

Bulletin 50

PART 1
2012

Association Bylaws

Association Procedures Related to Membership

Association Policy Guidelines

Association and Commission Dues and Fees Structure

Commission Bylaws

Commission Procedures Related to Accreditation
and Membership

Standards of Accreditation

Notations



The Association of Theological Schools
The Commission on Accrediting

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The *Bulletin* of
The Association of Theological Schools
in the United States and Canada
and The Commission on Accrediting
consists of three parts as follows:

- Part 1 Association Bylaws, Procedures, and Policy Guidelines;
Association and Commission Dues and Fees Structures;
and Commission Bylaws, Procedures,
Standards of Accreditation, and Notations
(published biennially in print and online)
- Part 2 Membership List
(published online and updated regularly)
- Part 3 Biennial Meeting
(published online biennially)

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under the same or similar titles.
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or order from the ATS website at www.ats.edu.



The Association of Theological Schools
The Commission on Accrediting

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Introduction

The mission of The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada is to promote the improvement and enhancement of theological schools to the benefit of communities of faith and the broader public. The Association seeks to fulfill this mission by engaging in three core functions of work: (1) leadership education for administrative officers and faculty, (2) development of theological education, which involves applied research and consultations regarding critical issues in theological education, and (3) communications and data. The Commission on Accrediting of ATS seeks to fulfill the mission through accrediting member schools of the Association and approving the degree programs they offer.

The Association began in 1918 as an informal conference of theological schools that met biennially to consider issues of common interest and concern. In 1936 it became an Association, adopted standards for judging quality, and in 1938 established a list of accredited schools. In 1956 it incorporated and secured a full-time staff. In 1964 it began publication of the journal, *Theological Education*. The Association began collecting data in the 1960s and since 1969 has made it available through the periodic *Fact Book on Theological Education* and now exclusively online. In 1990, it established new headquarters in Pittsburgh, and in 2005, moved its Ohio incorporation to Pennsylvania and separately incorporated the Commission on Accrediting. Member schools of the Association are Full Members and Associate Members. Member schools of the Commission are accredited schools and candidates for accreditation. Schools must be members of the Association in order to be eligible for membership in the Commission. In 2012, the Association and the Commission revised the accrediting standards, whose last major revision had been in 1996.

From its beginning, the Association has been representative in membership of both the United States and Canada. Its member schools include Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox graduate schools of theology that reflect a broad spectrum of doctrinal, ecclesiastical, and theological perspectives.

The Association and the Commission meet biennially in even-numbered years. The Board of Directors of the Association and the Board of Commissioners of the Commission each meet semiannually.

The Commission on Accrediting is recognized by the US Department of Education and by the nongovernmental Council for Higher Education Accreditation for the accreditation of graduate, professional theological schools in the United States. The Board of Commissioners works cooperatively with regional accrediting associations in the United States, other professional associations, state departments of education, and other allied organizations in Canada and the United States.

The Association and the Commission maintain relationships with a wide range of organizations related to ministry, higher education, and accreditation.

The three parts of the *Bulletin* provide detailed information about the Association and the Commission: their Bylaws, Procedures related to membership and accreditation, Standards of Accreditation, Policy Guidelines about the work of theological schools, the Membership List, and a report of the Biennial Meeting.

Information about the Association, the Commission, and their member institutions is available at www.ats.edu or by contacting their office in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

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Bylaws of The Association of Theological Schools

Bylaws of The Association of Theological Schools in The United States and Canada, A Pennsylvania Nonprofit Corporation

Article I: Introductory

Section 1.1 Name

The name of the corporation is The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (the "Association").

Section 1.2 Statement of Purposes

As provided in its Articles of Incorporation, the Association is organized for the purposes set forth in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) (the "Code") and in furtherance thereof to (i) promote the enhancement and improvement of theological schools in the United States and Canada and to advocate on behalf of theological education, (ii) provide a continuing educational forum for administrators and faculty in theological education, (iii) conduct applied research regarding issues and practices of theological education to contribute to the development of theological education, (iv) communicate with member schools and the broader public about theological education, and (v) provide a continuing venue to convene schools to consider issues regarding theological education, relationships among theological schools, and the relationships of theological schools to other educational institutions, associations, and ecclesiastical and governmental authorities. The corporation shall be a supporting organization of the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools, a 501(c)(3) organization recognized as a public charity pursuant to Section 509(a)(2) of the Code.

Section 1.3 Offices

The principal and registered office of the Association shall be located at 10 Summit Park Drive, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15275, or at such other place as the Board of Directors (the "Board") may designate from time to time.

Section 1.4 Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Association shall end on June 30 of each year or on such other date as may be fixed from time to time by resolution of the Board.

Section 1.5 Seal

The corporate seal of the Association shall be a circle with the name of the Association and the state of incorporation around the border and the words "Corporate Seal" in the center.

Section 1.6 Governing Law

This Association is governed by the Pennsylvania Nonprofit Corporation Law of 1988, as it may be amended from time to time ("NPCL").

Article II: Members and Affiliates

Section 2.1 Eligibility

Membership in the Association is open to schools located in the United States and Canada that offer graduate, professional theological degrees, are demonstrably engaged in educating professional leadership for communities of the Christian and Jewish faiths, and meet the standards and criteria for membership established from time to time by the Association ("Membership Eligibility Criteria"). The Association shall have two classes of members: Full Members and Associate Members. Associate Members and Full Members shall be referred to collectively herein as the "Members." Members that are seeking accreditation by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools ("Commission") are referred to as Associate Members. Members that are then accredited by the Commission are referred to as Full Members.

Section 2.2 Election of Associate Members

Institutions applying for membership in the Association shall be evaluated according to the then current criteria for Associate Membership as established from time to time by the Members. If the Board determines that the applicant institution meets the then current criteria for Associate Membership, the Board shall recommend to the Members that the applicant institution be considered for election as an Associate Member at the next Biennial Meeting. Election as an Associate Member requires the favorable vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Members of the Association present at a duly called and organized meeting of the Members. Associate Members shall provide institutional data to the Commission annually and when requested by the Commission in connection with its accreditation activities.

Associate Membership is granted for a five-year term. The Association admits Associate Members with the expectation that they will pursue accreditation by the Commission. If an Associate Member is not accredited by the Commission prior to the conclusion of its initial five-year term but has requested in writing to be granted a second five-year term as an Associate Member and continues to satisfy the Membership Eligibility Criteria, the Board shall reevaluate the institution for a second five-year term of membership and shall either accept or reject the Associate Member's request. The Board may grant such additional five-year terms as it deems appropriate.

Section 2.2(a) Reclassification to Full Member Status

Once accredited by the Commission, an Associate Member is automatically reclassified as a Full Member

of the Association. Full Members remain Members for so long as they continue to satisfy Membership Eligibility Criteria, pay all dues and charges, and remain accredited by the Commission.

Section 2.3 Powers of the Membership

In addition to any powers conferred on members of a nonprofit corporation under the relevant provisions of the NPCL, the Members of the Association shall (i) adopt the dues structure for Members, (ii) elect the officers, Directors, and any members of committees whose election or appointment is not otherwise provided for herein, and (iii) approve amendments to these Bylaws as provided in Sections 9.1 and 11.1.

Section 2.4 Duties of Membership

Each Member must (i) continue to meet the Membership Eligibility Criteria and other requirements established from time to time by the Members and (ii) deliver to the Association annual dues in an amount determined by the Members from time to time. A Member that ceases to meet the Membership Eligibility Criteria or other requirements shall cease to be a Member as of the date of such cessation. If at any time a Member is two years in arrears in payment of its annual dues, it shall be deemed to have withdrawn as a Member as of the date of becoming two years in arrears. The membership year shall be the Association's fiscal year or such other time as the Board may specify from time to time.

Section 2.5 Meetings of the Members

Meetings of the Members may be held at such place within or without the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as the person calling the meeting shall so indicate in the meeting notice. The Members shall meet biennially in each even-numbered year (the "Biennial Meeting"), each Biennial Meeting to be held at such time and place as the Board may determine from time to time by resolution. Special meetings of the Members shall be called by the Secretary upon the written request of ten percent (10%) of the Members of record or at the instruction of the President.

If the Board of Directors or Officers Committee has determined that an emergency exists requiring action by the Members, the Board may call a special meeting of the Members with thirty (30) days advance notice to Members (an "Emergency Meeting"). Members may participate in an Emergency Meeting via proxy. Members may not participate by proxy in any meeting of the Members that is not an Emergency Meeting.

The senior officer of the Association present shall preside at each meeting of the Members. If no officer is present, the Members present shall elect a presiding officer for the meeting then being held. The presiding officer shall determine the order of business and shall have the authority to establish equitable rules for the

conduct of the meeting. The presiding officer shall announce at the meeting when the polls close for each matter voted upon. If no announcement is made, the polls shall be deemed to have closed upon the final adjournment of the meeting. After the polls close, no ballots or votes and no revocations or changes thereto may be accepted.

Section 2.6 Notice

With the exception of Emergency Meetings, which shall be called as described in Section 2.5 above, written notice of the date, time, and place of each meeting of the Members shall be given to all Members of record entitled to vote at the meeting at least ninety (90) days prior to the date of the meeting, and the proposed agenda for the meeting shall be given to all Members no later than forty-five (45) days prior to the meeting. Such notice shall be given by sending a copy thereof by first class or express mail, postage prepaid, or by telegram (with messenger service specified), telex or TWX (with answer back received), or courier service, charges prepaid, or by facsimile to the Member's address (or telex, TWX, or facsimile number) appearing on the books of the Association. If the notice is sent by mail, telegraph, or courier service, it shall be deemed to have been given to the person entitled thereto when deposited in the US mail or with a telegraph office or courier service or, in the case of telex or TWX, when dispatched.

Section 2.7 Voting

Each Member of the Association is entitled to one vote on each matter before the Members. The manner of voting on any matter may be by voice, ballot, mail, or any other reasonable means. Each Member may send as many representatives to any meeting of the Members as it chooses; however, each Member attending any meeting of the Membership shall designate to the Association one individual to cast its ballot. In the event of a dispute regarding the identity of the individual authorized to exercise a Member's voting rights, the judges of election are authorized to award such voting rights to one of the individuals representing the Member, and the decision of the judges shall be final.

Section 2.8 Record Date

The Board may fix a time not more than ninety (90) days prior to the date of any meeting of the Members as a record date for the purpose of determining the Members entitled to notice of or to vote at such meeting. In such case, only Members of record on the date so fixed shall be entitled to notice and/or to vote notwithstanding any increase or other change on the books of the Association after the record date. If the Board does not fix a record date, then (a) the record date for determining Members entitled to notice of or to vote at the meeting shall be the close of business on the date before notice is given or, if notice is waived, the date before the meeting is held; (b) the record date for determining Members entitled to

express consent or dissent to corporate action in writing without a meeting, when no prior Board action is required, shall be the date on which the first written consent or dissent is expressed; and (c) for any other purpose the record date shall be the close of business on the day on which the Board adopts the resolution relating thereto.

Section 2.9 Judges of Election

In advance of any meeting of the Members, the Board may appoint judges of election, who need not be Members, to act at such meeting or any adjournment thereof. If judges of election are not so appointed, the presiding officer may, and on the request of any Member shall, make such appointment at the meeting. The number of judges shall be one or three. No person who is a candidate for office shall act as a judge. If any person appointed as judge fails to appear or fails or refuses to act, the vacancy may be filled by appointment made by the Board in advance of the meeting or at the meeting by the presiding officer. The judges of election shall determine the number of Members of record and voting power of each; the Members present at the meeting; the existence of a quorum; the authenticity, validity, and effect of proxies, if any; receive votes or ballots; hear and determine all challenges and questions in any way arising in connection with the right to vote; count and tabulate all votes; determine the result; and do such acts as may be proper to conduct the election or vote with fairness to all Members. The judges of election shall perform their duties impartially, in good faith, to the best of their ability, and as expeditiously as is practical. If there are three judges of election, the decision, act, or certificate of a majority shall be effective in all respects as the decision, act, or certificate of all. On the request of the presiding officer of the meeting, or of any Member, the judges shall make a report in writing of any challenge or question or matter determined by them and execute a certificate of any fact found by them. Any report or certificate made by them shall be prima facie evidence of the facts stated therein.

Section 2.10 Liability of Associate Members and Members

No Member shall be liable, solely by reason of being a Member, under an order of court or in any other manner, for a debt, obligation, or liability of the Association of any kind or for the acts of any Member or representative of the Association. A Member shall be liable to the Association only to the extent of any unpaid membership dues or assessments that the Association may have lawfully imposed on the Member or for any other indebtedness owed by the Member to the Association.

Section 2.11 Waiver of Notice

Whenever any written notice is required to be given, a waiver thereof in writing signed by a Member entitled to notice, whether before or after the time stated

therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of notice. Attendance of a Member at a meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of the meeting unless the Member attends for the express purpose of objecting, at the beginning of the meeting, to the transaction of any business because the meeting was not lawfully called or convened.

Section 2.12 Quorum

The presence in person (and in the case of an Emergency Meeting only, also by proxy) of voting representatives of at least seventy-five (75) Members shall constitute a quorum. The Members present at a duly organized meeting can continue to constitute a quorum until adjournment, notwithstanding the withdrawal of enough Members to leave less than a quorum. The vote of a majority of the Members present at a duly organized meeting of the Members at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Members.

Section 2.13 Termination

The membership of any Member may be terminated (a) by the Board, for failure to pay dues, or (b) by the vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Members present at a meeting of the Members, for Cause, upon the recommendation of the Board. "Cause" shall mean the failure of the Member to continue to satisfy Membership Eligibility Criteria and/or any action of the Member that may materially and adversely affect the Association or its reputation. Cause does not include failure to pay dues. In the case of termination for Cause, the affected Member shall be given at least thirty (30) days' advance, written notice of any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors at which such matter is to be considered, which notice shall specify the Cause for the proposed termination of membership. The affected Member shall be permitted to make a written response to the charges and to attend the meeting of the Board of Directors at which the Board determines whether to recommend termination and to make a brief oral response. Following the meeting of the Board of Directors, the Board may, in its discretion, elect to make a recommendation to the Members to terminate the membership. The decision of the Members shall be final. The foregoing procedure for a hearing before the Board and recommendation to and decision by the Members shall not apply to termination for failure to pay dues.

Section 2.14 Transfer of Membership

Membership in this Association is nontransferable and nonassignable.

Section 2.15 Affiliates

Affiliate status is available to two types of institutions and organizations. The first consists of agencies or organizations with a substantial interest in theological education in the Christian or Jewish faiths but not involved in educational programs leading to a degree;

the second consists of institutions of higher education offering graduate theological degrees related to communities of faith other than the Christian or Jewish faiths. Upon the recommendation of the Board, applicants for Affiliate status are elected or rejected as ATS Affiliates by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Members present and voting at any Biennial Meeting. Affiliate status is not a category of membership, and Affiliates are not eligible to be considered for membership in the Association. Representatives of Affiliates are eligible for election to committees or task forces of the Association and may attend and speak at Association meetings (unless the Association's legal counsel has recommended excluding them from a portion of the meeting) but have no vote. Affiliates shall pay annual dues as set by the Board from time to time. Affiliate status is granted for a renewable six-year term, with no limit to the number of consecutive terms.

Article III: Board of Directors

Section 3.1 Authority

Subject to the rights of the Members and any limitations set forth elsewhere in these Bylaws or the Articles of Incorporation of the Association, the affairs of the Association shall be under the general direction of the Board of Directors, which shall administer, manage, preserve, and protect the property of the Association.

The Board's authority shall include, without limitation: adoption of the Association's budget; proposal of amendments to these Bylaws, subject to the approval of the Members as provided in Sections 2.3 and 9.1; authorization of solicitation of grants and management of grant funds; oversight of the Association's assets; approval of the auditors employed by the Association, on the recommendation of the Audit Committee; and oversight of the employment policies of the Association. The Board is also charged with supervision of the Association's planning process and oversight of its implementation; review and evaluation of the programs of the Association; preparation of the Biennial Meetings; and appointment of task forces as necessary for the work of the Association, determining the composition, duties, and duration of each such task force.

Section 3.2 Number and Term

The Board shall include a minimum of twelve (12) and a maximum of sixteen (16) Directors (the actual number to be determined from time to time by a resolution of the membership) elected by the Members of the Association. In addition, the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Association, the immediate past President of the Association, and the Commission Representative to ATS (as defined in the Commission's Bylaws as they may be amended from time to time), shall serve as ex officio voting Directors for as long as they hold such offices. No fewer than three (3) and no more than four (4) of the elected Directors on the Board

at any time shall be Public Directors. The remaining elected Directors shall be Institutional Directors. Institutional Directors shall be individuals who are employed by a Member or who serve on the board of a Member at the time of their election or reelection to the Board. Public Directors are individuals who are not enrolled as a student in or employed by a Member at the time of their election or reelection.

With the exception of the initial Institutional Directors and initial Public Directors, whose terms shall be specified in the resolution appointing them, and the ex officio Directors, who shall serve for so long as they hold the respective offices pursuant to which they serve, Directors shall serve a term of four (4) years and until such Director's successor has been duly elected and qualified or until the Director's earlier death, resignation, or removal.

A Director is not eligible to serve as an elected Director for a period of one year after completing two consecutive full four-year terms.

Section 3.3 Nomination and Election

At least thirty (30) days prior to the Biennial Meeting (or special meeting held to elect Directors), the Nominating Committee shall nominate one or more persons for each Director position the term of which is due to expire in such year. At the Biennial Meeting or a special meeting held for that purpose, the Members shall elect the Directors (other than ex officio Directors) from among the persons nominated (a) by the Nominating Committee or (b) if any Member submits a petition signed by at least five (5) Members and the written consent(s) of the person(s) nominated, from the floor. Unless otherwise specified at the time of election, new Directors shall take office at the conclusion of the meeting at which they are elected.

Section 3.4 Vacancies

Vacancies in elected Directors occurring on the Board by death, resignation, refusal to serve, increase in the number of Directors, or otherwise between Biennial Meetings shall be filled by majority vote of the Board, and each Director so appointed shall serve until the next Biennial Meeting and until the Director's successor is elected and qualified or until such Director's earlier death, resignation, or removal.

Section 3.5 Compensation

No compensation shall be paid to any Director for services as a Director, but, at the discretion of the Board, a Director may be reimbursed for travel and actual expenses necessarily incurred in attending meetings and performing other duties on behalf of the Association.

Section 3.6 Meetings

The Board shall meet at least twice each year at a date and time established by the Board. The meeting follow-

ing the Biennial Meeting in even-numbered years and such other time as the Board may designate from time to time by resolution in odd-numbered years shall be the annual meeting of the Board. Special meetings shall be called by the Secretary upon the order of the President or at the written request of a number of Directors constituting a quorum of the Directors then in office and entitled to vote. All meetings of the Board shall be held at the registered office of the Association unless otherwise designated in the notice.

Section 3.7 Quorum

At all meetings of the Board, the presence of a majority of the Directors in office and entitled to vote shall constitute a quorum. In addition to those Directors who are actually present at a meeting, Directors shall be deemed as present at such meeting if a telephone or similar communication equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time is used. The Directors present at a duly organized meeting shall continue to constitute a quorum until adjournment, notwithstanding the withdrawal of enough Directors to leave less than a majority. The act of a majority of the Directors entitled to vote at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board. A majority of the Directors present and entitled to vote, whether or not a quorum exists, may adjourn any meeting of the Board to another time and place. Notice of any such adjourned meeting shall be given to the Directors who are not present at the time of adjournment.

Section 3.8 Voting

Each Director shall have one vote on each matter before the Board.

Section 3.9 Notices

Written notice of the date, time, and place of each meeting of the Board shall be given to all Directors at least thirty (30) days in advance of the date thereof. Such notice shall set forth the date, time, and place of the meeting. Whenever written notice is required to be given to a Director under this Section 3.9, it may be given to the Director personally or by sending a copy thereof by either of the following methods:

- (a) By first class or express mail, postage prepaid, or by telegram (with messenger service specified), telex, TWX (with answerback received), or courier service, charges prepaid, or by facsimile transmission, to the Director's address (or telex, TWX, or facsimile number) appearing on the books of the Association. If the notice is sent by mail, telegraph, or courier service, it shall be deemed to have been given to the Director entitled thereto when deposited in the US mail or with a telegraph office or courier service for delivery to that Director, or in the case of telex or TWX, when dispatched. Notice pursuant to this paragraph shall be deemed to

have been given to the Director entitled thereto when deposited in the US mail or with a courier service for delivery to that Director.

- (b) By facsimile transmission, email, or other electronic communication to the Director's facsimile number or address for email or other electronic communications supplied by the Director to the Association for the purpose of notice. Notice pursuant to this paragraph shall be deemed to have been given to the Director entitled thereto when sent.

Section 3.10 Waiver of Notice

Whenever any written notice whatsoever is required to be given to a Director under the provisions of applicable law, the Articles of Incorporation of this Association, or these Bylaws, a waiver of such notice in writing signed by the Director entitled to notice, whether before or after the time stated in such waiver, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice. Attendance of a Director at a meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of the meeting unless the Director attends for the express purpose of objecting, at the beginning of the meeting, to the transaction of any business because the meeting was not lawfully called or convened.

Section 3.11 Standard of Care and Fiduciary Duty

Each Director shall stand in a fiduciary relation to this Association and shall perform his or her duties as a Director, including his or her duties as a member of any committee of the Board upon which the Director may serve, in good faith, in a manner the Director reasonably believes to be in the best interest of this Association, and with such care, including reasonable inquiry, skill, and diligence, as a person of ordinary prudence would use under similar circumstances. In performing his or her duties, each Director shall be entitled to rely in good faith on information, opinions, reports, or statements, including financial statements and other financial data, in each case prepared or presented by any of the following:

- (a) one or more officers or employees of this Association whom the Director reasonably believes to be reliable and competent in the matters presented;
- (b) counsel, public accountants, or other persons as to matters which the Director reasonably believes to be within the professional or expert competence of such persons; and
- (c) a committee of the Board of this Association upon which the Director does not serve, as to matters within its designated authority, which committee the Director reasonably believes to merit confidence.

A Director shall not be considered to be acting in good faith if the Director has knowledge concerning the matter in question that would cause his or her reliance to be unwarranted.

Section 3.12 Factors That May Be Considered by Directors

In discharging the duties of their respective positions, the Board, committees of the Board, and individual Directors may, in considering the best interest of this Association, consider to the extent they deem appropriate the following:

- (a) the effects of any action upon any or all groups affected by such action, including Members, employees, suppliers, customers, and creditors of the Association, and upon communities in which offices or other establishments of the Association are located;
- (b) the short-term and long-term interests of the Association, including the benefits that may accrue to the Association from its long-term plans and the possibility that these interests may be best served by the continued independence of the Association;
- (c) the resources, intent, and conduct (past, stated, and potential) of any person seeking to acquire control of the Association; and
- (d) all other pertinent factors.

The Board, committees, and Directors are not required, in considering the best interest of the Association or the effects of any action, to regard any corporate interest or the interests of any particular group affected by such action as a dominant or controlling interest or factor. The consideration of interests and factors in the manner described in this section shall not constitute a violation of Section 3.11 hereof.

Section 3.13 Rules and Regulations

The Board may adopt rules and regulations not inconsistent with these Bylaws for the administration and conduct of the affairs of the Association and may alter, amend, or repeal any such rules or regulations adopted by it. Such rules and regulations may be amended by majority vote of the Directors present and entitled to vote at a meeting of the Directors where a quorum is present.

Section 3.14 Removal of Directors

- (a) **By the Members.** The entire Board or any class thereof or any individual Director may be removed from office without assigning any cause by the vote of the Members entitled to cast at least a majority of the votes that all Members present would be entitled to cast at any meeting of the Members. New Directors shall be elected at the same meeting. Unless the entire Board or class is removed, no individual Director shall be removed if the votes cast against the individual Director's removal, if cumulated, would be sufficient to elect one Director.
- (b) **By the Board.** The Board, by a majority vote of all of the Directors, may declare vacant the office of

any Director who is declared of unsound mind by an order of the court or is convicted of a felony or other cause. "Other cause" shall mean any action or inaction that, in the sole discretion of the Board, materially and adversely affects or may affect the Association.

- (c) **Institutional Directors; Loss of Affiliation with Associate Member or Member.** No Director shall be removed from his or her position as an Institutional Director solely because he or she ceases to be employed by (or serve on the board of) the Member that employed the Director (or on which board he or she served) at the time of his or her election to the Board, and it is presumed that such a Director shall continue to serve on the Board for the remainder of his or her term. However, if any conflict of interest (as that term is defined in Section 3.16, below) arises due to any new position held by the Director, such conflict of interest may be considered to constitute "other cause" supporting the removal of the Director by the Board as provided in subsection (b) of this Section 3.14.

Section 3.15 Consents

Any action that may be taken at a meeting of the Board may be taken without a meeting, if a consent or consents in writing setting forth the action so taken is signed by all of the Directors in office and entitled to vote and is filed with the Secretary of the Association.

Section 3.16 Conflict of Interest

An actual or potential conflict of interest exists when any of the following exists:

- (a) An officer or Director has an ownership or investment interest in or compensation relationship with an organization with which the Association does or proposes to do business or an organization that competes with the Association; or
- (b) An officer or Director receives remuneration for performing services for the Association, and the Association is determining his or her remuneration; or
- (c) An officer or Director serves as an officer or director or key employee of an organization that competes with or does business with the Corporation.

A conflict also exists when a similar circumstance exists with respect to a family member of a Director or company thirty-five percent (35%) owned by a Director and his or her family members. Annually, each Director and officer shall complete a disclosure statement reflecting his or her interests.

Directors shall act in a manner intended to further the best interest of the Association. If at any time a Director (i) has or may have a conflict of interest or (ii) is unable to act in the best interest of the Association on any issue

because of a personal situation, employment, conflicting interest, or other reason, the Director shall recuse himself or herself from voting on the subject and shall leave the room while the matter is discussed. Recusing himself or herself shall not prevent a Director from participating in other activities or discussions where no conflict of interest exists.

The Board may approve a transaction that is the subject of a conflict of interest only if it has determined (i) that the transaction or arrangement is in the Association's best interest and for its own benefit, (ii) that it is fair and reasonable to the Association, and (iii) that after exercising due diligence, the Association would not obtain a more advantageous transaction with reasonable efforts under the circumstances. Where appropriate the board shall obtain comparable information to assist it in reaching such conclusions.

The minutes of all meetings shall reflect (i) the names of the persons who disclosed any conflicts; (ii) the determination as to whether an actual or potential conflict of interest existed; (iii) the names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement; (iv) the content of the discussions, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement and the basis for the determination of the Board, including any comparability data; (v) the voting record, including any abstention from voting; and (vi) any action to be taken.

Article IV: Officers

Section 4.1 Officers; Enumeration

The officers of the Association shall consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and such other officers and assistant officers as the Board may, from time to time, designate.

Section 4.2 Term of Office

Each officer shall serve for a term of two (2) years and until the officer's successor is duly elected and takes office.

Section 4.3 Nomination and Election

At least thirty (30) days prior to the Biennial Meeting or any special meeting held to elect officers, the Nominating Committee shall nominate one or more persons for consideration for each office. At the Biennial Meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose, the Members shall elect the officers from among the persons nominated (a) by the Nominating Committee or (b) if any Member submits a petition signed by at least five (5) Members and the written consent(s) of the person(s) nominated, from the floor. Unless otherwise specified at the time of election, new officers shall take office at the conclusion of the meeting at which they are elected.

Section 4.4 Vacancies

The President may fill vacancies in any office for the period ending upon the date of the next meeting of the Board at which a quorum is present, when the Board shall fill such vacancy for the period ending at the next Biennial Meeting.

Section 4.5 President

The President shall be responsible for overseeing the affairs of the Association, shall preside at all meetings of the Members and the Board, and shall consult with the Executive Director concerning the work of the Association.

Section 4.6 Vice President

The Vice President shall be responsible for the duties of the President in the President's absence.

Section 4.7 Secretary

The Secretary shall make or cause to be made minutes of all meetings of the Board and the Members. The Secretary shall be responsible for the timely mailing or delivery of all notices of meetings of the Board and the Membership, shall affix the corporate seal at the direction of the President, and, generally, will perform all duties incident to the office of secretary of a corporation and such other duties as may be required by law, by the Articles of Incorporation or by these Bylaws, or that may be assigned from time to time by the Board.

Section 4.8 Treasurer

The Treasurer shall supervise the financial activities of the Association. Specifically, the Treasurer shall see that (a) full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept, (b) a system is in place such that all monies and other valuable effects are deposited in the name and to the credit of the Association in such depositories as shall be designated by the Board, (c) the Directors, at the regular meetings of the Board or whenever they may require it, receive an account of the financial condition of the Association, and (d) an annual audit of the Association's books and records is performed by an auditor selected by the Board. In performing these functions, the Treasurer may rely on employees of the Association or any affiliated corporation who possess special financial training and skills and whose employment responsibilities include management of the Association's financial affairs. In the absence or disability of the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer, if any, shall perform all the duties of the Treasurer and when so acting, shall have all of the powers of and be subject to all of the restrictions upon the Treasurer.

Section 4.9 Other Officers

Each other officer shall have such responsibilities and perform such duties as may be prescribed by the Members or the Board from time to time. Each assistant officer shall carry out the responsibilities and duties of the officer that the assistant officer assists in the event

such officer is unable to perform such responsibilities or duties, except that no assistant officer shall become a Director solely by virtue of being an assistant officer.

Section 4.10 Bonds

The Board may, in its discretion, require the Treasurer and any other officer to give bond in such amount and with such surety or sureties as may be satisfactory to the Board for the faithful discharge of the duties of the office and for the restoration to the Association, in case of the officer's death, resignation, retirement, or removal from office, of all books, papers, vouchers, money, and other property of whatever kind belonging to the Association in the officer's possession or under the officer's control.

Section 4.11 Removal of Officers

Any officer elected or appointed to office may be removed by the persons authorized under these Bylaws or the Association's Articles of Incorporation to elect or appoint such officers whenever in their judgment the best interest of the Association will be served.

Section 4.12 Executive Director

The Board shall elect in the manner described in this Section 4.12 an Executive Director to manage the operations of the Association. An ad hoc Search Committee appointed by the President and comprising an equal number of representatives from the Board of the Association and the Board of Commissioners of the Commission shall recommend to the Board of the Association the candidate for the position of Executive Director. The Board shall accept or reject the candidate recommended by the Search Committee.

The Board may terminate the appointment of the Executive Director, following an evaluative report by the Personnel Committee, with the approval of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Directors then in office and entitled to vote.

The Executive Director is an ex officio member of all Association committees and task forces, with voice but not vote, provided that the Executive Director shall not serve on any committee or task force when it is determining his or her compensation or evaluating his or her performance.

Article V: Committees

Section 5.1 Committees

The Association shall have the following standing committees: Officers Committee, Nominating Committee, Personnel Committee, Finance Committee, and Audit Committee. There shall be such other standing and ad hoc committees as the Board may deem advisable in the administration and conduct of the affairs of the Association. Such committees shall meet as necessary to accomplish their goals. The Board is authorized in its discretion to approve reimbursement for travel and

other actual expenses necessarily incurred by members of committees in attending committee meetings and in performing other official duties as such.

Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws or in the resolution creating the applicable committee, the Members shall elect committee members from among the persons nominated (i) by the Nominating Committee or (ii) if any Member presents a petition signed by at least five (5) Members and the written consent of the person(s) nominated, from the floor. The President shall appoint all committee chairpersons, except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws or in the resolution creating the applicable committee.

Upon expiration of their initial terms, committee chairpersons and members may be reelected to a committee for one additional term only. With the exception of the Officers Committee, persons who are not Directors are eligible to serve as committee members. Any person authorized to appoint the chairperson and/or members of any committee by these Bylaws or the resolution creating the applicable committee may appoint himself or herself as chairperson and/or committee member. The chairperson of each committee shall determine the date and place of all committee meetings. Each committee may adopt its own rules of procedure not inconsistent with these Bylaws.

Section 5.2 Limitation on Power of Committees

No committee shall have any power or authority as to the following:

- (a) the submission to the Members of any action requiring approval of the Members;
- (b) the creation or filling of vacancies in the Board;
- (c) the adoption, amendment, or repeal of the Bylaws;
- (d) the amendment or repeal of any resolution of the Board that by its terms is amendable or repealable only by the board; or
- (e) action on matters committed by the Bylaws or a resolution of the Board exclusively to another Committee of the Board.

Section 5.3 Officers Committee

The Officers Committee shall consist of the following officers of the Association: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The President shall serve as the chairperson of the Officers Committee. The Officers Committee may act for the Board between meetings. The Officers Committee shall meet at such times as the President may call or on petition of three (3) Officers Committee members. At least twenty-four (24) hours' oral or written notice shall be given for such meetings. A quorum for conducting business at a meeting of the Officers Committee shall be no fewer than three (3) voting members. The President shall present a full report of all decisions of the Officers Committee to the Board at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.

Section 5.4 Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consist of five (5) persons appointed by the President, provided, however, that two (2) members of the Nominating Committee shall be Directors of the Association, two (2) shall represent Members of the Association that do not have representation on the Board, and one (1) shall be a person who served on the previous Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall nominate the Directors, officers, and committee members not otherwise appointed under the terms of these Bylaws or in the resolution creating the applicable committee, as provided in Sections 3.3, 4.3, and 5.1 hereof, respectively.

Section 5.5 Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, immediate past President of the Association, the Commission Representative to ATS, and the immediate past Chair of the Commission on Accrediting. The Personnel Committee shall oversee the implementation of personnel policies of the Association, consult with the Executive Director regarding personnel issues, recommend compensation ranges, recommend changes to personnel policies to the Board, and evaluate and review the performance of the Executive Director.

Section 5.6 Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall consist of the President and the Treasurer of the Association, the Vice Chair of the Commission, and such additional persons with expertise in financial matters as may be appointed by the Board. The Finance Committee shall oversee and provide advice to the Association on financial matters. The Finance Committee shall regularly review and recommend to the Board policies to protect and enhance the assets of the Association.

Section 5.7 Audit Committee

The Audit Committee shall consist of three to five persons elected by the Members. Audit Committee members shall be persons knowledgeable about financial matters, a majority of whom shall be independent. The Audit Committee shall make recommendations to the Board regarding the selection of the Association's auditors, shall oversee the auditor's activities, shall set rules and processes for addressing complaints concerning accounting and internal control problems, and shall assume such other responsibilities as may be appropriate for an Audit Committee.

Article VI: Limitation of Personal Liability of Directors**Section 6.1 Limitation of Directors' Personal Liability**

A Director of the Association shall not be personally liable for monetary damages for any action taken un-

less the Director has breached or failed to perform the duties of his or her office under Chapter 57, Subchapter B of the NPCL, as in effect at the time of the alleged action by such Director, and the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct, or recklessness. Such limitation on liability does not apply to the responsibility or liability of a Director pursuant to any criminal statute or for payment of taxes pursuant to any Federal, state, or local law.

Section 6.2 Preservation of Rights

Any repeal or modification of this Article by the Association shall not adversely affect any right or protection existing at the time of such repeal or modification to which any Director or former Director may be entitled under this Article. The rights conferred by this Article shall continue as to any person who has ceased to be a Director of the Association and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of such person.

Article VII: Indemnification**Section 7.1 Mandatory Indemnification of Directors and Officers**

The Association shall indemnify, to the fullest extent now or hereafter permitted by law (including but not limited to the indemnification provided by Chapter 57, Subchapter D of the NPCL), each Director and/or officer (including each former Director or officer) of the Association who was or is or is threatened, pending, or completed action or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, by reason of the fact that the Director or officer is or was an authorized representative of the Association or is or was serving at the request of the Association as a representative of another domestic or foreign corporation for profit or not-for-profit, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, against all expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by the Director or officer in connection with such action, suit, or proceeding if such Director or officer acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interest of the Association and, with respect to any criminal proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, or conviction or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent shall not of itself create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that he or she reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interest of the corporation and, with respect to any criminal proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

Section 7.2 Mandatory Advancement of Expenses to Directors and Officers

The Association shall pay expenses (including attorneys' fees) incurred by a Director or officer of the Association referred to in Section 7.1 hereof in defending or appearing as a witness in any civil or criminal action, suit, or proceeding described in Section 7.1 hereof in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit, or proceeding, only upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of such Director or officer to repay all amounts advanced if it shall ultimately be determined that the Director or officer is not entitled to be indemnified by the Association as provided in Section 7.4 hereof.

Section 7.3 Permissive Indemnification and Advancement of Expenses

The Association may, as determined by the Board from time to time, indemnify, in full or in part, to the fullest extent now or hereafter permitted by law, any person who was or is or is threatened to be made a party to or a witness in, or is otherwise involved in, any threatened, pending, or completed action or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, by reason of the fact that such person is or was an authorized representative of the Association or is or was serving at the request of the Association as a representative of another domestic or foreign corporation for profit or not-for-profit, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, both as to action in his or her official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding such office or position, against all expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by such person in conjunction with such action, suit, or proceeding if such person acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interest of the Association and, with respect to any criminal proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The Association may, as determined by the Board from time to time, pay expenses incurred by any such person by reason of such person's participation in an action, suit, or proceeding referred to in this Section 7.3 in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit, or proceeding upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of such person to repay such amount if it shall ultimately be determined that such person is not entitled to be indemnified by the Association as provided in Section 7.4 hereof.

Section 7.4 Scope of Indemnification

Indemnification under this Article shall not be made by the Association in any case where a court determines that the alleged act or failure to act giving rise to the claim for indemnification is expressly prohibited by Chapter 57, Subchapter D of the NPCL or any successor statute as in effect at the time of such alleged action or failure to take action.

Section 7.5 Miscellaneous

Each Director and officer of the Association shall be deemed to act in such capacity in reliance upon such rights of indemnification and advancement of expenses as are provided in this Article. The rights of indemnification and advancement of expenses provided by this Article shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which any person seeking indemnification or advancement of expenses may be entitled under any agreement, vote of members, disinterested Directors, statute, or otherwise, both as to action in such person's official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding such office or position, and shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be an authorized representative of the Association and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of such person. Any repeal or modification of this Article by the members or the Board of the Association shall not adversely affect any right or protection existing at the time of such appeal or modification to which any person may be entitled under this Article.

Section 7.6 Definition of Authorized Representative

For the purposes of this Article, the term "authorized representative" shall mean a director, officer, or employee of the Association or of any corporation controlled by the Association, or a trustee, custodian, administrator, committeeman, or fiduciary of any employee benefit plan established and maintained by the Association or by any corporation controlled by the Association, or person serving another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise in any of the foregoing capacities at the request of the Association. The term "authorized representative" shall not include money managers or investment advisors (or any employees thereof) hired by the Association and shall not include agents of the Association unless indemnification thereof is expressly approved by the Board.

Section 7.7 Procedure for Effecting Indemnification

Unless ordered by a court, any indemnification under this Article VII or the NPCL shall be made only following a determination that the indemnification is proper in the circumstances because the person seeking indemnification has met the applicable standard of conduct. Such determination shall be made

- (a) by the Board by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of Directors who were not party to the action or proceeding;
- (b) if such a quorum is not obtainable or if obtainable and a majority vote of a quorum of disinterested Directors so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or
- (c) by the Membership.

Article VIII: Restrictions Regarding the Operations of the Association; Administration of Funds

Section 8.1 No Private or Political Beneficiaries

In keeping with the statement of purpose of the Association as set forth in its Articles of Incorporation, no part of the earnings or assets of the Association shall inure to the benefit of any private individual, and no substantial part of the activities of the Association shall be used for lobbying, and the Association shall not engage in any political campaign activities on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

Section 8.2 No Violation of Purposes

In no event and under no circumstances shall the Board make any distribution or expenditure, engage in any activity, hold any assets, or enter into any transaction whatsoever the effect of which under applicable federal laws then in force will cause the Association to lose its status as an organization to which contributions are deductible in computing the taxable income of the contributor for purposes of federal income taxation.

Section 8.3 Tax Records

The Association shall maintain at its principal office a copy of its application for exemption and all tax returns filed with the Internal Revenue Service. To the extent required by law, such documents shall be made available during regular business hours for inspection by any person requesting to see them.

Section 8.4 Annual Report

The Treasurer shall submit annually to the Board a statement containing those details required to be included under the provisions of the NPCL, as it may be amended from time to time or any successor statute governing Pennsylvania nonprofit corporations or these Bylaws.

Section 8.5 Books and Records

This Association shall keep correct and complete books and records of account and shall also keep minutes of the proceedings of the Members, the Board, and committees exercising the authority of the Board. The Association shall keep at its registered office the original or a copy of its Bylaws including amendments to date, certified by the Secretary of the Association, and a membership register, giving the names and addresses of all Members and the class and other details of membership. Every Member shall, upon verified written demand stating the purpose thereof, have a right to examine, in person, or by agent or attorney during the usual hours for business for any proper purpose, the membership register, books and records of account, and records of the proceedings of the Members and the Board, and to make copies or extracts therefrom. A proper purpose shall mean a purpose reasonably re-

lated to the interest of such person as a Member. Where an attorney or other agent is the person who seeks the right of inspection, the demand under oath shall be accompanied by a verified power of attorney or another writing authorizing the attorney or other agent to act on behalf of the Member.

Section 8.6 Definition of Code

Unless the context requires otherwise, terms used in this Article VIII of these Bylaws shall have the meanings ascribed to them in the Code. References to the Code in this Article shall be deemed to extend to corresponding provisions of any subsequent United States tax laws. The provisions of this Article shall apply notwithstanding other provisions of these Bylaws, if any, that are inconsistent.

Article IX: Bylaw Amendments

Section 9.1 Authority

The alteration, amendment, and/or repeal of these Bylaws may, from time to time, be proposed by the Board and approved by the Members, as set forth in Section 2.3.

Section 9.2 Notice

The Members of the Association shall be given at least thirty (30) days' prior written notice of any meeting of the Members at which proposed changes to the Bylaws of the Association are to be considered or acted upon. Such written notice shall include a copy of the proposed amendment or a summary of the changes to be effected thereby.

Article X: Dissolution

Section 10.1 Distribution of Assets upon Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of the Association or in the winding up of its affairs or other liquidation of its assets, the Association's property shall not be conveyed to any organization created or operated for profit or to any individual for less than the fair market value of such property. All assets remaining after all debts and expenses of the corporation have been paid or provided for shall be conveyed or distributed by the Board, in descending order of priority (i) to the Commission if it is then recognized as an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code; or (ii) equally among the Members that then qualify for the exemption afforded by Section 501(c)(3) of the Code, or in the case of Members that are Canadian entities, are equivalent to 501(c)(3) organizations; or (iii) to one or more organizations qualifying for the exemption afforded by Section 501(c)(3) of the Code. Any such assets not so distributed shall be disposed of pursuant to an order by a court of competent jurisdiction, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said court shall determine.

Article XI: Reserved Powers

Section 11.1 Reserved Powers

Pursuant to the Bylaws of the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools, the Association has the following powers with respect to the Commission:

- (a) To approve all amendments to the Bylaws or the Articles of Incorporation of the Commission;
- (b) To approve all fundamental changes with respect to the Commission, as that term is defined in the NPCL.

Association Procedures Related to Membership

Procedures Related to Membership in The Association of Theological Schools

I. Membership Eligibility Criteria of The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (the "Association")

- A. The school is located in the United States or Canada, offers graduate, professional theological degrees, and is demonstrably engaged in educating professional leadership for communities of the Christian and Jewish faiths.
- B. The school has operated long enough, typically three or more years, for at least one group of students to have earned all necessary credits and to have graduated with the Master of Divinity degree or the first theological degree offered by the school.
- C. The school has an adequate number of properly qualified professors working full time at postbaccalaureate theological education. Normally, this adequacy will be represented by the equivalent of six to ten full-time faculty.
- D. The school has a student body of sufficient size to provide for a community of peer learning appropriate for graduate education. Ordinarily, all students in the theological school shall hold an accredited baccalaureate degree.
- E. The educational program of the school consists of graduate-level studies in the broad range of the theological disciplines designed for preparation for ministry.
- F. The school evidences openness to the community of theological schools as demonstrated by all of the following:
 1. regular participation of faculty in activities of professional or learned societies;
 2. an openness to cooperative relationships with current Association member schools; and
 3. a commitment to participate in the larger community of theological education, and especially a recognition of the diversity that characterizes the community.
- G. The school conducts an educational program of quality, stability, and permanence by having:
 1. adequate physical facilities;
 2. a library that is adequate in the following ways to support graduate degree pro-

grams: holdings, staff, access to electronic information resources, and space for collection, study, and services;

3. adequate financial resources; and

4. other institutional and educational resources required for the program.

H. The school has a governance and administrative structure appropriate to the institution and characteristic of North American institutions and a degree of autonomy sufficient to determine and carry out its basic purposes, including authority to oversee its academic programs.

II. Associate Membership

- A. Associate Members are institutions in the United States and Canada that have met the membership eligibility criteria prescribed by the Association, have been recommended for Associate Membership by the Board of Directors (the "Board"), and have been elected by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Association present and voting at a meeting of the Association. Associate Membership is granted for a term of five years. The term may be renewed by action of the Board.
- B. Attaining Associate Membership
 1. The chief administrative officer of an institution initiates the process by requesting an application from the Association.
 2. The school shall complete the application form and submit it for review by staff of the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools (the "Commission").
 3. If the Commission staff determines, on the basis of the written application, that the school may qualify for Associate Membership, a one-day staff visit will be scheduled. The staff visit will involve an assessment of the school's compliance with the membership eligibility criteria, as well as its stability and future viability.
 4. In consultation with the Commission staff, the school shall provide letters of support from Association member institutions.
 5. The Board will review the school's application, the Commission staff report, letters

of support from Association member institutions, and the school's signed waiver and consent form regarding appeals as a basis for the Board's decision. The Board may take one of several actions:

- a. propose the school for Associate Membership to the Members of the Association;
 - b. delay action for clearly stated reasons, permitting the school to correct any deficiencies and resubmit its application; or
 - c. deny the request for Associate Membership. (When an application has been denied, an interval, to be determined by the Board, will be required before any new application will be considered.)
- C. Maintaining Associate Membership
1. The institution shall continue to meet the membership eligibility criteria and conduct its degree programs in conformity to the Commission's Degree Program Standards.
 2. The institution shall complete the Commission's Annual Report Forms.
 3. The institution shall pay annual dues as prescribed by the Association.
 4. At the end of each five-year term of its Associate Membership, if the institution has not petitioned the Board of Commissioners for Candidate for Accredited Status, it shall make a comprehensive report to the ATS Board, petitioning for renewal as an Associate Member.
- D. Candidate Status
- In response to a petition from an Associate Member school, the Board of Commissioners may confer Candidate for Accredited Status on the school.
- E. Withdrawal from membership
1. A school may, on its own initiative, withdraw as an Associate Member by written notice to the Board.
 2. If the Board determines that an institution should move toward candidacy but it declines to do so, the Board may recommend to the Association that the institution be withdrawn from membership.

III. Full Membership

- A. Full Members are institutions in the United States and Canada that meet the Membership Eligibility Criteria prescribed by the Association and have been reclassified as a Full Member of the Association by virtue of being accredited by the Commission.
- B. Maintaining Full Membership
 1. The institution shall continue to meet the Membership Eligibility Criteria and to be accredited by the Commission.
 2. The institution shall complete the Commission's Annual Report Forms.
 3. The institution shall pay annual dues as prescribed by the Association.
- C. Withdrawal from membership

A school may, on its own initiative, withdraw as a Full Member by written notice to the Board.

IV. Policy on disclosure and confidentiality

- A. Members

Each Member institution shall publish its formal status with the Association. Full Members shall disclose their complete accredited status in their bulletin, calendar, or catalog and give the Association's mailing address and phone number. References shall comply with the designations in the *Membership List* as to membership status.
- B. The Association
 1. The Association will publish a list of Associate Member schools in the *Membership List*.
 2. Upon inquiry, the Association will release the following information about member or applying institutions:
 - a. Membership status.
 - b. The dates when Associate Membership, Candidacy Status, and Full Membership were obtained.
 3. The *Membership List* will identify institutions removed from Associate or Full Membership or withdrawing from Associate or Full Membership.

Association Policy Guidelines

Introduction

Over the course of time, the members of the Association have adopted policy statements to serve as advice and counsel to the membership in a variety of areas. Because policy statements are for “advice and counsel,” they are formally distinct from the Standards of Accreditation and, consequently, were renamed *Policy Guidelines* at the 2010 Biennial Meeting.

Once adopted, a policy guideline is published until removed by formal action of the members of the Association. The year each policy guideline was adopted at a Biennial Meeting of the Association appears in a footnote on the first page of each.

Policy guidelines are offered by the members of ATS as pragmatic operational advice and counsel to member schools. Unlike compliance with the Standards of Accreditation, member schools are not accountable for implementing the guidelines in their policies or procedures. The guidelines are not intended to establish best practices applicable in all jurisdictions or create standards against which member schools’ conduct would be measured. Policy guidelines are not intended and should not be interpreted as legal advice. Member schools should consult their own legal counsel knowledgeable in the applicable law of the state(s) or province(s) where the school operates before implementing policies suggested by these guidelines.

Academic Freedom and Tenure*

The roots of freedom

Freedom has been affirmed, developed, and safeguarded by many persons and groups concerned with justice, with due process, and with commitment to free inquiry. In many lands, the protection of the rights of citizens and groups is provided for in the Constitution, in legal precedents and practices, and in the charters and bylaws of educational and other institutions.

There also are vital religious roots of freedom. Israel's prophets insisted upon speaking the truth of God despite the opposition of those in authority. The early Christians insisted that they were required to obey God rather than men. Freedom, as viewed by Jew or Christian, is as much a gift of God as is life itself.

Recognizing that there are various theological approaches to freedom, theological schools acknowledge that they share a common concern for realizing the highest possible standards of freedom in all institutions of education. Theological schools also acknowledge that the grounds for their understanding of freedom, and thus of academic freedom, need to be stated clearly and adhered to.

The following are fundamental to a Jewish and Christian view of academic freedom:

- I. Both Jewish theology and Christian theology direct all thought and life toward God, the source of truth, the judge of all human thoughts, and the ultimate end of all theological inquiry.
- II. The freedom of the person of faith always involves a commensurate responsibility toward God and neighbor. It is never the freedom merely to be left alone or to ignore basic obligations.
- III. Freedom has specific import in the context of a religious confession of faith. Theological schools may acknowledge specific confessional adherence as laid down in the charters and constitutions of the schools. A concept of freedom appropriate to theological schools will respect this confessional loyalty, both in the institutions and among their individual members. At the same time, no confessional standard obviates the requirement for responsible liberty of conscience in the Jewish or the Christian community or the practice of the highest ideals of academic freedom.

- IV. While freedom must ultimately be realized through the spirit and the loyalties of men and women, it must take form and be protected through concrete standards of institutional practice. Every statement of such standards moves somewhat in the sphere of law and regulation. The effectiveness of such stated principles depends finally upon the dedication within the theological school to a genuine concern for liberty of mind and spirit in theological teaching.

Principles of academic freedom

- I. Freedom of teaching and research
 - A. Central to the vocation of the theological school and to its faculty members and students is the inquiry for truth. This inquiry is both a communal and an individual vocation.
 - B. In pursuit of the inquiry for truth, a theological school which has a confessional or doctrinal standard may expect that its faculty subscribe to that standard; and the requirement for such subscription should be mutually understood at the time of their affiliation with the institution. The question of a faculty member's adherence to the standard may be opened according to specified procedures.

Any challenge to the confessional or doctrinal regularity of a faculty member should be subject to open hearing before the faculty member's colleagues and before the governing board of the school after consultation with students.

When controversy arises within a religious body concerning the understanding of its confessional or doctrinal standards, the governing body of the school which subscribes to such standards should provide its faculty members with all appropriate procedural safeguards for the protection of their academic freedom.

- C. Faculty members should be free to teach, carry on research, and publish, subject to adequate performance of their academic duties as agreed upon with the school.
- D. Teachers should have freedom in the classroom to discuss the subjects in which they have competence and may claim to be specialists without harassment or limitations.¹

* Adopted as advice and counsel by the Association in 1976.

- E. Teachers should be free to express and act upon their conscientious convictions as individual citizens, although they should realize that there is the tacit representation of their institution in whatever is said.²
- F. Faculty members should take care lest they violate each other's academic freedom by covert interference with their colleagues' work or through bypassing the orderly processes of full faculty discussion of curriculum, appointments, and other basic matters.³

II. Appointments and promotions

A. Appointments

- 1. Power to appoint faculty members is specified in the charters and constitutions of the schools, and is usually lodged in the trustees or board of directors on recommendation of the administration.
- 2. Faculty participation in the recommendation of new faculty members shall be assured by the establishment in writing of a specific procedure for such participation. Consultation with students should also be a normal part of the process.
- 3. The initial appointment to a faculty should be for a definite term, although this principle may be waived in the case of experienced persons of proved competence.
- 4. Theological schools should make serious efforts to appoint women faculty members, faculty members from minority groups, and young faculty members so that academic discourse may be broadened and the freedom to teach and to do research be extended to groups not now adequately represented.

B. Promotions

- 1. There should be a stated policy concerning the criteria for promotion, which would include recognition of teaching ability and service, concern for the ministry, interest in educational development, spiritual and moral leadership, scholarly research and production, and promise of growing competence.
- 2. Faculty participation in the recommendation of faculty members for promotion shall be assured by the establishment in writing of a specific procedure for such participation. Consultation with students should also be a normal part of the process.

- 3. Provision for faculty ranks (e.g., instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, professor) offers a recognized, orderly, and useful arrangement for academic administration and promotion in which institutional flexibility and recognition of faculty service are both preserved.
- 4. At stated intervals there should be review and evaluation of the performance of all faculty members. This evaluation should serve as the normal basis for decisions concerning the promotion of faculty members.

The purpose of periodic review and evaluation is to provide regular occasions for the peers of faculty members to offer counsel on ways to improve their work, to note strengths and limitations, to lend encouragement and support, and to identify any serious deficiencies that exist or may develop.

- 5. The school administration and the faculty should have a mutual understanding of the general policies of the institution as to salary level and the bases of increase or decrease in salary.

III. Tenure

- A. After the expiration of a probationary period, during which careful evaluation is to take place, faculty members should be granted tenure. Tenure (often called "indefinite tenure") means appointment to serve until resignation or retirement, with employment not terminated prior to such time. (See IV.A.1. for a statement of adequate cause.)

Theological schools may wish to adopt the policy, with careful safeguards against abuse, of continuing faculty members on a term contract beyond the stated probationary period and prior to the conferral of tenure. (See III.C.2.a.)

- B. The provision for appointment on indefinite tenure is one way in which institutions safeguard their faculties' freedom to teach, to inquire, and to organize their academic programs. It is not intended to confer personal privilege.

It assures faculty members that they will not be subject to dismissal for reasons other than the violation of the basic obligations, which are properly laid upon all teachers and that they may normally expect to pursue their teaching vocation where they are until a change is mutually agreed upon by them and the institution.

This provision for indefinite tenure is an arrangement that is justified by the above considerations and by its fruits in practice. It is not an absolute guarantee either of freedom or its right use. It may lead to difficulties when professors do not fulfill expectations and cling to positions that they are no longer fitted to fill in an adequate way.

Faculties should seek ways to insure so far as possible that the privilege tenure grants will not be abused, or result in damage to the function and efficiency of the institutions.

C. Accepted practice

1. The precise terms and conditions of every appointment (including any limitation on academic freedom that may exist for any reason whatsoever) should be stated in writing and be in the possession of both the institution and the teacher at the time the appointment is made.
2. After appointment to full-time faculty membership the probationary period should not exceed the agreed upon maximum adopted by the school.
 - a. This period normally should not exceed seven years in the institution. If, however, after a probationary period of more than three years in one or more institutions a teacher is called to another school, it may be agreed in writing that the new appointment is for a probationary period of not more than four years.

Theological schools may find it appropriate to extend the total period of nontenured faculty service beyond the seven years under carefully established guidelines, in order to provide a somewhat longer period for the faculty member to have demonstrated the competence and accomplishments associated with the award of tenure. The total period should in no case exceed ten years for full-time faculty members. The ten years might consist of seven probationary years, followed by a three-year term at high rank, after which tenure will be awarded or the contract be permitted to expire.

Any such extension of the period of faculty service beyond the normal seven years must provide for protec-

tion of the rights of the individual's academic freedom through the process and must be carried through on the basis of explicit guidelines clearly understood by the persons under such extended term arrangements.

- b. Whatever the specified number of years may be, the plan should be clearly understood and should provide a definite safeguard against any situation in which a teacher is kept on indefinitely without tenure and without knowledge of what the prospects are in relation to the school.
 - c. At least twelve months prior to the expiration of the last year of the probationary period (or of the extended term appointment referred to under 2.a. above, if any), notice should be given whether or not the faculty member is to be continued in service.
3. Termination of membership in a faculty may be by:
- a. Expiration of a term appointment;
 - b. Dismissal for adequate cause, in which case guidelines are set down in section IV of this paper;
 - c. Resignation, in which case the policy guideline "Faculty Resignations, Leaves, and Retirements" provides guidelines for faculty members and administrative officers;
 - d. Retirement, in which case the policy guideline "Faculty Resignations, Leaves, and Retirements" may serve to indicate guidelines;
 - e. Termination of service because of financial exigency or in connection with the merger of institutions. (See policy guideline, "Faculty Reductions During Financial Crisis.")

IV. Dismissals

A. Principles

1. Grounds for dismissal should be stated in the conditions of faculty employment and clearly understood. These should include incompetence, moral delinquency, and failure properly to perform duties.

2. Dismissal procedures should be clearly stated and rigorously observed. In the hearings involved in these procedures there should be representatives of the peers and colleagues of the professor involved. Student evaluations of the faculty member should be available to those conducting the hearing and to the faculty member.
- B. When all personal attempts at negotiation and reconciliation between the administration and faculty member(s) as parts of a religious community have failed, the welfare of the school and faculty may require putting into use clearly defined dismissal proceedings. The following description of proceedings is meant to be suggestive for such definition. Acceptable procedures should provide for:
1. Informal inquiry and counsel by a committee chosen by the faculty.
 2. When the informal efforts have failed, a clear statement of grounds for removal submitted to the person under notice of dismissal.
 3. Hearing by a committee that includes adequate representation by the faculty in one of two ways:
 - a. A committee of the faculty acting as a fact-finding body, or
 - b. A joint committee of trustees and faculty acting as a fact-finding body.

Student evaluation should be available to such fact-finding bodies.
 4. Recognition that once all of these measures have been taken, the faculty member is still entitled to employ other avenues such as judicatories, civil law courts, etc.
 5. Permission for the person under notice of dismissal to continue at work until proceedings are complete unless immediate harm to self or others is threatened by that continuance. Any suspension should be with pay.
 6. In clear cases of need, the salary of the dismissed faculty member should be continued for up to one year beyond the effective date of dismissal.

APPENDIX

In lieu of the statement formerly carried representing the counsel of the American Association of University Professors and the Association of America Colleges in 1958, ATS recommends careful consideration of the "Statement on Procedural Standards in Faculty Dismissal Proceedings," published in the *AAUP Bulletin*, Winter, 1968, 439–441. This is a considerably longer and more helpful statement than that previously carried by ATS.

ENDNOTES

1. "As members of an academic institution, professors seek above all to be effective teachers and scholars. Although professors observe the stated regulations of the institution, provided the regulations do not contravene academic freedom, they maintain their right to criticize and seek revision." *AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics*, 2009, IV.
2. "As members of their community, professors have the rights and obligations of other citizens. Professors measure the urgency of these obligations in the light of their responsibilities to their subject, to their students, to their profession, and to their institution. When they speak or act as private persons, they avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting for their college or university. As citizens engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, professors have a particular obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom." *AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics*, 2009, V.
3. Regarding the academic freedom of students, see ATS policy statement, "Termination of Student Tenure"; *AAUP Bulletin*, Summer, 1968, 258–261.

The Accreditation of Theological Schools and Ecclesiastical Assessment of Schools*

Introduction

The relationships between theological schools¹ and the churches are so diverse as to defy generalization. In recent years both institutions have undergone profound changes and both find it necessary to rethink and reformulate elements of the relationships to clarify the twofold context of responsibilities of theological schools as rooted in higher education and in the life and work of the church. The following considerations will be helpful for member schools in describing this twofold context in which the institutions exist.

The context of higher education

- I. The scope of theological education as a whole has changed significantly during the past quarter century. Apart from those seminaries that continue to admit only students preparing for ordination, many schools provide theological education for persons with diverse vocational and personal aims. This broadened function has subtly but significantly affected the identity of theological schools as educational institutions because their mission now often includes broadened purposes that they share with graduate professional schools in general.
- II. Theological schools have come to value peer assessment and to judge themselves by standards shared by graduate professional schools as a whole. Such peer assessment is the function of ATS that reflects both the standards of graduate and professional schools as well as a sensitivity to the denominational standards of churches for ministry. Schools have sought such peer assessment without compromising their loyalty to their denominations. In fact, church affiliated schools understand themselves as serving their respective churches better because they hold themselves accountable to standards of quality and governance established by accrediting agencies such as ATS. These developments have been in keeping with the dual context in which theological schools exist and from which they derive their identity—namely, higher education and the church.
- III. This accountability in the context of higher education to which theological schools are committed is achieved by accreditation.²

The context of church

- IV. There are two characteristics of the Jewish-Christian community that are particularly notable today. First is the long-standing acceptance of ecumenism. Second is the recent renewed denominational self-consciousness as churches reaffirm their distinctive religious heritage and ethos. Reflecting these trends, theological education has become decidedly more ecumenical with respect to both faculty and students as schools draw on scholarly resources from various traditions. Likewise, many theological schools that are related to a specific church are educating the leadership of other churches as well as their own. Conversely, the future leadership of a given church may be educated in schools representing a wide range of ecclesiastical identities. The churches for their part are showing increased concern for the continuation of their religious heritage and ethos. It is not surprising that this concern has as one of its focal points those institutions where the future leadership is being formed—namely, the theological schools. The communication of a church’s tradition is largely shaped by leaders educated in these schools.
- V. Churches have also established according to their individual polities means of determining and insuring the effectiveness of their theological schools to serve the leadership needs of churches and especially the requisites of ordination (Church Assessment).

Purpose of policy guideline

The intent of this policy guideline is (a) to distinguish between accreditation as a function of peers and church assessment and (b) to stress the conditions by which accreditation as a form of accountability is honored and maintained without prejudice to the churches. While acknowledging other forms of assessment, it does not address questions regarding the nature of assessment that is appropriate to ecclesiastical bodies, which may see fit to evaluate not only graduates but the schools themselves.

But policy guidelines alone, no matter how carefully phrased, will not assure the health of schools. Even the most robust theological schools are also fragile because their strength derives from a web of relationships nurtured by trust and self-restraint. Indeed, it is doubtful whether any school could mature into full strength in

* Adopted as advice and counsel by the Association in 1990.

an atmosphere in which all parties—church, board of trustees, administration, faculty, and students—dealt with one another merely on a juridical basis, that is, by insisting on exercising fully their “legal rights.” If relationships within a school develop in healthy ways because of mutual trust, self-restraint, dialogue, and shared goals, then healthy relationships between schools and churches depend even more on these qualities.

Guiding principles

The following principles, consonant with the foregoing consideration are offered to assist ATS schools in clarifying their relations with churches.

- I. ATS affirms the diverse patterns of governance and accountability of member schools in relation to their respective churches and the right of schools and churches having no formal affiliation to develop relationships consistent with the integrity of the school.
- II. ATS acknowledges that ecclesiastical judicatories and dioceses have a legitimate expectation that professional personnel graduating from ATS schools be prepared to meet qualifications for service within their respective churches.
- III. ATS accreditation affirms the character of theological schools as educational institutions, no matter how intimately affiliated with or administered by church bodies. The schools and the churches share the responsibility of assuring that those elements requisite for a healthy graduate professional school are maintained. Central to these requisites is the preservation of the integrity of the institutional and educational processes of theological schools (i.e., the freedom and responsibility to determine in accordance with the defining tradition and duly constituted internal procedures of the school who shall teach, who shall be taught, what shall be taught, and upon what conditions the appropriate degrees or certificates shall be awarded). These are the conditions that are recognized as essential by the higher education community.
- IV. ATS affirms that the responsibility for determining the qualification for ordination and other nonordained ministerial roles, and for ascertaining who has met them, lies with the church. Where appropriate and in accordance with church polity, church affiliated schools should establish with their judicatories and dioceses the means whereby they as schools fulfill their ecclesiastical responsibilities. This may include an assessment of candidates for ministry in addition to their general educational preparation.

- V. ATS acknowledges that should appropriate church judicatories have evidence that graduates of a member school consistently lack the minimum requirements for service in the church, they have the responsibility of bringing the disparity to the attention of the school. Care should be taken that communication be respectful of appropriate levels of church judicatory and theological school authority and responsibility. Church judicatories should refrain from *unilaterally* imposing curricular requirements or changes in the attempt to address such deficiencies.
- VI. ATS acknowledges the right of member schools to seek multiple accreditation from relevant accrediting bodies recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation or appropriate Canadian agencies, as well as the right to seek certification for discrete professional programs from appropriate certifying bodies (e.g., Clinical Pastoral Education programs).
 - A. ATS believes that there is a fundamental difference between accreditation within an association of peer institutions and church assessment. The evaluation by peers, which is an integral part of the accreditation practices and traditions, must be honored as a distinctive function and service. We believe ecclesiastical bodies have the right to designate those seminaries most appropriate for the training of their ministers, but that procedures of church assessment should not preempt, substitute for, or unduly interfere with the accreditation process.
 - B. ATS regards it as fundamentally inappropriate for member schools to be subjected to *accreditation* from any nonpeer body or agency, ecclesiastical or other. *Evaluation*, however, for institutional purposes may well come from ecclesiastical bodies or others.
 - C. In any case in which an ecclesiastical body or agency observes substantive and continuing deficiencies in the academic quality or institutional integrity of an ATS member school, notice should be given to the school and may be given to ATS for proper assessment and appropriate action. Ecclesiastical bodies have the right to expect prompt and thoughtful response from both parties regarding such representation.
- VII. ATS understands that it may be difficult to determine whether a member school is an “appropriate” place for a person of a given church to prepare for service, since this involves the long-range compatibility of its graduates with the ethos of the church. Nonetheless, ATS member schools (especially non-church affiliated) are encouraged to develop colle-

gial relations with those churches whose constituents they educate to foster mutual understanding, trust, and continuing engagement in the mutual endeavor of preparing persons for ministry.

ENDNOTES

1. As the inclusive term, *theological schools* is used to designate divinity schools, seminaries, theological colleges, and theological faculties.
2. Within the academic community, accreditation has a precise and formal meaning. It is the means by which institutions of higher education voluntarily associate as peer groups to exercise self-accountability for the quality and integrity of educational programs, services, and institutional life. Based on peer assessment, this accountability is ordered both by standards formulated and adopted by

member schools, and by practices and procedures defined by long-standing traditions of North American higher education. For The Association of Theological Schools, it is both a process and a status. As a process, accreditation is a comprehensive assessment of an institution according to standards and criteria that are essential to attaining quality theological education. The ATS Standards of Accreditation and the Procedures Related to Membership and Accreditation are published in *ATS Bulletin*, part 1. As a status, accreditation is conferred on an institution that in the judgment of qualified peers meets or exceeds the standards of the Association. It is an expression of confidence that an institution is guided by appropriate and well-defined mission and purposes, maintains resources that are required for them, and that is ordered by conditions, procedures, and practices that enable and ensure the fulfillment of the purposes to which a theological school is committed.

Disability and Theological Education*

Disability and theological education: toward a fully inclusive community

Recognizing that all fall short of God's intention for creation, this policy guideline asks ATS schools to live toward a vision of inclusion of all God's people in theological education. This policy guideline further calls upon each ATS member school to welcome people with disabilities into the communal life and mission of the institution. It also invites schools to become models for their religious constituents regarding ministry to and with persons who have disabilities. Indeed, it is a theological call for each school to work toward the fullest possible inclusion of all God's people in its work and witness. Disability is both an individual and a community issue. Schools should become inclusive communities where all qualified people can learn and serve.

Theological schools are communities of faith and learning, guided by a theological vision.¹ The Jewish and Christian concept of God is one of compassionate love showing special regard for persons who are marginalized in any fashion. At the conclusion of the Genesis witness to creation, God considers the natural order and calls it all good. God takes special delight in the creation of persons as made in the image of God, each with unique gifts and capabilities. The ministry of Christ demonstrates that divine hospitality is available to all persons and that human barriers designating some as inferior are forever destroyed. The resurrection shows us the power of God to overcome all human attempts at limiting God's love, even death itself. The fellowship of the faithful is charged to foster the giftedness of all within the community that all may worship and serve in response to God's call. If issues of disability are central to understanding both divine care and the character of the church, then certainly issues of disability should play a crucial role in Christian ministerial formation.

Mission

Because God's church welcomes all people, the mission of a theological school ought to attend to the contributions and needs of all its constituents: students, staff, faculty, administrators, board members, ecclesial representatives, donors, family members, and visitors to the campus—including those who live with disability. Member schools should examine their mission statements, and any interpretive expansion on them, to ensure that qualified persons with disabilities are not excluded on account of those disabilities from educa-

tion preparing them for the ministries of the church. Schools should also prepare men and women for ministry with attention to the unique gifts and needs of persons with disabilities who will be present in their congregations and communities.

Different governmental and other entities use different definitions of what constitutes a "disability."² This policy guideline is not legal advice, nor does it seek to describe the legal obligations of member schools with respect to persons with disabilities. Each member school is encouraged to seek its own legal counsel and to be informed of its legal obligations in that regard. Rather, this policy guideline is aspirational in nature. It is intended to outline the goals by which theological schools can make theological education possible for persons with disabilities who possess the gifts and abilities for ministry. To that end, this policy guideline should be understood to be as inclusive as reasonably possible in terms of defining the scope of persons with disabilities who should receive from member schools welcome, understanding, and assistance.

Recruitment, admission, hiring, and retention of people living with disabilities

A shared mission among theological schools is to identify and recruit students and faculty who will be effective religious leaders, contribute to theological wisdom, and provide ministerial service. Students and faculty members living with disability bring opportunity for new theological insight and understanding.

Schools retain the freedom to make reasonable judgments about students' appropriate potential for ministry, including spiritual maturity, moral integrity, and ministerial capacity. Qualified students with disabilities should have potential access to theological education and should be recruited with the same care and enthusiasm as other students. Students with disabilities should apply for admission under the same guidelines and careful screening as other students to determine whether they have the gifts and readiness for life and learning in a theological community and for future religious leadership.

Likewise, while schools also retain the freedom to make reasonable judgments about the appropriate potential and qualifications of faculty, qualified persons with disabilities should be sought and equally considered as faculty members, administrators, board

* Adopted as advice and counsel by the Association in 2008.

members, and staff. They should be recruited with the same intentionality as other underrepresented groups in theological education.

Curriculum and outcomes

Graduate theological schools equip future religious leaders. The curriculum, however, has usually included limited or no attention to equipping those leaders with knowledge about the human experience of disability.³ Curricular attention to issues of disability and interaction with persons living with disabilities cultivate the capacity of leaders to respond in ministry, teaching, and congregational settings.

Courses specifically focused on disability are valuable and necessary, but equally important is infusing knowledge about the experience of disability throughout the curriculum. When people with disabilities are members of the educational community and interact with others in the educational setting, they precipitate generative discourse that is, itself, a powerful curricular resource. Faculty can enhance students’ awareness and understanding by weaving the subject of human disability into their courses.⁴ The growing body of scholarship about theology and disability provides an important resource for curriculum development.

Schools should develop a process for assessing their efforts to include the contributions of persons with disabilities and to respond appropriately to their needs, including (1) advances in curriculum development and formation for effective ministry to and with persons with disabilities, (2) the school’s progress in recruiting qualified persons with disabilities, including students, staff, and faculty, and (3) the impact on students and their ministries from the greater presence of persons with disabilities in the seminary community.

Removing barriers to participation

Member schools should strive to provide access to all aspects of seminary life for those living with disabilities by removing barriers to their fuller participation in the community, unless doing so would result in an undue hardship to the seminary or fundamentally alter the seminary’s programs and its requirements. This may include but is not limited to changes in customary practice, the normal routine of activities and events, and the individuals’ environment, and may include but is not limited to the classroom, living quarters, chapel, library, activities, and services. Making any such changes is not meant to limit the responsibility for appropriate bodies to determine students’ qualifications, readiness, or fitness for ministry.

Schools should have a clear set of guidelines and a process for responding to students who present the need for such changes and services. Schools should support

faculty and staff with training and resources to deal appropriately and sensitively with students who have special educational needs.

Access and physical environment

Theological schools should strive to eliminate physical or architectural barriers that exclude or deter people who live with a disability and, in other appropriate ways, provide a physically hospitable environment for study, work, worship, and everyday activities. Schools should address environmental barriers related to parking, steps, doorways, bathrooms, and accessibility to classrooms, offices, library, food service, living quarters, and social and worship spaces. Technology can assist persons with disabilities to have full access to institutional resources, but attention should be given to ensure that access to technology and its ease of use are readily available to all in the community.

An accessibility audit of the campus can identify (1) needed modifications, (2) creative approaches to alter customary patterns, and (3) priorities for the future. Any audit should involve consultation with people with disabilities in the seminary or broader community.

Financial commitment

This policy acknowledges the varying financial circumstances among ATS member schools and the possible costs associated with making facilities and programs accessible to persons with disabilities. Schools must make their own decisions concerning what is financially possible and appropriate. Financial constraints, however, should not unduly prohibit schools from making the commitments necessary to becoming environments that employ and educate qualified persons living with disability and developing the necessary resources to make the vision a reality. Schools should not overlook potential resources and partner organizations in their communities that might provide expertise and assistance in meeting a range of institutional needs.

Seminary community awareness

Effective theological education requires a welcoming, supportive, and enabling institutional environment. To include persons living with disabilities, schools must intentionally consider the necessary steps to ensure a hospitable community and to identify and remove barriers of attitude. Schools should provide appropriate opportunities to raise awareness and understanding of the gifts and needs that will accompany the presence of persons with disabilities in the school community. For staff, students, and faculty, this will mean training and awareness opportunities that provide theological grounding and practical equipping that will enhance the school’s inclusion of persons with disabilities. Special attention should be given to personnel prac-

tices that open the workplace in theological schools to persons with disabilities. Assistance should be offered to faculty to identify and implement strategies for providing hospitable learning environments and sensitive pedagogies for students with disabilities. These strategies should attend to classrooms, study experiences, and contextual learning settings. Attention should also be given to formation issues in the student community that include broadened understanding of persons living with disabilities.

Relationships with church bodies

Theological students living with a disability should have the support of their appropriate judicatory or denominational offices. As appropriate to the church relationship of the seminary, theological schools may serve as advocates and interpreters on behalf of students who may be negotiating processes with church officials and committees that are unaccustomed to working with candidates who have a disability. Care should be taken to consult with each student before information is shared with a denominational body. The seminary might help to provide continuing education of clergy regarding ministry to and with persons in their congregations who live with disabilities. Seminaries could also seek to give leadership in their church bodies to raise awareness and foster action around issues of inclusion for persons with disabilities. In many ways, the seminary can become a model for the broader community.

ENDNOTES

1. Commission on Accrediting, "Standards of Accreditation," Standard 1, section 1, *Bulletin*, part 1 (Pittsburgh, PA: The Association of Theological Schools).
2. The World Health Organization defines disability as "any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in a manner or

within the range considered normal for a human being" (www.who.int/en). The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines disability as "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual such as walking, speaking, and breathing; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment" (www.ada.gov/pubs/ada.htm). See also *Loving Justice: The ADA and the Religious Community*, Ginny Thornburgh, ed. (Washington, DC: National Organization on Disability, 1996). The ADA has an information line, staffed by the Civil Rights Division of the US Department of Justice: 800-514-0301 (voice) and 1-800-514-0383 (TDD). The province of Ontario bases a definition of disability on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), which views disability as the interrelationship between body functions, activities, and social participation: "a limitation in activity as a result of a health problem or condition" (www.who.int/classifications/icf). Human Resources and Social Development Canada, a governmental department, "considers people to have a disability if they have a physical or mental condition or a health problem that restricts their ability to perform activities that are normal for their age in Canadian society" (www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/hip/odi/documents/PALS/PALS003.shtml).

3. Survey of Theological Education and People with Disabilities (Birmingham, AL: The Center for Religion and Disability, Inc., 2003, 2005), Robert C. Anderson and W. Daniel Blair, principal researchers.
4. A multifaceted approach toward inclusion could include activities such as encouraging faculty and students to include disability topics in their research; chapel services led by people with disabilities; special courses or symposia dealing with theology, disability, and religious life; teaching how people with disabilities can also minister to others rather than simply being the objects of care; or continuing education about disability for community clergy.

Faculty Reductions During Financial Crisis*

Rationale and goals

1. Proactively leading institutions in making difficult yet necessary changes to the finances of theological schools may prevent them from reaching severe financial crises. When extreme financial crisis warrants, the following principles and practices may help guide an institution in making those difficult decisions to balance the survival of the school with the protection of its employees.
2. Financial exigency is declared when an institution needs to take extraordinary action to reduce expenditures and preserve resources.[†]
3. This policy guideline is in full harmony and compliance with the mission and standards of the Association.

Guiding principles

1. Fundamental to the determination of the need for reductions of tenured faculty or contracted staff is a careful and credible statement of the nature and dimension of the financial exigency of the school. Appropriate constituencies of the school should be involved in understanding the facts if a declaration of financial exigency is to be deemed credible. Adopting a collaborative approach to this challenge may increase community-wide trust and support.
2. It should be understood that eliminating contracts of employment may be necessary for the long-term survival of the institution.
3. Institutions should focus on the viability, health, and integrity of the whole enterprise of education for ministry while balancing institutional survival with fair treatment of faculty and contracted staff members.
4. A flexible, equitable, and nondiscriminatory process that is consistent with the overall mission and values of the school should be adopted for making decisions about reductions of faculty or contracted staff members.
5. Appropriate amounts of time and resources should be spent on strengthening current revenue streams while developing new, sustainable revenue sources.

6. Mergers or redefining the institutional mission may be additional considerations.

Recommended practice

1. Schools should seek human resource experts and legal counsel knowledgeable in the applicable law of the state(s) or province(s) where the school operates before incorporating these guidelines into policies.
2. A panel of outside and disinterested qualified persons could be invited to confirm the reality of the financial exigency and assist in designing documents that best communicate the financial realities. It is understood that costs may prohibit this approach; however, local experts may be willing to donate their time and expertise if requested.
3. Schools should develop and implement appropriate personnel policies and procedures in accordance with General Institutional Standard 8.1.3.
4. At the earliest possible time, full and detailed information regarding the nature and extent of the financial exigency should be made available to all persons and groups potentially affected by the crisis. Compassionate transparency without violating confidentiality may prove useful.
5. Regular disclosure of appropriate information about the finances and financial health of an institution to its constituencies is the first step toward creating a climate of understanding when a school's finances may necessitate staffing reductions.
6. The processes used in reduction of tenured faculty or contracted staff and the announcement of those reductions with termination of contract or employment should be carried on in a compassionate spirit that results in the least damage of the sense of worth of those whose employment is terminated and provides as much transitional financial support as is prudent.
7. All legitimate and practical means of dealing with the financial crisis should be exercised before terminating contracts. This includes a careful analysis of increased endowment spending to eliminate deficits.

* Adopted as advice and counsel by the Association in 2010.

† In addition to the suggested guidelines from ATS, schools will find helpful a statement from the Association of American Colleges titled "Statement on Financial Exigency and Staff Reduction" and a statement from the American Association of University Professors titled "On Institutional Problems Resulting From Financial Exigency: Some Operating Guidelines."

8. Any reduction in faculty employment should be done with a clear eye toward such reduction's impact on the quality and scope of education offered to students. Educational needs of the institution must be balanced against other values such as seniority in times of genuine financial exigency.
9. Alternate forms and places of service for those who suffer from reduction in numbers, either within the institution or elsewhere, should be explored.
10. Institutions may consider not increasing salaries or taking across-the-board reductions in salaries as a means toward meeting the exigency.
11. Institutions may offer incentives for early retirement for eligible faculty as a means toward achieving ongoing payroll reduction.
12. Members of a faculty and administrative staff may wish to modify their compensation from the school in order to continue their life and work together.
13. Those with adequate financial means may wish to offer contributed service for part or all of their employment costs for a specified period in order to prevent termination of employment of themselves or of colleagues.
14. The board and administration may consider asking current full-time faculty to serve on a part-time basis until the financial conditions improve.
15. The board, administration, and faculty may consider eliminating or temporarily suspending certain employee benefits (e.g., employer contributions to retirement or sabbaticals).

Faculty Resignations, Leaves, and Retirements*

Rationale and goals

Faculty members are among the greatest resources of theological schools. Appropriate employment treatment of them is crucial for the financial and academic well-being of the schools. Both faculty members and the institutions that employ them need to follow guidelines for institutional procedures that protect the interests of both and contribute to the fruitful fulfilling of institutional mission and individual vocation.

Resignations

Guiding principles

1. Faculty considering resignation should provide sufficient notice so that the academic program of the school does not suffer unduly.
2. As appropriate, faculty considering resignation should conduct discussions sufficiently in the open that the school from which the resignation is contemplated has an opportunity to enter into the conversations.

Recommended practice

3. Tenured faculty members considering resignation should provide notice of a minimum of six months; for an untenured faculty member, the minimum notice should be three months.
4. A school may engage a faculty member at another school in conversation at any time regarding possible employment.

Sabbatical leaves

Guiding principles

1. A school is responsible for making provision of time and support for the continued intellectual and spiritual growth of faculty members.
2. A member of the faculty is responsible for taking and using the sabbatical as an opportunity for intellectual and spiritual growth to the benefit of the school and the church.

Recommended practice

3. A sabbatical leave should be provided for each member of the faculty on indefinite tenure after an agreed upon period of full-time service, provided plans are made to make use of the leave in line with the conditions suggested below.

4. The minimum length of such leave with full salary should be six months, but where a longer leave seems desirable, salary adjustments should be arrived at through appropriate discussion.
5. Sabbatical leave should be conceived of by the faculty member and the administration as a time for deeper study, research, or writing. Where possible, location in another center of learning will add breadth to the faculty member's point of view.
6. Normally the faculty member will agree to return to the school that has granted the sabbatical leave and to remain at the school for a minimum of one year after the leave.

Retirement

Guiding principles

1. The retirement policy and plan should be attractive to individuals engaged in educational work, increase the morale of the faculty, permit faculty members with singleness of purpose to devote their energies to serving their institution, and make it possible for them to enter retirement with a sense of security.
2. The occasion of retirement can offer the opportunity for institutional self-reflection about future needs.

Recommended practice

3. The retirement policy and plan of an institution should be clearly defined and be well understood by both the faculty and the administration of the institution.
4. Due to the complexity of federal and state or provincial laws regarding retirement policies and programs in higher education, the institution should engage the services of appropriate retirement consultants and plan administrators in the development of retirement policies, plans, and procedures and should seek legal counsel knowledgeable in the applicable law of the state(s) or province(s) where the school operates before incorporating these guidelines into policies.
5. Institutions may find that a policy allowing for early retirement may be helpful to members of the faculty, even though such a policy may result in a theological school losing gifted faculty members.

* Adopted as advice and counsel by the Association in 2010.

Striving for Culturally Competent School Communities*

Rationale and goals

The value of a culturally competent community lies in the benefits that accrue from experiencing a broad range of individuals with a broad range of perspectives and gifts. In the past four decades, higher education has made significant strides in its thinking and implementing of policies supporting just and diverse academic communities. At the same time, shifting demographics in the United States promise to tip the scales of racial balance in the coming decades. Continued vigilance is therefore required to ensure that institutional policies provide opportunities for diverse populations, build capacity in schools to serve those populations, enhance the educational experience for all constituents, and equip graduates to embrace a commitment to diversity and inclusion—in all their forms—as they minister in their congregations and communities.

This policy views cultural competency as a strength in theological education and encourages ATS schools to live toward a vision of including and valuing the full spectrum of God’s people—with their multiplicity of characteristics—in theological education and ministry. It seeks to honor the ATS commitment to respecting diversity as a core value within the schools while at the same time respecting their different expressions of faith and varying understandings of theology, polity, religious leadership, and social commitments. The guidelines provided may be adapted to the particular situation of each school.

Definitions

Cultural competency is proficiency in responding effectively and respectfully to a diverse cultural context. It is the process by which individuals and institutions become aware of and think theologically about assumptions, biases, and knowledge about themselves and others.

Culturally competent communities are communities that foster mutual respect and care for others and in which all individuals are recognized as persons loved by God. In a culturally competent community, members know how to relate to those qualities and conditions that are different from their own, how to manage the dynamics of difference, and how to benefit from the diversity around them.

Discrimination is any activity that creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others.

Capacity building is any activity that enhances an organization’s effectiveness (i.e., its resources, competencies, and ability) in fulfilling its mission and sustaining itself within the cultural context in which it operates.

Guiding principles

1. Culturally competent communities create environments in which individuals enjoy mutual respect, cooperation, and caring.
2. Theological schools should hold themselves accountable to ensuring that they contribute in a positive way to a diverse and multicultural society.
3. Diversity has many dimensions and manifests itself in the uniquenesses of individuals, communities, and their identities.
4. Initiatives toward building a culturally competent community should take a comprehensive and institution-wide approach with the full support of institutional leadership.
5. Opportunities for interaction among all members of the school community will promote discovery of common ground in shared ideals, values, and principles.
6. A culturally competent community promotes freedom of independent thinking and civil discourse and creates a dynamic learning environment.
7. Students and the communities they will serve benefit from teaching, learning, and research born out of a culturally competent environment.
8. Personal, cultural, and institutionalized discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others.
9. Building capacity in the area of cultural competency enhances a school’s ability to serve its mission, including education of graduates to function effectively in increasingly diverse societies.
10. A culturally competent theological school will regularly assess its mission and work to determine any areas in need of appropriate response.

* Adopted as advice and counsel by the Association in 2010.

Recommended practice

With these goals and principles in mind, theological schools should conduct ongoing assessments of their institutional climates and practices with respect to issues of cultural competency.

Mission and resources

1. A theological school’s mission and resources should be reviewed regularly to assess readiness and capacity for improvement in achieving cultural competency.
2. A theological school should develop a policy reflecting its aspirations and realistic goals for creating a culturally competent community.
3. A theological school should acquire, allocate, and provide access to resources, such as library, information technology, and student services, that reflect its commitment to cultural competency.
4. A theological school should develop steps to ensure that accountability structures are in place that will both lead to enhanced practices of inclusion and assist the school to identify and address ongoing areas of exclusion.

Campus climate

5. A theological school should endeavor to create a hospitable and welcoming culture.
6. A theological school should promote activities that foster interaction and discovery among all campus constituents.
7. A theological school should establish a procedure and a forum for discussion of any challenges or conflicts or any new initiatives related to cultural competency.

Representation

8. A theological school should strive to ensure that its communications and admissions processes, including recruitment and financial aid policies, maximize access to a full range of prospective students of varied identity and background, as appropriate to the school’s particular expression of faith and understanding of theology, polity, religious leadership, and social commitments.
9. A theological school should strive to recruit, to hire, and to retain, through tenure and promotion activities, a qualified faculty and staff whose composition reflects and serves the particular identity and background of its student body.

Curriculum, scholarship, and outcomes

10. A theological school should make resources available to faculty, students, staff and administration for the purpose of enhancing educational effectiveness in the service of diversity.
11. A theological school, through its faculty, should develop pedagogies and curricula that make learning more effective for the diversity of the student body.
12. Curricular offerings should cultivate the capacity of leaders to respond to diverse populations in ministry, teaching, and congregational settings.
13. Evaluation of scholarship should consider the influence of societal diversity on scholarly inquiry.

Relationships with church bodies

14. A theological school should work cooperatively with church bodies to diagnose and correct conditions that inhibit the achievement of culturally competent congregations.

Financial commitment

15. A theological school should endeavor to reflect the above commitments in its budget allocations.

Student Financial Aid*

Rationale and goals

Historically, seminaries have been concerned with providing financial aid to those who evidenced financial need in pursuit of their theological studies. Though that is still a major concern, the current environment also demands recognition of academic achievement or other forms of merit. Theological schools need highly qualified students regardless of financial status. In addition, students, schools, churches, and judicatories have expressed growing concerns regarding the increased debt load of students graduating from theological school and entering ministry. These factors lead to the following goals for financial aid provided by ATS member schools:

1. Theological schools should take into account aid granted on the basis of both financial need and merit.
2. Theological schools should counsel students regarding the consequences of educational debt.
3. Theological schools must take into account the many federal, state, and provincial regulations required of institutions participating in government loan programs.

The Association recommends that schools consider the following definitions, guiding principles, and practices in their financial aid procedures.

Definitions

Financial aid consists of scholarships, grants, loans, and work-study/institutional employment.

Need-based aid is defined as aid granted to a student to meet the difference between the total cost of attending a particular institution and the amount of resources available to the student.

Merit-based aid is defined as aid granted to a student on the basis of academic performance, cocurricular involvement, or other form of merit.

Guiding principles

1. The student has the major responsibility for his or her educational and living expenses. The school's aid will augment the student's efforts.

2. A student's financial resources will include consideration of merit scholarships; funds available from church, judicatory, and denomination; earnings of student and spouse; savings; veterans' benefits; and outside gifts.
3. Financial aid is not an end in itself but should be administered in such a way as to affirm financial responsibility and integrity of both student and school.
4. The administration of financial aid should be individual, personal, pastoral, and confidential.
5. Theological schools should adopt a financial aid code of conduct to which it and all outside agents (lenders, loan servicers, etc.) must adhere.
6. Need-based financial aid should not exceed the amount of demonstrated student need.
7. Theological schools that are part of larger institutions should coordinate their financial aid policies with those of the larger institution.

Recommended practice

1. A common need analysis system (such as FAFSA for US schools) should be used.
2. The estimate of a student's expenses should include tuition, fees, housing, transportation, food, medical care and insurance, recreation, and contributions to church and charities.
3. A flexible, equitable, and nondiscriminatory system should be developed for processing aid for all students.
4. In packaging aid, each school should take into account the total indebtedness of each student and spouse. Counsel should be given to all students seeking loans that indebtedness, by its very nature, affects ministry options.
5. A theological school must publish its procedures and policies to make certain they are available to students.
6. A theological school should review and change its procedures and practices to meet changing needs.
7. A theological school should provide for an annual review of each student's need.

* Adopted as advice and counsel by the Association in 2010.

Association and Commission Dues and Fees Structures

2012–13 Dues and Fees Structures

I. Membership dues

The dues formula of the Association and Commission includes the following essential elements:

- A. Dues are assessed on the basis of total expenditures, less scholarship and fellowship expenses, as reported by member schools in the prior year. (Total expenditures are defined as the amount reported on line 12 of Form 2, Part B, of the F-1 ATS Annual Report Form. Scholarship and fellowship expense is the amount reported on line 10 of Form 2, Part B, of the F-1 ATS Annual Report Form.)
- B. Dues are calculated as follows:
- .0025 of total expenditures, less scholarship and fellowship expenses, of up to \$1,797,000 or \$500, whichever is greater; plus
 - .0003 of total expenditures, less scholarship and fellowship expenses, between \$1,797,000 and \$4,192,000; plus
 - .00015 of total expenditures, less scholarship and fellowship expenses, above \$4,192,000.
- The revised \$1,797,000 and \$4,192,000 thresholds will be adjusted annually by an amount not to exceed the consumer price index or 3 percent, whichever is less, for subsequent years.
- C. Of the total dues from each member school, 75 percent is designated to the Commission on Accrediting and 25 percent to the Association.

- D. The Board of Commissioners establishes and adopts its budget, which is based on revenues derived from dues, assessment fees, reimbursement for evaluator travel and, as appropriate, grants. The expenditures budget provides for all direct and indirect expenses for the work of accreditation conducted by the Board of Commissioners.
- E. The Board of Directors of the Association establishes and adopts its budget, which is based upon revenues derived from dues, grants, fees, and investment income. The expenditures budget provides for all direct and indirect expenses for the work of the Association, including activities of grant projects.

II. ATS affiliate dues

- Annual Dues: \$255

III. Application, accrediting, and appeal fees

The following fees are subject to annual adjustment by the Board of Commissioners and/or the Association's Board of Directors based upon actual costs.

- Application and processing fee for Association membership: \$1,000
- Fee for comprehensive or initial evaluation visit: \$2,300
- Fee for focused evaluation visit: \$1,800
- Fee for appeal: \$1,000

Bylaws of the Commission on Accrediting

Bylaws of The Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools, A Pennsylvania Nonprofit Corporation

Article I: Introductory

Section 1.1 Name

The name of the corporation is Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools (the "Commission").

Section 1.2 Statement of Purposes

As provided in its Articles of Incorporation, the Commission is organized for the purposes set forth in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) (the "Code") and in furtherance thereof to (i) contribute to the enhancement and improvement of theological education through the accreditation of schools that are members of The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada ("ATS") and (ii) collect data from all members of ATS for use in accrediting and to provide the data resources supporting applied research undertaken by ATS.

Section 1.3 Offices

The principal and registered office of the Commission shall be located at 10 Summit Park Drive, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15275, or at such other place as the Board of Commissioners may designate from time to time.

Section 1.4 Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Commission shall end on June 30 of each year or on such other date as may be fixed from time to time by resolution of the Board of Commissioners.

Section 1.5 Seal

The corporate seal of the Commission shall be a circle with the name of the Commission and the state of incorporation around the border and the words "Corporate Seal" in the center.

Section 1.6 Governing Law

This Commission is governed by the Pennsylvania Nonprofit Commission Law of 1988, as it may be amended from time to time ("NPCL").

Article II: Members

Section 2.1 Eligibility

Membership in the Commission is limited to schools located in the United States and Canada that (i) offer graduate, professional theological degrees, (ii) are demonstrably engaged in educating professional leadership for communities of the Christian and Jewish faiths, (iii) are members of ATS (except as set forth in Section 2.13 below), and (iv) meet the Standards of Accreditation (for accredited schools) or criteria for

Candidate for Accredited Status (for candidate schools) (together "Eligible Schools"). A Member that ceases to be accredited by the Commission or to be a candidate for accreditation or that ceases to be an Eligible School, including without limitation by virtue of ceasing to be a member of ATS (except as otherwise provided in Section 2.13 of these Bylaws), is no longer eligible for membership in the Commission, and such Member's membership in the Commission may be terminated as provided in Section 2.13 of these Bylaws.

Section 2.2 Election to Membership

The Members of the Commission shall comprise the Eligible Schools that are granted accredited status by the Commission or are conferred Candidate for Accredited Status by the Commission. Membership continues for so long as the school remains an Eligible School, timely pays all dues, and is accredited by the Commission or is a candidate for accreditation, provided that a Member may voluntarily relinquish membership and accreditation by so notifying the Commission in writing and, provided further, that membership may be terminated in accordance with Section 2.13 of these Bylaws.

Section 2.3 Powers of the Membership; Standards and Procedures

In addition to any powers conferred on members of a nonprofit corporation under the relevant provisions of the NPCL, the Members of the Commission shall (i) adopt the dues structure for Members, (ii) elect the Commissioners, and (iii) adopt, maintain, modify, and revoke the Commission's Standards of Accreditation and Procedures for Accreditation and Membership ("Standards and Procedures"). Modifications to the Standards and Procedures shall require the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the Members present at a duly organized meeting of the Members at which a quorum is present.

Section 2.4 Duties of Membership

Each Member must (i) maintain its accreditation or candidacy for accreditation by the Commission pursuant to the Standards and Procedures, (ii) deliver to the Commission annual dues in an amount determined from time to time by the Members, (iii) continue to be an Eligible School, and (iv) provide institutional data to the Commission annually and when requested by the Commission in connection with its accreditation activities.

Section 2.5 Meetings of the Members

Meetings of the Members may be held at such place within or without the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as the person calling the meeting shall so indicate in the meeting notice. The Members shall meet biennially in each even-numbered year (the "Biennial Meeting")

at such time and place as the Board may determine from time to time by resolution, each Biennial Meeting to be held in conjunction with the Biennial Meeting of the membership of ATS. Special meetings of the Members shall be called by the Secretary at the request of the Board of Commissioners or the written request of ten percent (10%) of the Members of record or at the instruction of the Chair.

If the Board of Commissioners has determined that an emergency exists requiring action by the Members, the Board may call a special meeting of the Members with thirty (30) days advance notice to the Members (an "Emergency Meeting"). Members may participate in an Emergency Meeting via proxy. Members may not participate by proxy in any meeting of the Members that is not an Emergency Meeting.

The senior officer of the Commission present shall preside at each meeting of the Members. If no officers are present, the Members present shall elect a presiding officer for the meeting then being held. The presiding officer shall determine the order of business and shall have the authority to establish equitable rules for the conduct of the meeting. The presiding officer shall announce at the meeting when the polls close for each matter voted upon. If no announcement is made, the polls shall be deemed to have closed upon the final adjournment of the meeting. After the polls close, no ballots or votes and no revocations or changes thereto may be accepted.

Section 2.6 Notice

With the exception of Emergency Meetings, which shall be called as described in Section 2.5 above, written notice of the date, time, and place of each meeting of the Members shall be given to all Members of record entitled to vote at the meeting at least ninety (90) days prior to the date of the meeting, and the proposed agenda for the meeting shall be given to all Members no later than forty-five (45) days prior to the meeting. Such notice shall be given by sending a copy thereof by first class or express mail, postage prepaid, or by telegram (with messenger service specified), telex or TWX (with answer back received), or courier service, charges prepaid, or by facsimile to the Member's address (or telex, TWX, or facsimile number) appearing on the books of the Commission. If the notice is sent by mail, telegraph, or courier service, it shall be deemed to have been given to the person entitled thereto when deposited in the US mail or with a telegraph office or courier service or, in the case of telex or TWX, when dispatched.

Section 2.7 Voting

Each Member of the Commission is entitled to one vote on each matter before the Members. The manner of voting on any matter may be by voice, ballot, mail, or any other reasonable means. Each Member may send as many representatives to any meeting of the Members as it chooses; however, each Member attending any

meeting of the membership shall designate to the Commission one individual to cast its ballot. In the event of a dispute regarding the individual who is authorized to exercise a Member's voting rights, the judges of election are authorized to award such voting rights to one of the individuals representing the Member, and the decision of the judges of election shall be final.

Section 2.8 Record Date

The Board of Commissioners may fix a time not more than ninety (90) days prior to the date of any meeting of the Members as a record date for the purpose of determining the Members entitled to notice of or to vote at such meeting. In such case, only Members of record on the date so fixed shall be entitled to notice and/or to vote notwithstanding any increase or other change on the books of the Commission after the record date. If the Board of Commissioners does not fix a record date, then (a) the record date for determining Members entitled to notice of or to vote at the meeting shall be the close of business on the date before notice is given or if notice is waived, the date before the meeting is held, (b) the record date for determining Members entitled to express consent or dissent to corporate action in writing without a meeting, when no prior action of the Board of Commissioners is required, shall be the date on which the first written consent or dissent is expressed, and (c) for any other purpose the record date shall be the close of business on the day on which the Board of Commissioners adopts the resolution relating thereto.

Section 2.9 Judges of Election

In advance of any meeting of Members, the Board of Commissioners may appoint judges of election, who need not be Members, to act at such meeting or any adjournment thereof. If judges of election are not so appointed, the presiding officer may, and on the request of any Member shall, make such appointment at the meeting. The number of judges shall be one or three. No person who is a candidate for office shall act as a judge. If any person appointed as judge fails to appear or fails or refuses to act, the vacancy may be filled by appointment made by the Board of Commissioners in advance of the meeting or at the meeting by the presiding officer. The judges of election shall determine the number of Members of record and voting power of each; the Members present at the meeting; the existence of a quorum; the authenticity, validity, and effect of proxies, if any; receive votes or ballots; hear and determine all challenges and questions in any way arising in connection with the right to vote; count and tabulate all votes; determine the result; and do such acts as may be proper to conduct the election or vote in an equitable manner. The judges of election shall perform their duties impartially, in good faith, to the best of their ability, and as expeditiously as is practical. If there are three judges of election, the decision, act, or certificate of a majority shall be effective in all respects as the

decision, act, or certificate of all. On the request of the presiding officer of the meeting, or of any Member, the judges shall make a report in writing of any challenge or question or matter determined by them, and execute a certificate of any fact found by them. Any report or certificate made by them shall be prima facie evidence of the facts stated therein.

Section 2.10 Liability of Members

No Member shall be liable, solely by reason of being a Member, under an order of court or in any other manner, for a debt, obligation, or liability of the Commission of any kind or for the acts of any Member or representative of the Commission. A Member shall be liable to the Commission only to the extent of any unpaid portion of the capital contributions, membership dues, or assessments that the Commission may have lawfully imposed on the Member or for any other indebtedness owed by the Member to the Commission.

Section 2.11 Waiver of Notice

Whenever any written notice is required to be given, a waiver thereof in writing signed by the Members entitled to notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of notice. Attendance of a Member at a meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of the meeting unless the Member attends for the express purpose of objecting, at the beginning of the meeting, to the transaction of any business because the meeting was not lawfully called or convened.

Section 2.12 Quorum

The presence in person (and in the case of an Emergency Meeting only, also by proxy) of voting representatives of at least seventy-five (75) Members shall constitute a quorum. The Members present at a duly organized meeting can continue to do business until adjournment, notwithstanding the withdrawal of enough Members to leave less than a quorum. The vote of a majority of the Members present at a duly organized meeting of the Members at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Members.

Section 2.13 Termination

- (a) *Termination for Loss of Accreditation.* Any Member's membership in the Commission shall terminate automatically upon the Member's loss of its accreditation in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Standards and Procedures. The termination of Membership shall be effective upon the effective date of the loss of accreditation.
- (b) *Administrative Termination.* Any Member's membership may be terminated by the Board of Commissioners (i) for failure to pay dues, (ii) for failure to remain a Member of ATS, or (iii) for other failure to remain an Eligible School (each an "Administrative Termination"). The Administrative Termination of Membership shall result in the simultaneous termination of the affected Member's

accreditation, provided, however, that when a Member ceases to be a Member of ATS solely as a result of a Termination for Cause as defined in Section 2.13 of the ATS Bylaws, the loss of ATS membership shall not result in the loss of accreditation.

- (c) *Hearings Related to Administrative Termination.* Administrative termination of membership is not an appealable action. However, in the case of a termination of membership pursuant to clause (iii) of Section 2.13(b) above for failure to remain an Eligible School, the affected Member shall be afforded a hearing before the Board of Commissioners. The Member shall be given at least thirty (30) days' advance written notice of the meeting at which such matter is to be considered, which notice shall specify the reason the Member is no longer an Eligible School. The affected Member shall be permitted to make a written response and to attend the meeting at which the Commission determines whether to terminate the membership and to make a brief oral response. The decision of the Board of Commissioners shall be final. The foregoing procedure for hearing shall not apply to termination for failure to pay dues or remain an ATS Member, set forth in Section 2.13(b), clauses (i) and (ii) above, respectively.
- (d) *Withdrawal.* The membership year shall be the Commission's fiscal year or such other time as the Board of Commissioners may specify from time to time. If at any time a Member is two years in arrears in payment of its annual dues, it shall be deemed to have voluntarily withdrawn as a Member of the Commission and its accreditation and membership shall be terminated effective as of such time.

Section 2.14 Appeal of Accreditation Decisions

Members may appeal decisions of the Commission that affect the Member's accredited status according to the Procedures for Accreditation, as adopted and amended from time to time by the Members.

Section 2.15 Transfer of Membership

Membership in this Commission is nontransferable and nonassignable.

Article III: The Board of Commissioners

Section 3.1 Authority

Subject to the rights of the Members and any limitations set forth elsewhere in these Bylaws or the Articles of Incorporation of the Commission, the affairs of the Commission shall be under the general direction of the Board of Commissioners, which shall administer, manage, preserve, and protect the property of the Commission.

The authority of the Board of Commissioners shall include, without limitation: responsibility for all decisions related to the accredited status of Members; adoption and oversight of the Commission's budget; proposal to

the Members of amendments to these Bylaws and the Articles of Incorporation of the Commission, subject to the approval of ATS as provided in Sections 9.1 and 11.1; oversight of the Commission's assets; approval of the auditors employed by the Commission; establishment of fees to be assessed in the conduct of accreditation activities; recommendation of changes to the dues structure; review and evaluation of the Standards and Procedures and recommendation of appropriate changes for consideration for adoption by the Members; appointment of task forces and accreditation committees as it deems necessary for fulfilling its responsibilities; designating one Commissioner to serve as the Commission Representative to ATS; evaluation of the personnel, administrative, and other services secured by contract; and establishment of the employment policies of the Commission.

Section 3.2 Number and Term

There shall be a minimum of twelve (12) and a maximum of sixteen (16) Commissioners. No fewer than three (3) and no more than four (4) of the Commissioners shall be Public or Ministry Practitioner Commissioners. The remaining Commissioners shall be Institutional Commissioners. Institutional Commissioners are individuals who, at the time of their election as Commissioners, are employed by a Member of the Commission. Public Commissioners are individuals who, at the time of their election or reelection, are not (a) enrolled as a student in, or employed by, or a member of the governing board of, or a consultant to an institution that is either accredited or a candidate for accreditation by the Commission or (b) a member of the governing board of, or employed by, ATS or (c) a spouse, parent, child, or sibling of any individual identified in (a) or (b). Ministry Practitioners are persons who, at the time of their election or reelection, are active in vocational ministry.

With the exception of the initial Commissioners, whose terms shall be specified in the resolution appointing them, each Commissioner shall serve for the following terms:

- (a) Public or Ministry Practitioner Commissioners shall serve two-year terms and until such Commissioner's successor has been duly elected and qualified or until the Commissioner's earlier death, resignation, or removal; and
- (b) Institutional Commissioners shall serve six-year, nonrenewable terms and until such Commissioner's successor has been duly elected and qualified or until the Commissioner's earlier death, resignation, or removal.

An Institutional Commissioner is not eligible to serve as a Commissioner for a period of one year after completing one full six-year term. A Public or Ministry Practitioner Commissioner is not eligible to serve as a Commissioner for a period of one year after completing two consecutive, full two-year terms.

Section 3.3 Nomination and Election

At least thirty (30) days prior to the Biennial Meeting (or special meeting held to elect Commissioners), the Nominating Committee shall nominate one or more persons for each Commissioner position the term of which is due to expire in such year. At the Biennial Meeting or any special meeting called for such purpose, the Members shall elect the Commissioners from among the persons nominated (a) by the Nominating Committee or (b) if any Member submits a petition signed by at least five (5) Members and the written consent(s) of the person(s) nominated, from the floor. Unless otherwise specified at the time of the election, new Commissioners shall take office at the conclusion of the meeting at which they are elected.

Section 3.4 Vacancies

Vacancies occurring on the Board of Commissioners by death, resignation, refusal to serve, increase in the number of Commissioners, or otherwise between Biennial Meetings shall be filled by majority vote of the Board of Commissioners, and each Commissioner so appointed shall serve until the next Biennial Meeting and until the Commissioner's successor is elected and qualified or until such Commissioner's earlier death, resignation, or removal.

Section 3.5 Compensation

No compensation shall be paid to any Commissioner for services as a Commissioner, but, at the discretion of the Board of Commissioners, a Commissioner may be reimbursed for travel and actual expenses necessarily incurred in attending meetings and performing other duties on behalf of the Commission. A Commissioner may not be a salaried officer of the Commission.

Section 3.6 Meetings

The Board of Commissioners shall meet at least twice each year at a date and time established by the Commission. The annual meeting of the Board of Commissioners shall be the first meeting following the Biennial Meeting of Members in odd-numbered years and the first meeting of the year in even-numbered years. Special meetings shall be called by the Secretary upon the order of the Chair or at the written request of a number of Commissioners constituting a quorum of the Board of Commissioners then in office and entitled to vote. All meetings of the Board of Commissioners shall be held at the registered office of the Commission unless otherwise designated in the notice.

Section 3.7 Quorum

At all meetings of the Board of Commissioners, the presence of a majority of the Commissioners in office and entitled to vote shall constitute a quorum. In addition to those Commissioners who are actually present at a meeting, Commissioners shall be deemed as present at such meeting if a telephone or similar communication equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time is used. The Commissioners present at a duly organized meeting

shall continue to constitute a quorum notwithstanding the withdrawal of enough Commissioners to leave less than a majority. The act of a majority of the Commissioners entitled to vote at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Commissioners. A majority of the Commissioners present and entitled to vote, whether or not a quorum exists, may adjourn any meeting of the Board of Commissioners to another time and place. Notice of any such adjourned meeting shall be given to the Commissioners who are not present at the time of adjournment.

Section 3.8 Voting

Each Commissioner entitled to vote shall be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the Board of Commissioners.

Section 3.9 Notices

Written notice of the date, time, and place of each meeting of the Board of Commissioners shall be given to all Commissioners at least thirty (30) days in advance of the date thereof. Such notice shall set forth the date, time, and place of the meeting. Whenever written notice is required to be given to a Commissioner under this Section 3.9, it may be given to the Commissioner personally or by sending a copy thereof by either of the following methods:

- (a) By first class or express mail, postage prepaid, or by telegram (with messenger service specified), telex, TWX (with answerback received), or courier service, charges prepaid, or by facsimile transmission to the Commissioner's address (or telex, TWX, or facsimile number) appearing on the books of the Commission. If the notice is sent by mail, telegraph, or courier service, it shall be deemed to have been given to the Commissioner entitled thereto when deposited in the US mail or with a telegraph office or courier service for delivery to that Commissioner, or in the case of telex or TWX, when dispatched. Notice pursuant to this paragraph shall be deemed to have been given to the Commissioner entitled thereto when deposited in the US mail or with a courier service for delivery to that Commissioner.
- (b) By facsimile transmission, email, or other electronic communication to the Commissioner's facsimile number or address for email or other electronic communications supplied by the Commissioner to the Commission for the purpose of notice. Notice pursuant to this paragraph shall be deemed to have been given to the Commissioner entitled thereto when sent.

Section 3.10 Waiver of Notice

Whenever any written notice whatsoever is required to be given to a Commissioner under the provisions of applicable law, the Articles of Incorporation of this Commission, or these Bylaws, a waiver of such notice in writing signed by the Commissioner entitled to notice,

whether before or after the time stated in such waiver, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice. In the case of a special meeting, such waiver of notice shall specify the general nature of the business to be transacted. Attendance of a Commissioner at a meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of the meeting unless the Commissioner attends for the express purpose of objecting, at the beginning of the meeting, to the transaction of any business because the meeting was not lawfully called or convened.

Section 3.11 Standard of Care and Fiduciary Duty

Each Commissioner shall stand in a fiduciary relation to this Commission and shall perform his or her duties as a Commissioner, including his or her duties as a member of any committee of the Commission upon which the Commissioner may serve, in good faith, in a manner the Commissioner reasonably believes to be in the best interest of this Commission, and with such care, including reasonable inquiry, skill, and diligence, as a person of ordinary prudence would use under similar circumstances. In performing his or her duties, each Commissioner shall be entitled to rely in good faith on information, opinions, reports, or statements, including financial statements and other financial data, in each case prepared or presented by any of the following:

- (a) one or more officers or employees of this Commission whom the Commissioner reasonably believes to be reliable and competent in the matters presented;
- (b) counsel, public accountants, or other persons as to matters that the Commissioner reasonably believes to be within the professional or expert competence of such persons; and
- (c) a committee of this Commission upon which the Commissioner does not serve, as to matters within its designated authority, which committee the Commissioner reasonably believes to merit confidence.

A Commissioner shall not be considered to be acting in good faith if the Commissioner has knowledge concerning the matter in question that would cause his or her reliance to be unwarranted.

Section 3.12 Factors that May Be Considered by Commissioners

In discharging the duties of their respective positions, the Board of Commissioners, committees of the Board of Commissioners, and individual Commissioners may, in considering the best interest of this Commission, consider to the extent they deem appropriate the following:

- (a) the effects of any action upon any or all groups affected by such action, including members, employees, suppliers, customers, and creditors of the Commission and upon communities in which offices or other establishments of the Commission are located;

- (b) the short-term and long-term interests of the Commission, including the benefits that may accrue to the Commission from its long-term plans and the possibility that these interests may be best served by the continued independence of the Commission;
- (c) the resources, intent, and conduct (past, stated, and potential) of any person seeking to acquire control of the Commission; and
- (d) all other pertinent factors.

The Board of Commissioners, committees, and Commissioners are not required, in considering the best interest of the Commission or the effects of any action, to regard any corporate interest or the interests of any particular group affected by such action as a dominant or controlling interest or factor. The consideration of interests and factors in the manner described in this section shall not constitute a violation of Section 3.11 hereof.

Section 3.13 Rules and Regulations

The Board of Commissioners may adopt rules and regulations not inconsistent with these Bylaws or the Standards of Accreditation and Procedures for Accreditation and Membership adopted from time to time by the Members for the administration and conduct of the affairs of the Commission and may alter, amend, or repeal any such rules or regulations adopted by it. Such rules and regulations may be amended by majority vote of the Board of Commissioners present and entitled to vote at a meeting of the Commission where a quorum is present.

Section 3.14 Removal of Commissioners

- (a) **By the Board of Commissioners.** The Board of Commissioners, by a majority vote of all of the Commissioners, may declare vacant the office of any Commissioner who is declared of unsound mind by an order of the court or is convicted of a felony or other cause. "Other cause" shall mean any action or inaction that, in the sole discretion of the Board of Commissioners, materially and adversely affects or may affect the Commission.
- (b) **Institutional Commissioners; Loss of Affiliation with Member.** No Commissioner shall be removed from his or her position as an Institutional Commissioner solely because he or she ceases to be employed by the Member that employed the Commissioner at the time of his or her election as a Commissioner, and it is presumed that such a Commissioner shall continue to serve on the Board of Commissioners for the remainder of his or her term. However, if any conflict of interest (as that term is defined in Section 3.16, below) arises due to any new position held by the Commissioner, such conflict of interest may be considered to constitute "other cause" supporting the removal of the Commissioner by the Board of Commissioners as provided in subsection (a) of this Section 3.14.

Section 3.15 Consents

Any action that may be taken at a meeting of the Board of Commissioners may be taken without a meeting, if a consent or consents in writing setting forth the action so taken shall be signed by all of the Commissioners in office and entitled to vote and shall be filed with the Secretary of the Commission.

Section 3.16 Conflict of Interest: Corporate

An actual or potential conflict of interest exists when any of the following exists:

- (a) An officer or Commissioner has an ownership or investment interest in or compensation relationship with an organization with which the Commission does or proposes to do business or an organization that competes with the Commission; or
- (b) An officer or Commissioner receives remuneration for performing services for the Commission and the Commission is determining his or her remuneration; or
- (c) An officer or Commissioner serves as an officer or director or key employee of an organization that competes with or does business with the Commission.

A conflict also exists when a similar circumstance exists with respect to a family member of a Commissioner or company thirty-five percent (35%) owned by a Commissioner and his or her family members. Annually, each Commissioner and officer shall complete a disclosure statement reflecting his or her interests.

Commissioners shall act in a manner intended to further the best interest of the Commission. If at any time a Commissioner (i) has or may have a conflict of interest or (ii) is unable to act in the best interest of the Commission on any issue because of a personal situation, employment, conflicting interest, or other reason, the Commissioner shall recuse himself or herself from voting on the subject and shall leave the room while the matter is discussed. Recusing himself or herself shall not prevent a Commissioner from participating in other activities or discussions where no conflict of interest exists.

The Board of Commissioners may approve a transaction that is the subject of a conflict of interest only if it has determined (i) that the transaction or arrangement is in the Commission's best interest and for its own benefit, (ii) that it is fair and reasonable to the Commission, and (iii) that after exercising due diligence, the Commission would not obtain a more advantageous transaction with reasonable efforts under the circumstances. Where appropriate the Board shall obtain comparable information to assist it in reaching such conclusions. In such cases, the transaction or arrangement must be authorized by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners that do not have a conflict in relation to the relevant transaction or arrangement.

The minutes of all meetings shall reflect (i) the names of the persons who disclosed any conflicts; (ii) the determination as to whether an actual or potential conflict of interest existed; (iii) the names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement; (iv) the content of the discussions, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement and the basis for the determination of the Commission, including any comparability data; (v) the voting record, including any abstention from voting; and (vi) any action to be taken.

Section 3.17 Conflict of Interest: Accrediting Actions

The Board of Commissioners shall adopt and implement policies prohibiting conflicts of interest in decisions regarding the accredited status of schools that are or seek to become Members of the Commission.

Article IV: Officers

Section 4.1 Enumeration

The officers of the Commission shall consist of a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and such other officers and assistant officers as the Members may, from time to time, designate.

Section 4.2 Term of Office

Each officer shall serve for a term of two (2) years and until the officer's successor is duly elected and takes office.

Section 4.3 Election

The Board of Commissioners shall elect the Chair and Vice Chair from among the Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners shall elect the Secretary from among the director staff members who support the work of the Commission.

Section 4.4 Vacancies

The Chair may fill vacancies in any office at which a quorum is present for the period ending upon the date of the next meeting of the Board of Commissioners, when the Commissioners shall fill such vacancy for the period ending at the next Biennial Meeting.

Section 4.5 Chair

The Chair is responsible for determining the agenda for meetings of the Board of Commissioners, convening the Board of Commissioners and chairing its sessions, and participating in the work of the Commission.

Section 4.6 Vice Chair

The Vice Chair of the Commission convenes and chairs the meetings of the Board of Commissioners at the request of the Chair and serves as the Treasurer of the Commission.

Section 4.7 Secretary

The Secretary shall make or cause to be made minutes of all meetings of the Board of Commissioners and the

Members. The Secretary shall be responsible for the timely mailing or delivery of all notices of meetings of the Board of Commissioners and the Members, shall affix the corporate seal at the direction of the Chair, and, generally, will perform all duties incident to the office of secretary of a corporation and such other duties as may be required by law, by the Articles of Incorporation or by these Bylaws, or that may be assigned from time to time by the Board of Commissioners.

Section 4.8 Treasurer

The Treasurer shall supervise the financial activities of the Commission. Specifically, the Treasurer shall see that (a) full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept, (b) a system is in place such that all monies and other valuable effects are deposited in the name and to the credit of the Association in such depositories as shall be designated by the Board of Commissioners, (c) the Commissioners, at the regular meetings of the Board of Commissioners or whenever they may require it, receive an account of the financial condition of the Commission, and (d) an annual audit of the Commission's books and records is performed by an auditor selected by the Board of Commissioners. In performing these functions, the Treasurer may rely on employees of the Commission or any affiliated Commission who possess special financial training and skills and whose employment responsibilities include management of the Commission's financial affairs. In the absence or disability of the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer, if any, shall perform all the duties of the Treasurer and when so acting shall have all of the powers of and be subject to all of the restrictions upon the Treasurer.

Section 4.9 Other Officers; Commission Representative to ATS

Each other officer shall have such responsibilities and perform such duties as may be prescribed by the Members or the Board of Commissioners from time to time. Each assistant officer shall carry out the responsibilities and duties of the officer that the assistant officer assists in the event such officer is unable to perform such responsibilities or duties, except that no assistant officer shall become a Commissioner solely by virtue of being an assistant officer. The Board of Commissioners shall designate one Commissioner as the Commission Representative to ATS, who shall serve as an ex officio Director of ATS.

Section 4.10 Bonds

The Board of Commissioners may, in its discretion, require the Treasurer and any other officer to give bond in such amount and with such surety or sureties as may be satisfactory to the Board of Commissioners for the faithful discharge of the duties of the office and for the restoration to the Commission, in case of the officer's death, resignation, retirement, or removal from office, of all books, papers, vouchers, money, and other property of whatever kind belonging to the Commission in the officer's possession or under the officer's control.

Section 4.11 Removal of Officers

Any officer elected or appointed to office may be removed by the persons authorized under these Bylaws or the Commission's Articles of Incorporation to elect or appoint such officers whenever in their judgment the best interest of the Commission will be served.

Section 4.12 Administration

The Commission will normally contract with the Association for all of its personnel, facilities, administrative, and other organizational needs.

Article V: Committees**Section 5.1 Committees**

The Commission shall have the following standing committees: Officers Committee, Nominating Committee, Finance Committee, Audit Committee, and Appeals Panel. There shall be such other standing and ad hoc committees as the Board of Commissioners may deem advisable in the administration and conduct of the affairs of the Commission. Such committees shall meet as necessary to accomplish their goals. The Board of Commissioners is authorized in its discretion to approve reimbursement for travel and other actual expenses necessarily incurred by members of committees in attending committee meetings and in performing other official duties as such.

Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws or in the resolution creating the applicable committee, the Board of Commissioners or the Members at the Biennial Meeting or any special meeting called for that purpose shall elect committee members. In the case of committee members elected by the Members, the committee members shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee or, if any Member submits a petition signed by at least five (5) Members and the written consent(s) of the person(s) nominated, from the floor. The Chair shall appoint all committee chairpersons, except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws or in the resolution creating the applicable committee.

Upon expiration of their initial terms, committee chairpersons and members may be reelected to a committee for one additional term only. With the exception of the Officers Committee, persons who are not Commissioners are eligible to serve as committee members. Any person authorized to appoint the chairperson and/or members of any committee by these Bylaws or the resolution creating the applicable committee may appoint himself or herself as chairperson and/or committee member. The chairperson of each committee shall determine the date and place of all committee meetings. Each committee may adopt its own rules of procedure not inconsistent with these Bylaws.

Section 5.2 Limitation on Power of Committees

No such committee shall have any power or authority as to the following:

- (a) the submission to the Members of any action requiring approval of the Members;
- (b) the creation or filling of vacancies in the Board of Commissioners;
- (c) the adoption, amendment, or repeal of the Bylaws;
- (d) the amendment or repeal of any resolution of the Board of Commissioners that by its terms is amendable or repealable only by the Board of Commissioners; or
- (e) action on matters committed by the Bylaws or a resolution of the Board of Commissioners exclusively to another committee.

Section 5.3 Officers Committee

The Officers Committee shall consist of the Chair, Vice Chair, and a third Commissioner elected by the Board of Commissioners. The Chair shall serve as the chairperson of the Officers Committee. The Officers Committee may act for the Board of Commissioners between meetings, provided that it may not make decisions affecting accreditation status. The Officers Committee shall meet at such times as the Chair may call or on petition of two (2) Officers Committee members. At least twenty-four (24) hours' oral or written notice shall be given for such meetings. A quorum for conducting business at a meeting of the Officers Committee shall be no fewer than two (2) members. The Chair shall present a full report of all Officers Committee decisions to the Board of Commissioners at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

Section 5.4 Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consist of five (5) persons appointed by the Chair of the Board of Commissioners, including two (2) Commissioners and three (3) representatives of Members that are not represented on the Board of Commissioners. The Nominating Committee shall nominate Commissioners as provided in Section 3.3 hereof and shall nominate other committee members, including Appeals Panel Members, consistent with the policies of the Board of Commissioners.

Section 5.5 Reserved**Section 5.6 Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee shall consist of the President and the Treasurer of the Association, the Vice Chair of the Commission, and such additional persons with expertise in financial matters as may be appointed by the Board of Directors of ATS. The Finance Committee shall oversee and provide advice to the Commission on financial matters. The Finance Committee shall regularly review and recommend to the Board of Commissioners policies to protect and enhance the assets of the Commission.

Section 5.7 Audit Committee

The Audit Committee shall consist of three to five persons elected by the Members. Audit Committee members shall be persons knowledgeable about financial matters, a majority of whom shall be independent. The Audit Committee shall make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners regarding the selection of the Commission's auditors, shall oversee the auditor's activities, shall set rules and processes for addressing complaints concerning accounting and internal control problems, and shall assume such other responsibilities as may be appropriate for an Audit Committee.

Section 5.8 Appeals Panel

The Appeals Panel shall be composed of five (5) persons who are former Commissioners or former Directors of ATS, at least one of whom shall have been a Public Commissioner or Public Director. Appeals Panel members shall be elected by the Members and shall serve two-year terms. The Appeals Panel membership shall include at least one person in each of the following primary roles: a faculty member, an administrator, a ministry practitioner, and a public member. A person who has served for two consecutive two-year terms is not eligible for reelection until he or she has not served for two years. The Appeals Panel shall process appeals of Member schools regarding accrediting decisions in accordance with the Standards and Procedures of the Commission and policies of the Board of Commissioners.

Article VI: Limitation of Personal Liability of Commissioners**Section 6.1 Limitation of Commissioners' Personal Liability**

A Commissioner shall not be personally liable for monetary damages for any action taken unless the Commissioner has breached or failed to perform the duties of his or her office under Chapter 57, Subchapter B, of the NPCL, as in effect at the time of the alleged action by such Commissioner, and the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct, or recklessness. Such limitation on liability does not apply to the responsibility or liability of a Commissioner pursuant to any criminal statute or for payment of taxes pursuant to any Federal, state, or local law.

Section 6.2 Preservation of Rights

Any repeal or modification of this Article by the Commission shall not adversely affect any right or protection existing at the time of such repeal or modification to which any Commissioner or former Commissioner may be entitled under this Article. The rights conferred by this Article shall continue as to any person who has ceased to be a Commissioner of the Commission and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of such person.

Article VII: Indemnification**Section 7.1 Mandatory Indemnification of Commissioners and Officers**

The Commission shall indemnify, to the fullest extent now or hereafter permitted by law (including but not limited to the indemnification provided by Chapter 57, Subchapter D, of the NPCL), each Commissioner and/or officer (including each former Commissioner or officer) of the Commission who was or is or is threatened to be made a party to or a witness in any threatened, pending, or completed action or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, by reason of the fact that the Commissioner or officer is or was an authorized representative of the Commission or is or was serving at the request of the Commission as a representative of another domestic or foreign Commission for profit or not-for-profit, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, against all expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by the Commissioner or officer in connection with such action, suit, or proceeding if such Commissioner or officer acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interest of the Commission and, with respect to any criminal proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, or conviction or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent shall not of itself create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that he or she reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interest of the Commission and, with respect to any criminal proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

Section 7.2 Mandatory Advancement of Expenses to Commissioners and Officers

The Commission shall pay expenses (including attorneys' fees) incurred by a Commissioner or officer of the Commission referred to in Section 7.1 hereof in defending or appearing as a witness in any civil or criminal action, suit, or proceeding described in Section 7.1 hereof in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit, or proceeding, only upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of such Commissioner or officer to repay all amounts advanced if it shall ultimately be determined that the Commissioner or officer is not entitled to be indemnified by the Commission as provided in Section 7.4 hereof.

Section 7.3 Permissive Indemnification and Advancement of Expenses

The Commission may, as determined by the Board from time to time, indemnify, in full or in part, to the fullest extent now or hereafter permitted by law, any

person who was or is or is threatened to be made a party to or a witness in, or is otherwise involved in, any threatened, pending, or completed action or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, by reason of the fact that such person is or was an authorized representative of the Commission or is or was serving at the request of the Commission as a representative of another domestic or foreign corporation for profit or not-for-profit, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, both as to action in his or her official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding such office or position, against all expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by such person in conjunction with such action, suit, or proceeding if such person acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interest of the Commission and, with respect to any criminal proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The Commission may, as determined by the Board from time to time, pay expenses incurred by any such person by reason of such person's participation in an action, suit, or proceeding referred to in this Section 7.3 in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit, or proceeding upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of such person to repay such amount if it shall ultimately be determined that such person is not entitled to be indemnified by the Commission as provided in Section 7.4 hereof.

Section 7.4 Scope of Indemnification

Indemnification under this Article shall not be made by the Commission in any case where a court determines that the alleged act or failure to act giving rise to the claim for indemnification is expressly prohibited by Chapter 57, Subchapter D, of the NPCL or any successor statute as in effect at the time of such alleged action or failure to take action.

Section 7.5 Miscellaneous

Each Commissioner and officer of the Commission shall be deemed to act in such capacity in reliance upon such rights of indemnification and advancement of expenses as are provided in this Article. The rights of indemnification and advancement of expenses provided by this Article shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which any person seeking indemnification or advancement of expenses may be entitled under any agreement, vote of members, disinterested Commissioners, statute, or otherwise, both as to action in such person's official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding such office or position, and shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be an authorized representative of the Commission and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of such person. Any repeal or modification of this Article by the members or the Board of

Commissioners of the Commission shall not adversely affect any right or protection existing at the time of such appeal or modification to which any person may be entitled under this Article.

Section 7.6 Definition of Authorized Representative

For the purposes of this Article, the term, "authorized representative" shall mean a director, officer, or employee of the Commission or of any corporation controlled by the Commission, or a trustee, custodian, administrator, committeeman, or fiduciary of any employee benefit plan established and maintained by the Commission or by any corporation controlled by the Commission, or person serving another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise in any of the foregoing capacities at the request of the Commission. The term "authorized representative" shall not include money managers or investment advisors (or any employees thereof) hired by the Commission and shall not include agents of the Commission unless indemnification thereof is expressly approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Section 7.7 Procedure for Effecting Indemnification

Unless ordered by a court, any indemnification under this Article VII or the NPCL shall be made only following a determination that the indemnification is proper in the circumstances because the person seeking indemnification has met the applicable standard of conduct. Such determination shall be made:

- (a) by the Board of Commissioners by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of Commissioners who were not party to the action or proceeding;
- (b) if such a quorum is not obtainable or if obtainable and a majority vote of a quorum of disinterested Commissioners so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or
- (c) by the Members.

Article VIII: Restrictions Regarding the Operations of the Commission; Administration of Funds

Section 8.1 No Private or Political Beneficiaries

In keeping with the statement of purpose of the Commission as set forth in its Articles of Incorporation, no part of the earnings or assets of the Commission shall inure to the benefit of any private individual, and no substantial part of the activities of the Commission shall be used for lobbying, and the Commission shall not engage in any political campaign activities on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

Section 8.2 No Violation of Purposes

In no event and under no circumstances shall the Commission make any distribution or expenditure, engage in any activity, hold any assets, or enter into any trans-

action whatsoever the effect of which under applicable federal laws then in force will cause the Commission to lose its status as an organization to which contributions are deductible in computing the taxable income of the contributor for purposes of federal income taxation.

Section 8.3 Tax Records

The Commission shall maintain at its principal office a copy of its application for exemption and all tax returns filed with the Internal Revenue Service. To the extent required by law, such documents shall be made available during regular business hours for inspection by any person requesting to see them.

Section 8.4 Annual Report

The Vice Chair shall submit annually to the Board of Commissioners a statement containing those details required to be included under the provisions of the NPCL, as it may be amended from time to time or any successor statute governing Pennsylvania nonprofit Commissions or these Bylaws.

Section 8.5 Books and Records

This Commission shall keep correct and complete books and records of account and shall also keep minutes of the proceedings of the Members, the Board of Commissioners, and committees exercising the authority of the Board of Commissioners. The Commission shall keep at its registered office the original or a copy of its Bylaws including amendments to date, certified by the Secretary of the Commission, and a membership register, giving the names and addresses of all Members and the class and other details of membership. Every Member shall, upon verified written demand stating the purpose thereof, have a right to examine, in person, or by agent or attorney during the usual hours for business for any proper purpose, the membership register, books and records of account, and records of the proceedings of the members and the Board of Commissioners, and to make copies or extracts therefrom. A proper purpose shall mean a purpose reasonably related to the interest of such person as a Member. Where an attorney or other agent is the person who seeks the right of inspection, the demand under oath shall be accompanied by a verified power of attorney or another writing authorizing the attorney or other agent to act on behalf of the Member.

Section 8.6 Definition of Code

Unless the context requires otherwise, terms used in this Article VIII of these Bylaws shall have the meanings ascribed to them in the Code. References to the Code in this Article shall be deemed to extend to corresponding provisions of any subsequent United States tax laws. The provisions of this Article shall apply notwithstanding other provisions of these Bylaws, if any, that are inconsistent.

Article IX: Bylaw Amendments

Section 9.1 Authority

These Bylaws may be altered, amended, and/or repealed from time to time by the affirmative vote of the Members entitled to vote and present at the Biennial Meeting or any special meeting called to consider such alteration, amendment, and/or repeal, provided, however, that no such alteration, amendment, and/or repeal shall be effective prior to the approval of ATS as provided in Section 11.1(a).

Section 9.2 Notice

The Members of the Commission shall be given at least thirty (30) days' prior written notice of any meeting of the Members at which proposed changes to the Bylaws of the Commission are to be considered or acted upon. Such written notice shall include a copy of the proposed amendment or a summary of the changes to be effected thereby.

Article X: Dissolution

Section 10.1 Distribution of Assets upon Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of the Commission or in the winding up of its affairs or other liquidation of its assets, the Commission's property shall not be conveyed to any organization created or operated for profit or to any individual for less than the fair market value of such property. All assets remaining after all debts and expenses of the Commission have been paid or provided for shall be conveyed or distributed by the Board of Commissioners, in descending order of priority (i) to ATS if it then is recognized as an organization described in Code Section 501(c)(3); or (ii) equally among the Members that then qualify for the exemption afforded by Section 501(c)(3) of the Code or, in the case of Members that are Canadian entities equivalent to Section 501(c)(3) organizations; or (iii) to one or more organizations qualifying for the exemption afforded by Section 501(c)(3) of the Code. Any such assets not so distributed shall be disposed of pursuant to an order by a court of competent jurisdiction, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said court shall determine.

Article XI: Limitation of Powers

Section 11.1 Limitation of Powers

The Commission shall in its operation be subject to the following exclusive rights of ATS:

- (a) To approve all amendments to the Commission's Bylaws and the Articles of Incorporation;
- (b) To approve all fundamental changes with respect to the Commission, as that term is defined in the NPCL.

Commission Procedures Related to Accreditation and Membership

Procedures Related to Accreditation and Membership of the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools*

I. Membership

- A. Membership in the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools (the Commission) is limited to schools that meet the membership eligibility criteria of The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) and that are either Full Members of ATS or Associate Members of ATS on whom the Board of Commissioners has conferred Candidate for Accredited Status. In addition, a school that has ceased to be a member of ATS solely as a result of a Termination for Cause may continue as a member of the Commission.
- B. Each school shall either be accredited by the Commission on Accrediting or hold Candidate for Accredited Status.

II. Candidate for Accredited Status

- A. Candidate for Accredited Status is conferred on those members of ATS that, after review on the basis of the Commission's standards and procedures, have been formally authorized by vote of the Board of Commissioners to begin the self-study process. Candidate for Accredited Status is granted for a period of two years. By special action of the Board of Commissioners, candidacy may be extended for one year at a time, but in no case may candidacy extend beyond a total of five years.
- B. Criteria for Candidate for Accredited Status
 - 1. The applying institution shall be able to demonstrate that either it is, or by the conclusion of the self-study process will be, operating according to the Commission's General Institutional and individual Degree Program Standards and that it has the institutional capacity to evaluate its institutional and educational effectiveness.
 - 2. The applying institution shall demonstrate that it has the resources and capacity to complete a self-study process and report satisfactorily within the normal two-year period.
- C. Attaining Candidate for Accredited Status by Associate Members of ATS
 - 1. The chief administrative officer of an Associate Member school desiring candidacy status should notify the Commission staff in writing that the school intends to petition the Board of Commissioners for Candidate for Accredited Status.
 - 2. The applicant school shall undertake an internal study of its readiness for Candidate for Accredited Status. The Board of Commissioners will provide guidance for this internal study.
 - 3. Upon the school's completion of its internal study, a Commission staff member will review the study, conduct a staff visit to the school, and prepare a report regarding the school's compliance with the General Institutional and Degree Program Standards.

* In light of the new architecture of the Educational and Degree Program Standards approved by the membership at the 2012 Biennial Meeting, users should keep in mind that references in the COA Procedures to Degree Program Standards should be understood to include both the Educational Standard and the individual Degree Program Standards. COA Procedures will be revised to reflect the changes at the appropriate time.

4. The Board of Commissioners will base its decision regarding candidacy on the institution's internal study report, on the report of the staff visit, and on its assessment of the extent to which the institution will be able to meet the Commission's accrediting standards by the conclusion of the candidacy period. The Board of Commissioners may do one of the following:
 - a. grant candidacy for a period of two years; or
 - b. deny the candidacy petition.

If it denies the request for candidacy, the Board of Commissioners shall provide reasons for its action and notify the school of additional responses required to qualify for candidacy.

D. Maintaining Candidate for Accredited Status

1. The institution shall demonstrate evidence of progress in the self-study process.
2. The institution shall continue to meet criteria for candidacy and conduct its degree programs in conformity with the Commission's Degree Program Standards.
3. The institution shall complete the Commission's Annual Report Forms.
4. The institution shall pay annual dues as prescribed by ATS and the Commission.

E. Withdrawal from candidacy

A school may, on its own initiative, withdraw as a member of the Commission as a Candidate for Accredited Status at any time during its term of candidacy, by written notice to the Board of Commissioners.

III. Accredited membership

- A. Accredited members are institutions in the United States and Canada that are Associate Members of ATS that, after review on the basis of the accrediting standards of the Commission, are granted accreditation by the Board of Commissioners and become Full Members of ATS.
- B. Criteria for accredited membership
 1. Accredited institutions shall demonstrate that they operate according to the Commission's General Institutional Standards.
 2. All graduate degree programs offered by accredited members of the Commission shall meet the Degree Program Standards and be approved by the Board of Commissioners.
 3. All extension education offerings that provide graduate credit toward approved degrees shall be approved by the Board of Commissioners.
- C. Attaining accredited membership
 1. Candidates for Accredited Status shall engage in the self-study process, following the guidance provided in the Commission's *Handbook of Accreditation*. On-site staff consultation is available to schools in the self-study process. The General Institutional and appropriate Degree Program Standards must be addressed in the self-study report.
 2. The Board of Commissioners will examine the self-study report and determine whether it provides a sufficient basis for an on-site evaluation committee visit.

If the Board of Commissioners approves the self-study report and authorizes an initial accreditation visit, an evaluation committee will be appointed. If the Board of Commissioners finds the self-study report inadequate, an evaluation committee visit will not be authorized, but staff will be instructed to work with the institution to make the changes necessary to permit future consideration.

3. The evaluation committee will conduct a two-to-three-day visit to the campus and prepare a written report evaluating the institution in the light of the Commission's standards, following the procedures for evaluation committees published in the Commission's *Handbook of Accreditation*.
4. Based on the committee report and its recommendations, the Board of Commissioners may act in one of two ways:
 - a. accredit the institution and approve its degree programs for a period of no longer than seven years; or
 - b. deny accreditation to the institution. In this event, specific reasons will be stated in writing to the school.
5. It is possible for schools that offer graduate, professional theological degrees and that are demonstrably engaged in educating professional leadership for communities of the Christian and Jewish faiths but that are not individually eligible for accredited membership to qualify for accreditation by virtue of resources available through membership in a cluster or by contractual arrangement with another accredited institution. Accreditation requires assessment of the strength of the individual institution, the availability and actual use of resources claimed, and adequacy of the cluster of which the school is a part. Listings in publications, both of the Commission and of the school, shall state explicitly that such an institution is "accredited by The Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools by virtue of affiliation with _____."

D. Maintaining accredited membership

1. The institution shall maintain standards defined by the Commission and abide by the procedures of ATS and the Commission.
2. The institution shall complete the Commission's Annual Report Forms.
3. The institution shall pay annual dues as prescribed by ATS and the Commission.
4. The institution shall, at intervals specified by the Board of Commissioners, complete a process of comprehensive institutional self-study and prepare for regular scheduled visits of evaluation committees.

E. Policy regarding teach-out plans

1. A member school must submit a teach-out plan to the Board of Commissioners for the Board's approval upon the occurrence of any of the following events:
 - a. if the US Department of Education notifies the Board of Commissioners of an action against the institution to limit, suspend, or terminate an institution's participation in any Title IV program or initiates an emergency action against the institution;
 - b. if the Board of Commissioners withdraws, terminates, or suspends the accreditation of the institution; or
 - c. if the institution notifies the Board of Commissioners that it intends to cease operations or terminate a degree program.

IV. Withdrawal from membership

A school may, on its own initiative and by written notice to the Board of Commissioners, withdraw from membership and accredited status.

V. Procedures related to degree program approval

- A. New degree programs shall not be announced without prior approval by the Board of Commissioners.
- B. A school considering the introduction of a new degree program shall notify Commission staff and seek consultative guidance. It shall then submit a petition for consideration by the Board of Commissioners. The petition shall follow the guidelines established by the Board of Commissioners, including (1) an evaluation of the appropriateness of the proposed degree in the light of the institution's mission and purpose; (2) a detailed description of the design of the proposed degree (program features, compliance with the standards, resources available, relation to other degrees, etc.); (3) the institution's assessment of the new degree's impact on the programs already offered; and (4) an analysis of the financial support for the new degree and its impact on the institutional budget.
- C. If the proposed degree program is at the master's level, approval by the Board of Commissioners may be granted on the basis of the written petition. If the proposed degree is at the doctoral level, approval will be considered only after a focused evaluation visit has been conducted. The Board may excuse a school from this requirement if the institution already offers an approved doctoral program in the same degree category.
- D. When a member school determines to terminate an approved degree program, it shall notify in advance the Board of Commissioners and indicate how the school proposes to make adequate provision for current students pursuing the degree program to complete their studies and earn the degree or an equivalent degree.

VI. Procedures for approval of programs involving multiple locations (extension sites) and distance education

- A. Institutions shall seek appropriate Board of Commissioners' action for all programs involving multiple locations (extension sites) and distance education. The procedures for review and approval of such programs vary with the type of program. The Board of Commissioners has developed guidelines that outline in detail the review and approval process for different types of extension sites and for distance education programs.
- B. *Branch campuses.* A branch campus is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution as evidenced by permanence in nature, offering courses in educational programs leading to degrees, having its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization, and having its own budgetary and hiring authority. The establishment of a branch campus requires consultation and a written petition to the Board of Commissioners identifying the educational programs to be offered and the financial, operational, management, and physical resources necessary to meet Commission standards. A site evaluation is required prior to final action on the institution's petition by the Board of Commissioners.
- C. *Complete degree sites.* The offering of a full degree program at a site away from the institution's primary location requires consultation, a written petition to the Board of Commissioners, and a site evaluation prior to final action on the institution's petition by the Board of Commissioners.
- D. *Ongoing course offering sites.* The establishment of a program at a site away from the institution's primary location where a school intends to offer a variety of courses over time requires the submission of a written petition to the Board of Commissioners and action

on the petition prior to the first offering of courses. Sites where courses are offered on an ongoing basis may be visited and evaluated as part of the Board of Commissioners' review cycle. If as much as half of the course work required for any approved degree may be completed at the site away from the school's primary location, a site evaluation shall be conducted. Pursuant to Board policy, a school may be excused from an initial site visit.

- E. *Occasional course offering sites.* The establishment of a program in which a school intends to offer courses at a site away from the institution's primary location less frequently than on an annual basis does not require notification of or approval by the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners requests that institutions report such occasional offerings on the Commission's Annual Report Forms.
- F. International sites
1. *Outside Canada and the United States.* Institutions seeking to implement programs outside Canada and the United States that involve either the ongoing offering of courses or a full degree program must have the prior approval of the Board of Commissioners. In its proposal, the school shall clearly give attention to the guidelines adopted by the Board of Commissioners. After its review of the written proposal, the Board of Commissioners will ordinarily require a site review before it considers granting approval for these types of programs. The offering of occasional courses does not require notification of or approval by the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners expects that institutions report such occasional offerings on the Commission's Annual Report Forms.
 2. *Across the Canadian/US Border.* Institutions seeking to offer a program across the Canadian/United States border that involves either the ongoing offering of courses or a full degree program must have the prior approval of the Board of Commissioners. In its proposal, the school shall clearly demonstrate that it has given appropriate attention to the guidelines adopted by the Board of Commissioners and that it has consulted with Commission member schools near the location where the program is to be offered. The offering of occasional courses does not require notification of or approval by the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners requests that institutions report such occasional offerings on the Commission's Annual Report Forms.
- G. Distance education
1. When as many as six of the courses offered in any approved degree may be taken through distance education, it will be considered a comprehensive distance education program, and the institution must petition the Board of Commissioners for approval, according to guidelines adopted by the Board of Commissioners.
 2. The school shall undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the program either as part of its institutional self-study or at another time by request of the Board of Commissioners.
 3. When the design or amount of distance education courses offered in an approved distance program is significantly altered, the school is responsible for reporting the change to the Board of Commissioners.
 4. In its consideration of approval of distance learning programs, the Board of Commissioners may require a site evaluation.
 5. Schools conducting distance education must have a process by which the institution establishes by use of secure login and pass code, proctored examinations, or other means that are effective in verifying student identity and protecting student privacy, that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or

program and receives the academic credit. In addition, the school must notify students of any projected additional student charges associated with the verification of student identity at the time of registration or enrollment.

VII. Enforcement of standards for accredited members

A. Through comprehensive evaluation visits

1. Comprehensive evaluations occur prior to the expiration of a grant of accreditation. Normally, a comprehensive evaluation committee visit will occur within six months of the expiration of a grant of accreditation. The grant of initial accreditation is limited to no more than seven years and reaffirmation to no more than ten years. The Board of Commissioners may grant accreditation for shorter periods of time, with reasons given for the action in each case. Because accreditation is an ongoing relationship between the Board of Commissioners and the school, the Board of Commissioners may authorize a comprehensive evaluation at any time when regular monitoring activities indicate significant problems at multiple levels of a school or an institution initiates multiple substantive changes. The preparation of a self-study is not required when the Board of Commissioners authorizes such a special comprehensive evaluation visit.
2. Institutions shall engage in an institutional self-study in preparation for each comprehensive evaluation. The self-study shall follow the guidance provided in the *Handbook of Accreditation*.
3. The self-study report shall be submitted, at least sixty days before the scheduled visit, to the Commission staff who, in consultation with the chairperson of the evaluation committee, will determine whether the document is an adequate basis for conducting the visit or whether the visit should be postponed. If the visit is postponed by Commission staff for more than one semester, the institution shall have the right of appeal at the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Commissioners.
4. In preparation for an evaluation visit, a school shall advertise to its constituencies that it is receiving an evaluation committee and invite comment in writing concerning the institution's qualifications for accreditation. These comments will be available to the evaluation committee. The evaluation committee may also include an open hearing scheduled during the course of the visit.
5. The Board of Commissioners will publish the names of schools receiving a comprehensive evaluation visit in a given year and request comment from other Commission member institutions.

B. Through focused evaluation visits

1. Focused evaluation visits may be authorized by the Board of Commissioners as a response to any of the following:
 - a. a school's invitation to the Board of Commissioners;
 - b. a school's decision to offer a new degree program, as noted in section V of these procedures;
 - c. a school's decision to offer 50 percent or more of the courses for an approved degree at a new location;
 - d. a change in ownership or substantive change in the pattern of control of the institution;
 - e. the receipt of other information that leads the Board of Commissioners to conclude that a focused evaluation visit is advisable;

- f. an indication that the quality of a school's programs may have been adversely affected by changes in circumstances; or
 - g. in the context of investigating a formal complaint against the institution when deemed appropriate.
 - 2. In preparation for focused evaluation visits, the Board of Commissioners may require reports from the school as are appropriate to the situation, authorize staff or other evaluators as appropriate, and provide instruction for the school and the evaluators regarding the committee's report to the Board of Commissioners. The expectations for a focused evaluation will be described to the school in the context of a written prospectus prepared for the visit.
- C. Through monitoring of substantive changes
 - 1. Substantive changes include the following: change in fundamental mission, legal status, ownership, name, or governing control of an institution; change in location(s) at which an institution conducts its educational programs; introduction of a program of six or more distance learning courses; the offering of a new degree or major changes in the total hours required for an approved degree; the termination of an approved degree program; or a change in type of educational units. In addition, a substantive change includes a new contract or major changes in existing contracts for educational or administrative services that would affect the school's conformity to the accreditation standards, the acquisition of any other institution or any program or location of another institution, and the addition of a permanent location at a site at which the institution is conducting a teach-out for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study. Substantive changes do not include exceptions that an institution may choose to make for an individual student.
 - 2. It is the responsibility of an accredited school to petition the Board of Commissioners for approval of these changes prior to implementing them.
- D. Through the use of reports
 - 1. The Board of Commissioners may require a report if it judges that an accredited institution should supply additional information or needs to improve in an area or areas. In its action to require such a report, the Board will identify the standards where it needs information or judges that the institution requires improvement, and it will set the submission date or dates according to its judgment of the time reasonably necessary to provide the information or to make the improvement.
 - 2. The circumstances meriting reports are not instances of noncompliance, and insufficient improvement does not signal noncompliance.
- E. Through the use of published notations
 - 1. On the basis of reports received either from an evaluation committee or from a member institution, the Board of Commissioners shall impose a notation or notations when it judges that an institution insufficiently meets one or more sections of an accrediting standard.
 - 2. A notation is a public characterization of membership status. The *Membership List* includes any notations imposed by the Board of Commissioners as part of the institution's formal accredited status.
 - 3. Within two years following the imposition of a notation, the institution shall provide evidence to the Board of Commissioners as to why the notation should be removed. If the institution does not provide the requisite evidence, the Board of Commissioners shall take an adverse action. In certain cases and for demonstrat-

ed good cause, the Board of Commissioners may extend by one year the period of imposition of a notation.

F. Through the use of probation

1. Probation is designed to respond to the circumstance in which an institution does not meet one or more of the General Institutional or Degree Program Standards.
2. No institution will be placed on probation without an on-site visit. The evaluation committee will prepare a written report and submit it to the institution for its response. The evaluation committee's report and the institution's response will be considered by the Board of Commissioners and will serve as the basis for the decision of the Board of Commissioners.
3. In any action imposing probation, the Board of Commissioners will identify the standards that it judges that the institution is no longer meeting and describe its expectations regarding changes necessary to correct the situation.
4. The time assigned to an institution for the remedial action required for the removal of probation will be not less than twelve nor more than twenty-four months. If an institution demonstrates that the conditions to remove probation have been met prior to the deadline, the institution may petition the Board of Commissioners for an early decision on the request to remove probation.
5. Prior to the end of the period of probation, a visit by an evaluation committee will be conducted to bring a report to the Board of Commissioners with a recommendation as to whether the Board of Commissioners should remove probation or take an adverse action. In certain cases and for demonstrated good cause, the Board of Commissioners may extend by one year the period an institution has to demonstrate that the conditions to remove probation have been met.
6. When probation is imposed upon an institution, the action of the Board of Commissioners will be communicated in the *Membership List* and in the Board of Commissioners' reports provided by the Board's policies. The institution will continue to appear in the list of accredited institutions, but following its name will appear the note, "Probation (date) to (date)."

G. Through withdrawal of accreditation

1. Notations and probation are not sequential actions.
2. If, at the end of the term of a notation and any extension for good cause, an institution does not demonstrate that it has remedied the problem identified by the notation, the Board shall withdraw accreditation.
3. If, after a period of probation (including any extension for good cause), an on-site visit, examination of the evaluation committee's report, and receipt of an institution's response, the Board of Commissioners determines that an institution has failed to demonstrate that it can or will function according to the standards of accreditation, the Board of Commissioners shall withdraw institutional accreditation.
4. Once accreditation is withdrawn, an institution may not apply for reaccreditation for a period of three years. Application will follow the procedures outlined in section III above.

H. Adverse accrediting actions

Adverse accrediting actions by the Board of Commissioners are defined as denial of accreditation or withdrawal of accreditation.

VIII. The Board of Commissioners

A. Composition and duties

1. The composition and duties of the Board of Commissioners are defined by the By-laws of the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools.
2. The primary duties of the Board of Commissioners include (1) the oversight of the corporate work of the Commission, as authorized by the Bylaws; (2) the compilation and maintenance of the list of schools accredited in accordance with the standards determined by the Commission, including the authority to add schools to or delete them from the list; (3) the undertaking, on an ongoing basis, of a review of accredited schools for continued inclusion on the list of accredited schools, including all aspects of Commission accreditation pursuant to the procedures and standards of the Commission; and (4) the regular and continuous review of the accrediting standards and bringing recommendations for changes to Commission member schools.
3. In the context of its duties to make decisions regarding accreditation, the Board of Commissioners is responsible for adopting and overseeing policies and procedures that ensure thorough and fair evaluation of schools and for consistently applying the Commission's procedures and accrediting standards.

B. Procedures

1. Members of the Board of Commissioners must absent themselves from discussion and voting on matters having to do with schools in which they are currently or have been previously employed and schools that they have attended as students.
2. In making decisions following evaluation committee visits, the Board of Commissioners will consider the self-study of the school under consideration, the written report of the evaluation committee, the committee's recommendations contained in that report, and the responses of the institution to both the report and the recommendations. The actions that the Board of Commissioners takes will be based on these materials and will reflect both the Board of Commissioners' experience of applying the Commission's standards and the decisions it has made regarding other institutions.
3. Subcommittees of the Board of Commissioners will give preliminary consideration to evaluation committee reports and recommendations. Members of the Board of Commissioners may not serve on a subcommittee considering a report from an evaluation committee on which they served, nor may they vote on decisions about schools they visited.
4. Any school about which the Board of Commissioners is considering an accreditation action has the right to request an appearance by its designated representative(s) before the Board of Commissioners or a subcommittee of the Board of Commissioners.
5. Letters reporting the actions of the Board of Commissioners will be sent to schools no later than thirty days from the date of the action.
6. When an institution plans to close, or if the Board of Commissioners determines that an institution is in danger of closing, the institution shall be required to provide a plan detailing agreements with other institutions and the means of support necessary to allow students to complete the degree programs to which they were admitted in a manner and at a cost consistent with their enrollment in the institution that is closing.

7. Accreditation is a continuing relationship between an institution and the Commission, which is subject to review and consideration.

IX. Evaluation committees

- A. Committees evaluating institutions for initial accreditation, for reaffirmation of accreditation, and for focused evaluations will be selected according to procedures adopted by the Board of Commissioners and published in the *Handbook of Accreditation*.
- B. The Board of Commissioners and its staff will receive nominations for potential visitors from the executive officers of any institution that is a member of the Commission.
- C. The Board of Commissioners will provide the resources, training, and staff support to ensure informed and responsible work by members of evaluation committees.
- D. Evaluation committee members will be selected by Commission staff, under the supervision of the Board of Commissioners and in consultation with the institution to be visited, and with due consideration of the purpose, programs, and context of the institution. At least one member of the committee will not be a member of the Board of Commissioners or ATS Board of Directors. Schools may object to the appointment of persons to a committee if the appointee has attended the school as a student or been employed by the institution. The number of persons appointed to evaluation committees will vary according to the nature of the visit and will be determined in consultation with the institution.
- E. In cooperative evaluation visits with another accrediting agency, the composition of the committee will be negotiated with that agency to ensure that all committee members are mutually acceptable.
- F. Comprehensive evaluation visits normally require the equivalent of three days on-site at the institution, but that time may be adjusted in view of the size of the school and its overall situation. Committees conducting focused evaluation visits normally spend the equivalent of one or two days on-site at the institution.
- G. Members of evaluation committees serve without remuneration except for reimbursement of related out-of-pocket expenses, travel, meals, and other costs incurred.
- H. Committees are responsible for conducting their work and preparing their reports according to the guidelines provided by the Board of Commissioners in its *Handbook of Accreditation*.

X. Policy on disclosure and confidentiality

- A. Accredited status
 1. The Commission will publish a *Membership List* on the ATS website. The *Membership List* reports the formal accredited status of schools, including accreditation status, approved degree programs, approved degrees at locations other than the institution's primary location, approved programs of distance learning, the date of the most recent comprehensive evaluation visit, the date of the next scheduled evaluation, and reports required of schools during the current grant of accreditation. If the institution is on probation or has notations, this status shall also be disclosed. An institution's entry will not be published until the period for receiving appeals of actions by the Board of Commissioners, as specified in these procedures (Article XI below) and in the Bylaws of the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools (section 2.14), has expired. No adverse accrediting action will be published while an appeal is in process. Adverse accrediting actions are defined in VII.H above.

2. Accredited members shall disclose the following information in their printed and/or electronic bulletin, calendar, or catalog: the status of their accreditation with the following language “the school is accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools,” and provide the Commission’s mailing address and phone number. Schools shall also disclose the status of each degree program with the following language: “The following degree programs are approved by the Commission on Accrediting (name of degree programs).” When schools have been approved to offer full degree programs at more than one site, the school shall disclose this information as well.
3. Candidate members shall publish their formal status with the Commission as “Candidate for Accredited Status.”

B. Self-study reports

1. An institution may release for internal or public distribution the contents of its self-study.
2. The Board of Commissioners may permit representatives from member institutions access to another institution’s self-study report to aid in the self-study process. This access will be permitted only if an institution has given prior approval for use of its self-study in this way. The Board of Commissioners may also approve the use of self-study reports by educators who are conducting research, the purpose of which is the improvement of the accrediting process. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the US Department of Education may be allowed access to self-study reports in conjunction with the process of recognition that the Board of Commissioners undergoes with these entities.

C. Evaluation committee reports

1. As part of the accreditation process, reports prepared by evaluation committees of the Board of Commissioners shall be made available to governing boards and faculties by the chief executive officers of the schools.
2. An institution may make public the report of an evaluation committee, although this is not mandatory and is not advisable prior to formal action by the Board of Commissioners. If the institution makes a report public, it must make clear that the document is a report of the evaluation committee to the Board of Commissioners and is not an action of the Board of Commissioners.
3. The recommendations of the evaluation committee to the Board of Commissioners shall not be published by the institution as actions. Only the actions of the Board of Commissioners comprise the formal accreditation.
4. If, in the judgment of the Board of Commissioners, a school publishes selected portions of a report on an accreditation evaluation in such a way as to distort the overall import of that report, the Board of Commissioners has the authority to release the full text of the report in question.
5. The Board of Commissioners will not release evaluation committee reports to the public. With the approval of the institution, the Board of Commissioners may approve access to a report to those conducting research that contributes to the improvement of the accrediting process. Evaluation committee reports may be examined by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the US Department of Education only in the context of reviews of the Board of Commissioners by those agencies, for the purpose of recognition. Evaluation committee reports will also be shared with regional accrediting agencies in the case of dually accredited schools.

D. Other accrediting documents

1. Minutes of the Board of Commissioners are available to the members of the Board of Commissioners. A summary report of all actions of the Board of Commissioners is published biennially in the *ATS Bulletin*.
2. An institution that has officially appealed an adverse action of the Board of Commissioners may request those sections of official minutes that pertain to the adverse action.
3. Correspondence between the Board of Commissioners and a member or an applying institution shall be treated confidentially by both parties.
4. Institutional reports will not be released to the public by the Board of Commissioners. These reports, however, may be released by the institution after action has been taken by the Board of Commissioners.
5. The Board of Commissioners will share its correspondence to member schools with the appropriate regional accrediting agencies, with the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the US Department of Education in conjunction with the recognition process, and, as required, with appropriate state or provincial authorities.

E. Public statements by institutions

If an institution uses the public forum to take issue with an action by the Board of Commissioners relating to that institution, the chair of the Board of Commissioners may make available to the public any information pertinent to the decision. "Taking issue in a public forum" does not include an announcement by an institution that it intends to appeal an action of the Board of Commissioners.

F. Disclosure by the Board of Commissioners of information about member or applying institutions

1. Upon inquiry, the Board of Commissioners will release the following information about member or applying institutions:
 - a. Membership and accredited status.
 - b. The dates when the Board of Commissioners conferred Candidate for Accredited Status and, as relevant, granted initial accreditation.
 - c. The dates of the last comprehensive evaluation and of the next scheduled comprehensive evaluation.
 - d. The date of the next scheduled focused evaluation visit and formal reasons for the visit.
 - e. The date a formal application for membership began and the estimated date a decision on the application will be made.
 - f. The date of denial of candidacy or removal from candidacy.
 - g. The submission date and action taken on the most recent written report required by the Board of Commissioners.
 - h. The Board of Commissioners' action subsequent to the last evaluation visit regarding accreditation.

- i. Whether an institution has appealed an adverse accrediting action of the Board of Commissioners and the status and outcome of such appeal.
 - j. Actions of the appropriate appeal bodies with reasons for the actions.
2. The *Membership List* will identify institutions removed from candidacy or accredited membership, placed on probation, or withdrawing from candidacy or accredited membership.
 3. The summary report of the Board of Commissioners, published biennially, identifies institutions removed from candidacy or accredited membership, placed on probation, or withdrawing from candidacy or accredited membership during the period of the report.
 4. In all cases of adverse accrediting actions, a public statement about the action will be prepared in consultation with the institution for response to inquiries. The Board of Commissioners reserves the right to make final determination of the nature and content of the public statement. The Board of Commissioners will identify the reasons for the adverse accrediting action in the public statement.

XI. Appeals of actions by the Board of Commissioners

(cf. Bylaws of the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools, section 2.14, Appeal of Accreditation Decisions)

- A. Unless otherwise specified, the time for requesting an appeal shall be within thirty days from receipt of the letter reporting the action of the Board of Commissioners. The request for an appeal shall be in writing. Appeals are limited to decisions identified in sections B and C below.
- B. Regarding actions of the Board of Commissioners related to the failure to approve new degrees, extension sites, or distance education programs, the imposition of a notation, or the imposition of probation:
 1. If the institution believes that the action of the Board of Commissioners is unjust or based on erroneous information, the institution shall, either on its own initiative or at the invitation of the Board of Commissioners, first meet with three Commissioners appointed by the chair of the Board of Commissioners to seek a mutually satisfactory resolution. The response of the Board of Commissioners to a written appeal, including relevant specifics, shall be communicated in writing.
 2. If, after such consultation, the institution believes the action of the Board of Commissioners still to be unjust or based on erroneous information, it shall have the right to appeal in writing within sixty days of the receipt of the written findings, to the Appeals Panel as elected biennially by member schools. Within 120 days after receiving the notice of appeal, accompanied by a consent and waiver to be bound by the provisions therein and hereof, the Appeals Panel shall arrange for a hearing to review the findings of the Board of Commissioners and the position of such member. The recommendation of the Appeals Panel, including relevant specifics, shall be made to the Board of Commissioners, which shall act on the recommendation. The decision of the Board of Commissioners shall be communicated in writing and shall be final and binding in accordance with the consent and waiver referenced herein (and as submitted concurrent with the appeal procedures).
- C. Regarding adverse actions of the Board of Commissioners that are defined by the procedures as failure to grant initial accreditation or withdrawal of accreditation:

1. If the institution believes that the action of the Board of Commissioners is unjust or based on erroneous information, the institution shall, either on its own initiative or at the invitation of the Board of Commissioners, first meet with three Commissioners appointed by the chair of the Board of Commissioners to seek a mutually satisfactory resolution. The response of the Board of Commissioners to a written appeal, including relevant specifics, shall be communicated in writing.
 2. If, after such consultation, the institution believes the action of the Board of Commissioners still to be unjust or based on erroneous information, it shall have the right to appeal in writing within sixty days of the receipt of the written findings, to the Appeals Panel as elected biennially by member schools. Within 120 days after receiving the notice of appeal, accompanied by a consent and waiver to be bound by the provisions therein and hereof, the Appeals Panel shall arrange for a hearing to review the findings of the Board of Commissioners and the position of such member. The Appeals Panel shall make a decision to affirm, amend, or reverse the adverse action, or remand to the Board of Commissioners with instruction regarding its conclusions. The decision of the Appeals Panel is final and binding on both the Board of Commissioners and the member school. The Board of Commissioners in all cases will be responsible for implementing the decision.
- D. The Board of Commissioners and the moving party/parties shall have the right to representation in person and by counsel, if desired, at any level of appeal, and the school may provide new or additional information at any level of appeal that further demonstrates that the school is appropriately implementing the Standards of Accreditation.

XII. Complaints

The Commission has an obligation to the various publics it serves to give responsible consideration to complaints that may be made against any accredited school. The Board of Commissioners maintains policies and procedures for reviewing and responding to complaints. The complaint must be filed in writing, together with substantial documentation, as appropriate for the circumstance. The Board of Commissioners will determine if the complaint has standing with reference to any membership criterion or accreditation standard of the Commission. If the complaint has standing, the Board of Commissioners will conduct an investigation. The Board of Commissioners will communicate its conclusions and actions to the institution and the party raising the complaint. The Board of Commissioners assumes no responsibility for or obligation to adjudicate individual grievances.

XIII. Dual accreditation

- A. Any institution seeking or holding accreditation by more than one accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or the US Department of Education must describe itself in identical terms to each recognized accrediting body with regard to purpose, governance, programs, degrees, diplomas, certificates, personnel, finances, and constituents; and it must keep each accrediting body apprised of any change in its status with one or another accrediting body.
- B. The Board of Commissioners will withhold actions granting reaffirmation of accreditation, granting candidacy for accredited status, or extending the term of candidacy to any institution that is currently subject to (1) an adverse accrediting action by another accrediting agency recognized by the US Department of Education or (2) an action by an appropriate governmental authority that may lead to suspension, revocation, or termination of the school's legal authority to provide degree-granting higher education. If, after review, the Board of Commissioners determines that the institution is in compliance with Commission standards, it will proceed with the actions appropriate to Commission procedures, criteria, and standards.

- C. The Board of Commissioners will withhold actions granting reaffirmation of accreditation, granting candidacy for accredited status, or extending candidacy status to a college-related or university-related theological school, if the institution to which it is related is currently subject to an adverse action by another accrediting agency recognized by the US Department of Education or an interim action by a governmental agency leading to suspension, revocation, or termination of the institution's authority to offer degree-granting higher education. If, after review, the Board of Commissioners determines to grant candidacy, initial accreditation, or reaffirmation of accreditation to schools related to colleges or universities, subject to the conditions noted above, the Board of Commissioners will provide an explanation for its action to the US Secretary of Education and to the recognized accrediting agency.
- D. Schools accredited by the Commission on Accrediting and other recognized accrediting agencies in the United States and Canada may request a joint comprehensive evaluation visit conducted by both agencies. The Commission on Accrediting will conduct joint visits if the other agency agrees, and if the joint evaluation procedures do not compromise the independence and consistency of the Board of Commissioners' accreditation decisions.

Standards of Accreditation

Standards of Accreditation

Theological schools accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools (the “Commission”) are special-purpose institutions of postbaccalaureate, higher education. Prior to meeting the Standards of Accreditation, these schools must demonstrate that they are qualified for membership in the Commission by virtue of membership in The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (the “Association”) and by virtue of offering graduate theological degrees, functioning within the Christian or Jewish faiths, and demonstrating that their graduates serve in positions of religious leadership. The purpose of the Association is the improvement of theological schools, which is implemented through accreditation by the Commission and by the programs and services the Association provides to member schools.

Since 1938, The Association of Theological Schools has maintained standards for the accreditation of member schools. The standards both define minimal requirements for accreditation and identify qualities associated with good institutional and educational practice; as such, they articulate the shared understandings and accrued wisdom of the theological school community regarding normative institutional performance. The standards have been periodically reviewed and revised

since their inception: the General Institutional Standards were approved by the membership after a comprehensive redevelopment process undertaken from 2008 through 2010, and the present Educational and Degree Program Standards were approved by the membership after a comprehensive revision process undertaken from 2010 through 2012.

These standards are the basis by which schools are evaluated for accredited status with the Commission. More than previous editions of ATS standards, these standards seek to describe excellence in theological education in the context of the different purposes and constituencies of accredited schools. They provide the basis for ongoing institutional and educational improvement as well as descriptions of minimal expectations. The entire text comprises the accrediting standards. Within this text, the term “shall” is used to denote minimal expectations of accredited schools. Words such as “should” are used to identify characteristics of good practice and educational quality and to set forth expectations for improvement of theological education.

The standards are implemented according to the procedures and policies contained herein and are interpreted and administered by the Board of Commissioners (the “Board”).

General Institutional Standards

Theological schools accredited by the Commission are different in size, structure, constituencies, patterns of governance, and diversity of degree programs. The General Institutional Standards apply across the range of diverse schools, even though they may be interpreted in slightly varying ways in different schools.

The General Institutional Standards were approved by the membership at the 2010 Biennial Meeting and focus on issues that are true for all theological

schools regardless of the educational programs they offer: purpose, planning, and evaluation; institutional integrity; theological curriculum; library and information resources; faculty; student recruitment, admission, services, and placement; authority and governance; and institutional resources. These standards set forth the expectation that the Educational and Degree Program Standards will be applied on the foundation of a sound institutional context.

Guide to General Institutional Standards Renumbering

OLD		NEW	
1	Purpose, planning, and evaluation	1	Purpose, planning, and evaluation
2	Institutional integrity	2	Institutional integrity
3	Learning, teaching, and research: theological scholarship	3	Theological curriculum: Learning, teaching, and research
4	Reserved		
5	Library and information resources	4	Library and information resources
6	Faculty	5	Faculty
7	Student recruitment, admission, services, and placement	6	Student recruitment, admission, services, and placement
8	Authority and governance	7	Authority and governance
9	Institutional resources	8	Institutional resources
10	Multiple locations and distance education	Incorporated into Educational Standard (ES)	

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 postbaccalaureate 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.

1.2.2 Evaluation is a critical element in support of integrity to institutional planning and mission fulfillment. Evaluation is a process that includes (1) the identification of desired goals or outcomes for an educational program, or institutional service, or personnel performance; (2) a system of gathering quantitative or qualitative information related to the desired goals; (3) the assessment of the performance of the program, service, or person based on this information; and (4) the establishment of revised goals or activities based on the assessment. Institutions shall develop and implement ongoing evaluation procedures for institutional vitality and educational effectiveness.

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

1.2.2.2 Institutions shall develop and implement ongoing evaluation procedures for educational effectiveness as required by individual degree program standards.

1.2.3 A comprehensive evaluation process is the primary resource an institution uses to determine the extent to which it is accomplishing its purpose. The various in-

stitutional and educational evaluation procedures shall be analyzed, coordinated, and employed in comprehensive institutional planning. Information gained in evaluation processes should be utilized widely within the institution for ongoing administrative and educational planning.

2 Institutional integrity

Institutional integrity is demonstrated by the consistency of a theological school's actions with commitments it has expressed in its formally adopted statement of purpose, with agreements it assumes with accrediting and governmental agencies, with covenants it establishes with ecclesiastical bodies, and with ethical guidelines for dealing with students, employees, and constituencies.

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

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

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

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

2.5 In their institutional and educational practices, theological schools shall promote awareness of the diversity of race, ethnicity, and culture widely present in North America and shall seek to enhance participation and leadership of persons of color in theological education. Schools shall assist all students in gaining the particular knowledge, appreciation, and openness needed to live and practice ministry effectively in culturally and racially diverse settings.

2.6 In their institutional and educational practices, theological schools shall promote the participation and leadership of women in theological education within the framework of each school's stated purposes and theological commitments. Schools shall assist all students in gaining the particular knowledge, appreciation, and openness needed to live and practice ministry effectively in diverse settings.

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

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

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

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

3 The theological curriculum: learning, teaching, and research

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

3.1 Goals of the theological curriculum

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

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

3.2 Learning, teaching, and research

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

3.2.1 Learning

3.2.1.1 Learning in a theological school should reflect the goals of the total curriculum and be appropriate to postbaccalaureate education.

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

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

3.2.1.4 An institution shall demonstrate its ongoing efforts to ensure the quality of learning within the context of its purpose and as understood by the relevant scholarly and ecclesial communities.

3.2.2 Teaching

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

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

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

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

3.2.3 Research

3.2.3.1 Research is an essential component of theological scholarship and should be evident in the work of both teachers and students. Theological research is both an individual and a communal enterprise and is properly undertaken in constructive relationship with the academy, with the church, and with the wider public.

3.2.3.2 As a function of learning, research involves the skills needed both to discover information and to integrate new information with established understandings. As a function of teaching, research assimilates sources of information, constructs patterns of understanding, and uncovers new information in order to strengthen classroom experiences.

3.3 Characteristics of theological scholarship

Patterns of collaboration, freedom of inquiry, relationships with diverse publics, and a global awareness are important characteristics of theological scholarship.

3.3.1 Scholarly collaboration

3.3.1.1 The activities of theological scholarship—teaching, learning, and research—are collaborative efforts among faculty, librarians, and students, and foster a lifelong commitment to learning and reflection.

3.3.1.2 Scholarship occurs in a variety of contexts in the theological school. These include courses, independent study, the library, student and faculty

interaction, congregational and field settings, and courses in universities and other graduate level institutions. In each of these settings, mutual respect among scholarly inquirers characterizes theological scholarship.

3.3.1.3 Collaboration and communication extend beyond the theological school's immediate environment to relate it to the wider community of the church, the academy, and the society. Theological scholarship is enhanced by active engagement with the diversity and global extent of those wider publics, and it requires a consciousness of racial, ethnic, gender, and global diversities. In accordance with the school's purpose and constituencies, insofar as possible, the members of the school's own community of learning should also represent diversity in race, age, ethnic origin, and gender.

3.3.2 Freedom of inquiry

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

3.3.3 Involvement with diverse publics

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

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

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

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

3.3.4 Global awareness and engagement

3.3.4.1 Theological teaching, learning, and research require patterns of institutional and educational practice that contribute to an awareness and appreciation of global interconnectedness and interdependence, particularly as they relate to the mission of the church. These patterns are intended to

* See also the ATS policy guideline titled, "Academic Freedom and Tenure," in *Bulletin*, part 1.

enhance the ways institutions participate in the ecumenical, dialogical, evangelistic, and justice efforts of the church.

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

3.3.4.3 Schools shall demonstrate practices of teaching, learning, and research (comprehensively understood as theological scholarship) that encourage global awareness and responsiveness.

3.3.5 Ethics of scholarship

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

4 Library and information resources

The library is a central resource for theological scholarship and education. It is integral to the purpose of the school through its contribution to teaching, learning, and research, and it functions collaboratively in curriculum development and implementation. The library's educational effectiveness depends on the quality of its information resources, staff, and administrative vision. To accomplish its mission, the library requires appropriate financial, technological, and physical resources, as well as a sufficient number of personnel. Its mission and complement of resources should align with the school's mission and be congruent with the character and composition of the student body.

4.1 Library collections

4.1.1 Theological study requires extensive encounter with historical and contemporary texts. While theological education is informed by many resources, the textual tradition is central to theological inquiry. Texts provide a point of entry to theological subject matter as well as a place of encounter with it. Theological libraries serve the church by preserving its textual tradition for the current and future needs of faculty, students, and researchers.

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

4.1.3 Because libraries seek to preserve the textual tradition of the church, they may choose to build unique special collections, such as institutional, regional, or denominational archives.

4.1.4 In addition to print materials, collections shall include other media and electronic resources as appropriate to the curriculum and provide access to relevant remote databases.

4.1.5 The library should promote coordinated collection development with other schools to provide stronger overall library collections.

4.2 Contribution to learning, teaching, and research

4.2.1 The library accomplishes its teaching responsibilities by meeting the bibliographic needs of the library's patrons; offering appropriate reference services; providing assistance and training in using information resources and communication technologies; and teaching information literacy, including research practices of effectively and ethically accessing, evaluating, and using information. The library should collaborate with faculty to develop reflective research practices throughout the curriculum and help to serve the information needs of faculty, students, and researchers.

4.2.2 The library promotes theological learning by providing instructional programs and resources that encourage students and graduates to develop reflective and critical research and communication practices that prepare them to engage in lifelong learning.

4.2.3 Theological research is supported through collection development and information technology and by helping faculty and students develop research skills.

4.2.4 The library should provide physical and online environments conducive to learning and scholarly interaction.

4.3 Partnership in curriculum development

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

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

4.4 Administration and leadership

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

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

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

4.4.4 Schools shall provide structured opportunities to theological librarians for professional development and, as appropriate, contribute to the development of theological librarianship.

4.5 Resources

4.5.1 Each school shall have the resources necessary for the operation of an adequate library program. These include financial, technological, and physical resources and sufficient personnel.

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

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

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

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

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

5 Faculty

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

5.1 Faculty qualifications, responsibilities, development, and employment

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

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

5.1.3 Composition of the faculty should be guided by the purpose of the institution, and attention to this composition should be an integral component of long-range planning in the institution. Faculty should be of sufficient diversity and number to meet the multifaceted demands of teaching, learning, and research. Hiring practices should be attentive to the value of diversity in race, ethnicity, and gender. The faculty should also include members who have doctorates from different schools and who

exemplify various methods and points of view. At the same time, faculty selection will be guided by the needs and requirements of particular constituencies of the school.

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

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

5.1.6 Theological scholarship is enriched by continuity within a faculty and safeguards for the freedom of inquiry for individual members. Therefore, each school shall demonstrate effective procedures for the retention of a qualified community of scholars, through tenure or some other appropriate procedure.

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

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

5.2 Faculty role in teaching

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

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

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

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

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

5.3 Faculty role in student learning

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

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

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

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

5.4 Faculty role in theological research

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

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

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

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

6 Student recruitment, admission, services, and placement

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

6.1 Recruitment

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

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

6.2 Admission

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

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

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

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

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

6.3 Student services

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.3.7 Student financial aid, when provided, should be distributed according to the ATS policy guideline "Student Financial Aid" in *Bulletin*, part 1.

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

6.4 Student borrowing

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

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

6.5 Placement

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

6.5.2 Theological schools should monitor the placement of graduates in appropriate positions and review admissions policies in light of trends in placement.

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

7 Authority and governance

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

7.1 Authority

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

7.1.2 The structure and scope of the theological school's authority are based on the patterns of its relationship to other institutions of higher education or ecclesiastical bodies. Some theological schools have full authority for all institutional and educational operations. Other schools, related to colleges, universities, or clusters of theological schools, may have limited authority for institutional operations, although they may have full authority over the educational programs. Still other schools are related to ecclesiastical bodies in particular ways, and authority is shared by the institution and the ecclesiastical body. All three kinds of schools have different patterns for the exercise of authority, and in some schools these patterns may be blended.

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

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

7.1.2.3 Schools with authority limited by their ecclesiastical relationships shall develop, in dialogue with their sponsoring church bodies, a formal statement concerning the operative structure of governance for the institution. This statement must make clear where the authority for maintaining the integrity and vitality of the school resides and how that authority is to be exercised in actual practice. In schools of this type, the authority of the

governing board shall be clearly specified in appropriate ecclesiastical and institutional documents.

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

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

7.2 Governance

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

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

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

7.3 The roles of the governing board, administration, faculty, and students in governance processes

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

7.3.1 Governing board

7.3.1.1 The governing board is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of the institution's integrity and its freedom from inappropriate external and internal pressures and from destructive interference or restraints. It shall attend to the well-being of the institution by exercising proper fiduciary responsibility, adequate financial oversight, proper delegation of authority to the institution's administrative officers and faculty, engaging outside legal counsel, ensuring professional and independent audits, using professional investment advisors as appropriate, and maintaining procedural fairness and freedom of inquiry.

7.3.1.2 The governing board shall be accountable for the institution's adherence to requirements duly established by public authorities and to accredita-

tion standards established by the Commission and by any other accrediting or certifying agencies to which the institution is formally related.

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

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

7.3.1.5 The governing board shall require ongoing institutional planning and evaluation of outcomes to assure faithful implementation of the school's purpose, priorities, and denominational and theological commitments.

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

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

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

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

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

7.3.1.11 The board has the responsibility to hold itself accountable for the overall performance of its duties and shall evaluate the effectiveness of its own procedures. It should also seek to educate itself about the issues it faces

and about procedures used by effective governing bodies in carrying out their work. The board shall evaluate its members on a regular basis.

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

7.3.2 Administration

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

7.3.2.2 Administrative leaders should implement the institution's theological convictions and shared values in the way they manage the school's financial and physical resources and personnel, consult and communicate with constituencies, and ensure fairness in all evaluation and planning activities.

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

7.3.2.4 The responsibilities and structures of accountability shall be clearly defined in appropriate documents.

7.3.3 Faculty

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

7.3.3.2 Beyond the matters specifically delegated to the faculty, the faculty should contribute to the overall decision making as determined by the institution's structure of governance. Such involvement is particularly important in the development of the institution's purpose statement and in institutional evaluation and planning.

7.3.4 Students

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

8 Institutional resources

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

8.1 Personnel

8.1.1 The theological school should value and seek to enhance the quality of the human lives it touches. The human fabric of the institution is enriched by including a wide range of persons. The institution should devote adequate time and energy to the processes by which persons are recruited, enabled to participate in the institution, nurtured in their development, and prepared for their various tasks within the institution.

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

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

8.2 Financial resources

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

8.2.1 The financial condition of the school

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

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

8.2.1.3 A theological school should normally balance budgeted revenues and expenditures while employing a prudent endowment spending rate.†

* 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.

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

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

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

8.2.2 Accounting, audit, budget, and control

8.2.2.1 A theological school shall adopt internal accounting and reporting systems that are generally used in North American higher education. US schools should follow the principles and procedures for institutional accounting published by the National Association of College and University Business Officers. Canadian schools should follow guidelines published by the Canadian Association of University Business Officers.

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

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

8.2.2.4 A theological school shall ensure that revenues, expenditures, and capital projects are budgeted and submitted for review and approval to the governing board. Budgets should clearly reflect the directions established by the long-range plans of the school. Budgets should be developed in consulta-

tion with the administrators, staff, and faculty who bear responsibility for managing the institution's programs and who approve the disbursements. A theological school should maintain three-to-five-year financial projections of anticipated revenues, expenditures, and capital projects.

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

8.2.2.6 While a theological school may depend upon an external agency or group (such as a denomination, diocese, order, foundation, association of congregations, or other private agency) for financial support, the school's governing board should retain appropriate autonomy in budget allocations and the development of financial policies.

8.2.3 Business management

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

8.2.4 Institutional development and advancement

8.2.4.1 An institutional advancement program is essential to developing financial resources. The advancement program should be planned, organized, and implemented in ways congruent with the principles of the school. It should include annual giving, capital giving, and planned giving, and should be conducted in patterns consistent with relationships and agreements with the school's supporting constituencies. Essential to the success of the institutional advancement program are the roles played by the chief administrative leader in fundraising; the governing board in its leadership and participation; the graduates in their participation; and the faculty, staff, and volunteers in their involvement. Advancement efforts shall be evaluated on a regular basis.

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

8.2.4.3 When auxiliary organizations, such as foundations, have been established using the name and/or reputation of the institution, the school shall be able to demonstrate that the auxiliary organizations are regularly audited by an independent accountant and that the governing relationship between the school and auxiliary organization is clearly articulated.

8.3 Physical resources

8.3.1 The physical resources include space and equipment as well as buildings and grounds. A theological school shall demonstrate that the physical resources it uses are adequate and appropriate for its purpose and programs and that adequate funds for maintaining, sustaining, and renewing capital assets are included in budget planning.

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

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

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

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

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

8.4 Institutional information technology resources

8.4.1 To the extent that a theological school uses technology to deliver its educational programs, the school shall maintain adequate personnel and financial and technological resources to sustain its technology infrastructure.

8.4.2 For planning and evaluation, the school shall create and use various kinds of institutional data and information technology to determine the extent to which the institution is attaining its academic and institutional purposes and objectives. To the extent possible, it should use the most effective current technologies for creating, storing, and transmitting this information within the institution, and it should share appropriate information thus generated among institutions and organizations. The kinds of information and the means by which that information is gathered, stored, retrieved, and analyzed should be appropriate to the size and complexity of the institution.

8.5 Institutional environment

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

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

8.6 Cooperative use of resources

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

8.6.2 Access to the required resources may be achieved either through ownership or through carefully formulated relationships with other schools or institutions. These relationships may include, for instance, cross-appointments of faculty, cross-registration of students, joint and dual degree programs, rental of facilities, and shared access

to information required by administrators, faculty, and students in the pursuit of their tasks. Whatever their reason or scope, collaborative arrangements should be carefully designed with sufficient legal safeguards, adequate public disclosure, and provisions for review, and with a clear rationale for involvement in such arrangements.

8.7 Clusters

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

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

8.7.3 Structural components

8.7.3.1 The core membership of a cluster comprises schools holding accredited membership within the Commission, but clusters may include candidate members of the Commission and Associate Members of ATS, as well as other schools and agencies with compatible purposes.

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

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

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

8.7.3.5 These structures and resources shall be regularly evaluated and appropriately adjusted.

8.7.4 Effectiveness

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

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

8.8 Instructional technology resources

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

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

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

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

8.8.2.2 A technological and support services program should include technological training and should ensure adequate support services personnel for faculty and students.

8.8.3 Institutions shall develop and implement ongoing evaluation procedures for the use of instructional technology that involve appropriate groups of people in the evaluation process.

Educational and Degree Program Standards

The Commission on Accrediting of ATS identifies its expectations and requirements for the degrees offered by member schools in the following Degree Program Standards. These standards for degree programs are intended to ensure a common understanding of the kind and quantity of academic work involved in a degree program undertaken at member schools, and to provide common public meaning for a degree, regardless of the member school that grants it.

The revised Educational and Degree Program Standards were adopted at the June 2012 Biennial Meeting.

The Educational Standard (ES 1 through 8) identifies general educational qualities that transcend particular degree program expectations. It describes four primary patterns of theological education delivery—campus-based education, extension education, distance education, and individualized instruction. It also describes expectations related to assessing learning outcomes and educational effectiveness as well as technical issues related to practices such as transfer of credits and credits shared by more than one degree. Standard ES brings together material that was formerly part of Standard DS, Standard 10, and Standard M.

The Degree Program Standards (A through J) fall into four categories: Basic Programs oriented toward Ministerial Leadership, Basic Programs oriented toward General Theological Studies, Advanced Programs oriented toward Ministerial Leadership, and Advanced Programs primarily oriented toward Theological Research and Teaching. For each degree, the standards address (1) purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment; (2) program content; (3) educational resources and learning strategies; and (4) admission.

While the degree standards are intended to ensure a common, public meaning for degrees granted by theological schools that are accredited by the Board of Commissioners, a member institution should implement its degree programs in ways that meet the standards *and*

reflect the school's values and purpose. Thus, while the standards require schools to offer programs that provide opportunities through which students may grow in personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity, and public witness, each school must determine the kind of opportunities that are appropriate to its institutional and religious commitments, as well as the characteristics that are reasonable indicators of moral integrity or personal faith, in the context of the school's institutional and theological commitments. The standards require institutions to assess the degree to which the goals of a degree program have been achieved, but schools must identify the qualities by which the attainment of goals will be assessed.

Because accreditation is somewhat distinctive in North American higher education, applicants for admission who have completed their prerequisite educational work outside North America will typically not present degrees from "accredited" schools, and the patterns of their previous education may be different from familiar patterns of education in North America. Commission member institutions are responsible for determining, for all applicants, the level of work that has been completed and whether the work represents the educational equivalent of specified, prerequisite degrees.

When a school offers more than one degree program, it is important that each program be designed in a way that ensures its educational integrity. While some courses in a degree program may also be used to satisfy requirements for another degree, in most approved degree programs there will be some courses that are offered only for that program. In schools that offer both master's-level and doctoral programs, courses should be appropriate for each level and generally offered for students at only one level, with exceptions made only in clearly defined cases. Moreover, in each degree program a sufficient number of students should be enrolled to ensure an appropriate community of learners focused on the purpose and goals of that degree.

Plan of Implementation for the Revised Educational and Degree Program Standards

Guidelines for Implementation

The revised Educational and Degree Program Standards should be implemented in a way that provides sufficient time for institutions to adjust to the revised standards. The plan of implementation provides for an interim period during which both the former Degree Program Standards and the revised Educational and Degree Program Standards will be in force, allows schools time to align their programs with the revised standards, and moves both the Commission and the Association toward functioning with a single set of Educational and Degree Program Standards as soon as possible. The interim period applies only to the Educational and Degree Program Standards; the General Institutional Standards, in effect since July 1, 2010, will continue to be in force.

July 1, 2012–June 1, 2013

1. Member schools receiving a comprehensive accreditation evaluation between July 1, 2012, and June 1, 2013, may choose either the former Degree Program Standards or the revised Educational and Degree Program Standards adopted at the 2012 Biennial Meeting as the criteria by which they would prefer to be evaluated. For those choosing the former, General Institutional Standard 10 (Multiple Locations and Distance Education), Degree Program Standard M (Criteria for Admission, Transfer of Credits, Shared Credit in Degree Programs, and Advanced Standing Related to Degree Programs), and the former Degree Program Standards will apply.
2. It is the responsibility of the school to inform accrediting staff in writing of its preference.
3. If a school elects in this interim period to be evaluated by the former Degree Program Standards but is implementing programs at the time of its comprehensive accreditation evaluation that are allowed by the revised Educational and Degree Program Standards, the school must include in its institutional self-study report or in an addendum to the report a description and analysis of these programs, their educational effectiveness, and how they conform to the revised Educational and Degree Program Standards.

After June 2, 2013

1. After June 2, 2013, all decisions of the Board of Commissioners shall be based on the General Institutional Standards adopted at the 2010 Biennial Meeting and the revised Educational and Degree Program Standards adopted at the June 2012 Biennial Meeting.
2. All institutional self-study reports and all accreditation-related evaluations conducted after June 2, 2013, shall be based on the General Institutional Standards adopted at the 2010 Biennial Meeting and the revised Educational and Degree Program Standards adopted at the 2012 Biennial Meeting.

Guide to Educational and Degree Program Standards Relettering

OLD		NEW	
DS	Degree Standard	ES	Educational Standard

BASIC PROGRAMS ORIENTED TOWARD MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP

A	Master of Divinity	A	Master of Divinity
B	Education MAs (e.g., MRE, MCE, etc.)	B	Master of Arts in [specialized ministry] (e.g., MRE, MCE, MPS, etc.)
C	MA in [specialized ministry]		
D	Master of Church Music (MCM) Master of Sacred Music (MSM) Master of Music in Church Music (MM in Church Music) Master of Arts in Church Music (MA in Church Music)	C	Master of Church Music (MCM) Master of Sacred Music (MSM) Master of Music in Church Music (MM in Church Music) Master of Arts in Church Music (MA in Church Music)

BASIC PROGRAMS ORIENTED TOWARD GENERAL THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

E	Master of Arts (academic: e.g., MA, MAR, MTS)	D	Master of Arts (MA) Master of Arts [academic discipline] Master of Theological Studies (MTS)
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ADVANCED PROGRAMS ORIENTED TOWARD MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP

F	Doctor of Ministry (DMin)	E	Doctor of Ministry (DMin)
H	Doctor of Education (EdD)	F	Doctor of Education (EdD)
G	Doctor of Educational Ministry (DEdMin)	G	Doctor of [area of specialization] (including the DEdMin and DMiss)
I	Doctor of Missiology (DMiss)		
J	Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) Doctor of Church Music (DCM) Doctor of Sacred Music (SMD)	H	Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) Doctor of Church Music (DCM) Doctor of Sacred Music (SMD)

ADVANCED PROGRAMS PRIMARILY ORIENTED TOWARD THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND TEACHING

K	Master of Theology (ThM) Master of Sacred Theology (STM)	I	Master of Theology (ThM) Master of Sacred Theology (STM)
L	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Doctor of Theology (ThD)	J	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Doctor of Theology (ThD)

M	Criteria for admission, transfer of credits, shared credit in degree programs, etc.	ES	Standard M incorporated into Educational Standard
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ES Educational standard applicable to all degree programs

The Educational Standard (ES 1 through 8) sets forth expectations relevant to all degree programs, including nomenclature; campus-based education; extension education; distance education; faculty-directed individual instruction; assessment of student learning outcomes; academic guidelines regarding admission, transfer of credits, shared credit in degree programs, and advanced standing; and nondegree instructional programs.

ES.1 Degree programs and nomenclature

ES.1.1 The postbaccalaureate degree programs approved by the Board of Commissioners fall into several groups. It should be noted that these categories are not mutually exclusive and that there is some natural overlapping among them. Programs at the level of the first graduate theological degree are of two main kinds: (1) some oriented primarily toward ministerial leadership and (2) some oriented toward general theological studies. Programs at the advanced level, normally presupposing a first theological degree, are of two main kinds: (1) those that focus upon advanced ministerial leadership and (2) those directed primarily toward theological research and teaching.

ES.1.1.1 When Commission institutions offer more than one degree program, they shall articulate the distinctions among the degrees with regard to their educational and vocational intent. Institutions shall articulate the goals and objectives of each degree program they offer and assure that the design of its curriculum is in accordance with the institutional purpose and the accreditation standards of the Commission.

ES.1.1.2 The number of students enrolled in any degree program, along with those who have a shared investment in the educational goals of that degree program (i.e., those with regular and substantive interaction with the learners), shall be sufficient to ensure a viable community of learning.

ES.1.1.3 Schools shall follow the recommended nomenclature for all Board-approved degree programs. In cases where governmental licensing, charter requirements, or institutional federation agreements preclude use of recommended nomenclature, the Board will consider alternate degree nomenclature. In cases where the standards provide alternate nomenclature for the same kind of degree program (e.g., MRE or MA in Religious Education, ThM or STM, PhD or ThD), the nomenclature employed should reflect the history or policies of the schools offering the degree programs.

ES.1.1.4 Degree programs shall be approved by the Board according to the Commission's formally adopted procedures (cf. Commission Procedures) and individual degree program standards.

ES.1.2 Basic programs oriented toward ministerial leadership

ES.1.2.1 Curricula for programs oriented toward ministerial leadership have certain closely integrated, common features. First, they provide a structured opportunity to develop a thorough, discriminating understanding and personal appropriation of the heritage of the community of faith (e.g., its Scripture, tradition, doctrines, and practices) in its historical and contemporary expressions. Second, they assist students in understanding the cultural realities and social settings within which religious communities live and carry out their missions, as well as the institutional life of those communities themselves. The insights of cognate disciplines such as the social sciences, the natural sciences, philosophy, and the arts enable a knowledge and appreciation of the broader context of the religious tradition, including cross-cultural and global aspects. Third, they provide opportunities for formational

experiences through which students may grow in those personal qualities essential for the practice of ministry—namely, emotional maturity, personal faith, moral integrity, and social concern. Fourth, they assist students in gaining the capacities for entry into and growth in the practice of the particular form of ministry to which the program is oriented. Instruction in these various areas of theological study should be so conducted as to demonstrate their interdependence, their theological character, and their common orientation toward the goals of the degree program. The educational program in all its dimensions should be designed and carried out in such a way as to enable students to function constructively as ministerial leaders in the particular communities in which they intend to work and to foster an awareness of the need for continuing education. In settings where students are preparing for ministry with cultural linguistic communities, a school should attend carefully to the characteristics of education for ministry in these contexts.

ES.1.2.2 The following degree nomenclature is included among these kinds of curricular programs: Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Religious Education/Master of Religious Education, Master of Arts in [area of specialization] (e.g., Counseling), and Master of Sacred Music/Master of Church Music.

ES.1.3 Basic programs oriented toward general theological studies

ES.1.3.1 First graduate theological degrees in basic programs oriented toward general theological studies have in common the purpose of providing understanding in theological disciplines. These programs may be designed for general knowledge of theology, or for background in specific disciplines, or for interdisciplinary studies. They are intended as the basis for further graduate study or for other educational purposes. Nomenclature may differ according to the history of its use in the particular school. The curricula for these degrees should be developed in relation to the institution's distinctive goals for the programs. A scholarly investigation of Scripture, tradition, and theology is essential for all of the programs, while some may also emphasize research methods, teaching skills, or competence in specific theological disciplines. Depending on the intention and specific context of the degree, appropriate formational experiences may be provided that will develop the qualities essential for the application of the degree. Adequate faculty and instructional resources must be available, with special attention given to particular areas of focus within the programs.

ES.1.3.2 Degrees of this kind are offered with the following nomenclature: Master of Arts, Master of Arts (Religion), and Master of Theological Studies.

ES.1.4 Advanced programs oriented toward ministerial leadership

ES.1.4.1 Advanced programs in ministerial leadership presuppose a basic theological degree. All are designed to deepen the basic knowledge and skill in ministry so that students may engage in ministry with increasing professional, intellectual, and spiritual integrity. Emphasis is upon the practice of ministry informed by analytic and ministerial research skills. Certain curricular features are common to the advanced programs in this category. Each degree program emphasizes the mastery of advanced knowledge informing the understanding of the nature and purposes of ministry, the competencies gained through advanced study, and the integration of the many dimensions of ministry. Each degree program includes the completion of a final culminating written project/report or dissertation. Schools offering any of these advanced degrees are expected to make explicit the criteria by which the doctoral level of studies is identified, implemented, and assessed.

ES.1.4.2 Degrees offered in this broad category have the following nomenclature: Doctor of Ministry, Doctor of Educational Ministry, Doctor of Education, Doctor of Missiology, and Doctor of Musical Arts.

ES.1.5 Advanced programs primarily oriented toward theological research and teaching

ES.1.5.1 These programs oriented toward theological research and teaching presuppose a basic postbaccalaureate theological degree and permit students to concentrate in one or more of the theological disciplines. They equip students for teaching and research in theological schools, colleges, and universities, or for the scholarly enhancement of ministerial practice, or for other scholarly activities. They provide for both specialization and breadth in education and training; they provide instruction in research methods and procedures relevant to the area of specialization; and normally they provide training in teaching methods and skills or in other scholarly tasks. Curricula for these programs provide, first of all, a structured opportunity to develop an advanced critical understanding and appreciation of a specific area of theological studies or in interdisciplinary relationships and cognate studies. Second, they assist students in understanding cultural realities and social settings within which religious communities and institutions of theological or religious education exist and carry out their missions, as well as the institutional life of these communities and institutions themselves. Third, they assist student growth in those personal and spiritual qualities essential for the practice of scholarly ministry in theological environments. Fourth, they allow students to gain the capacities for teaching, writing, and conducting advanced research.

ES.1.5.2 The nomenclature for advanced master's degrees includes the Master of Theology and Master of Sacred Theology. The nomenclature for doctoral degrees oriented toward research and teaching includes the Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Theology.

ES.1.6 Degree Program Standards

To provide for a common public recognition of theological degrees, to assure quality, and to enhance evaluative efforts, the Commission establishes standards for each degree program. Each degree program should reflect the characteristics of the theological curriculum (see ES.1.3.1–ES.1.3.2) and meet all relevant expectations of Standard ES and the pertinent degree program standard. The Degree Program Standards articulate the following requirements for each degree program: purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment; program content; educational resources and learning strategies; and admissions and access.

ES.1.6.1 While approved degrees are required to conform to the expectations of this standard and the individual degree program standard, the Board may approve for experimental reasons modified requirements for programs that embody an educational design that ensures high standards of quality, congruence with the educational mission of the school, and coherence with the educational values and outcomes of theological education. In granting an exception, the Board of Commissioners will require the school to engage in an extended comprehensive evaluation of the experimental program and, on the basis of the comprehensive evaluation, determine the future approval of the experimental program.

ES.1.6.2 Schools offer programs of theological education using several different educational practices: courses offered on the main campus of the school granting the degree, at an approved branch campus or extension site, by approved programs of distance learning, and as needed, by faculty-guided

individual instruction. In all cases, faculty shall have regular and substantive interaction with students throughout courses and regularly be available to students to mentor, advise, and counsel. Because correspondence education lacks regular and substantive interaction between faculty and students, no Commission-approved courses can be offered by correspondence education.

ES.2 Campus-based education

Campus-based education involves classroom-based learning and a range of opportunities for student-faculty interaction and interaction among students. While it may take different forms and reflect different educational qualities, campus-based education is a model of theological education that typically includes the presence of faculty, students, administrative support services, and library and information resources in a common location. It provides in-person classroom teaching and learning and opportunities for corporate worship, informal interaction, and other activities that support or enhance students' educational experiences.

ES.2.1 Residency

ES.2.1.1 Residency is understood as in-person interaction of students with instructors or other educators, such as field education instructors or spiritual or formation directors, in locations approved for the offering of a full degree.

ES.2.1.2 Schools shall ensure educational opportunities that contribute to the intellectual, spiritual, personal, and professional formation necessary for religious leadership.

ES.3 Extension education

In order to meet the needs of their constituencies, theological schools may offer parts or all of degree programs in extension programs of study. This pattern of theological education gathers students and faculty for in-person classroom learning at locations away from the main campus of the institution. Programs of this nature shall be offered in ways that maintain the educational integrity of postbaccalaureate study, ensure that students receive academic support and essential services, provide formational components as stipulated by the relevant degree program standards, and give appropriate attention to both the general institutional and the relevant degree program standards.

ES.3.1 Definitions

ES.3.1.1 *Branch campuses.* A branch campus is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution as evidenced by permanence in nature, offering courses in educational programs leading to degrees, having its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization, and having its own budgetary and hiring authority.

ES.3.1.2 *Complete degree sites.* These sites provide all course work necessary for completion of a Board-approved degree and provide all the educational support and formational opportunities necessary to achieve the goals identified with each approved degree that can be earned at the location. The number, diversity, and sequence of courses available shall be adequate to fulfill all the stated purposes of the degree. All appropriate resources shall be available, including classroom facilities, library and information resources, faculty, administrative support, student services, and technological support appropriate for the administrative and educational needs of the program.

ES.3.1.3 *Ongoing course-offering sites.* This type of extension site offers, on an annual basis, a range of courses for credit, but a Board-approved degree cannot be earned without study at the institution's campus(es), at other extension site(s), or via distance learning, provided these are approved

to offer complete degree programs. For the portion of the degree program that can be completed at the extension site, the institution shall provide all appropriate resources, including classroom facilities, library and information resources, faculty, administrative support, student services, and technological support appropriate for the administrative and educational needs of the program.

ES.3.1.4 *Occasional course-offering sites.* These are sites where courses are offered less frequently than on an annual basis. Whenever such courses are offered, the institution should ensure access to resources students need for successful attainment of the courses' objectives, including classroom facilities, library and information resources, faculty, administrative support, student services, and technological support appropriate for the administrative and educational needs of the program.

ES.3.1.5 *International sites*

ES.3.1.5.1 *Outside Canada and the United States.* Programs offered at extension sites outside Canada and the United States shall meet all relevant standards of the Commission. Such programs—as distinct from study-abroad programs—should be initiated by church bodies, religious agencies, or theological schools located in the host country; should be developed collaboratively with constituencies in the host country; and shall reflect the cultural context in which the programs are offered. The school shall demonstrate that it has legal authority to offer courses or grant degrees according to the laws of the country where the program is offered.

ES.3.1.5.2 *Across the Canadian/US border.* Institutions that offer degrees or courses of study across the Canadian/US border shall give appropriate attention to cultural differences; should be initiated by church bodies, religious bodies, or theological schools located in the host country; and should consult with Commission member schools near the location where the courses of study are being offered.

ES.3.2 Educational design, resources, and institutional procedures

ES.3.2.1 Programs of study offered in extension education shall be established, approved, and reviewed by the regular institutional policies and procedures.

ES.3.2.2 When a school contracts for educational services from another agency, the school is responsible for the academic quality and integrity of all such educational services provided by the other agency.

ES.3.2.3 Institutions that provide instruction for extension education courses by electronic delivery, such as interactive video, shall ensure that students at each site have access to faculty support.

ES.3.2.4 Library and other information resources shall be available as needed to achieve the purposes of the educational course or program.

ES.3.2.5 Institutional faculty and library staff shall be involved in the development and maintenance of library resources and services at extension sites.

ES.3.2.6 Schools that rely on libraries of other institutions to support educational programs at extension sites shall have a written agreement with those institutions, shall be able to demonstrate the functional availability and adequacy of appropriate resources and facilities, and shall provide evidence that students are required to make appropriate use of these resources.

ES.3.2.7 Appropriate technology and technological support services will be made available to faculty and students at extension sites, as necessary.

ES.3.2.8 Faculty participating in extension programs should be selected according to the procedures that govern personnel for the institution and should possess credentials and demonstrated competence appropriate to the specific purposes of these instructional programs.

ES.3.2.9 The institution's full-time faculty shall share significant responsibility for teaching and academic oversight of extension education sufficient to ensure that the institution's goals and ethos are evident wherever the institution conducts its work. Full-time faculty teaching in extension programs should be available to students for consultation in addition to their availability when classes are in session. Adjunct and part-time faculty teaching in extension settings should have appropriate access to the administrative structures of the employing institution, be accountable to the institution's academic administration, and be appropriately oriented to the purposes of the sponsoring institution and of the extension education being offered.

ES.3.2.10 When administrative responsibilities for extension education programs are shared with local advisory groups or other entities, the functions and powers of those groups shall be articulated in the institution's governance policies and procedures. Institutions planning extension education should consult with theological schools in the geographical area of the projected offerings; assess the needs for additional programs; and make use of faculty, courses, or facilities of other schools only by formal arrangements. In all cases, the school granting credit for the work completed at an extension site shall have full academic control of the program.

ES.3.2.11 Institutions establishing extension education programs of study shall meet licensing or chartering regulations in the locations where the courses are offered.

ES.3.2.12 Institutions shall provide adequate financial resources to ensure the educational quality of extension education programs and maintain appropriate fiscal responsibility for the programs.

ES.4 Distance education

ES.4.1 Definition

Distance education is a mode of education in which a course is offered without students and instructors being in the same location. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous and employs the use of technology. Distance education courses may consist of exclusively online or other technologically assisted instruction or a blend of intensive classroom and online instruction. In all cases, distance education courses shall ensure regular and substantive interaction of faculty with students.

ES.4.2 Educational design, resources, and institutional procedures

ES.4.2.1 Distance education courses shall contribute to the goals of the degree programs to which the courses are credited. Schools shall demonstrate how programs offered through distance education implement both the institutional and the relevant degree program standards.

ES.4.2.2 Distance education programs shall address matters of coherence, educational values, and patterns of interactions among all courses offered within a degree program. Institutions shall guard against allowing the accumulation of distance education courses that lack coherence and curricular design.

ES.4.2.3 According to the relevant degree program standards, distance education programs shall seek to enhance personal and spiritual formation, be sensitive to individual learning styles, and recognize diversity within the community of learners. Courses shall require regular and substantive interaction between teachers and learners and among learners to ensure a community of learning.

ES.4.2.4 The development and review of courses shall be a collaborative effort among faculty, librarians, technical support staff, and students, showing sensitivity to ministry settings and the goals of the entire curriculum.

ES.4.2.5 Programs of study and courses for distance education programs shall be established, approved, and reviewed by the regular institutional policies and procedures regarding content, requirements, learning goals, and assessment of student learning.

ES.4.2.6 Degree programs that include distance education courses shall conform to the residency requirements required by the relevant degree program standard.

ES.4.2.7 When a school contracts for educational services from another agency, the school is responsible for the academic quality and integrity of all such educational services provided by the other agency. The school should have policies and procedures delineating the manner by which it exercises this responsibility and the faculty capacity for oversight of educational services.

ES.4.2.8 Library and other information resources shall be available in such number and quality as needed to achieve the purposes of the curriculum, and the institution shall demonstrate that students are required to make appropriate use of these resources. Programs shall provide access to librarians and instruction by library staff regarding the selection and use of library resources.

ES.4.2.9 When libraries of other institutions are used to meet the needs of distance education programs, the Commission member school shall have written agreements with those libraries to ensure that they offer the functional availability and adequacy of resources, facilities, and librarian support.

ES.4.2.10 Sufficient technical support services shall ensure that faculty and students are able to focus on their central tasks of teaching and learning. Schools offering distance education courses shall create systems for faculty development to ensure support for course development, training, implementation of the programs, and troubleshooting. Schools shall ensure that students have training and one-on-one technical support for their participation in a distance education program.

ES.4.2.11 Technological support services should include both (1) staff with a sufficiently high level of technical skills to ensure student facility in handling software and the technological aspects of course offerings and (2) the systemic evaluation and upgrading of technological resources and services consistent with the learning goals of theological scholarship.

ES.4.2.12 The program shall also ensure that the educational objectives are not hindered by time delays in support services or the lack of capable personnel to ensure the several bridging functions between technology and theological education, between theological curriculum and delivery systems, between teachers and learners, and between the distance education program and the goals of the overall curriculum for the courses and degree program being offered.

ES.4.2.13 Procedures that govern personnel for the total institution shall be used for selection of faculty in distance education. Faculty must possess requisite credentials, demonstrate competence appropriate to the specific purposes of these instructional programs, and benefit from institutional practices regarding scholarly development and support for faculty research. Institutions shall provide regular and formal procedures for evaluating faculty engaged in distance education.

ES.4.2.14 The institution's full-time faculty shall have significant participation in and responsibility for academic development, teaching, and oversight of distance education. They shall ensure that the institution's goals and ethos are evident, the program is rigorous, and the instruction is of a high quality.

ES.4.2.15 Adjunct and part-time faculty should have appropriate access to the administrative structures of the employing institution. They should receive a thorough orientation to the purposes of the institution and to its particular distance education programs.

ES.4.2.16 In recruitment efforts, services, and publications, institutions shall accurately represent their distance education programs, including but not limited to a description of the technology used and the technological ability, skill, and access needed to participate in the program satisfactorily.

ES.4.2.17 Admission requirements shall effectively inform students regarding the necessary skills and mastery of technology to participate fully in the distance education programs to which they are admitted.

ES.4.2.18 Students in distance education programs shall have access to appropriate services including advisory and administrative support, technological support, program and vocational counseling, financial aid, academic records, and placement. The policies and procedures governing financial assistance shall be published and administered equitably.

ES.4.2.19 The credits awarded for a hybrid or blended distance education course will count toward residency for those degrees that require residential instruction only if the majority of instructor-directed learning occurs in situations where both faculty and students are in person on the school's main campus or at an extension approved for the school to offer the full degree.

ES.5 Faculty-directed individual instruction

Courses for any Commission-approved degree program may be offered through individualized instruction directed by a faculty member qualified in the academic discipline and content of the course. The work shall involve both one-on-one instruction with the faculty member and student work comparable to other campus, extension, or distance programs of study. Individualized instruction should be limited to meeting unique educational and student needs and, in all cases, ensure regular and substantive interaction between the student and the faculty member.

ES.6 Assessment of student learning outcomes

Assessment of student learning requires schools to be able to demonstrate the extent to which students have achieved the various goals of the degree programs they have completed as well as indicators of program effectiveness, such as the percentage of students who complete the program and the percentage of graduates who find placement appropriate to their vocational intention and theological education.

ES.6.1 The school shall maintain an ongoing process for assessing student learning outcomes and degree program goals. An effective plan of assessment should be as simple and sustainable as possible while adequate to answer fundamental questions

about educational effectiveness. This plan should include (1) a process for evaluating components or the full degree program in an ongoing manner; (2) the identification of appropriate direct and indirect indicators of student learning; (3) the routine involvement of faculty in the review and evaluation of the results of the assessment; and (4) linking assessment results to curriculum and educational planning, institutional strategic planning, and resource allocation.

ES.6.2 Overall assessment strategy

ES.6.2.1 The process and goals of assessment shall be conducted in ways that are congruent with the educational mission of the school.

ES.6.2.2 The design for assessing student learning outcomes should attend carefully to the alignment of individual course learning outcomes and degree program goals.

ES.6.2.3 Appropriate administrative and financial resources shall be allocated to ensure that the process for assessment of student learning is maintained in an effective and sustainable manner.

ES.6.2.4 Schools shall include in their assessment plans a comprehensive evaluation of the assessment plan itself and its various activities.

ES.6.3 Data

ES.6.3.1 Assessment of student learning outcomes and degree program goals should utilize both qualitative and quantitative kinds of information. Determination of which qualitative and quantitative instruments are most appropriate should be based on the institutional size, educational mission, and specific learning outcomes.

ES.6.3.2 Assessment requires both direct (performance based) and indirect (perception based) measures of student learning. Schools should identify sources of information that best support the essential task of making decisions about educational effectiveness.

ES.6.3.3 Schools shall guard the confidentiality of student work used in the assessment of student learning and, as necessary, provide for the anonymity of student identity in certain artifacts of their work.

ES.6.4 Faculty, students, and trustees

ES.6.4.1 Evaluation of student learning is the responsibility of the faculty. Effective assessment of student learning requires that the faculty review and analyze the results of the assessment activities, discern appropriate changes to curriculum and educational practices, and document the results of both its interpretation of assessment data and decisions about educational changes.

ES.6.4.2 Schools shall communicate the learning goals of degree programs and expected student achievement through the school's catalog, website, and course syllabi.

ES.6.4.3 The governing board of the school is responsible for ensuring that the school has a program of assessment of student learning and that the results of these activities inform and shape educational and institutional decisions.

ES.6.4.4 The institution shall, on a regular basis, make available to the public a summary evaluation of the educational effectiveness of its approved degree programs. The school shall determine the frequency and manner of this information.

ES.7 Academic guidelines: admission, transfer of credits, shared credit in degree programs, and advanced standing

ES.7.1 Admission

While each degree program a theological school offers should have particular admission requirements, all master's-level programs share the following common requirements:

ES.7.1.1 Students must possess a baccalaureate degree from an institution of higher education accredited by a US agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, or approved by a Canadian provincial quality assurance agency, or the demonstrated educational equivalent of a North American baccalaureate degree.

ES.7.1.2 Educational equivalency for a baccalaureate degree shall be determined by the institution. The institution shall demonstrate that its means for determining equivalency requires formal postsecondary education consisting of general and specialized studies comparable to the baccalaureate degree.

ES.7.1.3 Exceptions to the baccalaureate degree requirement are noted in the Commission standards for individual degrees.

ES.7.1.4 Persons admitted without possession of the baccalaureate degree or its educational equivalent shall possess the knowledge, academic skill, and ability necessary for postbaccalaureate studies. Admission of such applicants should be restricted to persons with life experience that has prepared them for theological study at the graduate level. An institution admitting persons without a baccalaureate degree or its educational equivalent shall demonstrate that its process and criteria for evaluating academic ability are educationally appropriate and rigorous.

ES.7.1.5 When an institution permits undergraduate students to enroll in its postbaccalaureate courses, the institution must differentiate course requirements and student learning outcomes for postbaccalaureate or undergraduate credit.

ES.7.2 Transfer of credits

ES.7.2.1 A theological school has the right and responsibility to determine if it will accept credits for work completed at other institutions toward the degrees it grants.

ES.7.2.2 If an institution determines that it will accept transfer credits, it should ensure that courses in which the credits were earned were eligible for graduate credit in the institution at which they were taken and, preferably, were completed at an institution accredited by a recognized accrediting body.

ES.7.2.3 Two-thirds of the credits required in a Board-approved degree may be granted on the basis of transfer credits, subject to the limitation in ES.7.3.1 below.

ES.7.3 Shared credit in degree programs

ES.7.3.1 Institutions have the right to determine if credits that have been earned as part of the award of another graduate degree program can be transferred to the institution's approved degree programs. If an institution determines it will accept credits applied to other graduate degree programs, not more than half of the credits required for the other degree may be transferred into a Board-approved degree program.

ES.7.3.2 Students may be either simultaneously or sequentially enrolled in two master's programs as long as each degree program has a clear integrity and meets the stated standards. The programs may in some instances use the same resources and be overlapping. The total time required will be determined by the demands of the two degrees combined but must conform to the stipulations on shared credit in degree programs in section ES.7.3.1.

ES.7.4 Advanced standing

ES.7.4.1 Institutions may admit students with *advanced standing* to master's-degree programs if they so choose. If they do admit students with advanced standing, they may grant such standing (1) without credit by exempting students from some courses but not reducing the total number of academic credits required for the degree, or (2) with credit by reducing the number of credits required for the degree. The term *advanced standing*, in these standards, is distinct from *transfer of credits* and refers to decisions about students' competence when no transcripts of graduate credit are presented.

ES.7.4.2 If the institution chooses to grant advanced standing with credit on the basis of prior academic work, it shall determine by appropriate means of assessment that students have the knowledge, competence, or skills that would normally be provided by the specific courses for which they have been admitted with advanced standing. Advanced standing with credit cannot be granted on the basis of ministerial or life experience.

ES.7.4.3 If advanced standing is granted with credit on the basis of appropriate evaluation, not more than one-fourth of the total credits required for a degree approved by the Board of Commissioners may be granted in this way.

ES.8 Nondegree instructional programs

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

ES.8.1 Characteristics

ES.8.1.1 Programs that do not lead to degrees should remain appropriate to institutional purpose and will differ according to their learning goals.

ES.8.1.2 Such programs should be conducted with the proper administrative and faculty oversight, including design, approval, staffing, financing, and evaluation.

ES.8.1.3 Faculty who teach in such programs should be appropriately qualified. Normally, qualification will be demonstrated by the possession of an appropriate graduate theological degree and by significant experience in the field in which one is teaching. Students in these programs should have appropriate access to the instructor and to learning resources commensurate with the level and purpose of the program.

ES.8.2 Types of programs

ES.8.2.1 Schools may offer programs of study consisting of either courses for which graduate academic credit is granted or educational events without such credit.

ES.8.2.2 Programs of study that grant graduate credit are appropriate for enrichment; personal growth; the development of lay leaders; or special, nondegree emphasis for vocational ministerial leaders. Such programs require students to have a baccalaureate degree, or its educational equivalent, for admission and to complete a program comprising courses appropriate for graduate credit. Completion of the program of study results in some formal recognition but not a degree. Credits earned toward these programs may subsequently be transferred into a graduate degree program.

ES.8.2.3 Programs of study that do not carry academic credit may include courses, workshops, lectures, and other types of educational experiences on topics related to the theological curriculum or to the mission and ministry of the church. These programs and events may be designed for continuing education of ministers, for basic theological education, for personal enrichment, or for other purposes consistent with the character of the school. Because no academic credit is offered, those enrolled need not hold the baccalaureate degree. Requirements for admission to particular programs or events are at the discretion of the institution.

Basic Programs Oriented Toward Ministerial Leadership

A Master of Divinity (MDiv)

A.1 Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

A.1.1 Purpose of the degree

A.1.1.1 The purpose of the Master of Divinity degree is to prepare persons for ordained ministry and for general pastoral and religious leadership responsibilities in congregations and other settings. Because of its breadth, it is the recommended degree for admission to the Doctor of Ministry degree program and a recommended degree for admission to advanced programs oriented to theological research and teaching.

A.1.2 Primary goals of the program

A.1.2.1 The goals an institution adopts for an MDiv degree should be related to the institution's mission and foster students' knowledge of religious heritage, understanding of the cultural context, growth in spiritual depth and moral integrity, and capacity for ministerial and public leadership.

A.1.3 Learning outcomes

A.1.3.1 The primary goals of the program shall be further delineated as demonstrable learning outcomes congruent with the institution's mission and purpose. Institutions shall demonstrate that students have achieved the goals or learning outcomes of the degree program by means of direct and indirect evidence of student learning.

A.1.3.2 These specific, learning outcomes should shape and inform the design of all courses, supervised ministry experiences, formation activities, and other instructional strategies to establish a coherent and integrated curriculum for the degree program.

A.1.4 Educational assessment

A.1.4.1 The institution offering the MDiv shall articulate the assessment strategy and criteria by which it regularly evaluates the educational effectiveness of the degree program. The institution shall determine the extent to which students have achieved the stated goals of the degree program by the use of both direct and indirect evidence.

A.1.4.2 The institution shall also maintain ongoing assessment by which it determines the extent to which the degree program is meeting the needs of students and the institution's overall goals for the program, including measures such as the percentage of students who complete the program and the percentage of graduates who find placement appropriate to their vocational intentions.

A.2 Program content

A.2.1 The MDiv program should provide a breadth of exposure to the theological disciplines as well as a depth of understanding within those disciplines. It should educate students for a comprehensive range of pastoral responsibilities and skills by providing opportunities for the appropriation of theological disciplines, for deepening understanding of the life of the church, for ongoing intellectual and ministerial formation, and for exercising the arts of ministry. The learning outcomes for the MDiv shall encompass the instructional areas of religious heritage, cultural context,

personal and spiritual formation, and capacity for ministerial and public leadership. Each of the degree requirements shall be further refined as specific, demonstrable learning outcomes that are congruent with the institution's mission and purpose.

A.2.2 *Religious heritage:* The program shall provide structured opportunities to develop a comprehensive and discriminating understanding of the religious heritage.

A.2.2.1 Instruction shall be provided in Scripture, in the historical development and contemporary articulation of the doctrinal and theological tradition of the community of faith, and in the social and institutional history of that community.

A.2.2.2 Attention should be given both to the broader heritage of the Christian tradition as such and to the more specific character of particular Christian traditions and communities, to the ways the traditions transcend particular social and cultural settings, and to the ways they come to unique expression in them.

A.2.2.3 Instruction in these areas shall be conducted so as to indicate their interdependence with each other and with other areas of the curriculum as well as their significance for the exercise of pastoral leadership.

A.2.3 *Cultural context:* The program shall provide opportunities to develop a critical understanding of and creative engagement with the cultural realities and structures within which the church lives and carries out its mission.

A.2.3.1 The program shall provide for instruction in contemporary cultural and social issues and their significance for diverse linguistic and cultural contexts of ministry. Such instruction should draw on the insights of the arts and humanities, the natural sciences, and the social sciences.

A.2.3.2 MDiv education shall engage students with the global character of the church as well as ministry in the multifaith and multicultural context of contemporary society. This should include attention to the wide diversity of religious traditions present in potential ministry settings, as well as expressions of social justice and respect congruent with the institution's mission and purpose.

A.2.4 *Personal and spiritual formation:* The program shall provide opportunities through which the student may grow in personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity, and public witness. Ministerial preparation includes concern with the development of capacities—intellectual and affective, individual and corporate, ecclesial and public—that are requisite to a life of pastoral leadership.

A.2.4.1 The program shall provide for spiritual, academic, and vocational counseling and careful reflection on ministerial roles such as leader, guide, and servant of the faith community.

A.2.4.2 The program shall provide opportunities to assist students in developing commitment to Christian faith and life (e.g., expressions of justice, leadership development, the devotional life, evangelistic witness) in ways consistent with the overall goal and purpose of the institution's MDiv program.

A.2.5 *Capacity for ministerial and public leadership:* The program shall provide theological reflection on and education for the practice of ministry. These activities should cultivate the capacity for leadership in both ecclesial and public contexts.

A.2.5.1 The program shall provide for courses in the areas of ministry practice and shall ensure a constructive relationship among courses dealing primarily with the practice of ministry and courses dealing primarily with other subjects.

A.2.5.2 The program shall specifically provide for training in professional and ministerial ethics.

A.2.5.3 The program shall provide opportunities for education through supervised experiences in ministry. These experiences should be of sufficient duration and intensity to provide opportunity to gain expertise in the tasks of ministerial leadership within both the congregation and the broader public context and to reflect on interrelated theological, cultural, and experiential learning.

A.2.5.4 Qualified persons shall be selected as field supervisors and trained in supervisory methods and the educational expectations of the institution.

A.2.5.5 The institution shall have established procedures for selection, development, evaluation, and termination of supervised ministry settings.

A.3 Educational resources and learning strategies

A.3.1 Location

A.3.1.1 MDiv education has a complex goal: the personal, vocational, spiritual, and academic formation of the student. Because of the importance of a comprehensive community of learning, the MDiv cannot be viewed simply as an accumulation of courses or of individual independent work. The location, or learning environment, can occur in multiple patterns that include, but are not limited to, in-person faculty-student instructional contact on a campus or extension site, online/technologically mediated forms of instruction, supervised ministry practice, and formats that blend instructional modalities. Institutions shall clearly articulate the manner in which they provide the learning environment or supportive context for effective, comprehensive, theological education. An institution shall demonstrate that its students are engaged in a community of learning whereby faculty and students have significant opportunities for interaction, peer learning, development of pastoral skills, supervised experiences of ministry, and growth in personal, spiritual formation.

A.3.1.2 The institution shall provide instruction in a manner and at locations that facilitate the achievement of stated degree-program learning outcomes, shall state the rationale for the location(s) or learning environment(s) utilized, and shall devise a suitable means of assessment for evaluating the effectiveness of its location(s) or learning environment(s) to ensure that its students achieve the learning outcomes stipulated for the MDiv degree program.

A.3.1.3 Because MDiv education expects regular and substantive student-faculty interaction to achieve the stipulated learning outcomes, this interaction requires that at least one year of full-time academic study or its equivalent shall be completed at the main campus of the school awarding the degree or at an extension site of the institution that has been approved for MDiv degree-granting status. An exception may be granted if a school can demonstrate how its educational design and delivery system accomplishes the learning outcomes associated with residential theological study.

A.3.1.4 If an institution has Board approval for MDiv degree-program requirements to be completed in approved extension sites or by means of

distance learning, the institution must be able to demonstrate how students access the community of learning, education for skills particular to this degree, and formational elements of the program.

A.3.1.5 Courses should be provided on the institution's main campus, on an approved branch campus or approved extension site, or in an approved distance education program that provides access to appropriate resources of faculty, library, and a community of learners pursuing a similar program of study.

A.3.1.6 A limited number of courses may be taken as independent study or directed research.

A.3.1.7 The institution shall have established procedures and policies regarding supervised ministry practice, independent study, and directed research. These procedures and policies shall indicate the means the institution uses to assess the educational effectiveness of these forms of education.

A.3.2 Duration

A.3.2.1 In order to fulfill the broad educational and formational goals of the MDiv, an MDiv program shall require a minimum of three academic years of full-time work or its equivalent.

A.3.2.2 All course credits applied toward degree requirements should be earned within ten years of the awarding of the degree.

A.3.3 Distinctive resources needed

A.3.3.1 The MDiv degree requires the resources identified in the General Institutional Standards. In addition, MDiv students shall have access to community life that provides informal educational experiences, a sustaining religious fellowship, and adequate opportunity for reflection upon the meaning of faith in its relation to education for ministry. MDiv education is enhanced by faculty and community resources that support the goals of general education for ministerial leadership.

A.3.3.2 Faculty

A.3.3.2.1 Faculty shall relate the insights of their disciplines to the practice of ministry and shall be attentive to students' spiritual development and professional growth.

A.3.3.2.2 Faculty resources should include some persons who are currently engaged in parish, congregational, or specialized ministerial leadership.

A.3.3.2.3 Faculty shall be of adequate number, shall demonstrate instructional skills, and shall possess sufficient diversity of perspective to achieve the degree-program goals.

A.3.3.3 Community resources

A.3.3.3.1 The theological institution shall maintain a vital relationship with the religious community or communities to which it is related and other support systems, both to ensure that students have meaningful ministry contexts in which to work and to facilitate the placement of graduates.

A.3.3.3.2 The theological institution should maintain an open and mutually enhancing relationship with other theological institutions, universities, professional schools, and social agencies insofar as that relationship contributes to the accomplishment of the program's goals.

A.4 Admission

A.4.1 The MDiv is a postbaccalaureate degree. Admission requirements shall include (1) a baccalaureate degree from an institution of higher education accredited by a US agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, or approved by a Canadian provincial quality assurance agency, or the demonstrated educational equivalent of an accredited or approved North American baccalaureate degree; (2) evidence of the commitment and qualities desired for pastoral leadership; and (3) the academic ability to engage in graduate education.

A.4.2 As many as 15 percent of the students in the MDiv degree program may be admitted without possession of the baccalaureate degree or its educational equivalent. An institution admitting persons without a baccalaureate degree or its educational equivalent shall demonstrate that its process and criteria for evaluating academic ability are educationally appropriate and rigorous.

Basic Programs Oriented Toward Ministerial Leadership

B Master of Arts in [specialized ministry] (MA in [specialized ministry]), or Master of [specialized ministry] (MRE, MCE, MPS, etc.)

B.1 Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

B.1.1 Purpose of the degree

B.1.1.1 The primary purpose of these graduate-level professional degrees is to equip persons for competent leadership in some form of specialized ministry in congregations and other settings. These degrees are organized in three groups or broad areas of specialization:

Classification I: Religious Educational Leadership (including the Master of Religious Education [MRE], the Master of Christian Education [MCE], the Master of Arts in Religious Education [MA in Religious Education], and the Master of Arts in Christian Education [MA in Christian Education])

Classification II: Master of Arts in [specialized ministry] (MA in [specialized ministry]), including areas such as youth or senior ministry, counseling, social or ethnic ministries, or missiology

Classification III: Master [of Arts] in Pastoral Studies (MAPS, MPS) for congregational/parish ministry or service with a general or specialized focus

B.1.2 Primary goals of the program

B.1.2.1 Primary goals for this kind of degree program include (1) the capacity for critical and constructive theological reflection regarding the content and processes of the areas of specialized ministry; (2) skill in the design, implementation, and assessment of ministry in these specialized areas; (3) an understanding of the various disciplines that undergird the area of specialized ministry; and (4) growth in personal and spiritual maturity.

B.1.2.2 Because these programs may vary considerably with the size of the institution and the specialized ministry practices of the denominations or religious communities to which the theological school relates, each program shall clearly identify the ministerial roles that graduates of the degree might assume and shall articulate the particular educational goals of the degree program.

B.1.3 Learning outcomes

B.1.3.1 The primary goals of the program shall be further delineated as demonstrable learning outcomes congruent with the institution's mission and purpose. Institutions shall demonstrate that students have achieved the goals or learning outcomes of the degree program by means of direct and indirect evidence of student learning.

B.1.3.2 These specific, learning outcomes should shape and inform the design of all courses, supervised ministry experiences, formation activities, and other instructional strategies to establish a coherent and integrated curriculum for the degree program.

B.1.4 Educational assessment

B.1.4.1 The institution offering one of these degrees shall articulate the assessment strategy and criteria by which it regularly evaluates the educational effectiveness of the degree program. The institution shall determine the extent to which students have achieved the stated goals of the degree program by the use of both direct and indirect evidence.

B.1.4.2 The institution shall also maintain ongoing assessment by which it determines the extent to which the degree program is meeting the needs of students and the institution's overall goals for the program, including measures such as the percentage of students who complete the program and the percentage of graduates who find placement appropriate to their vocational intentions.

B.2 Program content

B.2.1 Degree programs oriented toward specialized ministerial leadership should provide instruction in the wide range of theological disciplines as well as those disciplines critical for the practice of the specialized ministry. Learning outcomes shall encompass the instructional areas of religious heritage, cultural context, personal and spiritual formation, and capacity for ministerial and public leadership in the designated area of specialization. Each of the degree-program requirements shall be further refined into specific, demonstrable learning outcomes that are congruent with the institution's mission and purpose.

B.2.2 *Religious heritage:* The program shall provide instruction in the religious heritage, including Scripture, theology, and history of the tradition.

B.2.3 *Cultural context:* The program shall provide instructional settings and opportunities for students to gain understanding of the context of the specialization in the broader range of ministerial practice and the purposes of the church and to develop appropriate understandings of the broader social context in which the specialized ministry is performed, including diverse cultural, religious, and linguistic contexts of ministry.

B.2.4 *Personal and spiritual formation:* The program shall provide opportunities through which the student may grow in personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity (including personal, professional, and ethical standards), and public witness.

B.2.5 *Specialization:* The program shall provide structured opportunities for students to gain understanding and skill in practice related to the areas of specialization, to acquire the capacity to design and maintain effective practices and programs in the areas of the specialty, and to develop skill in assessing the efforts and contributions of the specialized ministry.

B.2.5.1 The program shall provide students with supervised experiences in the area of the ministry specialization. These experiences should be of sufficient duration and intensity to provide opportunity to gain expertise in the tasks of ministerial leadership and to reflect on the interrelated theological, cultural, and experiential learning.

B.2.5.2 The theological school shall select qualified persons as field supervisors and train them in supervisory methods and the educational expectations of the institution. Schools shall also have a procedure for selection, development, evaluation, and termination of supervised ministry settings.

B.2.5.3 In a program of study that might lead to licensure or certification by a professional or ecclesiastical authorizing authority, practica and other requirements should conform to generally accepted standards of the area of specialty.

B.2.5.4 In a program of study for a Classification I degree, the theological school shall provide structured opportunities for students to gain skill in the understanding and practice of educational areas of study, including history and philosophy of education, teaching and learning, administration, and the behavioral and social sciences.

B.2.5.5 In a program of study for a Classification III degree, the school shall provide courses in pastoral formation that are oriented toward the practice of ministry.

B.3 Educational resources and learning strategies

B.3.1 Location

B.3.1.1 Because of the importance of a comprehensive community of learning, the professional MA cannot be viewed simply as an accumulation of courses or of individual independent work. The location, or learning environment, can occur in multiple patterns that include, but are not limited to, in-person faculty-student instructional contact on an approved campus or approved extension site, online/technologically mediated forms of instruction, supervised ministry practice, and formats that blend instructional modalities. Institutions shall clearly articulate the manner in which they provide the learning environment or supportive context for effective, comprehensive, theological education. An institution shall demonstrate that its students are engaged in a community of learning whereby faculty and students have opportunities for regular and substantive interaction; peer learning; development of ministry skills; supervised experiences of ministry; and growth in personal, spiritual formation.

B.3.1.2 The institution shall provide instruction in a manner and at locations that facilitate the achievement of stated degree-program learning outcomes, shall state the rationale for the location(s) or learning environment(s) utilized, and shall devise a suitable means of assessment for evaluating the effectiveness of its location(s) or learning environment(s) to ensure that its students achieve the learning outcomes stipulated for the professional MA degree program.

B.3.1.3 Because professional MA education expects regular and substantive student-faculty interaction to achieve the stipulated learning outcomes, this interaction requires that at least one-third of the required credits for the degree shall be completed at the main campus of the school awarding the degree or at an extension site of the institution that has been approved for professional MA degree-granting status. An exception may be granted if a school can demonstrate how its educational design and delivery system accomplishes the learning outcomes associated with residential theological study.

B.3.1.4 If an institution has Board approval for professional MA degree-program requirements to be completed in extension centers or by means of distance learning, the institution must be able to demonstrate how students access the community of learning, education for skills particular to this degree, and formational elements of the program.

B.3.1.5 Courses should be provided on the institution's main campus, on an approved branch campus or approved extension site, or in an approved distance education program that provides access to appropriate resources of faculty, library, and community of learners pursuing a similar program of study.

B.3.1.6 A limited number of courses may be taken as independent study or directed research.

B.3.1.7 The institution shall have established procedures and policies regarding supervised ministry practice, independent study, and directed research. These procedures and policies shall indicate the means the institution uses to assess the educational effectiveness of these forms of education.

B.3.2 Duration

B.3.2.1 In order to fulfill the broad educational and formational goals of the professional MA, the program shall require a minimum of two academic years of full-time work or its equivalent.

B.3.2.2 All course credits applied toward degree requirements should be earned within ten years of the awarding of the degree.

B.3.3 Distinctive resources needed

B.3.3.1 Adequate faculty, library resources, and support services shall be available to sustain students in these programs. Where specializations are offered in specific disciplines, more than one faculty member shall teach in the discipline, and special attention must be given to the faculty and library resources in those areas.

B.3.3.1.1 Faculty shall relate the insights of their disciplines to the practice of ministry and shall be attentive to students' spiritual development and professional growth.

B.3.3.1.2 Faculty resources should include some persons who are currently engaged in parish, congregational, or specialized ministerial leadership.

B.3.3.1.3 Faculty shall be of adequate number, shall demonstrate instructional skills, and shall possess sufficient diversity of perspective to achieve the degree-program goals.

B.3.3.2 Students should be provided with guidance and support for the particular vocational decisions related to the purposes of their programs.

B.3.3.2.1 The theological institution shall maintain a vital relationship with the religious community or communities to which it is related and other support systems, both to ensure that students have meaningful ministry contexts in which to work and to facilitate the placement of graduates.

B.3.3.2.2 The theological institution should maintain an open and mutually enhancing relationship with other theological institutions, universities, professional schools, and social agencies insofar as that relationship contributes to the accomplishment of the program's goals.

B.4 Admission

B.4.1 The professional master's program grants a postbaccalaureate degree. Admission requirements shall include (1) a baccalaureate degree from an institution of higher education accredited by an agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, or approved by a Canadian provincial quality assurance agency, or the demonstrated educational equivalent of an accredited or approved North American baccalaureate degree; (2) evidence of the commitment and qualities

desired for ministerial leadership; and (3) the academic ability to engage in graduate education.

B.4.2 As many as 15 percent of the students in the professional master's degree program may be admitted without possession of the baccalaureate degree or its educational equivalent. Admission of such applicants should be restricted to persons with life experience that has prepared them for theological study at the graduate level. An institution admitting persons without a baccalaureate degree or its educational equivalent shall demonstrate that its process and criteria for evaluating academic ability are educationally appropriate and rigorous.

Basic Programs Oriented Toward Ministerial Leadership

- C **Master of Church Music (MCM)**
Master of Sacred Music (MSM)
Master of Music in Church Music (MM in Church Music)
Master of Arts in Church Music (MA in Church Music)

C.1 Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

C.1.1 Purpose of the degree

The purpose of these master's-level degrees in church music is to equip persons for competent leadership in church or sacred music in congregational and other settings.

C.1.2 Primary goals of the program

Primary educational goals of the program include (1) capacity for constructive theological reflection, (2) an understanding of music theory and history, (3) competence in an applied music performance area, (4) skill in conducting and leadership of musical ensembles, (5) knowledge of church music literature, (6) capacity to lead a comprehensive program of church music education, and (7) growth in personal and spiritual maturity.

C.1.3 Learning outcomes

C.1.3.1 The primary goals of the program shall be further delineated as demonstrable learning outcomes congruent with the institution's mission and purpose. Institutions shall demonstrate that students have achieved the goals or learning outcomes of the degree program by means of direct and indirect evidence of student learning.

C.1.3.2 These specific learning outcomes should shape and inform the design of all courses, supervised ministry experiences, formation activities, and other instructional strategies to establish a coherent and integrated curriculum for the degree program.

C.1.4 Educational assessment

C.1.4.1 The institution offering one of these degrees shall articulate the assessment strategy and criteria by which it regularly evaluates the educational effectiveness of the degree program. The institution shall determine the extent to which students have achieved the stated goals of the degree program by the use of both direct and indirect evidence.

C.1.4.2 The institution shall also maintain ongoing assessment by which it determines the extent to which the degree program is meeting the needs of students and the institution's overall goals for the program, including measures such as the percentage of students who complete the program and the percentage of graduates who find placement appropriate to their vocational intentions.

C.2 Program content

C.2.1 Degree programs oriented toward leadership in music ministry should provide instruction in the wide range of theological disciplines as well as those disciplines critical for the practice of the music ministry. Learning outcomes shall encompass the instructional areas of religious heritage, cultural context, personal and spiritual formation, musical arts, and music ministry leadership. Each of the degree requirements shall be further refined into specific, demonstrable learning outcomes that are congruent with the institution's mission and purpose.

C.2.1.1 *Religious heritage*: The program shall provide basic instruction in Scripture, theology, and history of the tradition, including worship, liturgy, and hymnology.

C.2.1.2 *Cultural context*: The program shall provide instructional settings and opportunities for students to gain understanding of the context of the music ministry in the broader range of ministerial practice, and to develop appropriate understanding of the broader social context in which a music ministry is exercised.

C.2.1.3 *Personal and spiritual formation*: The program shall provide opportunities through which the student may grow in personal faith, emotional maturity, and moral integrity, the latter including the appropriation of personal and professional standards of conduct.

C.2.1.4 *Musical arts*: The program shall provide graduate-level instruction in the various musical arts and training in performance skill areas. For US schools, the ATS Board of Commissioners recommends that the degree program follow the guidelines of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) for the musical arts requirements in master's-level work. For Canadian schools, the ATS Board of Commissioners recommends that the degree program require the BMus (Bachelor of Music) degree from an institution of higher education that is approved by a provincial quality assurance agency.

C.2.1.5 *Music ministry leadership*: The program shall include opportunities for students to gain skill as conductors of musical ensembles and leaders of worship, preferably in supervised ministry contexts. These opportunities should reflect concern for the relationship of the churches' worship and ministry as well as awareness of the intercultural and cross-cultural nature of ministry in North American society.

C.3 Educational resources and learning strategies

C.3.1 Location

C.3.1.1 As a degree preparing persons for ministerial leadership in church music, this program requires a comprehensive community of teachers and peers who have opportunity for common experiences over time, as well as access to studio and ensemble resources and the range of courses in musical arts and theological studies. The location, or learning environment, can occur in multiple patterns that include, but are not limited to, in-person faculty-student instructional contact on a campus or extension site, online or technologically mediated forms of instruction, supervised ministry practice, and formats that blend instructional modalities. Institutions shall clearly articulate the manner in which they provide the learning environment or supportive context for effective, comprehensive theological and musical education. An institution shall demonstrate that its students are engaged in a community of learning whereby faculty and students have opportunities for regular and substantive interaction; peer learning; development of music ministry skills; supervised experiences of music ministry; and growth in personal, spiritual formation.

C.3.1.2 The institution shall provide instruction in a manner and at locations that facilitate the achievement of stated degree-program learning outcomes, shall state the rationale for the location(s) or learning environment(s) utilized, and shall devise a suitable means of assessment for evaluating the effectiveness of its location(s) or learning environment(s) to ensure that its students achieve the learning outcomes stipulated for the music master's degree program.

C.3.1.3 Because professional master's-level education expects regular and substantive student-faculty interaction to achieve the stipulated learning outcomes, this interaction requires that at least two-thirds of the required credits for the degree shall be completed at the main campus of the school awarding the degree or at an extension site of the institution that has been approved for professional MA degree-granting status. An exception may be granted if a school can demonstrate how its educational design and delivery system accomplishes the learning outcomes associated with residential study.

C.3.1.4 If an institution has Board approval for degree-program requirements to be completed in extension centers or by means of distance learning, the institution must be able to demonstrate how students access the community of learning, education for skills particular to this degree, and formational elements of the program.

C.3.1.5 Instruction may be offered on an institution's main campus, branch campus, or extension site, or through a distance-education program subject to Commission Procedures and Board of Commissioners' approval.

C.3.1.6 The institution shall have established procedures and policies regarding supervised ministry practice, independent study, and directed research. These procedures and policies shall indicate the means the institution uses to assess the educational effectiveness of these forms of education.

C.3.2 Duration

C.3.2.1 This degree program requires the equivalent of two years of full-time academic study.

C.3.2.2 All course credits applied toward degree requirements should be earned within ten years of the awarding of the degree.

C.3.3 Distinctive resources needed

C.3.3.1 In addition to general theological faculty resources, this program requires sufficient, qualified faculty who can provide instruction in the range of musical arts disciplines, performance areas, conducting, and ensemble leadership; and who can promote integration of music specialization within the broader context of ministry.

C.3.3.2 Schools offering this degree shall have adequate facilities for graduate instruction in the musical arts, such as appropriate studio and practice space.

C.3.3.3 These programs also require library collections that include musical scores, recordings, books, periodicals, and other media that support graduate instruction and faculty research in the various disciplines related to the musical arts.

C.4 Admission

C.4.1 Persons seeking admission to this program should (a) possess a baccalaureate degree from a program approved by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) or alternatively the BMus degree from an institution of higher education that is approved by a Canadian provincial quality assurance agency or (b) meet the standards of such a degree in either the United States or Canada or the educational equivalent of a North American baccalaureate music degree; or (c) take instruction without graduate credit until the competencies assumed by (a) or (b) are met.

C.4.2 Member institutions shall require qualifying or placement exams of all graduate applicants. If deficiencies are indicated, remedial work may be required without graduate credit.

Basic Programs Oriented Toward General Theological Studies

D Master of Arts (MA)

Master of Arts [academic discipline]

Master of Theological Studies (MTS)

D.1 Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

D.1.1 Purpose of the degree

D.1.1.1 The purpose of these degree programs is to provide a basic understanding of theological disciplines for further graduate study or for general educational purposes. The specific nomenclature for these degree programs, which are governed by the same standards, may be chosen according to an institution's specific purpose in offering the program or to reflect the needs and interests of the students enrolled.

D.1.2 Primary goals of the program

D.1.2.1 The goals an institution adopts for these degree programs should include the attainment of a survey knowledge of various theological disciplines, or focused knowledge in a specific discipline, or interdisciplinary knowledge. Achievement of student learning outcomes for these degrees shall contribute to meeting these programmatic goals.

D.1.3 Learning outcomes

D.1.3.1 The institution shall identify demonstrable student learning outcomes for these degrees and shall state those outcomes in terms of how student knowledge and outlook will change as a result of having completed the degree.

D.1.4 Educational assessment

D.1.4.1 The institution offering the degree shall articulate the assessment strategy and criteria by which it regularly evaluates the educational effectiveness of the degree program. The institution shall determine the extent to which students have achieved the stated goals of the degree program by the use of both direct and indirect evidence.

D.1.4.2 The institution shall also maintain ongoing assessment by which it determines the extent to which the degree program is meeting the needs of students and the institution's overall goals for the program, including measures such as the percentage of students who complete the program and the percentage of graduates who find placement appropriate to their vocational intentions.

D.2 Program content

D.2.1 Depending on the goals of the specific degree, the program of study shall include exposure to the broad range of theological disciplines or to the focused study of a theological discipline in depth and in the context of the broader theological disciplines. A predominant number of courses should be academic rather than professional in focus, and the summative requirement shall reflect the academic goals of the degree.

D.2.2 In addition to course work, these degrees should require a concluding exercise that allows for a summative evaluation; this exercise may be a thesis in the area of concentration, a comprehensive examination, or another summative process of evaluation.

D.2.3 The study of languages shall be required if a level of competence in a language is integral to the specific degree program.

D.3 Educational resources and learning strategies

D.3.1 Location

D.3.1.1 Courses should be provided on the institution's main campus; on an approved branch campus or approved extension site; or in an approved distance education program that provides access to appropriate resources of faculty, library, and community of learners pursuing similar programs of study. An institution shall demonstrate that its students are engaged in a community of learning whereby faculty and students have opportunities for regular and substantive interaction.

D.3.1.2 If requirements can be completed on branch campuses, at extension centers, or by means of distance learning, the institution must be able to demonstrate how the community of learning, education for skills particular to this degree, and formational elements of the program are made available to students.

D.3.1.3 A limited number of courses may be taken as independent study or directed research.

D.3.2 Duration

D.3.2.1 Normally these degrees require two academic years of full-time study or the equivalent in order to fulfill the broad educational goals of the program. In some cases, and in exception to ES.7.4, however, persons admitted with some advanced theological study or with prior extensive undergraduate studies in religion and/or other appropriate foundational areas may complete the program in one year of course work, in addition to the thesis, comprehensive examination, and/or other summative process of evaluation.

D.3.3 Distinctive resources needed

D.3.3.1 In general, adequate faculty, library resources, and support services shall be available to sustain students in these programs. Where concentrations are offered in specific disciplines, more than one faculty member shall teach in the discipline, and special attention must be given to the faculty and library resources in those areas.

D.3.3.2 Students should be provided with guidance and support for the particular vocational decisions related to the purposes of their programs.

D.4 Admission

D.4.1 Admission to any of these degree programs requires a baccalaureate degree from an institution of higher education accredited by a US agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, or approved by a Canadian provincial quality assurance agency, or the demonstrated educational equivalent of an accredited or approved North American baccalaureate degree.

D.4.2 Educational equivalency for a baccalaureate degree shall be determined by the institution. The institution shall demonstrate that its means for determining equivalency require formal postsecondary education consisting of general and specialized studies comparable to the baccalaureate degree. Students should have the interests, aptitudes, and personal qualities necessary for the particular application of the degree they are seeking.

D.4.3 Admission to these degrees should be offered to students whose background and academic records indicate the ability to engage in graduate-level study for academic pursuits or personal development.

Advanced Programs Oriented Toward Ministerial Leadership

E Doctor of Ministry (DMin)

E.1 Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

E.1.1 Purpose of the degree

E.1.1.1 The purpose of the Doctor of Ministry degree is to enhance the practice of ministry for persons who hold the MDiv or its educational equivalent and who have engaged in substantial ministerial leadership.

E.1.2 Primary goals of the program

E.1.2.1 The goals an institution adopts for the DMin should include an advanced understanding of the nature and purposes of ministry, enhanced competencies in pastoral analysis and ministerial skills, the integration of these dimensions into the theologically reflective practice of ministry, new knowledge about the practice of ministry, continued growth in spiritual maturity, and development and appropriation of a personal and professional ethic with focused study on ethical standards and mature conduct in the profession.

E.1.2.2 Programs may be designed to advance the general practice of ministry in its many forms or to advance expertise in a specialized area of ministerial practice (e.g., pastoral care, preaching, missions, leadership, organizational administration, multicultural ministries).

E.1.2.3 The achievement of student learning outcomes for the DMin degree shall contribute to meeting these programmatic goals.

E.1.3 Learning outcomes

E.1.3.1 The institution shall specify demonstrable learning outcomes for the Doctor of Ministry degree that demonstrate an advanced competency in the practice of ministry, give evidence of being informed by analytic and ministerial research, and show the integration of enhanced knowledge with growth in one's ministerial capacity and spiritual maturity.

E.1.4 Educational assessment

E.1.4.1 The institution offering the DMin shall articulate the assessment strategy and criteria by which it regularly evaluates the educational effectiveness of the degree program. Institutions offering the DMin degree shall be able to demonstrate the extent to which students have met the goals of the degree program through student performance in courses, ministry experience, and a final, summative project reflecting theological insight into the practice of ministry.

E.1.4.1.1 The institution shall establish a system of gathering quantitative and qualitative data related to both student learning outcomes and degree-program goals, analyze the data gathered, and make revisions as necessary based on that assessment. This assessment cycle shall be ongoing, regularized, and sustainable.

E.1.4.2 The institution shall also maintain an ongoing assessment by which it determines the extent to which the degree program is meeting the needs of students and the institution's overall goals for the program, including measures such as the percentage of students who complete the program and report vocational enhancement of the practice of ministry.

E.2 Program content

E.2.1 DMin programs shall provide advanced-level study of the comprehensive range of theological disciplines that provides for

E.2.1.1 an advanced understanding and integration of ministry in relation to various theological and other related disciplines;

E.2.1.2 the formulation of a comprehensive and critical understanding of ministry in which theory and practice interactively inform and enhance each other;

E.2.1.3 the development and acquisition of skills and competencies, including methods of research, that are required for ministerial leadership at its most mature and effective level;

E.2.1.4 a contribution to the understanding and practice of ministry through the completion of a doctoral-level project that contributes new knowledge and understanding of the practice of ministry;

E.2.1.5 the fostering of spiritual, professional, and vocational competencies that enable witness to a maturing commitment to appropriate religio-moral values for faith and life; and

E.2.1.6 engagement with the diverse cultural, religious, and linguistic contexts of ministry.

E.2.2 The DMin program shall provide for varied kinds of learning, including

E.2.2.1 peer learning and evaluation as well as self-directed learning experiences;

E.2.2.2 significant integrative and interdisciplinary activities involving the various theological disciplines and careful use of the student's experience and ministerial context as a learning environment;

E.2.2.3 various opportunities for learning and using the disciplines and skills necessary for the DMin project, including sustained opportunities for study and research on an approved campus or site of the institution offering the degree; and

E.2.2.4 opportunities for personal and spiritual growth.

E.2.3 The institution shall demonstrate how the program is attentive to global awareness and engagement as well as local settings in its educational design and delivery systems, including its efforts to form a community of learners.

E.2.4 The program shall include the design and completion of a written doctoral-level project that addresses both the nature and the practice of ministry. This final summative project should be of sufficient quality that it contributes to the practice of ministry as judged by professional standards and has the potential for application in other contexts of ministry or presentation in professional forums.

E.2.4.1 The project should demonstrate the candidate's ability to identify a specific theological topic in ministry, organize an effective research model, use appropriate resources, and evaluate the results. It should also reflect the candidate's depth of theological insight in relation to ministry.

E.2.4.2 Upon completion of the doctoral project, there shall be an oral presentation and evaluation. The completed written project, with any supplemental material, should be accessioned in the institution's library.

E.3 Educational resources and learning strategies

E.3.1 Location

E.3.1.1 Because of the importance of a comprehensive community of learning, at least one-third of the course work for the degree shall be completed on an ATS Board of Commissioners-approved campus or full-degree extension site of the member institution. Upon petition by the school, the Board may grant an exception if a school can demonstrate how the program's educational design and delivery system accomplishes the learning outcomes and program goals of the Doctor of Ministry degree. The school should be able to demonstrate for the duration of the program (a) sufficient opportunity for disciplined reflection on one's ministerial experience and needs for educational growth; (b) regular and substantive interaction of students with regular full-time faculty, appropriate adjunct faculty, and other instructional personnel; (c) extended involvement in peer learning; and (d) access to the resources of the institution, such as the library and academic and professional advising.

E.3.1.2 Where DMin course work occurs away from the main campus of the institution, the program should make effective educational use of the candidate's ministerial context.

E.3.1.3 If the institution has Board approval for the requirements to be completed in branch campuses, at extension centers, or by means of distance learning, the institution must be able to demonstrate how the community of learning, education for skills particular to the DMin degree, formational elements of the program, and educational resources are made available to students.

E.3.2 Duration

E.3.2.1 The DMin program shall require the equivalent of one full year of academic study *and* the completion of the doctoral project. Normally, the degree shall require not fewer than three nor more than six years to complete, although the Commission on Accrediting may approve alternative degree designs.

E.3.3 Distinctive resources needed

E.3.3.1 In addition to a community of peer learners that is adequate in both number and quality for advanced study, resources such as particular faculty, library, and academic support services are required for the degree.

E.3.3.2 Institutions shall have faculty and other instructional personnel in adequate numbers to staff the program and with the competencies required for the specific goals of the general or specialized programs.

E.3.3.2.1 Program administrative procedures should include full-time faculty in determining the program goals; provide for the evaluation of all participating faculty (full-time and adjunct), mentors, and supervisors; and make available opportunities for faculty development in relation to the DMin program.

E.3.3.2.2 Teaching responsibility in the DMin program for full-time faculty should be assigned in a manner comparable to that for other degree programs in that institution.

E.3.3.2.3 Whenever adjunct faculty, qualified mentors, or other personnel are employed, they shall receive appropriate orientation

to the purposes and expectations of the DMin program, and their roles shall be exercised and evaluated in full collaboration with full-time faculty.

E.3.3.2.4 It is expected that faculty in the DMin program shall be committed to structuring learning experiences that are oriented to the professional practice of ministry. Whenever needed, institutions shall have effective procedures of faculty development to achieve the particular competencies required for teaching in this program.

E.3.3.3 Library resources and services shall be of sufficient kind and substance to support the DMin program and its goals. This will include access to adequate existing collections, electronic resources, services, and staffing.

E.3.3.4 The regular academic support services and resources of the institution (e.g., recruitment, admissions, academic records, academic advisement, faculty consultation, and evaluation) shall be available for the DMin program and its students.

E.4 Admission

E.4.1 Students must possess an ATS Board of Commissioners-approved MDiv or its educational equivalent from an institution of higher education accredited by a US agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or approved by a Canadian provincial quality assurance agency. Degrees from institutions outside of North America may be accepted provided schools can demonstrate that they meet the standards of the Board-approved degrees for admission. MDiv equivalency is defined as 72 graduate semester hours or comparable graduate credits in other systems that represent broad-based work in theology, biblical studies, and the arts of ministry and that include a master's degree and significant ministerial leadership. Ministerial experience alone is not considered the equivalent of or a substitute for the master's degree.

E.4.2 Educational equivalency for these master's degrees shall be determined by the institution through appropriately documented assessment that demonstrates that students have the knowledge, competence, or skills that would normally be provided by specific MDiv-level courses. The process, procedures, and criteria for such determination shall be published in the institution's public documents.

E.4.3 Applicants to the DMin degree program should have at least three years of experience in ministry subsequent to the first graduate theological degree, and, as part of the program goal, show evidence of capacity for an advanced level of competence and reflection in the practice of ministry beyond that of the master's level. However, as many as 20 percent of the students in the DMin degree program may be enrolled without the requisite three years of ministry experience at the time of admission, provided that the institution can demonstrate objective means for determining that these persons have been prepared by other ministry experience for the level of competence and reflection appropriate for advanced, professional ministerial studies.

E.4.4 If an institution offers specialized DMin programs, it should set appropriate standards for admission to such programs.

Advanced Programs Oriented Toward Ministerial Leadership

F Doctor of Education (EdD)

F.1 Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

F.1.1 Purpose of the degree

F.1.1.1 The purpose of the Doctor of Education degree is to equip persons for leadership positions in education and in teaching and research.

F.1.2 Primary goals of the program

F.1.2.1 The goals an institution adopts for this program should include mastery of educational disciplines, graduate-level understanding of theological disciplines, and capacity to engage in administration, teaching, and research.

F.1.3 Learning outcomes

F.1.3.1 The primary goals of the program shall be further delineated as demonstrable learning outcomes congruent with the institution's mission and purpose. The institution shall demonstrate that students have achieved the goals or learning outcomes of the degree program by means of direct and indirect evidence of student learning.

F.1.3.2 The institution shall specify learning outcomes that reflect the goals of the program and demonstrate advanced competency in the discipline of religious education and capacity to conduct original research and writing that advances understanding of the discipline.

F.1.3.3 These specific, learning outcomes should shape and inform the design of all courses and other instructional strategies to establish a coherent and integrated curriculum for the degree program.

F.1.4 Educational assessment

F.1.4.1 The institution offering this degree shall articulate the assessment strategy and criteria by which it regularly evaluates the educational effectiveness of the degree program. The institution shall determine the extent to which students have achieved the stated goals of the degree program by the use of both direct and indirect evidence.

F.1.4.2 The institution shall also maintain ongoing assessment by which it determines the extent to which the degree program is meeting the needs of students and the institution's overall goals for the program, including measures such as the percentage of students who complete the program and the percentage of graduates who find placement appropriate to their vocational intentions.

F.2 Program content

F.2.1 The program shall provide for advanced study in several areas, including theological disciplines; behavioral sciences (e.g., human development, learning theory, counseling theory); the social sciences (e.g., regarding culture and context in which religious communities function, social change); philosophy of education; and measurement and evaluation. The program shall require a comprehensive examination in these areas before proceeding to the writing phase.

F.2.2 The program shall include a culminating dissertation, written project, or report of field research reflecting a high quality of research skill applied to some problem or area of religious education.

F.2.3 The program shall require demonstrated competence in modern languages, statistics, or other research tools determined by the student's research or professional needs.

F.3 Educational resources and learning strategies

F.3.1 Location

F.3.1.1 Courses, seminars, and colloquia for doctoral degrees shall normally be completed on the main campus of the institution offering the degree. Any petition for exception shall demonstrate how its educational design and delivery system accomplishes the learning outcomes associated with doctoral residential theological study. If course work completed at other institutions is to be accepted for credit in an ATS Board of Commissioners-approved doctoral program, that work shall have been eligible for credit in the doctoral program(s) offered by the institution at which it was completed or other advanced programs primarily oriented toward theological research and teaching.

F.3.2 Duration

F.3.2.1 The program normally requires the equivalent of two years of full-time academic study, plus the time needed to complete a doctoral thesis or dissertation.

F.3.3 Distinctive resources needed

F.3.3.1 There shall be faculty members who are specialists in the field of religious education, including a sufficient number in the cognate theological disciplines that are integral to the EdD program. Faculty shall have proven competence in teaching and research, with established reputations for scholarship. They should have published the results of their own scholarly work and be currently engaged in productive research.

F.3.3.2 The program should have a community of peer learners that is adequate in number and quality for advanced study, a faculty with specialties in educational and theological disciplines, library holdings that reflect a breadth of bibliographic resources, ready access to sufficient material in religious education related behavioral and social sciences, and the theological disciplines to enable it to achieve its goals and objectives. It should also include or have ready access to educational technologies, educational laboratories, clinical training, and other learning media as required to accomplish its objectives.

F.4 Admission

F.4.1 Students must possess an ATS Commission on Accrediting-approved MA/MRE degree or comparable degree from an institution of higher education accredited by a US agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, or approved by a Canadian provincial quality assurance agency, or the demonstrated educational equivalent of an accredited or approved North American MA/MRE degree.

F.4.2 Applicants must also demonstrate promise of contribution to the educational leadership in churches and denominations.

Advanced Programs Oriented Toward Ministerial Leadership

G Doctor of [area of specialization] including the DEdMin and DMiss

G.1 Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

G.1.1 Purpose of the degree

G.1.1.1 The purpose of the Doctor of [area of specialization] is to advance theologically competent leadership in a global context by equipping students with advanced knowledge and skill sets that integrate the study of theology with a variety of cognate disciplines that enhance advanced ministerial practice. These degrees are organized in two groups or broad areas of specialization:

Classification I: Religious Educational Leadership, including the DEdMin

Classification II: Ministry and the Human Sciences, including the DMiss

G.1.1.2 Classification I programs require two years of additional study beyond the appropriate ATS Board of Commissioners-approved master's degree (e.g., Master of Arts or Master of Arts in Religious Education), or, as necessary, in the cognate discipline or field of study, plus the time needed to complete the doctoral project, thesis, or culminating dissertation research project.

G.1.1.3 Classification II programs require two years of additional study beyond the appropriate ATS Board of Commissioners-approved master's degree (e.g., Master of Divinity, or its equivalent, or in an appropriate theological, missiological, or pastoral discipline), or, as necessary, in the cognate discipline or field of study plus the time needed to complete the doctoral project, thesis, or culminating dissertation research project.

G.1.2 Primary goals of the program

G.1.2.1 The primary goals an institution adopts for these degree programs shall include (1) competence in theological disciplines at the graduate level within culturally diverse contexts of ministry as relevant or pertinent to the area of specialization; (2) advanced capacity for critical and constructive theological reflection regarding content and practices of the various disciplines that undergird the areas of specialization; (3) skill in the design, implementation, and assessment of ministry in the area of specialization, including ministerial effectiveness; (4) development and appropriation of a personal and professional ethic with focused study on ethical standards and mature conduct in the profession; (5) advanced understanding of the various disciplines that undergird the area of specialization; and (6) enhanced opportunities for growth in spiritual maturity. (See also G.2, Program content.)

G.1.2.2 Programs may be designed to advance expertise in a specialized area of ministerial practice (e.g., pastoral care, missiology, religious education, leadership, organizational administration, and intercultural ministries). Each degree shall clearly articulate the particular educational and professional goals appropriate to the degree specialization.

G.1.2.3 Classification I and II degrees require acquisition of skills and competencies for effective practice of ministry as well as capacity to engage in administration, teaching, and research, particularly in the area of specialization, and shall require critical appropriation and respectful engagement of diverse cultural contexts.

G.1.2.4 In addition to the above (G.1.2.3), Classification I and II degrees may require acquisition of necessary language skills.

G.1.2.5 The achievement of student learning outcomes for these degrees shall contribute to meeting the programmatic goals for the appropriate degree specialization.

G.1.3 Learning outcomes

G.1.3.1 The institution shall specify demonstrable learning outcomes for the Doctor of [area of specialization] degree that demonstrate an advanced competency in the practice of ministry; give evidence of being informed by analytic, ministerial, and disciplinary research; and show the integration of these areas of advanced knowledge with opportunities for growth in one's ministerial capacity and spiritual maturity.

G.1.3.2 Institutions shall demonstrate that students have achieved the goals or learning outcomes of the degree program by means of direct and indirect evidence of student learning, including quantitative and qualitative assessments.

G.1.3.3 The institution shall demonstrate the doctoral candidate's ability to identify a specific theological topic in ministry, organize an effective research model, use appropriate resources, and evaluate the results, reflecting depth of theological insight in relation to ministry and leadership in the context of the cognate disciplines.

G.1.3.4 These specific, learning outcomes should shape and inform the design of all courses, relevant competency-based experiences, and formative and other instructional strategies to establish a coherent and integrated curriculum for the degree program.

G.1.4 Educational assessment

G.1.4.1 The institution offering the Doctor of [area of specialization] degree shall articulate the assessment strategy and criteria by which it regularly evaluates the educational effectiveness of the degree program.

G.1.4.2 The institution shall provide evidence that demonstrates the extent to which students have met the goals of the degree program through the design and completion of a doctoral thesis, research project, or dissertation that demonstrates high levels of research skill applied to a ministerial context or a problem in the field of study and shall be of sufficient quality that, judged by professional standards, has the potential for application in other contexts of ministry or presentation in professional forums.

G.1.4.3 Upon completion of the doctoral thesis, research project, or dissertation, there shall be an oral presentation and evaluation. The completed written project, with any supplemental material, should be accessioned in the institution's library.

G.1.4.4 The institution shall also maintain an ongoing assessment by which it determines the extent to which the degree program is meeting the needs of students and the institution's overall goals for the program, including measures such as the percentage of students who complete the program and report vocational enhancement of the practice of ministry or leadership in the field.

G.2 Program content

G.2.1 The Doctor of [area of specialization] shall provide advanced level study of the comprehensive range of disciplines appropriate to the areas of specialization that provides for

G.2.1.1 an advanced understanding and integration of ministry in relation to various theological and other related disciplines;

G.2.1.2 respectful engagement with the diverse cultural, religious, and linguistic contexts of ministry;

G.2.1.3 the formulation of a comprehensive and critical understanding of ministry leadership in which theory and practice interactively inform and enhance each other;

G.2.1.4 the fostering of spiritual, professional, ethical, and vocational competencies that witness to personal and spiritual maturity;

G.2.1.5 the development and acquisition of skills and competencies, including methods of research, that are required for ministerial leadership at its most effective level; and

G.2.1.6 the completion of a doctoral-level project that contributes new knowledge and understanding to the practice of ministry.

G.2.2 The Doctor of [area of specialization] shall provide for varied kinds of learning, including

G.2.2.1 peer learning and supervised learning, as well as self-directed learning experiences;

G.2.2.2 significant integrative and interdisciplinary activities involving the various theological disciplines and careful use of the student's experience and ministerial context as a learning environment;

G.2.2.3 various opportunities for learning and using the disciplines and skills necessary for the doctoral project, thesis, or dissertation, including sustained opportunities for study, critical thinking, and research;

G.2.2.4 opportunities for personal and spiritual reflection, self-correction, and growth; and

G.2.2.5 opportunities for ministerial engagement in culturally and racially diverse contexts.

G.2.3 The Doctor of [area of specialization] shall provide content-specific kinds of learning.

G.2.3.1 Classification I programs shall provide advanced critical and analytical study of theology, educational theory, and administration for professional application in distinct contexts; competencies necessary for research, planning and evaluation of the practice of ministerial leadership in distinct contexts; and competence and appreciation for modern languages as a research tool and a ministerial asset.

G.2.3.2 Classification II programs shall provide advanced study in social scientific disciplines (anthropology, psychology, intercultural studies, contextual studies, gender studies), history and theology (including world reli-

gions); and competence in at least one modern language other than English, or other languages relevant to social research methods.

G.3 Educational resources and learning strategies

G.3.1 Location

G.3.1.1 Because of the importance of a comprehensive community of learning, at least one-third of the course work for the Doctor of [area of specialization] shall be completed on a Board-approved campus or full-degree extension site of the member institution. Upon petition by the school, the Board may grant an exception if a school can demonstrate how the program's educational design and delivery system accomplishes the learning outcomes and program goals associated with the degree program. The school should be able to demonstrate

G.3.1.1.1 sufficient opportunity for disciplined reflection on one's ministerial experience, appropriate areas of specialization, and needs for educational growth;

G.3.1.1.2 regular and substantive interaction of the students with regular full-time faculty, appropriate adjunct faculty, and other instructional personnel;

G.3.1.1.3 extended involvement in peer learning; and

G.3.1.1.4 access to the resources of the institution, such as the library, and to academic and professional advising.

G.3.1.2 Where specialized doctoral course work occurs away from the main campus of the institution, the program should make effective educational use of the candidate's ministerial context.

G.3.1.3 If the institution has Board approval for requirements to be completed in branch campuses, at extension centers, or by means of distance learning, the institution must be able to demonstrate how the community of learning, education for skills particular to the doctoral degree, formational elements of the program, and educational resources are made available to students on location in the context of a demonstrable community of learning.

G.3.2 Duration

G.3.2.1 These degree programs shall require the equivalent of two full years of academic study plus the time needed to complete the doctoral project, thesis, or culminating dissertation research project. Normally, the degrees shall require not fewer than three nor more than six years to complete.

G.3.3 Distinctive resources needed

G.3.3.1 In addition to a community of peer learners that is adequate both in number and quality for advanced study, resources such as particular faculty, library, and academic support services are required for the degree.

G.3.3.2 Institutions shall have faculty and other instructional personnel in adequate numbers to staff the program and with the competencies required for the specific goals of the general or specialized programs.

G.3.3.2.1 Schools shall provide a core of qualified faculty with the appropriate terminal degrees in the specialized field of instruction as well as sufficient faculty governance in curriculum development

and assessment of overall effectiveness of the Doctor of [area of specialization] degrees.

G.3.3.2.2 Program administrative procedures should include full-time faculty in determining the program goals; provide for the evaluation of all participating faculty (full time, adjunct, mentors, and supervisors); and make available opportunities for faculty development in relation to the Doctor of [area of specialization] degrees.

G.3.3.2.3 Whenever adjunct faculty, qualified mentors, or other personnel are employed, they shall receive written and oral orientation to the purposes and expectations of the Doctor of [area of specialization] degree, and their roles shall be exercised and evaluated in full collaboration with full-time faculty.

G.3.3.2.4 It is expected that faculty in the Doctor of [area of specialization] degree programs shall be committed to structuring learning experiences that are oriented to the professional practice of ministry. Whenever needed, institutions shall have effective procedures of faculty development to achieve the particular competencies required for teaching in this program.

G.3.3.2.5 Teaching responsibility for full-time faculty shall be assigned in a manner comparable to that for other degree programs in that institution.

G.3.3.3 Library resources and services shall be of sufficient kind and substance to support these respective Doctor of [area of specialization] degree programs and their goals. This shall include access to adequate existing collections, electronic resources, services, and staffing.

G.3.3.4 The regular academic support services and resources of the institution (e.g., recruitment, admissions, academic records, academic advisement, faculty consultation, and evaluation) shall be available for Doctor of [area of specialization] degree programs and its students.

G.4 Admission

G.4.1 Admission to these degrees shall conform to the standards and expectations of the ATS Commission on Accrediting for advanced programs oriented toward ministerial leadership. Admission requirements shall include a master's degree from an institution of higher education accredited by a US agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, or approved by a Canadian provincial quality assurance agency, or the demonstrated educational equivalent of an appropriate accredited or approved North American master's degree. Comparable degrees from institutions outside North America may be accepted provided schools can demonstrate that they meet the standards of the Board-approved degrees for admission.

G.4.2 Institutions offering the Doctor of [area of specialization] shall set appropriate standards for admission.

G.4.2.1 Classification I programs (for example, the DEdMin) as well as other cognate disciplines require completion of a Board-approved master's program or other advanced master's-level degrees in the related cognate discipline. Other areas of specialization shall require the appropriate master's degrees.

G.4.2.2 Classification II programs (for example, the DMiss) require the completion of the MDiv degree or its educational equivalent, or other ad-

vanced master's-level degrees in the related cognate discipline. Other areas of specialization shall require the appropriate master's degrees.

G.4.3 Educational equivalency for these master's degrees shall be determined by the institution through appropriate and documented assessment that demonstrates that students have the knowledge, competence, or skills that would normally be provided by specific ATS Board of Commissioners-approved MDiv-level course work or the appropriate master's-level course work in the appropriate disciplines or areas of specialization. The process and procedures for such determination shall be published in the institution's public documents.

G.4.4 Ministerial experience alone is not considered the equivalent of or a substitute for the master's degree.

G.4.5 The achievement of a new level of competence in the practice of ministry requires that students have at least three years of experience in ministry and demonstrated capacity for an advanced level of competence prior to beginning the program.

G.4.6 As many as 15 percent of the students in the specialized doctoral degree program may be admitted in any given year without the requisite three years of ministry experience, provided that the institution has demonstrable, objective means for determining that these persons have the capacity for the level of competence and reflection appropriate for advanced, professional ministerial studies. The admission of such applicants should be restricted to persons with ministry experience that has prepared them for theological study at the advanced level.

Advanced Programs Oriented Toward Ministerial Leadership

H Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) Doctor of Church Music (DCM) Doctor of Sacred Music (SMD)

H.1 Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

H.1.1 Purpose of the degree

H.1.1.1 The purpose of these degrees is to equip persons for teaching, research, and leadership in church and sacred music.

H.1.2 Primary goals of the program

H.1.2.1 The goals an institution adopts for these programs should include mastery of the various disciplines included in the study of music, including the liturgical and historical repertory of church music, competence and proficiency in a performance area or areas, and capacity to engage in research and teaching.

H.1.3 Learning outcomes

H.1.3.1 The institution shall specify appropriate demonstrable learning outcomes for these degrees that demonstrate an advanced competency in the areas of church and sacred music, give evidence of being informed by analytic, ministerial, and disciplinary research, and show the integration of these areas of advanced knowledge with opportunities for growth in one's teaching, research, and leadership.

H.1.3.2 Institutions shall demonstrate that students have achieved the goals or learning outcomes of the degree program by means of direct and indirect evidence of student learning, including quantitative and qualitative assessments.

H.1.3.3 These specific, learning outcomes should shape and inform the design of all courses, relevant competency-based experiences, and formative and other instructional strategies to establish a coherent and integrated curriculum for the degree program.

H.1.4 Educational assessment

H.1.4.1 The institution offering these degrees shall articulate the assessment strategy and criteria by which it regularly evaluates the educational effectiveness of the degree program. The institution shall determine the extent to which students have achieved the stated goals of the degree program by the use of both direct and indirect evidence.

H.1.4.2 The institution shall be able to demonstrate that students completing these degrees have a comprehensive and critical understanding of the music disciplines and exhibit appropriate advanced proficiency in performance skills, the competence to conduct original research that can contribute to their field, and the capacity to teach with skill.

H.2 Program content

H.2.1 The program shall provide for advanced study in several areas, including liturgy, hymnology, theory, musicology, composition, and conducting.

H.2.2 The program shall provide for the study of foreign languages as appropriate for advanced scholarly work in music.

H.2.3 The program shall contain a major emphasis on musical performance.

H.2.4 The program shall include a comprehensive assessment of doctoral-level knowledge of the course of studies and a culminating dissertation reflecting a high quality of research skill.

H.2.4.1 The dissertation shall demonstrate the doctoral candidate's ability to identify an appropriate disciplinary topic, organize an effective research model, use appropriate resources, and evaluate the results, reflecting depth of insight in relation to the music disciplines.

H.3 Educational resources and learning strategies

H.3.1 Location

H.3.1.1 Courses, seminars, and colloquia for the degree shall be completed on a Board-approved campus or full-degree extension site of the member institution. If course work completed at other institutions is to be accepted for credit in a Board-approved doctoral program, that work shall have been eligible for credit in the doctoral programs offered by the institution at which it was completed.

H.3.1.2 An institution offering distance education courses for these degrees shall demonstrate in the courses the collaborative, performative, and research dimensions of scholarship in the various disciplines included in the study of music, including the liturgical and historical repertory of church music. Courses shall provide regular and substantive interaction between teachers and learners and among learners to ensure a viable community of learning.

H.3.1.3 Because of their performative character, no more than one-third of the course work for these degrees may be completed through distance education. An exception may be granted if a school can demonstrate how its educational design and delivery system accomplishes the learning outcomes required for these degrees.

H.3.2 Duration

H.3.2.1 The program requires the equivalent of three years of full-time study beyond the MCM/MSM.

H.3.3 Distinctive resources needed

H.3.3.1 There shall be faculty members who are specialists in the field of church music, including a sufficient number to instruct students at the doctoral level in the variety of relevant disciplines. Faculty shall have proven competence in teaching and research, with established reputations for scholarship or music performance. It is desirable that they should have published the results of their own scholarly work and be currently engaged in productive research.

H.3.3.2 The program shall provide ready access to resources for the development of performance skills and opportunities to lead ensembles.

H.3.3.3 The program shall have adequate library resources for research in the fields of music, especially church music, including access to scores, musical texts, recordings, books, and other media.

H.3.3.4 The Board of Commissioners strongly recommends that any institution offering the research/performance doctorate in music have programmatic accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Music or its institutional counterpart in Canada.

H.4 Admission

H.4.1 Admission requirements shall include (a) completion of an NASM/ATS Commission on Accrediting-approved master's degree program, or (b) demonstration that the candidate has the competencies provided by the MCM/MSM degree in church music as prescribed by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), or alternatively by the master's-level degree programs earned from an institution of higher education that is approved by a Canadian provincial quality assurance agency or the demonstrated educational equivalent of an accredited or approved North American music master's degree; or (c) an acceptable plan for completing these requirements in the course of study for the doctorate if the student has not met them through other prerequisites

H.4.2 Admission should be based on appropriate performance and academic ability as well as the potential to contribute to leadership in church music.

Advanced Programs Primarily Oriented Toward Theological Research and Teaching

I Master of Theology (ThM) Master of Sacred Theology (STM)

I.1 Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

I.1.1 Purpose of the degree

I.1.1.1 The purpose of this degree is to provide a fuller mastery of one area or discipline of theological study than is normally provided at the MDiv level. The program may serve a variety of aims, including further graduate study at the doctoral level, preparation for some forms of teaching, the scholarly enhancement of ministerial practice, or disciplined reflection on a specialized function in ministry.

I.1.1.2 The nomenclature, Master of Theology (designated as MTh), is also used in some Canadian institutions for programs of continued study of theological disciplines or specialization in an area of ministry practice.

I.1.2 Primary goals of the program

I.1.2.1 The primary goals an institution adopts for these programs should include an advanced understanding of a focused area or discipline in the context of general theological study, the ability to formulate productive questions, and the capacity to use research methods and resources in the discipline.

I.1.3 Learning outcomes

I.1.3.1 The institution shall specify demonstrable learning outcomes that demonstrate an advanced competency in one area or discipline of theological study and capacity to conduct original research in that area.

I.1.3.2 The institution shall demonstrate, by direct and indirect evidence, that students have achieved the learning outcomes of the degree program, including mastery of a theological discipline and scholarly competence in research.

I.1.3.3 These specific, learning outcomes should shape and inform the design of all courses and other instructional strategies to establish a coherent and integrated curriculum for the degree program.

I.1.4 Educational assessment

I.1.4.1 The institution offering the ThM or STM degree shall articulate the assessment strategy and criteria by which it regularly evaluates the educational effectiveness of the degree program.

I.1.4.2 The institution shall also maintain an ongoing assessment by which it determines the extent to which the degree program is meeting the needs of students and the institution's overall goals for the program, including measures such as the percentage of students who complete the program.

I.1.4.3 Student learning outcomes shall be stated in terms of how students' skills and knowledge change as a result of having completed the degree. The institution shall gather quantitative and qualitative data related to each of those outcomes, analyze the data gathered, and make revisions as necessary

based on that assessment. This assessment cycle shall be ongoing, regularized, and sustainable.

I.2 Program content

I.2.1 The program of study shall consist of regular course work and faculty-directed independent study and research.

I.2.2 To encourage an appropriate level of academic engagement, at least one-half of the work required shall be in courses designed for students in advanced programs.

I.2.3 Requirements for language study and other disciplines necessary for research should be appropriate to the field of specialization, typically one ancient language and one modern language.

I.2.4 Degree requirements should ordinarily include an examination that demonstrates mastery of a theological discipline and a thesis demonstrating scholarly research competence.

I.3 Educational resources and learning strategies

I.3.1 Location

I.3.1.1 The program shall be undertaken chiefly in courses offered on the institution's main campus with the appropriate research library resources and a sufficient number of students to provide a peer community for mutual criticism and stimulus. Any petition for exception shall demonstrate how its educational design and delivery system accomplishes the learning outcomes associated with research-oriented residential theological study.

I.3.2 Duration

I.3.2.1 The program shall require one year of full-time study or its equivalent.

I.3.3 Distinctive resources needed

I.3.3.1 Faculty teaching in this program should be actively engaged in research that provides effective models of theological research for students and should be of sufficient number to provide a variety of scholarly perspectives.

I.3.3.2 The library shall have collections of sufficient quality to support research in the disciplines in which the ThM or STM is offered as well as appropriate databases and other scholarly resources.

I.4 Admission

I.4.1 Admission to the program shall require an ATS Board of Commissioners-approved MDiv, or first graduate theological degree providing equivalent theological background, or its educational equivalent, from an institution of higher education accredited by a US agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, or approved by a Canadian provincial quality assurance agency; and evidence of aptitude for advanced theological study. Comparable degrees from institutions outside North America may be accepted provided schools can demonstrate that they meet the standards of the Board-approved degrees for admission.

Advanced Programs Primarily Oriented Toward Theological Research and Teaching

J Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Doctor of Theology (ThD)

J.1 Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment

J.1.1 Purpose of the degree

J.1.1.1 These degree programs are intended primarily to equip persons for vocations of teaching and research in theological schools, colleges, and universities, or for the academic study of ministerial practice. The same overall aims and standards apply to both the PhD and the ThD; the nomenclature differs according to the history of its use in a particular school.

J.1.2 Primary goals of the program

J.1.2.1 The goals an institution adopts for the research doctorate should include a comprehensive knowledge of the disciplines of study; a competence to engage in original research and writing that advance theological understanding for the sake of church, academy, and society; and a breadth of knowledge in theological and religious studies and in other academic disciplines.

J.1.2.2 The program should also enable the student to develop a sense of and a commitment to the vocation of theological scholarship in its dimensions of teaching, learning, and research.

J.1.3 Learning outcomes

J.1.3.1 The institution shall specify learning outcomes that are demonstrable, that reflect the goals of the program, and that demonstrate advanced competency in the disciplines of theological or religious studies and capacity to conduct original research and writing that advances theological understanding.

J.1.3.2 The institution shall demonstrate, by direct and indirect evidence, that students have achieved the learning outcomes of the degree program, including mastery of a theological discipline and scholarly competence in advanced research.

J.1.3.3 These specific, learning outcomes should shape and inform the design of all courses and other instructional strategies to establish a coherent and integrated curriculum for the degree program.

J.1.4 Educational assessment

J.1.4.1 The institution offering the PhD or ThD degrees shall articulate the assessment strategy and criteria by which it regularly evaluates the educational effectiveness of the degree programs.

J.1.4.2 The institution shall also maintain an ongoing assessment by which it determines the extent to which the degree program is meeting the needs of students and the institution's overall goals for the program, including measures such as the percentage of students who complete the program.

J.1.4.3 The institution shall gather quantitative and qualitative data related to learning outcomes, analyze the data gathered, and make revisions as necessary based on that assessment. This assessment cycle shall be ongoing, regularized, and sustainable.

J.2 Program content

J.2.1 The program of study shall either presuppose or provide grounding in the content and methods of theological studies in general, as a basis for the development of specialized competence.

J.2.2 The program shall facilitate an orderly progression of studies toward its goals within a specified length of time, allowing students sufficient flexibility to meet professional interests and special needs. For the sake of the program as well as of the individual student, students should be carefully evaluated after a year of study so that those who do not show sufficient signs of promise can be so advised.

J.2.3 The curriculum shall include training in the research methods and procedures relevant to the area of specialization. Attention should be given not only to commonly accepted approaches but also to newly emerging possibilities for framing inquiries and organizing and examining data.

J.2.4 The program shall assist students to grow in those qualities essential for practice of scholarly ministry in theological environments.

J.2.5 Opportunities shall be provided for instruction in teaching methods and for the development of competence in teaching.

J.2.6 The program shall include course work, comprehensive examinations, and the writing of a doctoral dissertation.

J.2.6.1 The course work shall include a majority of courses intended for doctoral students or students in other advanced programs oriented toward theological research and teaching.

J.2.6.2 During both their course of studies and their dissertation research, students shall be required to use competently the language(s) in which relevant primary texts are written, as well as those in which there is important secondary material. Normally, this would include at least one ancient and one or more modern languages. Students engaged in theological disciplines that use behavioral or social scientific research methods shall be required to demonstrate competence in these research methods.

J.2.6.3 Students are expected to devote the kind of attention to their doctoral programs that ensures opportunity for intensive study, research, and interaction with other students.

J.3 Educational resources and learning strategies

J.3.1 Location

J.3.1.1 Courses, seminars, and colloquia for research doctoral degrees shall normally be completed on the main campus of the institution offering the degree. Any petition for exception shall demonstrate how its educational design and delivery system accomplishes the learning outcomes associated with research-oriented residential theological study. If course work completed at other institutions is to be accepted for credit in an ATS Board of Commissioners-approved research doctoral program, that work shall have been eligible for credit in the research doctoral programs offered by the institution at which it was completed or other advanced programs primarily oriented toward theological research and teaching.

J.3.2 Duration

J.3.2.1 The total time devoted to the program shall include the equivalent of two years of full-time course work and sufficient time to prepare for comprehensive examinations, to acquire teaching skills, and to conduct the research for and writing of a doctoral dissertation.

J.3.3 Distinctive resources needed

J.3.3.1 The institution shall demonstrate the availability of resources in addition to those necessary for master's-level degree programs.

J.3.3.2 The faculty shall be broadly representative of the areas or disciplines of theological inquiry, including at least two faculty specialists in each field in which doctoral students may specialize and a sufficient number in cognate fields to support the program.

J.3.3.2.1 The faculty should have been trained in a variety of graduate institutions and should include a variety of scholarly viewpoints and approaches. Working relationships with faculty in other graduate institutions, in both research and graduate instruction, should be encouraged.

J.3.3.2.2 In general, faculty members should be competent in teaching and research, with a record of contributions to their disciplines. They should have published the results of their own scholarly work and should be currently engaged in significant research.

J.3.3.2.3 Faculty members shall be willing and able to offer guidance to doctoral students throughout the course of the program, both with regard to their development as scholars (e.g., in tutorials and independent study projects and in the writing of the dissertation) and with regard to their development as teachers and prospective colleagues in the academic profession.

J.3.3.2.4 The teaching and administrative loads of graduate faculty members—both junior and senior—shall be limited to permit ample time for attending to the needs of graduate students and for faculty research. The faculty shall participate in making academic policies relevant to the program.

J.3.3.3 Freedom of inquiry is fundamentally important for research doctoral programs. The institution must assure that not only faculty but also students have freedom to conduct research in their respective disciplines and, within any formally adopted confessional commitments of the institution, the freedom to communicate the findings of their research.

J.3.3.4 The institution shall allocate sufficient financial resources to support degree programs.

J.3.3.5 Research doctoral programs require substantial library holdings and facilities. Provision shall be made for the development and maintenance of research-quality collections and appropriate databases in each field of doctoral studies, together with collections in closely related fields. Adequate dedicated study space, technological support, information accessibility, and acquisitions and reference staff shall be ensured.

J.3.3.6 Where the faculty of a school participates to a significant degree in a doctoral program offered under the auspices of another institution (or of

another division of its own institution), the school shall account for this use of its resources.

J.4 Admission

J.4.1 Admission to the program shall require an ATS Board of Commissioners-approved MDiv, or first graduate theological degree providing equivalent theological background, or its educational equivalent from an institution of higher education accredited by a US agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or approved by a Canadian provincial quality assurance agency. Comparable degrees from institutions outside North America may be accepted provided schools can demonstrate that they meet the standards of the Board-approved degrees for admission.

J.4.2 Admission should be selective and offered only to students who have demonstrated the intellectual ability, the preparation, and the motivation for a scholarly vocation.

J.4.3 Because of the importance to scholarly growth of a sustained period of study in residence, admission should not be offered unless financial resources and arrangements are available to enable students to engage in full-time study for at least a significant part of their program.

J.4.4 The number of students admitted in each field should be sufficient to provide a community of peers but should not be so large as to imperil the quality of instruction.

Notations

In order to identify how and when, in the judgment of the Board of Commissioners, principles contained in the accrediting standards are not being adequately translated into practice, the board uses the notations that follow. These notations were developed to conform to the standards of accreditation and procedures adopted by the Association in 2010 (cf. Commission procedures, section VII.E).

The Board of Commissioners will be developing notations aligned with the revised Degree Program Standards adopted at the 2012 Biennial Meeting. Until then, these notations are in force.

Purpose, planning, and evaluation

- N1.1 The institutional statement of purpose is inadequately articulated or implemented.
- N1.2 Policies or procedures for comprehensive institutional evaluation are insufficient or ineffective.
- N1.3 The institution makes insufficient use of the findings of its evaluative efforts for improvement of institutional activities or educational programs.
- N1.4 The institution's planning processes are insufficient or ineffective.

Institutional integrity

- N2.1 Institutional policies or their implementation do not adequately ensure that students, faculty, administrators, or employees are treated in ethical ways.
- N2.2 The institution does not adequately demonstrate that its institutional or educational practices seek to enhance participation of racial/ethnic minority persons in institutional life.
- N2.3 The institution has not provided data or information to the board as required by the standards.
- N2.4 According to its stated purpose, the institution has failed adequately to address the concerns of women so as to increase their participation in theological education.
- N2.5 The school has inadequately or inaccurately published its accredited status with the Commission on Accrediting and failed to correct the error when instructed to do so.

The theological curriculum: learning, teaching, and research

- N3.1 Within the context of the school's institutional purpose, ongoing efforts to ensure the quality of teaching, learning, and research are lacking or ineffective.
- N3.2 The institution lacks, does not uphold, or does not implement policies regarding the freedom of inquiry necessary for the activities of teaching, learning, and research.
- N3.3 The school's practices of teaching, learning, and research inadequately or ineffectively encourage global awareness and responsiveness.

Reserved¹

Library and information resources

- N5.1 The library collection development policy is inadequately articulated or implemented.
- N5.2 The library collection is inadequate to provide appropriate bibliographic support for one or more of the degree programs offered by the school, and there is no evidence that the institution is implementing a credible plan to address this issue in a timely and effective manner.
- N5.3 The library lacks necessary technological or physical resources for the teaching, learning, and research required by the school's purpose or for the degree programs it offers, and there is no evidence that the institution is implementing a credible plan to address this issue in a timely and effective manner.
- N5.4 The staff of the library is insufficient in number or in qualification to provide the services the library requires, and there is no evidence that the institution is implementing a credible plan to address this issue in a timely and effective manner.

Faculty

- N6.1 The faculty does not possess appropriate credentials for graduate theological education, and there is no evidence that the institution is implementing a credible plan to address this issue in a timely and effective manner.
- N6.2 Faculty members do not have adequate freedom, in the context of the school's institutional purpose, to pursue critical questions, to seek knowledge, to communicate the findings of their research, or to teach the subjects in which they have competence.
- N6.3 Faculty members do not exercise appropriate responsibility for planning, designing, overseeing, or evaluating the quality of student learning in the degree programs in which they teach.
- N6.4 Procedures for the retention of qualified faculty members are insufficiently designed or implemented.
- N6.5 The workload of the faculty does not permit adequate attention to students, scholarly pursuits, or other institutional expectations.
- N6.6 The school lacks policies or resources necessary for faculty to fulfill their teaching or research responsibilities, and there is no evidence that the institution is implementing a credible plan to address this issue in a timely and effective manner.

1. Notations related to former Standard 4 have been moved to the end of this section under degree programs.

- N6.7 Procedures for evaluating faculty member performance are inadequately designed or implemented.
- N6.8 The school has inadequate provisions for structured opportunities for faculty members' research, professional development, or intellectual growth, and there is no evidence that the institution is implementing a credible plan to address this issue in a timely and effective manner.

Student recruitment, admission, services, and placement

- N7.1 Policies or practices of student recruitment are inconsistent with the stated purpose of the institution.
- N7.2 Recruitment services or publications do not accurately represent the institution, its educational programs, or the vocational opportunities of graduates.
- N7.3 Admission policies or practices do not ensure that the school is operating at a postbaccalaureate level.
- N7.4 Admission policies or practices do not encourage diversity in enrollment as appropriate to the purpose of the school.
- N7.5 The school does not clearly identify, publish, or implement policies or procedures regarding the following: students' rights, responsibilities, or discipline; degree requirements; or fees and tuition.
- N7.6 The content, storage, or security of student files is inadequate or inappropriate.
- N7.7 The institution has failed to demonstrate how tuition and fees are appropriate for the degree programs offered or to review student educational debt.
- N7.8 Institutional policies, processes, or records are inadequate regarding student complaints related to areas addressed by Commission accrediting standards.
- N7.9 The school provides inadequate or ineffective placement assistance for graduates of degree programs who are seeking employment.

Authority and governance

- N8.1 The structure or scope of authority is inadequately developed or documented.
- N8.2 The structures or processes of governance are inadequately articulated or documented.

- N8.3 The governing board exercises its authority or discharges its responsibilities ineffectively or inappropriately.
- N8.4 The governing board does not require ongoing institutional evaluation or planning or evaluate its own performance as a board.
- N8.5 The school does not adequately define or implement the roles, responsibilities, and structure of administrators and faculty in governance and administration.

Institutional resources

- N9.1 The school's provision of human resources is inadequate in terms of the number and quality of the persons it employs, the policies that govern its employment practices, or the supervision and evaluation of personnel, and there is no evidence that the institution is implementing a credible plan to address this issue in a timely and effective manner.
- N9.2 Current revenues are not sufficiently stable, predictable, or adequate to maintain the educational quality of the institution, and there is no evidence that the institution is implementing a credible plan to address this issue in a timely and effective manner.
- N9.3 The school has sustained a cumulative loss in its operating budget over the past three years, and there is no evidence that the institution is implementing a credible plan to address this issue in a timely and effective manner.
- N9.4 Policies and plans to protect the long-term purchasing power of the school's endowment are inadequately formulated or implemented.
- N9.5 Internal accounting and reporting systems are not in accordance with systems generally used in North American higher education, or the institution is not audited by an independent external auditor.
- N9.6 The school's policies, procedures, or reporting mechanisms are inadequate for budget development and review, or for monitoring revenue and approval of expenditures.
- N9.7 The school's physical resources are inadequate or inappropriate for its educational programs, and there is no evidence that the institution is implementing a credible plan to address this issue in a timely and effective manner.
- N9.8 The school lacks institutional data or the data available are inadequate for effective planning,

evaluation, or administration of its institutional effectiveness or its educational programs.

Multiple locations and distance education

- N10.1 The school offers extension or distance education programs that are not congruent with its stated purpose.
- N10.2 Extension or distance education programs of study are not established, approved, or reviewed by regular institutional procedures of planning and evaluation.
- N10.3 The distance education program provides insufficient interaction between teachers and learners and among learners to ensure a community of learning.
- N10.4 Technology or technological support services are insufficient for the delivery of the extension or distance education program, and there is no evidence that the institution is implementing a credible plan to address this issue in a timely and effective manner.
- N10.5 Library and information resources are not adequate in number or quality required for the extension or distance education program, and there is no evidence that the institution is implementing a credible plan to address this issue in a timely and effective manner.
- N10.6 Institutional faculty and library staff are insufficiently involved in the development and maintenance of library resources for the extension or distance education program.
- N10.7 The faculty teaching in the extension or distance education program do not provide appropriate diversity or adequate variety for the educational goals and purposes of the program.
- N10.8 The school's full-time faculty do not share significant responsibility for the academic oversight of the extension or distance education program.
- N10.9 Students in the extension or distance education program do not have access to appropriate student or academic services.
- N10.10 The extension or distance education program lacks appropriate organizational structures, financial support, or administrative processes, and there is no evidence that the institution is implementing a credible plan to address this issue in a timely and effective manner.

- N10.11 The school offers extension or distance education programs without approval of the Board of Commissioners.

Degree programs

- N4.1 The institution does not adequately differentiate its degree programs in terms of their educational goals or vocational intent.
- N4.2 The enrollment in one or more of the school's degree programs is insufficient to provide a community of learning in each of the degree programs, and there is no evidence that the institution is implementing a credible plan to address this issue in a timely and effective manner.
- N4.3 The nomenclature of the degree program fails to conform to Commission Degree Program Standards.
- N4.4 This school offers degree programs without the approval of the Board of Commissioners.
- N4.5 The institution's curriculum for this degree does not provide adequate exposure to the areas of content mandated by the Degree Program Standards.
- N4.6 The degree program does not require sufficient work to be completed at the school's main campus or at a branch campus approved to offer the degree program.
- N4.7 The duration of the degree program is less than that required by the degree program standard.
- N4.8 Admission requirements for the degree program are inadequately stipulated or implemented.
- N4.9 The available educational resources are inadequate for this degree program, and there is no evidence that the institution is implementing a credible plan to address this issue in a timely and effective manner.
- N4.10 The school is unable to demonstrate the extent to which students have met the educational goals of the program or the extent to which the degree program is meeting the needs of students or religious communities.

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ats The Association of Theological Schools
The Commission on Accrediting

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