



Signum Student Handbook

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCING SIGNUM UNIVERSITY

A. Mission

Signum University believes that education should be accessible, dynamic, and affordable. Signum University establishes a completely digital campus that promotes a vibrant academic community for our students and faculty, provides career-growth enrichment for our staff, and pushes the frontiers of online education.

B. Core Values

Signum's mission is accomplished through the application of the University's core values.

Education is interactive and informative.

Signum University believes a strong learning community is one in which students and professors can grow together in a context of high-quality academics. The University's virtual campus is designed to make that community a reality, delivering both the relational and academic components of a true liberal arts education.

Online education is valuable.

Signum University embraces the flexibility and richness of online education. Its learning environment incorporates both traditional and state-of-the-art educational models to provide a dynamic platform that is accessible to anyone with an internet connection. The University continuously invests in this campus to develop Signum's innovative academic opportunities.

Excellent education is affordable.

Signum University offers affordable education. It believes everyone who desires to learn should afford to invest in their education. With this belief in mind, the University matches its accessible platform with attainable tuition so that more people might benefit from continued, and even lifelong, education.

Rewarding education is accomplished through teamwork.

Signum University fosters an amicable and productive relationship between faculty and staff to the enrichment of all. Its philosophy requires that faculty and staff work together with students, using a team-oriented approach focusing on individual responsibility and gifts, to create an exceptional learning experience. Signum also believes that, given this approach, staff and faculty should be rewarded in full for the work they accomplish.

Lasting education is thorough.

Signum University helps its students pursue their chosen area of study through online education. As part of this vision, the University teaches students how to interact with academics, personalize their curricula, and communicate meaningfully with peers and colleagues, all with the goal of contributing to their fields of research now and in the future.

C. History

When he was working as a tenured literature professor, Dr. Corey Olsen decided to experiment with sharing his classroom lectures on the works of J. R. R. Tolkien through a podcast called [The Tolkien Professor](#). The podcast quickly surpassed a million downloads, and its success prompted Dr. Olsen to experiment further by bringing in listeners to discuss Tolkien's legendarium at length through a seminar-style series on *The Silmarillion*.

As *The Tolkien Professor's* audience grew, Dr. Olsen discovered more and more people who had a desire to study speculative literature: fantasy, science fiction, mythology, fairy tales, and so forth. While some colleges and universities offered electives in such subjects, no dedicated programs existed to fulfill the demand. Thus, in 2011, Dr. Olsen offered his first online, graduate-level, for-credit course on the works of J. R. R. Tolkien while continuing to engage audiences through free programs such as "Riddles in the Dark" on *The Tolkien Professor* podcast and the Mythgard Academy lecture series.

To better accommodate the growing number of students seeking a Master of Arts in Language and Literature, Dr. Olsen created Signum University in 2012. Today, the Graduate School at Signum University continues to blaze a trail in online learning through innovative program design and digital campus technologies, with a focus on keeping costs extremely low compared to both traditional universities and other online learning programs. There are now four concentrations, certificate programs, and auditing options in addition to the M. A. degree at the heart of Signum's Graduate School. Meanwhile, [Mythgard Institute](#) remains a separate branch of the

University focused on producing free, inventive educational programming for people of all ages through the ongoing *Tolkien Professor* podcast, Mythgard Academy book discussions, the Mythgard Movie Club, and forays into the virtual world of Middle-earth through *Lord of the Rings Online*.

SECTION 2: LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AT SIGNUM'S GRADUATE SCHOOL

A. Master of Arts in Language and Literature

Students who wish to earn their Master of Arts in Language and Literature must successfully complete a total of 36 credit hours at Signum University's Graduate School. We offer a flexible timeframe to complete these requirements: you are granted a minimum of 2 years and a maximum of 7 years to finish your degree program. During that time, you are welcome to take most courses at the pace that best suits you.

To receive an M.A. in Language and Literature, you must complete:

- 3 credit hours of Research Methods (taken as one of your first 4 courses)
- 6 credit hours of language (two courses)
- 6 credit hours of literature (two courses)
- 15 credit hours of language and/or literature courses in combination
- 6 credit hours of thesis planning and writing (after completing the above requirements):
 - LITZ 6398: Thesis Planning
 - LITZ 6399: Master's Thesis

Upon successfully completing the required courses and presenting a thesis project, you will be awarded their M.A. in Language and Literature.

M.A. students may choose to specialize in one of four concentrations:

- Tolkien Studies, which focuses on the life, creative writings, and academic studies of J.R.R. Tolkien
- Imaginative Literature, which includes fantasy, science fiction, speculative fiction, popular culture and other imaginative stories from myths and legends and pre-Tolkienian fantasy tales to modern sagas with sprawling worlds and technology-filled accounts of future and far-off societies
- Germanic Philology, which emphasizes the relationship between language and literature, and it explores the development of English language and

- literature from the earliest stories, such as *Beowulf*, through Chaucer's work and beyond
- Classic Literature, which focuses on Classical (Greek and Latin) languages and literature, Middle English, Medieval literature, the Renaissance and the Early Modern period (including Shakespeare).

Waivers and adjustments to academic requirements can be formally requested. Students are advised to discuss their concerns with their Signum Advisor for guidance in these matters.

Credit Transfer Policy

The Graduate School is happy to work with students to accept transfer credits from previous studies at a nationally or regionally accredited higher education institutions, especially those that are equivalent or similar to courses within the M.A. program, pending approval from the Department Chair. However, the number of transfer credits may not exceed at any time one half of the number of credits required for the degree.

B. Certificate Programs

Signum University understands that there are many people who enjoy learning what they love, but who do not necessarily want or need a graduate degree. For those people, we have created a program that allows them to take our graduate-level courses to earn credit towards a certificate in one of several concentrations.

The courses and course requirements for the certificate program are exactly the same as those taken for M.A. credit. The only difference is that for a certificate program, you will take only five credit classes (15 credit hours) and do not need to complete a thesis.

C. Auditing Options

Students who wish to audit Signum classes for personal interest have three options.

1. As a Premiere auditor, you may participate in live lectures during the first run of a new course; you also have access to recorded lectures, class materials, and a discussion forum.

2. As a Discussion auditor, you receive full access to current courses, including the ability to attend weekly live discussion sessions led by a Preceptor.
3. As an Anytime auditor, you learn at your own pace with access to recorded lectures, class materials, and a discussion forum.

SECTION 3: GETTING STARTED AS A CREDIT STUDENT AT SIGNUM

A. Application

The Graduate School application, which is required for the M.A. and certificate programs, is conveniently located online at <http://signumuniversity.org/admissions/apply/>.

Application Requirements

Before enrolling in a class for M.A. or certificate credit, you must meet the following requirements:

- Obtain a Bachelor's degree in any field of study
- Complete an application (one-time fee of \$25)

If you already have your Bachelor's degree, you can submit your application online. Be sure to have the following details available when completing your application:

- Contact information
- A writing sample of any kind – e.g., an essay you wrote as an undergrad, a blog entry, a piece of professional writing, etc.
- The name of the institution that issued your Bachelor's degree, your graduation year, and your GPA (if educated in the United States)

Application Process

Upon submission, your application will be reviewed by the Admissions Team and processed appropriately.

- If your application is accepted, you will receive instructions by email about how to register for your first course.
- If there are any issues or questions, a member of the Admissions Team will reach out to you to discuss your application with you.

Once your application has been processed, you can browse our course catalog and choose the class(es) you want to attend.

B. Registration

Each individual course page contains a registration link; students will register via these links and then receive classroom access information and an invoice for paying tuition via a secure server. Credit students should plan their course schedules with their Advisors, possibly in consultation with the Academic Mentor.

For a tutorial on how to register for classes at Signum, please visit Signum's [website](#).

C. Enrollment Agreement

The enrollment agreement is currently being revised. Please check back soon.

D. Financial Information

One of the most difficult aspects of receiving a college education today is dealing with the cost. Even those students who receive financial assistance through scholarships, grants, and loans can often be left holding mountains of debt after they graduate, with immediate pressure to start paying it off.

At Signum University, we never want the cost of education to be a barrier to learning. With that goal in mind, we work hard to keep tuition prices low by:

- Using cutting-edge online technologies that scale to accommodate most class sizes
- Eliminating the hefty administrative and maintenance costs associated with traditional universities with physical campuses
- Relying on the support of generous donors to pay for the bulk of our infrastructural expenses

In addition, our Stewardship Division is always looking for ways to create even more efficient and cost-effective processes to deliver a first-rate educational experience.

For students and auditors, there are two primary costs related to taking classes at Signum University: tuition and required materials (primarily texts).

Tuition

The tuition paid for each course taken is the largest cost involved. Signum takes pride in the fact that the vast majority of tuition paid by credit students and auditors goes toward faculty salaries. This allows us to offer students an opportunity to learn from world-class scholars and recognized experts in their fields, at a fraction of the cost for a similar course at a traditional institution.

Please see the Signum [website](#) for the current tuition and fees.

Books and Required Materials

As with any university course, most Signum classes require students to obtain books and, occasionally, other required materials. The costs for these materials can vary from class to class. Texts that students are required to obtain are listed on the catalog page for the course, so that students know ahead of time what materials they may need to purchase.

In general, there are several ways that we keep down the costs of books and other materials:

- Certain required readings (such as short texts or excerpts) are provided as downloads on the course page in our digital campus.
- The Signum Library offers credit students access to selected materials through sources such as Project MUSE for class and research purposes.
- When possible, professors will often provide links to where the text may be legally obtained online freely or for little expense.

To help keep down costs, students are also encouraged to find alternatives to purchasing books for their course, such as borrowing from a library or exchanging texts with friends who have the required book already.

In addition, some courses may have suggested texts or materials, which are not required but may provide additional insight or supplementary information about the course topic. These texts will be clearly marked as optional, and students should exercise discretion with regard to their personal finances before purchasing them.

Payment Plan

Signum University offers a convenient payment plan that allows students to pay their tuition in installments before the beginning of each term. Failure to pay tuition by the third week of classes will result loss of access to the course classroom.

Financial Assistance

At this time, Signum University does not have any scholarship, grant, or loan programs to make available to students.

However, one way that we can offer assistance to students is through our work-study program, which offers tuition remission in exchange for part time work on the Signum administrative team. If you are interested in participating in the work-study program, send an email to info@signumu.org or use our contact form at <https://signumuniversity.org/contact/>. Also, see Section 5 for further details.

SECTION 4: TAKING CLASSES AT SIGNUM

A. How Our Courses Work

The Graduate School strives to deliver rigorous courses that are nonetheless flexible and enjoyable. One of the ways we accomplish this goal is by providing two avenues of instruction for each course: lectures and discussion sessions.

Each course also requires reading, papers, and other assignments and assessments. However, the discussion sessions and lectures make up the bulk of classroom instruction for our students.

Lectures in Live Courses and Flex Courses

Each course will include a series of weekly lectures in which the professor(s) will elaborate on topics introduced in the assigned reading and provide additional context or instruction related to the course topic. How the lectures are delivered depends on whether the course is a live course or a flex course.

Live Courses: Live Courses offer students brand-new course content, delivered by world-class professors, specifically designed for us. Live courses generally feature twice-weekly live lectures, giving students a highly interactive classroom experience. These lectures can be accessed by students through the online

classroom after they are held to allow for convenient scheduling, and are supplemented by weekly live Preceptor discussion sessions.

Flex Courses: Flex Courses offer students maximum flexibility in accessing and scheduling their weekly course material. Pre-recorded lectures delivered by the Lecturer can be accessed anytime through the online classroom, allowing students the freedom to schedule their own learning. Flex Courses also have interactive learning as their core, providing students with synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities via required live Preceptor discussion sessions and online forums.

Discussion Sessions

At the heart of our courses are discussion sessions – weekly small-group conversations that give students an opportunity to converse with their peers about the course’s lectures, readings, and related topics.

This sort of direct engagement is one of the critical components many online degree programs often fail to incorporate into their curricula. At Signum, however, we want to make sure that students are working together to share ideas, ask questions, and debate issues related to the course topic. Discussion sessions are conducted using our classroom software and guided by Preceptors. Auditors who enroll at the discussion auditor level will also participate in weekly discussion sessions. The maximum size for each discussion group is twelve participants (eight for our language-learning classes).

Courses are offered during three 12-week terms each year. Signum’s course weeks run Monday through Sunday, and all times are listed as Eastern Standard or Eastern Daylight.

B. Signum’s Online Learning Environment

The Signum classroom uses conferencing software to connect students with Lecturers and Preceptors during live lectures and discussions.

Live Lectures

During live lectures (usually two each week per course), students and auditors can log into the live lecture to watch and listen to the lecturer’s presentation.

While you will not be able to speak during live lectures, you will be able to submit comments and questions to the Lecturer at any time during the presentation. This gives both credit students and auditors the ability to engage synchronously with the Lecturer, without having to remember to send an email later. (In the event that not all comments or questions can be answered during the lecture, many Lecturers will often respond via email or discuss the topic in the next class.)

Faculty-Student Interaction

One concern that people often have with regard to online learning is whether they will have access to the instructors. At a traditional college or university, many professors establish “office hours” when students can stop by to ask questions, clarify assignments, and receive additional recommendations for further readings or research. At Signum University, we believe that collaboration between students and instructors is an important aspect of the educational environment. Therefore, Lecturers and/or Preceptors are available by email, discussion forum, or video chat so you can connect directly with them to ask questions, clarify ideas, and discuss paper topics.

Students must always use their Signum student emails to communicate with faculty and Signum staff. Faculty and staff will always use your Signum student email when they communicate with you.

Student Support and Resources

Signum’s Digital Campus extends well beyond the live-instruction interface. The University also offers ways for students to access course materials and other resources, receive assistance, and engage with each other outside of the classroom. See Section 5 below for more information.

Course Pages

Each course receives its own page in our digital campus where credit students and auditors can access course information and materials, including:

- The course syllabus and discussion session assignments
- Weekly schedules with links to assignments, readings, lectures, and other materials
- A discussion forum where students, auditors, and professors can exchange ideas about topics brought up in class or related issues
- An archive of recorded class lectures to download for listening or viewing later

These course pages are typically made available before the course begins, so that you can access materials and start readings ahead of time, if you desire. The course pages will also be available after the end of the course, so that both credit students and auditors can continue discussions in the forums and access downloadable materials for review and further study.

Discussion Sessions

Credit students and discussion auditors will also engage in weekly moderated discussion sessions using the classroom software. During these weekly discussions, all participants will be able to talk directly with each other to present ideas, debate issues, and ask questions related to the course.

The discussion sessions are moderated by Preceptors, who will be able to direct the course of the conversation as appropriate and when necessary. Each discussion group will be no larger than twelve participants (eight for our language-learning classes).

C. Class Attendance

Credit students must meet the following attendance requirements:

1. Students must actively demonstrate a pattern of engagement in the various synchronous and asynchronous aspects of the Signum course experience including viewing lectures, reading assigned materials, attendance and participation in the synchronous preceptor sessions, and thoughtful participation on the course discussion board. This is minimally considered to require 2 active logins a week, although Preceptors may apply more specific requirements.

a. An **active login** is defined as one in which the you present a substantial discussion board post or a substantial response to another post, turns in an assignment, or takes an exam.

b. A **substantial post or response** may be defined by quality, content, and/or number of words according to the instructor's specifications.

2. You must attend all lectures either by synchronous participation at scheduled times or by watching or listening to archived lectures.

3. You must attend weekly discussion sessions with no more than two (2) absences per term. Any additional, unavoidable absences must be discussed with the Preceptor ahead of time, at which point the Preceptor may, at his or her discretion, accept the submission of work. If you miss three (3) or more discussion sessions,

you will be academically withdrawn from the course unless other arrangements have been made.

4. Participation in the course classroom and in discussion sessions must give evidence that you have watched or listened to the lectures and read the assigned texts critically and thoroughly.

5. Lecturers and Preceptors may reserve the right to modify these guidelines to suit the needs of their courses.

D. Assignments and Examinations

Required assignments for credit students include but are not limited to

- Course readings, which must be completed each week before the first lecture of that week as lectures and discussions will concentrate on the assigned texts
- Assignments and/or papers, the number, length, and topics of which will be determined by the faculty team and explained in the syllabus
- Class participation in live or archived lectures and discussion sessions
- Preparation for discussion sessions, as assigned by the section Preceptor, before each weekly session
- Additional assessments as determined by the faculty team

Further, you are expected to engage in timely communication with instructors, whether by email or discussion boards.

Exams vary according to instructor and class; specific instruction will be provide on the course syllabus and/or in the course classroom. Some instructors give periodic exams throughout the course. Others require a midterm and a final while still others give only a final. Instructors may choose whether finals are cumulative or not. Exams may be written or oral. Written exams may be one large essay, several small essays, or a mixture of essay and objective questions. Oral exams may be pre-prepared and/or question and answer with members of the faculty team. Instructors will also give at least one oral assessment during the term.

E. Grades

Final course grades are given in terms of honors, passing, or failing:

A	90%–100%	Honors (exceeds expectations)
B–C	70%–89%	Pass (meets expectations)

D-F 0%–69% **Fail** (does not meet expectations)

Students may receive letter or percentage grades on individual assignments, at the Preceptor's discretion, but final course grades will be H/P/F.s.

F. Withdrawal and Incomplete Policy

Withdrawals

A student may choose to withdraw from the course or switch to auditing status according to the following schedule; however, certain financial and academic consequences will apply as outlined below.

Credit students who drop the course during the first 3 weeks of a 12-week class will receive no grade for the course on their transcripts. Between weeks 3 through 9 students wishing to withdraw must communicate with the Registrar, Bursar, and the student's Academic Adviser. If the withdrawal occurs in week 3–9 and you are in good academic standing in the course at that time, a grade of W (for "Withdrawal") will be recorded. If you are not in good academic standing at that time, as determined by the Preceptor, a grade of F will be recorded. After week 9, an automatic F will be recorded (except in unusual circumstances and with the special permission of the Preceptor and either Department Chair or Academic Dean).

After week 9 of the course, you may not withdraw or change registration status without written permission of the Preceptor, Lecturer, and either the Department Chair or the Academic Dean. You are not required to submit any documentation in order to obtain a voluntary withdrawal until after week 9; documentation may be required for a withdrawal after week 9 of the course and will only be granted in extreme circumstances.

Refunds

The first week of each course, dated from the first lecture, is a drop-add period, in which a student may withdraw and still receive a complete refund or tuition adjustment.

- In weeks 4 through 6, you will receive a half refund/tuition adjustment.
- After week 6, no refund or tuition adjustment will be offered.
- After week 9, you may not withdraw or change registration status without written permission of the preceptor, lecturer, and either the Department Chair or the Academic Dean. Documentation may be required for a withdrawal after week 9 of the course and will only be granted in extreme circumstances.

Incompletes

An Incomplete grade is not automatically granted to students seeking to extend deadlines for course assignments. It is only to be granted in the case of extraordinary extenuating circumstances. Students may apply for an I (for Incomplete) grade if they

1. desire to complete the course for credit but
2. are unable to finish the work in the final weeks due to extreme circumstances and
3. have been able to complete the course's attendance and participation requirements.

If you have been unable to keep up with attendance and participation requirements, you should withdraw rather than seek an Incomplete.

To apply for an Incomplete grade, you must submit a written request to the Preceptor for the enrolled course. Approval is granted at the discretion of the Preceptor, who will consult with the Department Chair.

If the Incomplete is approved, the Preceptor will be responsible for setting all requirements for you, submitting the Incomplete grade to the Registrar, and communicating the situation with your Advisor. The Incomplete must be submitted within 14 days of the final exam (along with all final grades for the course).

After approval, you will have until 4 weeks into the following term to submit all remaining coursework to the Preceptor in order to receive credit for the course.

G. Thesis

Signum M.A. students research and write a Thesis in their last two terms of Signum studies. A Thesis is a substantial work, written in close consultation with a Thesis Director, that demonstrates original scholarship in the fields of language and/or literature. You can find more info in the [Thesis Guidelines](#).

H. Academic Honesty

In accordance with educational, legal, and moral standards throughout the academic community, Signum University expects and requires that all work submitted by students will be the product of their own personal effort. This means that you will never engage in plagiarism, cheating, collusion, or other forms of dishonest academic practice. Instead, you will produce their own assignments using correct,

thorough citation in an accepted style. You will indicate and integrate quotes into your work properly and include full bibliographic information.

You will not deliberately attempt to gain advantage by presenting someone else's work as if it were your own or duplicating another person's work without acknowledgment of the original source. You will behave with integrity and be diligent students, avoiding those poor habits that could result in unintentional breaches of academic trust. You will maintain open communication with their faculty members in order to receive guidance on any matters relating to the use of source material.

The consequences of any form of cheating or plagiarism are severe because the offense is serious. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Department Chair and/or the Academic Dean, and a record will be maintained. Depending upon the severity of the incident and the nature of the assignment, the consequences may include a warning and a chance to resubmit the assignment, a reduced assignment grade, failure of the assignment, failure of the course, probation, suspension, or expulsion from the institution.

I. Student Privacy and Rights

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that requires educational institutions to establish a written policy concerning records and student information and to make available a statement of student privacy rights. FERPA also requires institutions to maintain confidentiality about student records.

Student Rights under FERPA

1. You have the right to review and inspect your own educational records within 45 days of submitting a written request to the University.
2. You have the right to request that your records be amended if you believe them to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of FERPA privacy rights. If you wish to ask the University to amend your records, you must fill out a Request to Amend or Remove form by contacting the Registrar's Office. The University will notify you in writing whether or not your request has been granted. If the University denies the request, you may request a formal hearing. Additional information will be provided when you are notified of your right to a formal hearing.

3. You have the right to provide written consent before the University discloses personally identifiable information from your records, except for cases in which FERPA allows disclosure without consent (see below).

4. You have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education about alleged failures of the University to comply with FERPA. The address of the Office that administers FERPA is as follows:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

Release of Academic Information

Students must usually provide written consent before the University will release personally identifiable information from their records to third parties. To grant consent, you should fill out and sign the Release of Academic Information form by contacting the Registrar's Office.

Access to Records without Written Consent

According to FERPA, personally identifiable information in student records may be accessed in certain circumstances or by certain parties without the student's written consent. These include the following:

1. School officials with legitimate educational interest who use the records to fulfill their duties
2. Relevant staff members (e.g., registration, bursary)
3. Other schools in which the student is enrolled or seeks to enroll
4. Accrediting organizations
5. In instances of a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
6. In instances of a health or safety emergency

Request to Restrict Information

FERPA allows the University to release directory information including a student's name, address, telephone number, email address, hometown, date of birth, photograph, major field of study, class schedule, dates of attendance, degrees, awards received, and most recent previous educational institution. If you wish to restrict the release of this information, you must contact the Registrar's Office.

Information by Email

Because Signum University is an online institution, students will often receive information by email. However, personal information covered under FERPA will only be sent to a your Signum student email account. If a you lose access to your Signum student email account, login information may be sent to another email to help you regain access.

J. Accessibility

Signum University is committed to making reasonable accommodations to provide equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities. It is the responsibility of students with documented disabilities to communicate requests for accommodations with their Advisor and their instructors.

K. Student Evaluations

Signum values the opinions and input of its students. At the end of each course, you will be asked to fill out a brief survey, assessing the course itself, your preceptor, and Signum's online learning systems. Please be open and honest in your responses so we can learn how to better meet our students' needs.

SECTION 5: STUDENT SERVICES AT SIGNUM

A. Student Support

Signum University has a Student Support Team available to assist enrolled students as they pursue educational growth with the institution. The Team is available to answer basic questions, offer preliminary academic advice, organize degree plans, guide students to resources, provide academic support, serve as a liaison between you and staff, handle complaints, and offer emergency assistance. The Student Support Team can be contacted via info@signumu.org.

B. Communications and Questions

Signum students are always welcome and encouraged to communicate with and ask questions of Signum faculty and staff. Credit students should maintain contact with their Signum Advisor as an immediate resource. Auditors are encouraged to contact their professoring team, the Doorward, and/or technical assistance with questions and concerns. An Academic Mentor is also available for specific Literature or Language content-area questions and career advice. For course-related questions,

please contact your Preceptor. For non-course-related questions, please contact the Student Support Team at info@signumu.org.

C. Complaints and Resolutions

Filing a Complaint

Signum University encourages students to speak with their Student Advisor about any problems they encounter during their time at the University. However, sometimes filing a complaint is necessary. In these cases, Student Advisors may direct you to file a complaint. To file a complaint, you should use the complaint form available on the [Signum University website](#). Complaints will receive an immediate automated response, followed by a personal response from a complaint manager. Please note that it may take up to one week to receive a personal response. During this time, the complaint manager will determine whether the complaint should be taken to mediation, if mediation has been requested, or to investigation, if the complaint warrants that procedure. Please note that if the complaint refers to another student or to a faculty or staff member, the complaint may be forwarded to the individual concerned so that he or she may provide any relevant information.

If the complaint requires an investigation and additional information is necessary to properly address the complaint, the University will send you a request for information to and, where relevant, other concerned parties. Your response is required within 15 days of the information request. Please note that if a response is not received within that time, the complaint may be disregarded.

After all initial information is received, a timeline will be set for investigation of the complaint. When the investigation is concluded, a decision will be made regarding how the complaint will be addressed, and you and any other involved parties will be notified of the decision. If misconduct has been found that involves state and federal law, the appropriate authorities will be contacted and the University will comply with all state and federal requirements. If any misconduct has been found, the offending party will be notified of the disciplinary action that will be taken. Students and any other involved party can appeal an investigation's decision within 15 days of receiving the decision by contacting the complaint manager.

D. Transcript Requests

Signum is happy to provide a transcript listing of all classes a student has taken, either as an auditor or for M.A. credit. To request a transcript, send an email to info@signumu.org or use the [online contact form](#). Put "Transcript Request" in the

subject line, and be sure to include any other relevant information in the body of the message.

E. Library

Signum University offers a convenient online library that features a subscription to the Project Muse Humanities Collection as well as a set of research guides.

The Project Muse Humanities Collection contains over two hundred high-quality, peer reviewed journals to support research in the humanities. Journal categories include Literature; Language and Linguistics; Philosophy; Religious; Music; Art and Architecture; Film, Theater, and Performing Arts; Social Science; Creative Writing; and Social Sciences. Journal highlights include *Tolkien Studies*, *Chaucer Review*, *Arthuriana*, and *Shakespeare Quarterly*. Project Muse is accessible through course classes for faculty and students with an active Signum login.

Signum University's library also provides a set of research guides to direct faculty and students to trustworthy online sources. Guides include links to open access databases of journal articles and books, Tolkien and Inklings websites, history and literature websites, language and philology websites, modern genre websites, and other helpful online resources. These research guides are accessible to faculty, students, and the general public.

F. Writer's Forge

Signum University offers a writing tutorial program to help individuals who want to improve their academic writing skills. This program is open to all members of the Signum community, including current credit students, auditors, and participants in any of our public programs like Signum Symposia or the Mythgard Academy. In all of our courses, Preceptors are available to provide feedback on individual papers (and other assignments) and work with students on their revisions. However, in the event that you need help with more fundamental writing skills not directly related to the course content, the Preceptor for the class may recommend that you make an appointment with a tutor.

Assistance offered through the writing tutorial program includes (but is not necessarily limited to):

1. Strengthening sentence structure, stylistics, and standard writing conventions
2. Clarifying logic and argumentation

3. Addressing pervasive, recurrent issues with syntax, diction, organization, specificity, and quote integration
4. Reviewing sources and citations in academic writing

Signum's Student Support Division will work with interested writers to set up a one-on-one video chat and to share their work with their tutor through Google Docs. Both writer and tutor will thus be able to see the document and read it over together as they talk through the writing process, and the writer will be able to mark it up, ask questions, and make suggested revisions alongside the tutor. The fee for Signum's writing tutorial program is \$25 per half hour. You may make an appointment with a tutor at the [Writer's Forge](#).

G. Community Hearth

Signum University's Community Hearth features numerous discussion forums and chat rooms where students can find answers to their questions, discuss their classes, or simply hang out.

Community Hearth forums include:

- General Community Hangout
- Meeting of the Minds
- Student Lounge
- Thesis Support Group
- Creative Writing Group
- Polyglots' Corner
- Student-led Discussions for current classes

Community Hearth is accessible at forums.signumuniversity.org.

H. Work-Study Program

At Signum University, we work hard to keep our tuition as low as possible, but we understand that many people can still benefit from further financial assistance.

Work-study students receive tuition remission for one course per term in exchange for work of usually about five hours per week during the term. Please note that students new to our M.A. program must complete the application and be accepted for admission to the program before enrolling in courses for credit. People who are not interested in taking our courses for credit are welcome to apply their tuition remission towards auditing a course.

If you are accepted as a work-study student, you will be placed in one or more of our staff teams based on your skills, interests, and experience and are matched with a team leader who will be responsible for supporting and overseeing their work. If you complete your work for the term satisfactorily and would like to continue in the program for future terms, you will be welcome to do so.

Work-Study Eligibility

Prospective work-study participants should be aware of the following legal matters:

- You will need to provide evidence that you are legally able to work in your country of residence.
- You will need to submit some legal paperwork to Signum University before you can take part in the work-study program.
- For certain roles within the University, we may be obligated to perform a background check in accordance with University policy, with your consent (denying consent may render you ineligible for certain work-study roles).

SECTION 7: SIGNUM'S CODE OF CONDUCT

Signum's [Code of Conduct](#) provides specific information about consequences of student misconduct, the university's sexual harassment policy, the equal opportunity policy, and the cyber-bullying policy.

Consequences of Misconduct for Students

Students in the Signum community agree to keep our Code of Conduct upon enrolling in the University. As such, we reserve the right to respond to student breaches of this Code or any other behavioral policies established by the University. The following are sanctions you may expect Signum University to impose for student misconduct, in addition to complying with any relevant state or federal laws. The sanctions are listed in order of ascending severity:

1. Warning - Students who fail to comply with academic policies and procedures for a reason judged unsuitable by their professor(s) and/or relevant staff members will receive a warning from said professor(s) explaining the student's academically careless or otherwise inappropriate behavior. The professor(s) will first take steps to ensure the student is prepared and able to complete assignments in a timely manner, and will

approach the student with an attitude of help and advisement rather than punitively.

2. Probation - Students who have previously received a Warning from the University but continue in their failure to comply with the University's academic standards will receive a formal reprimand from the University expressing its disapproval of the student's careless or inappropriate behaviour. Students who have received a reprimand for a failure to comply to academic standards or who have engaged in misconduct judged by the University to warrant this sanction will be placed on probation for six months or two Signum terms. During the time of probation, students must adhere to all of the University's standards, policies, and procedures. If students succeed in adhering to the University's regulations, they will be removed from probation. Students who fail to adhere to any of the University's regulations will be suspended. Probation will be kept on the student's record.

3. Suspension - Students who have failed probation or who have engaged in any misconduct judged by the University to warrant this sanction will be suspended from the University for a time to be determined by the University but no less than six months and no more than eight semesters. During this time, suspended students will not be allowed to participate in their current courses nor register for future courses. The University strongly encourages that throughout the time of suspension students seek personal and/or academic assistance from other sources should they wish to return to the University. Students who return from a period of suspension will be kept on probation for a period of time determined by the University. A suspension will be kept on the student's record.

4. Expulsion - Students who have returned to the University after a time of suspension and then failed their probation period or who have engaged in any misconduct judged by the University to warrant this sanction will be expelled from the University. During the time of expulsion, students may not participate in any University-related activities. Students who have been expelled from Signum University may return to the University after a period of three years. If accepted, students will be on probation for the first year of their enrolment period with the institution. Students may not resume their studies as they were at the point of expulsion; none of the credits earned prior to the expulsion will count towards their course of study, should they choose to resume at a later date. Instead, previously expelled students will

start their study program of choice from the beginning of said program. Expulsion will be kept on the student's record.

Sexual Harassment Policy for Students

Signum University is committed to creating an institution that is free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment goes against the University's Code of Conduct and its Mission Statement and Core Values. As such, sexual harassment will not be tolerated. In the case of any and all allegations of sexual harassment that have been determined credible, the University will take prompt and appropriate corrective action in accordance with University policy and procedures and all applicable state and federal laws. Please report sexual and other forms of harassment by contacting the Student Support Team at info@signumu.org.

Equal Opportunity Policy

All opportunities and benefits at Signum University are equally available to any individual regardless of race, religion, national identity, gender identity, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital status, disability, age, status as a U.S. military veteran, or any other status protected under applicable federal, state, or local laws. Discrimination based on an individual's actual or perceived identity with such protected categories is prohibited. Retaliation against anyone who lodges a complaint in good faith or truthfully participates in an investigation of discrimination is also prohibited.

*Signum University defines a disability as a physical or mental condition, past or present, that substantially limits one or more major life functions, or if an individual is regarded or perceived, correctly or incorrectly, as having such a condition. Signum is committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities whenever possible. For information, please see Signum University's policy on Accessibility and Students with a Disability.

Cyber-Bullying policy

Signum University is a digital campus and realises that many forms of misconduct can take place on the Internet. Any forms of cyberbullying, stalking, harassment, or any other digital versions of misconduct will be treated with equal and like response as though the misconduct had taken place on a non-virtual campus. Virtual bad behavior is still bad behavior and will not be tolerated at this institution.

