

Graduate Student Handbook 2021-22

Graduate Student Handbook Terms and Updates 2021-22

By enrolling in graduate courses at Seattle Pacific University, you agree to comply with the expectations, policies and procedures in this Graduate Student Handbook, as amended from time to time. The University reserves the right to make changes of any nature to the expectations, policies, procedures, and other information in this handbook at its sole discretion, with or without prior notice. Furthermore, the handbook provisions are subject to interpretation by the University.

If you have any questions concerning current policies and practices, or if you would like a printed copy of the handbook, contact the [Office of Student Life](#).

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Behavioral Expectations

Seattle Pacific University has established a set of behavioral expectations for graduate students. Behaviors for which graduate students or graduate student organizations are subject to disciplinary action include, but are not limited to the following:

- Actions that constitute violations of federal, state, or local law. The University reserves the right to follow its normal conduct processes whenever a student is accused of a criminal act, regardless of the location of its occurrence and regardless of whether civil or criminal proceedings have been instituted against the student.
- Actions that interfere with the educational process or the administration of the University, including those that obstruct or disrupt the use of University premises, buildings, rooms or passages, or that incite a disturbance on or off campus.
- The possession, use, distribution, or sale of alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, or illegal drugs on University property or as part of any SPU activities. The illicit use of prescription drugs on University property or as part of any SPU activities is also prohibited.
- Dishonesty such as cheating or plagiarism; knowingly furnishing false information; alteration or unauthorized use of University documents, records or property; or misuse of student identification.
- Participation in any actions that involve discrimination or harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.
- Any form of coercive or unwelcome sexual behavior, including sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment, or related actions. For more information about policies and procedures for sexual misconduct, see the [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#).
- Activities that cause or threaten emotional, mental, or physical harm or suffering; that demean the dignity of any individual; or that interfere with any individual's academic process. Examples of such actions are verbal threats or abuse, harassment, intimidation, threatened or actual physical assault, or consistent disregard for the rights and welfare of any individual.
- Conduct or activities that are lewd, indecent, or obscene, whether demonstrative, visual, verbal, written, or electronic. For more information about related policies for SPU network use, see the [SPU User Policies](#).
- Failure to comply with the directions of authorized University officials in the performance of their duties, including the failure to comply with the terms of disciplinary sanctions and the failure to identify oneself when requested to do so.
- False reporting or warning of a fire, bombing, crime or other emergency situation, or tampering with safety equipment.
- Unauthorized possession of property belonging to the University or others; unauthorized presence in, or unauthorized use of or duplication of keys to, University premises or property; and activities that cause or may cause damage to property belonging to the University or others.
- Possession, use, or display on University property of any firearms, weapons, fireworks, live ammunition, incendiary devices, or other items that are potentially hazardous to other persons.
- Actions that constitute a safety or health hazard. Such activities include, but are not limited to, entering or exiting buildings through the windows; throwing, projecting, or dropping items that may cause injury; and pranks that create a safety or health hazard.

Seattle Pacific University Nondiscrimination Policy and Complaint Procedures

Seattle Pacific University holds that all persons are created in the image of God and possess intrinsic dignity and worth.

It is the policy of Seattle Pacific University not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in its programs or activities, as required by applicable laws and regulations.

As a Christian educational institution affiliated with the Free Methodist Church of North America, Seattle Pacific University is permitted and reserves the right to prefer employees or prospective employees on the basis of religion.

If you have any questions regarding this policy, contact any of the following persons:

Dr. Jeff Jordan, Vice Provost for Student Formation and Community Engagement

Campus Location: Room 209, Student Union Building
Seattle Pacific University
3307 Third Avenue West, Suite 212
Seattle, Washington 98119
206-281-2481

Mr. Gary Womelsduff, Director of Human Resources

Campus Location: 330 West Nickerson Street
Seattle Pacific University
3307 Third Avenue West, Suite 302
Seattle, Washington 98119
206-281-2809

Dr. Sandra Mayo, Vice Provost for Inclusive Excellence

Campus Location: Room 253, Demaray Hall
Seattle Pacific University
3307 Third Avenue West, Suite 104
Seattle, Washington 98119
206-281-2191

Dr. Laura Hartley, Provost

Campus Location: Room 210, Demaray Hall
Seattle Pacific University
3307 Third Avenue West, Suite 102
Seattle, WA 98119
206-281-2962

Ms. Trista Truemper, Title IX/Section 504 Coordinator

Campus Location: Room 253, Demaray Hall
Seattle Pacific University
3307 Third Avenue West, Suite 104
Seattle, WA 98119
Phone: 206-281-2538

If you believe you have been discriminated against in violation of this policy, please immediately contact one of the individuals designated above. For complaints regarding discrimination, refer to the [Nondiscrimination Complaint Procedures](#) located in the Undergraduate Student Handbook or the [Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedure](#) in the Employee Handbook, as applicable. If you have a question regarding the application of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities, you may contact the University's Title IX Coordinator or the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. For complaints regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault, or other sexual misconduct, refer to the University's [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#).

Administrative Structure

Vice Provost for Student Formation and Community Engagement

The vice provost for student formation and community engagement serves as a liaison between academic work under the provost and various student life programs. In addition to managing all the units that comprise the Office of Student Life (OSL), the vice provost for student formation and community engagement (or designee) acts as ombudsperson to all students to assist in resolving problems in the matter of community standards and expectations, discipline issues, and appeals.

Ombudsperson

Students may request the services of the University ombudsperson as a neutral party who can assist in resolving problems that arise with respect to academic and student life policies. The ombudsperson will help students understand procedures, including both their rights and responsibilities as students, and the rights and responsibilities of University officials. The ombudsperson role does not substitute for University judicial and appeal channels, but may assist students in understanding and navigating processes. Students wishing the services of a University ombudsperson should contact the vice president for student life by calling 206-281-2481. While the vice president for student life is typically the University ombudsperson, a designee may be appointed in certain situations (e.g., if there is a potential conflict of interest).

Certain Administrative Appeals

To resolve problems related to enrollment services, such as admissions, financial aid, or student accounts, students may contact the Office of the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing (VPEMM) by calling 206-281-2650. To appeal a decision to the VPEMM, a student must first complete the office or area process of appeal. This process is typically a written appeal to the department head. If the student is not satisfied that his or her interests were properly served by the area appeal process, an appeal may be directed to the VPEMM. The appeal should include all information that was submitted through the area appeal process.

Written appeals related to registration and records policies may be directed to Student Academic Services by calling 206-281-2031 or emailing sasinfo@spu.edu. If not satisfied that his or her interests were properly served, a student may direct a written appeal, accompanied by all information submitted at previous appeal levels, to the [Vice Provost for Academic Affairs](#).

Disciplinary Appeals

Students have the opportunity for a self-initiated appeal of a disciplinary action. Appeals may be addressed in writing to the appropriate University official within 48 hours of receipt by the student of the written notice of disciplinary action. The University attempts to provide ample information about community structures, expectations, and practices to all members, especially to those who are new each year. If you would like more information about behavioral standards or the disciplinary process, contact the Office of the Vice President for Student Life.

Academic and Other Appeals

The graduate [University Catalog](#) contains detailed information about the policy and process for graduate academic appeals under “Academic Policies and Procedures – Academic Appeals Policy.” In general, other service appeals begin with and are resolved by the graduate program coordinator and/or director who work directly with respective departments.

External Organizations

Depending on the situation, you may also wish to contact one or more of the organizations listed below to seek resolution of your concern (however, please note that in many cases you will be expected to first exhaust all internal University processes):

Washington State Office of the Attorney General

1125 Washington Street Southeast
P.O. Box 40100
Olympia, Washington 98504-0100
360-753-6200
atg.wa.gov

**Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
(NWCCU)**

8060 165th Avenue Northeast, Suite 100
Redmond, Washington 98052
425-558-4224 (Voice)
425-376-0596 (Fax)

nwccu.org

Washington Student Achievement Council

P.O. Box 43430
Olympia, Washington 98504-3430
360-753-7800

info@wsac.wa.gov

**The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) has authority to investigate student complaints against specific schools. WSAC may not be able to investigate every student complaint. Visit wsac.wa.gov/student-complaints for information regarding the WSAC complaint process.*

Professional Educator Standards Board

P.O. Box 47236
Olympia, Washington 98504-7236
360-725-6275

PESB@k12.wa.us

**Washington State Department of
Health (Nursing Commission)**

HSQA Complaint Intake
P.O. Box 47857
Olympia, Washington 98504-7857
360-236-4700

HSQAComplaintIntake@doh.wa.gov

Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment

Seattle Pacific University is committed to maintaining an environment free of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and other forms of sexual misconduct. The University has established a [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) (located in the Undergraduate Student Handbook) and a [Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process](#) that apply to both undergraduate and graduate students. These policies are intended to educate students and provide an equitable means of recourse for those who believe they have been a victim of sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct is a violation of University policy and may also be illegal. The University will promptly investigate and pursue the resolution of any complaint of sexual misconduct. The University reserves the right to respond with whatever measures it deems appropriate to prevent sexual misconduct and preserve the safety and well-being of its students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

Please see the [Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process](#) and the [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) for definitions of terms, resources, and procedures. Complaints of sex-based discrimination that do not involve sexual misconduct as defined in the Sexual Misconduct Policy will be handled pursuant to the [Nondiscrimination Complaint Procedures](#) or the [Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedure](#), as applicable. Additional information about the University's compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities, can be found on the University's [Nondiscrimination/Title IX website](#).

Drug-Free Workplace and Drug-Free Schools and Communities

SPU is subject to the requirements of the federal Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989. The University strongly supports the 1988 and 1989 acts. SPU annually distributes information regarding the restrictions and consequences of violations of each act. Any student who has not received copies of the statements may contact the Office of Student Life in the [Student Union Building \(SUB\)](#), second floor, or [Human Resources](#) at 330 West Nickerson.

The purpose of [SPU's Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use Policy](#) is to support the educational mission of the University with standards of personal health, moral integrity, and social consciousness. The policy is also intended to provide guidelines for members of the University community who are sensitive to the varieties of Christian perspectives represented on campus, the Free Methodist Church, and the community at large.

For some, this represents an area of personal liberty, but for others it is a stumbling block. In keeping with our heritage, we expect undergraduate and graduate students of legal age who choose to consume alcohol off-campus, to do so responsibly and to refrain from drunkenness at all times, and to not involve themselves in situations where excessive consumption and/or irresponsible behavior is taking place.

Illegal, underage consumption and/or possession of alcohol will not be permitted either on or off campus. Students who host or in any way assist or promote a gathering (on or off campus) that includes alcohol given to underage persons, underage consumption of alcohol, illegal drug usage, or any drunkenness will be subject to the disciplinary process, up to and including dismissal. Those living at the location where a party is hosted may be held responsible as hosts regardless of who provides the alcohol.

The use of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal use/possession of drugs on campus or at any of SPU's activities will be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. A student who is found on campus, or at any university activity, to be exhibiting behaviors that indicate that she or he may be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, can expect to be confronted and may be subject to discipline.

If the abnormal behavior resulted from prescription drug use in compliance with a physician's instructions, then the policy may be waived. If the behavior is a result of drug abuse or alcohol use, the student will be subject to further disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Graduate Student Services and Activities

Center for Career and Calling

Although the [Center for Career and Calling's \(CCC\)](#) primary mission is to serve undergraduate students, many online career resources are available that may be helpful to graduate students seeking positions. Visit both the "[students](#)" and "[alumni](#)" sections of its website for more information.

Disability Support Services

Staff in [Disability Support Services \(DSS\)](#) in SPU's [Center for Learning](#) coordinate services for all students with learning, psychological, medical, and physical disabilities to promote curricular and co-curricular program support and accommodations.

Students with disabilities who wish to receive services and accommodations should do the following:

- Provide the DSS program coordinator with current documentation prepared by a qualified professional in the relevant field. For specific guidelines for each disability, check the DSS website or contact the DSS program coordinator at dss@spu.edu.
- Meet with the DSS program coordinator to discuss particular needs and appropriate accommodations.
- For housing accommodations, students with disabilities should contact the DSS program coordinator by April 1 if they are returning students and want consideration during the Spring sign-up process, or by June 1 if they are new students applying for Autumn Quarter housing. Students applying for housing beginning Winter or Spring quarters should contact the coordinator at least six weeks before the start of the quarter.
- For information or to schedule an intake appointment, contact the DSS program coordinator at dss@spu.edu or 206-281-2272.

Student Counseling Center

[The Student Counseling Center \(SCC\)](#) provides SPU graduate students professional referrals to various community-based services, therapists, or organizations. SCC staff will work with graduate students to help them attain the most appropriate referrals for any mental health, couple, marital, or family related challenge.

International Student Services

SPU welcomes and encourages enrollment of F-1 international students. Special educational and social programs are designed to enhance a student's cross-cultural experiences. Counseling assistance is also provided for academic achievement, cultural adaptations, and financial and legal concerns.

[International Student Advisors](#) liaise with U.S. Department of Citizenship and Immigration Services regarding international students' travel outside of the United States, permission to transfer, employment eligibility, or practical training options, and maintaining status before, during, and after graduation.

If you are a new international student, whether a recent arrival to the United States or a transfer student from another educational institution, you are required to attend International Student Orientation and to submit documentation at that time. Questions may be directed to iss@spu.edu.

Requirements for F-1 International Students

F-1 non-immigrant status carries responsibilities as well as privileges. Failure to comply with requirements is considered a violation of U.S. law that invalidates F-1 status and cancels privileges. Seattle Pacific is required by law to make regular reports about F-1 students' status to the U.S. government.

All international and visa-holding students are required to carry health insurance while in attendance at SPU. This includes Summer Sessions and academic-year quarters in which the student may not be registered, or registered full-time (for non-F-1 students). Please see [Health Insurance](#) for International Students for more information.

International Student Advisors in the International Student Services office provide services to assist international students in complying with the terms of their visa status, applying for benefits, and attempting to correct status violations when necessary. However, the student's status is always considered his or her own responsibility, not that of SPU.

To maintain non-immigrant F-1 status, you must:

1. **Participate in an entry interview.** You must attend the required International Student Orientation. If you are unable, for a valid reason, to attend this required orientation, it is your responsibility to contact the International Student Services office no later than the fifth day of your first quarter.
2. **Be a full-time student.** Complete a full-time course load (12 credits for undergraduate students; 6 credits for graduate students) during every academic quarter (Summer Sessions may be an exception) and maintain satisfactory academic progress. If it is not possible to be enrolled full time, a Request for Reduced Course Load (RCL) form must be obtained from the International Student Services (ISS) office, signed by your faculty advisor and submitted to ISS no later than the fifth day of the quarter. Reduced enrollment will be approved only under exceptional circumstances defined by F-1 regulations. Following the 10th day of a quarter, F-1 students enrolled part time without DSO approval will be reported "out-of-status" and their SEVIS record will be terminated.
3. **Do not work off-campus without authorization.** All F-1 students (in good status) are authorized to work on-campus at SPU up to 20 hours per week during academic sessions and up to 40 hours per week during vacation periods. Any off-campus employment (paid or unpaid work) must be approved by an International Student Advisor and is only allowed within strict F-1 regulations.
4. **Report any change of name or address.** The U.S. government requires notification within 10 days of any name or address change. You must report the location of your physical residence (not a post office box) to both:
 - The International Student Services office, who will report the change to the U.S. government through the SEVIS reporting system.
 - SPU — using a Change of Directory Information form or the [Banner Information System](#) "Personal Directory Information/Directory Preferences" menu.
5. Obey the laws of the United States of America.
6. Participate in an exit interview (in the event of departure): Schedule an appointment with an International Student Advisor if you will be graduating or otherwise ending your studies at SPU for any reason.

Chapels, Lectures, and Workshops

Graduate students are encouraged to attend chapels and assemblies and to use these opportunities to hear outstanding leaders in religion, education, and other professions. For a schedule, call [University Ministries](#) at 206-281-2966.

Graduate Commencement

Commencement is a time-honored ceremony at Seattle Pacific that recognizes the scholarship, service, and Christian growth of graduating students. It is a celebratory service where students, faculty, staff, parents, relatives, and friends congratulate the graduates on their “new beginning.”

Master’s degree and doctoral degree students are recognized by the academic leadership for completion of their advanced degree and are hooded by their school dean and the graduate faculty. Degrees are awarded to graduates who have successfully completed the requirements to obtain their graduate diplomas.

Motor Vehicles and Parking

The Office of Safety and Security manages campus parking. SPU is located in a residential area with limited street parking. Campus parking is available to both residential and commuter students. Parking applications are available online to all registered students through the [Banner Information System](#). See below for additional information, and go to spu.edu/security for full information about parking on campus.

Parking Assignments

Any on-campus resident is eligible to apply for a space in the general commuter parking areas, including the Dravus lot, which is located next to the Library. Level 2 of the Dravus Lot is designated as assigned residential and carpool parking. Levels 1, 3, 4 and 5 are designated for commuter students, faculty, and staff. Commuting students may also apply for a parking permit that allows them to park in any of the designated commuter parking lots. These spaces are available on a first-come, first-served basis. A quarterly fee is typically charged to the student's account when an assignment is made. Students who do not receive a parking space in a lot will be put on the waiting list for the lot they prefer.

Vehicles of students who have received a residence hall lot assignment are designated "Resident" on their parking decals. For other students a "Commuter" designated decal will determine which parking lot may be used.

For additional information about parking rules, regulations, and hours, see the Office of Safety and Security's [Parking & Vehicle Registration](#) web pages.

Parking Regulations

Anyone operating a motor vehicle on campus is required to be familiar with the University parking regulations. Review the parking policies and regulations on the Office of Safety and Security website.

Vehicle Registration

Every motorized vehicle brought to campus, either for temporary or for yearlong use, must be registered with the Office of Safety and Security.

Students

Students may register their vehicle by applying online via their Banner account, or in person at the [Office of Safety and Security](#).

Visitors

Visitors may obtain daily guest parking permits at the Office of Safety and Security. A guest-parking permit allows a visitor to park in any commuter lot.

Towing and Ticketing

Students parking in a reserved space not assigned to them are subject to immediate towing or ticketing by Safety and Security patrols. Complaints by assigned owners of parking spaces should be directed to the Office of Safety and Security at 206-281-2922.

The Seattle Police Department tickets/tows all cars violating city regulations, including cars parked on restricted parking strips or too near driveways.

Traffic Fines

The owner of a vehicle brought to campus is accountable for the vehicle at all times, regardless of who is driving when a violation occurs. Traffic fines are automatically charged to a student's account. A schedule of fines can be found in the [Parking Regulations](#) on the Office of Safety and Security website.

Should a vehicle owner wish to protest a traffic fine, a complete parking petition must be filed in the Office of Safety and Security within 10 days of the date and time the violation was cited. Petition forms are available in the Office of Safety and Security.

Liability

SPU does not assume liability or responsibility for motor vehicles parked on SPU property or adjacent streets, or for the contents of these vehicles.

Academic Schedule Religious Accommodation Policy

The purpose of this policy is to allow SPU undergraduate and graduate students to observe holidays for reasons of faith or conscience or for organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious organization as required by RCW 28B.10.039. SPU faculty must reasonably accommodate students who, due to the observance of religious holidays, expect to be absent or endure a significant hardship during certain days of a course or program. “Reasonably accommodate” means coordinating with the student on scheduling examinations or other activities necessary for completion of the program and may include rescheduling examinations or activities or offering different times for examinations or activities.

A student who wishes to obtain an accommodation pursuant to this policy must provide written notice to each faculty member from whom the student is seeking an accommodation within the first two weeks of the beginning of the course. The written notice must identify the specific dates for which the student requests accommodations regarding examinations or other activities. SPU will not require students to pay any fees for seeking reasonable accommodations under this policy. Taking an approved accommodation under this policy will not adversely impact a student’s grade.

If a student makes a request to a faculty member for an accommodation under this policy, the faculty member will evaluate whether this policy applies to the request and whether the request has been properly made. If the faculty member believes that the student is entitled to an accommodation pursuant to this policy, the faculty member will discuss options for accommodations with the student. The goal would be to find an alternative arrangement that is workable for both the student and the faculty member. The faculty member should document in writing (which may be done by email to the student) any accommodation agreed upon by the student and the faculty member.

Faculty members will offer reasonable accommodations to students requesting accommodations under this policy. In doing so, for situations involving tests, the faculty member must offer more than one alternative testing time that is not in conflict with either the religious event or the class schedule of the student. If reasonable accommodations have been offered to a student in writing and the student has not accepted one or does not show up at the agreed upon time, the faculty member is not obligated to make other accommodations for the student. Failure to show up at an agreed upon time for an accommodation may impact the student’s grade.

If a student does not believe that they have been treated in accordance with this policy they may file a grievance by submitting a written complaint to the faculty member’s dean. Contact information for SPU deans is listed on the [Deans’ Cabinet webpage](#). If a student does not know the faculty member’s dean, the student may send the written complaint to SPU’s Provost at provost@spu.edu. The written complaint must be submitted within two weeks of the date on which the student believes their rights under this policy were not honored. The dean (or designee) will evaluate the student’s written complaint and may speak with one or both of the student and the faculty member. The dean (or designee) will attempt to complete a written decision within two weeks of receipt of a written complaint and will issue the written decision to the student and the faculty member after it has been completed. The decision of the dean (or designee) is final.