



POLICY ON THE TRANSFER OF STUDENTS FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS

This policy sets forth the norms of the Faculty of Theology (henceforth, “the Faculty”) of the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (PUST) for accepting students who have begun a program of studies that entails the conferral of an ecclesiastical degree or a non-ecclesiastical degree at another academic institution, but who wish to complete their studies at the PUST. It considers especially those students transferring from other Ecclesiastical Faculties, in addition to those from civilly accredited institutions.¹

GENERAL ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

The norms for transferring apply to students of any vocational state (clerical, seminarian, religious, or layperson), “who can legally give testimony to leading a moral life and to having completed the previous studies appropriate to enrolling in the Faculty.”² Further, the “transfer of a student from one Faculty to another can take place only at the beginning of the academic year or semester, after a careful examination of his academic and disciplinary situation.”³ As such, in order to ensure an adequate timeline for all relevant evaluation procedures, the Faculty accepts admissions applications on a *rolling basis*, with Fall admissions normally ending during the 3rd week of September, and Spring admissions ending during the 4th week of January. Whenever possible, however, it is preferred that applicants submit their applications to the Faculty *no later than 1 June* (for Fall Semester registrations) or **1 December** (for Spring Semester registrations). In any case, applications will still be accepted beyond these dates, respecting the University’s normal admissions deadlines stated above. It belongs to the authority of the Dean of the Faculty “to admit or exclude students in the name of the Rector according to the norms of the Statutes.”⁴

It is the sole responsibility of the applicant (and as applicable, the university that has issued a student’s degree and/or academic transcripts) to provide the Faculty with the necessary academic transcripts and other requested admissions documentation, which “adequately describe the nature of the institution that issued the degree, the features of the study course followed by the student, and the value of the diploma.”⁵

TRANSCRIPTS / COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Students who wish to transfer to the PUST must provide the Faculty with all *official* academic transcripts from institutions where courses relevant to their intended program of study were completed. At a minimum, the academic transcripts received are to contain the following information:

¹ This document was drafted in English. Should there be any linguistic discrepancies, the English version should prevail.

² Pope Francis, Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium*, December 27, 2017, General Norms, Section IV, Article 31. Hereafter referred as “*VG*”.

³ *VG*, Norms of Application, Section IV, Article 28.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Section II, Article 17, n. 3.

⁵ Dicastery for Culture and Education, *Guide for Academic Institutions*, <http://www.educatio.va/content/cec/en/international-recognition-center/guide-for-academic-institutions.html>.

1. The name and address of the academic institution;
2. The student's full legal name;
3. The student's institutional Student ID number and/or date of birth;
4. The degree, diploma, or certificate program which the student was awarded or at least enrolled in, along with the date of the degree, diploma, or certificate conferral (as applicable);
5. The full listing of courses completed by name, along with their corresponding:
 - a. semester and year;
 - b. course code;
 - c. grade obtained;
 - d. credit hours obtained;
6. The total credit hours obtained;
7. The final cumulative grade point average achieved;
8. The grading scale/key/legend;
9. The date the transcript was issued;
10. The official seal of the institution, along with the printed name and signature of the authorized academic authority issuing the transcript.

If the Faculty does not have a translator for transcripts received in a foreign language, the Faculty is to notify the applicant of this need. It would therefore be the applicant's responsibility to provide the Faculty with an *official translation* of their transcripts into either English or Italian, completed by a certified and sworn professional translator authorized by an appropriate governmental or independent accrediting body. Whenever possible, concurrent with the submission of academic transcripts, students are to also provide the Faculty with course descriptions (and/or syllabi) of all courses relevant to their intended program of study.

In the case of those students who are unable to submit the required academic transcripts (i.e., refugees, exiles, and other displaced persons), such persons can be approved for admission by the Dean of the Faculty after consultation with the Secretary General of the PUST. In such cases, the Faculty will follow the specific regulations stipulated in the Faculty Statutes to facilitate the enrollment of such persons.⁶

COURSE DISPENSATIONS

Courses completed at another Ecclesiastical Faculty or other accredited academic institution of higher education – both of which will be treated without distinction for these purposes (except where otherwise indicated) – may be presented for acceptance and dispensation from required courses for their course of study, subject to the following conditions. *N.B.*: *These conditions may also apply to applicants who are not categorized as a "transfer student", and whose completed coursework was part of an earned degree.*

1. The course(s) must:
 - a. have acceptable equivalence in content, quality, and quantity (inclusive of required credit hours) with one of the courses offered within the Faculty.
 - i. *N.B.*: To satisfy this condition, applicants must provide the Dean's Office with course descriptions and/or syllabi of the relevant courses taken, and must provide official documentation showing how their institution's academic credits converts to ECTS;

⁶ See *VG*, Norms of Application, Section IV, Article 32, §3. For example, within the Faculty of Theology, the following regulations must be followed: (1) An examination, whether oral or written, and similar to that which ordinarily concludes the course or cycle that the candidate claims to have completed, shall be required for enrollment in any of the three cycles; (2) For enrollment in the second or third cycle, the head of the section in which the student intends to enroll will be consulted; (3) The Dean of the Faculty may then assign one or more Faculty members of his confidence to deal appropriately with such cases (cf., *Statuti della Facoltà di S. Teologia della Pontificia Università San Tommaso d'Aquino in Urbe*, Cap. I, Art. 3, §4).

- b. be university-level courses (in the ecclesiastical context, baccalaureate level or higher);
 - c. be applicable to the student's course of study; and
 - d. be compatible with the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.
2. The student must have passed the course with a grade recognized as "satisfactory"/"sufficient"/"average" or better, according to the grading scale of the institution that issued the grade. Typically, such a grade may be represented with a minimum of a "C(-)", "70%", "6.5", "Good", etc. Irrespective of the precise language used in the institution's grading scale, this grade category must be minimally equivalent with PUST's grade of "*Bene*". Courses graded on a "Pass/Fail" basis are not eligible for dispensation.
3. The course grades must not have been awarded more than ten years prior to the matriculation of the student into the PUST.
 - a. Exception: This limitation does *not* apply to students who transfer from institutions that are officially incorporated, affiliated, or aggregated with the PUST.
4. The number of credits accepted for dispensation must amount to *less than* 50 percent of the total credits required by the Faculty for the degree, diploma, or certificate.
 - a. Exception: This limitation does *not* apply to students who transfer from institutions that are officially incorporated, affiliated, or aggregated with the PUST.
5. Students who have completed a Baccalaureate in Philosophy from an Ecclesiastical Faculty are dispensed from the Philosophy Biennium of the First Cycle in the Theology Faculty. This comprehensive dispensation, however, does *not* apply to students whose Baccalaureate in Philosophy was earned from a non-Ecclesiastical Faculty.⁷ Nevertheless, the Dean retains the right to require further studies from students whose philosophical formation is missing essential subject matters in the Faculty's Plan of Studies.
6. Courses completed via *online/distance education* may be accepted for dispensation, but only if the following two conditions apply, and within the limits of the requirements of each Cycle, as stated below: (1) such courses were taught within a 'mixed' mode of teaching (i.e., having combined both in-presence and online teaching in each course); and (2) the final evaluation/examination must have been carried out according to the physical, in-presence method. Courses taught exclusively through some intermediary form [i.e., online platform, mail correspondence, or other electronic communication, etc.), in a way that did not include physical, in-person interaction between teacher and student, will *not* be accepted. As such, dispensation regarding distance education courses may be had in the following ways, with differing requirements for each Cycle:
 - a. For the Baccalaureate (First Cycle), no dispensation may be given for distance education courses, which are identified by the Faculty as *obligatory* courses/seminars. However, the Faculty may permit dispensation for what the Faculty recognizes as *optional* courses and/or seminars in their program of studies. As such, the Faculty may accept for dispensation distance education courses for the *optional* courses/seminars only, up to a maximum of 30 percent of the total credits/ECTS for the *optional* subjects.
 - b. For the Licentiate (Second Cycle), a maximum of 30 percent of the total number of credits/ECTS required for the *obligatory* or *optional* courses/seminars may be accepted.
 - c. For the Doctorate (Third Cycle), no distance education courses will be accepted.
 - d. For any Diploma or Certificate program offered by the Faculty, a maximum of 30 percent of the total number of credits/ECTS required for the *obligatory* or *optional* courses/seminars may be accepted.

⁷ See *VG*, Part II, Special Norms, Section 1, Art. 74(a).

7. A single course accepted for dispensation shall *not* be accepted toward the dispensation of multiple required courses in the Plan of Studies. Course dispensations are only accepted on a 1 to 1 (course for course) basis. However, in the rare case where a single course is equivalent in content, quality, and quantity (inclusive of required credit hours) with two courses of the PUST, such a course may be accepted for dispensation of two courses.

In individual cases and for a just cause, the Dean of the Faculty may petition the Rector to dispense from one or more of the requirements above, which he may grant according to his sole discretion.

Since courses accepted for dispensation will *not* be recorded in the student's official academic transcripts, the grades earned from those courses will in no way be counted within the final grade point average of all courses taken in the Faculty.

PLAN OF STUDY

The Dean or Vice Dean of the Faculty will create and approve a plan of study based on the courses already completed. Regardless of how much time was spent in a previous course of study, whether spent at an Ecclesiastical Faculty or other accredited academic institution, "nobody can be given an academic degree unless all the requirements for the degree are fulfilled as the Statutes and Plan of Studies demand."⁸

Therefore, based on the evaluation of the student's academic transcripts, "[i]f one of the disciplines has been found not to have been studied or to have been studied in an insufficient way, the Faculty is to require that this be made up at a suitable time and verified by an examination."⁹

⁸ *VG*, Norms of Application, Section IV, Article 28.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Section IV, Article 26, §4.