# Associate Membership Application Instructions

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| **Name of Applicant:** Type the full name of the graduate theological school seeking membership |

**Associate Membership Application Instructions**

Membership in The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (hereafter “Association” or “ATS”) is open to schools located in Canada or the United States that offer graduate, professional theological degrees, are demonstrably engaged in educating professional leadership (i.e., offering at least one professional graduate degree) for communities of the Christian and Jewish faiths, and meet the Association’s membership eligibility criteria (linked [here](https://www.ats.edu/member-schools/membership-process)). Current ATS member schools reflect a broad spectrum of doctrinal, confessional, and theological perspectives.

Alternatively, the Association offers an Affiliate status for interested entities that are *ineligible* for membership. See the ATS website for information on [pursuing Affiliate status](https://www.ats.edu/member-schools/affiliates) (i.e., do not complete or submit the present form).

### Description of Membership

There are two sequential classes or levels of membership. **Associate Membership** refers to ATS member schools that are seeking accreditation by the Commission on Accrediting of The Association of Theological Schools (hereafter “Commission” or “COA”). The member school’s degree programs, along with any online offerings and additional locations, are not reviewed or approved; since an Associate Member is not yet accredited by COA, the school is not entitled by virtue of this class of membership to participate in Title IV financial aid programs from the US Department of Education Office of Federal Student Aid. **Full Membership** refers to ATS members that have been accredited by the Commission, based on an institutional self-study report and an onsite evaluation visit by a committee of peer and public reviewers. Full Members of ATS are also Accredited Members of COA bound by the Commission [*Standards of Accreditation*](https://www.ats.edu/accrediting/standards), [*Policies and Procedures*](https://www.ats.edu/accrediting/procedures-policies-and-bylaws), and [COA *Bylaws*](https://www.ats.edu/accrediting/procedures-policies-and-bylaws) (linked at each of the preceding). Free-standing, accredited schools become eligible to participate in Title IV funding by virtue of this class of membership. An Associate Member becomes a Full Member by following one of the pathways described in the *Guidelines for Achieving Initial Accreditation* (linked [here](https://www.ats.edu/member-schools/membership-process)). All member schools—Associate Members and Full Members—pay [annual membership dues](https://www.ats.edu/accrediting/dues-and-fees) and submit [Annual Report Forms](https://www.ats.edu/resources/institutional-data/annual-report-forms), as described in the [ATS *Bylaws* (PDF)](https://www.ats.edu/uploads/about-ats/documents/association-bylaws.pdf#pagemode=bookmarks).

### Overview of Application Process

Prior to submitting this application, the prospective applicant school should review documentation posted on the ATS [Membership Process webpage](https://www.ats.edu/member-schools/membership-process), where contact information can be found for the ATS staff person coordinating the process to apply. This application form (in Word/DOCX format) should help the school’s governance, faculty, and administration (as appropriate) in discerning whether to apply. When a school has decided to pursue ATS membership, it should designate a senior school official (e.g., president, provost, dean) to prepare the application, which is estimated to take 10 months or more to prepare adequately. Given the timeline, by fall of an even-numbered year (e.g., fall 2020 or fall 2022), this school official ought to initiate preparation of the application for membership and would liaise with the aforementioned ATS staff person, as needed, over the following months.

The application fee is $5,000 (payable in two installments), in addition to any visit-related costs incurred by ATS. Invoiced fees and costs are nonrefundable, regardless of application outcome. Applications are received year-round but will only be reviewed during the academic year preceding the ATS/COA Biennial Meeting (held in June of even-numbered years). Therefore, the applicant school should be prepared to submit information *current as of the summer prior* to the submission deadline (ATS staff will inform the applicant school of any such need). To assist in the school’s discernment and coordination of this application, the following outline provides a helpful overview:

1. Identify timing: Note that the application is due September 1st of odd-numbered years (e.g., 2021, 2023, 2025).
2. Determine feasibility: Decide on how the school will coordinate necessary resources (e.g., documents, fees).
3. Complete form: Fill in all fields below, providing URLs as needed; save this DOCX file, renaming appropriately.
4. Gather documentation: Compile highlighted items as individual PDF files (consult your IT/library staff for help).
5. Submit application: Go to the online submission page (linked [here](https://www.ats.edu/member-schools/membership-process)) to upload all files (***one* DOCX**; ***eight PDFs***). *(NOTE: ATS will invoice the first installment of the nonrefundable application fee, in the amount of $2,500.)*
6. Await initial review: ATS staff will communicate by October 15th whether eligibility criteria appear to be met.

*If this application is determined by a committee of ATS staff to warrant continuation in the process…*

1. Schedule visit: An ATS staff person will arrange a one- or two-day visit to the school at a mutually agreeable time between October and February, in order to verify the information in this application. The applicant school is responsible for providing, as needed, all of the following accommodations: local transportation to and from the nearest airport, lodging at a local hotel (usually for one night), and meals during the one- or two-day visit.
2. Make arrangements: The applicant would arrange for ATS to receive the following—*prior to any staff visit*:
   1. Five letters of support from [any current ATS members](https://www.ats.edu/member-schools/member-school-list) of the applicant school’s choosing (directions: [here](https://www.ats.edu/member-schools/membership-process));
   2. One-half of the application fee (total: $5,000). *(REMINDER: ATS will invoice the first installment of $2,500.)*
3. Await substantive review: In April, the ATS Board of Directors will vote whether to recommend applicants for membership—based upon the application materials and support letters, as well as the report written by the ATS staff person who conducted the visit to evaluate how well a school meets each membership criterion.

*If the ATS Board of Directors affirmatively recommends this application for a vote…*

1. Resolve invoice: The remaining half of the application fee (total: $5,000), in addition to any visit-related costs incurred by ATS, would be due by the end of May. *(NOTE: As before, ATS will invoice the second installment of $2,500 plus any visit costs, which are also not refundable regardless of application outcome.)*
2. Await final outcome: At its expense, any school may register online to send its representative(s) to attend the ATS/COA Biennial Meeting, which takes place in June of even-numbered years (e.g., 2022, 2024, 2026); regardless of application status, attendance is optional and has no bearing on the vote for membership. Two thirds of ATS members at the Biennial Meeting must vote favorably for Associate Membership to be granted.

*If Associate Membership (a five-year term) is granted…*

1. Seek accreditation: Review the *Guidelines for Achieving Initial Accreditation* (linked [here](https://www.ats.edu/member-schools/membership-process)) and communicate with the school’s Commission staff liaison—to be assigned in July—in order to determine next steps. The term for Associate Membership is five years, being renewable once and at discretion of the ATS Board of Directors.

***APPLICATION FORM BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE***

# Criteria for Membership: Application Form

All information supplied on this application and in any required appendices must (also) be written in English. The application is based upon the eight “membership eligibility criteria” described in the *Procedures Related to Membership in The Association of Theological Schools* (linked [here](https://www.ats.edu/member-schools/membership-process); see sections I.A–H on pages 1-2).

## “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.” ➡ *PDF to upload: a copy of the school’s legal charter and corporate bylaws*

**Name of school/department (see below):** Type here to identify the accreditable entity

**If applicant1 is part of a larger entity, please describe:** Type “N/A” if this does not apply

1ATS membership is open only to schools that have an “accreditable entity” offering graduate, professional theological degrees. If the applicant is part of a larger entity that offers more than the degrees within the recognized scope of the [ATS Commission on Accrediting](https://www.ats.edu/accrediting/overview-accrediting) (e.g., offering undergraduate degrees or degrees not related to theology or ministry), then please describe the nature of the *smaller* entity that offers *only* graduate degrees related to theology or ministry (e.g., a school or department within a university or a faculty of theology).

**Addresses2:** Provide the homepage URL or web address for the accreditable entity

|  |
| --- |
| *MAIN CAMPUS:*  Type full address of main campus location |

|  |
| --- |
| *MAILING ADDRESS (IF DIFFERENT):*  Type mailing address (or “same”) |

2List any additional locations under I.G.4 (below), not here.

**Other public contact methods:** Provide phone number(s) and general inquiry email address (if any)

**Academic credit system3:** Type here, specifying the system used (e.g., semester hour, quarter hour)

3If competency-based, then append and upload a brief yet informative statement—to include (i) rationale: needs met, mission alignment, succinct description; (ii) competencies: degree alignment, associated learning activities; (iii) planning: program development narrative, faculty participation, professional engagement (e.g., faith community leaders), placement outlook; and (iv) evaluation: rubrics/benchmarks, direct/indirect measures, regular/substantive interaction, additional educational factors for conferral. (Cf. prompts under I.E, below.)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Master’s degree(s) currently offered, if any:*** | *# of credits* | *% at distance3* | *# of students4* |
| List here (hit “Return” in each column, as needed) | e.g., 72 | e.g., 100% | e.g., 12 |
| ***Doctoral degree(s) currently offered, if any:*** | *# of credits* | *% at distance3* | *# of students4* |
| List here (hit “Return” in each column, as needed) | e.g., 72 | e.g., 100% | e.g., 12 |

4Indicate what percentage of each degree can be earned via distance education (e.g., online); otherwise, type “0%” when fully residential.

5Report the total number of headcount enrollment (not FTE) for each degree program during the current or most recent term.

**Mission Statement:** Paste from applicant school’s official documentation; add any brief commentary

## “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.” ➡ *PDF to upload: a list of graduates (recent 3 years) with current occupations*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Identify the year the school was officially chartered:** | e.g., 1999 |
| **Identify the year classes were first offered:** | e.g., 2000 |
| **Identify the year the first students graduated:** | e.g., 2003 |
| **Identify the number of these initial graduates:** | e.g., 3 |

## “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 10 full-time faculty.” ➡ *PDF to upload: a* *binder (or portfolio) collecting recent CVs for each full-time (equivalent) faculty*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Full-time6 faculty:** *(6-10 persons)* | | *Title (including area)* | *Graduate credentials (including areas)* | *School(s) where earned degrees were conferred* | | *Teaching load* |
| **1.** e.g., Pat Lee | | e.g., President and Professor of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., MBA in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ e.g., PhD in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., University-Name e.g., Seminary-Name | | e.g., 25% |
| **2.** e.g., Jamie Da Silva | | e.g., Academic Dean and Professor of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., MDiv e.g., DPhil [in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_] | e.g., Seminary-Name e.g., University-Name | | e.g., 50% |
| **3.** e.g., Casey X. Wang | | e.g., Library Director and Research Professor of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., MLIS e.g., ThD in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., University-Name e.g., Seminary-Name | | e.g., 25% |
| **4.** e.g., Kerry Moussa | | e.g., Professor of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., STM in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ e.g., PsyD in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., Seminary-Name e.g., University-Name | | e.g., 100% |
| **5.** e.g., Jordan Anderson-Smith | | e.g., Associate Professor of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., MSW in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ e.g., DMin [in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_] | e.g., University-Name e.g., Seminary-Name | | e.g., 50% |
| **6.** e.g., Leslie Z. Williams | | e.g., Associate Professor of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., MRel in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ e.g., EdD in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., Seminary-Name e.g., University-Name | | e.g., 25% |
| **(7.)** e.g., Avery Ibrahim | | e.g., Associate Professor of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., MS in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ e.g., DTheol in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., University-Name e.g., Seminary-Name | | e.g., 100% |
| **(8.)** e.g., Brook Garcia | | e.g., Assistant Professor of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., ThM in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ e.g., DBA in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., Seminary-Name e.g., University-Name | | e.g., 50% |
| **(9.)** e.g., Morgan Kim | | e.g., Assistant Professor of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., JD in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ e.g., STD in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., University-Name e.g., Seminary-Name | | e.g., 25% |
| **(10.)** e.g., Kendall Lopez | | e.g., Assistant Professor of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., MA in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ e.g., DMA in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | e.g., Seminary-Name e.g., University-Name | | e.g., 100% |
| ***Faculty directory URL:*** | Provide web address where all faculty are listed | | | | ***More than 10 FT faculty?*** | e.g., Yes |

6Each school determines how it calculates a full-time (FT) faculty teaching load. For instance, if this were to be defined as 5 courses annually (e.g., 3:2) and if the FT faculty member teaches all 5 courses only in the applicant school, the figure is “100%”; if another FT faculty member teaches 5 total courses per year, including (e.g.) 2 in an undergraduate program, then it is “60%” assuming the same definition of FT load.

**If fewer than 6 full-time faculty, please succinctly explain:** Type “N/A” if this does not apply

## “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” ➡ *PDF to upload: enrollment dashboard (e.g., FA21), projections (e.g., FA22, FA23), brief narrative*

**Provide 5-year enrollment data reflecting totals per term for only the degrees reported above (i.e., under I.A):**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *Recent Fall (e.g., 2020)* | *Two Falls ago (e.g., 2019)* | *Three Falls ago (e.g., 2018)* | *Four Falls ago (e.g., 2017)* | *Five Falls ago (e.g., 2016)* |
| *Student headcount* | e.g., 12 | e.g., 11 | e.g., 10 | e.g., 9 | e.g., 8 |
| *Student FTE6* | e.g., 9 | e.g., 5.5 | e.g., 5 | e.g., 3 | e.g., 2 |
| *New students* | e.g., 5 | e.g., 4 | e.g., 3 | e.g., 2 | e.g., 1 |

6Full-time equivalency is calculated by dividing the sum of credits registered in a given term, by the number of credits taken to be considered full-time (e.g., to defer US federal loan repayment). If the school does not utilize credit hour systems, append and upload 5-year trend data.

**Report percentage of current students (cf. I.A: degrees) without an accredited baccalaureate:** e.g., 20%

## “The educational program of the school consists of graduate-level studies in the broad range of the theological disciplines designed for preparation for ministry.” ➡ *PDF to upload: a copy of the most recent course catalog*

**Course catalog URL:** Provide web address for online catalog

**Formal denominational affiliation(s), if any:** List here

**Describe the program goals and curricular requirements for all degree offerings at the applicant school:**

|  |
| --- |
| Be brief yet informative (text box will not resize); if this information is *also* online, then type the URL or web address here; if this information appears *also* in the appended materials, then identify where in the PDF appendices it may be found. |

**Describe how the school supports and evaluates supervised practical experiences (e.g., practicum/internship):**

|  |
| --- |
| Be brief yet informative (text box will not resize); if this information is *also* online, then type the URL or web address here; if this information appears *also* in the appended materials, then identify where in the PDF appendices it may be found. |

**Public statement of educational effectiveness URL, if any:** Provide web address (or type “N/A”)

## “The school evidences openness to the community of theological schools as demonstrated by all of the following:” ➡ *PDF to upload:* *a copy of each of the school’s handbooks, including for faculty and for students*

#### “regular participation of faculty in activities of professional or learned societies;”

**Professional and learned societies in which the faculty regularly participate:** List here

#### “an openness to cooperative relationships with current Association member schools; and”

**Describe the ways in which the school values cooperative relationships with current Association members:**

|  |
| --- |
| Be brief yet informative (text box will not resize). |

#### “a commitment to participate in the larger community of theological education, and especially a recognition of the diversity that characterizes the community.”

**Describe the school’s engagement in theological education, particularly outside of ATS (e.g., globally):**

|  |
| --- |
| Be brief yet informative (text box will not resize). |

**Describe why the applicant school desires to participate in the ATS community at this time:**

|  |
| --- |
| Be brief yet informative (text box will not resize). |

**Describe how the school recognizes *diversity* as that which “characterizes the community” of theological education:**

|  |
| --- |
| Be brief yet informative (text box will not resize). |

## “The school conducts an educational program of quality, stability, and permanence by having…” ➡ *PDF to upload:* *a binder (or portfolio) that includes the applicant school’s current budget, two most recent audits, and any additional narrative or helpful comments pertinent to this criterion.7*

7If the school is financially embedded in a larger entity, append the audits for the larger entity; however, the current budget must reflect the revenue/expenses for *only* the applicant school (i.e., not the larger entity).

#### “adequate physical facilities;”

**Describe the nature and extent of the applicant school’s physical facilities:**

|  |
| --- |
| Be brief yet informative (text box will not resize); e.g., “The school leases a 10,000 square-foot, two-story, sustainably-designed facility built in 2005. The resource-efficient building houses eight offices, four classrooms, a library, and a student lounge, with ample and safe parking for all students and staff. The building meets all state codes and is ADA and wireless accessible.” |

#### “a library that is adequate in the following ways to support graduate degree programs: holdings, staff, access to electronic information resources, and space for collection, study, and services;”

**Provide data describing the theological library’s adequacy for supporting the school’s educational mission:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *List the library director’s academic qualifications:* | Type here | | *Number of print volumes (books/journals) in library:* | Type here |
| *Number of full-time library staff:* | | Type here | *Number of print journal subscriptions:* | Type here |
| *Number of part-time library staff (and FTE):* | | Type here | *Square footage of library facility (approximately):* | Type here |
| *Number of e-books:* | | Type here | *Percentage of shelving that is full (approximately):* | Type here |
| *Number of full-text e-journals:* | | Type here | *Seating capacity of library facility (number of students):* | Type here |
| *Number of electronic databases (e.g., ATLAS):* | | Type here | *Number of computers available for student use:* | Type here |

#### “adequate financial resources; and”

**Describe how the school’s financial resources are adequate to ensure institutional vitality and educational quality:**

|  |
| --- |
| Be brief yet informative (text box will not resize); e.g., “The school is in sound financial health, running a surplus in 3 of the past 5 years. Its educational mission is well served by a sustainable economic model relying in equal proportion on tuition revenue and donor support. The school carries no mortgage debt, partnering with a faith community that hosts it at significant cost savings, and has plans to build a modest endowment in 7-10 years.” |

#### “other institutional and educational resources required for the program.”

**List any additional location(s) that the school presently operates:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Physical address (identify hosting entity, if any)* | *Degree program(s) offered* | *% of Degree(s)* |
| Type “N/A” if this does not apply (otherwise, hit “Return” in each column to add a site) | e.g., MDiv, MA in Theology | e.g., 25% of any master’s |

## “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.” ➡ *PDF to upload:* *a binder (or portfolio) to include both a roster of board members (including occupations and board officers) and a current organizational chart with titles and names (indicating which offices are held by administrators)*

**Provide data describing the governance and administrative bodies of the applicant school:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Report the number of board members currently serving:* | e.g., 12 |
| *Report how many members are elected by your board:* | e.g., 9 |
| *Report the number of administrators serving the applicant school:* | e.g., 6 |
| *Report the number of administrators who are full-time employees:* | e.g., 3 |

**If the applicant is part of a larger entity, please clarify regarding the data reported in this table (immediately above) whether these figures reflect structures dedicated to the accreditable entity (e.g., a board committee or an advisory council that attends to the theological school’s mission)?** Type “N/A” if this does not apply

**Other accreditation:** Type “N/A” if this does not apply; otherwise, list status with web address/URL

***APPLICATION FORM CONCLUDES ON NEXT PAGE***

## ***APPLICATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS (place a checkmark for each item before signing and submitting)***

##### “I hereby certify that the applicant school has authorized me to submit, on its behalf, this application for Associate Membership with The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS).”

##### “I have read and understood the instructions for this Associate Membership application (pages 1-2, above, and linked [here](https://www.ats.edu/member-schools/membership-process)), as well as the [ATS *Bylaws* (PDF)](https://www.ats.edu/uploads/about-ats/documents/association-bylaws.pdf#pagemode=bookmarks) and the [*Procedures Related to Membership* (PDF)](http://www.ats.edu/uploads/about-ats/documents/association-procedures-related-to-membership.pdf); if approved for Associate Membership, the school would agree to be governed by the expectations established therein.”

##### “On behalf of the applicant school, I accept the terms of the Associate Membership application process, which includes the applicant school’s financial obligation to pay $5,000 with respect to the application fee (total) plus any visit-related costs incurred by ATS; furthermore, I acknowledge that any fees and costs, as invoiced by The Association of Theological Schools, are in no way refundable, regardless of application outcome.”

##### “I declare all of the information provided in support of the application—whether on this form or in any forthcoming supporting documentation—to be accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge; I understand that I must upload this completed form (1 file in DOCX format) plus all appendices (8 files in PDF format, separately collated with appropriate bookmarks) via the application submission webpage (linked [here](https://www.ats.edu/member-schools/membership-process)), with the acknowledgement that *within a few minutes* of successful submission I should receive an automated email at the address I provide and that *within fifteen days* I will be notified by ATS staff concerning the completeness of this application.”

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| SIGNED (with Title) |  | DATED |

### (a typed signature is acceptable)

***To submit your school’s application for membership, save this file and  
go to*** [***https://www.ats.edu/member-schools/membership-process***](https://www.ats.edu/member-schools/membership-process)

***Click on the “******Submit Completed Application” link  
and follow the prompts posted there***

***Be sure to upload this form  
and all appendices***

