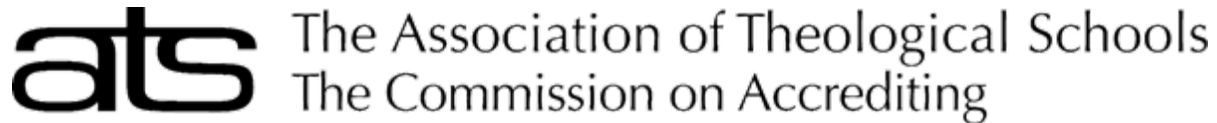


From: [ATS Accrediting](#)
To: james.lee@itsla.edu; [Elsie Miranda](#)
Cc: priscilla.adoyo@itsla.edu
Subject: [COAATS] Action Letter, June 2023
Date: Friday, June 9, 2023 4:27:32 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)



June 9, 2023

ATTN: James Seung-Hyun Lee
International Theological Seminary
540 E Vine Ave
West Covina, CA 91790
via email only

Dear President Lee,

The Board of Commissioners met in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on June 5-6, 2023, and included on its agenda International Theological Seminary's comprehensive visit and the resulting report by the evaluation committee.

After reviewing the information in light of the pertinent Commission [Standards](#) and [Policies and Procedures](#), the Board voted:

1. To reaffirm the school's accreditation for a period of five years, until 31 July 2028, with the next comprehensive evaluation visit in spring 2028.
Rationale if less than maximum period: In light of the imposition of probation, an accreditation period of less than ten years is necessary.
2. To approve the following educational offerings:
 - a. Degree programs:
 - Master of Divinity
 - Master of Arts (Theological Studies)
 - Master of Theology (ThM)
 - Doctor of Ministry
 - Doctor of Intercultural Studies
 - b. Distance education: Comprehensive
 - c. Additional locations: None
3. To affirm these three distinctive strengths to be maintained during the next period of accreditation:
 - a. The devoted and passionate dedication of the board, administrators, faculty, and staff that selflessly serve the school in fulfilling its unique mission, in service to the global church.
 - b. The school's distinctive capacity to be a "living lab of intercultural diversity," engaged in an ongoing process of growth, generosity and hospitality among administrators, faculty, staff and students that is respectful, collaborative, and appreciative, embodying diverse ways of being and doing "community."
 - c. The school's capacity to be nimble and willing to accommodate to new educational modalities and bi-vocational needs of students.
4. To highlight the following issues needing special attention during the next period of accreditation:

- a. The school is encouraged to attend to the adequacy of its technology infrastructure and personnel, as integral to the fulfillment of its mission, with particular attention to:
 - i. the availability of qualified persons to support the school's information and educational technology,
 - ii. availability of personnel to support faculty and students in ongoing growth of online learning, and
 - iii. availability of technology security and privacy that meets all applicable laws and regulations (see Standard 10.9).
 - b. The school is encouraged to enhance student services protocols designed to attend to student retention and safety issues, with a particular focus on securing F1 students' visas, offering hospitality and welcome to international students upon their arrival to the US, with special attention paid to International Visa requirements and temporary work permits in fulfillment of its mission (see Standards 7.1 and 7.5).
5. To require the following reports to address areas needing improvement and/or further information:
- a. To require a report by the 1st of April 2024, regarding an update to the Student Handbook that includes a formally defined process for responding to complaints raised by students, and documentation on how records of formal complaints are maintained in accordance with the school's standards and policies, process followed, and the decisions made (see Standard 7.6).
 - b. To require a report by the 1st of April 2025, regarding a revision of the strategic plan that recognizes the school's current realities and articulates the school's priorities in ways that clarify how each priority will be achieved, including appropriate human, financial, physical, and technological resources necessary for each priority (see Standards 2.1-3, 10.1, and 10.4).
6. To impose probation for a period of 24 months (June 2023 to June 2025), as a result of the school not meeting the following Commission Standard (per *Policies and Procedures*, III.H): Standard 10.3. The school is at risk of not having "sufficient and stable financial resources to achieve its mission with educational quality and financial sustainability." The school must submit a report by the 1st of April 2025, documenting progress toward financial sustainability, including a financial plan that is "realistic, holistic, and sustainable" (see [Guidelines for Understanding Standard 10.3 on Finances](#) for additional guidance). The school's FY 2022-2023 and FY 2023-2024 audits, management letters (if available), analysis of the FY 2024-2025 operating revenues and expenditures, and budget projections for FY 2025-2026 must be appended to the report (see Standards 9.3 and 10.3).
7. To authorize a focused visit prior to the end of the period of probation (no later than April 15, 2025) to make a recommendation regarding whether the Board of Commissioners should remove probation or take an adverse action, i.e., withdrawal of accreditation (*Policies and Procedures*, III.J).

NOTE: Actions #1–5 (above) are effective **June 6, 2023**; actions #6 & #7 (above) are effective **June 23, 2023**—thereby allowing sufficient time from the receipt of this notification for any initial request for a review (see ATS Commission [Policies and Procedures](#), VIII.A and VIII.A.1-3). To request a review of the above public sanction(s), the school must submit an official request signed by the school's chief executive officer (or designee) within two weeks from today's Board action letter; the school would then have two more weeks to submit specific documentation supporting its review request (VIII.A.1-2). Any initial request for a review is to be addressed to the Board of Commissioners and submitted in care of the Accrediting Records Coordinator (accrediting@ats.edu).

The ATS Commission [Policies and Procedures](#) defines a public sanction as (negative) action being taken by the Board of Commissioners to issue a Warning (III.G), to place on Probation (III.H), or to issue a Show Cause (III.I). Timeframes for resolving a public sanction may not exceed twelve months in the event of a Show Cause—which is neither reviewable nor appealable (III.I.1)—or two years in the event of either an imposition of Warning (III.G.1) or being placed on Probation (III.H.1). Evidence for removal of the above public sanction(s) should be sent to the ATS Commission on

Accrediting no later than **April 1, 2025**, in order to be considered by the Board at its 2025 summer meeting (June). Submission of such evidence follows the guidelines and formatting as other interim reports to the Commission (III.E(.1); see also <https://www.ats.edu/Interim-Reports>). To request that a public sanction be removed earlier, the school should contact its assigned ATS Commission staff liaison regarding the possibility of any advance submission and associated deadline for Board review.

In preparation for any required focused evaluation visit, the school will receive a prospectus outlining the documentation that the school must provide prior to that visit (ATS Commission [Policies and Procedures](#), III.D.3). Note that the school's assigned ATS Commission staff liaison will be in contact regarding the visit prospectus—in addition to establishing a date for the focused visit. Any relevant visit fees can be found on the ATS website (<https://www.ats.edu/Evaluation-Visit-Billing-Policies>); for a focused visit required to affirm findings of any comprehensive evaluation visit conducted virtually, there is no fee (though travel expenses may apply).

Please contact me directly at miranda@ats.edu with any questions.

Sincerely,

Elsie Miranda
Director of Accreditation and Diversity

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The Association of Theological Schools | The Commission on Accrediting
10 Summit Park Drive | Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1110 | 412-788-6505 | accrediting@ats.edu | www.ats.edu