

154. Conferences, days of recollection, workshops, and annual retreats should be well organized and together form a whole and coherent program of spiritual formation.

155. Catechesis should be given concerning the meaning and proper celebration of the Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours, and especially the sacrament of penance.

156. Communal celebration of the sacrament of penance should be scheduled at least seasonally. Frequent opportunities for individual celebration of the sacrament should be provided and encouraged.

157. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the word of God should be especially fostered in the life of the seminary because it is essential to the life of seminarians and of future priests.

158. Devotion to Mary, the Mother of God, and to the saints should be encouraged.

159. The spiritual formation program should be sensitive to and encouraging of the legitimate and valuable cultural and ethnic devotions of students.

160. The Christian practices of fasting, almsgiving, and self-sacrifice should be encouraged in a manner appropriate for college students.

161. Each seminarian must meet regularly with a priest spiritual director who is chosen from a list prepared by the director of spiritual formation. These priests must be approved by the rector and appointed by the diocesan bishop.¹¹³

B. INTELLECTUAL FORMATION

Liberal Arts

162. A sound liberal arts education for candidates preparing for the priesthood possesses multiple benefits. The study of the natural world and of humanity in all its historical and cultural diversity represents a significant value in its own right. Such an education encourages intellectual curiosity, promotes critical thought, and fosters disciplined habits of study. A liberal arts education also teaches students to communicate with others in a clear and articulate way.

163. A liberal arts education gives students some introduction into the wider range of human learning. Accordingly, studies in mathematics and natural science; in the social and behavioral sciences; in history, literature, communication skills; and the fine arts should be included in the curriculum.

164. A liberal education also has a special value as a preparation for the study of theology. The liberal arts have traditionally provided college-level candidates with an understanding of the cultural roots of their faith. By understanding the human sciences, they can better comprehend the world in which God's spirit acts. By grasping how faith and culture have interacted in the past, they gain some insight into the working of God's plan in larger historical events.

165. The curriculum should also strive to take into consideration contemporary issues of the day in intellectual, cultural, social, and political life as they pertain to moral and religious topics. Such an approach stimulates students to deeper study by building on current knowledge and present interests. The authentic teaching of the Church on such issues should be clearly and cogently presented. The curriculum should introduce students to the basic teachings of the faith as well as to the richness and diversity of the Catholic intellectual tradition.

166. A liberal arts education normally involves a field of concentrated study. Philosophy has been considered the most appropriate area of concentration for college seminarians. Every seminary should offer philosophy as a major field of study. Other liberal arts may be appropriate fields of concentration for some students. The choice of another major should be evaluated on an individual basis.

Philosophy

167. Catholic education for the priesthood has traditionally placed a strong emphasis on a sound grasp of philosophy.¹¹⁴ "A proper philosophical training is vital, not only because of the links between the great philosophical questions and the mysteries of salvation which are studied in theology under the guidance of the light of faith, but also vis-à-vis an extremely widespread cultural situation which emphasizes subjectivism as a criterion and measure of truth: Only a sound philosophy can help candidates for the priesthood to develop a reflective awareness of the fundamental relationship that exists between the human spirit and truth, that truth which is revealed to us fully in Jesus Christ."¹¹⁵

168. Methodologically, the study of philosophy aids students in developing their own powers of clear critical thought and analysis. Substantively, students should be confronted with the epistemological and ontological presuppositions of faith and human knowledge. Positively, they should be brought to a coherent vision of reality, recognizing "human reason's ability to attain truth . . . as well as its metaphysical capacity to come to a knowledge of God from creation."¹¹⁶ Negatively, they should become critically aware of those philosophical tenets that limit or deny the role of revelation. Philosophy also has a value as an interdisciplinary and integrative discipline, helping students to grasp their entire course of studies synoptically, relating those studies to a deeper understanding of themselves and human culture.

169. Therefore, a philosophy program should be balanced, comprehensive, integrated, and coherent. It should include studies in metaphysics, anthropology, natural theology, epistemology, ethics, and logic. It should also include substantial studies in the history of philosophy treating ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophy. Some treatment of American philosophy or social thought is also helpful for seminarians in understanding the dynamics of contemporary society in the United States. The philosophy of St. Thomas should be given the recognition that Church teaching accords it.¹¹⁷

Undergraduate Theology

170. College-level seminarians also should begin the study of theology. Undergraduate courses in theology should focus on the fundamental beliefs and practices of the Catholic faith. In particular, they should concentrate on those elements of the faith which may have been overlooked or neglected in the students' religious education and which stand as a presupposition for all forms of graduate theological study. From the start, students should relate theology to the larger mission of the Church in the public sphere. College-level theology courses are intended as a preparation for studies in the theologate, not as a replacement for them.

171. The undergraduate theology program should include introductions to biblical revelation, doctrine, church history, liturgy, spirituality, and Christian ethics. An appreciation of the role of religion in literature and in the arts as well as an understanding of world religions may be helpful. Students should also begin their study of the Church's teaching on ecumenism and interfaith relations.

NORMS

172. College seminarians should normally achieve a bachelor of arts degree from an accredited college.

173. Educational standards should not be so rigid or restrictive as to close the door to candidates who are lacking in some dimension of the required educational background because of cultural background or social class. Remedial help should be provided such students so that their academic deficiencies gradually may be overcome.

174. A college seminary program must offer courses in philosophy and undergraduate theology or provide for them at a Catholic college or university which possesses a complete curriculum of philosophical and theological studies.

175. Sound philosophical formation requires 24 semester credit hours.¹¹⁸ A minimum of 12 semester credit hours should be required in appropriate courses of undergraduate theology.

176. Programs which utilize colleges and universities for philosophy and theological studies should carefully and consistently monitor the content and quality of those courses.

177. College seminaries are encouraged to offer the bachelor of philosophy degree (Ph.B.) either by affiliating with an ecclesiastical faculty or university or by special arrangement with the Congregation for Catholic Education.

178. The curriculum of studies of college seminarians should include a grounding in the liberal arts and sciences, with special attention to classical and foreign languages. The study of Latin and the biblical languages is foundational and should be given the emphasis that church teaching accords it.¹¹⁹ The study of the Spanish language and Hispanic culture, as well as other pastorally appropriate languages and cultures, is recommended. In some cases, English as a Second Language (ESL) may form an important part of the program.

179. Excellence in education at the college level demands access to a strong library, as required by accrediting agencies.