most germane to their calling and intellectual and spiritual development.

Lifelong learners are non-degree students who participate in non-credit educational opportunities ranging from a single seminar to certificate programs in specific areas of interest. Lifelong learners should refer to the lifelong learning handbook for details regarding programming, fees, library access, and community standards. Financial aid is not available. Lifelong learners who would like to pursue credit-bearing courses or a full graduate degree program are invited to be in touch with the Meadville Lombard Office of Admissions.

APPENDICES

- [Appendix 1: MDiv Degree Completion Worksheet](#)
- [Appendix 2: MAR Degree Completion Worksheet](#)
- [Appendix 3: DMin Degree Completion Worksheet](#)

DEGREE COMPLETION WORKSHEETS

Using the worksheets on the following pages, students can track their progress as they work through their respective degree programs. When saved electronically, the sheets will automatically tally the credits earned toward degree completion. Using this sheet in consultation with your Academic Advisor is highly recommended.

Overall M.Div Degree Completion Worksheet

Enter the number of credits completed in the "Completed" Column to automatically calculate your progress.

Required Courses (48 credits)			Contextual Ministry (12-18 credits)			
Title	Credits	Completed	Area of Study	Course Selected	Credits	Completed
Ministry in Context (Fall and Spring)	3		Clinical Pastoral Education		6	
Grounding: Theology and Social Praxis	3					
Introduction to Pastoral Ministry	3		Required Internship (Choose Rooted or Flexible)			
Constructive Theology	3		Rooted		12	
Topics in Worship and Liturgy	3		Flexible		6	
Preaching as if You Mean It	3					
Vocational Studies 1: Formation	3		Contextual Ministry Credits Total			12 or 18
Vocational Studies 2: Communities	3					
Faith Formation in a Changing World	3		Electives (21 credits for Rooted Program; 27 credits for Flexible)			
Healthy Boundaries for Leaders	3		General Elective 1		3	
Global Religions	3		General Elective 2		3	
Leadership Studies 1: Formation	3		General Elective 3		3	
Leadership Studies 2: Administration	3		General Elective 4		3	
New Testament	3		General Elective 5		3	
History of Global Christianity	3		General Elective 6		3	
Hebrew Scripture	3		General Elective 7		3	
Intro to Ethics: Themes and Topics	3		General Elective 8		3	
Total Credits	51		General Elective 9		3	
			Total Elective Credits			21 or 27
			Program Total			90

In order to be eligible for Federal Aid, the student must be enrolled in a degree program at least half-time.

Designations:

Fall and Spring: Full Time = 12 credits; Part Time = 6 credits

Summer (Optional): Full Time = 6 credits; Part Time = 3 credits

Elective Courses that are required for MFC Credentialing (the following classes are not required to complete the degree program but are required for those seeking credentialing):

Course Name	Satisfies
Tools for Parish and Nonprofit Administration	General Elective
Unitarian Universalist History and Polity	General Elective

Overall MAR Degree Completion Worksheet

	Credits	Courses Selected	Completed
Required Courses			
Healthy Boundaries for Leaders	3		
Constructive Theology	3		
Global Religions	3		
Introduction to Ethics	3		
Concentration Courses			
Concentration Elective 1	3		
Concentration Elective 2	3		
Concentration Elective 3	3		
Free Electives			
Free Elective 1	3		
Free Elective 2	3		
Free Elective 3	3		
Thesis or Project	6		
Total Credits	36		

All students must complete a Concentration in either Religious Education or Theology/Ethics.

Enter the number of credits completed in the "Completed" Column to automatically calculate your progress.

In order to be eligible for Federal Aid, the student must be enrolled in a degree program at least half-time.

To meet these requirements, they must be enrolled as follows:

Designations:

Fall and Spring: Full Time = 12 credits; Part Time = 6 credits

Summer (Optional): Full Time = 6 credits; Part Time = 3 credits

DMIN Degree Completion Worksheet

Course	Credits	Completed
Advanced Methods in Leadership & Ministry	3	
Spirituality for Social Change	3	
Theories of Liberation	3	
Social Justice Leadership	3	
Political Theology & Social Ethics	3	
Research Methods & Ethics	3	
Leadership & Ministry Research Colloquy	3	
Supervised Thesis Research I	3	
Supervised Thesis Research II	3	
Elective [insert course name/number/institution]	3	
Total Credits	30	

Enter the number of credits completed in the "Completed" Column to automatically calculate your progress.