



# STUDENT HANDBOOK

## 2016-2017

*Preparing students to serve Christ and His church through biblical, experiential, and practical ministry*

*(updated 08/2016)*

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## *STUDENT HANDBOOK*

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Dear PRTS student,

We are grateful you have chosen to become part of our seminary community. We are enriched by each student the Lord sends to us and count it a privilege to be your partners in your preparation for the Lord's calling in your life.

This handbook, along with the other documents you receive at orientation, is meant to assist you during your time with us. The policies and procedures outlined are given to protect the honor of our Lord, the integrity of our seminary, and your wellbeing.

May God bless you with much success and joy during this time of preparation.

PRTS faculty and staff

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## General Seminary Policies

Infractions of any of the regulations in this handbook are to be addressed by any of the following means, depending on the severity of the infraction: a warning, academic probation, suspension (either temporary or indefinite), or dismissal. If you have questions or concerns about any policies in this handbook, please feel free to speak with any faculty member or the registrar for clarification.

### *Local, State, and Federal Law*

All members of the seminary community are expected to act in accordance with local, state, and federal laws at all times, whether on or off campus. Breaches of such laws may also entail disciplinary action by the seminary.

### *Severe Weather Policy*

In the case of severe weather warnings or large snowfall, the faculty or administrative staff will determine whether the seminary will remain open. If the weather is questionable, students should either call the seminary at 977-0599, or check the website for announcements regarding cancellations. If the school remains open, individual classes may be canceled at the discretion of the instructor, who will notify the students of the cancellation. *In the event of the cancelation of all classes, a notice will be placed on the PRTS website and an e-mail notice will be sent to students, faculty, and staff indicating that all classes are cancelled.* If classes are being held, and you are hindered from coming because of weather circumstances, you must notify the registrar (ext. 139) or the front desk (ext. 135) prior to class.

### *Thunderstorm Watches and Warnings*

A thunderstorm watch will not affect regularly scheduled classes. If a thunderstorm warning is issued by 7:00 AM, however, classes will be cancelled for that day until the warning is withdrawn. Local radio stations such as WFUR, WCSG will announce weather warnings.

### *Tornado Watches and Warnings*

If a tornado watch or warning is issued an hour before classes start, the seminary will close until the watch or warning has cleared. If a tornado watch is issued during classes, all classes will immediately stop. Students, faculty, and staff may either go home or stay in the building as the weather is monitored. If a tornado warning is issued during classes, all classes will immediately stop; all students, staff, and faculty will take shelter in the designated tornado shelter areas until the warning is cleared. *Tornado shelter areas are as follows: Second-story occupants will gather in the east stairwell; lower-level occupants will gather in the south stairwell or the basement.*

If a travel advisory regarding winter driving conditions is issued, PRTS will abide by the advisory and announce closings on the website and via e-mail.

### *Tobacco-Free & Alcohol-Free Environment*

The seminary is a smoke-free and alcohol-free environment. Students or guests of the seminary may not smoke or drink on the seminary premises.

### *Food in Class*

Food should not be consumed during class time, unless the instructor specifically allows for it (for instance, in the rare instance when one's class schedule would not allow for a separate lunch hour). Drinks may be brought into class, provided they are consumed quietly and care is taken that no mess is made or left behind.

Food should be consumed outside of the building, or in the lunch room. When eating in the building, students should take special care to avoid cooking or warming food with strong odors, or leaving behind any mess. It is expected that everyone clean up after him/herself, placing dirty dishes in the dishwasher.

### *Notices and Signs*

Permission must be obtained from seminary staff or faculty to display any notices or signs on or around seminary facilities.

## **Academic Policies**

### *Class Attendance*

Each student is expected, barring lawful reasons, to attend every class for which he or she is registered.

### *Excused Absences*

Absences caused by illness or other justifiable causes will be permitted to a limited extent; a student should, however, notify the professor as early as possible and request an excused absence.

### *Unexcused Absences*

Students should not accrue more unexcused absences than the number of course credit hours. Should absences endanger the student's performance in class, the instructor will counsel the student. Further absences will normally result in either the reduction of the course grade or expulsion from the course. Unexcused absences may also result in the student being placed on academic probation.

### *Recorded Lectures*

At times lectures are recorded for the seminary's distance learning program. In exceptional circumstances a student may make up a missed class by way of recorded classes. Students should submit their request to make up a missed class in this way at least 24 hours before the lecture begins. The first such request may be granted at the discretion of the lecturer. Subsequent requests and long-term access requests will be considered by the entire faculty. Students taking classes that are recorded should exercise caution to not produce background sound interference that will affect the recording. Students may not broadcast the lectures via the internet without the express permission of the lecturer.

### *Use of Internet During Class*

Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary is committed to fostering a spirit of godly learning in the classroom, where the student's active participation is valued, encouraged, and expected. PRTS desires students will grow in the ability to focus attentively on the intellectual or pastoral task at hand, both for the sake of effective learning and to establish patterns for faithful ministry. In light of this, PRTS does not allow student use of the internet on computers, smart phones, or other connective devices during class meetings. Make note to turn ringer off in class. The only exception is upon a professor's invitation to students to go online for the sake of classroom process. This expectation is not meant to disparage the value of electronic media in the life of the church, or in promoting evangelization, but to affirm the importance of diligence in the classroom for the sake of wise and respectful ministerial formation. Faculty members and the dean of students are asked to challenge students to attend to this standard and to consider seriously the quality of their attention and careful use of classroom time and instruction.

### *Drop-Add Policy*

A student is able to drop or add a course within an established "grace" period as set in the academic calendar. After the drop/add deadline, a student may no longer enroll in a course. If a student drops a course within this period, the dropped course does not appear on the student's transcript. The drop/add deadlines are as follows:

- for fall, winter, spring, and summer semesters – 7 days after the start of each semester. These deadlines will be noted in the academic calendar.
- for all independent studies – 7 days after enrollment date.
- for all modular courses – first day of course (a student adding a modular class must attend the first day of that class)

The student should be aware of the tuition refund concerning dropped/ withdrawn courses as established in the following section.

### *Tuition Refund for Dropped/Withdrawn Courses*

A student dropping or withdrawing from an individual course may receive the following refund on tuition:

#### *For traditional semester-length courses:*

- Within two weeks, an 80% refund is granted
- Within four weeks, a 60% refund is granted
- Within six weeks, a 50% refund is granted
- After six weeks, no refund is granted.

#### *For modular or intensive courses:*

- 4 weeks or more prior to the first day, an 80% refund is granted
- 3 weeks or more prior to the first day, a 60% refund is granted
- 2 weeks or more prior to the first day, a 50% refund is granted
- Within two weeks of the first day, no refund is granted.

Notification of a dropped or withdrawn course should be provided by submitting a written statement to this effect (email is fine) to the seminary registrar; consent of the academic dean is also required. Withdrawal under any other circumstance or withdrawal after the withdrawal deadline will result in a failing grade "F" for the course. Exceptions will apply only if approved by the academic dean or registrar.

For scholarship students, the above drop/add policy applies. For students in the Veteran program, the refund percentage will be prorated according to the specifications given in the following section.

### *Tuition Refund for VA Students*

Students who receive VA benefits and withdraw from an enrolled course will be refunded the unused portion of the tuition within thirty days after a signed written notice of withdrawal has been submitted to the registrar's office. The refund formula is as follows: *the full tuition minus the number of sessions in class divided by the number of sessions scheduled for the course times the tuition for the course.*

To illustrate: if a student has attended 20 of the total 28 sessions of a three credit course the refund will be as follows:  $\$750 - (20/28*750) = \$214.29$ .

### *Unpaid Tuition*

Students with unpaid tuition will not be able to register for additional classes until tuition has been paid or an approved payment plan is in place. Failure to adhere to an established payment plan will be considered a breach of contract.

In addition, graduating students will not be provided with a diploma or a transcript until all tuition is paid in full.

### *Withdrawal from the Seminary*

A student planning to withdraw from the seminary should report this to the registrar and academic dean, and is responsible for unpaid bills to the seminary and the bookstore. Should such a student desire to return to the seminary within one academic year of withdrawing, he should notify the registrar and normally need not reapply. Students who withdraw from the seminary may receive the refund on their tuition as detailed above.

### *Probationary Status Policy*

#### *Upon Admission (based on undergraduate work)*

Admitted students without an undergraduate GPA of 2.3 (C+) are placed on academic probation and must have their probation lifted before the end of their second semester. Ordinarily, probationary students will be required to reduce their academic load if still on probation after the first semester. The lifting of probationary status is a decision made by the faculty committee on an individual basis.

The following regulations and procedures also relate to the probationary student:

- The acceptance letter sent to a student admitted on probation will strongly advise him to take four years to complete his academic program for the MDiv degree.
- The faculty committee will strongly advise a probationary student to limit the number of hours he/she spends in outside work to a maximum of 15 hours/week.
- A probationary student is required to discuss the matter of outside workload with a faculty counselor during the first month of the first academic semester. This discussion is to be initiated by the student.
- Wherever possible the admissions committee will include a period of supervised tutoring in the



program of a probationary student before making a final decision to allow him/her to continue his/her studies at the seminary.

### *During Program (based on seminary work)*

At the end of each academic term, a student who fails to maintain the minimum GPA for his or her program (MDiv = 2.3; MA = 2.7; ThM = 3.0) will receive a notification from the registrar warning the student of the drop in performance, even if the student's cumulative GPA meets the minimum requirement. The student should take this warning seriously and endeavor to raise his or her average to acceptable standards during the following term. A student whose GPA falls below the minimum requirements for graduation will be placed on academic probation and will be given two semesters to raise his or her average to the minimum, or to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the registrar and academic dean that significant progress is being made to raise the average to the minimum standard. If sufficient progress is not made, the student will be terminated from the program. Funding sources such as the US Department of Veterans Affairs, church support, and the guaranteed student loan program will be promptly notified when a student receiving funds is terminated from a program.

### *Auditing Courses*

Prospective students who wish to audit a class must first submit an online condensed application; instructions regarding this mini-application can be obtained from the registrar. Regular students may audit a class provided there is sufficient room in the classroom. Classes may be audited at the cost of \$60 per credit hour for MDiv/MA courses and \$100 per ThM course.

Students who have taken a course which they subsequently wish to audit, may do so free of charge providing there is sufficient room in the class and permission is granted by the instructor.

ThM students may audit an MDiv/MA level class for free with appropriate permission from the instructor of the course. Free classes may not be enrolled online; ThM students are encouraged to meet with the registrar to enroll in these classes.

### *Transfer of Credits*

A student seeking transfer credit on the basis of master's-level course work pursued at another institution should present to the registrar prior to registration an official transcript of the previous work, syllabi of the applicable courses, and a catalog from the other institution containing course descriptions of the work for which credit is requested. After confirming equivalency of course status with the appropriate professor of the relevant course(s), credit may be granted by the registrar for up to 50 per cent of the program being completed. No credit will be given for coursework completed at the bachelor's level, though language courses may be waived under certain conditions. In the event that courses completed at the bachelor's level clearly duplicate courses prescribed in the student's degree program at PRTS, permission may be given to substitute other equivalent courses. Such substitutions do not reduce the total number of credits required for the completion of the student's degree program.

### *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is an academic crime that is never acceptable. In serious cases, it is a flagrant sin against the eighth and ninth commandments, and the seminary cannot tolerate it in any of its forms.

There is often confusion among students as to what constitutes plagiarism. At its basic level, plagiarism is taking another person's intellectual property and presenting it as if it were one's own. Practically speaking, it usually involves taking basic units of language (words, phrases, sentence, and paragraphs)—or even thoughts and ideas—without properly accounting for them in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations must be indicated by the use of quotation marks and a footnote citation.

It is perhaps easiest to explain with examples. Note the following paragraph taken from Gerald F. DeJong's, *The Dutch Reformed Church in the American Colonies*, Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America No. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 228:

In contrast to some of the English colonies, New Netherland was not founded as a place of refuge for the religiously oppressed, but was established for the specific purpose of extending the Dutch commercial empire. Nevertheless, the religious needs of the settlers were not overlooked. Numerous letters and other documents of this period attest to the fact that the divines in Holland kept a watchful eye on what transpired across the Atlantic and from an early date fostered the Dutch Reformed Church there. By the time New Netherland fell to the English in 1664, eleven Dutch Reformed congregations had been organized on American soil, all but two of which were located in the colony of New York. The conditions confronting the churches were those of the wilderness frontier: communities were generally isolated, living conditions were harsh, ministerial salaries were irregularly paid, and most of the people were of a rough and boorish background. Nevertheless, despite primitive conditions, most of the ministers were well educated and dedicated men.

The following points, including improper and proper examples of citation from the above paragraph, must be understood concerning plagiarism:

- Plagiarism includes undocumented copying of whole phrases.  
*Wrong:* "Numerous letters and other documents of this period attest to the fact that the divines in Holland kept a watchful eye on what transpired across the Atlantic and from an early date fostered the Dutch Reformed Church there."
- Plagiarism includes undocumented copying of the essential substance of a sentence, even though one changes some words.  
*Wrong:* "While the English colonies may have been started as a haven for religiously persecuted people, the Dutch colonies were founded for commercial purposes."  
*Right:* "As Gerald DeJong argues, unlike their English counterparts, the Dutch colonies were founded for commercial purposes. (footnote)"
- Plagiarism includes copying of a phrase or phrases of another author, even if they are in one's own sentence.  
*Wrong:* "Dutch theologians did not ignore the developments across the Atlantic, but kept a watchful eye on what transpired in the colonies."  
*Right #1:* "As Gerald DeJong has documented, Dutch theologians did not ignore the developments across the Atlantic, but followed events in the colonies from afar. (footnote)"  
*Right #2:* "Dutch theologians did not ignore the developments across the Atlantic, but followed events

in the colonies carefully. (footnote)”

- Plagiarism does not include repeating things that are common knowledge, which you might find in a dictionary or encyclopedia, and that anyone could have formulated in that specific manner. These things need not be documented, unless you are doing so at length or you are including definite specifics of your source author. In such a case, you should simply have an opening footnote stating that you are leaning heavily on a particular source.

*Right:* It is unnecessary to footnote: “New Netherland fell to the English in 1664.”

The best way to avoid unintentional plagiarism is to do your research in a methodical way, making adequate notes of your sources so that ideas do not make their way into your mind without your being able to trace them. Follow this general rule: if in doubt, footnote (although one should take care not to over-document).

Instances of plagiarism will be dealt with as follows:

- First offense: The student is spoken to by the professor and/or the dean of students and the incident is recorded and entered into the student’s permanent record. The project in question receives a failing grade, and it is at the discretion of the professor to allow an additional assignment to be completed.
- Second offense: In a second case of plagiarism, the student is suspended for one year. Re-admittance to study at PRTS requires the approval of the president of the seminary in consultation with faculty and the Board of Trustees (BOT).
- Third offense: In a third case of plagiarism, the student is expelled from the seminary and will not be permitted to graduate with a degree. Expulsion will proceed as determined by the faculty committee with the president and approved by the Board of Trustees.

Scholarship students who withdraw or are expelled as a consequence of plagiarism or any other discipline are required to reimburse the seminary 75% of the total funds received in scholarships.

All cases of plagiarism must be referred to the Academic Dean, who will then consult with the full-time faculty. Each case will be dealt with individually and may not go exactly according to the above-named steps. In a serious offense (intentional, lengthy, etc.) the first step may be skipped. All second and third offenses—and serious first offenses—of plagiarism will be reported, as decided by the administration in consultation with the full-time faculty, to the local church consistory (session or council) of which the student is a member, and to the BOT for any additional action. The Academic Dean, in consultation with the full-time faculty, is to exercise discretion in this area, and the student retains the right to appeal to the BOT.

### *Grading System*

Education programs at PRTS employ a common set of marks to indicate student’s achievement in a course. The following criteria are used in assigning a final grade:

- A: Excellent; superior achievement of course objectives
- B: Good; commendable achievement of course objectives
- C: Acceptable; adequate achievement of course objectives
- D: Poor; marginal achievement of course objectives
- F: Failure to advance in the course to the extent necessary for credit to be given

- W: Withdrawal; official permission granted to withdraw from the course after the final date for dropping the course
- S or P: Satisfactory or pass; adequate achievement of course objectives, but no grade points given
- U: Unsatisfactory; insufficient achievement of course objectives
- AU: Audit; no grade points given
- I: Incomplete; a temporary extension

Grades have been assigned the following numerical values for the purpose of computing the grade point average:

Percent	Grade	Grade Points
95-100	A	4.0
91-94	A-	3.7
88-90	B+	3.3
84-87	B	3.0
81-83	B-	2.7
78-80	C+	2.3
74-77	C	2.0
71-73	C-	1.7
68-70	D+	1.3
64-67	D	1.0
61-63	D-	0.7
0-60	F	0.0

Grade points per subject are determined by multiplying the grade points assigned to the letter grade earned with the number of credit hours assigned to the course. A student's semester and cumulative grade-point average are computed by dividing the total grade points earned with the number of attempted hours.

### *Retake Policy*

In a course in which a student has received a failing grade, permission may be granted by the professor to take a re-examination or resubmit an assignment of sufficient quality to raise the grade to an F/D. Such work must be completed within one month after notification of the failing grade. If the grade is raised to an F/D, the student receives credit for the course but receives a 0.0 GPA for the course.

Students are permitted to repeat a course in which a grade was earned. When a course with an earned grade of an "F" is repeated, both the failing and second grade figure into the cumulative grade-point average. If a student repeats a course that has been passed, both grades will be shown on the transcript, but only the first grade will factor into the student's GPA.

### *Late Submission of Course Assignments*

All theses, papers, reports on assigned readings, or other special assignments must be submitted on or before the date set by the professor in charge. In special circumstances, however, a student may request an incomplete (I), provided that this is agreeable to the professor of the course. The incomplete will be removed from the transcript upon completion of the course providing it is within the time frame as expressed in the "Policy for Incompletes."

Each instructor may deal with late assignments as he sees fit. The standard procedure, however, is that for every day late the student will be penalized by a drop of 0.7 grade points (thus, two days late would reduce the grade by 1.4 grade points, or for example, reduce the grade from an A- to a C+).

A student cannot submit the same or similar assignments for more than one requirement at the seminary, unless the instructor explicitly approves this. Neither can a student use work done for another institution (e.g., undergraduate work) to fulfill assignments in courses at the seminary. If you have questions about a possible overlap of work, please check with your instructor.

### *Policy for Incompletes*

Students who make an incomplete (I) are required to make up or complete their work by the mid-term point of the following semester. If the work is not completed by the required deadline, the "I" will be changed to "F." A student who makes up his work within the required time will receive a grade determined by the instructor. Exceptions to this policy are at the discretion of the academic dean and president.

### *Course Evaluations*

Students are expected to complete evaluations for each course. Course evaluations must be completed within two weeks of the close of each respective course; they can be completed online through Populi. The student's grade for the course will be locked until the evaluation is completed.

The evaluations for each course will be collated and submitted anonymously to the instructor, academic dean, president, and Board of Trustees. Please bear in mind that course evaluations are taken seriously by the faculty and board; they should therefore be completed in a professional manner. They are not, however, an opportunity to air grudges or refer to specific instances in class in which you were disappointed or offended. References to specific situations leave the Board of Trustees somewhat confused, not knowing the context of a statement or situation. Such situations should be handled at the time they occur, according to Matthew 18. Offensive or unduly harsh comments may be excised from evaluations by the seminary registrar in consultation with the academic dean.

### *Advising Sessions*

Each incoming student will be assigned an academic advisor who shall meet with the student regularly to give advice on various matters, including which courses the student should be taking each semester in order to complete the program requirements. A student should also notify the dean of students and/or the academic dean of any issues or difficulties that are hindering his academic progress.

### *Course Conflicts*

Each semester the class schedules are set, bearing in mind the various demands of the students and instructors, as well as the limitations of our institution. If a student must take required courses through distance education courses, efforts will be made to accommodate this as much as is possible. The student should, however, adjust any non-essential element of their schedule to fit the course schedule.

### *Grade Reports and Appeals*

Every student has access to an unofficial copy of his or her transcript through Populi, the seminary's online student management system. Any discrepancy between the transcript and the student's personal record must be brought to the attention of the seminary registrar. Students have a period of six months from the final date of the semester to appeal any grade recorded on their transcript within that same semester. After this six-month period, grades will be considered final.

### *Transcript*

An official transcript for your files or for another academic institution may be requested from the registrar.

### *Distance Education Courses*

In order to complete a program in a timely manner, a student may find it necessary to complete courses via distance learning or independent study. When taken for credit, distance education courses are charged regular tuition rates, with the addition of a \$50 non-refundable distance education fee. The student is responsible for contacting the director of distance learning for any course packet, assignment, or exams. Students should make an effort to finish independent studies during the semester in which they are taken.

## **Additional Policies/Resources**

### *Spiritual Formation*

Each student is expected to meet with the dean of students and spiritual formation at least three times during each semester. PRTS believes that the spiritual wellbeing of the student is critical both for their present study and future ministry. Students must take the initiative to schedule with the dean of students. Students must fill out a questionnaire (available on Populi) before coming for their first visit. For all spiritual, family, and personal concerns, our dean is available to help and assist you in any way he can.

Conflicts with other students should be brought to the dean of student's attention if a resolution cannot be reached.

### *Conflict Resolution and Appeal Procedure*

1. In recognition of the fact that conflicts within the seminary community can arise, it is to the glory of God and to the benefit of all involved that these conflicts be resolved in a manner that reflects the principles of procedural fairness.
2. The persons involved in a conflict should do their utmost to resolve the matter. Their objective is to glorify God and seek peace with each other. In order to do this there must be the willingness to address each other, to listen to each other, to admit one's own faults, to forgive and to work towards reconciliation.
3. If the conflict cannot be resolved in this way, help by a third party may be necessary.
4. If this does not have the desired result and the conflict cannot be resolved, there is the opportunity to appeal. The appeal procedure depends on the nature of the conflict and the persons involved.
5. For appeals involving allegations about life and conduct, and/or sexual harassment, refer to the following table. For academic appeals, refer to page 16 of the Student Handbook, as well as the

following table..

Parties in conflict	Appellant May Contact	If Not Resolved appellant may contact	If Not Resolved appellant may contact	If Not Resolved appellant may contact
Students or student/faculty	Dean of Students	Seminary Executive <sup>1</sup>	Board Executive	Board of Trustees
Student/Staff	Dean of Students	Seminary Executive	Board Executive	Board of Trustees
Staff/Faculty	Dean of Students	Seminary Executive	Board Executive	Board of Trustees
Staff/President	Dean of Students	Academic Dean	Board Executive	Board of Trustees
		Director of Operations		
Faculty Members	Seminary Executive	Board Executive	Board of Trustees	Synod
Faculty/President	Academic Dean	Board Executive	Board of Trustees	Synod
	Director of Operations			

### *Chapel*

Chapel is held once a week during the regular semester. Students, instructors, and outside speakers take turns leading in prayer and giving a short meditation aimed at concerns which may benefit the students in particular. The message, prayer, and singing should not take longer than 25-30 minutes. It is followed by an additional 50 minutes of announcements and fellowship and prayer. Full-time students are expected to attend chapel; part-time students should attend as enabled. Please contact the dean of students if you are unable to attend. Resident students receiving PRTS scholarships are obliged to attend chapel.

### *Student Orientation*

An orientation for new students is held at the beginning of each academic year. The purpose of the orientation is to introduce new students to the facilities and policies of the seminary. Orientation is mandatory for all new students. Students who matriculate in the spring must attend the next possible student orientation.

### *Social Media Policy*

Consider 1 Peter 2:18, Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 39, and the following points:

- Be aware that your online presence as a student of PRTS reflects upon the seminary and your sponsoring churches.
- Remember that what you write online may affect future calls to the ministry.

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<sup>1</sup> Seminary Executive is comprised of the President, Academic Dean, and Vice President for Operations.

- Do not post details of in-class discussions or out-of-class conversations between you and the professors.
- Be respectful in any references to PRTS staff, fellow-students, pastors, and churches
- Be clear that you are not speaking as a seminary spokesperson with any news media.

### *Speech Lessons*

Speech lessons may be obtained through faculty designate. If a student desires or requires speech lessons, initial approval should be attained of the academic dean. Upon approval, the student should contact the faculty designate and inform her/him of the specific needs and the number of anticipated sessions. (This may need to be changed in consultation with the speech instructor.) Contact information will be provided.

### *Student Writing Assistance*

Volunteer and staff assistance is available for students who need writing assistance. Please see the registrar or librarian to make arrangements.

### *Reformed Theological Research and English Grammar*

Every student is required to take the one-credit Reformed Theological Research course in their first semester; this course provides essential direction for meeting the writing objectives of each of our degrees. The course is offered every fall semester. Should a student matriculate in a semester other than the fall, the Reformed Theological Research course must be taken at the next available offering.

In their first semester at PRTS, every MDiv and MA student (and may be required of some ThM students) will be enrolled in 099 English Grammar & Syntax. This course has a threefold purpose:

- To prepare the student for the original language courses;
- To give the student the skills needed to write well and to analyze their writing;
- To acquaint the student with the PRTS Style Guide and its requirements for proper citation.

Unless a waiver is granted, this is a required course. Students will be able to test out of the course.

### *Graduation and Commencement Exercises*

A student will be allowed to graduate only after all the program requirements have been met and a graduation checklist form has been completed and submitted to the registrar. Only in rare situations, and with approval of both the academic dean and the president of the seminary, may a student participate in commencement exercises with incomplete coursework. In such cases the student will not be awarded a diploma until all program requirements have been fulfilled.

The date for commencement exercises will typically be the first Friday evening after the last final exam of the spring semester. Seminary regalia will be made available for graduating students.

### *Seminary Facilities*

The seminary building was built in 2004 and expanded in 2014 with the dual purpose of housing Reformation Heritage Books (RHB) and PRTS. Much work and time went into its construction; it should therefore be treated with consideration. Access to building is controlled with access cards programmed by staff. Student



access is limited to 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM (Monday through Thursday), 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM (Friday), and 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM (Saturday).

### *Parking*

Parking is available front of the seminary building with the exception of 16 spaces located at the south edge of the parking lot and 4 spaces on the south east corner of the parking lot. These spaces are leased to Priority Health. Please do not block any sidewalks or the dumpster.

### *Chapel*

The seminary chapel is located on the main floor, west of the classrooms. This room is designed for the weekly chapel meeting and the practice preaching sessions; video and sound equipment enable the recording of all sessions. The chapel is used for special events beyond the seminary's use, and should therefore be kept clean. The sound and video booth and its equipment are to be operated only by designated trained personnel.

### *Bookstore*

Reformation Heritage Books (RHB) is located on the main floor and is open for business Monday – Friday (8:30 AM – 5:00 PM) and Saturdays (9:00 AM – 1:00 PM). Students are welcome to browse the bookstore, but may not remove books from the bookstore without purchasing them.

### *Library*

Since its inception, the PRTS Library has grown from the personal collection of President Beeke to its present state of approximately 60,000 volumes. The library focuses on Puritan and Reformed theology, with its centerpiece being the Puritan Research Center.

The PRTS Library shares an online catalog and “integrated library system” with Cornerstone University and Kuyper College. PRTS, Kuyper College, and Cornerstone University students have reciprocal borrowing privileges, using a system that coordinates and automates functions such as circulation, cataloging, and searching.

In addition to its growing collection of theological books, the library has a variety of journals, both as current subscriptions and bound issues. Library subscriptions to several online databases (such as EEBO, ATLA-Religion, and Christian Periodical Index) provide further, powerful research capabilities.

Briefly, four other library resources for ministry and research deserve attention:

- Interlibrary Loan (ILL): Students and Faculty may ask to borrow books and articles that are not readily available in our own library. Submit requests by email to: [kimberly.dykema@prts.edu](mailto:kimberly.dykema@prts.edu)
- PeRT (Puritan Electronic Research Tool): literally hundreds of thousands of Scripture citations are indexed in an online database and keyed to books in our library. This index is located on the library's webpage.
- Audio Library: thousands of cassette tapes have been digitized and are accessible as MP3 files directly from our online catalog, using the Firefox web browser.

- Research Assistance: PRTS Librarian, Laura Ladwig, is readily available by email ([laura.ladwig@prts.edu](mailto:laura.ladwig@prts.edu)), online using the “Ask-A-Librarian” form, or in person during normal seminary hours to assist students in finding and accessing theological and other resources.

Students are encouraged to study in the library where they will find study carrels with power access and network ports or wireless access to the Internet. Students may “designate” a carrel as their own, but the seminary is not responsible for any loss or damage to personal items left unattended in a carrel. Any library book kept in a carrel must be checked out.

Students may check out books or recordings for 4 weeks. Online access to one’s library account enables students to renew books for an additional 4 weeks. All borrowers are expected to return books before their due date and will be liable for overdue, lost, or damaged books. Overdue and replacement cost notices are sent automatically to the borrower’s email address.

Journals, reference books, and antiquarian books (pre-1850) are limited to library use only. However, free photocopying of journal articles or sections from reference books is available for PRTS student use. Photocopying of antiquarian books is generally prohibited due to the damaging effects of light and handling—please ask library staff to assist you in finding a reprint edition.

### *Copier / Printer Usage*

PRTS provides black and white printing and full color scan services for all students. Each semester a student will be issued a \$60.00 credit for on-campus copying and printing. This includes all assignments and class work. The multi-function printer is located in the east wing of the library, next to the faculty reception desk. Students are granted access to the printer on the west wall. The printers on the south wall and in the first floor printing room are restricted to PRTS Staff and faculty.

#### Print Charges.

Single-side \$.10 per sheet

Double-side \$.15 per sheet

These charges will be automatically deducted from the \$60 credit issued at the beginning of the semester.

Credit reimbursement requests should be reported to [support@prts.ed](mailto:support@prts.ed). Include the print job name or numbers on your request for reimbursement. Reimbursement will be made only for printer jams or malfunctions. *Refunds for “mistakes” will not be made.* \$60 will cover 400 double sided pages or 600 single sided pages. To avoid running out of credit before the end of the semester, monitor your printing needs carefully.

### *Internet Access*

The seminary offers wireless internet access from most rooms of the building, including classrooms and the library. If you experience difficulties using the internet while on campus, please notify the IT director.

Do note that the seminary's server does have web-filtering software to block access to any adult content or questionable website.

### *Lounge*

Students are welcome to use the kitchen and adjacent lounge. Please show consideration and kindness by cleaning up after yourself, and by putting dirty dishes into the dishwasher.

### *Food Pantry*

Qualifying students will find that a food bank, housed in the 2919 Leonard garage building next door to the seminary, is of immense help financially. The food bank is operated by the HRC of Grand Rapids and is stocked every Tuesday by volunteers. Clients using the food bank must complete an annual application. Forms are obtained in the food bank or by contacting the registrar. If you have questions or concerns regarding the food bank, the seminary staff can direct you to the appropriate person.

### *Student Mailboxes*

Student mailboxes are located in the administration office on the main floor. Access to mail is from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday – Thursday.

### *PRTS Student Services*

All PRTS students are welcomed into the community with all the privileges of the PRTS family.

#### **Housing services:**

The three homes owned by the seminary are designated for student families. The registrar/admissions director assists students with housing arrangements. If necessary, the community makes every attempt to furnish all the basic housing needs for PRTS students.

#### **Health Services:**

The seminary does not offer any on-campus health services. Numerous local clinics are accessible for qualifying students. Contact information is in the Ministry Wives Institute handbook.

#### **Financial Services:**

PRTS offers limited scholarships based on potential for service and demonstrated need. Applications are obtainable from the website. Students are given an account which they can view regarding their obligations to the seminary. Policies for tuition payment and tuition refunds are posted on the seminary website and printed in the Student Handbook.

#### **Community Services:**

The PRTS community supports the students with a food pantry for basic grocery needs. Access to thrift shop clothing and other needs is also provided. Local car dealers provide vehicles at cost for those who demonstrate this need.

**Academic Services:**

The registrar guides students who need assistance with scheduling, enrollment, and other academic services. Our Populi student support site is accessible 24/7. Students requiring writing or speech tutorials are encouraged to contact the registrar for arrangements. These tutorials are free to students with some limitations as to frequency of use.

**Spiritual council and advice:**

Students have access to the Dean of Students and Spiritual Formation with concerns and questions about their spiritual life. The Dean seeks to meet with students at least three times a semester.

Student Rights and Responsibilities are clearly listed and defined in the student handbook. Discipline, should it become necessary, is practiced biblically as outlined in the student handbook (see, for example, the above discussion concerning plagiarism).

***Student Society***

The PRTS Student Society is a student-led campus group that exists to enrich PRTS students' lives while they attend PRTS. The society has a fourfold mission: to promote Christian growth; to offer Christian fellowship and recreation; to encourage theological reflection; and to foster intellectual development. To accomplish this, the society sponsors spiritual, theological, and intellectual discussions; plans various fellowship and recreational events; and provides opportunities that allow students to take advantage of the rich resources available in the seminary and greater Grand Rapids community. On-campus students are elected to serve on this society. The society is designed to draw the student body closer together through active participation in the events which are separate from the classroom setting.

***Ministry Wives Fellowship***

Being a pastor's wife is a very important part of ministry. At PRTS we want to serve you as a whole family and one of our ministries is to reach out to your wives and provide support, helpful topics and encouragement. The Ministry Wives Fellowship has a fourfold mission: to promote personal Christian growth and piety; to equip future pastors' wives for a life of service alongside her husband; to foster fellowship and communion between the wives at PRTS; and to involve PRTS students' wives and children in various social events. In order to accomplish this, regular meetings are held in which all students' wives are encouraged to attend. At these meetings various topics are presented which focus upon some aspect of what it means to be a pastors' wife. Time for questions and answers is also provided. The Ministry Wives Fellowship has put together a "Handbook for Seminary Families" which is available at the office. This book is a great resource about very practical issues of living in the Grand Rapids area, shopping, banking, hospitals, etc.

**Student Conduct*****Dress Code***

Students are expected to wear pants and a collared shirt on campus. Shorts and T-shirts are not considered proper attire. A student preaching in practice preaching class should wear a suit. Though all

details of dress and appearance cannot be legislated, we ask that students appear clean, trim, and inoffensive.

### *Interaction with Staff/Faculty*

Students should take care to maintain a professional, kind, and circumspect demeanor around everyone in the seminary, including the seminary and bookstore staff. Students should allow staff to concentrate on their work and refrain from unnecessary or prolonged conversations. The seminary staff's chief responsibility is to assist the student in academic matters. Students should, however, take care not to overburden them with tasks they are not required to do (photocopy, check out books, proofread papers, etc.), unless specifically instructed to do so by faculty. The RHB staff is unrelated to the seminary's daily operation. Students should see faculty in their offices by appointment or during their office hours, unless specified otherwise by the individual faculty member.

### *Etiquette*

The seminary recommends that students know the etiquette of North American society and culture, as well as that of other societies and cultures. Paul affirms the minister is not to give "offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed" (2 Cor. 6:3). Students are urged to practice punctuality, gratitude, and helpfulness.

## Student Forms

### *Consent to Release Form*

#### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

#### Consent to Release Form

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended, it is necessary for Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary officials to require written consent from a student prior to releasing information from the student's educational record to most sources outside the Seminary. An educational record is defined as "any record directly related to students and are maintained as official working files by the Seminary."

#### **PART A**

Sign this portion of the form ***ONLY*** if you want the named individual(s) to be authorized to inquire about your educational record on your behalf. All student requests for consent will be accommodated.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

hereby consent to the release by Puritan Seminary of educational record information as specified below.

#### **TYPES OF RECORDS TO BE RELEASED:**

\_\_\_ All educational records

\_\_\_ Specific records listed below:

\_\_\_ Admissions

\_\_\_ Business Office (Accounts Receivable)

\_\_\_ Puritan Learning Center

\_\_\_ Registrar

\_\_\_Dean of Students:

\_\_\_Student Financial Services

**PARTIES TO WHOM SUCH RECORDS MAY BE RELEASED:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name Relationship

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name Relationship

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PART B**

Sign this portion of the form **ONLY** if you desire to reverse consent previously submitted.

**Yes, please void** consent as previously requested.

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ M.I. \_\_\_\_\_

ID# \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return form to the Registrar’s Office, Fax 616.855-5740, or send to: [admissions@puritanseminary.org](mailto:admissions@puritanseminary.org) or Puritan Seminary – Registrar’s Office – 2965 Leonard Street, NE, Grand Rapids MI 49525

**Office Use Only:**

- Data entry Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept: \_\_\_\_\_
- File form in student file

***Directory Information Restriction/Release Request***

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended, it is necessary for Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary officials to obtain written consent from a student prior to releasing information from the student’s educational record to most sources outside the seminary.

FERPA policy allows the release of directory information.

Directory information as identified by Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary includes:

- Name
- Dates of Attendance
- Address
- Degrees Pursued
- E-Mail Address
- Cumulative Credits
- Phone Number

As an enrolled student, you have the right to restrict release of Directory Information. Use this form **ONLY** if you do **not** want the above listed information released. All requests must be submitted within the first week of classes of your first semester. This request will remain in effect from the date indicated below until written notification is given to release information. All requests for non-disclosure of directory

information will be accommodated. Carefully consider the consequences of your decision to withhold directory information. If you decide that Puritan should not release directory information, all requests for such information from persons or organizations (prospective employers, scholarship opportunities, etc.) not specifically sanctioned by PRTS and federal regulation will be refused, regardless of the effect on you, and Puritan assumes no liability for honoring the request.

**Option A:**

**Restrict** the following information:

- All Information  Phone Number  Degree  Cumulative Hours
- Address  Birth Information
- E-Mail  Degrees  Photo

**Option B:**

**Release** Current restrictions as previously requested.

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ M.I. \_\_\_\_\_

ID# \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to the Registrar's Office, Fax 616-855-5740, or send to: [admissions@puritanseminary.org](mailto:admissions@puritanseminary.org) or Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary – Registrar's Office – 2965 Leonard Street, NE, Grand Rapids MI 49525

Office Use Only:  File form in student's file

