

ACTS Academic Advising Overview

Enrolling in a seminary program is a big decision.

All students who come to ACTS, in one way or another, are here in response to God's leading. It's not just a matter of decisions *we* make—it's about obedience to our Lord's direction. We understand and affirm that God calls all followers of Jesus to be ministers. Our prayer is that your studies at ACTS provide further discernment and preparation for the ministry to which God has called you.

Your own path into graduate study has involved many decisions and steps along the way. And the decisions don't stop when you arrive at new student orientation or for the first day of classes. There are choices you will make about courses and faculty, schedules and course load, specializations and assignments. One by one, these large and small decisions all come together to shape your experience as you pursue the call of God in seminary.

But don't worry – you don't need to make these decisions on your own. Your ACTS faculty and staff are here to help with the academic and personal planning necessary to make your journey through seminary as smooth and helpful as possible. As a start, we have gathered below a collection of academic advising resources.

The goal of this document is to familiarize you with some of the most important academic advising tools available to you as an ACTS student. We trust you will find them helpful throughout your seminary studies. We also welcome suggestions and requests for additional resources that would be useful to you and to others in our community.

The key tools for academic planning and decision-making described below are:

- Degree program templates
- The TWU Automated Student Records and Course Needs systems
- Current course schedule plans
- Long-term course rotation plans
- Personal assistance (email, phone, face-to-face)

I. PROGRAM TEMPLATES

The course requirements for every ACTS degree and diploma program are summarized in your program template. The official templates are listed in the ACTS Academic Catalogue, available online in the program description pages on the ACTS website, and gathered at www.actsseminaries.com/current-students/program-templates. You should have received a copy of the current template for your program with your admission letter and in your New Student Orientation Day folder.

Using Microsoft Excel, you can also download from the “program templates” link above an active version of the program template. The template spreadsheets have a number of useful features:

- If your program has specialization options, you can easily compare the “generic” program and various specializations in a side-by-side format.
- The course slots are all fillable, so you can insert courses you plan to take and those you’ve taken, giving you a convenient personalized program summary.
- The “credits completed” section calculates automatically, showing how many hours you have achieved toward the program and how many you still need, both overall and in each area.
- These templates include a tool for program completion planning, allowing you to map out course loads over multiple upcoming semesters.

Please note: these sheets are planning tools, not official transcripts.

II. TWU AUTOMATED STUDENT RECORDS AND COURSE NEEDS

Student Transcripts

You have immediate access to your current academic records through the TWU Student Portal. You can review this information anytime by downloading the current unofficial transcript. (Follow the “Transcript (Unofficial)” tab in the list down the right side of your student portal).

This resource allows you to check your previous course history (which courses you have taken and what grades you achieved), confirm the status of your current and most recent classes and to see your current cumulative GPA. Use this data to double-check and fill out your program template as you do program planning.

Course Needs

Through the Student Portal you also have access to Course Needs, which generates a quick summary of program progress based on your current academic record. The Course Needs system will show you which degree program requirements you have already fulfilled, which are unfulfilled, and which are in progress in the current semester – all in categories that match your degree program template. Course Needs also allows you to search the registration database for upcoming courses that you need in order to fulfill program requirements.

Please note: every time you download the .pdf advising sheet, hit the “recalculate” button beforehand to ensure the content is up-to-date.

III. COURSE SCHEDULES

One of the most important tools to help you select courses each semester is the current schedule of courses for the academic year.

The TWU Registrar's Office Course Timetable

The course timetable posted on the Student Portal under "Course registration" is the official list of courses available for each semester. You can also register for the course from that page.

Course Timetables on the ACTS Website

Lists of courses for the upcoming semester(s) are also provided on the ACTS website at www.actsseminaries.com/current-students/courses-and-syllabi. There are several additional features here that are not present on the Student Portal.

- Clicking on the course code (e.g. BOT 652) will link you to the course description.
- Once current course syllabi are available, you can click the "PDF" on the right side of the course listing to download the syllabus.
- These course lists are searchable.

You are always welcome to inquire with the Academic Director if you have specific questions about upcoming classes that are not yet listed. The full list of courses – both those offered regularly and those offered occasionally – are available in the ACTS Academic Catalogue.

In addition to the course list, a weekly timetable is available to visually map when the courses meet each week. This is helpful when planning your weekly schedule.

In the fall and spring semesters, you will see three tables:

- One will show all planned courses, listed by subject area.
- One will show the weekly timetable, visually mapping the courses that meet each week. This is very helpful when planning your weekly schedule.
- One will list courses delivered in special formats: evenings, online, live-streamed, modular (reading week, weekends, etc.)

In summer you will see just the overall list.

IV. LONG-TERM COURSE ROTATION

For long-term planning, again head to the "Courses and Syllabi" link above and scroll down to "Course Rotation Plans".

ACTS Base Course Rotation

Each year's course schedule is unique, shaped by program needs, faculty availability, new initiatives, as well as long-term curriculum plans. But most of the courses we offer in any given year are highly predictable. The ACTS Base Course Rotation is a summary of these consistently-planned courses. It shows which classes are typically offered in summer, fall, and spring semesters, with information on frequency and course rotation.

This sheet allows you to predict:

- Which semester a regularly-offered course will take place (*e.g. THS 571 is usually in summer and fall*).
- Which courses will be offered in a certain academic year (*e.g. THS 571 is offered every year, usually twice; Romans is normally offered every other year*).
- How many courses will typically be available in a subject area each semester (*e.g. in the fall we usually have 3 NT courses and 2 OT courses; in the spring we plan for 2 of each*).

ACTS Special Delivery Course Rotation

Not all students can attend traditional on-campus classes that meet every week during the day. This is why we offer one-week intensive modules, evening courses, online courses and live-stream courses.

We use a 5-year special delivery course rotation plan as a guide for our course scheduling each semester. This ensures you can get most, if not all, of your required courses in alternative delivery formats over a 4- to 5-year period.

Please note: actual course offerings in any given year may deviate somewhat from the plan, but where possible we are happy to make adjustments to help you customize programs where a change in course planning interferes with your program completion.

V. PERSONAL ACADEMIC PLANNING

While we want to provide the tools and information you need to select your courses and plan your academic journey, you do not need to make these plans on your own. Your ACTS faculty and staff are here to answer your questions, provide assistance and even to spend time praying with you. Please do not hesitate to contact us when you need personal assistance with program planning and other aspects of academic life. If we don't know the answer, we will make sure to connect you with the person who can help.

When have questions, the following chart can provide guidance as to the best person to approach:

(a) Admissions process and status	Go to: The ACTS Admissions staff (acts@twu.ca , 604-513-2044)
Our admissions team are here to work with you from your first inquiry about ACTS until you are registered and starting classes.	
(b) "How to..." questions about systems, etc.	Go to: ACTS staff – in the ACTS main office. (acts@twu.ca , 604-513-2044; or

	<p>www.actsseminaries.com/current-students/help-me)</p> <p>- for quick, <i>non-technical</i> answers about how to use systems</p> <p>Or go to the TWU Office of the Registrar (registrar@twu.ca, 604-513-2070, www.twu.ca/academics/office-of-the-registrar)</p> <p>- for more detailed how-to information about the registration systems and help with things that aren't working properly</p>
<p>Most questions in this category relate to the registration system: how to register for classes, how to change classes, how to pay tuition, how to check your student account, etc.</p>	
<p>(c) Degree program information and strategy</p>	<p>Go to: your degree program chair, the Dean of your seminary, and other faculty who teach in the program.</p>
<p>In this area, you may want to know more about program requirements and how they are interpreted; program-specific policies; the purpose, strengths and weaknesses of the program; how to succeed in the program; or advice on course selection and sequencing within the program.</p> <p>A current list of program chairs and committee members is available on the ACTS website, together with contact information for ACTS faculty. www.actsseminaries.com/faculty</p>	
<p>(d) Requests and approvals</p>	<p>General - Go to: the TWU Office of the Registrar. (registrar@twu.ca, 604-513-2070, www.twu.ca/academics/office-of-the-registrar)</p> <p>Specific - Go to: your degree program chair.</p>
<p>“General” requests here involve standard academic processes, usually at the start or finish of a program. These include <i>requests for transfer credit</i>, <i>letters of permission</i> (to take classes elsewhere as a visiting student), and <i>formal requests for graduation</i>.</p> <p>“Specific” request relate to special permissions or recognitions related to your degree program. These include requests for <i>Advanced Standing (with or without credit)</i>, <i>course substitutions</i>, <i>program exceptions and customizations</i>, <i>transfer credit</i> that is non-standard or requested after the admission process.</p> <p>For many academic requests, there are approval forms to sign and submit. These can be found on the ACTS website at www.actsseminaries.com/current-students/forms.</p>	
<p>(e) Financial Aid</p>	<p>Go to: your Seminary Dean</p>

	<p>Or go to: the TWU Financial Aid Office (www.twu.ca/financial-aid/, awards@twu.ca, 604-513-2159)</p>
<p>You can discuss financial aid options with the Admissions staff as part of the admission process.</p> <p>After admission and during your time as a student, the Dean of your particular seminary of enrolment will be helpful both for information about general ACTS financial aid and for information related to seminary-specific assistance.</p> <p>The TWU Financial Aid Office manages general ACTS financial aid with the application systems that you use to apply. They can also help you with information about other forms of financial aid that fall outside ACTS and the Seminaries, and with information about broader policies and government legislation around student financial aid.</p>	
<p>(f) Concerns, grievances, and appeals</p>	<p>Go to: the ACTS main office – in person, by phone, at acts@twu.ca, or through www.actsseminaries.com/current-students/help-me (for further direction)</p> <p>Or go to: your seminary Dean (for assistance and direction)</p>
<p>In the ACTS Academic Catalogue, and also on our website, you will find a statement of general principles and procedures that cover most scenarios. Forms for filing official academic appeals (eg: grade appeals) and lodging other formal complaints can be downloaded from the ACTS website (www.actsseminaries.com/current-students/forms).</p> <p>In most cases, you may direct formal concerns, grievances, and appeals to the office of the ACTS Academic Director. Concerns about campus harassment may go to a current harassment officer. The ACTS office staff will assist you in determining where to go and what the right process will be to care for your concerns.</p>	