

Stake Seminary Graduation Guide

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The Guidelines

1. Annual graduation exercises provide one way to recognize the efforts and accomplishments of all seminary students. They also provide an opportunity to encourage all youth to continue their religious education.
2. Seminary graduation should be held annually on a stake level.
3. In most cases, students who qualify for seminary graduation must complete all four years of seminary courses of study, including Old Testament, New Testament, The Book of Mormon, and Doctrine & Covenants/Church History.
4. To complete a course of study, seminary students must satisfy (1) attendance, (2) assigned course reading, and (3) Elevate Learning Assessment (ELA) requirements. Students must attend 75% of class sessions and read 100% of assigned reading material. Students must also complete the ELA with at least a 75%.
5. Makeup work is available for students who have not met these three requirements.
6. Potential seminary graduates must be ecclesiastically endorsed to earn their Seminary Diploma and be recognized at stake graduation.
7. Students completing a year's course of study must also be ecclesiastically endorsed each year to earn their year's Certificate of Completion for that year and be recognized at stake graduation.
8. Only the pre-printed signature of the Chairman of the Church Board of Education and the S&I Administrator will now appear on Seminary Diplomas and Certificates of Completion.
9. If possible, graduation ceremonies should be held after the school year ends. If graduation is held after year-end, all Diplomas and Certificates of Completion are given to the stake representative with a seminary assignment (a high councilor, usually) to be distributed at stake seminary graduation.

Awards of students who are not ecclesiastically endorsed are given to bishops to award to students at a later time. Unendorsed seminary students will not be recognized at graduation.

10. Seminary graduations held prior to the end of a school year may still recognize projected graduates by presenting them with an empty diploma cover. If graduations are held prior to year-end, Seminary Diplomas and Certificates of Completion can be mailed to those students who appeared on each stake graduation program or delivered to stake or ward leaders to distribute after the school year has been closed in WISE.

Roles & Responsibilities

The Stake President

- Consults with the stake's assigned seminary principal or coordinator in preparation and planning of stake seminary graduation.
- Oversees ecclesiastical endorsement of projected graduates and earners of the Certificate of Completion.
- Assigns stake seminary supervisor and/or high councilor assigned to seminary to coordinate stake seminary graduation ceremony.
- Stakes are responsible for creating their own stake seminary graduation ceremony program.

The Bishop

- Endorses potential seminary graduates and those earning the certificate of completion.
- Ultimately, it is left to the bishop's discretion to endorse or not endorse each student.
- Is responsible to inform a seminary student if and why the student is not endorsed. Informs the seminary student's parents or guardians if the student will not participate in seminary graduation ceremonies.
- Reports to Stake President endorsed list of students to be added to the stake graduation program.
- Seminary programs should never know 'endorsed or not endorsed' status of any students.

The Seminary Ecclesiastical Endorsement

For Stake Presidents & Bishops

- The bishop's endorsement of a student for institute graduation signifies that the applicant understands and strives to apply the principles and doctrines of the Gospel of Jesus Christ learned while in seminary, "confirming that he or she is worthy and committed to live the standards outlined in For the Strength of Youth or similar standards for young adults" (Handbook 1, Section 11.2.2, Graduation and Recognition).
- It is not necessary to hold a separate 'ecclesiastical endorsement' interview for seminary graduation applicants. The bishop or one of his counselors *may* use regularly scheduled youth interviews as the basis to endorse or not endorse a student who is projected to graduate or complete a seminary year.
- Ultimately, it is left to the bishop's discretion to endorse or not endorse each applicant.
- Bishops are responsible to inform seminary graduation applicants if and why the applicant is not endorsed. Bishops also inform seminary students' parents if the student will not participate in seminary graduation ceremonies.
- Seminary principals or coordinators ensure that each stake president understands the ecclesiastical endorsement requirement to become a seminary graduate or to complete a seminary year.
- Stake presidents ensure that each bishop or branch president also understands this requirement.
- From the projected graduates list (which includes students earning an award for completing the seminary year), bishops report to the stake president endorsed students from his ward or branch to be included on the stake seminary graduation program.
- Only endorsed students who have academically qualified for a Diploma and Certificate of Completion should be recognized at stake seminary graduation.

Seminary Graduation Program Outline

NAME OF STAKE

Seminary Graduation

DATE / TIME (recommended length: 1 hour)

PLACE

Presiding:

Conducting:

Pianist:

Chorister:

Welcome:

Opening Hymn:

Invocation:

Remarks on participating in the seminary program:

Student speaker (one or more):

Musical presentation:

Student speaker (one or more):

Brief remarks by S&I Representative:

Remarks by member of presiding stake presidency:

Recognition of students receiving Certificates of Attendance or Completion:

Awarding of Seminary Diplomas:

Closing Hymn:

Benediction:

The following is a suggested list of names to include in the printed program:

- Area Presidency (as applicable)
- Mission presidency (as applicable)
- Stake presidencies
- Bishoprics or branch presidencies

- Church Board of Education*
- Commissioner of the Church Educational System*
- Administrator of Seminaries & Institutes of Religion*
- Area Director for Seminaries & Institutes of Religion*
- Seminary principals, institute directors, or coordinators (as applicable)*
- Seminary or institute teachers (as applicable)*
- Seminary or institute student council members (as applicable)*
- Each student earning a diploma and/or Certificate of Completion*, organized by stake and ward, if desired.

*The S&I representative will provide these names.

