

6. Academic Policies

Christendom College is committed to promoting academic freedom. It recognizes the right of students to the Truth, and to receive instruction in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church. The Graduate School recognizes and defends each faculty member's freedom and right to teach the Catholic Faith without fear of reprisal. Professors and students enjoy the freedom to explore and research and thereby develop their own insights into Catholic doctrine in accord with the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. Legitimate pluralism, consistent with fidelity to both the ordinary and extraordinary Magisterium, strengthens the bonds of unity, and honest dialogue is most welcome at the Graduate School.

Students are bound by the academic policies and degree requirements of the Graduate School Bulletin in effect at the time of their first registering as a matriculating student fully admitted to the program. A student who returns to the Graduate School after an absence of more than one semester will be bound by the requirements in force when he or she returns. Academic policies apply equally to classroom and online students, except where noted.

6.1. Admissions

Admission to the Christendom Graduate School is open to all properly qualified persons who desire to develop their knowledge of authentic Catholic teaching in explicit communion with the Holy See and with the principles of renewal in ecclesiastical studies given to the Church by the Second Vatican Council. A prior education in theology is not required, although students are expected to know the teachings of the Catholic Faith as presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Students without prior formal theological education are required to complete the prerequisite course (THEO 590, Introduction to Theology) at the beginning of their studies. The application process is the same for on-campus and distance students. Christendom College does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, handicap, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, and other school-administered programs.

6.1.1. Application requirements

Applicants for admission to the Christendom Graduate School must present evidence of their ability to do graduate work in theology. A baccalaureate degree (B.A. or B.S) or the equivalent—in any field—is required before any graduate credit can be awarded. Thus, a baccalaureate degree is required in order for an applicant to begin pursuit of the Master of Arts and/or the Advanced Apostolic Catechetical Diploma. However, such a degree is not required for pursuit of the Basic Apostolic Catechetical Diploma or for the certificates, as these certifications can be completed without the conferral of graduate credit. As the Graduate School has rolling admissions, there is no application deadline. Applicants for the Master of Arts and/or Apostolic Catechetical Diploma should send the following materials to the Christendom Graduate School (Attn: Mary Castano) at 134 Christendom Drive, Front Royal, VA 22630:

- Completed application form (obtainable online at <https://graduate.christendom.edu/admissions/>).
- A statement of purpose (approx. 150 words) explaining the reasons for enrolling in the program.
- At least two (2) letters of recommendation, preferably one from a pastor or priest who knows the applicant, and another from a former professor or from a supervisor with whom the applicant has worked.
- Official transcripts of all post-secondary academic work.
- \$100.00 application fee (made payable to Christendom College).

6.1.2. Casual Students

Casual (non-degree-seeking) and certificate students have a simplified admission process consisting of an information form only. They must fill out and submit the application form but do not need to submit letters of

recommendation nor the application fee. However, they must submit evidence of a bachelor's degree (in the form of an official transcript) if they wish to receive graduate credit for their courses for transfer to another institution. A student may register for courses as a casual student while completing the application for admission to the MA program, and all credits earned as a casual student can apply towards the degree, upon admission. A student may be admitted on probation if the Admissions Committee is not satisfied of his or her ability to do graduate work in theology. The probationary period is two semesters, and the student must earn a GPA of 3.0 to be fully admitted. Audit students are welcome at Christendom on a space-available basis; they need not apply for admission, but may simply register for courses.

6.1.3. Transfer Credits

Students who wish to have their previous graduate work in theology or philosophy considered for transfer to Christendom must make this request of the Dean of the Graduate School and provide official transcripts of such graduate work. They may also be required to supply course syllabi or catalog course descriptions establishing that the courses correspond to Christendom courses and are of an academic quality sufficient for graduate work. No more than twenty graduate credits may be transferred. Credits earned more than ten years before matriculation at NDGS may not be accepted. Academic credit is not granted for life experience, for course work done on a non-credit basis, nor for independent study outside of a university or seminary.

6.1.4. Deferral and Reinstatement

Any student who is accepted to the Christendom Graduate School may choose to defer his or her enrollment for any reason. If the student enrolls in courses within three years of his initial acceptance, he or she does not need to reapply for admission. After three years, the student will need to reapply.

Degree-seeking students may pause the pursuit of their degree at any time. If a student takes a break of no more than two consecutive years, he or she may be automatically reinstated to active student status.

Students who have paused their course of study—for no more than five consecutive years—due to military service will be automatically entitled to reinstatement in their degree program without the need to reapply. A student who is leaving his or her course of study due to military service should submit a notice of departure in writing to the Dean of the Graduate School. He or she should also submit a written notice of intent to return to the Christendom Graduate School no later than three years after the completion of the period of military service. There may be some exceptions to these time frames under the Higher Education Opportunity Act.

Any degree-seeking student who pauses his or her course of study for more than two consecutive years must meet with the Academic Dean to determine whether extended absence from the program has been detrimental to his or her ability to complete the degree, and whether there are any courses that need to be repeated. Students returning from military service will be provided with one-on-one academic advising in order to determine what the next steps are for completing their degree. If a particular course of study is no longer available or suitable for the student, these circumstances will be addressed as well.

6.2. Taking Courses

6.2.1. Add/Drop/Change of Courses, Cancellations

During the first two weeks of the fall and spring semesters and the first week of the summer semester, students may register for, or add, a course for credit by completing the *Add/Drop/Change Form* and submitting it to the registrar. No for-credit student will be admitted to a classroom course after this period, although students may