

Graduate and Professional Student Handbook

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Complete Handbook

Saint Mary's College of California

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GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL

Student Handbook
2018-2019

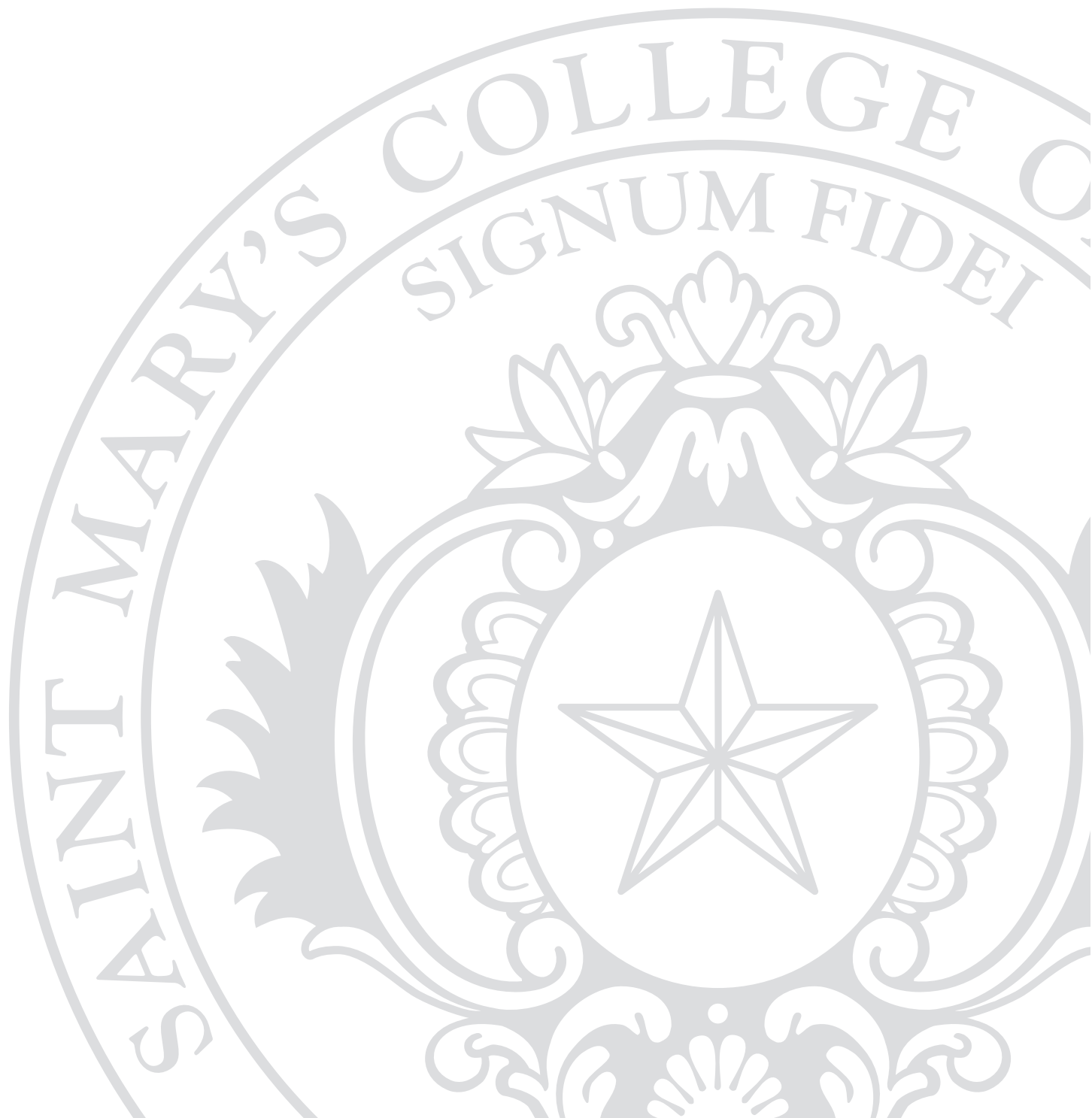


Table of Contents

Part 1: Academic Policies.....4

Part 2: Graduate and Professional Academic Honor Code.....10

INTRODUCTION AND HANDBOOK RIGHTS

The Graduate and Professional Student Handbook is designed to provide students, faculty, and administrators with a reference guide for college-wide academic policies, the graduate and professional honor code, the student code of conduct, and several other policies governing student and community behavior. The policies described in the handbook were developed by the Graduate Council and the Graduate and Professional Studies Educational Policies Committee (GPSEPC), and approved by the Academic Senate. The policies are reviewed annually by GPSEPC.

Students are required to adhere to the policies outlined in the Graduate and Professional Student Handbook for the academic year they enter their program, with the notable exception of the academic honor code, which applies to all students in the form described in this handbook. Students maintain handbook rights by continuous enrollment as defined by the College. Students that do not maintain continuous enrollment will lose graduate standing and will be required to re-apply for admission. Such students may be required to abide by policies and requirements set forth by the handbook of the year they reenter the program.

Part 1: Academic Policies

Definitions Applying to Academic Policies

Graduate student: A student admitted to any graduate-level program at Saint Mary's College.

Professional student: A student admitted to any undergraduate program designed for working adults. For purposes of clarity, these students are also referred to in the handbook as "undergraduate professional student."

Business day: Refers to all days during which the College is officially open, including days when classes are not in session.

Program director: The administrator responsible for a particular program.

Dean: The administrator responsible for a particular school. In nearly all cases, the dean may delegate responsibilities assigned to her/him to another party, such as an associate dean.

Admissions Requirements

Saint Mary's College welcomes applications from students qualified to pursue a program of study leading to a graduate or undergraduate professional degree. The admissions process is designed to evaluate the potential for success in an individual program. Applicants should consult the department to which they are applying for its specific evaluation requirements and criteria.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Applicants must hold or expect to hold prior to the beginning of classes a bachelor's degree (for master's degree programs) or a master's degree (for doctoral programs) from a regionally accredited U.S. institution or an equivalent international university. International students must provide transcripts showing graduation from a recognized college or university with a degree normally requiring 15-16 years of prior education before graduation from college or university.

Applicants must submit two or three letters of recommendation (varies by program) from academic or professional references and official transcripts of all baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate studies.

In evaluating a candidate for admission, the admissions officer or committee reviews the following credentials: the completed application, transcripts from the colleges and/or universities the applicant has attended, and letters of recommendation. Some schools and programs in the College require standardized examinations, such as the GRE or GMAT, and some schools or programs may conduct admissions interviews or require writing samples or statements of purpose. In reviewing transcripts, admissions officers will take into account the choice of coursework, the rigor of the undergraduate major, the competitiveness of the academic institutions, and the grade point average (GPA). For master's degree and credential programs, an undergraduate GPA of 2.8 or better is generally the standard for admissions consideration. Doctoral programs typically require an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 and a graduate GPA of 3.5.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

Applicants to the LEAP program must hold a high school diploma or its equivalent. Applicants to the Leadership and Organizational Studies program must have earned a minimum of 64 semester units of acceptable transfer credit.

Applicants must submit two letters of recommendation from academic or professional referees and official transcripts of all baccalaureate studies.

In evaluating a candidate for admission, the admissions officer or committee reviews the following credentials: the completed application, transcripts from the colleges and/or universities the applicant has attended, letters of recommendation, an experiential learning inventory, and an essay or statement of goals. In reviewing transcripts, admissions officers will take into account the grade point average (GPA). An undergraduate GPA of 2.0 or better is generally the standard for consideration.

Academic Standing

UNCONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE

Students who meet all program admissions criteria, have complete files, and have been selected for admission by program-specific admissions processes are accepted unconditionally.

PROVISIONAL ACCEPTANCE

Students whose admissions files are incomplete (e.g., missing test scores, transcripts, etc.) may be provisionally admitted, and must take steps to ensure that their files are completed within one term. The time limit may be extended with the approval of the program director.

CONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE

If a student has a complete application but missing requirements, such as the Basic Skills Requirement (BSR) or the Writing Proficiency Exam, this student may be admitted conditionally. The program director will notify the student in writing how to attain unconditional acceptance and provide a deadline for achieving it.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Graduate students whose cumulative grade point average in courses constituting the degree falls below a 3.0 (B) average at any time during their course of study are placed on academic probation. They are notified of their status in writing by the Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies. Upon notification, students have one academic term to bring their grade point average up to the 3.0 level. Failure to do so will result in academic disqualification.

Some programs at the College—especially those using P/F grading—may the grade of issue Marginal Performance grade. The use of Marginal Performance grade is a warning to the student that even though his/her coursework might merit a passing grade, the work was nonetheless marginal.

Students who accumulate two or more Marginal Performance grade or one (1) failing grade will be placed on Academic Probation.

Undergraduate Professional students whose grade point average falls below a 2.0 (C) average at any time during their course of study are placed on academic probation. They are notified of their status in writing by the Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies. Students have one semester to bring their grade point average up to the 2.0 level. Failure to do so may result in academic disqualification.

ACADEMIC DISQUALIFICATION

Graduate students are disqualified from continuing in a program when they have not attained a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher for two continuous terms of enrollment. Two terms of enrollment count as continuous even if a student has taken a leave between terms. Students in P/F programs are subject to disqualification if they receive two (2) failing grades or one (1) failing grade and two (2) marginal performance grades, or four (4) marginal performance grades.

Undergraduate Professional students are disqualified from continuing in a program when they have not attained a 2.0 grade point average for two or more terms. The Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies notifies students subject to disqualification.

Any student subject to disqualification is barred from further study at Saint Mary's College.

SPECIAL ACADEMIC PROBATION

Special Academic Probation is granted at the discretion of the Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies and may be based on the student's extreme personal hardship, serious illness, or a similar reason that justifies poor academic standing. Students facing academic disqualification may request to be placed on Special Academic Probation by filing a Petition for Special Action within two weeks of the notice of disqualification. In addition to explaining their special circumstances, students must also outline how they expect to improve their grades and resume regular academic standing by the end of the next term. If granting Special Academic Probation, the Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies may further specify additional conditions and program requirements for removing academic probation status. Students who fail to meet the conditions of Special Academic Probation are disqualified from further study.

Full- and Part-time Status

Students should consult with their individual programs in order to determine a course of study that is considered full- or part-time. Full-time status may be a requirement of a program and may determine eligibility for financial aid.

Residency Requirement

"In residence" typically means on the Saint Mary's College campus, but there are common exceptions: Students attending SMC-sponsored overseas programs and students attending at satellite campuses are in residence, as are students enrolled in online or hybrid courses. At least 50 percent of all credential or master's programs must be completed in residence. The remaining 50 percent may consist of transfer credits,

challenges, comprehensive evaluations, independent study, and other non-standard classes.

Nonmatriculated Students

Individuals who hold a bachelor's degree or equivalent and wish to take a course in a specific program that allows non-degree students are eligible to apply for non-matriculated status. Non-matriculated students are permitted to register for one course each term for a maximum of two terms. A maximum of six credits may be credited toward the Master's degree if a student applies and is accepted into the matriculated program.

Transfer Units for Graduate Students

A limited amount of graduate credit obtained at other accredited colleges or universities may be accepted in partial fulfillment of some requirements for a credential, certificate, or master's degree. Generally, no more than two full-unit courses can be so approved, but under special circumstances, the dean of the school may approve up to a total of three full-unit courses. Transferred credit does not qualify as work done in residence.

Courses acceptable for transfer credit must:

- Have been graduate courses with clear relevance to course of study,
- Have been taken at a regionally accredited institution of higher education within the last five years, (Coursework may be acceptable beyond five years if the candidate can demonstrate current experience and knowledge.)
- Have been assigned a grade of "B" (or its equivalent or better),
- Not have been supervised fieldwork, field practice, practicum or independent study (with the exception of one semester of credit for the school counseling PPS credential)

Permission to take courses at another institution, after admission to the College, may be granted at the discretion of the program director only if all of the following criteria are met:

- The course is vital to the student's program of study and is currently not available or not offered in a timely fashion at the College.
- The course is offered at the appropriate graduate level and is offered by a regionally accredited institution.
- The total number of transfer units does not exceed the maximum described above.
- Permission must be granted before the course is taken.
- Upon relocation outside of the area, a student may petition for an additional course to be taken at another institution.

Upon completion of the course, the other institution should forward the transcript information directly to the Registrar.

Transfer Units for Undergraduate Professional Students

Credit obtained at other accredited colleges or universities may be accepted in fulfillment of elective and some general education requirements for a bachelor's degree. Transferred credit does not qualify as work done in residence.

Courses acceptable for transfer credit must:

- Have been taken at a regionally accredited institution of higher education or an appropriate and comparable institution in another country,
- Have been assigned a grade of “C-” (or its equivalent or better),
- Be transferable to the University of California if taken at a California community college, except for courses that are related to their current career field or (for LEAP students) the career field to which they are transitioning, which may be transferable to the California State University System,
- Not exceed 10 semester units for activity units (e.g., physical education),
- Not include remedial subjects and secondary school mathematics,
- May not exceed a total of 64 lower division semester units when combined with other courses comprising the bachelor’s degree.

Permission to take courses at another institution, after admission to the College, may be granted at the discretion of the program director only if all of the following criteria are met:

- The course is offered by a regionally accredited institution.
- The course meets the criteria for acceptable transfer credit.
- The course is applicable to the student’s program and does not exceed the maximum of 64 lower division units allowed toward the bachelor’s degree.
- Permission is requested before the course is taken.

Upon completion of the course, the other institution should forward the transcript information directly to the Registrar.

Grading

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Graduate courses are evaluated on the 4.0 scale with “A” being equivalent to 4.0. Pass/fail (P/F) grading is offered in many graduate courses and programs. In most graduate programs, a passing grade (or the grade of “Pass” in a P/F courses) is equivalent to a “B-” or higher. In the Professional MBA Program, a passing grade is equivalent to a “C” or higher. Any failing grade must be repeated for credit toward the degree. In some programs, students may be required to complete a particular class with a passing grade before enrolling in subsequent course offerings. All grades will appear on the transcript, but for the purposes of calculating grade point average, only the grade received in the most recent (passing) enrollment will be used. The number of times a course may be repeated for credit with a passing grade is at the discretion of the individual program.

Graduate students who complete their degree with a cumulative grade point average of 3.75 or higher are designated as graduating with Honors by indication on both the transcript and the diploma. Students in P/F courses can also graduate with honors by receiving the grade of “honors” (“H”) in five or more courses. Honors recognition in a course is given to students whose standard of performance significantly exceeds that expected in the course and is considered to be rare.

UNDERGRADUATE PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

Undergraduate professional courses are evaluated on the 4.0 scale with “A” being equivalent to 4.0. In courses taken P/F in undergraduate professional programs, the grade of “Pass” is equivalent to a C- or higher, and will not impact the student’s GPA. Any grade beneath a C- (in letter-graded or P/F courses) needs to be repeated for credit toward the degree.

Undergraduate professional students are awarded honors designation using the traditional Latin honor system: cum laude (3.5 cumulative GPA); magna cum laude (3.75 cumulative GPA); and summa cum laude (3.85 GPA).

INCOMPLETES AND FINAL GRADES

An instructor may grant an incomplete (“I”) to a student due to circumstances such as a serious illness, personal or family crisis, or extraordinary demands due to employment, or an unresolved Honor Code issue, given that the student is passing the course and has had reasonable attendance throughout the term. The instructor is responsible for determining whether an incomplete is the appropriate grade. Incomplete grades must be cleared by the end of the next term. An extension may be requested in writing prior to the deadline, using the form Student Petition for Exceptional Action. The petition must be approved by the instructor and the program director. Incomplete grades that are not cleared automatically become “F” grades, depending on the default grading status of the course. Students who have two incomplete grade reports for two consecutive semesters may not register for any new courses until the incompletes have been cleared.

Final grades are considered permanent and not to be changed except in the case of an error in computing, recording or evaluating a student’s work, or in the case of an Honor Code sanction imposed after grades have been posted. When necessary, faculty may secure a Grade Change Petition from the Registrar’s office. Students wishing to appeal a specific grade assigned should consult with their program director for program-specific appeal guidelines.

Attendance policy

Regular attendance is an important obligation and essential condition for successful academic progress. Absences may seriously jeopardize the successful completion of a course.

The instructor is responsible for communicating the attendance policy for a given course. Students are responsible for all assignments in a course whether or not the assignments were announced during an absence. Penalties for absences depend upon the nature and amount of work missed, of which the faculty member is the sole judge.

It is not permissible to miss regularly scheduled classes for the purpose of intercollegiate athletic practice. A student who misses the first session of a course, even if s/he is pre-registered, may have his/her place in that course given away and be denied further attendance in that course. The College recognizes that during a field experience placement or practicum, students may encounter labor disputes that result in a work stoppage (either a strike or a lock-out), a “sick-out,” or a slow-down, or other job action. The policies and procedures of the College in such an event are available from the program director.

Auditing

Students may audit College courses without earning College credit, depending on availability. A Petition to Audit a Course form must be filed by the student with the program director. Auditors cannot expect to take examinations or submit written work for evaluation, but may participate in class discussions.

Open enrollment

Open enrollment is limited to students not regularly matriculated or admitted to a graduate program as well as those not maintaining continuous enrollment. Graduate students who register as open enrollment students in another program sever their continuous enrollment in their original program. No more than three units of open enrollment credit in a graduate program may be transferred upon entry into the graduate program.

Continuous enrollment and leave of absence

All students are expected to be continuously enrolled in their program unless otherwise stipulated in program materials. Students who wish to leave the College temporarily must request such a leave in writing from their program director. Students may take leave for one academic term unless otherwise specified by the program. Normally, students who are not enrolled in classes for two academic terms will be considered withdrawn and must reapply to the program (and must pay an application fee). Programs are not required to accept such applications for readmission. If students are readmitted, they are held to the catalog requirements of the term in which they are readmitted. Students may file a petition with the program to extend their leave for more than one semester for medical reasons or for active military service. Students may also file to extend their leave on educational grounds. The rationale for this planned leave must document the intention to pursue other activities that clarify educational goals or enrich educational programs. These activities might include travel for educational purposes or on-the-job experience in an area related to the student's field of academic study.

The College does not permit leaves based on the lack of funds to pay tuition and other fees.

Timely completion of degree

It is expected that students will make steady progress toward the completion of their degree. Therefore, students receiving the bachelor's, credential or master's degree have five years to complete their program; students receiving the doctoral degree have eight years. Extensions may be granted for extraordinary circumstances by the Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies, but students may be held to new standards and/or asked to verify currency in any coursework taken more than five years prior.

Dual degree programs

Saint Mary's allows for students to enroll in courses of study defined as dual degree programs. These programs, which involve students enrolling concurrently in two aligned courses of study, are defined by the College and available to potential

applicants. In dual degree programs, students are admitted to the degree programs under the usual processes for the individual programs. These students should ensure that they are seeking clear academic advice in scheduling coursework and fulfilling degree requirements in a timely manner.

Second master's degree

Students wishing to take two or more courses of study concurrently that are not defined as dual degree programs are required to file a petition for exceptional action, providing a rationale for working on another degree program before completing the degree program in which they are currently enrolled. This petition must be approved by the Vice Provost for the Graduate and Professional Studies. Core courses for one program may not be used to satisfy core requirements of another program.

Course evaluations

Course evaluations should be conducted for each graduate and undergraduate professional course offered at Saint Mary's College, and students have the responsibility to participate in these evaluations.

Degree requirements

Students are expected to satisfy degree requirements defined by their individual programs. Please see program materials or program director for specific requirements.

Advancement to candidacy and completion of degree

Each student who plans to become a candidate for a degree is required to:

- Be admitted to a specific program and maintain good academic standing
- Complete all required courses and reach the minimum unit requirement for the program
- File a Petition for Candidacy with the Registrar.

Students who have advanced to candidacy may be required to take additional exams or participate in final projects in order to complete the requirements for their degree. Some programs also require students to submit a thesis, synthesis project, or dissertation.

Thesis, Synthesis Project, and Dissertation Guidelines

FILING THESES, DISSERTATIONS AND ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS

If a student's degree requires a thesis, dissertation, or action research project, the student must submit the work through ProQuest using the following steps.

1. Manuscript Review

The thesis or dissertation chair reviews the final manuscript to ensure that the document meets the program requirements and academic writing standards. The chair can require that the student seek editing support if there are serious academic writing challenges.

Before submitting the final manuscript to ProQuest, each program will identify a faculty-approved reviewer (which could also be the thesis or dissertation chair) to examine the manuscript for compliance with APA/MLA standards such as requirements for pagination, Table of Contents, in-text citations, heading levels, margins, and the like. Once students receive feedback from the reviewer, it is their responsibility to make the corrections and to have the revised manuscript accepted by the faculty-approved reviewer.

2. Signature page

Before the academic chair signs off on the thesis or dissertation signature page, he or she will coordinate with the faculty-approved reviewer to ensure that the document meets the formatting requirements. The signed signature page is not included in the document submitted to ProQuest. A copy of the completed signature page, however, will be placed in the student's file.

3. Student Submission

After the chair has signed off on the thesis or dissertation, students submit their manuscripts to ProQuest according to the guidelines posted on the ProQuest website.

4. Graduation Check

Each school or program will identify a school or program ProQuest administrator who will be responsible for overseeing the graduation check and communicating with the Campus ProQuest Administrator. There are four sources of data that must be reviewed for the graduation check: the signature page; a copy of an e-mail, showing verification that the PDF has been downloaded to ProQuest; evidence that all degree requirements have been completed; and evidence that the student is in good financial standing. After all degree requirements have been verified, the school or program ProQuest administrator will notify the Campus ProQuest Administrator to publish the manuscript.

5. Final Approval and Delivery to ProQuest for Publication

After each of the above steps has been completed, the Campus ProQuest Administrator will approve the manuscript for publication and electronically deliver the manuscript to ProQuest for publication.

6. Coordinating with Library Cataloging and Programs/Schools

On a regular basis, the Campus ProQuest Administrator will notify the library cataloger and program or school ProQuest administrator about which manuscripts have been approved and published. Students must follow the guidelines located at <http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/graduate-and-professional-studies/about-proquest>

Academic Appeal Process

The academic appeal process provides students with an opportunity to have their appeals heard in a predictable, timely and fair manner. Students are free to pursue any other right or remedy provided by law, but this policy sets forth the exclusive procedures to be followed by a student seeking an administrative resolution to an appeal.

DEFINITION

An academic appeal is a dispute that involves the application of, or compliance with, the academic policies and procedures of Saint Mary's College. Appeals governed by this process generally include outcomes directly related to policies described in Part I of the Graduate and Professional Student Handbook. An appeal shall not include challenges to or attempts to change state or federal law, or policies or procedures of Saint Mary's College. Appeals may involve any of the following:

- The interpretation of admissions criteria regarding a particular student's application,
- Probation or disqualification,
- The determination of the number of units taken in residence at Saint Mary's College,
- The determination of transfer course or unit eligibility for degrees at Saint Mary's College,
- Grades,
- Determinations associated with the continuous enrollment/leave of absence policy,
- Determinations regarding the deadline for completion of degree,
- Determinations regarding the approval of a second master's degree,
- Determination of degree candidacy and conferral of degree,
- Or, any other situation related to academic policies (other than the Honor Code).

GENERAL PROVISIONS

A student who elects to file an appeal shall follow the steps described below within the determined time frame.

At each step of the appeal procedure, a colleague or faculty member may accompany the student. Because the appeal process is not a legal process, the student shall not be accompanied or represented by an attorney.

Neither the student filing an appeal nor any faculty member or colleague accompanying the student will be disciplined or discriminated against for participating in the appeal procedure.

After a formal, written appeal has been filed, the issues of the appeal shall not be added to or altered except with the written permission of the dean of the school. If the process reveals that different or additional issues must be part of the appeal, then the changed appeal must be initiated anew.

APPEAL PROCEDURES

A student who wants to appeal an academic issue should first discuss it with the involved faculty member (in the case of a grade) or the program director (on other matters) in order to try to work out a satisfactory solution in an informal manner. If a solution satisfactory to all parties is not accomplished through informal discussion, then the appealing student may file a formal appeal.

If an informal resolution cannot be reached, the student must submit a written appeal to the Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies. If the involved faculty member is the dean of the school, the appeal should be submitted directly to the Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies, who

will carry out the actions attributed to the dean. The written appeal should include a statement of the issue and the desired remedy.

No later than 10 business days after receiving the appeal, the dean shall convene an Appeals Committee.

APPEALS COMMITTEE AND FINAL DECISION

The Appeals Committee shall consist of two full-time faculty members (appointed by the dean), the associate dean, who shall act as chairperson of the committee, and a student appointed by the dean to serve on the committee for a particular appeal. The dean also shall appoint two full-time faculty members as alternates to the committee to be called upon in cases when a faculty member of the committee is disqualified or is otherwise unavailable.

A student who is concerned that a faculty or student member of the Appeals Committee may be biased concerning that student's appeal may communicate this concern to the dean in writing. A committee member who feels a bias concerning a student's appeal may request that the dean appoint an alternate faculty or student member to serve. The dean shall determine if there is an actual or potential bias problem with a faculty or student member of the Committee and shall appoint an alternate when appropriate.

Appeal Committee members:

- Shall review the formal written appeal and all subsequent documentation generated through the Appeal Procedure,
- Shall provide all parties to an appeal the opportunity to be heard by the Committee,
- May conduct interviews and make inquiries in order to receive additional information to assist in its evaluation of the appeal,
- May interpret established policy as it applies to the specific circumstances of the appeal,
- May engage in additional fact-finding and suggest future policy changes to the administration of the College,
- Shall come to a consensus in its decision,
- Shall keep all proceedings of the Committee confidential to the extent possible while carrying out their assigned duty,
- Shall keep minutes and documents pertaining to the appeal in a confidential file separate from the student's regular file.
- The chair of the Appeals Committee shall notify the dean and student in writing of the committee's decision. The decision of the Appeals Committee is final.

Part 2: Graduate and Professional Academic Honor Code

Saint Mary's College expects every member of its community to promote and abide by ethical standards, both in conduct and exercise of responsibility towards other members of the community. Academic honesty must be demonstrated at all times to maintain the integrity of scholarship and the reputation of the College. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of College policy because, among other things, it undermines the bonds of trust and honesty between members of the community and betrays those who may eventually depend upon the College's academic integrity and knowledge.

As an expression of support for academic integrity throughout the Saint Mary's learning community and as an administrative tool to discourage academic dishonesty, Saint Mary's has implemented an Academic Honor Code. The Academic Honor Code has been approved by the ASSMC Student Body, the Faculty Academic Senate, the provost and the president of Saint Mary's College.

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE PLEDGE

All enrolled students are required to abide by the pledge. The pledge reads as follows:

As a student member of an academic community based in mutual trust and responsibility, I pledge:

- to do my own work at all times, without giving or receiving inappropriate aid,
- to avoid behaviors that unfairly impede the academic progress of other members of my community, and
- to take reasonable and responsible action in order to uphold my community's academic integrity.

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE PRINCIPLES OF ACTION

Individual Responsibility

It is the responsibility of every student and faculty member of the College community to know and practice the tenets of the Academic Honor Code. If there is confusion over the appropriateness of a particular action in light of the code, or if a community member has recommendations about how to amend or alter the code, those questions and suggestions should be addressed to the Academic Honor Council through the AHC coordinator.

Community Responsibility

In addition to maintaining one's own academic integrity, each member of the academic community should strive to preserve and promote integrity among his/her peers. This community empowers its members to take appropriate action in support of the Academic Honor Code. If a student, faculty member, staff member or administrator suspects a violation of the Academic Honor Code, he or she should take action consistent with the Academic Honor Code Procedures described below. Additional possible actions include:

- Actively encouraging academic integrity among one's peers,
- Using moral suasion to avert a peer's academic dishonesty,

- Alerting a faculty member to suspected violations of academic integrity,
- Educating one another regarding the responsibilities of academic integrity,
- Helping a faculty member maintain an environment that is conducive to academic integrity.

VIOLATIONS OF THE ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

All violations of the Academic Honor Code are administered by the Academic Honor Council. Members of the academic community are presumed to be familiar with the procedures outlined for determining a violation of the Academic Honor Code and, therefore, ignorance of the code is not available as an excuse for an alleged violation of it.

Forms of violations of the Academic Honor Code include, but are not restricted to:

In Examinations: unauthorized talking during an exam; use of "cheat sheets" or other unauthorized course materials during an exam; having someone other than the student registered in the course take an exam; copying from another student's work; giving assistance to another student without the instructor's approval; gaining access to an exam prior to its administration; informing students in other course sections of the contents of an exam; preparing answer sheets or books in advance of an exam without authorization from the instructor; unauthorized collaboration on a take-home exam; altering another person's answers in the preparation, editing or typing of an exam; bringing unauthorized materials into an exam room.

On Papers and Class Assignments (understood as all work assigned in a course): submitting work prepared by someone else as one's own; using the thesis or primary ideas of someone else, even if those ideas have been edited or paraphrased, without proper citation; plagiarizing words, phrases, sections, key terms, proofs, graphics, symbols or original ideas from another source without appropriate citation; receiving unauthorized assistance in preparing papers, whether from classmates, peers, family members, or other members of this or any other College community; collaboration within a class or across sections of a class without the consent of the instructor; preparing all or part of a paper for another student; intentional failure to cite a source that was used in preparing the paper; citing sources that were not used or consulted to "pad" a bibliography; citing sources out of another's bibliography without having consulted those sources; re-using previous work without the consent of the current instructor; providing a paper to another student for any purpose other than peer editing or review; using unapproved sources in preparing a paper; lying to an instructor to circumvent grade penalties; interference with access to classrooms, computers or other academic resources.

In Research: fabricating or falsifying data in any academic exercise, including labs or fieldwork; using material out of context to inappropriately support one's claims; sabotaging another person's research; using another researcher's ideas without proper citation; taking credit for someone else's work; hoarding materials and/or equipment to advance one's research at the expense of others.

In the Use of Academic Resources: destruction, theft or unauthorized use of laboratory data, research materials (including samples, chemicals, lab animals, printed materials, software, computer technology, audiovisual materials, etc.); stealing or damaging materials from the library or other College facilities; not returning materials when asked to do so; appropriating materials needed by others such that their work is impeded; helping others to steal, hoard, destroy or damage materials.

In Academic Records: changing a transcript or grade in any unauthorized way; forging signatures on College documents; willful public misrepresentation of achievements, whether academic, athletic, honorary or extracurricular; falsifying letters of recommendation to or from college personnel; bribing any representative of the College to gain academic advantage; breaking confidentiality about the proceedings of the Academic Honor Council, an Academic Review Board, or an investigative committee in the student's program.

These types of conduct constitute violations of the Academic Honor Code and will be considered, if determined to have occurred, as acts of academic dishonesty. Any conduct that represents falsely one's own performance or interferes with that of another is academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is distinguished from academic inadvertence. The Academic Honor Council or the dean or program director for undergraduate professional and graduate programs, receives and considers all reports of conduct that is alleged to be a violation of the code and, thereafter, decides whether the alleged conduct, if determined to have occurred, constitutes academic dishonesty or academic inadvertence, which involves an act that might appear to be a violation of the Academic Honor Code, but is determined during the Review Board process not to be. In cases of academic inadvertence, no charge of academic dishonesty is made and the student is referred to the instructor for appropriate resolution.

The Academic Honor Code is not intended to impede or inhibit the free exchange of ideas and collaborative learning that are hallmarks of a Saint Mary's education. The College supports and encourages cooperative learning, group projects, tutoring, mentoring or other forms of interchange of ideas among students and faculty, one of the most important benefits of academic life.

OVERSIGHT AND SANCTIONS

The procedures for the administration of the Academic Honor Code, the determination of violations and the imposition of sanctions are overseen by the Academic Honor Council (AHC) and the Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies.

OVERSIGHT: ACADEMIC HONOR COUNCIL

Graduate and Professional Honor Council Membership

The Honor Council will include graduate and undergraduate professional students and faculty with representation from all schools. There will be 15 graduate members total (three students and two faculty members representing each of the three schools), each serving a one-year term. These members share special responsibility for the dissemination and implementation of the Academic Honor Code.

Responsibilities of the Academic Honor Council

The responsibilities of the AHC include, but are not limited to, the following:

- To review and revise the Academic Honor Code as necessary, offering recommendations for changes to the code to the Admissions and Academic Regulations Committee of the Academic Senate,
- To constitute Review Boards from among its membership to consider alleged violations of the code,
- To consider requests for the removal of "XF" grades from student transcripts and records.

Coordinator of the AHC

The coordinator's responsibilities are: to serve as first contact for a party who wishes to register a concern; to maintain office hours during which community members may file concerns, seek advice, obtain written materials relevant to the Academic Honor Code; to update written materials and information as per the instructions of the AHC; to distribute materials to appropriate parties during student orientation and at the beginning of new academic terms; to function as a "neutral party" in organizing and scheduling reviews by the AHC; to contact all involved parties and inform them of their rights and responsibilities in the process of pursuing a concern; to assign Advisors at the earliest possible time; to compile brief case inventories on concerns that are raised; to schedule and book meetings of the Academic Honor Council at large, and to coordinate the constitution and meetings of Honor Review Boards.

Honor Review Boards

In cases when a violation of the Academic Honor Code is not handled through the channels of No-Contest Resolution, the coordinator establishes an Honor Review Board comprised of members of the AHC.

Honor Review Boards are comprised of five voting members: three student members (one from each school) and two faculty members (at least one from the school in which the offense occurred), and also include one non-voting facilitator, who is not directly associated with the program related to the alleged violation. The appropriate sanction is decided by the majority vote of the voting members.

The non-voting facilitator serves as the neutral presiding officer of the review and is typically a disinterested faculty member, program director or dean. The facilitator is also responsible to help the respective parties in their understanding of the Academic Honor Code, provide confidential advice, assist in preparing the respective parties for the Honor Review Board process, aid the parties in understanding the decisions of the Honor Review Board, and inform the parties of processes for petition for reconsideration. At no time during the review does the facilitator formally represent the party in the hearing or speak on his/her behalf; rather, each party is expected to speak for him- or herself.

SANCTIONS

Standard Sanction: Assignment of an "XF" Grade

For violations pertaining to a course, the standard sanction upon a student who commits a violation of the Academic Honor Code is the assignment of an XF grade in the course. For violations that do not pertain to a course, the sanction is determined by the Honor Review Board hearing the case.

The XF grade indicates failure in the course, and that the course failure was the result of a violation of the Academic Honor Code. A notation will be included in the student's transcript indicating the meaning of the grade. For the purposes of computing grade point average and class standing, the XF will be treated as an F.

In addition to the notation on the student's transcript, an XF grade disqualifies a student from representing the College as the leader of an approved extracurricular activity, or as a member of an athletic or scholarly team that is sponsored by the College. Students with XF grades will be eliminated from consideration for departmental or College awards and honors. No student with a standing XF grade may be a member of the Academic Honor Council.

Through a letter filed with the AHC Coordinator, a student may petition the Academic Honor Council to remove an XF grade in the semester following its assignment. A successful petition will result in the replacement of the XF with the grade of F and the removal of the notation from the student's transcript. Such a petition will be considered if the student has completed a non-credit seminar on academic integrity (administered by the Academic Honor Council) and has avoided any further violation of the Academic Honor Code. The decision to remove an XF grade resides with the Academic Honor Council and is not guaranteed merely with completion of the seminar on academic integrity. A letter reflecting the violation, the sanction, and the removal of the XF grade remains in the student file held in the Office of the Registrar.

Alternative Sanctions

That the assignment of an XF grade is the standard sanction for violations that pertain to coursework does not preclude the right of the Honor Review Board to assign an alternative sanction, one that is either more harsh or more lenient. The rationale for an alternative sanction other than the standard is the nature of the offense and not the status or identity of the offender. The community member who brings forth the charge against the alleged violator may recommend a particular sanction to the Honor Review Board, but the assignment of the sanction rests with the board.

Alternative sanctions include but are not limited to:

- Reprimand by the AHC, with a letter placed in the student's permanent file in the Registrar's office,
- Community service requirements, either to the College or to a selected community agency consistent with the offense committed,
- Community education requirements, including participation in the development of workshops, displays, bulletin boards, testimonials, brochures or College forums,
- Attendance of a non-credit seminar on academic integrity,
- Academic or extracurricular probation,
- Loss of privileges for College leadership or athletic participation,
- Removal from the course, with alternate plans for completing it,
- Failure of the assignment,
- Failure of the course,
- Modified XF grade, with no limitation on extracurricular activities,

- Suspension from the College at the end of the term,
- Immediate suspension from the College,
- Expulsion from the College,
- Withholding of a degree, even in cases where all College requirements have been met,
- Revocation of a degree already received.

Note: All student information generated in connection with the code and its implementation are education records of the student(s) involved and cannot be discussed or disclosed (or redisclosed) other than on an educational need-to-know basis or with the student(s)'s prior written and dated consent.

PROCEDURES FOR SUSPECTED VIOLATIONS OF THE ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

The procedure to be followed in any suspected violation of the Academic Honor Code will follow three steps, and, in certain instances (as specified, below), a fourth step.

Step One: Initial Discussion

If a faculty member becomes aware of conduct that might constitute a violation of the code, then he or she should first discuss the conduct with the suspected violator. This discussion might include asking the suspected violator(s) to explain the situation or confronting them with relevant information about the suspected conduct. The possible outcomes are:

- If the faculty member concludes that no violation has occurred, then the matter will be dropped.
- If the discussion results in confirmation by both parties that a violation has occurred, then the faculty member requests a No-Contest Resolution by contacting the coordinator (Step Two).
- If the discussion results in lack of confirmation by both parties that a violation has occurred, then the faculty member refers the case to review by an Honor Review Board by contacting the coordinator (Step Three).
- If a student or staff member wishes to report conduct that might constitute a violation of the code, then he/she has two options:
 - Refer the matter to the relevant faculty member, or
 - Refer the matter to the Academic Honor Council by contacting the coordinator (Step Three).
- Upon referral by the faculty member, the coordinator will contact the student. From that point, the student has five business days to schedule and attend an intake meeting.

Step Two: No-Contest Resolution

The No-Contest Resolution process is an option in cases when the following four conditions are met: 1) neither party contests that the conduct has occurred; 2) the nature of the violation caused by the conduct is clear; 3) the violation is course-related, and 4) both parties agree to the standard sanction for the admitted violation.

In No-Contest Resolution, the standard sanction of XF is applied. To provide fairness in its application, the coordinator will witness the No-Contest Resolution process. The coordinator will serve only as an advisor to the proceedings and not as an agent of formal review. He or she will clearly inform both parties regarding the nature and consequences of

No-Contest Resolution. By choosing No-Contest Resolution, both parties waive the right to contest the matter at a later date.

Step Three: Honor Review Board

In the absence of a No-Contest Resolution, the case is referred through the AHC Coordinator to an Honor Review Board for review and determination.

Preparation. The coordinator convenes the Honor Review Board. Once the Chair has established the Honor Review Board for a case, it will hold a review hearing. The hearing is a closed and confidential meeting with the person raising the concern, the alleged violator(s), and any witnesses who have relevant information that either party wishes to include in the proceedings. Prior to the review hearing, the facilitator will provide a list of witnesses and relevant information to both the person raising the concern and the alleged violator(s).

Confidentiality. All of the testimony and relevant information from the review hearing will be kept in confidence, in accordance with the College policy and to protect the privacy of the student(s) involved under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"). Failure to maintain the confidentiality of the matters and/or the privacy of the student(s) involved will result in a separate and independent charge of code violation. No lawyers or lawyers' representatives (e.g. paralegals) representing the involved parties or family members of either party may be present during the review process or the deliberations of the Honor Review Board.

Multiple Alleged violators. In the case of multiple alleged violators in closely related cases, one Honor Review Board will hear all testimony and evidence. The facilitator has the discretion to hold one review for all students concerned, subject to receipt of the prior written and dated consent of the student(s) involved, or separate reviews for each alleged violator. Reviews will be closed to all other persons unless all parties concerned consent in writing to an open review.

The Review Hearing. The facilitator sets and coordinates the time and place for the review hearing, as well as its structure and flow. Each party has the opportunity to present his or her position and offer relevant information and testimony, including that of witnesses, to support their respective positions. Members of the Honor Review Board may forward questions during any phase of the review with the permission of the facilitator.

Deliberation and decision. Upon hearing all arguments, the Honor Review Board meets privately to deliberate and make its decision. A valid decision constitutes a simple majority arriving at a common conclusion as to whether a violation "more likely than not" occurred. In the event of a split or tied vote, the case will be referred to the full body of the AHC for deliberation and decision. Within 48 hours of the close of deliberations, the facilitator of the Honor Review Board informs both parties about the decision and sanction, if appropriate, through written notification. Notwithstanding this notice requirement, failure to inform both parties of the decision and sanction within 48 hours does not constitute a material procedural irregularity.

Removal of a Board Member. Any member of the Board who has a conflict of interest or bias or whose participation would give rise to the appearance of bias or conflict of interest must recuse him or herself from the deliberation and decision process. If during the review hearing or the deliberations the

facilitator detects a bias that may interfere with the impartial consideration of information by any voting member of the Honor Review Board and that may significantly affect the outcome of the Board's decision, the facilitator must remove that representative from the Review Board immediately. Review and deliberations will continue with the remaining members.

Ad Hoc Review Boards. In the event that a review is necessary outside of the confines of the regular academic calendar (in the summer or over Christmas break, for example), then the Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies may convene a special ad hoc Honor Review Board consisting of two students and one faculty member. If possible, those representatives should be current or former members of the Academic Honor Council, but the dean may exercise the right to appoint other representatives as necessary.

Step Four: Petition to Reconsider

Grounds for Reconsideration. Except as permitted below, the decision of the Honor Review Board is final (whether it is the product of a regular or ad hoc review board), and will be reported to the Academic Honor Council as well as to the Registrar's office. The decision may be reconsidered only if: new information not available at the time of the deliberation and Board's decision can be offered for consideration, one or more parties can provide information that supports an allegation that there was a failure to follow procedure that materially affected the decision of the board, or the sanction applied goes beyond the standard sanction. If the case is not subject to reconsideration, then the matter ends at this step.

Reconsideration: Any petition for reconsideration of a decision by the Honor Review Board is filed with Vice Provost. The Vice Provost determines whether or not the information and reasons offered support the request for reconsideration (based on the above criteria). If the Vice Provost deems that the information offered is sufficient to support reconsideration of the case, then it is brought before the full body of the Academic Honor Council. The Council rehears the case, taking into account the new information and/or material procedural irregularity that has been established. The Vice Provost presents the original case (in brief), the board's decision, and the stated grounds of the petition to the AHC. The AHC may, in its sole discretion, rely on existing written information or call for new information and/or testimony as needed to allow a full and fair consideration of the petition. If the AHC disagrees with the decision of the Honor Review Board, then a new decision may be reached by the entire Academic Honor Council by a majority vote of those present. The Vice Provost will be excluded from the initial vote and will only vote in the case of a tie. If the AHC upholds the decision of the Honor Review Board, then the case will be closed. In either situation, the decision of the Academic Honor Council is final.

Final Responsibility

Saint Mary's, through its designated officers, faculty and/or employees is solely charged with and responsible for interpreting and applying the Academic Honor Code. In exercising that responsibility, the College chooses to give students a distinct and significant role in designing the code, hearing cases, recommending sanctions, and educating the campus community about the importance of academic integrity. This student participation, however, in no way prevents Saint Mary's from exercising its sole discretion, without prior notice, in interpreting, implementing and/or amending these policies and procedures.