



MINERVA
UNIVERSITY

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www.minerva.edu

Graduate Student Handbook

Academic Year 2021–22

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Notice to Students

Minerva University (hereafter referred to as Minerva) reserves the right to make changes to policies, rules and regulations related to academic, financial, and other related matters affecting students at any time. These changes may involve such matters as tuition and all other fees, courses, degrees and programs offered, degree and other academic requirements, academic policies, rules pertaining to student conduct and discipline, fields or areas of concentration, and other rules and regulations applicable to students. Revisions will also be made in the most current version of the Student Handbook available on The Hub.

Please direct questions about the information in this Student Handbook to studentlife@minerva.edu.

Introduction

Mission and Values

Our Mission

Nurturing critical wisdom for the sake of the world

Minerva University offers an unparalleled educational program designed to prepare our students to be exceptional problem solvers and decision makers, able to work together to develop new and effective ways to address the most complex challenges faced by society. The Minerva educational journey has been designed to enhance student learning outcomes providing an environment of deep intellectual learning.

Minerva will promote student success, continuing to provide support long after graduation. The greatest success for Minerva will be seeing and celebrating the accomplishments of our graduates.

Our Guiding Principles

These principles work with one another, adding another dimension to our work and decision making, and when all working together the results are extraordinary.

- Being Unconventional
- Being Thoughtful
- Being Confident
- Being Human
- Being Selective
- Being Authentic
- Being Driven

A Brief History of Minerva

Minerva's founder Ben Nelson first conceived of what eventually became Minerva University in 1993 as a plan to reinvent an Ivy League university to better prepare graduates for the twenty-first century. Today's great American universities were founded on the notion of liberal arts education, the idea that a university education meant that its graduates were well prepared to lead the important institutions in society by knowing how to think deeply, while also being well versed in a variety of subjects and possessing deep knowledge in an area of their choosing. Minerva University's faculty and staff believe passionately that we must live up to the original intent of the university model by offering a purposeful education for our students and adopting curricular and pedagogical structures and practices that help students to learn most deeply and effectively.

In 2012, Nelson partnered with Benchmark Capital to create a new university experience based on these venerable ideals in a modern, global context. Minerva (named after the Roman goddess of wisdom) was announced publicly in April 2012. In 2013, the Minerva Project formed an alliance with Keck Graduate Institute (KGI) to incubate the Minerva Schools, which was in effect until Minerva University was granted its own accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges/Senior College and University Commission in June 2021. KGI was an ideal partner for Minerva because both have a general emphasis on interdisciplinary education, global understanding, team building, collaboration, active learning, and deep student engagement. For more information about KGI, see www.kgi.edu.

Minerva University, then called Minerva Schools at KGI, launched in fall 2014 with 29 students in its Founding Class. More than one hundred students enrolled in fall 2015 as the Inaugural Class. These two groups of talented and pioneering students joined together to become the first graduating class in May 2019. In 2016, Minerva offered its first graduate program, the Masters of Science in Decision Analysis, the MDA (see below). In fall 2021, Minerva will enroll its eighth first-year undergraduate class, its fifth graduate class, have a total enrollment of ~600 students, 400 alumni, and more than 60 faculty members and about 60 staff members located all over the world.

Masters of Science in Decision Analysis Program

The Masters of Science in Decision Analysis (MDA) program was initiated in 2016 with the first cohort graduating in 2017. In May 2021, the third cohort of MDA students graduated. The current 21 month part time program is designed to impart critical professional skills with an emphasis on research analysis, practical decision-making and cognitive skills for working with others. Students will learn to interpret complex data, find rational conclusions, devise potential solutions, and evaluate the implications of their choices. Program learning outcomes for the MDA program include:

- Frame problems: Identify and research important real-world problems learning the broad and integrative knowledge relevant to a particular research question or decision.
- Contextualize research: critique and extend existing research and articulate a deep understanding of the nature and complexity of problems seen from multiple perspectives.
- Synthesize approaches: apply multiple approaches, theories and methods of analysis to formulate possible solutions to problems integrating quantitative and qualitative methods including computer based data science.

- Assess solutions: use all available information and appropriate analytical tools to assess and select the most effective solutions to problems incorporating risk, ethical implications and competing interests.
- Measure efficacy: design processes to implement decisions effectively and measure the outcomes.
- Interact effectively in complex social and professional environments.

Accreditation

On June 25, 2021, the Western Association of Schools and College Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) granted accreditation to Minerva Institute operating as Minerva University for a period of six years. For information on accreditation, contact Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC or WSCUC), 1001 Marina Village Parkway, Suite 402, Alameda, CA 94501, (510) 748-9001, <https://www.wscuc.org>. Minerva Institute for Research and Scholarship is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit institution that is registered and operating as Minerva University.

Academic Calendars

For the part-time Master's in Decision Analysis program, Minerva operates on a semester + summer term system, with three 15-week terms in one academic year. The following are the academic calendars for 2021-2022:

Fall 2021	
Orientation	September 2 (anticipated, may shift a day or two)
First Day of Fall Term	September 6, 2021
Course Drop Deadline w/o "W" grade	October 1, 2021
Fall Break	October 11 - 12, 2021
Friendsgiving Break	November 24 - 26, 2021
Last Day of Fall Semester	December 17, 2021
Winter Break	December 18, 2021 - January 9, 2022
Spring 2022	

First Day of Spring Term	January 10, 2022
Course Drop Deadline w/o "W" grade	February 4, 2022
Spring Break	February 14 - 15, 2022
Quinquatria Break	March 23 - 25, 2022
Last Day of Spring Semester	April 22, 2022
Summer 2022	
First Day of Summer Semester	May 2, 2022
Summer Term 1 classes start-end dates	May 9 - Jun 28, 2022
Course Drop Deadline w/o "W" grade for Summer I courses	May 19, 2022
Break	Jun 29 - Jul 3, 2022
Summer Term 2 classes start-end dates	Jul 4 - Aug 23, 2022
Course Drop Deadline w/o "W" grade for Summer II courses	Jul 15, 2022
Last Day of Summer Semester	Aug 23, 2022

Financial Information

Tuition and Fees, 2021-22

Students are responsible for all costs associated with attending Minerva. The graduate program is non-residential, so graduate students typically live wherever they were living before admission. In any case, Minerva does not provide any residential option for graduate students.

Estimated Program Costs

The actual amount that you owe will take into account any applicable financial aid loan provisions or other agreed-upon considerations.

Tuition	\$ 39,500
Course Materials (estimated)*	\$ 500
Total Estimated Costs	\$ 40,000

All amounts in U.S. dollars.

* Many learning materials will be provided free of charge. The cost of paid materials varies by year. Students purchase materials from other organizations, not Minerva University.

Summary of Exceptional Fees

Tuition and Fees		
Thesis Extension Extension for thesis completion	3 months 12 months	\$500 \$2,000
Late Payment Fee	Per late payment	1.5% of amount due, but at least \$50

Payment Due Dates

	Billing Date	Due Date
Fall 2021	June 15, 2021	July 15, 2021
Spring 2022	November 15, 2021	December 15, 2021
Summer 2022	March 15, 2022	April 15, 2022
Fall 2022	July 15, 2022	August 15, 2022
Spring 2023	November 15, 2022	December 15, 2022

Tuition is due and payable in five payments of \$7,900 in accordance with the schedule shown above. The terms of payment are pursuant to the separate enrollment agreement that was provided under separate cover. Tuition is refunded on a pro rata basis only through the ninth week of the semester. (See Withdrawal and Refund Schedule.)

Students are responsible for paying their bills by these dates. If someone else is paying the student's bill, the student must ensure that timely payments are made. In order for a student to register each term, tuition and fees must be paid in full. Any unpaid balance results in a hold placed on registration until the balance is paid in full.

Installment Payment Plan

Students may arrange to pay tuition and fees on an installment plan. The total amount due for each semester is payable in three installments. A service fee of 4% of the total amount of tuition and fees charged to the student for the year is added to the first installment. Installment payments are due as follows:

- July 15, 2021 payment

July 15	September 1	October 15
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- December 15, 2021 payment

December 15	January 30	March 15
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- April 15, 2022 payment

April 15	May 15	June 15
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- August 15, 2022 payment

August 15	September 30	November 15
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- December 15, 2022 payment

December 15	January 30	March 15
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Students not adhering to the agreed upon installment plan for a semester payment might not be offered an installment plan for the following semester.

To set up an installment plan, please contact bursar@minerva.edu.

Payment Instructions

Minerva offers four payment options for invoices. These include:

1. Online transfer from a domestic (US) account
2. Online transfer from an international (non-US) account
3. Direct wire transfer
4. US check

Payment instructions will also be sent with each invoice.

While online transfers are often completed within 24 hours, direct wire transfers and check delivery can take up to ten days. Please ensure you start your payment early to avoid late payment fees.

Payment by Online Transfer from a Domestic (US) Account

Online payments from domestic accounts are processed by Nelnet Campus Commerce. To start a payment with Nelnet, enter your invoice through a direct link, or through Prepare if paying a term bill. Scroll to the 'Amount Due Today' box and select 'US Bank' from the 'Transfer Type' drop-down menu. Click 'Pay Now' to be directed to the Nelnet payment website. Follow the prompts to complete your payment. You will be given the option to make your payment by 'eCheck' (bank transfer) or Credit Card. The fees associated with the credit card transfer reflect the type of card used and are not set by Minerva. All fees are retained by Nelnet.

Once your payment has been completed, the status of your term bill should change from 'Currently Due' to 'Paid,' and the payment should appear in the 'Payments/Credits' section of the invoice as pending. This pending status will be removed once Nelnet has received the funds from your bank account. In some cases, it may take Nelnet several days to withdraw the funds from your bank account. If you are concerned about your payment, please contact Nelnet.

Payment by Online Transfer from an International (Non-US) Account

Online payments from non-US bank accounts are processed by Flywire. To start a payment with Flywire, enter your invoice through a direct link, or through Prepare if paying a term bill. Scroll to the 'Amount Due Today' box and select 'Non-US Bank' from the 'Transfer Type' drop-down menu. Click 'Pay Now' to be directed to the Flywire payment website. Follow the prompts to complete your payment. You will then be prompted to select the country of payment origin and sign into your Flywire account.

Funds can be transferred electronically to Flywire, or deposited into a Flywire account through a transaction made at your bank.

Once your payment has been completed, the status of your term bill changes from 'Currently Due' to 'Paid,' and the payment appears in the 'Payments/Credits' section of the invoice as pending. This pending status will be removed once Flywire has received the funds from your bank account.

Payment by Direct Wire

If you would like to send your payment to Minerva by direct wire, please contact bursar@minerva.edu for full account details and instructions. Please remember that a direct wire can take up to ten days to process.

Payment by Check

Checks can be addressed to Minerva University, Office of the Bursar and mailed to 1145 Market Street, Ninth Floor, San Francisco CA USA 94103. Please ensure all checks have the student name and ID included so payment can be correctly applied to the invoice. If a payment is for multiple invoices, please specify which bills are being settled. (E.g. Spring Term Bill, 2021)

Late Penalty Charges

Minerva relies on students paying their invoices by the due dates. If someone else is paying for the student, the student must ensure that timely payments are made.

If full payment for term invoices and installment plan invoices, or for any other invoice, is not received by the due date, a late payment penalty of 1.5% of the amount past due but at least \$50 may be assessed.

If the payment is more than 14 days past due and unless special circumstances or arrangements have been approved in writing by the Office of the Bursar, a financial hold will be placed on the student account. Such holds may result in any or all of the following:

- Bar the student from attending classes and turning in assignments;
- Suspend all services and privileges;
- Block the student from registration for the upcoming terms.
- Withhold diplomas

Once a payment is more than 30 days past due or a balance owed for an upcoming term is not paid prior to the start of that term, any or all of the following actions may be taken:

- Incoming students will be withdrawn from Minerva and must reapply for admission in the following academic year.
- Suspension of the student;
- Assign the student debt to a collection agency (students who have debt assigned to an outside collection agency may be required to pay in advance for all future registrations and services)
- Report the student to a credit bureau.

Withdrawal and Refund Schedule

If a student withdraws from Minerva, tuition is refunded on the following schedule. Please note that Student Services fees, if any, are non-refundable. The date of withdrawal is defined as the

date that Minerva receives a statement of withdrawal in writing from the student. Reductions of student loans are returned directly to the lenders of the funds.

Date of Withdrawal	Refund Percentage
Prior to the first day of class	Full refund
Up through 60% of calendar days in semester	Pro rata refund
Beyond 60% of calendar days in semester	No refund

Tuition during Leave of Absence

If leave of absence is approved prior to the first day of classes, tuition will not be charged. Please see the *Withdrawal and Refund Schedule* above for further information regarding tuition refunds after this time.

Financial Aid

Minerva follows a need-blind admissions policy. This means that students are admitted without regard to their need for financial aid, and that applying for financial aid does not affect admissions decisions. Through low-interest loans, Minerva offers support to admitted MDA students requesting such assistance. Based on previous years, we expect the maximum loan amount to be \$19,750, and the interest rate to be 6.5%. Unlike most US universities, Minerva offers financial aid regardless of country of origin — everyone with demonstrated financial need is eligible. Scholarships and work/study opportunities are not available to graduate students.

The loan will be funded in two parts. Applicants will receive one loan covering up to 50% of the first three terms, and then submit a loan application again for the final two terms. As long as a student remains in good standing and makes payments on time, there should not be any barrier to the students receiving the second part of the loan.

Students interested in applying for such a loan should contact financialaid@minerva.edu with that request.

External Scholarships Awarded to Students

If a student has funding from an external entity, the amount to be paid by the external entity is deducted from the student's loan amount.

Student Services

Student ID Cards

The Minerva Student ID card is your official Minerva University identification card. Students can obtain a Student ID card by completing the Student ID Card Module in Prepare.

Should you lose or damage your card, a replacement card can be obtained for a \$15 USD fee, billed directly to your student account by the Bursar. Replacement ID cards may be requested through the Student ID Card Module in Prepare.

If an ID card is stolen and a police report is filed with a police agency (police reports from other countries are accepted as long as they are in English), the fee will be waived. A copy of the report must be sent via email to studentservices@minerva.edu prior to the issuance of a replacement card.

Student Health

Minerva does not provide or monitor health insurance coverage or mental health services for graduate students.

F-1 Student Visas

Because Minerva's graduate program is non-residential, Minerva does not sponsor F-1 student visas, or any other type of visa, for graduate students. In the event that graduate students wish to attend Minerva-related events in the US, including but not limited to commencement ceremonies (i.e., graduation), students must obtain all necessary documentation (typically, a visitor B-2 visa).

Courseload Requirements and Exceptions

Students must be enrolled in all courses required by the relevant phase of the program to maintain student status, but there are circumstances that would allow a student to drop below a standard course load. Those circumstances include but are not limited to: Academic Difficulties, Medical Condition, and Completion of Course of Study. A student who is experiencing one of these circumstances may be granted a Reduced Course Load (RCL). Permission must be granted by the Head Instructor for MDA prior to any change to a student's course schedule.

Request a Reduced Course Load by completing [this request form](#).

Failure to comply with the guidelines or process for requesting a RCL may result in a loss of student status and termination from the Program.

Employment and Other Academic Programs

Graduate students may, at their discretion, maintain part-time or full-time employment while enrolled at Minerva. They may also attend other part-time academic programs. Obligations related to employment or other programs do not constitute a valid reason for missing class, failing to adhere to school or course policies (including but not limited to on-time completion and submission of work), or falling below performance thresholds. The Program requires meeting four times per week per semester for the four semesters when two courses are taught each semester. Estimated time per week is six hours per week for the class sessions and 10-14 hrs per week to prepare for class sessions and work on project-based assignments. During the fifth semester students work on their thesis with regular meetings with their thesis advisors and MDA Head Instructor.

Policy on Accommodations for Disabilities

Provision of Services

Minerva University has an institutional commitment to equal access to all educational opportunities for students with disabilities. Minerva commits to complying with state and federal laws and additionally commits to accommodations, auxiliary services and support to provide for the most inclusive experience.

Each accommodation request will be addressed in an individualized and interactive manner. Accommodations will be developed to address barriers resulting from a disability that adversely affect equal educational opportunities. In a collaborative manner, the Disability Resource Specialist will work with appropriate administrators and staff to develop reasonable and effective accommodations that are appropriate for the student and yet do not alter fundamental aspects of the educational program.

Resources

Student Services is responsible for determining and coordinating appropriate accommodations and auxiliary aids and services for qualified students with disabilities. For additional information and forms, please see The Hub [here](#). Students who have questions or want to confer with the Disability Resources Specialist may email disabilityservices@minerva.edu. It is advisable to consult with the Disability Resource Specialist before you apply for accommodations.

Eligibility

Students are eligible for consideration for accommodations and/or auxiliary aids and services if they have a documented disability. Students should initiate the process through the Prepare

module and communicate directly with the Disability Resource Specialist about the specific impact of their disability on their studies at Minerva. Documentation needs will be communicated directly with the student to ensure that the student provides the documentation necessary for the Specialist to make a recommendation about the accommodation. Minerva's Disability Resource Specialist reviews documentation, communicates directly with students, and determines those functional limitations of the disability that require reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids and/or other services.

Student Responsibility

Each student bears the responsibility of initiating a disability-related request for accommodations, auxiliary aids and/or services with the Disability Resource Specialist prior to the time it is needed. If a student has pre-existing conditions or known disabilities, the earlier a student consults with the Disability Resource Specialist, the better. Students will not receive any informal accommodations in academics unless formal approved accommodations have been granted. If an accommodation is granted, the student must adhere to the policies and guidelines set forth within the approved accommodation.

Documentation

Documentation may or may not be required to begin the accommodation process. Please complete the online Prepare module to begin the interactive process. Throughout the process, the Disability Resource Specialist and student will navigate the documentation needs together. Every request is unique and will be approached in an individualized process. The request for any accommodation will be evaluated promptly once a student engages in this interactive process.

Examples of Accommodations

Accommodations include not only disability-related accommodations, but also disability-related services and auxiliary aids. Accommodations refers to modifications to the course, program or educational requirements as are necessary and appropriate so that such requirements do not create a barrier to the educational environment and allow for an inclusive educational experience. Possible modifications and accommodations are based on a student's specific needs, course and program requirements, and appropriate documentation; not all accommodations are necessarily provided to each student in a particular disability category. The following are the kinds of accommodations that Minerva may grant. These and other kinds of accommodations are considered on a case-by-case basis.

- Extended time permitted for completion of the degree program
- Reduced course load
- Extensions on assignment due dates (e.g., when a chronic illness has flare-ups)

- Conversion of materials into alternate formats (e.g., e-text, large print, Braille)
- Assistive technology, software and/or hardware (e.g., screen readers, speech-to-text applications)
- Sign language interpreting
- Computer-aided real-time transcription (CART)
- Captioned videos

Confidentiality

Minerva treats all student disability information as confidential, and will not share it except as required or permitted by law or as necessary for institutional processes. These processes include facilitating reasonable accommodations, addressing health and safety issues, or investigating claims or charges.

Student Privacy Rights and Responsibilities

In compliance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the General Data Protection Regulation as applicable (GDPR), and California law, students at Minerva University have the following four rights in regard to maintained education records:

1. Students have the right to inspect and review education records. Education records are defined as records in any format that directly identify the student and are maintained by the various offices of Minerva University. Some records may be administered by additional privacy laws and regulations that supersede FERPA, and, therefore, may not be available under this policy. Requests for the inspection and review of education records must be submitted directly to the custodian of the record, following policy and procedure of the office in whose custody the record is maintained.
2. Students have the right to seek to amend education records. Individual offices have established procedures for challenging the content of education records. Students may also submit a written request for review of a particular education record to the appropriate office. Under FERPA, grades are exempted from this provision. Students with concerns about individual grades should contact the CAO.
3. Students have the right to have some control over the disclosure of information from education records. Students may request that Minerva restrict the release of directory information by submitting a written request to Student Services (studentservices@minerva.edu). Such restrictions remain in effect until canceled in writing by the student. Students may declare themselves to be tax dependents of their parents and authorize Minerva to release non-directory information to parents. Such

authorizations remain in effect until canceled in writing by the student. Parents/legal guardians are permitted to access all non-directory information of their student without a release if the student is under the age of 18.

4. Students have the right to file a complaint with the Federal Policy Compliance Office, a division of the U.S. Department of Education, for any alleged violation of their rights under FERPA. Complaints must be submitted in writing to: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington DC 20202-5920.

In compliance with FERPA and GDPR, Minerva has designated the following items of information as directory information: name and student username; local and permanent address; local, cellular, and permanent phone numbers; email address; date and place of citizenship; major field of study; dates of attendance; enrollment status; degrees and awards received; most recent previous institution attended; photographs; participation in officially recognized activities. Directory information is defined as information that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. Unless restricted by the written request of a student, Minerva may release directory information without the prior consent of a student. Directory information required for course or classroom participation in courses may not be withheld from faculty and students connected with the particular course.

As permitted by FERPA, Minerva allows access to student directory and non-directory information by education officials when a legitimate educational interest exists for specific education records. A legitimate educational interest exists when an education official demonstrates a need to know specific information to accomplish instructional, advisory, administrative, research, supervisory, or other administrative responsibilities assigned by Minerva. Education officials may include employees, faculty, staff, designated representatives of Minerva, and contracted agents and agencies of Minerva. Minerva may outsource some operations requiring the disclosure of information from education records. Providers of such services include the National Student Clearinghouse. Education officials, including contracted providers, who receive education records, must comply with all FERPA regulations regarding re-disclosure and the privacy of such education records.

Under FERPA, and in compliance with other federal and local regulations, privacy rights in the postsecondary environment are reassigned from parents to students. Nevertheless, FERPA permits institutions to disclose information from education records to parents and to other third party entities in specific situations and under certain conditions. Among these situations are the following: to schools where the student seeks, intends, or has enrolled; in connection with financial aid; to certain government authorities, including U.S. military recruiters; to certain entities conducting studies or audits on behalf of Minerva, by federal, state, or local education authorities, or by professional and other educational organizations; in compliance with court orders and subpoenas where health and safety are at risk or in the event of student status changes; when violations to federal, state, or local regulations have occurred and violations to

institutional policy have been determined in regard to crimes of violence or non-forcible sex acts and, for students under the age of 21, the use or possession of alcohol or other controlled substances; and per additional contingencies set forth in FERPA.

For further information from the United States Department of Education: <http://www.ed.gov/>

You can find detailed FERPA information at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

You can find information from the Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO) at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/index.html>. For more information on whether the GDPR applies to you, please contact studentlife@minerva.edu.

Coaching & Talent Development

The Coaching & Talent Development team supports Minerva's mission by empowering Minerva students to create and pursue meaningful lives and careers by exploring, identifying, testing, and developing the skills and characteristics that will support them in thriving personally and professionally.

Through one-on-one and group coaching, CTD support students in our MDA program to:

- Understand, articulate, and align their values, strengths, and goals to their actions
- Reflect on work history to date; gain awareness of past and present obstacles and develop tools to work through them
- Consider needs within their organization, current job function, and/or fields with strong alignment to the MDA curriculum; identify and articulate new ways to add value
- Further develop a growth mindset and increase self-confidence in pursuing paths of meaning and impact
- Continuously develop and nurture positive relationships with a diverse set of stakeholders and networks

A full description of the Coaching & Talent Development programs and services may be found [here](#) the Hub.

Academic Policies and Procedures

Curricular Structure

The aim of the MDA program is designed to teach students critical skills to help them make better decisions in their professional and personal lives and to enact positive change. As such,

the graduate culture is related to the development and practical application of the necessary skills for working professionals. All students take the same courses, although the nature of the Thesis project introduces considerable variability to each student's experience.

Semesters 1-3: Foundations

During their first year at Minerva, students are taught the “habits of mind” and “foundational concepts” (HCs) that foster critical thinking, creative thinking, and effective interaction. All students take three eight-credit seminars: Advanced Formal Analyses (which focuses on thinking critically), Advanced Empirical Analyses (which focuses on thinking creatively), and Advanced Complex Systems (which focuses on interacting effectively). This material is also used and assessed during the subsequent three semesters of the program.

Semester 4: Depth

Students take two additional seminars: Research Methods and Information-Based Decisions. These courses are designed to help students develop hands-on skills in empirical methods and quantitative / statistical reasoning. In addition, this semester is an opportunity for students to conceive a thesis topic and incorporate preliminary thesis research into their coursework.

Semester 5: Thesis

During their final semester, students work closely with a primary advisor to research and complete an original work, on a topic to be determined in consultation with the advisor. For more information see The Master's Thesis section below.

Academic Advising

During the first four semesters, students are encouraged to consult the Head Instructor for MDA, as well as their course-specific professors, for academic guidance. These meetings are typically held twice per semester; professors and the Head Instructor make office hours available on ForumTM, and appointments may also be made by emailed request.

When students begin work on their thesis projects, they will choose a Minerva professor as Thesis advisor, by mutual consent with the faculty member. A list of potential advisors and a summary of their expertise will be made available to students in the third semester for this purpose. In addition to the Thesis advisor, students must also identify and enlist an outside reader (who serves as a secondary advisor) for their Thesis project. These readers should be experts in the relevant field, and not members of the Minerva faculty. All readers must be approved by the Head Instructor for MDA.

The Master's Thesis

The Master's Thesis is a project that requires students to create a work of professional quality constituting a novel contribution to their field. The Thesis should effectively leverage the concepts and skills taught in the program in a way that is legitimately warranted by the selected topic. Thesis research begins in Semester 4, during which students should identify an advisor and conceive a topic. Much of the thesis work this semester complements coursework in Semester 4 classes. In turn, Semester 5 represents a four-month period of intense thesis research, which culminates in an oral defense no later than May of a student's final year.

In the event that a student or the Thesis advisor determines that the Thesis is not sufficiently complete to successfully defend in the final oral examination, the student may apply for an extension to continue working on the thesis for up to one calendar year from the end of that academic year. If the extension is granted, there will be an additional fee of \$500 for an extension from May to August or \$2000 for a one-year extension (May to following May), due immediately at the beginning of the extension period. Students may apply for additional one-year extensions if needed and approved by the Head Instructor for MDA.

Further details regarding the Master's Thesis are available in the [MDA Thesis Guide](#).

The Academic Standards Committee

The Academic Standards Committee (ASC) adjudicates academic honor code violations, considers applications for reinstatement and makes recommendations to the Petition Review and Policy Committee when a student has been dismissed for academic reasons or academically withdrawn, and considers petitions for exceptions to the academic policies, procedures, and deadlines defined in this handbook. A student's thesis advisor (if one has been appointed) serves as a liaison to the committee upon request of the student or when deemed necessary by the ASC.

The ASC operates under the assumption that the academic rules and regulations should be followed in almost all circumstances. Petitions for relief must be clearly articulated and well supported with appropriate documentation. When considering exceptions, the Committee attempts to apply consistent standards while still responding to individual circumstances.

Petition Review and Policy Committee

This Committee acts on petitions and other requests from students and provides input to the Academic Standards Committee in making decisions on purely academic matters. Among the kinds of requests it considers are Leaves of Absence; Reinstatement; . . . Reduced or Increased Course Load. The Committee also collects and reviews student retention information. This includes collecting and analyzing quantitative data, collecting qualitative data

from students at risk of leaving or leaving Minerva, and meeting with staff or faculty regarding retention concerns. The purpose of these efforts are to ensure that Minerva provides the appropriate resources and support services to retain the students that are selected to attend. Because of the nature of the issues that the committee reviews, it often considers ways to improve policies, procedures, communications, and practices and makes recommendations accordingly. It has representatives of all units within Minerva University that connect directly to students' education and experience: Academics, Student Life, Student Services, and Financial/Financial Aid. The committee may consult with others as it carries out its work.

Please see the section below on the Academic Standards Committee for the scope of its authority.

Course Credit

A standard course of four units (referred to simply as “a course”) generally consists of 26 90-minute seminar sessions. Additionally, Minerva expects that each student will complete a minimum of 4-5 hours of pre-class work for each of these sessions. That time is intended to allow students to complete assigned readings, project-based and other assignments, and conduct whatever auxiliary independent study is needed to maximize learning. The thesis course requires fewer synchronous class meetings and proportionally more out-of-class work. The official Minerva University credit hour policy is in the Course Catalog.

Leave of Absence Policy

Students may need to interrupt their formal course of study at the Minerva University for a period of time. To do so, the student must petition Minerva for a leave of absence through the Leave of Absence Form on Registrar.minerva.edu. When it is relevant to the reasons for the leave of absence, the petition should include verifiable documentation to support the request.

Minerva will review the Leave Request and the conditions under which the student may return to school, taking into account the following:

- The student must be currently enrolled in academic courses and in good standing, unless there are serious extenuating circumstances.
- After the eleventh week of the semester, a student may apply for a leave of absence for the current semester only for medical reasons or due to military deployment.

The standard maximum leave of absence is two academic semesters. It is the student's responsibility to keep Minerva informed of any [change of address](#) or circumstances while on a leave of absence.

A student returning from an approved leave of absence must submit a petition for reinstatement to Minerva on the Return from Leave Form on Registrar.minerva.edu, including a

written statement that addresses the student's readiness to return and resume coursework, with documentation when appropriate. The reinstatement petition should be submitted no later than June 15th for returning the next fall term and October 15th for returning the next spring term, unless otherwise stated in an official communication to the student. Minerva will render a decision on the request, weighing the recommendation from the Head Instructor for MDA.

When a student returns from a leave of absence, the student will re-enter the program at the point following the last full academic term completed and will be subject to the curriculum, policies, and procedures in place at that time.

Students who do not return at the end of their leave will be withdrawn and must submit a petition to the Head Instructor for MDA for readmission to the program, unless an extension is filed prior to the deadline.

The Leave of Absence Petition Form and the Academic Reinstatement Petition Form are available on the registrar site, registrar.minerva.edu.

Registration Policies and Procedures

By default, all students are enrolled in the required courses. Class schedules are released a few weeks prior to the beginning of each academic term.

Switching Between Course Sections

During the course adjustment period (first week of class for graduate students), students may switch between sections of a course at any time if another section is offered and if there is room in the desired section. After the course adjustment period, students may switch between two sections at the professors' discretion, if there is room in the desired section.

Class Attendance

Class attendance is a fundamental part of the Minerva model. It is where students learn and are assessed. Because our approach to active learning is the foundation of our entire model, class attendance is required. Students are required to prepare appropriately for each class session and actively participate in them. Students should read all assigned materials, watch assigned videos, and complete all assigned pre-class work, including solving pre-assigned problems and answering study guide questions. Because all of our classes are seminars, all students must be prepared to be fully engaged participants—to shirk on preparation not only short-changes the individual student, it also undermines the experience for the other students. Instructors have the right to mark students absent if they are not prepared to participate in class.

All of Minerva's courses are taught on the Forum™, and students are required to be logged on to Forum™ and ready to participate in class by the class's stated start time. Details on policies with respect to tardiness and technology and network issues are in each course syllabus.

Students are also required to adhere to assignment guidelines and deadlines, and to contact the appropriate faculty promptly should they need to request an extension. Additional information and consequences for failing to meet requirements are described in each course syllabus. Specific maximum number of absences and assignment extensions for each course are shown in the course syllabus. The syllabus also indicates any assignment for which it is not permissible to get assignment extensions (such as final projects and other assignments due in weeks 14-15). If students do not submit required assignments by the end of the semester, they may be assigned a failing "F" grade. Students are subject to being administratively dropped from a course for violation of attendance or extension requirements, with a "AW" grade notation. If it appears that health or other issues may cause a student to exceed the maximum permitted absences, a voluntary course withdrawal from one or more courses/a lighter course load or a leave of absence is recommended.

Students are responsible for their attendance and therefore for tracking their absences. They should monitor their absences on their Forum™ dashboard and, if they think their absences are incorrect, they should contact their instructor and helpdesk@minerva.edu. If instructors have not excused the absence within one week after submission of makeup work, email AcademicAffairs@minerva.edu.

A certain number of absences with appropriate documentation are permitted for each class to cover unexpected circumstances. However, excessive absences overall may result in being dropped from a course or a W grade in the course and/or recommendation for the student to consider a Leave of Absence. The maximum number of total absences can be found on each course syllabus.

Assessment of Student Work and Grading Policies

Faculty members are responsible for assessing the performance during class and on assignments of each enrolled student on the course learning outcomes using customized rubrics based on the following template:

- 1 (Lacks knowledge): Does not recall or use the skill or concept when prompted, or does so mostly or entirely inaccurately.
- 2 (Superficial knowledge): Recalls or uses the skill or concept only somewhat accurately, by partially quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, outlining, or applying it, or applies the skill or concept in ways that fail to address the relevant problems or goals.

- 3 (Knowledge): Accurately recalls, uses, paraphrases, summarizes, outlines or reproduces standard or straightforward examples of the skill or concept, and does so in a way that addresses the relevant problems or goals.
- 4 (Deep knowledge): Demonstrates a deeper grasp of the skill or concept by explaining it, using it to produce a sophisticated, non-standard example, differentiating component parts, applying critical distinctions, or analyzing relationships between component parts.
- 5 (Profound knowledge): Uses the skill or concept in a creative and effective way, relying on a novel perspective (i.e., not one that was in course materials or is easily located in the relevant literature).

Course grades are based on the student's completion of course requirements and an aggregation of learning outcome scores from class session and on assignments. Please refer to the course syllabi for grading details.

Letter Grades and Grade Point Equivalents

Grades at Minerva reflect how well a student has mastered the course learning outcomes. The following table defines the performance level and GPA points associated with each grade:

Grade	Grade Point Equivalent
A+	4.0
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C -	1.7
D	1.0
F	0.0
Pass	NA

No Pass	NA
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A student must earn a letter grade of at least C to be granted course credit or to use a course as a prerequisite. If all required assignments/projects are not submitted, the course is subject to an “F” grade.

Grade Point Average Calculation

Grade point averages (GPAs) are determined by multiplying the number of grade points for each course letter grade by the number of course units, taking the sum of the resulting product, and dividing by the total number of course units attempted by the student. Minerva calculates GPAs for each semester, and a cumulative GPA. Semester GPAs include all courses taken that semester. The cumulative grade point average listed on a student’s transcript includes all courses taken at Minerva except for the Thesis, which is graded as Pass/No Pass. The grade for the Thesis is not included in GPA calculations.

If a student repeats a failed course (final grade of C- or lower) and earns a passing grade, the second passing grade replaces the initial failing grade in the GPA calculation.

Incomplete Grades

If a student becomes seriously ill or experiences an emergency that disrupts the student’s ability to complete one or more courses, the student may petition the Head Instructor and Registrar for an incomplete grade.

Along with a petition, students are required to submit documentation verifying the circumstances that prevent them from completing coursework, a list of the missing work, and a revised schedule for submitting the listed work. ASC approval is dependent on the consent of the Head Instructor for MDA. The petition and supporting documentation must be submitted before the last day of the term. The Incomplete Petition Form is available on the registrar site, registrar.minerva.edu.

If the request is granted, the student is required to submit all outstanding work by the deadline determined in the revised course schedule; typically the date is set within two to six weeks after the end of the semester.

Other Grades and Transcript Notations

Minerva uses the following transcript notations:

- I = Incomplete
- W = Voluntary withdrawal from a course after the course drop deadline has passed

- IP = In Process, denotes a course that is still being taken or is in the process of being graded
- AW = Administratively withdrawn from a course
- NR = Not Recorded, indicates that a grade is missing because the instructor has not submitted it yet, or it is being held for administrative reasons
- R = previously failed course retaken.

Graduation Requirements

In order to graduate, students must pass all required courses, including the Thesis, and have at least a 2.00 grade point average.

Academic Records

A student's academic record includes assessment of all Minerva University coursework for which credit can be granted and in which the student enrolled, unless the student withdraws from the class before the drop deadline. Students may view and download unofficial transcripts on the Registrar website, registrar.minerva.edu.

Students may choose to release their academic records to a third party by submitting an FERPA Education Records Release Authorization Form, and may subsequently revoke access by submitting the Revoke FERPA Education Records Release Authorization Form. Both forms are available on the registrar site, registrar.minerva.edu.

Official transcript requests must be made directly through the National Student Clearinghouse. There is an administrative fee of \$4.25 per transcript, paid to the National Student Clearinghouse.

Disputed Grades Policy

If a student believes there is compelling evidence that the student's final course grade was assigned or posted in error, the student should make an appointment with the instructor to discuss the issue. If the instructor decides that the grade should stand as initially assigned, and the student still believes the grade was not assigned or posted properly, the student may petition the Head Instructor for MDA. The petition should include a detailed explanation as to why the grade should be changed, along with any pertinent documentation. It may not be used to petition for relief from penalties imposed on the student by the ASC due to Honor Code violations. Disputed grade petitions must be submitted no later than the third week of the following semester. Disputed Grade Petition Forms are available on the registrar site, registrar.minerva.edu.

The Head Instructor may discuss the issue with the student or faculty member, and will decide whether the grade should be changed. This decision is final.

Academic Standing

At the end of each semester, the Office of the Chief Academic Officer reviews student academic records to determine each student's academic standing. Academic standing classifications and potential consequences are described below.

Good Standing

A student is considered to be in good standing if the student:

- is earning a predicted grade of C or above in all required courses
- earns at least a 2.00 GPA each semester
- meets minimum progress standards on the Thesis project, within the specified time frame.

Academic Probation

Academic probation is imposed when:

- in any semester, the student earns a C- or lower in one or more courses;
- a student is administratively withdrawn from one or more courses during a semester;
- a student is guilty of a honor code violation and probation is a sanction (see below);
- a student earns a semester GPA or a cumulative GPA below 2.00; or
- a student fails to meet minimum progress standards on the student's Thesis project, within the specified time frame.

Students placed on academic probation are required to meet with the Head Instructor to devise a detailed set of expectations and a plan for substantial improvement of the student's academic performance over the next semester.

Academic Dismissal

Dismissal may be issued when:

- a student is administratively withdrawn from or earns a No Pass in two or more courses;
- a student who is required to retake a course does not pass the course after the second attempt;
- a student is on academic probation for three or more reasons in a given semester (e.g., falls below passing in two courses and has a semester GPA below 2.00);
- a student put on probation does not return to good standing within one semester.

Students who have been academically dismissed and would like to return to Minerva will be required to apply to the ASC for reinstatement. This application will only be considered when there is strong and compelling evidence of a change in the student's readiness to perform academic work at the required level, including a well-considered academic plan and

demonstration of a robust support system. The Academic Reinstatement Petition Form is available on the registrar site, registrar.minerva.edu. Typically, the reinstatement request should be submitted no later than February 15 for returning the next fall term and October 15 for returning the next spring term, unless otherwise stated in an official communication to the student.

Academic Freedom

Minerva has adopted the Academic Freedom Statement of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP, 1940), which reads as follows:

1. Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution.
2. Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter that has no relation to their subject. Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment.
3. College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

Academic Honor Code

The Minerva Honor Code rests on four pillars: honesty, integrity, mutual respect, and personal responsibility. Minerva students are expected to conduct themselves with the highest levels of these qualities both inside and outside the classroom. Each student serves as an ambassador to the community for Minerva. When one student exhibits inappropriate behavior outside the university, it reflects badly on every student and the institution as a whole (the public tends not to differentiate between individuals in these situations, and attributes bad behavior to the entire student body).

Minerva students are citizens of an academic community whose members are expected to challenge themselves and one another to achieve greatness with honesty, integrity, mutual respect, and personal responsibility. Each individual who joins the Minerva community accepts

this commitment in an effort to sustain and enhance personal, professional and institutional reputations.

Principles inherent in this Honor Code include:

- Students shall treat all members of the community with respect and without malicious intent to ensure that all students share equal opportunities.
- Students shall conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the principles for honesty and integrity in order to promote an environment of trust.

To assist students in understanding their responsibilities under the Honor Code, the following is a list of conduct pertaining to academic matters that violate the Honor Code. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to the following:

Plagiarism

- Knowingly appropriating another's words, ideas, data or code and representing them as one's own
- Use of another's words, ideas, data or code without acknowledging the source
- Paraphrasing the words and ideas of another without clear acknowledgment of the source (This includes instances of "Mosaic plagiarism" which occurs when ideas and wording have been used/borrowed without proper attribution-*note that this includes other classmate's work as well as all other resources used for class/assignment work.*)
- Modifying the code of another without clear acknowledgment of the source
- Falsification or fabrication of a bibliography
- Using one's own previously submitted coursework or written assignments (or portions of such previously submitted coursework or assignments) for alternate purposes and/or for other assignments without prior approval

Cheating

- Unauthorized collaboration on assignments
- Use of unauthorized resources during class and on coursework
- Use of previously submitted coursework for alternate purposes without prior approval
- Using and/or uploading/downloading of any Minerva material on "resource" and "library" websites such as, but not limited to, sites such as "Course Hero"
- Falsification of data for a class session or assignment

Obstruction of Honor Code

- Making false statements to an Honor Code investigator

Falsification of Information

- Knowingly making false statements or submitting misleading information related to academic matters to Minerva faculty or staff
- Fabrication of data on assignments
- Submission of falsified documents, such as transcripts, applications, petitions, etc.
- Intentional attempt to deceive Minerva faculty or staff by engaging in, but not limited to, the following: uploading blank documents for assignments, completing pre-class work during the associated class session, altering time stamps on any submissions or course-related work
- Modifying the functionality of academic tools (such as polls, etc.) in Forum.

It is not a defense to charges of violating this Honor Code for students to claim that they have not received, read or understood this Code, or are otherwise ignorant of its provisions. A student is held to have notice of this Honor Code by enrolling at Minerva. Students must fully cooperate with investigations into potential violations of the Honor Code.

Charge of Honor Code Violation

Initial Charge and Informal Process

A faculty member, staff member, or student who wishes to make a charge of a violation of the Honor Code against a Minerva student must report violations to the Academic Standards Committee. It is the responsibility of students, staff, or faculty who suspect such a violation to make a charge in writing, using the Academic Dishonesty Charge Form. This form is available on the registrar site, registrar.minerva.edu.

Upon receipt of an Academic Dishonesty Charge, an Academic Standards Committee member conducts a meeting with the accused student. Prior to the meeting, the ASC notifies the accused student in writing that a Charge of Academic Dishonesty has been submitted for a specific class, provides them the evidence, and informs them of their rights under the Honor Code. The initial meeting is recorded with the prior approval of the student, to provide an accurate record of the discussion. If the student does not agree to recording the meeting, two ASC members will participate in the meeting and take thorough notes. During the meeting the student is shown the charge and evidence in support of the charge. The student may request that their advisor or another witness also participate in the initial meeting. If requested by the student, the ASC member will schedule the meeting such that the advisor or other witness can attend.

If the accused student admits responsibility for academic dishonesty during the course of the initial meeting/preliminary investigation, the ASC meets to discuss and determine the appropriate sanction/s (see Sanctions section below). The sanction/s will be entered into a form that will then be sent to the student who is asked to sign the form documenting admission

of guilt. If the student admitted guilt, but refuses or fails to sign the form (after sanction/s were entered into the form), the ASC will follow up with a letter noting that, even though the student did not sign the form, the sanctions were instituted as they verbally admitted guilt.

Hearing Process

If the accused student does not admit responsibility for academic dishonesty, further investigation by the ASC occurs. Depending on the nature of the charges, the ASC may confer with the professor and seek additional information as appropriate, including speaking to the student again and with other students who may be involved in the potential violation. After this secondary investigation, the ASC may determine that there is not sufficient evidence to proceed. If they believe there is sufficient evidence, the ASC will vote on appropriate sanctions, enter them in a form where there is a place for the student to provide a signature admitting guilt. If the student does not admit responsibility, and the ASC believes there is substantial evidence to warrant a hearing, this is communicated to the student and the ASC proceeds to schedule the hearing. The hearing is recorded with the student's permission and is attended by ASC members, the student, and the faculty or staff member who brought the charge. The student has the right to present witnesses and exculpatory information. After hearing all witnesses and considering all evidence presented, the ASC decides whether a violation of the Honor Code has occurred, determined by the preponderance of evidence standard. The ASC then determines the appropriate sanction (see below). Students may appeal the ASC decision to the Chief Academic Officer. See Appeal section below.

The ASC informs the faculty member responsible for the course or associated academic activity of the outcome of the investigation and the process.

The student's rights include the following:

- The right to notice of the nature of the honor code violation and the activity and course or courses in which it is alleged to have taken place
- The right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty
- The right to solicit advice from others
- The right to have the matter be handled in a confidential manner
- The right to have the student's coach present at the initial meeting and any subsequent hearing that occurs
- The right to a prompt hearing, which can be waived if the student admits responsibility for the violation in the investigative meetings
- The right to a reasonable amount of time to prepare for the hearing, no less than five days after the initial investigative meeting is completed, and
- The right to present witnesses and exculpatory information at the hearing.

Sanctions

If the ASC determines the student committed no wrongdoing or there was insufficient evidence to proceed, no sanctions are imposed. If the student admits responsibility or the ASC determines that the student has violated one or more of the provisions of this Academic Honor Code after the investigation or the hearing, the ASC will impose sanctions. Sanctions may include but are not limited to Academic Warning or Academic Probation, a reduced or failing grade for an assignment, a reduced or failing grade for a course, Dismissal, revocation of financial aid eligibility, and/or withdrawal of an awarded degree/certificate.

- Academic Warning is a temporary sanction that is not on the student's permanent record.
- Academic Probation is not reported on the official transcript or diploma, and is only reported to external 3rd parties when permitted via signed release.
- Academic Dismissal is reported on the official transcript (no diploma is typically awarded), and is only reported to external 3rd parties when permitted via signed release.

Multiple violations of the Honor Code may result in the imposition of more severe sanctions such as Dismissal, or revocation of an awarded degree.

Students have the right to appeal the ASC decision and sanction following the Academic Appeal Process below.

Academic Appeal Process

The process described below is administrative in nature and is separate and distinct from the criminal and civil legal systems and the Minerva policy on student conduct.

The process of adjudicating alleged violations of academic policies or other regulations cited in this section is the responsibility of the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) under the direction of the Chief Academic Officer. If a sanction is presented, a student must submit an appeal within 10 days of notification.

The Committee shall consider:

- **Information**
 - Is there any additional information needed to make a decision?
 - Is there anything in the record that is incomplete or unclear?
- **Responsibility**
 - Is there evidence that the student committed the violation?
 - Is there evidence that the student followed written guidelines and policies?
- **Fair and Appropriate Sanction**
 - Has the student been given notice and a chance to address the alleged violation?
 - How does the student's previous record affect the kind of sanction that should be imposed?

- Based on past experience how likely will the violation occur in the future?
- **Aggravating and Mitigating Circumstances**
 - Are there aggravating or mitigating circumstances that affect the sanction?
 - Did the student take responsibility for the violation or misconduct?
 - Did the student indicate that they learned anything from this incident?

The ASC deliberates and makes a decision to uphold the original decision or to grant the appeal within 10 days, unless further investigation is required, in which case the ASC must reconvene within 10 days of completion of additional investigation and make a recommendation at that time.

The ASC informs the student of the outcome of the proceeding by email, including the sanction and rights of appeal.

When the ASC denies the students appeal, the student may appeal to the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) via formal letter to academicaffairs@minerva.edu. The CAO will consider appeals based on one of the following bases: 1) a substantial mistake of fact; 2) a fundamental misinterpretation of the policies, rules, or regulation involved; or 3) a substantial procedural error. The student must include the basis for the appeal and provide clear information on the basis for appeal. The CAO reviews the written record and may interview the ASC and/or the student as deemed necessary to make a decision. The CAO acts promptly in the appeal, usually within 21 days and informs the student by email with a copy of this communication to the ASC. If the appeal is granted, the ASC carries out next steps as set forth by the CAO. If the appeal is denied, the ASC implements the original decision with any modifications made by the CAO.

The CAO will review the student's appeal and may:

1. Uphold the decision without any modifications;
2. Modify the decision;
3. Overturn the decision; or
4. Return the decision for further review.

The CAO's decision is considered final.

Class Session Recording Retention and Access Policy

In order to provide assessment of students' contributions to classroom discussions, each Minerva class session is video recorded. These recordings are available to students enrolled in the class section so that they can view the personalized feedback/assessments written by the professor and review the class discussion. These recordings are not to be shared or distributed

by students without the explicit written permission of the course faculty member and college head overseeing the course.

The video recording of discussion in a particular section of a course will be made available to the students enrolled in that section shortly after the discussion concludes, and will remain accessible to the students until the first day of the following academic year. Access to a recording from previous academic years can be requested for the purpose of appealing a grade or selecting video clips to include in a personal academic portfolio. Requests will be reviewed by the Head Instructor for MDA. The Video Access Request Form is available on the registrar site, registrar.minerva.edu.

Student Conduct Policies and Procedures

Principles of Community

Minerva University is first and foremost an institution of learning and teaching, committed to serving the needs of society. The community reflects and is a part of a society comprising all races, creeds and social circumstances. Minerva confronts and rejects all manifestations of discrimination, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, status within or outside Minerva, or any of the other differences among people that have been excuses for misunderstanding, dissension or hatred. Minerva recognizes and cherishes the richness contributed by diversity. Minerva recognizes that everyone has an obligation to the community of which they have chosen to be a part. All of us must give as much as we receive, and must be active and enthusiastic participants in the educational process. Minerva will strive to build a true community of spirit and purpose based on mutual respect and caring.

Basic Rules of Conduct and Policies

Minerva Conduct Policies and Rules

The Minerva Honor Code (also defined in the [Academic Policies](#) section of this Handbook) rests on four pillars: honesty, integrity, mutual respect, and personal responsibility. Minerva students are expected to conduct themselves with the highest levels of these qualities both inside and outside the classroom. Minerva students are citizens of an academic community whose members are expected to challenge themselves and one another to achieve greatness with honesty, integrity, mutual respect, and personal responsibility. Each individual who joins the Minerva community accepts this commitment in an effort to sustain and enhance personal, professional and institutional reputations.

Principles inherent in this Honor Code include:

- Students shall treat all members of the community with respect and without malicious intent to ensure that all students share equal opportunities.
- Students shall conduct themselves in a manner that upholds their reputation for honesty and integrity and to promote an environment of trust.

Any member of the Minerva community may report conduct by a student or students that may be a violation of the Principles of Community, Honor Code, and/or other policies covered by this Student Handbook.

Violations of the Honor Code that are not academically related and violations of other Student Life policies may lead to disciplinary action. (Minerva's [disciplinary procedures](#) are described below.) The following list of specific violations is not all-inclusive and other conduct that violates the Principles of Community may be considered as a basis for discipline:

- Discrimination and unlawful harassment are prohibited by state, federal and local laws in the United States, and in this Student Handbook. Discrimination of all types will be subject to discipline. Retaliation against a person who reports, complains about, or participates in the investigation of harassment is likewise prohibited. Harassment is defined as persistent, repetitive, pervasive, or severe conduct (physical, verbal or visual) that creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile working or academic environment, or that substantially interferes with work or academic performance based on a person's protected status. For conduct to be deemed intimidating, offensive or hostile, both the person complaining of harassment and a reasonable person standard must be met. Generally, statements and/or conduct legitimately and reasonably related to Minerva's mission of education do not constitute harassment (e.g., a debate about protections afforded to protected categories).
- Any form of dishonesty not covered by the academic honor code, such as misrepresentation on a resume or in another communication related to internships and employment; purposely furnishing false information to any member of the faculty or staff; concealing or misrepresenting information in a conduct or honor code matter; or theft of any kind.
- Intentional destruction, theft of, or damage to Minerva property or the property of Minerva faculty, staff or students.

Social Media Policies

The use of social media is governed by the Honor Code and federal and state laws. Students are responsible for their own use of social media outlets, which may or may not be monitored

or regulated. It is up to each user of a social media outlet and participant in a virtual discussion to regulate content that is added or shared with the community.

Within these general guidelines, students are prohibited as follows:

- Students may not post any content that is discriminatory, including any posts that are vulgar, false, obscene, harassing, or disparaging to the race, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability of any individual with whom a student comes into contact as a result of being a member of the Minerva community.
- Students may not disclose any financial, proprietary, or other confidential information of Minerva.
- Students may not present themselves as official representatives of, or spokespersons for, Minerva unless asked to do so by a Minerva staff or faculty member.
- Students may not utilize Minerva's trademarks or logos without permission of the Marketing staff at Minerva.
- Students may not represent themselves as another person, real or fictitious, or otherwise attempt to obscure their identity as a means to circumvent the prohibitions included in this policy.

If found in violation of these policies, students will be subject to disciplinary actions including warning, probation, or suspension pending withdrawal from Minerva. Violations of federal and state laws may also result in criminal or civil actions.

Guidelines on Anonymous Postings on Social Media

One of Minerva's guiding principles is Being Authentic, explained as follows:

We communicate openly and candidly, addressing people directly and conveying heartfelt emotion. We welcome honest dialogue, even about sensitive or controversial topics. We impart accurate information with genuine sincerity, building trust and establishing mutual respect. We avoid anything artificial, false, or contrived; hyperbole breeds suspicion and erodes credibility.

In keeping with this principle, we do not support or value anonymous platforms as appropriate means of communication in the Minerva community. Anonymous posts are likely to spread confusion, misperceptions, and uncertainty, without holding anyone accountable for being authentic. They undermine our collective intentions to promote honest dialogue in a context of respect for one another. Furthermore, we believe that an anonymous post is likely to provide

the author with a false sense of privacy, while breeding an environment in which others are motivated to uncover the author's identity.

We recognize that students might write anonymous posts as a way of sharing harmless, fun, or lighthearted thoughts or feelings. Although such posts do not carry inherent risks, they are not consistent with the principle of being authentic in our communications with others. We encourage students to consider how such messages might be better expressed openly, with a sense of accountability to one another.

Anonymous posts might also be seen as a means of venting, or expressing dissatisfaction about some aspect of life at Minerva. If directed at other students, an anonymous post could cause hurt feelings or anger, without a means of responding personally. If directed at staff or faculty, we are unable to provide direct feedback. However, we actively seek student feedback in a number of ways: via Town Halls, through surveys, feedback groups, and in direct personal communications. For additional avenues for student feedback, please contact the Head Instructor for MDA.

As Minerva seeks to create and foster a community, cohesion among members of the community is paramount. We do not endorse and strongly discourage the creation and/or facilitation of anonymous platforms and we will not monitor the content of such. We urge all members of the Minerva community to have a zero tolerance policy for anonymous communication, especially the kind that can cause discord or panic. Those specifically seeking to cause such harm to the Minerva community will be subjected to the same student conduct rules at Minerva as facilitators or originators of uncivil discourse in general.

Computing Policies

Minerva seeks to provide education in an environment where the free exchange of ideas is encouraged and protected. Minerva makes available computing and network facilities (CNF) resources for use by students. These services are provided for educational purposes and to carry out the legitimate business of Minerva University. Responsible, considerate, and ethical behavior expected by Minerva extends to use of computing and network facilities resources. These CNF resources may include but are not limited to:

- Forum(™)
- Data networking equipment systems, including remote and wireless access
- Computer software
- Electronically stored institutional data and messages
- All other similar resources owned, controlled, and/or operated by Minerva
- Google Apps for EDU
- Services to maintain these resources.

Ownership

Minerva retains absolute ownership rights of the CNF resources.

Privacy and Security

Students' personal documents, files and electronic mail stored on a Minerva-networked computer or server are normally accessible only by the student. However, any file or document placed on a Minerva-owned computer or network is subject to access, and thus, should not be regarded as private or confidential. All staff members working in information technology have clear guidelines that prohibit violations of privacy and confidentiality and, in the normal course of their work, do not view the contents of user files or email. However, authorized Minerva personnel will take appropriate steps to investigate when there is a suspicion of inappropriate use of computing or networking resources.

Many educational and business activities at Minerva require network access to resources on the Internet. To ensure adequate bandwidth to these sites for primary educational and business purposes, Minerva IT staff may restrict the amount of traffic to particular sites and the amount of traffic of specific types.

From time to time, these network monitoring activities may allow systems managers to identify individuals whose activities downgrade the performance of the campus network or a segment of the network, or which appear to violate the general guidelines for appropriate use of campus computing and network resources. In such instances, Minerva staff may ask you to cease these activities. If you continue such activities, or if they include illegal activities, appropriate authorities may be notified. In extreme cases, network privileges may be revoked on an interim basis pending resolution of the issue.

Passwords

Individuals who are entrusted with or inadvertently discover logins and passwords are expected to guard them responsibly. These passwords are not to be shared with others. Passwords may be used for the purpose of security, but the use of the password does not affect Minerva's ownership of electronic information.

Access to Resources

Access to CNF resources is a privilege. All users must understand and abide by the responsibilities that come with the privilege of use. Such responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Students are expected to understand and comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws.

- Students must not intentionally seek information about, browse, copy, or modify non-public files belonging to other people. Students must not attempt to “sniff” or eavesdrop on data on the network that are not intended for them.
- Students are authorized to use only computer resources and information to which they have legitimately been granted access. Sharing passwords with others is expressly forbidden. Any attempt to gain unauthorized access to any computer system, resource or information is expressly forbidden. If students encounter or observe a gap in system or network security, they should report it immediately to Minerva IT staff.
- Minerva’s policies on harassment and use of social media apply equally to electronic displays and communications as to more traditional (e.g., oral and written) means of display and communication.
- Messages, sentiments, and declarations sent as electronic mail or postings must meet the same standards for distribution or display as physical (paper) documents.
- Unsolicited mailings and unauthorized mass mailings from campus networks or computing resources (i.e., “spam”) are prohibited.
- Spoofing, and attempts to spoof or falsify e-mail, network or other information used to identify the source, destination or other information about a communication, data or information are prohibited.
- Students must not degrade computing or network performance in any way that could prevent others from meeting their educational or business goals. This includes preventing others from using shared resources by running unattended processes, by playing games or by “locking” systems without permission.
- Students must conform to laws and policies regarding protection of intellectual property, including laws and policies regarding copyright, patents, and trademarks. When the content and distribution of an electronic communication would exceed fair use as defined by the federal Copyright Act of 1976, users of campus computing or networking resources must secure appropriate permission to distribute protected material in any form, including text, photographic images, audio, video, graphic illustrations, and computer software.
- Students must not use campus computing or networking resources or personal computing resources accessed through campus network facilities to collect, store or distribute information or materials, or to participate in activities that violate federal, state or local laws or Minerva policies or guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, policies regarding intellectual property and sexual or other forms of harassment.

- Students must not create or willfully disseminate computer viruses, worms, or other software intended to degrade system or network security. Students must take reasonable steps to prevent their systems from being used as a vehicle for such actions. This includes installing system and software patches as well as anti-virus signatures files.
- The use of CNF resources for advertising, selling, and soliciting for commercial purposes or for personal gain is prohibited without the prior written consent of Minerva.
- The disclosure of individually identifiable non-directory information is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Willful or unauthorized misuse or disclosure of information owned by Minerva or KGI will also constitute just cause for disciplinary action, including dismissal from school, regardless of whether criminal or civil penalties are imposed. It is also expected that any user will report suspected abuses of CNF resources. Failure to do so may subject the individual to loss of CNF access and/or disciplinary action.
- Minerva may immediately suspend service to an individual or computer found to be significantly degrading the usability of the network or other computer systems. Inappropriate use will be referred to the appropriate authority to take action, which may result in discipline up to and including dismissal from Minerva.

Disciplinary Procedures

The process described below is administrative in nature and is separate and distinct from the criminal and civil legal systems and the Minerva policy on academic dishonesty. Resolution through this process does not preclude someone from pursuing legal action now or in the future. If the conduct in question is alleged to be a violation of both Minerva policy and law, Minerva will normally proceed with its usual conduct process, regardless of action or inaction by outside authorities. Violations of the conduct code, policies, and residential agreements may also be resolved informally through staff in each residential hall and city. If student conduct places the community at immediate risk, Minerva may take whatever steps are necessary to protect the community and institute formal proceedings as soon as reasonably possible after the event.

The process of adjudicating alleged violations of the conduct code or other regulations cited in this section is the responsibility of the Head Instructor for MDA (hereafter, the Head) or his or her designee. When violations are referred to the Head, the Head conducts the initial investigation and determines if disciplinary proceedings should be commenced. The Head may delegate all or part of the investigation to another designated staff person as circumstances require. The investigation commences within a reasonable time, usually within 30 days of notification. The Head informs the student of the commencement of proceedings in writing,

stating the rules, laws, regulations or policies violated, and gives the student the opportunity to prepare a written statement for submission in the proceeding. The student is given a reasonable amount of time to submit such a statement, usually 10 days.

The Head or designee appoints three persons, one or two each from the Minerva faculty and staff, to serve as a Student Conduct Committee within 10 days of completion of the investigation. Each committee member should have no prior meaningful involvement with the student(s) as an advisor, mentor, or supervisor, and no involvement with any incident that gave rise to the proceeding.

The Head or designee provides the Student Conduct Committee with the investigation report, the student's statement, if any, and recommendations for sanctions, if any. The Committee convenes within 10 days of appointment. It may investigate further or ask the Head to investigate further, as appropriate, to ensure that all relevant information is considered.

The Committee shall consider:

- **Information**
 - Is there any additional information needed to make a decision?
 - Is there anything in the record that is incomplete or unclear?
- **Responsibility**
 - Has the student admitted to the conduct?
 - If not, is there substantial evidence that the student engaged in the alleged conduct?
 - Is the conduct a violation of the law, residential agreement, student code of conduct, and/or other Minerva policy?
- **Fair and Appropriate Sanction**
 - Considering the conduct in question and the record of the student, is the sanction recommended fair and appropriate?
 - Has the student been given notice and a chance to address their participation in the conduct?
 - Is the sanction proportional to the gravity of the conduct?
 - How does the student's previous record affect the kind of sanction that should be imposed?
 - Has the student been a good member of the Minerva community?
 - Based on past and this conduct, is the student likely to be a good member of the community in the future?
 - Does the student pose any risk to the community?
- **Aggravating and Mitigating Circumstances**
 - Are there aggravating or mitigating circumstances that affect the sanction?
 - Did the student openly admit the misconduct?
 - Did the student take responsibility for the misconduct?
 - Did the student express remorse about the conduct?

- Did the student indicate that they learned anything from this incident?

The Committee deliberates and makes a recommendation to the Head within 10 days, unless further investigation is required, in which case the Committee must reconvene within 10 days of completion of additional investigation and make a recommendation at that time.

The Head informs the student of the outcome of the proceeding by email, including the sanction and rights of appeal.

The student may appeal the decision to the Chief Academic Officer (CAO). The appeal must be in writing directly to the CAO within 10 days of the date on which the student receives the Committee's decision. The CAO reviews the written record and may interview the Head and/or the Student Conduct Committee. The CAO interviews the student by phone or video conference. The CAO acts promptly on the appeal, usually within 21 days. The CAO informs the student of the decision by email and sends a copy of this communication to the Head Instructor for MDA. If the appeal is granted, the Head will carry out the next steps accordingly. If the appeal is denied, the Head will inform the student by email of the right of appeal to the President.

If the appeal to the CAO is denied, the student may appeal to the president of Minerva University within 10 days of being informed of the denial of the appeal. To grant the student's request for appeal, the appeal must be based on at least one of the following grounds: 1) a substantial mistake of fact; 2) a fundamental misinterpretation of the policies, rules, or regulation involved; or 3) a substantial procedural error. The student must include the basis for the appeal and provide clear information on the basis for appeal. The President reviews the written record and may interview the Head, CAO, Student Conduct Committee, and/or the student as deemed necessary to make a decision. The President acts promptly in the appeal, usually within 21 days. The President informs the student by email and sends a copy of this communication to the Head. If the appeal is granted, the Head carries out next steps as set forth by the President. If the appeal is denied, the Head implements the original decision.

Sanctions

Any one or more of the following sanctions may be imposed on a student who is found responsible for a violation:

1. Restitution: Reimbursement by the student to Minerva, the complainant(s), and/or a member of the Minerva community to cover the cost of damage to property or other loss.
2. Fine: A monetary penalty assessed as appropriate to the violation.
3. Educational Program/Project: Programs and activities designed to help the student become more aware of conduct policies and understand the inappropriateness of the student's behavior, including, but not limited to, participation in an educational program.

4. Referral for Counseling: A referral for an assessment with an appropriately trained therapist and a mandate to follow any recommendations resulting from the assessment.
5. Loss of Privilege(s): Denial of specific privilege(s) for a defined period of time. Privileges include, but are not limited to participation in student government.
6. Restricted Access: Conditions which specifically dictate and limit the student's presence in Minerva-controlled locations and/or participation in Minerva-sponsored activities. The restrictions may include, but are not limited to, presence in certain buildings or locations or a no-contact order in relation to a particular individual(s).
7. Warning: Conduct warning is issued when a student has violated a policy and is being warned that further violations will escalate the matter to a formal proceeding.
8. Conduct Probation: Formal, written notice that the student's behavior is in violation of the Principles of Community and/or other policy and an expectation that the student exhibit good behavior for a defined period of time. Any violation during the probationary period may result in suspension or expulsion from Minerva.
9. Suspension: Separation from Minerva for a defined period of time. During the suspension period the student is not permitted in any Minerva-controlled building and is not permitted to participate in any Minerva-sponsored or affiliated program or activity. The terms of the suspension may include the designation of special conditions affecting eligibility for readmission or special conditions to be in effect upon readmission.
10. Expulsion: Permanent separation from Minerva. A student who has been expelled is not permitted to participate in any Minerva-sponsored or affiliated program or activity.

Sanctions 8-10 may be imposed only through a formal Disciplinary Procedure.

Records of Student Disciplinary Matters

Minerva University retains student disciplinary records for seven (7) years from the date of the outcome letter and may keep records for longer periods of time at the discretion of the Dean of Students or designee. Students may review disciplinary records in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act's provision for viewing their educational records; they do so by scheduling an appointment with the Dean of Students or designee at least five (5) business days in advance.

Records may be redacted so that information relating to other students, administrative file notes, and other confidential information is removed prior to student inspection.

Suspensions and expulsions are noted on student transcripts. Other conduct violations and sanctions are noted in the student file, unless the sanctions do not carry this notation.

Please note that the Clery Act requires that the campus report (without names or personally identifying information) statistics about misconduct that rises to the level of criminal activity,

including sexual assault; domestic violence; burglary; and certain drug, alcohol, and weapon law Violations.

Minerva may release the name, nature of the violation, and the sanction for any student who is found in violation of a policy that is also a crime of violence, including: arson, burglary, robbery, criminal homicide, sex offenses, assault, destruction/damage/vandalism of property, intimate partner violence, stalking and kidnapping/abduction. In doing so, Minerva will inform other students who reported or witnessed the act and will not release any information that could lead to the identification of a student who reported or provided information about the violation.

Prohibited Sexual Conduct

The mission of Minerva is to nurture critical wisdom for the sake of the world. We apply critical wisdom in establishing policies and procedures that are fair and impartial, including our policy regarding prohibited sexual conduct.

Minerva has enacted the Prohibited Sexual Conduct Policy in order to:

1. maintain our community values and expectations that all community members are free from sexual misconduct and all forms of sex and/or gender discrimination and harassment,
2. describe our procedures for determining when this policy has been violated, and
3. provide recourse for individuals and the community in response to policy violations.

Minerva's [Prohibited Sexual Conduct Policy](#) applies to all members of the Minerva community and complies with U.S. federal and state laws that prohibit sex and/or gender discrimination.

Minerva is committed to the principles of academic freedom, including free inquiry and expression. This policy is not intended to stifle the freedom of Minerva students, faculty, and staff to properly engage in vigorous discussion and debate and to express ideas that may be controversial, provocative, or unpopular. However, this protection of free speech has limits, such that speech or conduct that rises to the level of unlawful harassment on the basis of gender is neither legally protected expression nor an exercise in academic freedom. Minerva supports an environment free of sex or gender-based harassment and misconduct.

Minerva does not tolerate acts of Prohibited Sexual Conduct. This term refers to the following forms of behavior:

- Sex or Gender-Based Harassment
- Sexual Misconduct, which includes Sexual Assault, Non-Consensual Sexual Contact, Sexual Exploitation, and Stalking
- Intimate Partner Violence

- Prohibited Relationships by Persons in Authority
- Retaliation against a person who inquires, reports, or otherwise participates in good faith regarding this policy

Any report of Prohibited Sexual Conduct will be taken seriously and addressed promptly. Minerva will act to end the prohibited sexual conduct, prevent its recurrence, and appropriately sanction responsible parties. Individuals who violate these policies are subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment at Minerva (faculty or staff), expulsion (students), and/or other appropriate sanctions.

The full policy, which can be accessed on the Hub [here](#), defines terms and prohibited conduct; describes Minerva's consent culture and related educational programs; sets forth reporting processes and the rights of parties to a reported matter; establishes procedures for investigation, review, and appeal; and provides local resources.

Anyone who wishes to report a possible violation of this policy should contact any Minerva staff or faculty member or the Title IX Coordinator at tix@minerva.edu.

General Complaint Procedures

All faculty and staff at Minerva take student complaints seriously. We encourage you to resolve areas of concern informally through dialogue with the individuals involved.

However, we have established procedures to give aggrieved students a process by which they may express complaints without fear of retribution, especially if they believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, marital status, or handicap. The process described here is not intended to be used to question a rule, policy, or procedure established by an authorized faculty or administrative body. Rather, a person or persons shall use this procedure for a hearing and due process if they believe that a rule, policy, or procedure has been applied in an unfair or inequitable manner, or that there has been unfair or improper treatment.

Students who have a complaint regarding an academic-related grievance may present their complaint in person or in writing to the relevant faculty or staff member. If students have any other form of grievance, they may present their complaint in person or in writing to the Head Instructor for MDA. The relevant person will provide the student with an explanation of the process for addressing the particular complaint(s) and answer any questions to ensure a fair process.

If the student and a faculty or staff member are not able to resolve the grievance informally, the student may submit a written, signed statement to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students will provide a copy of the complaint to the person involved who will be given an opportunity to

respond in writing no later than five (5) business days after receipt of the complaint. In the event that the issue is still not resolved, the written complaint and response will be taken to the person's immediate supervisor. The immediate supervisor will then respond in writing to the appeal. If the student does not accept the decision, the Dean of Students will meet with the student, hear the grievance, review written materials and respond in writing with a decision within five (5) business days after receipt of the complaint. The Dean of Student's decision is final. If the complaint is against the Dean of Students, or the Dean of Students cannot be impartial in the process, the Chief Academic Officer/Provost will be designated to fill the role of the Dean of Students.

If a student is not able to resolve a complaint and believes that Minerva is in violation of accreditation standards, the student may also direct a complaint to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges – Senior College and University Commission (WASC) at <http://www.wascsenior.org>.

If a student believes that the complaint continues to warrant further consideration after exhausting the review by Minerva Student Affairs staff and/or WASC, the student may contact the California Bureau of Private Postsecondary Education as follows:

California Bureau of Private Postsecondary Education

2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 400

Sacramento, CA 95833

Telephone: 916-431-6924

Fax: 916-263-1897

Website: <http://www.bppe.cal.gov>

Nothing in this disclosure limits any right that you may have to seek civil or criminal legal action to resolve your complaints.