

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN
LEADERSHIP STUDIES**

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2019-20

Geneva College
Beaver Falls, PA

March 2019

Policies stated in this handbook are subject to change without notice. The most current edition of the MSLS Student Handbook is available on the Geneva College website and in Moodle under the School Resources menu.

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INTRODUCTION

Geneva College offers programs that serve different student populations. The policies described in this student handbook are specific to Master of Science in Leadership Studies (MSLS) students.

The purpose of the MSLS Student Handbook is to outline College procedures and expectations and to describe the support services available to enable students to be successful members of the Geneva College community. This handbook does **not** constitute a contract between the College and students or faculty.

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to Geneva's community standards and academic policies. Course content and academic and conduct regulations are reviewed and revised periodically. The College reserves the right to withdraw or amend information in this handbook and in the curriculum without prior notice. The most up-to-date version of this MSLS Student Handbook will be available on the Geneva College website and in Moodle under the School Resources menu. **Students are responsible to know the policies of the official Geneva College Catalog as well as the policies in this MSLS Student Handbook.**

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Geneva College admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, disability, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic or other school-administered programs.

MSLS AND THE COLLEGE MISSION

GENEVA MISSION STATEMENT

Geneva College is a Christ-centered academic community that provides a comprehensive education to equip students for faithful and fruitful service to God and neighbor.

The MSLS program in the Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies supports the mission of Geneva College through the vision to offer nontraditional students Christ-centered degree programs leading to high-demand occupations.

The mission of the Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies is to extend the reach of Geneva College and its ability to educate nontraditional students through the lens of the Biblical perspective. We deliver on that commitment by providing a rigorous, relevant education through innovative pedagogies, modalities, and programs designed to prepare students for professional life.

All the policies and procedures of the MSLS program are intended to support and maintain the mission of Geneva College.

SECTION ONE

MSLS CONTACT INFORMATION

MAILING ADDRESS

Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies
Geneva College
3200 College Avenue
Beaver Falls, PA 15010

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

800-576-3111

GENEVA TECHNOLOGY CENTER HELP DESK

(For myGeneva and Geneva email help only)

724-847-6789 (Hours: M-F, 8 am to 7 pm EST)

MOODLE LMS HELP

For technical assistance pertaining to issues or questions within the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS) for online courses, see the Help Center block located on any page within the LMS. (Hours: M-F, 8 am to 8 pm EST)

MSLS ACADEMIC ADVISOR

Sue Starn 724-847-6758
sastarn@geneva.edu

DEAN OF ADULT AND ONLINE PROGRAMS

John Gallo 724-847-6756
jdgallo@geneva.edu

STUDENT SUCCESS TEAM

successcoach@geneva.edu

PROGRAM DIRECTOR FOR STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Kara Lee Mantinaos 724-847-6767
klmantin@geneva.edu



The Department must have your **updated contact information** to keep you informed of vital course and student account details. Please keep the personal information in your myGeneva account up-to-date.

SECTION TWO

ACADEMIC POLICIES of the MSLS

PROBATIONARY ADMITTANCE

At the discretion of the Dean of Adult and Online Programs, a student may be admitted to MSLS on academic probation (due to low undergraduate GPA). A hold is placed on the student's record for review prior to continuing enrollment in a second semester. Enrollment/registration for another semester is contingent upon meeting the requirements stipulated in the acceptance letter (as well as having no student account balance due with Student Financial Services).

For students with an undergraduate GPA below the admissions standard, the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) may be required in order to be considered for probationary admission into MSLS.

TEXTBOOKS and COURSE MATERIALS

It is important that students be prepared for each course by purchasing the required books and materials well in advance of the course start date. Updated book lists for online courses can be found in the online learning management system (Moodle) under School Resources > Graduate Student Resources.

While textbooks are an expense that may or may not be accounted for in financial aid packages, **students must purchase books in advance of a course start date with their own money.** They may later use any excess financial aid to reimburse themselves after their financial aid is disbursed.

MSLS students can purchase or rent books through the Geneva College Bookstore website at [this link](#) or use the ISBN number provided on the book list to find the text(s) elsewhere online. Please be advised that renting books will require adherence to return deadlines; students are responsible for any expenses incurred as a result of failure to comply with these deadlines.

The MSLS program recommends that students obtain books for a course approximately one month prior to the course start date. **Failure to obtain textbooks in advance of the course start date is not a valid reason for missing assignments or turning in late work.**

Learning objectives can only be met when students fully engage all the materials that have been carefully selected for the course. A lack of having read the materials in a course is obvious to instructors because assignments and assessments (e.g., quizzes, papers, postings, etc.) reveal the level of engagement with a text and its concepts. Therefore, grades will be negatively affected when a student does not have the book(s) for the duration of the course.

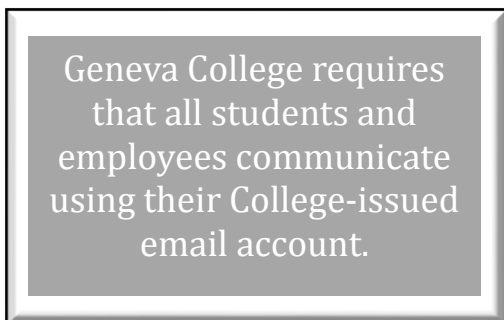
Other important textbook information:

- The MSLS program recommends that students do not purchase all the books for MSLS at one time. Course content is updated regularly; therefore, the required texts change as well.
- The MSLS program will not change course texts less than 30 days prior to a class start date.
- Students should not sell a book after a class is completed until they are certain it will not be needed again; some books are used for multiple courses.

COURSE REGISTRATION

Due to the accelerated format of courses in the MSLS program, **students must be registered for a course by the class start date in order to take the course.** Late enrollment creates the potential for delayed purchase of textbooks/materials, missing the first assignment(s), early low grades, and generally being behind in the course from the beginning. In order to promote student success in MSLS courses, no late registrations (beyond the course start date) will be accepted by the Department. Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the express consent of the Dean of Adult and Online Programs.

STUDENT USE OF GENEVA EMAIL FOR ALL COLLEGE CORRESPONDENCE



Geneva College provides all students with a Geneva email account (e.g., username@geneva.edu) and a complimentary subscription to Geneva's Office 365 for Education, through which students can download and use the latest versions of Microsoft Office products, including Outlook email, for use on their personal computers and mobile devices using Mac or Windows operating systems. **It is strongly recommended that students use the Microsoft Office products provided by Geneva to ensure compatibility with other students and the instructor**

for assignment submissions. Students will not receive credit for assignments that are submitted in a format that cannot be opened, read, or viewed by the instructor or fellow students; in those cases, the student must resubmit the assignment in the appropriate format to receive credit.

The College requires that all students and employees correspond via email using only the Geneva email account issued by the Tech Center upon matriculation. There is a free Outlook app available for download (IOS and Android) that students can use to conveniently access Geneva email from their mobile devices.

For Geneva technology account help, contact the Tech Center at 724-847-6789 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. EST. For myGeneva and Geneva email password issues, please utilize the [Password Self Service](#) section on myGeneva. By using this feature, you can specify an alternate email address to which a password reset link will be sent should you forget your Geneva password. **Please utilize [Password Self Service](#) before calling the Geneva Help Desk.**

Also, please be aware that your passwords for myGeneva and for the Moodle learning management system **are not connected**. Therefore, if you have forgotten your password to log into your Moodle classroom, please use the **Moodle** password reset function (available on the Moodle log-in screen by clicking “Lost password?”).

LEARNING AND PHYSICAL DISABILITIES POLICY

Geneva College values diversity and inclusion and recognizes disabilities as an aspect of diversity. Our shared goal is to create learning environments that are accessible, equitable, and inclusive, ultimately leading to the success of our students in and beyond college. Therefore, Geneva College complies with the ADA as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act by affording reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. Any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations should contact Geneva’s Student Success Center (SSC) to arrange a confidential appointment with the Director of the SSC before or during the first week of classes. (Some accommodations may take time to put into place, so it is advised to request this meeting as early as possible.) Legally, no retroactive accommodations can be provided.

Accommodations for disabilities are available only as recommended by the SSC. Students whose accommodations are approved will be provided confidential letters which students should review and discuss with their instructors in relation to course requirements.

Grievance Policy for Accommodations

If the student does not agree with the accommodations decided upon by the Director of the Student Success Center, the student should appeal the decision in writing to the Dean of Student Development. The Dean of Student Development, after consulting with the student and the Director of the SSC, will rule which accommodations will be granted in this situation. The ruling of the Dean of Student Development will be binding.

For more details, visit [the Student Success Center website](#) or call 724-847-5005.

STUDENT SUCCESS TEAM

As a part of your educational experience at Geneva College, a Student Success Team is available to help you be successful in your courses and, ultimately, in your journey through the MSLS program. With the help of your instructor, the Student Success Team monitors courses to help students stay on track academically. The team will regularly review discussion postings and assignment submissions and will attempt to contact students who have missed postings and/or assignments.

The Student Success Team will contact students periodically to make sure they are progressing academically and that they have a workable degree plan in place. Should a student fail to complete an academic event, miss an assignment, or have another issue impacting academic progress, the instructor and the Student Success Team will work with the student to establish a plan to help the student persist.

If/when the Student Success Team contacts you, please respond immediately.

Any questions or concerns regarding assignments or other coursework should be directed to the instructor first. Questions or concerns regarding academic progress, degree plans, or other needs can be directed to the Student Success Team that is available to students and instructors to help students meet with success in Geneva’s MSLS program. To reach the Student Success Team, please email successcoach@geneva.edu or call 724-847-6756, and you will be directed to the appropriate person to assist you.

THE GRADING SYSTEM IN THE MSLS PROGRAM

Letter grades for the MSLS program are A, B, C, and F. Geneva includes pluses (+) and minuses (-) in the determination of the grade point average (GPA). Grade points are assigned for each semester hour of credit earned according to the following grading system:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Explanation</u>	<u>Grade Points</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
A	Excellent	4.0	92.00% – 100.00%
A-		3.7	90.00% – 91.99%
B+		3.3	87.00% – 89.99%
B	Good	3.0	83.00% – 86.99%
B-		2.7	80.00% – 82.99%
C+		2.3	77.00% – 79.99%
C	Satisfactory	2.0	73.00% – 76.99%
C-		1.7	70.00% – 72.99%
F	No Credit	0.0	< 70.00%
WX, WP, WF	Withdrawal		

Students must maintain a 3.0 grade point average to continue in the MSLS program. Students may receive a course grade of “C” (including C+, C, and C-) on their transcript. However, students who receive three or more “C” grades (including C+, C, and C-) will have to **first** retake at least one of those courses and earn a higher grade **before continuing on with any new coursework**. Students **cannot graduate** with an MSLS degree with three or more “C” grades.

Also, a student whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 will not be able to graduate until they have retaken enough courses to raise their GPA to a 3.0 or above.

GRADE REPORTING and STUDENT PRIVACY

The College is committed to students' privacy rights. Therefore, students can view final grades for courses on their unofficial transcript accessible in the Student Information portal in myGeneva, which can only be accessed with their username and password. Further, no College offices or personnel are permitted to report final grades or GPA by phone, fax, email, or letter/written form.

GRADE CHANGES

A final grade for a course cannot be changed after 30 days from the course end date.

“F” GRADE

An **F** (failing grade) is given when course objectives are not satisfactorily achieved. An **F** grade can be cleared only by repeating the course. **If a student repeats a previously failed course, only the repeated course grade will factor into the overall GPA.** However, please note that **all** F grades will remain on the transcript whether or not they have been repeated.

ACADEMIC STANDING

Academic Continuation

The academic status of each student is determined at the end of every semester (fall and spring) and is normally based on the criteria described below. Students are normally considered to be in “Academic Good Standing” unless their cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 or they have earned three or more “C” grades (including C+, C, and C-). Students who are not in “Academic Good Standing” fall into one of two categories: Academic Probation or Academic Dismissal. Normally, students are placed in one of these categories based on academic performance as described below. Students who have GPAs that qualify them for these categories may be explicitly notified, but absence of such explicit notification does not exempt a student from the status or the consequences of the status.

The College administration reserves the right to place a student on warning, probation, or dismissal for reasons other than the criteria described here. Criteria that might be used to make these judgments include, but are not limited to, specific patterns of poor academic performance, weak progress in completing attempted credit hours, poor class participation, lack of conformance to academic regulations, and so forth.

Note that these statuses are based on term and cumulative GPAs. A term GPA is based only on coursework taken during that term. A cumulative GPA is based on all local hours and any transfer hours completed after matriculation.

Academic Warning

Students who have a cumulative GPA *or* a term GPA less than 3.2 at the end of a semester are on Academic Warning. Students who have earned two “C” grades (including C+, C, and C-) are also on Academic Warning. This indicates that either 1) the student has a cumulative GPA that is sufficiently low to warrant concern about the student’s ability to successfully meet the 3.0 minimum GPA required for graduation, 2) the student had a term GPA that is sufficiently low to warrant additional intervention with regard to academic progress, or 3) earning one more “C” grade would place the student on Academic Probation and prohibit graduation. However, as long as the student’s cumulative GPA remains at 3.0 or above and the student has no more than two “C” grades, the student is in “Academic Good Standing.”

Academic Probation

Students who either have 1) a cumulative GPA less than 3.0 at the end of a semester **or** 2) earned three or more “C” grades (including C+, C, and C-) are on Academic Probation. Additionally, students who enter into MSLS under probationary acceptance due to GPA are also on Academic Probation during their first semester. Academic Probation status indicates that the student is not making satisfactory progress towards graduation. For students with a cumulative GPA less than 3.0, appropriate faculty and staff in the Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies will determine what, if any, probationary conditions the student may have in order to help the student become academically successful. Conditions could include, but are not limited to, limiting the student to part-time enrollment, requiring a weekly check-in with the Student Success Team, and so forth. For students who have earned three or more “C” grades (including C+, C, and C-), the student will be required to **first** retake at least one of those courses and earn a higher grade **before continuing on with any new coursework**. In general, students on Academic Probation may also be required to first retake courses they have failed as the quickest means to raise their GPA, depending on course availability.

Students on Academic Probation are strongly encouraged to seek assistance from the Student Success Team for help with academic skills such as writing, effective study habits, and time management.

Students who stop out of one or more blocks will have their academic standing evaluated at the time of readmission. Academic standing will be determined by the Dean of Adult and Online Programs. The Dean will review the student’s demonstrated coursework, class participation, and other relevant academic items to determine the student’s academic standing.

Students can be on Academic Probation for multiple semesters, whether consecutive or not. Students on Academic Probation will return to Academic Good Standing if they raise their cumulative GPA to a 3.0 or above at the end of a probationary semester and have no more than two “C” grades on their record.

Academic Dismissal

Academic Dismissal occurs when the student has attempted twelve or more local (Geneva) credits and both the student’s term *and* cumulative GPA are below a 3.0 at the end of a semester **or** when the student’s academic performance indicates that it is unreasonable to anticipate eventual completion of degree requirements. Since the dismissal is intended to be permanent, only the lapse of a year or more and a drastic change in circumstances can justify application for readmission to the Dean of Adult and Online Programs. The Dean will grant readmission of a dismissed student only in rare instances. Readmission following dismissal will be based on evidence of improved academic performance or evidence that past difficulties that have affected academic performance have been overcome and that eventual completion of the requirements for a degree can be reasonably expected.

A student on Academic Dismissal may appeal to be moved to Academic Probation status by submitting a written request, along with any supporting documentation, to the Dean. **Such an appeal must be made within 30 days of notice of Academic Dismissal.** The appeal must be based on the assurance of improved academic performance. Such appeals will be granted only in cases where there is clear reason to expect immediate and marked improvement in academic performance and the demonstration that factors that have disrupted academic progress have been successfully addressed. The Dean may consult with appropriate College staff concerning the student's appeal.

Exceptions to any part of this policy may be granted by the express consent of the Dean.

GRADE APPEAL PROCESS FOR MSLS STUDENTS

Instructors in the MSLS program assign grades based on an assessment of students' achievement of stated criteria for a specific learning activity, using their professional and academic judgment. Even though Geneva College uses consistent grading rubrics in all courses and provides course syllabi, instructors have the right to modify or alter rubrics and/or syllabi, change assignments, determine late penalties, and otherwise authorize all other forms of classroom management.

A formal grade appeal process is in place for students who are able to demonstrate that a deliberate, improper bias or significant grading inconsistency has occurred with regard to their **final course grade**.

Please note that this formal appeal process is **not applicable to individual assignment grades**. Disputes over individual assignment grades should be made directly to the instructor as soon as the grade is posted. The instructor reserves the right to provide additional clarifying feedback, modify the assignment grade, or keep the original grade.

To appeal final course grades, the formal Grade Appeal Process below must be followed. Complaints or appeals that are not issued through formal procedures and proper channels will not be addressed. The Grade Appeal Process is as follows:

1. The student must submit an appeal of the grade in writing to the instructor of record on the course and to the Program Director for Student Experience (see the contact information at beginning of this handbook) within **seven calendar days of the date the grade was posted (accessible in myGeneva)**. The request made by the student should be in formal writing and sent via email in order to document the request and subsequent response. The request must list: 1) the specific assignment(s) in question as it relates to the **final course grade** and 2) the steps that the student took to resolve the issue(s). The appeal should document why the student believes the assignment grade(s) does not accurately represent the submitted work based on the stated grading guidelines.
2. The instructor of record will respond to the appeal in writing within seven calendar days of receiving it with copies to the student and the Program Director for Student Experience. The response will justify why the grade should or should not be changed.
3. In rare situations, the student may request a further review and will be asked to submit a clean copy of the assignment(s) in question to the Student Appeals Committee within seven calendar days of the instructor's response. After reviewing the materials, the Student Appeals Committee can take the following action:

a. Affirm the decision of the instructor and inform the student of that decision.

OR

b. Ask another qualified instructor to review and grade the assignment(s) in question and then make a final decision with input from their evaluations.

4. The Program Director for Student Experience will document the final decision in writing to the student with a copy to the instructor.
5. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, a further appeal can be made in writing to the Dean of Adult and Online Programs within seven calendar days of receiving the written decision of the Student Appeals Committee. The Dean will assess the documentation of the appeal and will render a decision that either affirms or reverses the Student Appeals Committee's decision. The Dean will respond to the student within seven calendar days of receipt of the student's appeal.
6. The decision of the Dean of Adult and Online Programs is final regarding the matter of the grade in question.

SECTION THREE

PARTICIPATION and WITHDRAWAL POLICIES

Students' consistent and timely participation in the online classroom is an integral component of the opportunity and responsibility that attends membership in a community of Christian learning. As such, students should participate in all the scheduled class sessions by completing an academic event for *each week* of their courses.

Pregnant and Parenting Students

Pregnant and parenting students are held to the same learning objectives and academic expectations as all other MSLS students. However, reasonable accommodations are available for pregnant and parenting students, such as an excused absence in the case of childbirth or a documented medical situation of a student's child. Further, the College prohibits discrimination, sex discrimination, and harassment against pregnant or parenting students. Students may review the [College website](#) for more information concerning their rights in this regard.

PARTICIPATION in ONLINE COURSES

In the online environment, participation is marked by the completion of an *academic event* within the given timeframe (typically Monday-Saturday in most online courses, defined herein as a *session*). Academic events include, but are not limited to, submission of a class assignment, participation in an online discussion forum, or completion of a quiz or exam. Please note that simply contacting the instructor and/or the Student Success Team **does not** qualify as an academic event. Exceptions may be granted by the express consent of the Dean of Adult and Online Programs.

Non-Participation in First Session

If no academic event is completed within the first session of an online course for which the student is registered, the student will be administratively withdrawn from the course and will receive a refund in accordance with the [tuition refund policy](#). The course will not appear on the student's transcript.

Additionally, as most MSLS students take only one class at a time, a student who is administratively withdrawn from a course due to non-participation in the first week is also assumed to have unofficially withdrawn from the College and will be administratively withdrawn from any other future registrations and from Geneva College. The student will receive a refund for all courses in accordance with the tuition refund policy. The courses will not appear on the student's transcript.

Non-Participation after First Session

Beyond the first session, if no academic event is completed for a class session, the student will be considered as having not participated in that week in that class. Each week of non-participation will result in **zeros on the missed assignments** as well as a **half-letter grade deduction** from a student's final course grade. The student may talk to his or her instructor regarding options for turning in missed assignments and earning points back, but accepting late work is at the discretion of the instructor and will still involve a late penalty, in addition to the half-letter grade deduction from the final course grade. Please note that students who make arrangements ahead of time with the instructor and/or Student Success Team may not receive a half-letter grade deduction, but will still receive zeros for any missing coursework.

If a student does not complete an academic event in two consecutive sessions where the second consecutive week of non-participation occurs during Weeks 3-6 of an eight-week course, the student will be administratively withdrawn from the course with a grade of WP, WF, or WX. If a student does not complete an academic event in two consecutive sessions where the second consecutive week of non-participation occurs during Weeks 7-8 of an eight-week course, the student will receive an F and must repeat the course.

If a student is registered for more than one course, an administrative withdrawal from one course for non-participation *after the first session* does not necessarily withdraw the student from other courses or from Geneva College.

If a student anticipates a circumstance in which they will be unable to complete an academic event for a session, the student must notify the instructor *prior to the session* and make proper arrangements. *Legitimate reasons* for anticipated weeks of non-participation include medical emergency or surgery, military involvement, or work-related travel. If these are discussed with the instructor ahead of time, they may not be subject to the half-letter grade deduction penalty. This will be at the sole discretion of the instructor and may require written verification of the anticipated week of non-participation.

Additionally, students may request an exemption from non-participation policies when dealing with issues related to natural disasters/emergencies, military service deployment, or a medical withdrawal. Students will need to work with the Student Success Team to have these exceptions approved. (See the "[Students Affected by Disasters](#)", "[Military Withdrawal](#)", and "[Medical Withdrawal](#)" sections of this handbook for more details.)

DROP AND WITHDRAWAL POLICIES

Account Balances

After a student registers for courses in a given semester, electronic bills will be generated monthly in Nelnet for students to view. **All bills must be paid in full ten (10) days before the start of the first course. For more information, please visit [the website](#).**

If the student account balance is not paid prior to the start of the first course, the student will be administratively withdrawn from all courses and will receive a refund in accordance with the [tuition refund policy](#). The courses will not appear on the student's transcript.

Please refer to [the website](#) for more information on tuition and billing.

Dropping Courses

To drop or withdraw from a course, students must immediately communicate **in writing** (email is acceptable) with the Student Success Team (successcoach@geneva.edu) regarding intent to drop a class. Charges will continue to accrue until the Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies receives written notice of withdrawal from the student. [All financial aid and tuition refund policies apply](#).

Students may drop a course and not have the course appear on their transcript through the first week of the course.

Students may **withdraw** from a course after one week of the course has transpired through approximately 66% of the course. For eight-week online courses, students may withdraw through the last class date of Week 5. The course will appear on the transcript and the grade will be listed as WX (withdrawal before judgment could be formed), WP (withdrawal, passing) or WF (withdrawal, failing) as assigned by the course instructor. The grade will not impact the student's GPA.

Students are not able to withdraw from a course after the dates above and will receive the grade assigned by the course instructor.

Additionally, students may request an exemption from standard withdrawal and refund policies when dealing with issues related to natural disasters/emergencies, military service deployment, or a medical withdrawal. Students will need to work with the Student Success Team to have these exceptions approved. (See the "[Students Affected by Disasters](#)", "[Military Withdrawal](#)", and "[Medical Withdrawal](#)" sections of this handbook for more details.)

Withdrawals and failing grades may result in the **cancellation of financial aid and/or charges and financial obligations** to Geneva College.

Financial aid must be adjusted according to federal guidelines for students who fail classes or withdraw.

MCLS students should maintain regular communication with the Department regarding course withdrawals and failures because they impact financial aid and Geneva College student account balances.

Stop-outs

Students who do not enroll at Geneva for one or more semesters will be considered as withdrawn from the College and must apply for readmission. Students who do not take courses at Geneva for one eight-week block and have no future registrations will also need to complete a “fast-track” readmission process in order to re-enroll. Academic standing will be determined upon readmission. A student who anticipates a need to stop out of the program should contact the Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies.

Please note that stopping out or taking a leave-of-absence is counted as part of the seven-year period allowed for completion of degree requirements.

Withdrawal from the College

To withdraw from the College, the student must immediately communicate intent to withdraw, **in writing**, to the Student Success Team at successcoach@geneva.edu.

Refunds

Student refunds will be issued in accordance with the current tuition refund policy based on the date of withdrawal. The effective date of withdrawal is the date that the student contacts the Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies. If students do not receive an immediate reply to emails, they should call the office to confirm receipt of their intent to withdraw. The Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies is not responsible for lost mail or emails sent to the wrong address or for any other reason that communication of the intention to withdraw is not received by the Department.

Please visit [this webpage](#) for the current tuition refund policy.

Additionally, students may request an exemption from standard withdrawal and refund policies when dealing with issues related to natural disasters/emergencies, military service deployment, or a medical withdrawal. Students will need to work with the Student Success Team to have these exceptions approved. (See the “[Students Affected by Disasters](#)”, “[Military Withdrawal](#)”, and “[Medical Withdrawal](#)” sections of this handbook for more details.)

Financial Aid

Withdrawals and failing grades may result in the **cancellation of financial aid and may result in charges and financial obligations to Geneva College**. In the event of dropping a course or withdrawing from the College, students **must** contact Student Financial Services at 724-847-6530 for more information.

Readmission

Students who do not enroll at Geneva for one or more semesters will be considered as withdrawn from the College and must apply for readmission. A student who anticipates a need to stop out of the program should contact the Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies. Please note that all graduation requirements must be met within seven years of first attendance with Geneva’s MSLS program.

When a student is readmitted within seven years of their original matriculation date into the MSLS program, the student will be held to the graduation requirements in the Geneva College Catalog in effect at the time they first matriculated.

If seven or more years pass after a student first matriculates in the MSLS program, the re-entering student must meet the graduation requirements in the Geneva College Catalog in effect at the time of readmission, which may mean that the student must take additional courses beyond those required when the student first entered the MSLS program.

STUDENTS AFFECTED BY DISASTERS

Our primary concern for students in areas affected by natural or human-made disasters and for those serving as first responders is their safety. In the event of a major disaster or emergency that is natural or human-made, Geneva College will use reasonable and humane judgment to assist those students who have been impacted. Students who are registered for courses and have been impacted by a disaster should contact the College as soon as possible to discuss their options.

This policy applies to Geneva College students who reside or are located within areas that are declared major disaster or emergency areas as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. This policy and its benefits also apply to international Geneva College students who reside or are located in major disaster or emergency areas outside the United States. If FEMA is not applicable, the Dean will make the final determination as to whether an area is considered a major disaster or emergency area.

In the case of local disasters or emergencies that are not declared major disasters or emergencies by FEMA (or recognized international agencies), Geneva College will use reasonable and humane judgment to accommodate the student. Accommodations to the student will depend on the special circumstances, but may be similar to those given to students in declared major disaster areas. Students should contact the Student Success Team for assistance.

Extensions

Short extensions on assignments (generally 1-2 weeks) can be arranged in most cases by contacting your instructor(s) and the Student Success Team. Particularly in cases of local disasters or emergencies, the student may be required to submit supporting documentation which clearly shows that he or she was not able to complete his or her online coursework successfully.

Students who are granted short-term extensions on assignments will also not be penalized for non-participation in the week(s) where assignment extensions have been granted.

Please note that if short-term extensions are granted for assignments during Week 7 or 8 of an eight-week course, the instructor will be required to submit the final course grade as is (with zeros in for any missing assignments). When the assignments have been completed, the instructor will submit a grade change form. Final grades cannot be changed after 30 days from the course end date. Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the express consent of the Dean.

Emergency Withdrawal

In some cases of major disasters or emergencies, it may be more appropriate for a student to request an emergency withdrawal from current courses. The goal of an emergency withdrawal is to support students who may be experiencing serious extenuating circumstances by allowing a course withdrawal in order to minimize academic consequences. While the refund policies still apply, the College reserves discretion to allow financial consideration for emergency withdrawals.

In order for an emergency withdrawal to be considered, the circumstance must be serious, unforeseen, and documented and must not be able to be addressed through a reasonable academic arrangement such as a short-term extension (described above). Emergency withdrawals are not granted for circumstances that are foreseeable, avoidable, or do not significantly and reasonably impact a student's ability to complete his or her online coursework. Emergency withdrawals are also not granted if a student does not provide sufficient documentation.

Initiation of Request for Emergency Withdrawal

- 1) A student requesting an emergency withdrawal must make the request in writing (email is acceptable) or by phone to the Student Success Team. The student will be asked to complete and sign a Request for Emergency Withdrawal form, which can be obtained by calling the Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies at 724-847-6756. If a student is unable to access a computer and/or internet connection, the Department will complete and submit the form on the student's behalf.
- 2) The student must provide documentation that clearly shows that the student was not able to complete his or her online coursework successfully. Documentation could include, but is not limited to, police reports, news reports, medical reports, or other documentation deemed acceptable by the Department.

Determination of Request

- 1) A decision approving or denying the emergency withdrawal request will be made by the Dean. This decision will be made within 48 hours of receiving a completed request form, provided there is no additional documentation required.
- 2) The Dean will provide a copy of the decision to the appropriate personnel, including but not limited to, the Program Director for Student Experience, the Student Success Team, the Registrar, the Academic Advisor, and the Student Financial Services Department.
- 3) The Dean will notify appropriate offices on campus of the student's status and send a copy of the decision to the student for his/her records.
- 4) Copies of the decision will be maintained in the student's file. The appropriate Professional and Online Graduate Studies personnel will maintain original documentation.

Approval of an emergency withdrawal request is not guaranteed. Financial consideration outside the standard withdrawal and refund policies is not guaranteed.

Deadline of Application for Emergency Withdrawal

Requests must be initiated within two weeks of the student's last date of academic activity. For online students, the last date of academic activity will be the last day (usually Saturday) of the most recent week that the student participated (completed an academic event).

For online courses, the deadline for requesting an emergency withdrawal must be made prior to the last two weeks of class(es).

Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the express consent of the Dean.

Grades and Completion of Academic and College Responsibilities

A student whose request for emergency withdrawal is approved will be given a grade of “WX” (withdrawal, no judgment formed) in each course for which he/she is registered. (Note: If a student withdraws from classes before the start date of another class in the same semester, the student may choose to withdraw from all classes in that semester, but only the in-progress classes will receive grades. Also note that a grade of WX is not granted during the first week of an eight-week class). No credit for any course is earned when emergency withdrawal is granted.

It is the responsibility of the student to speak with his or her Academic Advisor about the potential implications of withdrawing before submitting a request for emergency withdrawal.

Financial Aid Implications

An emergency withdrawal, just like any withdrawal, could have financial implications beyond the cost of the course. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the Student Financial Services Department to discuss the implications of an emergency withdrawal on his/her financial aid. Federal and state financial aid will be returned according to government guidelines.

Refund of Tuition and Fees

Students who are granted an emergency withdrawal may be eligible for some refund. Exceptions to the standard withdrawal and refund policies will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

MILITARY WITHDRAWAL

Geneva College recognizes that students who serve in the U.S. armed forces may encounter situations in which military obligations force them to withdraw from a course of study and that this can sometimes happen with little notice. This policy is intended to recognize and make appropriate allowances for students who find themselves in such situations.

Therefore, military withdrawal is an option for students who need to leave the College during the semester without completing their coursework, as necessitated by service, whether voluntary or involuntary, in the United States Armed Forces, including service by a member of the National Guard or Reserve, on active duty, active duty for training, or full-time National Guard duty under Federal authority.

Initiation of Request for Military Withdrawal

1) A student requesting a military withdrawal must make the request in writing (email is acceptable) to the Student Success Team. The student will be asked to complete and sign a Request for Military Withdrawal form, which can be obtained by calling the Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies at 724-847-6756.

2) The student must provide documentation by presenting a copy of the military orders or by providing other appropriate documentation deemed acceptable by the Department.

Determination of Request

- 1) A decision approving or denying the military withdrawal request will be made by the Dean. This decision will be made within 48 hours of receiving a completed request form, provided there is no additional documentation required.
- 2) The Dean will provide a copy of the decision to the appropriate personnel, including but not limited to, the Program Director for Student Experience, the Student Success Team, the Registrar, the Academic Advisor, and the Student Financial Services Department.
- 3) The Dean will notify appropriate offices on campus of the student's status and send a copy of the decision to the student for his/her records.
- 4) Copies of the decision will be maintained in the student's file. The appropriate Professional and Online Graduate Studies personnel will maintain original documentation.

Grades and Completion of Academic and College Responsibilities

A student whose request for military withdrawal is approved will be given a grade of "WX" (withdrawal, no judgment formed) in each course for which he/she is registered. (Note: If a student withdraws from classes before the start date of another class in the same semester, the student will be dropped from all classes in that semester, but only the in-progress classes will receive grades. Also note that a grade of WX is not granted during the first week of an eight-week class). No credit for any course is earned when military withdrawal is granted. Students withdrawing for military reasons will not be penalized with regard to grades/academic standing, and they will be exempt from non-participation policies.

Readmission Process

- 1) A student who has taken a military withdrawal from the College or has had studies interrupted because of active duty or active service in a branch of the United States Armed Forces and wishes to re-enroll must notify the College of the intention to return to resume a course of study upon conclusion of duty or service and present appropriate documentation. The student should notify the College by at least two weeks prior to the intended start date.
- 2) The student must provide notice to the College within three years from the time he or she is discharged from military service or is placed on inactive duty of the intention to re-enroll. Notice should be provided in writing to the Dean of Adult and Online Programs and should include documentation (including an official certificate of release or discharge, a copy of duty orders, or other appropriate documentation) to establish that the student's withdrawal was related to active duty or active service in the United States Armed Forces and that the student is able to resume studies.
- 3) Readmission after a military withdrawal guarantees the following:
 - A streamlined readmission process
 - No application or readmission fee
 - No change in academic standing
 - Access to the same course of study he/she was in at the time of withdrawal (except in cases where a program has been discontinued, in which case the student will work with the Academic Advisor to determine an acceptable degree plan)

If a student is not academically prepared to resume a course of study in which he or she was previously enrolled or is unprepared to complete a program, the College will determine whether reasonable means are available to help the student become prepared. The College may deny the student readmission if it determines that reasonable efforts are not available or that such efforts have failed to prepare the student to resume the course of study or complete the program.

A student who chooses at the conclusion of military service to enroll in a different course of study other than the one the student was in at the time of military withdrawal must complete the regular admission and enrollment process for that course of study.

4) All information will be reviewed and an updated degree plan will be established by the Dean and/or appropriate personnel, including but not limited to, the Program Director for Student Experience, the Student Success Team, and the Academic Advisor.

5) The Dean will notify the student, the Registrar, and other appropriate offices on campus of the student's readmission and current status.

Registration for Returning Students

A student on military withdrawal cannot register for courses until readmission to the College is granted through the above procedures. The student must register for classes by the deadlines stipulated by the Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies.

Any money paid to the College, such as deposits against tuition or charges anticipated for the following semester, will be refunded in full if the student does not return. Approval to return must be granted in order for registration to be considered final.

Financial Aid Implications

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the Student Financial Services Department to discuss the implications of military withdrawal on his/her financial aid. Federal and state financial aid will be returned according to government guidelines. Questions about loan deferment and repayment for military service members can also be reviewed in detail with Student Financial Services.

Refund of Tuition and Fees

Students who are granted military withdrawal will be granted an exception to the standard withdrawal and refund policies.

MEDICAL WITHDRAWAL

Geneva College cares deeply about the physical and mental health of its students. At times, a student may experience extreme medical or psychological circumstances such that their ability to function is significantly impaired. Students are encouraged to prioritize their health and safety and take steps toward establishing health even if academic progress must be delayed. Geneva College supports students to initiate a self-care plan. The College may initiate actions that consider the welfare of the individual student and the Geneva College community.

Therefore, Medical Withdrawal is an option for students who, due to documented serious physical or psychological illness, need to leave the College during the semester without completing their coursework. Students granted a medical withdrawal are regarded as having permanently withdrawn from the College and need to apply for readmission through the appropriate enrollment office.

Initiation of Request for Medical Withdrawal

1) A student or his/her representative (e.g., health care provider) requesting a **medical withdrawal** must make the request in writing or in person to the Dean of Adult and Online Programs. The student will be asked to complete and sign a Request for Medical Withdrawal form, which can be obtained by calling the Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies at 724-847-6756.

2) The student must provide documentation from a physician, mental health provider, or other qualified health care provider (may not be a family member or Geneva representative) stating that it is their recommendation to have the student medically withdrawn for the remainder of the semester. Documentation must include details that clearly indicate the student's need for medical withdrawal (e.g., diagnosis, treatment plan, course of action). The Dean may choose to consult with the student's health care provider.

Determination of Request

1) A decision approving or denying the medical leave request will be made by the Dean. If the Dean must consult with other appropriate personnel, the student may be asked to sign a release. This decision will be made within 48 hours of receiving a completed request form, provided there is no additional documentation required.

2) The Dean will provide a copy of the decision to appropriate personnel, including but not limited to, the Program Director for Student Experience, the Student Success Team, the Registrar, the Academic Advisor, and the Student Financial Services Department.

3) The Dean will notify appropriate offices on campus of the student's status and send a copy of the decision to the student for his/her records.

4) Copies of the decision will be maintained in the student's file. The appropriate Professional and Online Graduate Studies personnel will maintain original documentation of the student's medical records. These records will be purged after seven years after the date of withdrawal.

Deadline of Application for Medical Withdrawal

Requests must be initiated within two weeks of the student's last date of academic activity. For online students, the last date of academic activity will be the last day (usually Saturday) of the most recent week that the student participated (completed an academic event).

The deadline for requesting medical withdrawal for the current semester must be made prior to the last two weeks of class.

Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the express consent of the Dean.

Grades and Completion of Academic and College Responsibilities

A student whose request for medical withdrawal is approved will be given a grade of either "WP" or "WF" (withdrew passing or withdrew failing) in each course for which he/she is registered. (Note: If a student medically withdraws from classes before the start date of another class in the same semester, the student will be dropped from all classes in that semester, but only the in-progress classes will receive grades. Also note that a grade of WP or WF is not granted during the first week of an eight-week class). No credit for any course is earned when medical withdrawal is granted. Any refund of charges is determined by the Student Financial Services Department.

Readmission Process

- 1) The student will be requested to provide documentation from his/her physician, mental health provider, or other qualified care provider concerning current medical/psychological status by three weeks prior to the intended start date.
- 2) The student may be asked to have an interview with the Dean or other Professional and Online Graduate Studies personnel.
- 3) All information will be reviewed and a plan for future success will be established by the Dean and/or appropriate personnel, including but not limited to, the Program Director for Student Experience, the Student Success Team, and the Academic Advisor.
- 4) The Dean will notify the student, the Registrar, and other appropriate offices on campus.

Registration for Returning Students

A student on medical withdrawal cannot register for courses until readmission to the College is granted through the above procedures. The student must register for classes by the deadlines stipulated by the Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies.

Any money paid to the College, such as deposits against tuition or charges anticipated for the following semester, will be refunded in full if the student does not return. Approval to return must be granted in order for registration to be considered final.

Financial Aid Implications

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the Student Financial Services Department to discuss the implications of medical withdrawal on his/her financial aid. Federal and state financial aid will be returned according to government guidelines.

Refund of Tuition and Fees

Students who are granted medical withdrawal may be eligible for some refund. See the Student Financial Services Department for specific information.

Involuntary Medical Withdrawal

In order to provide a safe environment conducive to the achievement of the College's mission, the College may require a student to involuntarily take a medical withdrawal due to mental health or medical concerns. This occurs when the student's behavior compromises minimal standards of academic performance and/or community life. At that time, the student would be qualified for medical withdrawal. This policy includes, but is not limited to, the following students:

- Students who are deemed to be a danger to themselves or to others (including fellow students, instructors, or any College personnel). *Danger to themselves/others* is here defined to include threat of harm or risk of suicide, homicide, or assault substantially above the norm for college students which necessitate unusual measures to monitor, supervise, treat, protect, or restrain the student to ensure the safety of themselves/others.
- Students whose behavior is disruptive to others and/or violates standards of conduct for Geneva College. *Disruptive* is defined to include behavior which causes emotional and/or physical distress to other students, instructors, and/or College personnel substantially above that normally experienced in daily life. Such disruption may be in the form of a single incident or a pattern of behavior. In the online environment, *disruptive behavior* can include, but is not limited to, language in written communication (in private messages and emails, as well as in publicly posted communication in the LMS) which demonstrates a lack of respect for or perceived threat of harm to self or to fellow students, instructors, or any College personnel. *Violations of standards of conduct* can include, but are not limited to, language or actions that include profanity; are rude or crude; mock or demean other students, instructors, and/or College personnel; are of a hostile or violent nature (regardless of seriousness of perceived threat); or are of a vulgar, sexual, or inappropriate manner that demonstrate a lack of respect for other students, instructors, or College personnel.
- Students whose physical or psychological condition requires specialized services beyond those available through the Health and Wellness Center or some other service provider in the area.

The Dean will make the final decision in consultation with appropriate College officials and based on the contextual and individual circumstances. The Dean will notify the student, appropriate Professional and Online Graduate Studies personnel, the Registrar, and the other offices on campus. In order for the student to resume coursework, they must follow the guidelines listed under "*Readmission Process*".

All students are encouraged to speak with the Student Financial Services Department to learn what financial implications may result from their involuntary medical withdrawal.

A student placed on involuntary medical withdrawal may appeal the College's decision by following the [Administrative/Policy Appeal process](#) listed in this student handbook. Students have **three days to request an appeal to an involuntary medical withdrawal**. During the appeal process, the student must honor the decision to withdraw. The guidelines listed above (i.e., *Grades and Completion of Academic*

Work, Readmission Process, and Registration for Returning Students) apply to students who are granted a medical withdrawal and to students placed on medical withdrawal involuntarily.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONDUCT WITHDRAWAL/EXPULSION

Geneva College may effect an administrative withdrawal and/or expulsion from the institution, with or without the student's consent, for a variety of reasons. Situations which may lead to this action include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The student violates the College's policy on academic honesty (see the "[Policy on Academic Honesty](#)" section of this handbook for more details.)
- The student's behavior **appears to** or **could** pose a danger to the life, health, or safety of the student or other members of the College community or to the College, its property, rental property, or property of another member of the College community. The appearance of danger may be in the form of a single incident or a pattern of behavior.
- The student's behavior impedes or disrupts the educational process, living and/or working environment, or the authorized activities of other members of the College community and/or his/her behavior violates standards of conduct for Geneva College. Such disruption may be in the form of a single incident or a pattern of behavior.

Disruptive or dangerous behavior is defined to include behavior which causes emotional and/or physical distress to other students, instructors, and/or College personnel substantially above that normally experienced in daily life. In the online environment, *disruptive or dangerous behavior* can also include, but is not limited to, language in written communication (in private messages and emails, as well as in publicly posted communication in the LMS) which demonstrates a lack of respect for or perceived threat of harm to fellow students, instructors, or any College personnel. Any communications or actions that demonstrate a lack of respect for the authority of the instructor and/or College administration and/or any communications or actions that could be perceived as defamatory or libelous in nature will not be tolerated. *Violations of standards of conduct* can include, but are not limited to, language or actions that include profanity; are rude or crude; mock or demean other students, instructors, and/or College personnel; are of a hostile or violent nature (regardless of seriousness of perceived threat); or are of a vulgar, sexual, or inappropriate manner that demonstrate a lack of respect for other students, instructors, or College personnel. (See the "[Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)" and "[Student Conduct and Interaction](#)" sections of this handbook for more details.)

When an appropriate College official judges that a student's behavior necessitates the administrative withdrawal and/or expulsion of the student, the student will be notified, in writing, of this decision. When circumstances permit, the College will make an effort to consult with the student before a final decision is made. In certain cases, the College may require that the student seek professional assistance in dealing with the behavior issues (at the student's expense) as a condition of continuation. Refusal to follow through on such requirements will lead to administrative withdrawal.

Unless otherwise indicated in writing, a student who has been administratively withdrawn and/or expelled from the institution is prohibited from being in the online classroom for any reason.

SECTION FOUR

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Students in the MSLS program are required to comply with these Standards of Conduct.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

Geneva College has adopted a campus wide policy on academic honesty, the main portions of which are summarized here. Students should become aware of the fuller policy found in [Appendix A](#) of this student handbook.

When an instructor has reason to believe that dishonest behavior has occurred, the parties involved should be confronted as soon as possible by the instructor and notification made to the Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies.

Sanctions may be levied on the student, which could range from an informal warning to expulsion, based on the seriousness of the student's offense (see [Appendix A](#) of this student handbook).

Students may appeal any disciplinary action by following the procedure laid out in the College's policy on academic honesty (see [Appendix A](#) of this student handbook).

STUDENT CONDUCT AND INTERACTION WITH STUDENTS, INSTRUCTORS, AND COLLEGE PERSONNEL

As adult members of the Geneva College community, students accept certain standards considered essential to accomplish the corporate purpose. These standards provide reasonable boundaries within which freedom can be exercised by all without endangering the rights of others. May our concern be with the "spirit of the law" as well as the "letter of the law."

Please note that any violation of the following standards may result in disciplinary measures that could range from a reprimand to expulsion, depending on the nature, severity, and frequency of the offense.

Geneva College requires its students, instructors, and all College personnel to abstain from possession, sale, use, or influence of illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, or firearms while under the jurisdiction of the College. This policy applies to the College property, College rental facilities, or College-sponsored events. Smoking is prohibited in College buildings, rental facilities, and on the main campus.

In the online classroom and in conversations with fellow students, instructors, and/or College personnel, Geneva College requires that parties practice mutual respect and preserve a climate free from hostility

and from harassment of any kind. Language or actions that violate the standards of conduct in the online classroom, in email/messages, or in any other forms of communication will not be tolerated.

Violations of standards of conduct can include, but are not limited to, language or actions that include profanity; are rude or crude; mock or demean other students, instructors, and/or College personnel; are of a hostile or violent nature (regardless of seriousness of perceived threat); or are of a vulgar, sexual, or inappropriate manner that demonstrate a lack of respect for other students, instructors, or College personnel.

Instructors, staff, and/or administration of Geneva College who are communicating with students in any capacity are encouraged to politely disengage from any student who speaks disrespectfully to them, uses foul language, or causes them to feel threatened in any way. Any communications or actions that demonstrate a lack of respect for the authority of the instructor and/or College administration and/or any communications or actions that could be perceived as defamatory or libelous in nature will not be tolerated.

If a student persists in rude, profane, generally disrespectful, and/or seemingly threatening language or behavior, the employee will direct the student to use other means of communication, including, but not limited to, the use of a mediator. Geneva College may require all communication to occur in written form, at which time the incident(s) will be referred to Geneva College legal counsel.

Failure to comply with any of these student conduct and interaction policies may result in, but is not limited to, the following consequences: an administrative conduct withdrawal of the student from course(s), a failing grade in current course(s), and/or expulsion of the student from Geneva College. Please refer to the "[Administrative Conduct Withdrawal/Expulsion](#)" section of this handbook for more details. In addition to institutional consequences, there may also be legal repercussions.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Geneva College is committed to providing a safe working, learning, and living environment—one that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect free from discrimination on the basis of sex. This includes all forms of sexual misconduct—which is contrary to the standards of the College community, as it violates an individual's fundamental rights and dignity as a person made in the image of God. We consider sexual misconduct, in all its forms, to be a serious offense, and it will not be tolerated. We are dedicated to preventing and educating our students, faculty, and staff regarding sexual misconduct. This policy refers to all forms of sexual misconduct committed against members of our campus community, including but not limited to: unfair treatment based on sex, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking by other students, employees, or third parties.

All members of the campus community are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not infringe upon the rights of others. The College believes in zero tolerance for sex-based misconduct. Zero tolerance means that when an allegation of misconduct is brought to an appropriate administrator's attention, protective and other remedial measures will be used to reasonably ensure that such conduct ends, is not repeated, and the effects on the victim and community are remedied, including serious sanctions when a responding party is found to have violated this policy. This policy has been developed to reaffirm these principles and to provide recourse for those individuals whose rights have been violated. This policy is intended to define community expectations.

The College uses the preponderance of the evidence (also known as “more likely than not”) as a standard for proof of whether a violation occurred. In campus resolution proceedings, legal terms like “guilt, “innocence,” and “burdens of proof” are not applicable, but the College never assumes a responding party is in violation of College policy. Campus resolution proceedings are conducted to take into account the totality of all evidence available from all relevant sources.

For further details regarding Geneva’s sexual misconduct policies, please visit the College webpage dedicated to this topic at <https://www.geneva.edu/about-geneva/titleix/>.

Sexual misconduct may result in, but is not limited to, the following consequences: an administrative conduct withdrawal of the student from course(s), a failing grade in current course(s), and/or expulsion of the student from Geneva College. Please refer to the “[Administrative Conduct Withdrawal/Expulsion](#)” section of this handbook for more details. In addition to institutional consequences, there may also be legal repercussions.

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT INTERACTIONS IN THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

Academic Integrity in the Online Environment

Students in the online environment are held to Geneva College’s campus-wide policy on academic honesty. Students should become aware of the fuller policy found in [Appendix A](#) of this student handbook.

Turnitin Policy

Students agree that by taking an MSLS course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Students must agree to the End User License Agreement (EULA) for Turnitin. Use of the Turnitin service is subject to the Usage Policy and Privacy Pledge posted on [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com).

Assignments that are not submitted through Turnitin will not be graded and will not receive credit.

Student Identity Verification

For distance learning, Geneva College has established and will periodically evaluate its process to confirm that a student taking an examination is the student who registered to take the examination and that a student who is registered for an online course is the same student who participates in, completes, and receives credit for the course. To authenticate identities, Geneva College will use one or more of the following methods for verification:

1. A secure login with username and password
2. Proctored examinations
3. New or emerging technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification

All methods of verifying student identity in distance education must protect the privacy of student information in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and any other applicable laws or regulations regarding the confidentiality of personally identifiable information and the College’s privacy policy.

Personally identifiable information collected by the College may be used as the basis for identity verification. This information may include a combination of the following:

- Student ID Number
- Last four digits of student's Social Security Number
- At least two other pieces of information, such as the student's email address on file, date of birth, address, or username

Procedure for Student Identity Verification

All students who enroll at the College are issued a Geneva email account and a student account in myGeneva (with secure student username and password). Students seeking registration in online courses must register through myGeneva using the secure login information. For students enrolled in online courses in the learning management system, a secure student username and password will be issued and required to access, participate in, and submit online coursework. The secure username and password for the learning management system are provided to the student at his or her College-issued email account, further authenticating the student's identity in the online learning management system(s). **Any online student work, assessments, or activities that are graded or contribute to a student's grade must be submitted via a system that verifies the student's identity as noted above.**

Responsibilities in Student Identity Verification

Students are responsible for providing their complete and true identity information in any identification verification process. All users of the College's learning management system(s) are responsible for maintaining the security of usernames, passwords, and other access credentials as required. An account is given to an individual for the exclusive use by that individual. It is against College policy for a user to give someone his or her password or allow others to use his or her account. Users are responsible for any and all users of their account. Users are responsible for all activity on their accounts.

Interacting in the Online Environment

The online classroom environment can be intimidating to adult learners, especially if it is their first experience in an online classroom or learning management system (LMS). You may be apprehensive about composing and posting your comments and ideas knowing that those comments can be seen by all your classmates. For many, this may be the first time that peers will be making comments and suggestions about your writing.

This portion of the student handbook is intended to clarify the expectations of Geneva College's MSLS program for all its students participating in online discussion boards in Moodle. It is meant to serve as an addendum to class syllabi and expand upon the directions and procedures listed there.

Because of the asynchronous nature of the online class, not all participants are online at the same time. You will be the best judge of when to contribute to the online discussions according to the requirements of the syllabus. For many of you, it will be in the evening, but for some, it can be during the day, in the afternoon, or whenever you can concentrate, focus, and compose your thoughts.

In all online classes, the discussion posting typically consists of two parts:

1. Post a response in your online classroom to a question or prompt that appears in your syllabus; and,
2. Respond to your instructor's post and respond to at least two of your classmates' postings according to the syllabus.

The Geneva College MSLS administration believes that by following this format and by students submitting quality posts, an engaging and beneficial discussion can take place in an online learning environment. Because this learning environment may be new to you and these discussions are graded, there are several typical questions that arise. Questions routinely received by the Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies include:

- How many postings do I have to make?
- How are they being graded – quantity or quality?
- Do I have to use proper grammar and APA formatting?
- Is there a limit or minimum number of words that my postings should contain?
- Am I allowed to respond directly to a classmate before the instructor responds?

To assist students in developing a quality academic posting, students should ensure that their posts include the following items:

1. A demonstration of thorough understanding of the course material being discussed.
 - a. Include proper use of terminology in the context of the answer or posting. The posting should not contain a regurgitation of material from the text. Instead, the student should show understanding and comprehension of the readings by stating the material in his or her own words where possible.
 - b. Use multiple ideas from the reading materials. The student should preferably demonstrate the ability to relate concepts and themes that cross over multiple chapters or readings rather than simply concentrating on one detail or concept.
 - c. Include individually sought research showing further exploration of course material.
 - d. Include proper APA citation when referencing, quoting, or paraphrasing course textbooks and materials or other outside sources.
2. A demonstration of application and relevancy to the student.
 - a. Provide appropriate agreement/disagreement with the terms/concepts/questions and proper evidence given from the readings for the position taken.
 - b. Provide an appropriate personal example to demonstrate familiarity and application.
 - c. If the question or concept being discussed does not currently exist in a student's organization or past experience, provide an example of how it could be incorporated or how it could be adapted or modified to fit a current or future situation.
 - d. Offer an analysis of how the idea or concept appears through an understanding of a Biblical worldview and, perhaps, how the student's perception of the idea may have changed as a result of the application of a Biblical perspective or critique.
 - e. Demonstrate the ability to view an idea from more than one perspective and to discuss why the perspectives differ.

3. Proper adherence to format, grammar, syntax, and the English language.
 - a. All posts should be made by the required deadline.
 - b. Sentences should be free from grammatical errors and misspellings.
 - c. Students should not use emoticons, text messaging shorthand, or other forms of informal speech (e.g., slang, colloquialisms, etc.).
 - d. A student's tone should be respectful of others' contributions even if opinions differ.
 - e. Recognition and encouragement of others is always appropriate.

When responding back to the instructor, students should use the above criteria and be sure that they respond to any questions asked.

When responding to classmates, students should utilize the above criteria and should feel encouraged to ask questions of classmates and provide additional insight from readings, outside research, or other experience. Remember to justify your views by an appeal to authority, to scientific evidence, or to careful description of anecdotal experiential evidence.

By adhering to these criteria, the Geneva College MSLS program believes that students will be able to provide substantive, quality postings which will be graded according to the requirements listed within the syllabus. If you would like to contribute additional responses to a lively discussion or to help a fellow classmate, you are encouraged to do so. Instructors, when grading, will look favorably on class citizenship behaviors. However, a quantity of postings does not compensate for a lack of quality postings as described above.

Also, please note that **your instructor may have specific requirements for you or specific instructions for you to follow**. Even though Geneva College uses consistent grading rubrics in all courses and provides course syllabi, instructors have the right to modify or alter rubrics and/or syllabi, change assignments, determine late penalties, and otherwise authorize all other forms of classroom management. Please direct any specific questions you may have to your instructor.

Sunday Policy

Geneva College has a longstanding view of respecting Sunday as a day to refrain from work, a view emanating from the historical church tradition of the College. In light of this, it is the policy of Geneva Online that courses formally open on Monday and end on Saturday at 11:55 p.m. EST. Materials on the LMS are available in the online course all of the time. Thus, a student can go online Sunday and see the assignments for the week and begin reading or doing his or her work if he or she chooses to do so. However, we do not require assignments to be due on Sunday. Additionally, instructors are not required to respond to students or grade any work on a Sunday.

In coming to this policy, the College reflected on the following from the *Student Handbook*:

The College seeks to honor the Fourth Commandment (“Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy....”). In the New Testament era, the day of observance changed from the 7th day to the 1st day of the week (Sunday) and is referred to in Scripture as the Lord’s Day. Geneva College believes that God has given His people the gift of the weekly Lord’s Day in which people are given rest from their usual labor and have the opportunity to engage in public worship. Therefore, in so far as is possible, the College orders its affairs such that instructors, staff, and students are not required to work on the Lord’s Day. Of course, works of necessity (e.g., food service, security) and works of love and mercy are recognized as legitimate activity on the Lord’s Day. However, classes, organized athletic competitions, programmed student activities, and the like are not scheduled. In addition, College offices, recreation facilities, and the library will be closed on the Lord’s Day.

Regarding student concerns for assignments due on Saturday, please be aware that due dates are not when the assignment should be done, but rather the last date when the assignment is due. Students are free to upload their assignments anytime during the week before the due date.

SECTION FIVE

GRADUATION and COMMENCEMENT

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Please note that all graduation requirements must be met within seven years of first attendance with Geneva's MSLS program. Taking longer than seven years to graduate will subject students to the graduation requirements of a later catalog than the one under which they first enrolled.

Summary of Graduation Requirements for the Master of Science in Leadership Studies

- **36 total credits**
(24 credit hours MSLS Program + 12 credit hours MSLS Specialization)
- **3.0 GPA or higher** (see [Grading System](#) and [Academic Standing](#) Policies in this handbook)
- **Payment of all financial obligations to the College**

There is no campus residency requirement in MSLS. Please refer to the College website and the [College Catalog](#) for additional details on degree requirements.

GRADUATION POLICIES

There are three degree conferring dates during the year: December, May, and August (transcripts and diplomas reflect the appropriate degree award date). There is, however, only one annual commencement ceremony, which is held in May of each year on Geneva's campus.

Graduation from your program of study and participation in the ceremony are both by application only. Students may obtain an application for graduation on myGeneva.

Graduation Application Policy

Eligible students **must apply to graduate and to participate** in the May commencement ceremony.

Failure to meet stipulated graduation application deadlines may result in students being excluded from graduation activities and may delay the receipt of their diploma.

YOU MUST APPLY TO:

1 – **GRADUATE** in order to
RECEIVE YOUR DEGREE
and DIPLOMA

2 – **PARTICIPATE** IN THE
COMMENCEMENT
CEREMONY

Graduation Application Deadlines

<u>Estimated Graduation Date</u>	<u>Graduation Application Deadline</u>
December	October 15 of graduating year
May	Spring of graduating year (date available on myGeneva)
August	Spring of graduating year (date available on myGeneva)

When a student is approaching graduation in the coming year, a “Graduation Application” tab will be made available in October in myGeneva under Student Information. All graduation application deadlines are listed on myGeneva.

If more than 90 days have passed since you last logged into myGeneva and your application deadline is approaching, you will need to utilize the Password Reset function in myGeneva. For help, contact the [Tech Center Help Desk](#) or call 724-847-6789.

You can only apply to graduate once in myGeneva. Therefore, if your estimated graduation date changes or if there are any other changes to information on the graduation application you submitted in myGeneva, you must contact the Registrar’s Office at 724-847-6556.

Commencement Ceremony Participation Policy

Only those students who have completed at least 36 credits are permitted to participate in the graduation ceremony each May. The only exception to this policy is for MSLS students who fulfill **all** of the following requirements:

1. The student must have nine (9) or fewer credits remaining to reach the required minimum of 36 credits.

AND

2. The student, when he/she applies for graduation, must file a written plan with the MSLS Academic Advisor indicating how he/she plans to complete all the remaining credits by August 15.

AND

3. The student must provide proof of course registration for those courses that will enable him/her to achieve the minimum 36 credits by August 15.

To order a cap and gown, contact the Geneva College Campus Store at 724-847-6595.

Diplomas

All diplomas will be mailed to students. No one will receive a diploma at the commencement ceremony in May. May graduates who do not participate in the ceremony will have their diplomas mailed to them after the graduation requirements are completed and transcribed in the Registrar's Office. December and August graduates, whether they are participating/have participated in the May commencement ceremony or not, will also have their diplomas mailed to them after the graduation requirements are completed and transcribed in the Registrar's Office.

Diplomas are mailed according to the following timeline:

- December graduates: diplomas mailed after February 15
- May graduates: diplomas mailed after June 15
- August graduates: diplomas mailed after September 15

TRANSCRIPTS

Current students may obtain unofficial transcripts online through the Student Information portal in myGeneva. Official Geneva College transcripts can be obtained by [submitting a request](#) through the National Student Clearinghouse. Official transcripts may also be ordered by sending a signed letter to the Registrar's Office. **Official transcripts are usually sent directly from Geneva College to schools, employers, agencies, or others requiring transcripts.** Students may also request official transcripts to be mailed to them. **All indebtedness to the College must be satisfied before an official transcript will be issued.**

Former students of Geneva College may also request degree verifications and order transcripts online through the National Student Clearinghouse at [this link](#).

SECTION SIX

GRIEVANCE and APPEAL PROCESS

ADMINISTRATIVE/POLICY GRIEVANCES and APPEALS

Institutional Grievance Process

If a student is able to demonstrate that he or she has been treated unfairly by the application of any administrative decision or College policy, the student may file a letter of grievance with the Dean of Adult and Online Programs.

The formal grievance process, below, must be followed. Complaints or appeals that are not issued through formal procedures and proper channels will not be addressed. The Institutional Grievance Process is as follows:

1. The student must submit a written letter of grievance (email is **not** acceptable) to the Dean of Adult and Online Programs **within seven calendar days** of the administrative decision or action being contested. The letter should be mailed to the Department of Professional and Online Graduate Studies and should include:
 - a. Policy student believes was violated (please specify the year and page number of the MSLS Student Handbook or Geneva College Catalog containing the policy);
 - b. Description of unfair application of named policy;
 - c. Hardship created by A and B; and,
 - d. Preferred resolution.
2. Letters of grievance will be reviewed by the Dean of Adult and Online Programs, who will respond in writing with a resolution within seven calendar days of receiving the initial letter of grievance.
3. **Grievances will not be accepted after seven calendars days** after the administrative decision/action in question.
4. Grievances addressing graduation requirements and commencement proceedings must be filed more than 30 days prior to the graduation date in question.
5. If the student is not satisfied with the Dean's resolution(s), the student may then appeal to the Provost within seven calendar days of receiving the Dean's resolution(s). The appeal should include the original letter of grievance and a letter explaining the student's points of disagreement with the Dean's resolution(s). The Provost will assess the documentation of the appeal and will render a decision that:
 - a. Affirms the resolution(s) of the Dean of Adult and Online Programs and informs the student of that decision;
 - b. Offers an alternative resolution(s); or,
 - c. Dismisses the grievance.

The decision of the Provost is final regarding the matter(s) indicated in the initial letter of grievance.

State Authorization

Geneva is an approved SARA institution in Pennsylvania. The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) is a voluntary, regional approach to state oversight of postsecondary distance education. States and institutions that choose to participate agree to operate under common standards and procedures, providing a more uniform and less costly regulatory environment for institutions, more focused oversight responsibilities for states, and better resolution of student complaints.

Students must first follow the appropriate institutional grievance/appeal processes as outlined above. If the matter is not resolved, students can access Student Complaint Contact Information for the appropriate state at [this link](#). **Grade appeals and student conduct appeals are not allowed under SARA.**

PRIVACY ISSUES (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (or FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their educational records and personal information. The following section specifies Geneva's policies in relation to FERPA.

College Communication

To protect students' rights under FERPA, Geneva College requires that all students and employees communicate using their College-issued email account. Geneva College provides all students with a Geneva email account (e.g., username@geneva.edu); it is the responsibility of the student to access, maintain, and communicate using this email address. Geneva is not responsible for any student repercussions due to lack of use of the College-issued email account.

Grade Reporting

Under FERPA, no College offices or personnel are permitted to report final grades or GPA by phone, fax, email, or letter/written form. Students can view final grades for courses in their unofficial transcript, found in the Student Information portal in myGeneva, which can only be accessed with their username and password.

Campus Directory Information

Under FERPA, Geneva College has designated certain personally identifiable student information as "directory information." This includes information for the Online Campus Directory that is only viewable by administration, faculty, staff, and other students. The only information the myGeneva Online Campus Directory contains about a student is his or her name and the email address on record.

Campus Directory Policy

The myGeneva Online Campus Directory is the property of Geneva College. Any use of it or the information it contains must comply with applicable state and federal laws including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Any current staff, faculty, or students may request that specific information be withheld from this directory by submitting a written request to the Registrar's Office.

The availability of contact information is intended to facilitate ease of communication among members of the campus community. Directory information and emails shall not be used, rented, distributed, or sold for commercial purpose, such as advertising or solicitation.

The Online Campus Directory information is not available to the public (guests). Only internal users of myGeneva can view the information delineated above. Note that your personal info privacy settings only apply to the public view of the Online Campus Directory; your name and email will still be included in the internal directory. The Online Campus Directory does not show a photo of MSLS students because they are not required to have ID photos taken.

Requested Changes to Information in the Campus Directory

Student directory changes or updates can be submitted for review by the Registrar's Office. Requests for review of an individual's directory information can be submitted by editing his or her Biographical Info Tab in myGeneva and submitting the form. Note that updates submitted are not immediate. They will be reviewed by the Registrar, and students should be able to view them within a few days.

Educational Records

- 1) A student has the right to inspect and review his/her education records within 45 days from the date the College receives a request for access.
- 2) A student should submit a written request that identifies the record(s) he/she wishes to inspect to the Registrar, Dean of Adult and Online Programs, or other appropriate College official. The College official will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the College official to whom the request was submitted, that official will advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.
- 3) A student has the right to request the amendment of the education record that the student believes is inaccurate or misleading. A student should write to the College official responsible for the record, clearly identifying the part of the record that they want to have changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.
- 4) If the College decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the College will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for the amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student if the right of hearing is granted.
- 5) A student has the right to consent to the disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
- 6) One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests (i.e., if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility). A school official is a person employed by the College in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the College has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees or Board of Corporators; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in the performance of his or her tasks.

7) Upon request, the College may disclose education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks to be enrolled.

8) A student has the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the College to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-5920

9) The College may also disclose personal information when a student's health/safety is in jeopardy or if/when a student poses a significant threat to self or others.

APPENDIX A

GENEVA COLLEGE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS AND FACULTY¹

Introduction. Academic integrity is a serious matter. Dishonesty is an affront to the character and Law of God and an insult to the academy and to its professors. It destroys the basic building block for community and has been called a "crime against nature" and an "obscenity" within the educational context because it violates freedom and trust, which are absolutely essential for effective learning. It limits the ability of the student to reach his or her potential as a child of God and citizen of the Kingdom; therefore, it must be fully understood and closely monitored.

Definitions. *Honesty* is a personal quality of being authentic, truthful, whole or complete, and responsible. People who are honest will be trusted and respected by others. *Dishonesty* is the quality of being inauthentic and deceitful to others. It involves abusing or hiding the truth. It breaks trust between people, robs its victims of their sense of security and justice, and shows disrespect for biblical standards of righteousness.

There are several categories of dishonesty that are specific to the academic community. Some of these behaviors typically occur within the context of a specific academic course (categories 1-6 below) while others occur outside the classroom and therefore have broader community implications (category 7 below).

1. Plagiarism (the misattribution or misrepresentation of the intellectual work of another person as one's own, including their ideas, pictorial/graphic materials, and words).
2. Self-plagiarism (turning in an assignment for one class that was originally prepared for another class).
3. Inventing or falsifying information in an academic exercise (e.g., making up a fictitious source or quote; intentionally giving an incorrect citation).
4. Cheating (e.g., obtaining/attempting to obtain answers from another student for an academic test or exercise or using unauthorized notes during an exam).
5. Allowing one's own intellectual work to be dishonestly used by others (e.g., sharing a term paper or examination so that another student may cheat).
6. Misrepresenting or disguising one's actions in order to deceive the instructor (e.g., fabricating a reason for nonparticipation or for missing a deadline; refusing to use Turnitin or accept the End User License Agreement).
7. Forging a signature on or unauthorized alteration of academic documents (e.g., transcripts, registration and drop/add forms).

¹This document is adapted from the Academic Integrity Policy passed by the Geneva College Faculty Senate on November 29, 2001.

Procedural Guidelines.

Detection. Where the instructor has reason to believe that dishonest behavior has occurred, the parties involved should be confronted as soon as possible and all relevant materials confiscated where possible. If there is reasonable doubt about whether an offense has occurred, the instructor should warn the student(s). While instructors must be careful to avoid false accusation, they are free to exercise their professional judgment. Students will be required to submit all written assignments through Turnitin; **assignments that are not submitted through Turnitin will not be graded and will not receive credit.**

Reporting Procedure. The instructor will confront the student(s) involved with evidence and then report the offense to the Program Director for Student Experience. Prior to making a course-specific judgment about penalties to be imposed, the Dean of Adult and Online Programs will be notified about the offense, who will determine if additional disciplinary action may be called for. The Program Director for Student Experience will inform the Dean of the details of the case.

Sanctions. For an offense in categories 1-6, several penalty options are available to the instructor, including, but not limited to, the following:

- informal or formal warning to the student(s) involved, requiring the assignment or test in question to be retaken with a lower grade;
- requiring makeup work with or without a lower grade being assigned;
- assigning a grade of F for the assignment in question;
- lowering the final grade for the course;
- giving the student a failing grade for the course.

In addition to the above sanctions, the instructor or Program Director for Student Experience or Dean may require for an offense in category 7 sanctions that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- informal or formal apologies to the victim(s);
- restitution for lost or damaged material.

Upon recommendation of the Program Director for Student Experience, the Dean of Adult and Online Programs may invoke further penalties as warranted by an offense, including:

- charging fines;
- placing the student on academic and/or disciplinary probation;
- suspension or dismissal from the institution;
- reporting the offense to external authorities.

Appeals Process. Students have the right to appeal disciplinary actions taken in response to academic dishonesty. An instructor's ruling can be appealed to the Program Director for Student Experience. If needed, further appeals are taken to the Dean of Adult and Online Programs, then to the Provost, and, finally, to the President (whose decision is final).