



# BLUE RIDGE INSTITUTE

*for* THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

## Administrative and Financial Policies

### Degrees and Accreditation

All degrees are granted in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and upon recommendation of the faculty and by the authority of the Board of Trustees.

Blue Ridge Institute for Theological Education is a school of theology, preparing students for pastoral ministry, leadership, and service in the church by offering graduate level degrees. Under the original charter of the Institute adopted by the Board of Trustees and subsequently amended in accordance with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), BRITE has the authority to grant the degrees of:

- ❖ Certificate of Graduate Studies
- ❖ Bachelor of Divinity
- ❖ Master of Divinity-Diploma
- ❖ Master of Divinity

When appropriate certification has been attained from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) and agency

permission has been granted, it is the Board's intention to offer two MA degrees:

- ❖ Master of Arts in Biblical Studies
- ❖ Master of Arts in Theological Studies

In accordance with the regulations in place by various accrediting agencies, the needs of BRITE, and the current number of years of operation, BRITE is presently unaccredited by any regional accrediting agency or theological school accrediting agency. The majority of BRITE students, for purposes of their own study or vocational aspirations, do not require an accredited degree. The vast majority of churches, denominations, mission agencies, etc. with whom BRITE students would aim to serve do not require an accredited master's degree for their ecclesiastical purposes. Moreover, the Institute is committed to maintaining academic standards equal to or higher than those set by accrediting agencies as well as avoiding unnecessary expenditures in order to maintain an accessible, affordable theological education option for her students.

However, for the students at BRITE for whom an accredited degree would be advantageous, BRITE has entered into a partnership with Erskine Theological Seminary whereby students may study with BRITE and earn a fully-accredited Master's degree from Erskine. Erskine Theological Seminary is accredited by both the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). More information about Erskine Theological Seminary may be found at [seminary.erskine.edu](http://seminary.erskine.edu). Please contact the BRITE Academic Dean for more details.

# Admissions

Application for admission is made through the BRITE website ([www.brite-va.org](http://www.brite-va.org)) and admission is subject to approval by the Admissions Committee. The following items are needed before an application is considered. (Note: Original forms are required. Faxed copies will be accepted only in certain situations.)

1. A completed application form. This includes:
  1. An applicant's autobiography.
  2. ***For degree-seeking applicants:*** Official transcript(s) from all post-secondary schools attended, sent directly to the Admissions Committee from the Registrar of each school previously attended. If digital delivery is an acceptable option from the transcript's school of origin, they may be sent to [academicdean@brite-va.org](mailto:academicdean@brite-va.org). Otherwise, transcripts should be physically mailed to the BRITE Offices at:  
  
**Blue Ridge Institute for Theological Education**  
c/o 2216 Peters Creek Road NW  
Roanoke, VA 24017
2. Two completed Applicant Reference Forms from fellow Christians who know the applicant well. Use of the BRITE Applicant Reference Form is required; these forms can be located at <https://s3.amazonaws.com/5mt.brite-va.org/2017/05/BRITE-Applicant-Reference-Form-fill-in-boxes.docx>.
3. Written recommendation from a pastor or church leadership council/team, such as a group of elders or church officers. Use of the BRITE Applicant Reference Form is acceptable.

Alternatively, a letter or an email from the pastor/church leadership is acceptable. These items may be sent via email to [academicdean@brite-va.org](mailto:academicdean@brite-va.org).

4. An affirmation of historic, orthodox Christianity (i.e. affirmation of the Nicene Creed). This affirmation is generally understood by way of an applicant's requisite membership in an orthodox, Protestant congregation, but in some cases an interview with the Dean of Students will be necessary prior to admission.
5. A nonrefundable application fee of \$20.

In some cases, additional documents may be required or, in some unusual cases, an interview with the Dean of Students may be required before admission is granted.

Applicants for all Master's degrees must hold a B.A. or other Bachelor's degree. In extraordinary circumstances, students who seek to study, but who have not attained a B.A. degree or similar, may be admitted to the Institute to study for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity (BDiv) or Master of Divinity-Diploma (MDiv-Diploma), depending on age and life circumstances. Please see the admissions requirements for this degree outlined in "The Divinity Program."

Applicants to BRITE waive all rights to privileged knowledge of the decision making process leading toward admission. All references and other evaluative documents will be confidential. The Admissions Committee reserves the right to decline admission to the Institute to any applicant if they determine such admission would not be in the best interest of the faculty, student body, or Institute as a whole. The decision of the Admissions Committee acting officially on behalf of the faculty is **final**. However, an applicant who fails to be admitted may re-apply no sooner than

three (3) years from the date of the Admissions Committee's Decision Letter.

## Application Deadlines

Completed applications for the Certificate program, MATS, MABS, MDiv, MDiv Diploma, and BDiv may be submitted up to twelve (12) months prior to the application deadline. The deadline for application is relative to each semester. These deadlines can be located at [www.brite-va.org/academic-calendar/](http://www.brite-va.org/academic-calendar/).

Late applications may require delayed enrollment. Students are not allowed to register for classes until their application has been approved.

## Admission Process

Applications take approximately 15 business days to process after all required items are received by the Admissions Committee. The Admissions Committee treats all material confidentially. If approved, the application file will remain valid for purposes of admission for one year from the date of approval. If enrollment is delayed beyond one year or if this application is not approved, a new updated application with accompanying forms must be submitted. Interested parties may contact the Admissions Committee by way of the Academic Dean at [academicdean@brite-va.org](mailto:academicdean@brite-va.org) with any questions about applications or about the admission process.

## Transfer Credit

Transfer students admitted to a BRITE degree program may be granted advanced standing/transfer credit. A letter or email formally petitioning (requesting) BRITE to consider transferring in previously-earned credit must be delivered to the Academic Dean along with an official transcript. An official transcript showing the

courses completed at the previous institution must be submitted with the application. Applicants seeking admission as transfer students must have maintained at least a 'C' average (normally a 2.00 GPA) and be in good standing at the school last attended. A statement of honorable dismissal from the former institution may be required. Credit for work done at other institutions will be granted after evaluation by the Institute. No credit will be allowed for work receiving less than a grade of 'C' or its equivalent. Grade point averages at BRITE will be computed only on the basis of work done at BRITE. Only the course work completed at BRITE will appear on the student's transcript with the notation that he or she was granted advanced standing because of the previous degree.

# Academic Regulations

## **Class Attendance**

Because all class work is directed to the glory of God and designed for the best preparation of students for their service in the church of God, students are expected to attend all class sessions and to arrive for those sessions on time. In particular, no student should miss one class to complete work for another. One unexcused absence will result in a grade being lowered one letter; two unexcused absences, two letters; and three unexcused absences, failure. Requests for an excuse need to be made by phone, text, or e-mail. If e-mail or text is not acknowledged, then a phone call is required. If because of an emergency, the student is unable to contact the professor before class, he must let the professor know the nature of the emergency as soon as possible. In exceptional cases, due to extended illness or a family crisis, the student may petition the Dean of Students, in writing, for permission to withdraw from courses without penalty.

## **Courses By Off Campus Instruction**

BRITE students may not take courses by means of digital media except in extreme circumstances and then only with the approval of the Academic Dean and the professor responsible for the course. A student may take and be given credit for a recorded course that is from another institution.

## **Examinations**

All students must take examinations at the scheduled time. The professor may grant an exception. However, the request for an exception must be received ordinarily in writing prior to the scheduled exam time. Failure to comply will result in a reduced or failing grade.

## **Incomplete Work**

For a reason the professor deems valid, and with the approval of the Academic Dean, an “I” may be given for a course not completed in the semester when it was taken. A petition for an incomplete must be completed and filed with the Academic Dean no later than the last day of the final examination period. The student has until the beginning of the same semester the following year to complete the work. Failure to meet this deadline results in an “F” for the course. An “I” may not be given if the student simply fails to complete the work or fails to take the examination.

## **Withdrawal from a Course**

The final date to withdraw (drop) a course is the third official class meeting of a particular course. After this date, depending on the student’s standing in the class, the professor may assign either WP (withdraw pass) or WF (withdraw fail). If the withdrawal takes place after the midterm break, the student will automatically receive a WF.

## **Withdrawal from Institute**

A student desiring to withdraw from the Institute at any time should report that fact in writing to the Academic Dean so that his records may be completed and his transcript released. Failure to complete the proper withdrawal process will prevent release of the transcript. A student desiring re-admission after two years must reapply, and pay the application fee.

## **Academic Probation**

Students must maintain a GPA of 2.0. A student whose GPA falls below 2.0 may be permitted to remain enrolled on probation for one more semester. If his GPA remains below 2.0, the student will be

dismissed for academic reasons. After the period of one year, the dismissed student may reapply for admission.

### **Transcripts**

Transcripts are released only on written request from the student. The cost of release is \$5.00. Each student receives a free copy of his or her transcript upon graduation, provided all accounts with the Institute are settled.

### **Add/Drop Policies**

Students are permitted to add (enroll in) courses as late as the **first** day of class. Courses may be dropped without academic penalty if done so before the **third** official class meeting. No courses may be added or dropped after these aforementioned deadlines. For refunds related to courses dropped, see the refund policy below under “Financial Information.”

## Grading System

The Institute uses the following grading system for students:

Letter	Numeric Value	Quality Points
A	97-100	4.00
A-	94-96	3.66
B+	91-93	3.33
B	88-90	3.00
B-	86-87	2.66
C+	83-85	2.33
C	80-82	2.00
C-	78-79	1.66
D+	75-77	1.33
D	72-74	1.00
D-	70-71	0.66
F	Fail	0.00
I	Incomplete	0.00
WP	Withdraw Pass	0.00
WF	Withdraw Fail	0.00
S	Satisfactory	0.00
(P)	(Pass)	0.00

## Plagiarism

Research papers require borrowing other people's ideas and words. However, the source of such borrowing must be acknowledged properly so that your ideas are clearly distinguished from ideas that you borrowed. If the source is not acknowledged properly, your work is plagiarism.<sup>1</sup> For an excellent summary on what constitutes plagiarism, see Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research*

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<sup>1</sup> As an example of how to avoid plagiarism, it should be noted that this section on plagiarism from the BRITE Catalog was copied (with slight emendation) from the Reformed Theological Seminary Catalog 2017-2019, pp. 58-59.

*Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (rev. by Wayne C. Booth, etc.; 8<sup>th</sup> ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp. 78-82 (section 7.9).

Plagiarism includes word-for-word copying, lifting terms, restatement of someone's argument or line of thought, etc.—all without acknowledgment of source. Plagiarism also includes giving a source partial credit when more is taken from that source than indicated. Plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, is very serious. All plagiarism cases are referred to the Academic Dean for resolution.

Consequences may include some of the following:

- ❖ repeat the assignment and receive a maximum
- ❖ of a D on the assignment
- ❖ receive an F on the assignment
- ❖ receive an F in the course
- ❖ expulsion from the Institute

### **Complaint and Appeals Policy**

An appeals process exists to resolve any behavioral or academic problem that cannot otherwise be settled in a biblical manner and assures fairness to all parties concerned. This process is rarely needed and should only be used after all other means have been exhausted. For example, in academic matters that pertain to a class or a grade, the student should first work directly with the professor. Concerning behavioral or community issues, the student should first consult with the Dean of Students.

If the matter cannot be resolved by the above means, the following appeals process exists:

1. The student should submit a written appeal to the Academic Dean regarding the issue. Depending on the issue, the Academic Dean may request input from the Faculty. The Academic Dean will render a written decision.

2. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Academic Dean, then the student may submit a subsequent written appeal to the Dean of Students requesting a hearing. The Dean of Students may or may not grant the request. If granted, Dean of Students may appoint an ad hoc committee that may consist of trustees, faculty, staff, and/or institutional officers to hear the case. This committee is authorized to meet with any or all concerned parties to resolve the issue and will render a written decision concerning the case.

3. The decision of the Dean of Students or the ad hoc committee is considered final, subject only to review by the Board of Trustees to affirm the appeals process was properly observed.

# Financial Information

## **Tuition, Fees, and Payments**

For all tuition and fees, see the BRITE web page: ([www.brite-va.org](http://www.brite-va.org)).

All tuition and fees for a class are due the first day of class. Those who are depending on financial support from churches, organizations, individuals, etc. should be prepared to meet financial obligations when due, whether or not such funds have been received by the student personally.

## **Tuition Refund Policy**

Students may receive a full refund for their course tuition if they request to withdraw from a course up to and including the first day of class. No refund will be issued (even if a student withdraws from the course) after the first official class meeting. If a student withdraws from a course after the first day of class deadline, the student may opt to apply their course tuition toward a future BRITE class. The student should notify the Academic Dean in writing of their desire in this regard.

## **Scholarship**

Limited scholarship funds may be available to meet special needs. Please inquire with Academic Dean for further information.

## Student Conduct

All students of BRITE are expected to conduct themselves at all times as mature Christians. The Institute believes that the Reformation Confessional Standards required of the Faculty (i.e. the Westminster Standards, the London Baptist Confession, etc.) are sound expositions of the biblical principles of conduct as well as of faith and doctrine. The Institute reserves the right to refuse or dismiss students whose conduct fails to meet the ethical principles set forth in the Bible and the Confessions. Admission to BRITE assumes the desire on the part of the student to study the Christian Faith as understood by the Institute. The candidate's conduct is expected to conform to this assumption at all times.