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# Student Handbook

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Revised September 2016

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## **WELCOME TO HOUSTON GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

You have sensed the calling of God upon your life to Christian ministry and have decided to prepare to fulfill that calling through graduate studies. We want to help you meet these goals. This Handbook provides information and guidelines for daily routines and professional style that will enhance your ministry and the life of the seminary. It is our hope that you will want to fit into this setting with respect, gratitude, and a professional manner that does honor to our Lord Jesus Christ and his church.

### **ACCREDITATION**

HGST is accredited by the Commission on Accrediting, the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, and the following degree programs are approved: Master of Arts in Missional Leadership, Master of Arts in Spiritual Direction, Master of Theological Studies, Master of Arts in Counseling, Master of Divinity, and Doctor of Ministry. Contact information for the ATS accrediting commission is below.

The Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools  
in the United States and Canada  
10 Summit Park Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15275 USA  
Telephone: 412-788-6505  
Fax: 412-788-6510  
Website: [www.ats.edu](http://www.ats.edu)

HGST is listed in the Education Directory: Colleges and Universities, published by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U.S. Department of Education Center of Statistics, and we are a member of the Council of Southwestern Theological Schools (COSTS). HGST has also been approved by the State Approving Agency to process veteran benefits.

## FACILITIES

Houston Graduate School of Theology is located at 4300-C, West Bellfort Street Houston, Texas 77035 on the east side of the Willow Meadows Baptist Church campus.

HGST's website is [www.hgst.edu](http://www.hgst.edu).

### *Office hours:*

8:30 am—4:30 pm Monday—Wednesday

8:30 am—7:00 pm Thursday

8:30 am—3:00 pm Friday

### *Library Hours\*:*

8:30 am—end of last class Monday—Thursday

8:30 am—3:00 pm Friday

8:30 am—end of last class Saturday (only if classes are scheduled)

Closed Sunday

\*Please see the Library page of HGST website for current semester hours.

Entrance into the facility is through the door adjoining the parking lot.

Classrooms at HGST are located on 2nd floor. The Library "Seminar Room," Room 106, is also used as a classroom.

### *Office Locations*

The 1st floor of the complex houses the Reception Desk, the offices of the President, Academic Dean, Chief Financial Officer, and the Library. All resident faculty offices and classrooms 201-205 are located on the 2nd floor. Telephones, copy machines, and other equipment are to be used by school employees only. A copy machine in the library is available for student use. Offices for the Admissions Coordinator, the Registrar, and Financial Aid and Student Services are located in the north wing, adjacent to the Student Commons.

### *Parking and Transportation*

Ample, well-lit parking is provided for students in the area directly in front of the seminary's entrance. Keep vehicles locked and secure all belongings out of sight.

HGST's campus is easily accessible from the South Main (008) bus route. The stop closest to HGST is Bellfort Ave. @ Greenwillow Dr. You can find exact arrival and departure times by selecting the South Main (008) route and your date of travel on METRO's website.

### *Emergency Exits*

HGST is equipped with fire alarms which are tested on a routine basis. Should the fire alarm sound, all persons must quickly exit the building from the first floor either through the front doors into the parking lot or through the doors on the west side of the building onto playground of Willow Meadows Baptist Church. Those in the north wing (Student Commons or Student Services Offices) may exit through a gate on the breezeway between the main building and the Student Commons which gives egress to the playground. After exiting the building, move to a safe distance from the building and do not re-enter until told it is safe to do so.

## **STUDENT SERVICES**

### **Academic Catalog**

HGST students are expected to read, understand, and follow the Academic Catalog for all academic policies. It is published annually and is available at [www.hgst.edu](http://www.hgst.edu).

### **Life Together**

*Life Together* is the student association of HGST. It exists to provide students with opportunities for community, peer-to-peer mentoring, worship, and service to the student body and communities where they live. Life Together participation is voluntary and designed to be low-impact because students are already living busy lives. Students who participate in Life Together experience a greater sense of connection and are more likely to continue an association as alumnae after graduation.

When requested by the administration, Life Together students serve as ambassadors of the school and assist in recruiting new students. Student Services at HGST is charged with advocating for and coordinating Life Together functions.

### **Student ID**

New students will have a student photo taken during New Student Orientation. Those photos will be used to create a HGST Student ID card. Students will be notified when the completed ID is ready for pick up at the Library Circulation desk.

### **Access card**

Each new student will be given a security access card with HGST lanyard. These cards allow student access to the building during normal hours of operation. They are also required to enter the north wing which contains the Students Commons, Registrar, Admissions and Financial Aid/Student Services offices.

### *Lost Access Card*

To replace a lost access card, the student must pay \$5.00 either at the front desk or online using the HGST online payments link and bring the proof of payment to the Student Services Office. To replace a lost lanyard the cost is an additional \$1.50

### *Malfunctioning Access Card*

To replace a malfunctioning or broken access card, the student must bring the faulty card to the Student Services Office for replacement at no charge.

### **Communication**

Students are assigned an email address (@hgst.edu) upon first registering for classes. This HGST email account is linked the preferred personal email submitted on the HGST application. All correspondence from the seminary and its staff to students is sent to this address. Students are responsible for making sure HGST emails are sent to their preferred email address.

### *School Closures*

In the case of school closures, weather-related or otherwise, the primary form of notification will be an email to the HGST email accounts of all current students.

### *Bulletin Boards*

The bulletin board in the Student Commons will have job and internship postings as the school is notified of such openings. Students may also post event notices or organizational information that may be of interest to our ministry and counseling students. Please refrain from posting commercial marketing materials. The seminary reserves the right to remove any postings as it sees fit.

The bulletin boards in the second floor hallway are reserved for information from the seminary faculty and administration.

### **Children on the HGST Campus**

In addition to providing graduate-level studies, Houston Graduate School of Theology is a community of faith and caring, concerned with the well-being of every member of its family. However, unattended children can disrupt the teaching and learning process, may damage equipment or facilities, and may cause injury to themselves or others. HGST employees are not qualified to provide adequate childcare and cannot take responsibility for the safety and well-being of children while their parents are in class, conducting business on campus, or studying in the library. Therefore, students with children under the age of 12 should seek alternative childcare arrangements off campus.

Children 12 and older may sit quietly and read or study in the Student Commons, the Student Lounge, or the Library. In every case, parents are responsible for ensuring that their child does not become a distraction to fellow students or HGST employees. Noncompliance may lead to the revoking of the privilege of bringing children of any age to campus.

### **Library Services**

The Student ID card also serves as the HGST library card. Students may check out up to eight books. The borrowing period is two weeks. Books may be renewed provided another patron has not requested the item. Reference (including bound HGST theses or project reports) and Reserve Room items may not leave the Library. The fine for overdue books is 25 cents per book per day. Students cannot receive final course grades, diplomas, or transcripts until all library fines are paid in full.

#### *Copy Card*

A reloadable copy/print card is issued to all enrolled students. In order to print documents from the computer lab, students must first log in to a lab computer using their pre-set username/password in order to access and then send a print job to the copy machine. Students are not enabled to send print jobs to the library copy machine from their laptops. To make copies, hold the copy/print card near the small black card reader unit on the left side of the copy machine. Scanning to email is free and is enabled at the copy machine using the copy/print card.

### **Student Commons**

Numerous restaurants are located near campus. In addition, the Student Commons, located in the north wing, is equipped with vending machines, refrigerator, and microwave oven. Care must be taken to maintain this area. Students are expected to clean up and leave the area as clean as possible at all times. Care should be taken when bringing food and beverages into classroom areas. Food and drink are not permitted in the Library. Food left in the refrigerator should be labeled with a name and date. Unlabeled food may be discarded at any time.

### **Student Meetings**

Any special activity or use of classrooms, library or student commons for meetings should be scheduled in advance in coordination with the Academic Office. Student use of the building is limited to the classrooms, Student Commons, and the Library unless otherwise noted.

As good stewards, join us in treating our leased facilities with the utmost respect.

## **INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES**

### **Campus Security Information**

The U.S. Department of Education requires all Title IV institutions to publish and make available up-to-date campus security information to their students and staff. HGST's most recent campus security information can be found on the school's website, [www.hgst.edu](http://www.hgst.edu).

### **Computer/Technology Ethics and Usage Policy**

Houston Graduate School of Theology contracts with IT Fidelity for its computer, email, and Internet services. Students, faculty, and staff have access to the Internet via Wi-Fi connections while on campus. No provision is made for off-campus use. The seminary administration has the right to monitor its computer systems in order to diagnose system problems or investigate security breaches.

All HGST technology, computer and Internet users are responsible for their actions. That responsibility exists regardless of what security measures are in place. All users are expected to use these services in a responsible and ethical fashion. Materials must be respectful and appropriate.

Any violations of the HGST Technology Ethics and Usage Policy will be referred to the Executive Team and will lead to disciplinary actions which may include suspension or the loss of privileges.

The following are considered unacceptable uses of technology and are strictly prohibited:

#### *Offenses against HGST technology users (faculty, staff and students):*

- Posting offensive materials or language to any site in use by the seminary or service; e.g. harassment
- Posting and sharing confidential information; e.g. Social Security numbers or phone numbers
- Unauthorized access or attempted unauthorized access to computer, computer files, personal devices or network
- Computer trespass into remote systems or secured areas of the system
- Invasion of privacy; e.g. cracking passwords and unauthorized examination of files
- Modification or destruction of programs or data other than your own personal files

#### *Offenses involving HGST equipment and services:*

- Causing disruption or denial of normal access to HGST technology; e.g. computer and Internet services

- Vandalism or destruction of personal devices, computer, computer hardware; e.g. run a virus that renders a network unusable. This includes HGST owned technology and technology owned by HGST students, staff, and faculty
- Theft or removal of computers, personal devices, projectors, hardware, cables, etc., as well as computer related materials and services. This includes HGST owned technology and technology owned by HGST students, staff, and faculty

*Criminal offenses:*

- Copying licensed software, unauthorized peer-to-peer file sharing, illegal downloading or unauthorized distribution of copyrighted materials
- Violation of any state or federal laws including those applying to electronic transmissions

*Security for Your Account and Data*

Do not consider the Internet or e-mail to be private or secure. Houston Graduate School of Theology does not encrypt e-mail. Email can be easily intercepted and such email, data and files can read, altered, misused or destroyed at any machine they pass through. Messages sent to nonexistent or incorrect addresses may be delivered to an unintended destination. In addition, machines attached to the Internet are vulnerable. Do not assume your data is safe on your computer if it is directly connected to the Internet. Do not store valuable or privileged information without applying security. If you can't afford to lose it, back it up. Keep all valuable disks, portable hard drives and flash drives in a secure place. Secure backup copies of valuable files or data to cloud based or off site storage. When throwing out obsolete storage devices, make sure no sensitive information remains on the device.

**Copying, Copyright and Peer-to-Peer File Sharing**

HGST students are expected to purchase or otherwise obtain a copy of each required textbook. A copy of the required textbook for each HGST course is placed on reserve in the Library every semester; however, reserve books may not be removed from the Library nor may they be photocopied in their entirety. Except in cases where a book is out of copyright (published prior to 1923) or is not available at a reasonable cost, photocopying an entire book is forbidden under U.S. Copyright Law. Following is the actual text that the U.S. Copyright Office suggests posting in libraries and that is posted in the HGST library.

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used

for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

#### *Peer-to-Peer File Sharing*

Downloading or sharing music, videos, or any other copyrighted media without legally purchasing it or without the owner's permission is a violation of copyright law and the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DCMA) and is subject to legal action including substantial fines and criminal prosecution. Using HGST's network or Internet services to download or share media illegally is also a violation of Seminary's policies, including the Computer Ethics and Usage Policy, and is subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the student and employee handbooks.

### **HGST Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy and Procedures**

Houston Graduate School of Theology is a diverse Christian community whose members represent a wide range of ethnic, cultural, and language backgrounds while encompassing a broad spectrum of faith perspectives. We are dedicated not only to the theological education of our students but also their professional and spiritual formation for ministry. Our students are expected to aspire to excellence in matters of scholarship and personal integrity, conducting themselves in an honest, ethical and professional manner. Thus, activities or behaviors which disrupt the peaceful and essential operation of the Seminary or which negatively impacts the Seminary's reputation for integrity and academic excellence are not permitted. Each student, upon registration, agrees to abide by the HGST Code of Conduct and by the policies of the seminary as published in the Student Handbook and the Academic Catalog. Members of the HGST community (students, staff and faculty) are expected to maintain:

- Honesty: academic, financial, and personal
- Civility and respect for others within the classroom and without
- Fitness for ministry and counseling

Members of the HGST community are expected to refrain from activities and behaviors which include but are not limited to:

- The disruption any HGST activity within the classroom or without
- Physical abuse, sexual harassment, harassment towards others, and/or threatening words or actions
- The theft, deliberate damage or misuse of property belonging to others or the seminary
- The possession, use, or distribution of any form of alcoholic beverage or controlled substance on HGST property

- The possession, display, or use of any dangerous instrument, weapon, or explosives on HGST property

Those who violate the HGST Code of Conduct are subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from Houston Graduate School of Theology according to the HGST Discipline Policy and Procedures.

Complaints of violations of the HGST Code of Conduct must be submitted in writing by the complainant or a school official to the Academic Dean for review. Should the Dean deem the complaint worthy of further review, the student in question will be asked to appear before a seminary committee comprised of the Associate Academic Dean, the Coordinator of Student Services, and two faculty representatives.

The Committee will exercise Christian concern in its dealings with students, and its actions will be intended to be occasions for learning, personal growth, professional development and reconciliation. The welfare of the student, the seminary community, and the organizations it serves are its primary concern (Gal. 6:1-2). The Committee, or any member thereof, shall provide written notice of the allegations and supporting information of the violation of the standards of the HGST Code of Conduct to the student. The student shall have an opportunity to respond in person and in writing.

The Committee will decide if the student has demonstrated ethical misconduct. If the Committee so finds, the appropriate sanction will be determined. The student will be notified in writing of the results.

#### *Disciplinary Action*

Actions of the committee may include, but are not limited to:

- *Warning-* A notice in writing to the student of violation and a request to cease and desist
- *Probation-* A written reprimand for the violation. Probation is for a designated period of time and includes possible disciplinary sanctions should further violation occur
- *Suspension-* A notice in writing to the student of a defined period of suspension after which the student is eligible to return
- *Dismissal-* Separation of the student from the seminary with no promise (implied or otherwise) of readmission. Conditions regarding access to HGST premises, HGST-sponsored activities, and subsequent consideration for possible readmission may be specified

Any of the above may be noted on the student's transcript and may be removed at the discretion of the committee.

### *Right to Appeal*

A student may appeal the decision of the Code of Conduct Committee through the office of the Academic Dean. It will be the Dean's decision to overturn or support the decision of the committee. Upon a review of the decision, the Dean will render a final decision from which there will be no further review or appeal.

### **Educational Rights and Privacy**

FERPA is an acronym for the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g, 34 CFR 99). Congress enacted FERPA, also referred to as the "Buckley Amendment," in 1974. FERPA mandates that schools, including colleges and universities, maintain students' records in a confidential manner. It requires that students be allowed to inspect and review their education records and request the amendment of records that are inaccurate or misleading. It also prohibits the disclosure of student information except in limited circumstances. Rights under FERPA apply to eligible students. An eligible student is an individual who is or has been in attendance at HGST. FERPA rights begin on the first day of class in the academic term for which the student is accepted. Applicants who are denied admission or who never attend are not covered under FERPA.

### *Education Records*

Education records are records directly related to a student and maintained by HGST or by a party acting for HGST. Printed documents, handwritten notes, emails, electronic documents, and web pages can all contain education records covered by FERPA. Education records may include but are not limited to:

- Student folders in Admissions/Registrar/Financial Aid/Advisors/Placement offices
- Student classroom activity or homework maintained by HGST as part of the student's permanent record
- Reports and records
- Class rolls, papers, and tests
- Application forms for student organizations/activities
- Memos between school employees
- Photographs
- Most student disciplinary records

The following are not included in the definition of education records:

- Employment records where employment is not connected to student status
- Alumni records that do not relate to the person as a student
- Records made by instructional, administrative, and educational personnel that are not shared with others

### *Directory Information*

FERPA permits institutions to define some education record information as "directory information" not confidential under FERPA. This is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. HGST considers the following directory information:

- Student's full name
- Permanent address and telephone number
- Local address and telephone number
- Email address
- State of residence
- Date and place of birth
- Marital status
- Academic status
- Class schedule and roster
- Name of advisor
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance and graduation
- Degrees and honors & awards received
- Photographic, video, or electronic images of students taken and maintained by the school

Although the above information is not confidential under FERPA, HGST will not disclose this information to third parties who plan to use the information for purposes of commercial solicitation. Students may opt out of the release of directory information by completing a form available in the Registrar's office.

### *Student Rights under FERPA*

Under FERPA, students may:

- Inspect and review their education records (requests should be made in writing)
- Request the amendment of inaccurate or misleading records (requests must be made in writing)
- Consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in their education records by completing a form available in the Registrar's office
- File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by HGST to comply with this law

HGST is not required to provide a copy of education records unless failure to do so would deny access. Records cannot be destroyed if a request is pending. The school must comply with written requests to inspect and review education records within 45 days. FERPA does not grant the student access to:

- Educational records that contain information on more than one student (the student may review only the specific information about himself or herself).
- Confidential letters of recommendation, for which the student has signed a waiver and which are related to admission to HGST

### *School Officials and Legitimate Educational Interests*

A school official is a person employed by HGST in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or support staff position. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, and other outside parties to whom the institution has outsourced institutional services or functions, persons serving on the Board of Trustees, and students serving on official committees or assisting school officials in performing their tasks.

Only school officials with a legitimate educational interest may access education records. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities for the school. Upon request, HGST also discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

### **Grievances, Appeals, and Complaints**

A grievance is a cause of distress affording reason for complaint. When a student has a grievance regarding treatment under school policies, including grades, every effort will be made to deal with the matter fairly according to this process:

1. An appeal by a student for redress of a grievance must be made in writing with the signature of the person making the complaint.
2. A grievance from a student must first be given to the faculty or staff member to whom the grievance pertains.
3. A further step, in the event it is necessary for a second consideration, will be to have the grievance presented to the Academic Office.
4. If necessary, a decision by Academic Office about a grievance may be appealed to the President. The decision of the President is final.

### *Complaints*

Student wishing to file a complaint with the *Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board* may visit [www.thecb.state.tx.us/studentcomplaints](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/studentcomplaints) . The rules governing student complaints may be found in Title 19 of the Texas Administrative code, Sections 1.110-1.120.

Students wishing to file a complaint with the *Federal Student Aid Ombudsman Group of the U.S. Department of Education* may file a complaint at

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/repay-loans/disputes/prepare/contact-ombudsman>

**Illicit Drugs and Alcohol Abuse** (*Pertaining to Section 22: The Drug Free Schools and Communities Act – Amendment of 1989*)

*Standards of Conduct* - Any student who is found under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol while on HGST property, or who is in unlawful possession of, using, or distributing an illicit drug or alcohol on HGST property or as part of any of its activities, will be expelled immediately from the campus and must appeal, in writing, to the HGST President for reinstatement.

*Report to Legal Authorities* - HGST will observe all City of Houston, State of Texas, and United States federal laws and sanctions for the unlawful possession or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students. If there is a violation of any applicable policy or sanction, law enforcement authorities will be called for the appropriate action or response. Charges resulting from violation of local, state, and federal laws could range from misdemeanor punishment to felony charges; this could result in fines or confinement in jail.

*Health Risks Associated with the Use of Illicit Drugs and the Abuse of Alcohol* - The health risks associated with the use of illicit drugs and the abuse of alcohol are identifiable in several areas. Excessive drinking causes a multiple series of psychological, physiological, and social problems. Illicit drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, barbiturates, and designer drugs are more devastating to the physiological and psychological aspects of human beings.

**Non-discrimination Policy**

HGST welcomes students, regardless of age, national or ethnic origins, sex, marital status, race, socio-economic status, and disability, to all the rights, privileges, and programs generally accorded or made available to faculty. HGST does not discriminate on the basis of any of these factors in the administration of its policies.

Further, the use of sexist, religious, or racial epithets or any other derogatory statement or conduct based upon a person's race, national origin, religion, age, sex, handicap, or veteran status will not be tolerated. All faculty members, staff, and students are entitled to equal treatment, respect, and dignity.

## **Plagiarism**

Presenting the work of another person as one's own without giving proper credit for the use of the information is plagiarism. Students must not quote or paraphrase books, articles, essays, or Internet sites without giving proper credit to the author(s). Students should guard against plagiarism by crediting the original author through use of proper citations. Internet plagiarism is a particularly easy and tempting form of intellectual theft. Cutting and pasting sentences and paragraphs from the Internet without citations is plagiarism. Failure to cite Internet sources is plagiarism. Any student found guilty of plagiarism is subject to a range of consequences as outlined below:

1. If a faculty member suspects plagiarism, the instructor will investigate. If suspicions are confirmed, the faculty member will present the evidence to the appropriate Associate Dean as a record of the offense. If the Associate Dean concurs with the allegations, the following procedures should be implemented as applicable:
  - a. The faculty member may discuss the offense with the student following consultation with the Associate Dean, but the student will meet with the Associate Dean
  - b. For a first offense, the faculty member, in consultation with the Associate Dean, may give opportunity for a rewrite of the assignment or may assign a grade of zero for the plagiarized assignment
  - c. For a particularly egregious case of plagiarism on a major assignment, the consequences could result in automatic failure of the course.
2. The student may appeal the above-mentioned decisions of the faculty member in writing to the Academic Dean
3. The second confirmed offense will result in expulsion from school. The student will be notified by a letter from the Academic Dean. His or her only opportunity for appeal will be to the President in writing. The President's decision will be final.

## **Sexual Abuse and Harassment**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, in any educational programs and activities of educational institutions that receive federal funding. Students and employees are covered by Title IX.

As Christians, we affirm that God's will for both religious institutions and society as a whole is the full and equal participation of all persons without distinction as to gender, race, religion, or physical disability (Gal. 3:26-28). Human relationships in the church should be marked by respect and Christ-like love (Gal 5:16-18). Leadership should be marked by the Christ-like servant character that distinguished the Lord we serve while he was on this earth (Luke 22:24-27).

When sexual harassment or abuse occurs, the Christian community bears a responsibility to offer healing to the victims of such abuse and to correct it. The existence of human sin, however, means that this desirable solidarity and equality in the human community has been and perhaps will continue to be broken by violence and sexual abuse. HGST also has a responsibility to insure that policies are in place both to prevent such abuse insofar as it is possible and to discipline offenders when it occurs.

Relationships, between students and their teachers, advisors, and others holding positions of authority over them, should be conducted in a manner that avoids potential conflicts of interest, exploitation, or personal bias. Given the inherent power differential, the possibility of intentional or unintentional abuse of that power should always be borne in mind. For example, a conflict of interest arises when an individual evaluates the work or performance of a person with whom he or she is engaged in a romantic or sexual relationship.

Romantic or sexual relationships between students and persons in positions of authority compromise the relationship between students and the seminary. No faculty or staff member should be romantically or sexually involved with a current HGST student.

In the case of a student complaint of sexual harassment or inappropriate relational contact with an employee, the follow steps will be taken:

1. The Academic Dean, President, or designated representative will investigate the incident, including meeting with the student and other involved party or parties. If the incident can be resolved to the satisfaction of all involved, the incident will be considered concluded.
2. If the incident is not resolved, a sexual harassment grievance committee will be convened to investigate and recommend a satisfactory solution. The committee, appointed by the President, should include at least one member from the following groups:
  - Board of Trustees
  - Administration
  - Faculty
  - Student Body
3. The committee will gather all necessary evidence and make one of the following recommendations.
  - Dismissal of charge because of insufficient evidence

- Recommendation of disciplinary action against the accused, which may include dismissal, a period of probation, or official reprimand, following the general guidelines for disciplinary actions in this manual
- In some situations, the committee may recommend legal action by the complainant

4. Either party may appeal the decision of the committee to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees may choose the course of action that they deem appropriate. The decision of the Board of Trustees will be final.

### **Student Comments**

*Student Participation in School Decision Making* - Meeting the needs of the students, as they pertain to graduate education, is a priority. It is important, therefore, for the school to know how students perceive the operations and programs of the school and how their educational needs are being met. For these reasons, administrators may occasionally invite students to address or serve on various committees. In addition, students regularly evaluate each course and participate in periodic evaluation of the school and its programs through questionnaires.

### **Students with Disabilities**

HGST is a learning community that welcomes the full participation of students with disabilities into all aspects of seminary life and our journey together toward formation for ministry and service. The seminary will make every reasonable accommodation for any persons with disabilities. This reasonable accommodation is assured by our concern for equitable treatment of all who study and work in the Seminary community, and to follow the legal guidelines for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In compliance with federal and state regulations, the seminary will provide reasonable accommodations or services to qualified students with disabilities. The key principle is "accommodation," not the altering of academic standards or course content. The student must make his or her abilities and limitations known and must meet the instructor's expectations regarding class participation, attendance, and performance.

HGST will deem a request for accommodation or services reasonable if the request:

- Is certified by physician or healthcare professional that the student has a disability that requires accommodation to be made. The physician must certify that the disability is a current medically determinable physical or mental impairment
- Does not compromise essential requirements of a course or program;
- Does not impose a financial or administrative burden upon the seminary beyond that which is deemed reasonable and customary; or

- Is within the scope of the seminary's control

HGST defines a qualified student as one whom, with or without reasonable accommodations, is able to perform the essential functions of program or course requirements. The essential requirements of an academic course or program do not need modification to accommodate an individual with a disability.

The Seminary condemns all occurrences of discrimination and mistreatment as intolerable and will respond to them quickly and effectively through those preexisting channels most relevant to the nature and context of the discrimination or mistreatment.

## **BUSINESS OFFICE**

The HGST Business Office provides support and payment processing for students and alumni. Current academic year tuition and fees rates may be found on the Business Office page of [www.hgst.edu](http://www.hgst.edu).

### **Payment Options**

HGST accepts cash, check, and all major credit cards. Additionally, students can use our [online payment page](#) to make tuition or fee payments.

### *Installment plan*

To use the installment plan, the student must make a 50% down payment by the semester's payment deadline. The remaining balance must be paid in three equal monthly payments beginning one month after the semester's payment deadline.

### **Payment & Refund Policies**

Registration is not valid until arrangements have been made to pay tuition and fees. Failure to pay account balances or to arrange for financial aid in a timely manner will invalidate a student's course registration. In addition, a student will not be able to take final exams, receive grade reports, or receive official transcripts until all account balances have been cleared. For international students, failure to pay in a timely manner may also result in termination of the student's SEVIS record.

Although all fees are non-refundable, tuition may be refunded according to the schedule below.

### *Master's Level Tuition Refunds*

#### *Fall and Spring Semesters*

- A 90% refund will be made for courses dropped through the 1st week of the semester
- A 75% refund will be made for courses dropped through the 2nd week of

- the semester
- A 50% refund will be made for courses dropped through the 3rd week of the semester

No refunds will be made beyond the 3rd week of the semester.

*Summer Terms*

- A 90% refund will be made for courses dropped before the 2nd class meeting
- A 50% refund will be made for courses dropped before the 3rd class meeting

No refunds will be made beyond the 3rd class meeting.

*One-week Mini-terms*

- A 100% refund will be made for courses dropped before the 1st class meeting
- A 50% refund will be made for courses dropped before the start of the 2nd class meeting

No refunds will be made after the start of the 2nd class meeting.

*Doctoral Level Tuition Refunds*

*Fall Semester*

- A 90% refund will be made for courses dropped by May 31
- A 75% refund will be made for courses dropped by June 15
- A 50% refund will be made for courses dropped by June 30

*Spring Semester*

- A 90% refund will be made for courses dropped by November 30
- A 75% refund will be made for courses dropped by December 15
- A 50% refund will be made for courses dropped by December 31

**There are no fee refunds.**

