

## Proposed Changes to Standards 1–9 and Procedures for Accreditation

In 2008 the Board of Commissioners voted to undertake a four-year project to review and revise, as appropriate, the Commission's procedures and standards of accrediting. The work of the first two years has focused on the Procedures for Accreditation and General Institutional Standards 1 through 9. The work for the second two years, 2010–2012, will begin on the third day at this Biennial Meeting and focus on the degree program standards and the standard on extension and distance learning, Standard 10.

### Goals of revisions

The primary assumption with which the task force began its work on the General Institutional Standards (1–9) was that, for the most part, these standards have been functioning effectively. Across the past decade, the Commission has asked self-study directors, deans, visiting committee chairs and members to evaluate these standards, and those evaluations have been consistently positive. The task force thus approached its work with the intent of proposing changes that would enhance editorial clarity, update the standards as appropriate, and introduce substantive changes only where they were deemed most necessary. Some of the proposed changes have their origins in the work of several ATS projects across the past decade, most especially the work of the Technology and Theological Education Task Force.

The proposed changes to the Procedures for Accreditation reflect two primary goals. The first was to ease the number of accrediting interactions between schools and the Board of Commissioners. For example, the proposed procedures eliminate the distinction between preliminary and ongoing approval of new degree programs, which would replace two institutional petitions and board actions with one petition and board action. The second goal was to update the procedures to current U.S. Department of Education (DOE) requirements for recognized agencies.

### Process

The board appointed a Task Force on Revision of the Standards and Procedures in 2008, which has worked throughout the biennium and made its recommendation to the Board of Commissioners for consideration in its February 2010 meeting. The board received the recommendations of the task force and in a few cases modified them, then published them online for comment from member schools in March. In late April, the board considered each comment or proposal received regarding the changes to the standards or procedures. It incorporated many of them and determined that others were not necessary or advisable in the context of the standards overall. It also considered the extensive set of new DOE regulatory requirements that were issued in draft form just as the board was nearing completion of its initial recommendations in February, and several changes in the final proposed procedures will make the Commission more fully compliant with the final form of the regulations, to be issued in summer 2010. These changes were not present in the draft posted in March because the board did not have time to formulate changes prior to that posting. The most substantial newly proposed change in the procedures is related to the appeals process. The new DOE regulations require a recognized agency to have an Appeals Panel that can make final decisions related to adverse accrediting decisions, which the Commission on Accrediting defines as the failure to grant initial accreditation or to withdraw accreditation. The proposed change identifies actions that can be appealed, continues the current appeal procedures for actions other than adverse accrediting actions, and introduces a new procedure for appeals related to adverse accrediting decisions that complies with the new regulation.

The text for both the standards and the procedures indicates text proposed for deletion in ~~strikeout~~ and text proposed for addition in underline.

# Proposed Changes to General Institutional Standards 1 through 9

## 1 Purpose, Planning, and Evaluation

Theological schools are communities of faith and learning guided by a theological vision. Schools related to the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools conduct post-baccalaureate programs for ministerial leadership and in theological disciplines. Their educational programs should continue the heritage of theological scholarship, attend to the religious constituencies served, and respond to the global context of religious service and theological education.

### 1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 Each member school shall have a formally adopted statement of institutional purpose. The statement of institutional purpose should articulate the mission to which the school believes it is called and define its particular identity and values. When confessional commitments are central to the identity of a school, they shall be clearly articulated in the statement of purpose. The initiation, development, authorization, and regular review of this statement is the responsibility of the appropriate governing body, and the development should involve all appropriate constituencies (e.g., trustees, faculty, administration, staff, students, and ecclesiastical bodies).

1.1.2 Theological schools that are related to colleges or universities should support the purpose of the overall institution and develop their purpose statements in relationship to the institutions of which they are a part.

1.1.3 Purpose statements should be enabling and defining documents, and should be realistic and accurate. The adequacy of the purpose statement and the institution's ability to fulfill its mission are critical elements to the institution's integrity.

### 1.2 Planning and evaluation

1.2.1 The purpose statement shall guide the institution in its comprehensive institutional planning and evaluation procedures and in making decisions regarding programs, allocation of resources including the use and support of educational technology, constituencies served, relationships with ecclesiastical bodies, global concerns, institutional flexibility, and other comparable matters.

31 | 1.2.2 Evaluation is a critical element in support of integrity ~~to in educational efforts,~~  
32 | ~~institutional renewal, and individual institutional planning and mission fulfillment.~~  
33 | ~~professional development.~~ Evaluation is a process that includes (1) the identification of  
34 | desired goals or outcomes for an educational program, or institutional service, or  
35 | personnel performance; (2) a system of gathering quantitative or qualitative information  
36 | related to the desired goals; (3) the assessment of the performance of the program,  
37 | service, or person based on this information; and (4) the establishment of revised goals or  
38 | activities based on the assessment. Institutions shall develop and implement ongoing  
39 | evaluation procedures for institutional vitality and educational effectiveness. ~~employees,~~  
40 | ~~students, educational programs, and institutional activities.~~

41 | 1.2.2.1 Institutions shall develop and implement ongoing evaluation  
42 | procedures for institutional vitality. The scope of institutional vitality evaluation  
43 | includes (1) ability to fulfill the school’s mission; (2) ability to provide the  
44 | resources necessary to sustain and improve the school; and (3) ability of  
45 | governance and administrative structures, personnel, and procedures to exercise  
46 | leadership adequately on behalf of the school’s purpose and to operate the school  
47 | with integrity.

48 | 1.2.2.2 Institutions shall develop and implement ongoing evaluation  
49 | procedures for educational effectiveness as required by individual degree program  
50 | standards. ~~The scope of educational effectiveness evaluation includes (1) the~~  
51 | ~~extent to which degree programs are meeting the needs of students and the~~  
52 | ~~institution’s overall goals for the programs; and (2) the effectiveness of~~  
53 | ~~instruction and other educational activities to foster student learning.~~

54 | 1.2.3 A comprehensive evaluation process is the primary resource an institution uses to  
55 | determine the extent to which it is accomplishing its purpose. The various institutional  
56 | and educational evaluation procedures shall be analyzed, coordinated, and employed in  
57 | comprehensive institutional planning. Information gained in evaluation processes should  
58 | be utilized widely within the institution for ongoing administrative and educational  
59 | planning.

60 | **2 Institutional Integrity**

61 | Institutional integrity is demonstrated by the consistency of a theological school’s actions with  
62 | commitments it has expressed in its formally adopted statement of purpose, with agreements it  
63 | assumes with accrediting and governmental agencies, with covenants it establishes with

64 ecclesiastical bodies, and with ethical guidelines for dealing with students, employees, and  
65 constituencies.

66 2.1 Schools accredited by the Board of Commissioners shall carry out their educational  
67 programs and institutional activities according to the standards and procedures established by the  
68 Commission and its Board of Commissioners, communicate honestly and forthrightly with the  
69 board, comply with requests for information, and cooperate with the board in preparation for and  
70 conduct of visits.

71 2.2 With regard to state, provincial, and federal authorities, schools shall conduct their  
72 operations in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

73 2.3 The school shall ensure that all published materials, electronic and print, including  
74 catalogs, academic calendars, and promotional literature, accurately represent the institution to  
75 its various constituencies and publics, including students and prospective students. All charges  
76 and fees, including refund policies, should be fully disclosed. Schools should exercise care in  
77 advertising to portray the institution fairly and honestly to the public. Wherever appropriate,  
78 published institutional documents shall employ gender inclusive language with reference to  
79 persons.

80 2.4 The institution shall seek to treat students, faculty, administrators, employees, and the  
81 publics to which it relates in ethical ways. Such treatment includes, among other concerns, an  
82 equitable policy of student tuition refunds; nondiscriminatory practices in employment, insofar  
83 as such practices do not conflict with doctrine or ecclesiastical polity; clearly defined processes  
84 for addressing faculty, employee, and student grievances; and integrity in financial management.

85 2.5 In their Integrity in theological education includes institutional and educational practices,  
86 theological schools shall ~~that~~ promote awareness of the diversity of race, ethnicity, and culture  
87 widely present in North America and ~~Schools shall seek to enhance participation and leadership~~  
88 of persons of color racial/ethnic minorities in institutional life. Schools shall assist all students in  
89 gaining the particular knowledge, appreciation, and openness needed to live and practice  
90 ministry effectively in culturally and racially diverse settings.

91 2.6 While member schools have a variety of ~~According to its stated purposes and theological~~  
92 commitments, the each school shall seek to ~~address the concerns of women and~~ and to seek to  
93 increase the participation and leadership of women in theological education. In all cases, schools  
94 shall seek to assist students in gaining the particular knowledge, appreciation, and openness  
95 needed to live and practice ministry effectively in changing cultural and racially diverse settings.

96 2.76 Institutions participating in U.S. ~~federally guaranteed~~ federal student financial assistance  
97 programs shall comply with prevailing governmental guidelines regulating these programs.  
98 Default rates on student loans above the federal threshold, or failure to comply with federal  
99 guidelines, is cause for review of an institution's overall conformity to the standards of  
100 accreditation of the Commission. Schools shall demonstrate that they have resolved effectively  
101 all areas of deficiency identified in audits, program reviews, and any other information provided  
102 by the US Department of Education to the Commission.

103 | 2.87 For schools related to colleges or universities, integrity requires that these schools  
104 contribute to the overall goals of the larger institution and support its policies and procedures.

105 | 2.9. Member schools shall make public a statement of their policy on transfer credits earned at  
106 other institutions of higher education, including the criteria used for their decisions.

107 | 2.10 Institutions shall establish and enforce policies for the appropriate and ethical use of  
108 instructional technology, digital media, and the Internet that are consistent with the institution's  
109 educational purposes and environment.

110 | **3 The Theological Curriculum: Learning, Teaching, and Research : Theological**  
111 **Scholarship**

112 | A theological school is a community of faith and learning that cultivates habits of theological  
113 reflection, nurtures wise and skilled ministerial practice, and contributes to the formation of  
114 spiritual awareness and moral sensitivity. Within this context, the task of ~~theological scholarship~~  
115 the theological curriculum is central. It includes the interrelated activities of ~~teaching~~, learning,  
116 teaching, and research. The theological curriculum is the means by which learning, teaching, and  
117 research are formally ordered to educational goals.

118 | **3.1 Goals of the theological curriculum**<sup>1</sup>

119 | 3.1.1 In a theological school, the overarching goal is the development of theological  
120 understanding, that is, aptitude for theological reflection and wisdom pertaining to a  
121 responsible life in faith. Comprehended in this overarching goal are others such as  
122 deepening spiritual awareness, growing in moral sensibility and character, gaining an  
123 intellectual grasp of the tradition of a faith community, and acquiring the abilities  
124 requisite to the exercise of ministry in that community. These goals, and the processes

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<sup>1</sup> This text has been moved from current Standard 4.

125 and practices leading to their attainment, are normally intimately interwoven and should  
 126 not be separated from one another.

127 3.1.2 The emphasis placed on particular goals and their configuration will vary, both  
 128 from school to school (depending on the understanding of institutional purpose), and  
 129 within each school (depending on the variety of educational programs offered). The  
 130 ordering of teaching, learning, and research toward particular sets of goals is embodied in  
 131 the degree programs of the school and in the specific curricula followed in those  
 132 programs. The theological curriculum, comprehensively understood, embraces all those  
 133 activities and experiences provided by the school to enable students to achieve the  
 134 intended goals. More narrowly understood, the curriculum is the array of specific  
 135 activities (e.g., courses, practica, supervised ministry, spiritual formation experiences,  
 136 theses) explicitly required in a degree program. In both the more comprehensive and the  
 137 more narrow sense, the entire-curriculum should be seen as a set of practices with a  
 138 formative aim—the development of intellectual, spiritual, moral, and vocational or  
 139 professional capacities—and careful attention must be given to the coherence and mutual  
 140 enhancement of its various elements.

141 **3.2—Activities of Theological Scholarship: Learning, teaching, and research**

142 3.2.4.0 Learning and teaching occur in the classroom and through experiences outside the  
 143 classroom; the responsibilities of teaching and learning rest with both students and  
 144 faculty; the collaborative nature of theological scholarship requires that people teach and  
 145 learn from one another in communal settings; and research is integral to the quality of  
 146 both learning and teaching.

147 **3.2.4.1 Learning**

148 3.2.4.1.1 Learning in a theological school should reflect the goals of the total  
 149 curriculum and be appropriate to post-baccalaureate education.

150 3.2.4.1.2 Learning should cultivate scholarly discourse and result in the ability  
 151 to think critically and constructively, conduct research, use library resources, and  
 152 engage in the practice of ministry.

153 3.2.4.1.3 Learning should foster, in addition to the acquisition of knowledge, the  
 154 capacity to understand and assess one's tradition and identity, and to integrate  
 155 materials from various theological disciplines and modes of instructional  
 156 engagement in ways that enhance ministry and cultivate emotional and spiritual  
 157 maturity.

158 | 3.2.1.4 An institution shall demonstrate its ongoing efforts to ensure the  
159 | quality of learning within the context of its purpose and as understood by the  
160 | relevant scholarly and ecclesial communities.<sup>2</sup>

161 | **3.2.2 Teaching**

162 | 3.2.2.1 Teaching should involve faculty, librarians, and students working  
163 | together in an environment of mutual learning, respect, and engagement.

164 | 3.2.2.2 Instructional methods should use the diversity of life experiences  
165 | represented by the students, by faith communities, and by the larger cultural  
166 | context. Instructional methods and the use of technology should be sensitive to  
167 | the diversity of student populations, different learning styles of students, the  
168 | importance of communities of learning, and the instructional goals. The  
169 | integration of technology as a teaching tool and resource for learning shall include  
170 | careful planning by faculty and administration to ensure adequate infrastructure,  
171 | resources, training, and support.

172 | 3.2.2.3 Courses are a central place of interaction between teachers and  
173 | learners. The way the instructor arranges the work and structures the class should  
174 | encourage theological conversation. Courses and programs of study should reflect  
175 | an awareness of the diversity of worldwide and local settings. In the development  
176 | of new courses and the review of syllabi, faculty should interact with one another,  
177 | with librarians, with their students, with the church, and with the developing  
178 | fields of knowledge. Faculty should be appropriately involved in the  
179 | consideration of ways in which technology might enhance or strengthen student  
180 | learning. Course development and review best occur in the context of the goals of  
181 | the entire curriculum.

182 | 3.2.2.4 An institution shall demonstrate its ongoing efforts to ensure the  
183 | quality of teaching within the context of its purpose and as understood by the  
184 | relevant scholarly and ecclesial communities.

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<sup>2</sup> The existing standards include a statement about “ensuring quality” for teaching and learning at the end of this section (existing 3.1.4). These changes locate this expectation at the end of each statement about teaching and learning and delete the overall statement at the end.

185	<b>3.21.3 Research</b>
186	3.21.3.1 Research is an essential component of theological scholarship and
187	should be evident in the work of both teachers and students. Theological research
188	is both an individual and a communal enterprise, and is properly undertaken in
189	constructive relationship with the academy, with the church, and with the wider
190	public.
191	3.21.3.2 As a function of learning, research involves the skills needed both to
192	discover information and to integrate new information with established
193	understandings. As a function of teaching, research assimilates sources of
194	information, constructs patterns of understanding, and uncovers new information
195	in order to strengthen classroom experiences.
196	<del>3.1.4 An institution shall demonstrate its ongoing efforts to ensure the quality of teaching,</del>
197	<del>learning, and research within the context of its purpose, and as understood by the relevant</del>
198	<del>scholarly and ecclesial communities.</del>
199	<b>3.32 Characteristics of theological scholarship</b>
200	3.32.0 Patterns of collaboration, freedom of inquiry, relationships with diverse publics,
201	and a global awareness are important characteristics of theological scholarship.
202	<b>3.32.1 Scholarly collaboration</b>
203	3.32.1.1 The activities of theological scholarship—teaching, learning, and
204	research—are collaborative efforts among faculty, librarians, and students, and
205	foster a lifelong commitment to learning and reflection.
206	3.32.1.2 Scholarship occurs in a variety of contexts in the theological school.
207	These include courses, independent study, the library, student and faculty
208	interaction, congregational and field settings, and courses in universities and other
209	graduate level institutions. In each of these settings, mutual respect among
210	scholarly inquirers characterizes theological scholarship.
211	3.32.1.3 Collaboration and communication extend beyond the theological
212	school’s immediate environment to relate it to the wider community of the
213	church, the academy, and the society. Theological scholarship is enhanced by
214	active engagement with the diversity and global extent of those wider publics, and
215	it requires a consciousness of racial, ethnic, gender, and global diversities. In

216 accordance with the school’s purpose and constituencies, insofar as possible, the  
 217 members of the school’s own community of learning should also represent  
 218 diversity in race, age, ethnic origin, and gender.

219 | **3.3.22.2 Freedom of inquiry**

220 | 3.32.2.0 Both in an institution’s internal life and in its relationship with its publics,  
 221 | freedom of inquiry is indispensable for good theological education. This freedom, while  
 222 | variously understood, has both religious roots and an established value in North  
 223 | American higher education. Theological schools have a responsibility to maintain their  
 224 | institutional purpose, which for many schools includes confessional commitments and  
 225 | specific responsibilities for faculty as stipulated by these commitments. Schools shall  
 226 | uphold the freedom of inquiry necessary for genuine and faithful scholarship, articulate  
 227 | their understanding of that freedom, formally adopt policies to implement that  
 228 | understanding and ensure procedural fairness, and carefully adhere to those policies.\*

229 | **3.3.23 Involvement with diverse publics**

230 | 3.32.3.1 Theological scholarship requires engagement with a diverse and  
 231 | manifold set of publics. Although the particular purpose of a school will influence  
 232 | the balance and forms of this engagement, schools shall assume responsibility for  
 233 | relating to the church, the academic community, and the broader public.

234 | 3.32.3.2 Theological scholarship informs and enriches the reflective life of the  
 235 | church. The school should demonstrate awareness of the diverse manifestations of  
 236 | religious community encompassed by the term *church*: congregations,  
 237 | denominations, parachurch organizations, broad confessional traditions, and the  
 238 | church catholic. Library collections, courses, and degree programs should  
 239 | represent the historical breadth, cultural difference, confessional diversity, and  
 240 | global scope of Christian life and thought.

241 | 3.23.3.3 The theological faculty contributes to the advancement of learning  
 242 | within theological education and, more broadly, in the academic community, by  
 243 | contributions to the scholarly study of religion and its role in higher education.

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\*The Association adopted a policy guideline on “Academic Freedom and Tenure,” which appears in the Policy Statements section of *Bulletin*, Part 1.

244 | 3.32.3.4 Theological scholarship contributes to the articulation of religion's  
 245 | role and influence in the public sphere. The faculty and administration should take  
 246 | responsibility for the appropriate exercise of this public interpretive role to enrich  
 247 | the life of a culturally and religiously diverse society.

248 | **3.32.4 ~~Globalization~~ Global Awareness and Engagement**

249 | 3.32.4.1 Theological teaching, learning, and research require patterns of  
 250 | institutional and educational practice that contribute to an awareness and  
 251 | appreciation of global interconnectedness and interdependence, particularly as  
 252 | they relate to the mission of the church. These patterns are intended to enhance  
 253 | the ways institutions participate in the ecumenical, dialogical, evangelistic, and  
 254 | justice efforts of the church. ~~The term globalization has been used to identify~~  
 255 | ~~these patterns and practices collectively.~~

256 | 3.32.4.2 ~~Globalization~~ Global awareness and engagement is cultivated by  
 257 | curricular attention to cross-cultural issues as well as the study of other major  
 258 | religions by opportunities for cross-cultural experiences; by the composition of  
 259 | the faculty, governing board, and student body; by professional development of  
 260 | faculty members; and by the design of community activities and worship.

261 | 3.32.4.3 Schools shall ~~develop~~ demonstrate practices of teaching, learning, and  
 262 | research (comprehensively understood as theological scholarship) that encourage  
 263 | global awareness and responsiveness.

264 | **3.3.5 Ethics of scholarship**

265 | The institution shall define and demonstrate ongoing efforts to ensure the ethical  
 266 | character of learning, teaching, and scholarship on the part of all members of the  
 267 | academic community, including appropriate guidelines for research with human  
 268 | participants.

269 **4 The Theological Curriculum**

270 *The theological curriculum is the means by which teaching and learning are formally ordered to*  
 271 *educational goals.*

273 **4.1—Goals of the Theological Curriculum**<sup>3</sup>

275 *4.1.1 In a theological school, the overarching goal is the development of theological*  
 276 *understanding, that is, aptitude for theological reflection and wisdom pertaining to*  
 277 *responsible life in faith. Comprehended in this overarching goal are others such as*  
 278 *deepening spiritual awareness, growing in moral sensibility and character, gaining an*  
 279 *intellectual grasp of the tradition of a faith community, and acquiring the abilities*  
 280 *requisite to the exercise of ministry in that community. These goals, and the processes*  
 281 *and practices leading to their attainment, are normally intimately interwoven and should*  
 282 *not be separated from one another.*

284 *4.1.2 The emphasis placed on particular goals and their configuration will vary, both*  
 285 *from school to school (depending on the understanding of institutional purpose), and*  
 286 *within each school (depending on the variety of educational programs offered). The*  
 287 *ordering of teaching and learning toward particular sets of goals is embodied in the*  
 288 *degree programs of the school and in the specific curricula followed in those programs.*  
 289 *The theological curriculum, comprehensively understood, embraces all those activities*  
 290 *and experiences provided by the school to enable students to achieve the intended goals.*  
 291 *More narrowly understood, the curriculum is the array of specific activities (e.g.,*  
 292 *courses, practica, supervised ministry, spiritual formation experiences, theses) explicitly*  
 293 *required in a degree program. In both the more comprehensive and the more narrow*  
 294 *sense, the entire curriculum should be seen as a set of practices with a formative aim—*  
 295 *the development of intellectual, spiritual, moral, and vocational or professional*  
 296 *capacities—and careful attention must be given to the coherence and mutual*  
 297 *enhancement of its various elements.*

298 **4.2 Degree programs**<sup>4</sup>

299 *4.2.0 Degree programs approved by the Board of Commissioners are post-*  
 300 *baccalaureate and fall into several groups. It should be noted that these categories are*  
 301 *not mutually exclusive and that there is some natural overlapping among them. Programs*  
 302 *at the level of the first graduate theological degree are of two main kinds: (1) some are*

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<sup>3</sup> Existing sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 are proposed to become part of Standard 3.

303 *oriented primarily toward ministerial leadership and (2) some toward general*  
 304 *theological studies. Programs at the advanced level, normally presupposing a first*  
 305 *theological degree, are of two main kinds: (1) those that focus upon advanced ministerial*  
 306 *leadership and (2) those directed primarily toward theological research and teaching.*

307 *4.2.0.1 When Commission institutions offer more than one degree program,*  
 308 *they shall articulate the distinctions among the degrees with regard to their*  
 309 *educational and vocational intent. Institutions shall articulate the goals and*  
 310 *objectives of each degree program they offer and assure that the design of its*  
 311 *curriculum is in accordance with institutional purpose and the accreditation*  
 312 *standards of the Commission.*

313 *4.2.0.2 The number of students enrolled in any degree program shall be*  
 314 *sufficient to provide a community of learning in that degree program.*

315 *4.2.0.3 Schools shall follow the recommended nomenclature for all board-*  
 316 *approved degree programs. In cases where governmental licensing, charter*  
 317 *requirements, or institutional federation agreements preclude use of*  
 318 *recommended nomenclature, the board will consider alternate degree*  
 319 *nomenclature. In cases where the standards provide alternate nomenclature for*  
 320 *the same kind of degree program (e.g., MRE or MA in Religious Education, ThM*  
 321 *or STM, PhD or ThD), the nomenclature employed reflects the history or policies*  
 322 *of the schools offering the degree programs.*

323 *4.2.0.4 Degree programs shall be approved by the board according to the*  
 324 *Commission's formally adopted procedures (cf. Procedures).*

#### 325 **4.2.1 Basic programs oriented toward ministerial leadership**

326 *4.2.1.1 Curricula for programs oriented toward ministerial leadership have*  
 327 *certain closely integrated, common features. First, they provide a structured*  
 328 *opportunity to develop a thorough, discriminating understanding and personal*  
 329 *appropriation of the heritage of the community of faith (e.g., its Scripture,*  
 330 *tradition, doctrines, and practices) in its historical and contemporary*

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<sup>4</sup> The material from existing 4.2 through 4.4.2 would be moved out of the institutional standards to become an introductory and definitional section to the degree program standards. This change would have no accrediting effect.

331 *expressions. Second, they assist students in understanding the cultural realities*  
 332 *and social settings within which religious communities live and carry out their*  
 333 *missions, as well as the institutional life of those communities themselves. The*  
 334 *insights of cognate disciplines such as the social sciences, the natural sciences,*  
 335 *philosophy, and the arts enable a knowledge and appreciation of the broader*  
 336 *context of the religious tradition, including cross-cultural and global aspects.*  
 337 *Third, they provide opportunities for formational experiences through which*  
 338 *students may grow in those personal qualities essential for the practice of*  
 339 *ministry, namely, emotional maturity, personal faith, moral integrity, and social*  
 340 *concern. Fourth, they assist students to gain the capacities for entry into and*  
 341 *growth in the practice of the particular form of ministry to which the program is*  
 342 *oriented. Instruction in these various areas of theological study should be so*  
 343 *conducted as to demonstrate their interdependence, their theological character,*  
 344 *and their common orientation toward the goals of the degree program. The*  
 345 *educational program in all its dimensions should be designed and carried out in*  
 346 *such a way as to enable students to function constructively as ministerial leaders*  
 347 *in the particular communities in which they intend to work, and to foster an*  
 348 *awareness of the need for continuing education.*

349 *4.2.1.2 The following degree nomenclature is included among these kinds of*  
 350 *curricular programs: Master of Divinity; Master of Arts in Religious*  
 351 *Education/Master of Religious Education; Master of Arts in \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g.,*  
 352 *Counseling); Master of Sacred Music/Master of Church Music.*

#### 353 **4.2.2 Basic programs oriented toward general theological studies**

354 *4.2.2.1 First graduate theological degrees in basic programs oriented toward*  
 355 *general theological studies have in common the purpose of providing*  
 356 *understanding in theological disciplines. These programs may be designed for*  
 357 *general knowledge of theology or for background in specific disciplines, or for*  
 358 *interdisciplinary studies. They are intended as the basis for further graduate study*  
 359 *or for other educational purposes. Nomenclature may differ according to the*  
 360 *history of its use in the particular school. The curricula for these degrees should*  
 361 *be developed in relation to the institution's distinctive goals for the programs. A*  
 362 *scholarly investigation of Scripture, tradition, and theology is essential for all of*  
 363 *the programs, while some may also emphasize research methods, teaching skills,*  
 364 *or competence in specific theological disciplines. Depending on the intention of*  
 365 *the degree, appropriate formational experiences are to be provided that will*

366 *develop the qualities essential for the application of the degree. Adequate faculty*  
 367 *and instructional resources must be available, with special attention given to*  
 368 *particular areas of focus within the programs.*

369 4.2.2.2 *Degrees of this kind are offered with the following nomenclature:*  
 370 *Master of Arts, Master of Arts (Religion), Master of Theological Studies.*

371 **4.2.3 *Advanced programs oriented toward ministerial leadership***

372 4.2.3.1 *Advanced programs in ministerial leadership presuppose a basic*  
 373 *theological degree. All are designed to deepen the basic knowledge and skill in*  
 374 *ministry so that students may engage in ministry with increasing professional,*  
 375 *intellectual, and spiritual integrity. Emphasis is upon the practice of ministry*  
 376 *informed by analytic and ministerial research skills. Certain curricular features*  
 377 *are common to the advanced programs in this category. Each degree program*  
 378 *emphasizes the mastery of advanced knowledge informing the understanding of*  
 379 *the nature and purposes of ministry, the competencies gained through advanced*  
 380 *study, and the integration of the many dimensions of ministry. Each degree*  
 381 *program includes the completion of a final culminating written project/report or*  
 382 *dissertation. Schools offering any of these advanced degrees are expected to make*  
 383 *explicit the criteria by which the doctoral level of studies is identified,*  
 384 *implemented, and assessed.*

385 4.2.3.2 *Degrees offered in this broad category have the following*  
 386 *nomenclature: Doctor of Ministry, Doctor of Educational Ministry, Doctor of*  
 387 *Education, Doctor of Missiology, Doctor of Musical Arts.*

388 **4.2.4 *Advanced programs primarily oriented toward theological research and***  
 389 ***teaching***

390 4.2.4.1 *These programs oriented toward theological research and teaching*  
 391 *presuppose a basic post-baccalaureate theological degree and permit students to*  
 392 *concentrate in one or more of the theological disciplines. They equip students for*  
 393 *teaching and research in theological schools, colleges, and universities, or for the*  
 394 *scholarly enhancement of ministerial practice, or for other scholarly activities.*  
 395 *They provide for both specialization and breadth in education and training; they*  
 396 *provide instruction in research methods and procedures relevant to the area of*  
 397 *specialization; and normally they provide training in teaching methods and skills,*  
 398 *or in other scholarly tasks. Curricula for these programs provide, first of all, a*

399                    *structured opportunity to develop an advanced critical understanding and*  
 400                    *appreciation of a specific area of theological studies or in interdisciplinary*  
 401                    *relationships and cognate studies. Second, they assist students in understanding*  
 402                    *cultural realities and social settings within which religious communities and*  
 403                    *institutions of theological or religious education exist and carry out their*  
 404                    *missions, as well as the institutional life of these communities and institutions*  
 405                    *themselves. Third, they assist students to grow in those personal and spiritual*  
 406                    *qualities essential for the practice of scholarly ministry in theological*  
 407                    *environments. Fourth, they allow students to gain the capacities for teaching,*  
 408                    *writing, and conducting advanced research.*

409                    *4.2.4.2    The nomenclature for advanced masters' degrees includes the Master*  
 410                    *of Theology and Master of Sacred Theology. The nomenclature for doctoral*  
 411                    *degrees oriented to research and teaching includes the Doctor of Philosophy and*  
 412                    *Doctor of Theology.*

413    **4.3    Degree Program Standards**

414                    *4.3.0    To provide for a common public recognition of theological degrees, to assure*  
 415                    *quality, and to enhance evaluative efforts, the Commission establishes standards for each*  
 416                    *degree program. Each degree program should reflect the characteristics of the*  
 417                    *theological curriculum (see 4.1–4.2). The degree standards articulate the following*  
 418                    *requirements: purpose of the degree; primary goals of the program; program content,*  
 419                    *location, and duration; admission and resource requirements; and educational*  
 420                    *evaluation. The degree programs offered by board-accredited institutions shall conform*  
 421                    *to these standards.*

422    **4.4    Other instructional programs**

423                    *4.4.0    In addition to their degree programs, theological schools contribute to their various*  
 424                    *publics through other programs of learning and teaching. Although these programs do*  
 425                    *not culminate in degrees, they should be compatible with the institution's primary*  
 426                    *purpose of graduate theological education.*

427    **4.4.1    Characteristics**

428                    *4.4.1.1    Programs that do not lead to degrees should remain appropriate to*  
 429                    *institutional purpose and will differ according to their student audience learning*  
 430                    *goals: for example, continuing education for clergy-religious leaders, programs*

431 | *for ~~racial/ethnic~~ persons of color or linguistic minority groups, or programs for*  
432 *enrichment.*

433 *4.4.1.2 Such programs should be conducted with the proper administrative*  
434 *and faculty oversight, including design, approval, staffing, financing, and*  
435 *evaluation.*

436 *4.4.1.3 Faculty who teach in such programs should be appropriately*  
437 *qualified. Normally, qualification will be demonstrated by the possession of an*  
438 *appropriate graduate theological degree and by significant experience in the field*  
439 *in which one is teaching. Students in these programs should have appropriate*  
440 *access to the instructor and to learning resources commensurate with the level*  
441 *and purpose of the program.*

#### 442 **4.4.2 Types of programs**

443 *4.4.2.1 Schools may offer programs of study consisting either of courses for*  
444 *which graduate academic credit is granted or educational events without such*  
445 *credit.*

446 *4.4.2.2 Programs of study that grant graduate credit are appropriate for*  
447 *enrichment, personal growth, the development of lay leaders, or special,*  
448 *nondegree emphasis for vocational ministerial leaders. Such programs require*  
449 *students to have a baccalaureate degree, or its educational equivalent, for*  
450 *admission and to complete a program comprising courses appropriate for*  
451 *graduate credit. Completion of the program of study results in some formal*  
452 *recognition but not a degree. Credits earned toward these programs may*  
453 *subsequently be transferred into a graduate degree program.*

454 *4.4.2.3 Programs of study that do not carry academic credit may include*  
455 *courses, workshops, lectures, and other types of educational experiences on*  
456 *topics related to the theological curriculum or to the mission and ministry of the*  
457 *church. These programs and events may be designed for continuing education of*  
458 *ministers, for basic theological education, for personal enrichment, or for other*  
459 *purposes consistent with the character of the school. Because no academic credit*  
460 *is offered, those enrolled need not hold the baccalaureate degree. Requirements*  
461 *for admission to particular programs or events are at the discretion of the*  
462 *institution.*

463 **5 Library and information resources**<sup>5</sup>

464 The library is a central resource for theological scholarship ~~and the theological curriculum~~  
 465 education. It is integral to the purpose of the school through its contribution to teaching, learning,  
 466 and research, and it functions collaboratively as a partner in curriculum development and  
 467 implementation. The library's educational effectiveness depends ~~both~~ on the quality of its  
 468 information resources, staff, and administrative vision. ~~collections and information resources and~~  
 469 ~~on the vision and organization of its administration~~. To accomplish its mission task, the library  
 470 requires appropriate financial, technological, and physical resources, as well as a sufficient  
 471 number of personnel. ~~collections, effective information technology, and sufficient human and~~  
 472 ~~physical resources~~. Its mission and complement of resources should align with the school's  
 473 mission and be congruent with the character and composition of the student body.

474 **5.1 Library collections**

475 5.1.1 Theological study requires extensive encounter with historical and contemporary  
 476 texts. While theological education is informed by many resources, the textual tradition is  
 477 central to theological inquiry. Texts provide a point of entry to theological subject matter  
 478 as well as a place of encounter with it. Theological libraries serve the church by  
 479 preserving its textual tradition ~~both in print and in electronic forms~~, for the current and  
 480 future needs ~~educational needs of faculty, and students, and researchers~~. ~~and for the~~  
 481 ~~future~~.

482 5.1.2 To ensure effective growth of the collection, schools shall have an appropriate  
 483 collection development policy. Collections in a theological school shall hold materials of  
 484 importance for theological study and the practice of ministry, ~~that~~ and they shall represent  
 485 the historical breadth and confessional diversity of Christian thought and life. The  
 486 collection shall include relevant materials from cognate disciplines and basic texts from  
 487 other religious traditions; and demonstrate sensitivity to issues of diversity, inclusiveness,  
 488 and globalization to ensure ~~that theological learners and researchers have~~ access to the  
 489 variety of voices that speak to theological subjects.

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<sup>5</sup> The general institutional standards would be renumbered with the library becoming Standard 4 and other standards following in order, but these changes are not shown in this text.

- 490 5.1.3 Because libraries seek to preserve the textual tradition of the church, they may  
491 choose to build unique special collections, such as institutional, regional, or  
492 denominational archives.
- 493 5.1.4 In addition to print materials, collections shall include other media and electronic  
494 resources as appropriate to the curriculum and ~~ensure~~ provide access to relevant remote  
495 databases.
- 496 5.1.5 The library should promote coordinated collection development with other  
497 schools to provide stronger overall library collections.
- 498 **5.2 Contribution to ~~teaching, learning,~~ teaching, and research <sup>6</sup>**
- 499 5.2.1 The library accomplishes its teaching responsibilities by meeting the  
500 bibliographic needs of the library's patrons; offering appropriate reference services;  
501 providing assistance and training in using information resources and communication  
502 technology technologies; and teaching information literacy, including research practices  
503 of effectively and ethically accessing, evaluating, and using information. ~~theological~~  
504 ~~bibliography and research methods that foster knowledge of the literature and enable~~  
505 ~~students to locate resources, incorporating library research throughout the curriculum,~~  
506 ~~and helping to serve the information needs of graduates, clergy, and the church.~~ The  
507 library should collaborate with faculty to develop reflective research practices throughout  
508 the curriculum and help to serve the information needs of faculty, students, and  
509 researchers.
- 510 5.2.2 The library promotes theological learning by providing instructional programs  
511 and resources that encourage students and graduates patrons to develop reflective and  
512 critical research and communication practices that prepare them independent research  
513 skills and by preparing them to engage in a lifelong learning process.
- 514 5.2.3 Theological research is supported through collection development and  
515 information technology and by helping faculty and students develop research skills.
- 516 5.2.4 The library should provide physical and online an environments conducive to  
517 learning and scholarly interaction.

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<sup>6</sup> These changes address the rapidly expanding impact of information technology on libraries.

518 **5.3 Partnership in curriculum development**

519 5.3.1 The library collaborates in the school's curriculum by providing collections and  
520 services that reflect the institution's educational goals.

521 5.3.2 Teaching faculty should consult with library staff to ensure that the library  
522 supports the current curriculum and the research needs of faculty and students. Library  
523 staff should participate in long-range curriculum planning and anticipate future  
524 intellectual and technological developments that might affect the library.

525 **5.4 Administration and leadership**

526 5.4.1 In freestanding theological schools, the chief library administrator has overall  
527 responsibility for library administration, collection development, and effective  
528 educational collaboration. The chief administrator of the library should participate in the  
529 formation of institutional policy regarding long-range educational and financial planning  
530 and should ordinarily be a voting member of the faculty. Normally, this person should  
531 possess graduate degrees in library science and in theological studies or another pertinent  
532 discipline.

533 5.4.2 When a theological library is part of a larger institutional library, a theological  
534 librarian should provide leadership in theological collection development, ensure  
535 effective educational collaboration with the faculty and students in the institution's  
536 theological school, and ordinarily be a voting member of the theological faculty.

537 5.4.3 The library administrator should exercise responsibility for regular and ongoing  
538 evaluation of the collection, the patterns of use, services provided by the library, and  
539 library personnel.

540 5.4.4 Schools shall provide structured opportunities to theological librarians for  
541 professional development and, as appropriate, contribute to the development of  
542 theological librarianship, appropriate to their role.

543 **5.5 Resources**

544 5.5.1 Each school shall have the resources necessary for the operation of an adequate  
545 library program. These include ~~human~~, financial, technological, and physical resources  
546 and sufficient personnel.

547 5.5.2 The professional and support staff shall be of such number and quality as are  
 548 needed to provide the necessary services, commensurate with the size and character of  
 549 the institution. Professional staff shall possess the skills necessary for information  
 550 technology, collection development and maintenance, and public service. Insofar as  
 551 possible, staff shall be appointed with a view toward diversity in race, ethnicity, and  
 552 gender. Where appropriate, other qualified members of the professional staff may also  
 553 have faculty status. Institutions shall affirm the freedom of inquiry necessary for the role  
 554 of professional librarians in theological scholarship.

555 5.5.3 An adequate portion of the annual institutional educational and general budget  
 556 shall be devoted to the support of the library. Adequacy will be evaluated in comparison  
 557 with other similar institutions as well as by the library's achievement of its own  
 558 objectives as defined by its collection development policy.

559 5.5.4 Adequate facilities include sufficient space for readers and staff, adequate  
 560 shelving for the book collection, appropriate space for nonprint media, adequate and  
 561 flexible space for information technology, and climate control for all materials, especially  
 562 rare books. Collections should be easily accessible and protected from deterioration,  
 563 theft, and other threats.

564 5.5.5 Adequacy of library collections may be attained through institutional self-  
 565 sufficiency or cooperative arrangements. In the latter instance, fully adequate collections  
 566 or electronic resources are not required of individual member schools, but each school  
 567 shall demonstrate contracted and reliable availability and actual use.

568 5.5.6 In its collaborative relationships with other institutions, a school remains  
 569 accountable for the quality of library resources available to its students and faculty.

## 570 | **6 Faculty**

571 The members of the faculty of a theological school constitute a collaborative community of faith  
 572 and learning, and they are crucial to the scholarly activities of teaching, learning, and research in  
 573 the institution. A theological school's faculty normally comprises the full-time teachers,  
 574 continuing part-time ~~adjunct~~ teachers, and teachers who are engaged occasionally or for one  
 575 time. In order for faculty members to accomplish their purposes, theological schools should  
 576 assure them appropriate structure, support, and opportunities, including training for educational  
 577 technology.

578 **6.1 Faculty qualifications, responsibilities, development, and employment**

579 | 6.1.1 Schools should demonstrate that their faculty members have the necessary  
580 | competencies for their responsibilities. Faculty members shall possess the appropriate  
581 | credentials for graduate theological education, normally demonstrated by the attainment  
582 | of a research doctorate or, in certain cases, another earned doctoral degree. In addition to  
583 | academic preparation, ministerial and ecclesial experience is an important qualification in  
584 | the composition of the faculty. Also, qualified teachers without a research doctorate may  
585 | have special expertise in skill areas such as administration, music, or media as well as  
586 | cross-cultural contextualization for teaching, learning, and research.

587 | 6.1.2 In the context of institutional purpose and the confessional commitments affirmed  
588 | by a faculty member when appointed, faculty members shall be free to seek knowledge  
589 | and communicate their findings.

590 | 6.1.3 Composition of the faculty should be guided by the purpose of the institution, and  
591 | attention to this composition should be an integral component of long-range planning in  
592 | the institution. Faculty should be of sufficient diversity and number to meet the  
593 | multifaceted demands of teaching, learning, and research. Hiring practices should be  
594 | attentive to the value of diversity in race, ethnicity, and gender. The faculty should also  
595 | include members who have doctorates from different schools and who exemplify various  
596 | methods and points of view. At the same time, faculty selection will be guided by the  
597 | needs and requirements of particular constituencies of the school.

598 | 6.1.4 The faculty who teach in a program on a continuing basis shall exercise  
599 | responsibility for the planning, design, and oversight of its curriculum in the context of  
600 | institutional purpose and resources and as directed by school administration requirements  
601 | for recruitment, matriculation, graduation, and service to constituent faith communities.

602 | 6.1.5 Each school shall articulate and demonstrate that it follows its policies concerning  
603 | faculty members in such areas as faculty rights and responsibilities; freedom of inquiry;  
604 | procedures for recruitment, appointment, retention, promotion, and dismissal; criteria for  
605 | faculty evaluation; faculty compensation; research leaves; and other conditions of  
606 | employment. Policies concerning these matters shall be published in an up-to-date faculty  
607 | handbook.

608 | 6.1.6 Theological scholarship is enriched by continuity within a faculty and safeguards  
609 | for the freedom of inquiry for individual members. Therefore, each school shall

610 demonstrate effective procedures for the retention of a qualified community of scholars,  
611 through tenure or some other appropriate procedure.

612 6.1.7 The institution should support its faculty through such means as adequate salaries,  
613 suitable working conditions, and support services.

614 6.1.8 The work load of faculty members in teaching and administration shall permit  
615 adequate attention to students, to scholarly pursuits, and to other ecclesial and  
616 institutional concerns.

## 617 **6.2 Faculty role in teaching**

618 6.2.1 Teachers shall have freedom in the classroom to discuss the subjects in which  
619 they have competence by formal education and practical experience.

620 6.2.2 Faculty should endeavor to include, within the teaching of their respective  
621 disciplines, theological reflection that enables students to integrate their learning from the  
622 various disciplines, field education, and personal formation.

623 6.2.3 Full- and part-time faculty should be afforded opportunities to enhance teaching  
624 skills, including the use of educational technology as well as training in instructional  
625 design and in modes of advisement appropriate to distance programs, as a regular  
626 component of faculty development.

627 6.2.4 Appropriate resources shall be available to facilitate the teaching task, including  
628 but not limited to, classroom space, office space, educational technology, and access to  
629 scholarly materials, including library and other information resources.

630 6.2.5 Schools shall develop and implement mechanisms for evaluating faculty  
631 performance, including teaching competence and the use of educational technology.  
632 These mechanisms should involve faculty members and students, as well as  
633 administrators.

## 634 **6.3 Faculty role in student learning**

635 6.3.1 Faculty shall be involved in evaluating the quality of student learning by  
636 identifying appropriate outcomes and assessing the extent to which the learning goals of  
637 individual courses and degree programs have been achieved.

638 6.3.2 To ensure the quality of learning, faculty should be appropriately involved in  
639 | development of the library collection, educational technology, and other resources  
640 necessary for student learning.

641 6.3.3 Faculty should participate in practices and procedures that contribute to students'  
642 learning, including opportunities for regular advising and interaction with students and  
643 | attentiveness to the learning needs of diverse student populations.

644 6.3.4 Faculty should foster integration of the diverse learning objectives of the  
645 curriculum so that students may successfully accomplish the purposes of the stated  
646 degree programs.

647 **6.4 Faculty role in theological research**

648 6.4.1 Faculty are expected to engage in research, and each school shall articulate clearly  
649 its expectations and requirements for faculty research and shall have explicit criteria and  
650 procedures for the evaluation of research that are congruent with the purpose of the  
651 school and with commonly accepted standards in higher education.

652 6.4.2 Schools shall provide structured opportunities for faculty research and intellectual  
653 growth, such as regular research leaves and faculty colloquia.

654 6.4.3 In the context of its institutional purpose, each school shall ensure that faculty  
655 have freedom to pursue critical questions, to contribute to scholarly discussion, and to  
656 publish the findings of their research.

657 6.4.4 Faculty members should make available the results of their research through such  
658 means as scholarly publications, constructive participation in learned societies, and  
659 informed contributions to the intellectual life of church and society, as well as through  
660 | their teaching.

661 **7 Student Recruitment, Admission, Services, and Placement**

662 The students of a theological school are central to the educational activities of the institution.  
663 They are also a primary constituency served by the school's curriculum and programs and, with  
664 the faculty, constitute a community of faith and learning. Schools are responsible for the quality  
665 | of their policies and practices related to recruitment, admission, student support, student  
666 borrowing, and placement.

667 **7.1 Recruitment**

668 7.1.1 Schools shall be able to demonstrate that their policies and practices of student  
669 recruitment are consistent with the purpose of the institution.

670 7.1.2 In recruitment efforts, services, and publications, institutions shall accurately  
671 represent themselves as well as the vocational opportunities related to their degree  
672 programs.

673 **7.2 Admission**

674 7.2.1 In the development of admission policies and procedures, a theological school  
675 shall establish criteria appropriate for each degree program it offers. Admission criteria  
676 should give attention to applicants' academic, personal, and spiritual qualifications, as  
677 well as their potential for making a contribution to church and society.

678 7.2.2 Schools shall be able to demonstrate that they operate on a post-baccalaureate  
679 level, that the students they admit are capable of graduate level studies, and that their  
680 standards and requirements for admission to all degree programs are clearly defined,  
681 fairly implemented, and appropriately related to the purpose of the institution.

682 7.2.3 Schools shall regularly review the quality of applicants admitted to each degree  
683 program and develop institutional strategies to maintain and enhance the overall quality  
684 of the student population.

685 7.2.4 Schools shall give evidence of efforts in admissions to encourage diversity in such  
686 areas as race, ethnicity, region, denomination, ~~or gender~~, or disability.

687 7.2.5 Schools shall encourage a broad baccalaureate preparation, for instance, studies in  
688 world history, philosophy, languages and literature, the natural sciences, the social  
689 sciences, music and other fine arts, and religion.

690 **7.3 Student services**

691 7.3.1 Policies regarding students' rights and responsibilities, as well as the institution's  
692 code of discipline, shall be clearly identified and published.

693 7.3.2 Schools shall regularly and systematically evaluate the appropriateness, adequacy,  
694 and use of student services for the purpose of strengthening the overall program.

695 7.3.3 Students should receive reliable and accessible services wherever they are  
696 enrolled and however the educational programs are offered.

697 7.3.4 Schools shall maintain adequate student records regarding admission materials,  
698 course work attempted and completed, and in other areas as determined by the school's  
699 policy. Appropriate backup files should be maintained and updated on a regular basis.  
700 The institution shall ensure the security of files from physical destruction or loss and  
701 from unauthorized access.

702 7.3.5 Institutions shall demonstrate that program requirements, tuition, and fees are  
703 appropriate for the degree programs they offer.

704 7.3.6 Institutions shall publish all requirements for degree programs, including courses,  
705 noncredit requirements, and grading and other academic policies.

706 7.3.7 Student financial aid, when provided, should be distributed according to the  
707 guidelines detailed in "Student Financial Aid" (see Policy Statements, *Bulletin*, Part 1).

708 ~~7.3.8 Senior administrators and financial aid officers shall review student educational~~  
709 ~~debt and develop institutional strategies regarding student's borrowing for theological~~  
710 ~~education. Based on estimates of compensation graduates will receive, the school should~~  
711 ~~provide financial counseling to students so as to minimize borrowing, explore alternative~~  
712 ~~funding, and provide the fullest possible disclosure of the impact of loan repayment after~~  
713 ~~graduation.~~

714 7.3.98 The institution shall have a process for responding to complaints raised by  
715 students in areas related to the accrediting standards of the Commission, and schools shall  
716 maintain a record of such formal student complaints for review by the board.

717 **7.4 Student borrowing**

718 7.4.1 Senior administrators and financial aid officers shall review student educational  
719 debt and develop institutional strategies regarding students' borrowing for theological  
720 education.

721 7.4.2 Based on estimates of compensation graduates will receive, the school should  
722 provide financial counseling to students so as to minimize borrowing, explore alternative  
723 funding, and provide the fullest possible disclosure of the impact of loan repayment after  
724 graduation.

725 | **7.45 Placement**

726 | 7.45.1 In keeping with institutional purpose and ecclesial context, and upon students'  
727 | successful completion of their degree programs, schools shall provide appropriate  
728 | assistance to persons seeking employment relevant to their degrees.

729 | 7.45.2 Theological schools should monitor the placement of graduates in appropriate  
730 | positions and review admissions policies in light of trends in placement.

731 | 7.45.3 The institution should, in the context of its purpose and constituency, act as an  
732 | advocate for students who are members of groups that have been disadvantaged in  
733 | employment because of their race, ethnicity, ~~and/or~~ gender, and/or disability.

734 | **8 Authority and Governance**

735 | Governance is based on a bond of trust among boards, administration, faculty, students, and  
736 | ecclesial bodies. Each institution should articulate its own theologically informed understanding  
737 | of how this bond of trust becomes operational as a form of shared governance. Institutional  
738 | stewardship is the responsibility of all, not just the governing board. Good institutional life  
739 | requires that all institutional stewards know and carry out their responsibilities effectively as well  
740 | as encouraging others to do the same. Governance occurs in a legal context, and its boundaries  
741 | are set by formal relationships with ecclesiastical authority, with public authority as expressed in  
742 | law and charter, and with private citizens and other legally constituted bodies in the form of  
743 | contracts. The governance of a theological school, however, involves more than the legal  
744 | relationships and bylaws that define patterns of responsibility and accountability. It is the  
745 | structure by which participants in the governance process exercise faithful leadership on behalf  
746 | of the purpose of the theological school.

747 | **8.1 Authority**

748 | 8.1.1 Authority is the exercise of rights, responsibilities, and powers accorded to a  
749 | theological school by its charter, articles of incorporation and bylaws, and ecclesiastical  
750 | and civil authorizations applicable to it, ~~or~~ by the overall educational institution of which  
751 | it is a part. A theological school derives from these mandates the legal and moral  
752 | authority to establish educational programs; to confer certificates, diplomas, or degrees;  
753 | to provide for personnel and facilities; and to assure institutional quality and integrity.

754 | 8.1.2 The structure and scope of the theological school's authority are based on the  
755 | patterns of its relationship to other institutions of higher education or ecclesiastical  
756 | bodies. Some theological schools have full authority for all institutional and educational

757 operations. Other schools, related to colleges, universities, or clusters of theological  
758 schools, may have limited authority for institutional operations, although they may have  
759 full authority over the educational programs. Still other schools are related to  
760 ecclesiastical bodies in particular ways, and authority is shared by the institution and the  
761 ecclesiastical body. All three kinds of schools have different patterns for the exercise of  
762 authority, and in some schools these patterns may be blended.

763 8.1.2.1 Schools with full authority shall have a governing board with  
764 responsibilities for maintaining the purpose, viability, vitality, and integrity of the  
765 institution; the achievement of institutional policies; the selection of chief  
766 administrative leadership; and the provision of physical and, fiscal resources, and  
767 personnel ~~human resources~~. The board is the legally constituted body that is  
768 responsible for managing the assets of the institution in trust.

769 8.1.2.2 Schools where authority is limited by or derived from their  
770 relationship to a college or university shall identify clearly where the authority for  
771 maintaining the integrity and vitality of the theological school resides and how  
772 that authority is to be exercised in actual practice. Schools within universities or  
773 colleges should have an appropriate advisory board whose roles and  
774 responsibilities are clearly defined in the institution's official documents.

775 8.1.2.3 Schools with authority limited by their ecclesiastical relationships shall  
776 develop, in dialogue with their sponsoring church bodies, a formal statement  
777 concerning the operative structure of governance for the institution. This  
778 statement must make clear where the authority for maintaining the integrity and  
779 vitality of the school resides and how that authority is to be exercised in actual  
780 practice. In schools of this type, the authority of the governing board shall be  
781 clearly specified in appropriate ecclesiastical and institutional documents.

782 8.1.3 Governing boards delegate authority to the faculty and administration to fulfill  
783 their appropriate roles and responsibilities. Such authority shall be established and set  
784 forth in the institution's official documents and carried out in governing practices.

785 8.1.4 In multilocation institutions, the assignment of authority and responsibilities  
786 should be clearly defined in the institution's official documents and equitably  
787 administered.

788 **8.2 Governance**

789 8.2.1 While final authority for an institution is vested in the governing board and  
790 defined by the institution's official documents, each school shall articulate a structure and  
791 process of governance that appropriately reflects the collegial nature of theological  
792 education. The governance process should identify the school's constituencies and  
793 publics, recognize the multiple lines of accountability, and balance competing  
794 accountabilities in a manner shaped by the institution's charter, purpose, and particular  
795 theological and denominational commitments.

796 8.2.2 Shared governance follows from the collegial nature of theological education.  
797 Unique and overlapping roles and responsibilities of the governing board, faculty,  
798 administrators, students, and other identified delegated authorities should be defined in a  
799 way that allows all partners to exercise their mandated or delegated leadership.  
800 Governance requires a carefully delineated process for the initiation, review, approval,  
801 implementation, and evaluation of governing policies, ensuring that all necessary policies  
802 and procedures are in place. Special attention should be given to policies regarding  
803 freedom of inquiry, board-administrator prerogatives, procedural fairness, sexual  
804 harassment, and discrimination.

805 8.2.3 The collaborative nature of governance provides for institutional learning and  
806 self-correction, constantly developing the theological school's knowledge of specific  
807 tasks, and remaining alert to developments in other organizations and institutions.

808 **8.3 The roles of the governing board, administration, faculty, and students in**  
809 **governance processes**

810 8.3.0 The various roles that the board, the administrative leadership, and the faculty  
811 play in the development of policy and the exercise of authority should be clearly  
812 articulated. Because of their different histories and patterns of governance and  
813 administration, the role of the governing board varies from institution to institution; and  
814 the role also varies dependent upon the authority vested in the governing board and upon  
815 the institution's relationship to other educational and denominational structures.

816 **8.3.1 Governing board**

817 8.3.1.1 The governing board is responsible for the establishment and  
818 maintenance of the institution's integrity and its freedom from inappropriate  
819 external and internal pressures and from destructive interference or restraints. It

820 shall attend to the well-being of the institution by exercising proper fiduciary  
821 responsibility, adequate financial oversight, proper delegation of authority to the  
822 institution’s administrative officers and faculty, engaging outside legal counsel,  
823 ensuring professional and independent audits, using professional investment  
824 advisors as appropriate, and maintaining procedural fairness and freedom of  
825 inquiry.

826 8.3.1.2 The governing board shall be accountable for the institution’s  
827 adherence to requirements duly established by public authorities and to  
828 accreditation standards established by the Commission and by any other  
829 accrediting or certifying agencies to which the institution is formally related.

830 8.3.1.3 Members of the governing board shall possess the qualifications  
831 appropriate to the task they will undertake. In accordance with the school’s  
832 purpose and constituencies, the governing board’s membership should reflect  
833 diversity of race, ethnicity, and gender. As fiduciaries, they should commit  
834 themselves loyally to the institution, its purpose, and its overall well-being. They  
835 should lead by affirming the good that is done and by asking thoughtful questions  
836 and challenging problematic situations. New members of the board should be  
837 oriented to their responsibilities and the structures and procedures the board uses  
838 to accomplish its tasks.

839 8.3.1.4 Subject to the terms of its charter and bylaws, the board chooses the  
840 chief administrative leadership, appoints faculty, confers degrees, enters into  
841 contracts, approves budgets, and manages the assets of the institution. If, in  
842 accordance with an institution’s specific character and traditions, certain of these  
843 powers are reserved to one or more other governing entities, the specific character  
844 of these restrictions shall be made clear.

845 8.3.1.5 The governing board shall require ongoing institutional planning and  
846 evaluation of outcomes to assure faithful implementation of the school’s purpose,  
847 priorities, and denominational and theological commitments.

848 8.3.1.6 The governing board shall create and employ adequate structures for  
849 implementing and administering policy, and shall delegate to the school’s chief  
850 administrative leadership authority commensurate with such responsibilities. In  
851 turn, it requires from these officers adequate performance and accountability.

852 8.3.1.7 In its actions and processes, the board serves in relationship to a  
853 variety of constituencies, both internal (e.g., administration, faculty, students,  
854 staff) and external (e.g., graduates, denominations, congregations, etc.) and should  
855 seek creative initiatives from all of these constituencies. Individual board  
856 members, who are drawn from various constituencies, shall exercise their  
857 responsibility on the behalf of the institution as a whole.

858 8.3.1.8 The board shall exercise its authority only as a group. An individual  
859 member, unless authorized by the board, shall not commit the institution's  
860 resources, nor bind it to any course of action, nor intrude upon the administration  
861 of the institution.

862 8.3.1.9 The board shall have a conflict of interest policy. Ordinarily, members  
863 should not be engaged in business relationships with the institution, nor should  
864 they derive any material benefit from serving on the board. In the event that  
865 conflicts of interest arise, a board member must recuse himself or herself from  
866 any vote or participation in the board's decision on that issue.

867 8.3.1.10 Governing boards should be structured to conduct their work  
868 effectively. Board membership should be large enough to reflect the institution's  
869 significant constituencies but not so large as to be unwieldy in its decision  
870 making. The frequency of board meetings should be determined by the number  
871 and complexity of the issues the board is called upon to address. An executive  
872 committee of the board may be given the authority to address issues between  
873 meetings of the full board.

874 8.3.1.11 The board has the responsibility to hold itself accountable for the  
875 overall performance of its duties, and shall evaluate the effectiveness of its own  
876 procedures. It should also seek to educate itself about the issues it faces and about  
877 procedures used by effective governing bodies in carrying out their work. The  
878 board shall evaluate its members on a regular basis.

879 8.3.1.12 The board shall be responsible for evaluating overall institutional  
880 governance by assessing and monitoring the effectiveness of institutional  
881 governance procedures and structures.

882           **8.3.2 Administration**

883           8.3.2.1     Under the governing board’s clearly stated policies and requisite  
884           authority, the chief administrative leadership is responsible for achieving the  
885           school’s purpose by developing and implementing institutional policies and  
886           administrative structures in collaboration with the governing board, faculty,  
887           students, administrative staff, and other key constituencies.

888           8.3.2.2     Administrative leaders should implement the institution’s theological  
889           convictions and shared values in the way they manage the school’s financial, and  
890           physical, resources and personnel ~~human resources~~, consult and communicate  
891           with constituencies, and ensure fairness in all evaluation and planning activities.

892           8.3.2.3     Administrative leaders and staff shall include, insofar as possible,  
893           individuals reflecting the institution’s constituencies, taking into account the  
894           desirability of diversity in race, ethnicity, and gender. They should be sufficient in  
895           number and ability to fulfill their responsibilities. They should have adequate  
896           resources and authority appropriate to their responsibilities.

897           8.3.2.4     The responsibilities and structures of accountability shall be clearly  
898           defined in appropriate documents.

899           **8.3.3 Faculty**

900           8.3.3.1     Within the overall structure of governance of the school, authority  
901           over certain functions shall be delegated to the faculty and structures devised by  
902           which this authority is exercised. Normally, the faculty should provide leadership  
903           in the development of academic policy, oversight of academic and curricular  
904           programs and decisions, establishment of admissions criteria, and  
905           recommendation of candidates for graduation. The faculty should participate in  
906           the processes concerning the appointment, retention, and promotion in rank of  
907           faculty members.

908           8.3.3.2     Beyond the matters specifically delegated to the faculty, the faculty  
909           should contribute to the overall decision making as determined by the institution’s  
910           structure of governance. Such involvement is particularly important in the  
911           development of the institution’s purpose statement and in institutional evaluation  
912           and planning.

913           **8.3.4 Students**

914                           8.3.4.0 Where students take part in the formal structures of governance, their roles  
915                           and responsibilities should be clearly delineated.

916   **9        Institutional Resources**

917 | In order to achieve their purposes, institutions need ~~not only adequate~~ sufficient personnel  
918 | ~~human,~~ but also adequate financial, physical, and institutional data resources. Because of their  
919 | theological character, Commission schools give particular attention to personnel ~~human~~  
920 | ~~resources~~ and to the quality of the institutional environment in which they function. Good  
921 | stewardship requires attention by each institution to the context, local and global, in which it  
922 | deploys its resources and a commitment to develop appropriate patterns of cooperation with  
923 | other institutions, which may at times lead to the formation of clusters.

924 | **9.1     Personnel ~~Human Resources~~**

925 |       9.1.1   The theological school should value and seek to enhance the quality of the human  
926 |       lives it touches. The human fabric of the institution is enriched by including a wide range  
927 |       of persons. The institution should devote adequate time and energy to the processes by  
928 |       which persons are recruited, enabled to participate in the institution, nurtured in their  
929 |       development, and prepared for their various tasks within the institution. ~~Human resources~~  
930 |       ~~include students, faculty, administrators, support personnel, trustees, friends, church and~~  
931 |       ~~public constituencies, volunteers, and external support and consultatives appropriate to~~  
932 |       ~~the mission of the school.~~

933 |       9.1.2   Theological schools should support the quality of community through such means  
934 |       as policies regarding procedural fairness, discrimination, and sexual harassment.

935 |       9.1.3   The theological school shall (a) engage the numbers and the qualities of personnel  
936 |       ~~human resources~~ needed to implement the programs of the school in keeping with its  
937 |       purpose; (b) develop appropriate personnel policies and procedures to be approved by the  
938 |       board and implemented by the administration; (c) ensure that these policies are clear and  
939 |       adequately published; include reference to job performance evaluation, termination,  
940 |       sexual harassment or misconduct; and conform to applicable requirements mandated by  
941 |       federal, state, or provincial jurisdictions; (d) provide for equitable patterns of  
942 |       compensation; (e) provide clear written job descriptions for all employees ~~members of~~  
943 |       ~~the staff~~; and (f) provide appropriate grievance procedures.

944 **9.2 Financial resources**

945 9.2.0 Because quality education and sound financial policies are intimately related,  
 946 theological schools should be governed by the principles of good stewardship in the  
 947 planning, development, and use of their financial resources. The financial resources  
 948 should support the purpose of the school effectively and efficiently as well as enable it to  
 949 achieve its goals. The financial resources of the school should be adequate to support the  
 950 programs, personnel (faculty, staff, students), and physical plant/space both in the present  
 951 and for the long term. The financial resources should allow the school to anticipate and  
 952 respond to external changes in the economic, social, legal, and religious environment.

953 **9.2.1 The financial condition of the school**

954 9.2.1.1 Theological schools should maintain the purchasing power of their  
 955 financial assets and the integrity and useful life of their physical facilities. While  
 956 year-to-year fluctuations are often unavoidable, schools should maintain  
 957 economic equilibrium over three or more years, retain the ability to respond to  
 958 financial emergencies and unforeseen circumstances, and show reasonable  
 959 expectations of future financial viability and overall institutional improvement.

960 9.2.1.2 A theological school shall have stable and predictable sources of  
 961 revenue such that the current and anticipated total revenues are sufficient to  
 962 maintain the educational quality of the institution. Projected increases in revenue,  
 963 including gift income, should be realistic. The use of endowment return to fund  
 964 expenditures budgets should be prudent and in accordance with applicable law.\*

965 9.2.1.3 A theological school should normally balance budgeted revenues and  
 966 expenditures while employing a prudent endowment spending rate.<sup>† ‡</sup> Deficits

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\* A common and customary understanding of a “prudent” use of endowment return is to budget as revenue 5 percent of a three-year average of the market value of endowment and board-designated quasi-endowment. Member schools should seek legal counsel regarding law applicable to the use of endowments.

† The term *endowment spending rate* refers to a common budgeting rule adopted by governing boards. Such a rule limits or controls the consumption of school’s endowment and return, which for purposes of these standards includes all of a school’s endowment and board-designated quasi-endowment.

‡ The term “endowment spending rate” refers to a common budgeting rule adopted by governing boards. Such a rule limits or controls the consumption of return from the school’s endowment (which for purposes of these standards includes all of a school’s long-term invested assets, whether endowment, quasi-endowment, or other funds). A common endowment spending goal among

967 weaken the institution and therefore should prompt the administration and trustees  
968 to take corrective action. A theological school shall be able to demonstrate that it  
969 has operated without cumulative losses across the last three years. If deficits have  
970 been recorded or are projected, the school shall have a plan to eliminate present  
971 and future deficits that is realistic, understood, and approved by the governing  
972 board. When reducing expenditures, the theological school should be mindful of  
973 its purpose and attend to the quality and scope of the degree programs.

974 9.2.1.4 Endowments (including funds functioning as endowment) are  
975 frequently a major source of revenue for schools. A theological school (or the  
976 larger organization of which it is a part) should adopt a prudent endowment  
977 spending formula that contributes to the purpose of the institution while  
978 enhancing the stability of revenue for the school. A school shall demonstrate  
979 evidence of adequate plans to protect the long-term purchasing power of the  
980 endowment from erosion by inflation. The school (or university, diocese, order, or  
981 other larger organization of which it is a part) shall have formally adopted  
982 statements of investment policies and guidelines that set forth for trustees and  
983 investment managers the conditions governing the granting or withholding of  
984 investment discretion, investment goals of the institution, guidelines for long-term  
985 asset allocation, a description of authorized and prohibited transactions, and  
986 performance measurement criteria. Trustees should review these policies  
987 regularly.

988 9.2.1.5 The financial condition of theological schools that are units of colleges  
989 or universities is influenced by the financial condition of the related institutions.  
990 These theological schools should enhance the well-being of the larger institution,  
991 while the larger institution should demonstrate appreciation for the special  
992 characteristics of theological schools. The larger institution should provide  
993 adequate financial resources to support the mission and programs of the  
994 theological school.

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colleges and universities with long-term assets, primarily invested in equities, is to budget as revenue 5 percent of a three-year average of the market value of all long-term invested assets.

995           **9.2.2 Accounting, audit, budget, and control**

996           9.2.2.1     A theological school shall adopt internal accounting and reporting  
997           systems that are generally used in North American higher education. U.S. schools  
998           should follow the principles and procedures for institutional accounting published  
999           by the National Association of College and University Business Officers.  
1000          Canadian schools should follow guidelines published by the Canadian  
1001          Association of University Business Officers.

1002          9.2.2.2     The institution shall be audited by an external, independent auditor in  
1003          accordance with the generally accepted auditing standards for colleges and  
1004          universities (not-for-profit organizations) as published by (for U.S. schools) the  
1005          American Institute of Certified Public Accountants or (for Canadian schools) the  
1006          Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. If an institution is not freestanding,  
1007          the larger organization of which it is a part (such as a university or diocese) shall  
1008          provide an audit of the consolidated entity. The governing board of a theological  
1009          school shall have direct access to the independent auditor and receive the audit.

1010          9.2.2.3     The institution shall obtain from an auditor a management letter and  
1011          shall demonstrate that it has appropriately addressed any recommendations  
1012          contained in the management letter.

1013          9.2.2.4     A theological school shall ensure that revenues, expenditures, and  
1014          capital projects are budgeted and submitted for review and approval to the  
1015          governing board. Budgets should clearly reflect the directions established by the  
1016          long-range plans of the school. Budgets should be developed in consultation with  
1017          the administrators, staff, and faculty who bear responsibility for managing the  
1018          institution’s programs and who approve the disbursements. A theological school  
1019          should maintain three-to-five-year financial projections of anticipated revenues,  
1020          expenditures, and capital projects

1021          9.2.2.5     A system of budgetary control and reporting shall be maintained,  
1022          providing regular and timely reports of revenues and expenditures to those  
1023          persons with oversight responsibilities.

1024          9.2.2.6     While a theological school may depend upon an external agency or  
1025          group (such as a denomination, diocese, order, foundation, association of  
1026          congregations, or other private agency) for financial support, the school’s

1027 governing board should retain appropriate autonomy in budget allocations and the  
1028 development of financial policies.

1029 **9.2.3 Business management**

1030 9.2.3.0 The institution’s management responsibilities and organization of business affairs  
1031 should be clearly defined, with specific assignment of responsibilities appropriately set  
1032 forth. The financial management and organization as well as the system of reporting shall  
1033 ensure the integrity of financial records, create appropriate control mechanisms, and  
1034 provide the governing board, chief administrative leaders, and appropriate others with the  
1035 information and reports needed for sound decision making. Schools should ensure that  
1036 personnel responsible for fiscal and budgetary processes are qualified by education and  
1037 experience for their responsibilities.

1038 **9.2.4 Institutional development and advancement**

1039 9.2.4.1 An institutional advancement program is essential to developing  
1040 financial resources. The advancement program should be planned, organized, and  
1041 implemented in ways congruent with the principles of the school. It should  
1042 include annual giving, capital giving, and planned giving, and should be  
1043 conducted in patterns consistent with relationships and agreements with the  
1044 school’s supporting constituencies. Essential to the success of the institutional  
1045 advancement program are the role played by the chief administrative leader in  
1046 fundraising, the leadership and participation of the governing board, graduates’  
1047 participation, and involvement of faculty, staff, and volunteers. Advancement  
1048 efforts shall be evaluated on a regular basis.

1049 9.2.4.2 The intention of donors with regard to the use of their gifts shall be  
1050 respected. The school should also recognize donors and volunteers appropriately.

1051 9.2.4.3 When auxiliary organizations, such as foundations, have been  
1052 established using the name and/or reputation of the institution, the school  
1053 ~~should~~shall be able to demonstrate that ~~those organizations support institutional~~  
1054 ~~aspirations and are regularly audited by independent accountants.~~ the auxiliary  
1055 organizations are regularly audited by an independent accountant, and that the  
1056 governing relationship between the school and auxiliary organization is clearly  
1057 articulated.

1058 **9.3 Physical resources**

1059 9.3.1 The physical resources include space and equipment as well as buildings and  
1060 grounds. A theological school shall demonstrate that the physical resources it uses are  
1061 adequate and appropriate for its purpose and programs, and that adequate funds for  
1062 ~~maintenance and capital renewal are budgeted.~~ maintaining, sustaining, and renewing  
1063 capital assets are included in budget planning.

1064 9.3.2 Institutions shall make appropriate efforts to ensure that physical resources are  
1065 safe, accessible, and free of known hazards. Insofar as possible, facilities should be used  
1066 in ways that respect the natural environment.

1067 9.3.3 Faculty and staff members should have space that is adequate for the pursuit of  
1068 their individual work as well as for meeting with students. Physical resources should  
1069 enhance community interaction among faculty, staff, and students, and should be  
1070 sufficiently flexible to meet the potentially changing demands faced by the school.

1071 9.3.4 The school should determine the rationale for its policies and practices with  
1072 regard to student housing, and this rationale should be expressed in a clearly worded  
1073 statement. Arrangements for student housing should reflect good stewardship of the  
1074 financial and educational resources of the institution.

1075 9.3.5 Facilities shall be maintained as appropriate so as to avoid problems of deferred  
1076 maintenance. The institution should maintain a plan that provides a timetable for work  
1077 and identifies needed financial resources.

1078 9.3.6 When physical resources other than those owned by the institution are used by the  
1079 school, written agreements should clearly state the conditions governing their use and  
1080 ensure usage over a sufficient period of time.

1081 **9.4 Institutional ~~Data~~ information technology resources**

1082 9.4.1 To the extent that a theological school uses technology to deliver its educational  
1083 programs, the school shall maintain adequate personnel ~~human,~~ and financial, and  
1084 technological resources to sustain its technology infrastructure.

1085 9.4.2~~0~~ For planning and evaluation, the school shall create and use various kinds of  
1086 institutional data and information technology to determine the extent to which the  
1087 institution is attaining its academic and institutional purposes and objectives. ~~The school~~  
1088 ~~should provide for the financial costs of developing and maintaining this information.~~ To

1089 the extent possible, it should use the most effective current technologies for creating,  
 1090 storing, and transmitting this information within the institution, and it should share  
 1091 appropriate information thus generated among institutions and organizations. The kinds  
 1092 of information and the means by which that information is gathered, stored, retrieved, and  
 1093 analyzed should be appropriate to the size and complexity of the institution.

1094 **9.5 Institutional environment**

1095 9.5.1 The internal institutional environment makes it possible for the institution to  
 1096 maximize the various strengths of its ~~human, personnel and~~ financial, physical, and  
 1097 information resources in pursuing its stated goals. An institution's environment affects its  
 1098 resiliency and its ability to perform under duress. Accreditation evaluation will take into  
 1099 account the ways in which an institution uses its various resources in support of its  
 1100 institutional purpose.

1101 9.5.2 The quality of institutional environment is cultivated and enhanced by promoting  
 1102 effective patterns of leadership and management, by providing effective exchange of  
 1103 information, and by ensuring that mechanisms are in place to address conflict.

1104 **9.6 Cooperative use of resources**

1105 9.6.1 The theological school should secure access to the resources it needs to fulfill its  
 1106 purpose, administer and allocate these resources wisely and effectively, and be attentive  
 1107 to opportunities for cooperation and sharing of resources with other institutions. Such  
 1108 sharing involves both drawing upon the resources of other institutions and contributing  
 1109 resources to other institutions.

1110 9.6.2 Access to the required resources may be achieved either through ownership or  
 1111 through carefully formulated relationships with other schools or institutions. These  
 1112 relationships may include, for instance, cross-appointments of faculty, cross-registration  
 1113 of students, joint and dual degree programs, rental of facilities, and shared access to  
 1114 information required by administrators, faculty, and students in the pursuit of their tasks.  
 1115 Whatever their reason or scope, collaborative arrangements should be carefully designed  
 1116 with sufficient legal safeguards, adequate public disclosure, and provisions for review,  
 1117 and with a clear rationale for involvement in such arrangements.

1118 **9.7 Clusters**

1119 9.7.1 Clusters are formed when a number of schools find that they can best operate by  
1120 sharing resources in a more integral and systematic way and by establishing structures to  
1121 manage their cooperative relationships.

1122 9.7.2 The term *cluster* is meant to be descriptive rather than prescriptive. A variety of  
1123 terms can denote these types of arrangements and a variety of approaches can make them  
1124 work effectively. Schools should be creative and flexible as they seek to be good  
1125 stewards of their resources. However devised, cluster arrangements should have clear  
1126 structural components and effective patterns of operation.

1127 **9.7.3 Structural components**

1128 9.7.3.1 The core membership of a cluster comprises schools holding  
1129 accredited membership within the Commission, but clusters may include  
1130 candidate members of the Commission and associate members of ATS, as well as  
1131 other schools and agencies with compatible purposes.

1132 9.7.3.2 Each cluster shall develop a clear definition of purpose and objectives  
1133 that should be fully understood by the participating schools and their supporting  
1134 constituencies and based on a realistic assessment that encompasses constituent  
1135 needs, access of member institutions to one another, available resources, and  
1136 degree programs offered by the cluster directly or enabled by it.

1137 9.7.3.3 The structure of each cluster shall be appropriate to its purpose and  
1138 objectives, providing proper balance between the legitimate autonomy of its  
1139 member institutions and their mutual accountability in terms of their common  
1140 purposes. An effective cluster arrangement frees students, faculty, and institutions  
1141 to operate more effectively and creatively. The cluster shall have a clearly defined  
1142 governance structure that has authority commensurate with responsibility. The  
1143 governance should enable the cluster to set policies, secure financial support,  
1144 select administrative officers, and provide other personnel functions.

1145 9.7.3.4 The cluster shall be able to demonstrate financial support from various  
1146 sources sufficient for the continuity of its functions and for the security of the  
1147 faculty and staff it appoints, and should engage in appropriate financial planning.

1148 9.7.3.5 These structures and resources shall be regularly evaluated and  
1149 appropriately adjusted.

1150           **9.7.4 Effectiveness**

1151                   9.7.4.1   Evidence of effective operation may include reciprocal flow of  
 1152                   students, faculty, and information among the member institutions of a cluster,  
 1153                   coordinated schedules and calendars, cross-registration, and common policies in  
 1154                   areas such as tuition and student services. Requirements, especially in academic  
 1155                   and graduate programs, are determined in such a way as to invite the sharing of  
 1156                   resources. Duplication is avoided wherever possible.

1157                   9.7.4.2   If a school meets the accreditation standards of the Commission only  
 1158                   by virtue of affiliation with a cluster, this fact shall be formally specified in its  
 1159                   grant of accreditation by the board.

1160    **9.8    Instructional technology resources**

1161    Institutions using instructional technology to enhance face-to-face courses and/or provide online-  
 1162    only courses shall be intentional in addressing matters of coherence between educational values  
 1163    and choice of media, recognizing that the learning goals of graduate education should guide the  
 1164    choice of digital resources, that teaching and learning maintains its focus on the formation and  
 1165    knowledge of religious leaders, and that the school is utilizing its resources in ways that most  
 1166    effectively accomplish its purpose. They should also establish policies regarding the appropriate  
 1167    training for and use of these resources.

1168                   9.8.1    Students should be adequately informed regarding the necessary skills and  
 1169                   mastery of technology to participate fully in the programs to which they are admitted.  
 1170                   Institutions are encouraged to provide opportunities for students to gain these skills as  
 1171                   part of their program of study.

1172                   9.8.2    Sufficient technical support services should ensure that faculty are freed to focus  
 1173                   upon their central tasks of teaching and facilitating learning. Support services should  
 1174                   create systems for faculty development and assistance to ensure consistent, effective, and  
 1175                   timely support.

1176                   9.8.2.1   Timely technological support services should include (1) staff with a  
 1177                   sufficiently high level of technical skills to ensure student facility in handling  
 1178                   software and the technological aspects of course offerings and (2) the systemic  
 1179                   evaluation and upgrading of technological resources and services consistent with  
 1180                   the learning goals of theological scholarship.

1181 |                   9.8.2.2 A technological and support services program should include  
1182 |                   technological training and should ensure adequate support services personnel for  
1183 |                   faculty and students.

1184 |                   9.8.3 Institutions shall develop and implement ongoing evaluation procedures for the  
1185 |                   use of instructional technology that involve appropriate groups of people in the  
1186 |                   evaluation process.