

# I. The Graduate Studies Program

## Application and Admission

Graduate work demands scholarship which is at a higher level, emphasizes research and creativity, and requires greater student initiative and responsibility than the baccalaureate level.

Applicants for admission must complete the graduate application form, and meet both the general requirements for admission to graduate study and the specific requirements of their particular program of study. Applications, fees, transcripts, and letters of recommendation must be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Adult Studies. The admission decision is made by the program faculty.

### General Admission Requirements

1. Completed graduate study application form and fee;
2. Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and official undergraduate transcripts from all institutions attended;
3. Official transcript(s) from any institution(s) in which postbaccalaureate or graduate course work was taken;
4. Evidence of ability to do graduate work as indicated by a minimum undergraduate cumulative grade point average of 3.0;
5. Three (3) letters of recommendation written by appropriate professionals;
6. Approval by the program faculty.



Specific admission requirements for each Graduate program are available from the Office of Graduate and Adult Studies or the program director.

### International Students

Applicants whose native language is not English are required to demonstrate high-level competence in the use of the English language, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening, prior to admission. This competence can best be established by achieving a score of at least 550 (paper-based) or 213 (computer-based) on the TOEFL (the Test of English as a Foreign Language.) A score of 650 (paper-based) or 280 (computer-based) is required for the Master of Arts in Writing Popular Fiction and in Marriage and Family Therapy. The TOEFL is administered by Educational Testing Service, Box 899, Princeton, NJ 08540, USA. Applicants should make arrangements to take the test as soon as graduate study at Seton Hill University is anticipated and should request ETS to forward the official test score directly to the Office of Graduate and Adult Studies.

# Classification of Students

## Degree Seeking Categories

**Regular** status is assigned to a student of high scholarship and academic work who meets the general and program admission requirements.

## Non-Degree Seeking Categories

**Special** status is a temporary classification granted to a student who wishes to pursue personal and/or professional goals through advanced study. Students are limited to a maximum of 12 semester hours of graduate course work.

**Certification** status is granted to a student already holding a bachelor's or master's degree who is taking graduate courses to obtain a certificate or to use toward registration/licensure from an outside accrediting agency.

## Interim Category

**Provisional** status may be granted to an applicant who has not completed the admission process or who may need to complete some prerequisite course work, but who is entitled to register for a graduate course. This status must be changed within one year of admission.

## Registration Procedures

1. Registration materials will be mailed to the student.
2. Approval for course work must be obtained from the student's academic advisor prior to registration.
3. Registration may be done in person or by mail through the Registrar's Office.

*Note: Applicants may register for courses as provisional-status students while awaiting the admission decision.*

# Financial Information

## Expenses

Tuition, fees, and costs for room and board are published annually, and this information is available on request from the Graduate and Adult Studies Office (724-838-4208).

Students enrolled for 9 or more credits each semester are considered full-time students. All graduate students are charged on a per credit basis.

## Payment of Expenses

Payment of university bills for the semester or session is due prior to the beginning of classes each semester or session. Unpaid balances at the beginning of the semester are subject to late fees equal to 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>% of the unpaid balance or a minimum of \$45. Each student's account must be cleared by the Student Accounts Office. Financial clearance indicates that payment or satisfactory payment arrangements have been made by the student. If the student does not obtain financial clearance, the University reserves the right to:

- place the student on financial hold;
- withhold the student's identification card validation;
- cancel dining hall privileges;
- withhold transcripts;
- cancel registration;
- withhold conferring of degree;
- withhold participation in graduation ceremonies.

Checks should be made payable to Seton Hill University and should include the student's social security number. A service fee will be assessed on all checks that are returned from the bank for lack of sufficient funds, regardless of the maker. For the student's convenience, the Student Accounts Office also accepts VISA, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, and bank-issued debit cards.

## Refunds as the Result of Overpayments

Refunds that are the result of overpayments or excess financial aid will be made to the student by check. Refunds as a result of credit card payments will be refunded back to the credit card. Refunds that are the result of a Parent Plus Loan, payments through Tuition Management Systems, or from OneCause will be refunded as directed on a Refund Request Form.

## Installment Payment Plans

Seton Hill University offers a tuition payment plan through Tuition Management Systems for full-time students who prefer to pay the bill in monthly installments during the year. Information on the monthly payment plan option is available from the Student Accounts Office (724-838-4214) or Tuition Management Systems (1-800-722-4867). Part-time students should contact the Student Accounts Office to discuss available payment plans.

## Fines

Monetary fines may be assigned for

- library violations or late returns;
- lost library books;
- parking violations;
- room damages;
- lost room keys;
- violations of University policies that are against the general welfare and safety of the community.

## Refund Policy

### Total Withdrawal

To formally withdraw from all classes at the University, a student must complete the withdrawal form available in the Registrar's Office. Students who have already completed a class in a prior session of a semester should refer to the section under Course Withdrawals (Drops) from Accelerated and Intensive Courses. Non-attendance or informing the faculty member does not constitute withdrawal from class. Final determination of the refund amount will be based on the date on which the form is received in the Registrar's Office. An administrative fee of the lesser of \$100 or 5% of institutional charges is charged for a total withdrawal.

Students who withdraw from the dormitory after the semester has begun must notify the Residence Hall Director. Withdrawal from residence is not official until keys are returned.

Tuition, fees, room, and board charges are refunded based on the following schedule:

IF STUDENT WITHDRAWS	PERCENTAGE OF INSTITUTIONAL CHARGES THAT ARE REFUNDED
Before the first day of classes	100%
On the first day of classes through the first 10% of the semester/session	90%
After the first 10% through the first 25% of the semester/session	50%
After the first 25% through the first 50% of the semester/session	25%
After the first 50% of the enrollment period	0%

Seton Hill reserves the right to change the refund policy to comply with state or federal regulations. A current refund policy is posted in the Registrar's Office each semester.

### Course Withdrawals (Drops) from Semester-Based Programs

Students who drop a class (and remain enrolled in other classes) must complete an Add/Drop form (available in the Registrar's Office). If the Add/Drop form is processed prior to the end of the Add/Drop period, the student will receive a 100% refund. No refund is given to the student if the form is processed after the Add/Drop period ends.

### Course Withdrawals (Drops) from Accelerated and Intensive (weekend, one or two week) Courses

Students who drop a class (and remain enrolled in other classes) must complete an Add/Drop form (available in the Registrar's Office). Students who have completed a class in a prior session and want to drop a class in a subsequent session must complete an Add/Drop form. If the Add/Drop form is processed before the second class meeting, the student will receive a 100% refund. No refund is given to the student if the form is processed after the second class meeting. Students who are only enrolled in one class must complete a Withdrawal form. Please refer to the Refund Policy for Total Withdrawal.

## Campus Bookstore

Textbooks and supplies may be purchased at the bookstore on campus. The bookstore accepts cash, personal checks

(with a Seton Hill University I.D. and a current driver's license), MAC, VISA, MasterCard, Discover, and American Express. The website for the Seton Hill University Bookstore is [www.setonhillbookstore.com](http://www.setonhillbookstore.com).

## Financial Responsibility

A student will not graduate, participate in commencement activities, or receive transcripts of the University record until all accounts with the University have been paid in full. In addition, if it becomes necessary for Seton Hill to engage an outside collection agency to assist in the collection of payment of the bill, the student will be responsible for all collection and legal fees.

## Settlements

If an account is in collection, or has been closed and returned from collection, and the University accepts a settlement in full vs. payment in full, all financial holds will be removed from the student's account and the University will consider the student a high financial risk and reserves the right to prevent the student from future enrollment in the University.

## Financial Assistance

**Scholarships** - Seton Hill University makes available scholarships for graduate study. Interested students should inquire in the Graduate and Adult Studies Office for details.

**SHIP Scholarship** - Seton Hill International Program (SHIP) was founded to enrich the educational and cultural experience of an international student seeking a master's degree from Seton Hill University. The scholarship is valued at \$5,000 per year for a maximum of 2 years graduate study.

**Stafford Student Loan Program** - Long-term low-interest loans are available through a cooperative effort of private lending institutions and state and federal governments. Repayment and interest do not commence until six months after the student completes or discontinues her/his courses of study for the subsidized Stafford Loan. Interest may be capitalized on the unsubsidized Stafford Loan, or the student may make quarterly interest payments. The student has up to ten years to repay. Students enrolled on a full-time basis, carrying a minimum of nine credits per term, are eligible to borrow up to \$18,500 per academic year. Students enrolled at least half-time, carrying a minimum of four and one-half credits, may borrow a reduced amount. Students must be enrolled at least half-time to qualify for the Stafford Loan.

To receive consideration for the federally-insured loans, the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) must be completed at the earliest possible date. Applicants should also submit the Seton Hill University Graduate Financial Aid appli-

cation. These forms are available in the Financial Aid Office, first floor of the Administration Building or on the Seton Hill University website: [www.setonhill.edu](http://www.setonhill.edu).

# Student Services

## Campus Services

At the center of the Seton Hill Campus is **Reeves Memorial Library**, housing a spacious two-story library and the university archives as well as the university theater and Harlan Art Gallery. This building serves as the information center of the campus to students and faculty alike. The library, renovated in 1987 and completely automated since 1992, holds a collection of approximately 119,000 items which includes the following: books, periodicals, microforms, both educational and entertainment videos, CDs, and educational software programs. Access to information is made easy through Endeavor's Voyager automated catalog. Voyager (along with certain online databases) is accessible both in the library and through any personal computer connected to the university network or the Internet.

Access is provided to the Internet at the library through the Seton Hill LAN. Products currently offered to the university community on-line are: EBSCOhost and Lexis-Nexis Universe. These databases offer thousands of abstracts and journal articles, many of which are full-text, to further enhance the library's collection. Well-lit areas for study, quiet corners for concentration, and a center for video viewing invite concentrated study and relaxed perusal. Collections in women's studies, art, theology, behavioral sciences, business, and children's books on the Holocaust are among the library's strengths.

With an emphasis on service, the library staff works in conjunction with Seton Hill's faculty in providing a thorough bibliographic instruction program on library usage. Each element of the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum offers an aspect of library research and critical thinking to broaden students' capabilities in accessing and using information. As part of the growing world of information, the library at Seton Hill offers its patrons world-wide interlibrary loan service through the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC). Reciprocal borrowing privileges are available to students, faculty, and staff through the Westmoreland Academic Library Consortium whose members are: St. Vincent College; the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg; Pennsylvania State University campuses at Fayette, McKeesport, and New Kensington; Westmoreland County Community College; and Seton Hill University. Reeves Library belongs to the Share Westmoreland and PALINET Consortia.

**The Media Center**, located in Maura Hall, contains audio/visual equipment that can be scheduled, delivered, and retrieved by Media Center personnel upon request. Requests should be made 24 hours in advance on the proper A/V request

forms. Requests for items needed on Monday should be made no later than Friday morning.

**The Curriculum Library**, located in St. Joseph Hall, ground floor, contains sample curricula, textbooks, courses of study, and tests. It is available for use by students enrolled in education/certification programs.

**Campus Ministry** While Catholic in orientation, Campus Ministry provides opportunities for students of all denominations to enrich their college experience by participation in prayer and worship, community service, social responsibility, and, in general, sharing the gifts of life with the entire university community.

**The Post Office**, located on the ground floor passage between the Administration Building and Maura Hall, receives mail from the U.S. Postal Service daily and distributes it each morning. Intra-university mail is distributed to campus boxes throughout the day. Students are assigned mailboxes upon request, and are expected to check their mailboxes each week.

**A Drug and Alcohol Prevention and Education Program** is provided to the entire Seton Hill community. This program presents information on alcohol and other drugs and strives to foster personal development through programs, lectures, and experiences geared toward self-enhancement.

Student Services for graduate and adult, undergraduate students are housed in the Office of Graduate and Adult Studies. This staff includes the Director of Admissions and Adult Student Services, three Program Advisors, and two Administrative Assistants. These services, which are primarily academic in nature, include: orienting new students, scheduling assistance each semester/session, test proctoring, CLEP and DANTES testing, initiating into the Portfolio process, facilitating the adult honor society, and overall advocacy for the adult student. Students requiring other services are referred to the appropriate offices.

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**

Seton Hill University has adopted a policy consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which allows each student to inspect and to review her/his educational records and which limits the circumstances in which information contained in a student's education records might be disclosed. The policy is maintained in the Office of Graduate and Adult Studies, and any student may obtain a copy of it there. (Please see page 30 for additional information.)

### **Housing**

On-campus residence hall facilities are available for graduate students. Requests should be made to the Office of Residence Life.

## **The Academic Program**

### **Philosophy and Educational Objectives of Graduate Study**

As a liberal arts university, rooted in Judeo-Christian philosophy and in the Catholic intellectual tradition, Seton Hill is committed to the holistic development of students who are pursuing graduate education. By providing advanced study within a liberal arts context, Seton Hill University aims to contribute to the preparation of highly qualified professional women and men whose education will enable them to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century and enjoy fruitful personal and professional lives.

Seton Hill University believes that the preparation of persons for specialized careers within a small, private institution permits greater attention to all aspects of individual development — intellectual, social, moral, aesthetic, and physical. It hopes in turn that these professionals will share their knowledge and talents with those whose lives they touch.

In order to realize this philosophy, Seton Hill University expects all candidates for master's degrees to achieve the following objectives:

- To become a reflective practitioner of the discipline being mastered and develop a professional philosophy which integrates theory, practice, research, and methodology.
- To become a scholar-practitioner, analyzing, critiquing, and evaluating the discipline, its current research, research methodology, and the relationship between its theory and practice.
- To master the practical skills appropriate to the discipline, becoming an effective and creative practitioner capable of developing new knowledge in the field and applying it in innovative ways.
- To become a social change agent aware of one's personal value system and its impact on professional practice, as well as one's social responsibility to the profession and to society.
- To develop effective communication skills, including the ability to deliver clear written and oral presentations.
- To be aware of and able to apply ethical standards appropriate to the discipline.
- To recognize that a discipline develops within the context of a multi-cultural and pluralistic society, understanding the relevance and importance of social and cultural differences as defined by privilege and/or oppression.

## Program of Study

A program of study should be prepared by the student and her/his advisor immediately after acceptance into the graduate program. This program must be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Adult Studies on the final Master's Program of Study Form and must be approved by the student's advisor, the Program Director, and the Associate Dean.

## Application for Graduation

Any student who has successfully completed the following is eligible to receive the Master's degree appropriate to the curriculum chosen.

An application for graduation must be filed with the Registrar before the beginning of the last semester of study and at least 60 days prior to the anticipated graduation date, and the graduation fee must be paid to the Student Accounts Office in the semester prior to graduation. A student may apply for graduation if:

1. the necessary hours for the degree are completed or registered for during the semester of graduation,
2. a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 in all graduate courses has been achieved,
3. all final examinations are completed one week prior to the end of the semester of graduation, and
4. all thesis work or final projects are completed at least three weeks prior to the end of the semester of graduation.

## Knowledge of Requirements

Program Directors, the Associate Dean, and the Graduate Program Advisor are available to assist the student. Procedures have been established to check the progress of the student toward a degree. It is the student's responsibility, however, to know the requirements of her/his degree and to fulfill them. It is also the student's responsibility to be thoroughly familiar with the academic policies and procedures as outlined in this catalog.

## Conferring of Degrees

Seton Hill University observes three dates for graduation each year: May, August, and December. In addition, special commencement ceremonies are held in January and June for Writing Popular Fiction graduates. The appropriate date of completion of all course requirements is shown on the student's transcript. Degrees are formally conferred only at the commencement exercises in May and December.

# Academic Policies

## Credit Load

A full load of coursework at the graduate level is 9 credits per semester. The graduate program is designed for working adults, and therefore many students will enroll on a part-time basis.

## Advisement

The Director of the Program serves as the advisor to the students or assigns a faculty member to assume these responsibilities. Registration, changes in registration, and withdrawal from a course must be approved by the student's advisor and communicated in writing to the Registrar.

## Academic Standing

In order to remain in good academic standing, a graduate student must maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average in graduate coursework. A student whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0 will be placed on probation for one semester and will be required to meet with her or his advisor to develop a plan of study. In addition, any student with unsatisfactory performance in any semester or in the program of study may incur probationary status. Failure to raise the cumulative grade point average to 3.0 or significantly improve the level of performance may result in suspension or dismissal from the program. The progress of a student on probation is reviewed by the Graduate Academic Status Committee. A student may challenge a suspension or dismissal by petitioning, in writing, the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will review the petition. The decision of the Vice President for Academic Affairs is final.

Semester grade reports are issued on-line to students by the Registrar. Students who wish to have an official grade document should request an official transcript.

## Grading System

Grade	Quality Points	Description
A	4.0	Indicates the student has demonstrated superior aptitude and initiative in the course and produced work of excellence and distinction characterized by accuracy, practical application, originality, creativity, insight, and understanding.
A-	3.67	

Grade	Quality Points	Description
B+	3.33	Indicates the student has demonstrated very good aptitude and given evidence of marked achievement in accuracy, practical application, originality, creativity, insight, and understanding.
B	3.0	
B-	2.67	
C+	2.33	Indicates the student has demonstrated minimal aptitude and achievement toward accuracy, practical application, originality, creativity, insight, and understanding.
C	2.0	
F	0.0	Indicates failure in the course.
P		Indicates the student has done the equivalent of B work or higher. Credit is awarded, but the grade is not computed in the student's grade point average.
HP		Indicates the student has done the equivalent of A work. Credit is awarded, but the grade is not computed in the student's grade point average.
U		Unsatisfactory. Indicates that no credit is awarded. This grade is not computed in the student's grade point average.
AU		Audited course. Indicates satisfactory completion of an audited course. No credits are granted.
I		Incomplete. Indicates that certain work remains to be completed before the student can receive credit for the course.
W		Indicates the student withdrew officially and before mid-semester.
WF		Indicates the student withdrew after mid-semester with a failing grade.
WP		Indicates the student withdrew after mid-semester with a passing grade.

A student's grade point average is calculated by dividing the total number of credits attempted at Seton Hill University (exclusive of pass-fail credits) into the total number of quality points earned at Seton Hill University. Courses graded with W, WP, and WF will appear as "hours attempted" on the student's transcript but are not used in calculating the student's grade point average.

In circumstances where a change to a student's grade is necessary, this must be done by the faculty member in consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, whose approval is required. For fall semester courses, this must be done no later

than the following February 28; for spring semester courses, by June 30; and for summer term courses, by September 30.

### **Repetition of Courses**

A student may repeat a course, in which case only the higher grade shall be used in computing the grade point average. However, the previous grade received is not removed from the transcript. Only the credits earned in the repeated courses count toward graduation. Exceptions to this are courses which are noted as "repeatable for credit."

A student is permitted to take a course no more than two times to achieve the minimum grade required in the graduate program.

### **Incomplete Grades**

The student must request and receive permission from the instructor and the Director of the Program to be granted an Incomplete in a course. This must be done during the last month of class and before the last day of classes for the course. 80% of the course work must be completed for a student to be eligible for an Incomplete. (Instructor's discretion may be used to determine eligibility.) The due date for making up the Incomplete grade is no later than February 28 for fall classes, June 30 for spring classes, and September 30 for summer classes. If the "I" grade is not removed by that date, the default grade specified on the Incomplete Request Form is assigned, or a grade of "F" is assigned if no default grade is submitted. Students on academic probation may not request an Incomplete.

### **Auditing**

Any course in the University may be audited. The student must ask permission of the instructor to audit and must notify the Registrar's Office, in writing. The credits for the audited course are included in the total count of credits for which the student is billed, but no credits are earned for any audited course.

### **Time Limit for Completion of Work**

All requirements for the Master's Degree must be completed within five (5) years from the initial date of acceptance or date of matriculation into the program, whichever is later (excluding any leaves of absence). A student may request from the Associate Dean an extension of this time limit for valid reasons.

### **Transfer**

Transfer of credits to a graduate program at Seton Hill University may occur with the following limitations:

1. A maximum of six (6) credits may be accepted for transfer provided they were earned at the graduate level at an accredited institution, are deemed equivalent to courses in the plan of study, and carry a grade of B or better.
2. No credit will be accepted for courses completed more than five (5) years prior to the student's admission to the graduate program.
3. An official transcript must be submitted along with a catalog description of the course in question.
4. Transferred grades will be reflected on the student's plan of study but will not be computed into the Seton Hill University grade point average.

Under appropriate academic circumstances, students matriculating at Seton Hill University may take courses at other accredited graduate schools. The credits from these courses will be accepted only after prior permission has been granted by the student's advisor and the Program Director and an official transcript for these credits is presented to the Registrar.

### **Leave of Absence**

Students who wish to interrupt their education may petition the Program Director. The petition should contain the reasons for requesting the leave of absence and an estimate of its duration, which cannot be longer than one calendar year. Students who are not enrolled for a period of longer than one year must reapply for admission to the program.

The official date for taking a leave of absence is the date on which the written notification is received in the Office of the Registrar. (See Time Limit for Completion of Work.)

### **Class Attendance**

Every student is expected to attend all class meetings and will be held responsible for the full content of each course of study. Each instructor will make clear on the course syllabus how absences from class affect evaluation. For the Seton Hill student, a responsible academic life implies systematic preparation in all course work.

If a student is absent from class for a disproportionate amount of time and allows work quality to become substandard, the student may be asked by the Associate Dean to withdraw during the semester with a grade of W, WP, WF, or F, based on the academic calendar. Students on academic probation are permitted no class absences.

### **Military Call-up**

Seton Hill University will enforce its withdrawal and refund policies as described in the University Catalog to the full extent possible and practical in every situation. In case of the

issuance of a call-up of reservists to military duty which takes place after the Drop/Add period has ended in a given semester, the following options are available:

1. If the course content allows for completion through independent study, a grade of Incomplete ("I") is assigned, and the student may complete the course work to receive a grade (and credits if the course is passed) in a time frame not to exceed one semester after the release from active military duty.
2. If the course's structure does not permit completion by the method described in #1, the student may receive a grade of "W" in the course and receive a voucher for the cost of the course (tuition and course-specific fees), provided that the student enrolls in the same course within two years after the release from active military duty, and provided that the student has fully met the financial obligation to Seton Hill prior to that enrollment. If either of these conditions is not met, the voucher will be invalid, and the student will be required to pay for any courses taken in the following semesters.

No credit will be issued for courses that are partially complete, nor will refunds be issued except as the University's policy states.

### **Withdrawal from Courses**

A student who wishes to withdraw from a course at any time must consult with the Program Director and submit a form with proper signatures to the Registrar. When a student withdraws from all courses at the University, the Program Director and the Registrar must be consulted.

Withdrawal from a course until mid-semester appears on the student's academic record as "W." After mid-semester, until 80% of the course schedule has been completed, the course professor will assign either a "WP" (withdraw passing) or "WF" (withdraw failing). This will be recorded on the transcript, but not used in grade point computation. After 80% of the course schedule is completed, no withdrawal is permitted. Failure to attend class or merely giving notice to an instructor will not be regarded as official notice of withdrawal.

### **Withdrawal from the University**

Students who wish to withdraw from the University must consult with the Program Director, and then complete an exit interview in the Office of the Registrar. Failure to comply with this policy will result in the grade of "F" being given for all courses being pursued.

The official date of withdrawal from the University is the

date on which the written notification is received or exit interview completed in the Office of the Registrar.

### **Course Cancellation**

Seton Hill University reserves the right to cancel courses for which there is insufficient enrollment.

### **Resolution of Student Concerns Involving a Faculty Member**

The following procedure should be followed for those instances in which a student has a concern about a faculty member:

- The student should make an appointment with the faculty member to discuss the problem and/or concern. This step must take place before any further action can occur. The only exception to a direct meeting with the faculty member is if the student feels she/he is in physical danger.
- If the student has met with the faculty member and is still not satisfied, she/he should meet with the Program Director. If appropriate, the Program Director may schedule a three-way meeting to discuss the issue(s) being raised.
- If the concern is not resolved at the Program Director level, the student should make an appointment with the Associate Dean. If the instructor is the Associate Dean, the student should make an appointment with the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- If the concern is not resolved at the graduate studies level, the student should make an appointment with the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Prior to the meeting, the student will be informed that the Vice President for Academic Affairs will consult with the Associate Dean to determine how the issue has been handled to this point. Depending on the student complaint, if the issue is not resolved, the Vice President for Academic Affairs may recommend that the student consider filing a formal academic grievance.
- If the concern is not resolved after meeting with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the student has decided not to file a formal academic grievance, the decision of the Vice President for Academic Affairs in these matters is final.

The procedure described above is different from a formal academic grievance. A formal academic grievance is filed when the student believes that she/he has been dealt with unfairly in an academic matter, commonly related to unfair grading practice.

### **Academic Grievance Board**

If any student feels she/he has cause for grievance in academic matters not covered elsewhere in this catalog, the student may ask the Vice President for Academic Affairs to initiate the academic grievance procedure. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will discuss the matter with the involved faculty member or director and the student, and then help them to establish an *ad hoc* Grievance Board. This board will consist of two faculty members and two students, agreed upon by both parties, and a fifth member from the university community, chosen by the previously mentioned four. If the faculty member or director involved has not named two faculty members for this board within two weeks, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will appoint them. The Grievance Board will act in an advisory capacity to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The decision of the Vice President for Academic Affairs is final.

### **Code of Academic Conduct**

Seton Hill expects that all its students will practice academic honesty and ethical conduct. The University regards plagiarism, cheating on examinations, falsification of papers, non-sanctioned collaboration, and misuse or illegal use of library material, computer material, or any other material published or unpublished as violations of academic honesty. Violators of the code may expect disciplinary sanctions. These sanctions will under normal circumstances be determined by the faculty member who discovers the infraction against the code. If the student and faculty member accept a resolution offered by either of them, the matter is considered closed. In the event that a resolution is not reached, the matter shall be taken before the Academic Honesty Committee. This committee consists of one faculty member chosen by each party, one member of the counseling staff, and the Associate Dean.

### **Research Project**

No later than a candidate's final semester of study for the Master's degree, the Program Director will appoint a major advisor for the research paper or thesis project. The student, in consultation with the major advisor, is responsible for initiating the work and for securing one additional faculty member to serve on the reading committee. The reading committee is responsible for approving the subject of the research paper or thesis project and for arranging and conducting the oral examination. The major advisor has the primary responsibility for guiding the research paper or thesis project, but the student should consult with the reading committee to draw upon their expertise in relevant areas.

The completed research paper or thesis must be submitted to the reading committee at least two weeks before the final oral examination. The student must be registered for course work in the term during which the final oral examina-

tion is scheduled. This examination is devoted primarily to the research paper or thesis. An affirmative vote of the members of the reading committee is required to pass the final examination. The advisor-approved abstract and the form indicating that the final examination has been passed must be submitted to the Program Director no later than the last day of the term during which the student expects to graduate. Exceptions to this requirement must be approved by the Associate Dean.

Three copies of the final research paper or scholarly report, with the signatures of the reading committee, must be delivered to the Library prior to graduation. Copies will be bound and distributed to the Library, the project supervisor, and the student. Official transcripts and the diploma will not be released until the thesis is submitted to the Library.

### **Certification**

Candidates seeking certification in any specialization must complete all requirements for certification and submit appropriate forms to the Program Director.

### **Return of Assignments**

Faculty members make available to students a procedure for returning final assignments. If the faculty member agrees to a mailing, the students must supply the faculty member with a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the returning of assignments at the end of the semester. It will be understood that students not providing the stamped envelope do not wish materials to be returned.

### **Special Topics — Variable Credit Courses**

The Graduate Program provides a variety of innovative courses that carry one to three academic credits. With the approval of the academic advisor, students may choose from this pool to add breadth to their course of study.

### **Transcripts**

An official copy of the student's transcript will be prepared for any student or for an individual whom the student designates, provided that the student submits the request in writing, with signature, social security number, current address, telephone number, and payment of \$5 per copy, and provided the student is financially cleared by the Student Accounts Office. "Unofficial" transcripts are available on Campus Connect.

## **Student Records**

Seton Hill University has adopted a policy consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) which allows each student to inspect and to review her/his educational records and limits the circumstances in which information contained in a student's education records might be disclosed. The policy is maintained in the Student Services Office, and any student may get a copy of it there. FERPA accords students certain rights which include:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education record within 45 days of the day the University receives a request for access.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes to be inaccurate.
3. The right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by Seton Hill; a person or company with whom Seton Hill has contracted; or a student designated by a Seton Hill employee in performing his or her official tasks. A school official has legitimate educational interest if he or she needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Under this policy, the following student information is considered to be directory information which may be disclosed by the University unless a student exercises her/his right to request that such information not be disclosed:

Name; address (local, home, and email); telephone number (local and home); date and place of birth; dates of attendance; major field of study and class level; degrees, honors, and awards received; previous institutions attended; past and present participation in officially recognized activities and sports; height and weight of athletic team members.

To withhold disclosure of such directory information, written notification must be received in the Student Services Office no later than the last day of the drop/add period in any given semester. A form must be filed in each academic year to renew the request to withhold information.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Seton Hill University to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

## **Name Change**

Students who have a name change after their last enrollment at Seton Hill University or a change from the name submitted on their application for admission must provide a copy of the Social Security card, driver's license, or other official document showing the new name. No enrollment or records services can be accomplished for a student with a name that differs from that on her/his Seton Hill records. All grade reports, transcripts, and diplomas are issued only under the person's legal name as recorded by the University Registrar.

## **Undergraduate Students Enrolled in Graduate Courses**

Seton Hill University seniors may enroll in graduate courses if appropriate to their academic program of study. The student must have the Program Director's written permission, upon the recommendation of the student's academic advisor, to enroll in graduate course work. When enrolling in graduate courses, the student should understand that she/he is expected to complete work at the graduate level, with all academic requirements being the same for graduate and undergraduate students. When a student enrolls in a graduate course prior to receiving her/his baccalaureate degree she/he will designate in writing to the Registrar whether the course is to be counted as undergraduate credit or as graduate credit. If the course is designated as graduate credit, the student must have successfully completed a minimum of 120 credits in addition to the graduate course(s) to receive the Bachelor's degree. In order for the graduate course work to be credited towards completion of a graduate degree, the student must have achieved a grade of "C" or better in the course.

## **Petitions for Exceptions to Policies and Requirements**

Exceptions to policies and requirements are rarely made. A student who believes an exception is justified may petition the Graduate Council, in care of the Associate Dean, and should state exactly what exception is being requested and the reasons for it. The student's advisor must countersign the petition indicating her/his knowledge of the request. Petitions should be submitted well in advance of the time the student wishes the exception to go into effect.