

# **Constitution of the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches**

1. The Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches has for its purpose the training of future ministers of the Word for the aforesaid churches. The Theological School will also train others for the ministry who intend to serve in other churches. These latter shall, however, meet the academic requirements of Article 10. Special or unclassified (non-diploma) students intending to enter the ministry in other churches may be admitted by the Theological School Committee with the approval of synod.
2. The supervision and administration of the institution belongs to synod itself. However, synod shall appoint a committee consisting of no fewer than ten members to do the work of synod in the interim between synodical meetings.
3. At this institution, the following branches of study shall be taught: the basic scriptural languages, Hebrew and Greek, and such other languages as synod may decide upon; Hermeneutics, Exegesis, Isagogics, Sacred History, Typology, Church History, Church Polity, History of Dogma, Dogmatics, Concepts, Homiletics, Catechetics, Poimenics, and other subjects which may be agreed upon by faculty and synod.
4. The professors are appointed on salaries determined by the synod and for definite departments. The rule shall be to appoint only such men who have especially prepared themselves for the particular branch or branches they are to teach. With a view to orderly transition in the seminary, a new professor shall be appointed when any of the active professors reaches the age of 65.
5. Whenever a professor is to be appointed, the Theological School Committee shall propose names at the meeting of the synod. The aggregate shall be discussed at this meeting, and in this discussion the advice of the theological faculty shall be sought. After this discussion and consultation, the synod shall proceed to make a nomination from the aggregate. From this nomination synod elects a professor. In electing professors, synod shall give preference to one already a minister of the gospel.
6. The installation of professors of theology shall take place according to the form, after they shall have signed the Formula of Subscription in the presence of the Theological School Committee.
7. A professor shall serve four years, and after that three years if reappointed. If after this he be reappointed, such appointment shall be permanent. Thereafter his services at school can be terminated only through the synod formally retiring, expelling, or deposing him and for reason urgent, cogent, and legitimate. When a professor reaches the age of 65, and on a yearly basis thereafter, the professor shall be consulted by the Theological School

Committee about his capability to continue teaching or possible emeritization. Whether a professor shall continue to teach all or some of his subjects after the age of 65 shall be decided by the synod on a yearly basis, upon the recommendation of the Theological School Committee. A professor shall retire when he reaches 70 years of age and shall be declared emeritus.

1. The following criteria shall be used to judge the competence and development of a professor when he is up for reappointment:
  1. He shall demonstrate in all his work a continuing commitment to the truth of Scripture, as summarized in the Reformed creeds and as taught in our churches.
  2. He shall give evidence of the ability to teach, being fresh and lively.
  3. He shall show the ability to do theological research and scholarly study in his department.
  4. He shall be a godly example to the students and denomination.
  5. He shall exhibit a willingness to contribute to the well-being of the denomination in the areas of preaching, writing, lecturing, serving on standing or special committees of synod.
  6. He shall, before his first reappointment, have completed and received approval of his Master's Thesis.
2. The process: The TSC shall present to synod a recommendation concerning reappointment.
  1. The TSC must exercise careful oversight of the professor's instruction and of his work in light of the criteria given above.
  2. The judgment of the faculty concerning the man's work shall be given to the TSC and become a part of their recommendation.
8. Professors emeriti who are honorably retired and who had received an appointment are qualified to receive support from the churches, since they, just as the ministers, devoted all their gifts and talents entirely and exclusively to the service of the churches.

Arrangements for retirement shall be in charge of the Theological School Committee, subject to final determination by synod. All support of emeriti professors shall be directly from the Emeritus Fund.

If retirement proves necessary by reason of sickness or other disability during the school year, the Theological School Committee shall temporarily determine the amount of support to be given and shall notify the Emeritus Committee. The latter shall then authorize payment of the support determined upon from the Emeritus Fund.

9. The instruction shall be given by the professors and, if need be, by assistants appointed by the faculty in conjunction with the Theological School Committee with the approval of synod. In case of emergency the approval of synod shall be sought at its next meeting.
10. Permission to pursue the theological course in the seminary shall be granted by the synod, upon recommendation of the Theological School Committee, to such an aspirant only who comes supplied with a letter of recommendation from his consistory explaining that he is a member in full communion, sound in faith, upright in walk, and exhibits the qualities and personality necessary for a gospel minister. Such recommendation ought to contain the consistory's evaluation of the applicant's spiritual and intellectual gifts, as well as any areas of concern. The applicant shall also provide a certificate from a reputable physician showing him to be in good health.

A complete high school education and a bachelor level degree (B.A. or B.S.) from an accredited college or university are required for entrance into the seminary. Moreover, each entrant must produce evidence that he has credit for the following college courses:

- Latin — 4 semesters, intermediate-level proficiency
- Greek — 4 semesters, intermediate-level proficiency
- English Composition — 2 semesters, one of which must be beyond the freshman composition level
- Philosophy — the history of philosophy: must include ancient, medieval, and modern
- History — a minimum of 2 semesters of history of western civilization
- Psychology — 1 semester: Introductory Psychology
- Speech — 1 semester: public speaking
- Logic — 1 semester

A B- cumulative average shall be required for entrance into the seminary department. If such average is not maintained, a student may be received on probation by consent of the Theological School Committee in conjunction with the faculty.

The student shall furnish the faculty with a transcript of credits earned at other colleges, and these shall be included in the academic record of the student and in the annual report of the grades to synod.

11. Promotion to a higher grade shall take place after the student has successfully passed his courses.

Moreover, it is required of every seminary student that he maintain at least a 2.5 cumulative average in each of the four major divisions, viz., Biblical-Exegetical Studies, Dogmatical Studies, Church-Historical Studies, and Practical-Theological Studies. In addition, a minimum GPA of 2.0 for the two and a half years of Practice Preaching (ten sermons) and a minimum of 2.5 for the last year and a half of Practice Preaching (six sermons) are required. The diploma pre-licentiate student will not be allowed to enter the internship program unless he has a minimum GPA of 2.5 in Practice Preaching for the year previous to the internship (four sermons, ordinarily during the third year). A student shall be forbidden to take a final examination before synod having less than a 2.5 cumulative average. The final examination before synod of the student having a failing grade in any branch shall be forbidden. Arrangements, however, may be made for a reexamination of any student having a failing grade in any branch; but in case a student should fail in such reexamination, he shall be forbidden to proceed to the next subject until he shall take the course anew in which he has failed and shall show a passing grade therein.

12. The examinations at the end of each semester shall be written. The final examinations of those students graduating in theology and intending to enter the ministry in the churches shall be oral. The only exception shall be a written examination in translation and exegesis on passages from the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament assigned by the Theological School Committee, said examinations to be submitted to synod for approval. There shall be oral examinations in: Dogmatics, Old Testament History, New Testament History, Church History, Church Polity, and Practica. In addition, each student shall preach a sermon before the synod on an assigned text.

Written examinations for those students intending to enter the ministry in other churches shall be administered by the faculty and must be successfully passed before a diploma is granted.

13. The faculty shall license a student to speak a word of edification in the meetings for public worship when it deems him ready.
14. The school year shall be divided into two semesters, with the months of June, July, and August set apart for summer vacation. There shall be a two-week Christmas vacation and a one-week spring vacation.
15. The student shall conduct himself in and out of school as a Christian. Failing in this, he shall be admonished by the faculty in conjunction with the Theological School Committee. If after these repeated admonitions the student remains obstinate, he shall be expelled from school. In case a gross sin has been committed, he shall, with the approval of the Theological School Committee, be expelled immediately.

16. The student shall pursue the course of study at the school with diligence. He shall regularly attend the classes and conduct himself in accordance with the rules of this institution.
17. The constitution, drafted upon the instruction of the Classis of the Protestant Reformed Churches, accepted by that of June 1 and 2, 1938, and amended by the Synod of 1941 and the Synod of 1973, remains in force until another Synod shall have amended it.

(Cf. Acts of Synod, 1941, Art. 68, Suppl. XXVIII; Acts of Synod, 1949, Arts. 31, 38; Acts of Synod, 1957, Arts. 93-94; Acts of Synod, 1960, Art. 78, Suppl. XXI; Acts of Synod, 1973, Arts. 68-87, Suppl. VIII; Acts of Synod, 1983, Art. 41; Acts of Synod, 1985, Art. 40, Suppl. XI; Acts of Synod, 1989, Art. 26, Suppl. XIII; Acts of Synod, 1991, Art. 38; Acts of Synod, 1999, Art. 72; Acts of Synod, 2003, Art. 50; Acts of Synod, 2005, Art. 48; Acts of Synod, 2009, Art. 53.)