



# Petition for Educational Experiment

for consideration by the ATS/COA Board of Commissioners

*Commission-accredited schools must petition for approval prior to implementing an innovative educational program or approach that is not addressed or not allowed in the [Standards](#). Such changes, if approved, will be treated by the Board as experiments that must be evaluated over several years to determine their effectiveness and ongoing status (with periodic reports required). In its petition, the school must demonstrate that the experiment ensures educational quality, congruence with the school's educational mission, and coherence with the values of theological education (per [Policies and Procedures](#), IV.G).*

Examples of experiments include offering any educational program not based on courses or credits (see Standard 3.10 and the Board-approved [Guidelines for Competency-Based Theological Education](#)) or offering a PhD degree where half or more of the coursework is not completed on the school's main campus (see Standard 5.15). Per [Policies and Procedures](#), IV.G.1, the Board requires schools petitioning for an experiment to specify the length of the experiment (typically three to five years), during which time the school will evaluate the results and periodically report those results as directed by the Board when it approved the experiment. In its final report, the school must either notify the Board that it is terminating the experiment (if the results are negative) or request that the experiment be changed to an ongoing exception (if the results are positive). If the latter, the Board will review the results of the experiment to determine whether to terminate it or continue it as an ongoing exception.

Given the potential complexity of this type of change, schools are encouraged to consult with their Commission staff liaison before submitting a petition for this type of substantive change. In completing this petition form, please include links to additional documentation as requested or as deemed helpful. Your Commission staff liaison will contact you if there are any questions regarding this petition.

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Please note: you are able to save and return to this form as needed. Click "Save" at the bottom of any page and enter your email address. An email will be sent to you from Jotform (via [noreply@jotform.com](mailto:noreply@jotform.com)) which contains a link to your form in progress.

**i. Name of school: \***

**ii. Contact information for person submitting this form: \***

First Name (MI)

Last Name

**iii. Title: \***

**iv. Email: \***

A copy of your form will be sent to this address

**v. Indicate the nature of this experiment: \***

Click to select from menu

Once selected, complete the items on the following pages to describe this experiment

## Implementing a PhD program where at least half of the coursework is not delivered on campus

(cf. Standard 5.15)

**1. What is the name of the PhD program? \***

(e.g., "Doctor of Theology in Social Ethics," "Doctor of Philosophy (Practical Theology)," etc.)

**2. Is this PhD program a new degree? \***

SELECT ONE

**3. If approved, when would this experiment begin and for how many years is the school requesting this experiment be conducted before a final decision on its ongoing status is made by the Board?**

**3a. Start date for this to begin: \***

Indicate both year and term

**3b. Number of years for the experiment: \***

(NB: typically three to five years)

**4. How will this program be delivered? (check all that apply) \***

- a. Half or more of the coursework will be delivered synchronously online
- b. Half or more of the coursework will be delivered at an approved additional location\*
- c. Half or more of the coursework will be delivered through independent studies

Other

**\*If indicating 4b. (above), provide the complete address for that location:**

Street Address

Street Address Line 2

City

State / Province

Postal / Zip Code

Country

**5. Describe the rationale for this experiment: \***

**6. Describe the resources and support the school has to implement this experiment:**

**6a. If online, describe the school's technological resources and support: \***

Include name of online products and training provided (cf. Prompt 4a, above)

**6b. If at additional location, describe the adequacy of that facility for a PhD: \***

**6c. If through independent studies, describe the nature and extent of those studies: \***

**6d. If any additional costs are involved (e.g., for faculty, technology, library, etc.), please describe those costs here: \***

**7. How will this experiment be evaluated, especially in terms of documenting that students have achieved the student learning outcomes for this degree? \***

Include link(s) to appropriate document(s) (e.g., educational evaluation plan)

## **Implementing one or more competency-based theological education (CBTE) programs via direct assessment**

Per the Board-approved Guidelines for Competency-Based Theological Education, CBTE programs utilizing courses and/or credits should use the recommended petition or notification forms on the ATS Petitions, Notifications, and Guidelines webpage. NOTE: Any Title IV school approved to offer CBTE programs not based on courses and/or credits must also seek and receive approval from the USDE if it desires Title IV eligibility for those students.

**1. Describe the rationale for the CBTE program, including what needs it will meet, how it aligns with the school's mission, and a succinct description of the program (see Standard 1.1): \***

**2. Describe the program's clearly articulated competencies and how those align with the expectations of the applicable degree program standards. Include competency definitions and behavioral-based performance indicators that potential graduates must demonstrate to earn the desired credential. Describe structured learning activities designed, reviewed, and approved by faculty that utilize new learning to help students move from their current levels of performance to achieve intended outcomes. Describe the learning activities associated with each competency, such as seminars, synchronous or asynchronous online sessions, reading and writing assignments, exams, ministry activities, study groups, mentoring sessions, church-based activities, etc. (see Standards 3, 4, and 5): \***

If needed, provide link(s) to where these issues are addressed more fully

**3. Summarize how the competencies listed above were developed, including the involvement of faculty and other professionals (e.g., church leaders), with some indication that graduates of the program will find appropriate placements (see Standards 7.10-11 and 8.8): \***

**4. Summarize here and provide a link to a coherent plan for evaluating the program's competencies, including direct and indirect measures and especially performance-based assessment tools, as well as clear rubrics and benchmarks, that are aligned with criteria named in expected outcomes requiring students to demonstrate a pre-determined level of achievement (mastery) of all competencies before any degree is awarded (see Standards 2.5-6 and the appropriate degree program standards): \***

**5. Describe the involvement of qualified faculty engaged in the design, delivering, and oversight of program content and in the evaluation of how and how well the competencies are achieved, as well as other persons or agencies involved in student evaluations. The petition must list faculty and others involved, including their roles, specific activities, and relevant qualifications (see Standard 8):**

Provide link to all faculty in the program, their roles, and qualifications

**6. Describe how the program will require regular and substantive interaction between qualified faculty and students, as well as among a viable student community of learning, since CBTE is not a form of correspondence education (not allowed under ATS Commission Standards); see Standard 3.9 for requirements for “regular and substantive interaction,” and the related Self-study Ideas for examples: \***

(per Standard 3.9; NB: CBTE cannot be a form of correspondence education, which is prohibited under Policies and Procedures IV.F)

**7. Clarify how, where, and when the program will be delivered, giving attention to issues of location (e.g., onsite, offsite, online), building a community of learning, and of degree length (how long it will typically take to complete). If the program is to be offered in other countries and/or other languages, describe the school's resources and capacities to support students in those other countries and/or other languages (see Standard 1.4): \***

**8. Describe how the program gives due attention to formation, including—as appropriate to the degree—intellectual, human, spiritual, and vocational formation, as well as how any required supervised ministry experiences will be provided and evaluated. Describe both a) how students in the program will be mentored, and b) the difference between the roles of mentor and faculty, the training, development, and ongoing evaluation of mentors to ensure consistency in mentoring and achievement of outcomes (see Standard 3.1 and the appropriate degree program standards): \***

**9. Describe the support services and resources that will be available to students, including library services and resources, technology services and resources, and student services and resources, and how those will be delivered, as well as the qualifications of those delivering those resources and services (see Standards 6.2, 7.5, and 10.9): \***

**10. Describe how the CBTE program meets graduate-level workload expectations, i.e., that the work required and the outcomes achieved are comparable to current generally accepted standards of graduate education, e.g., the normal expectations and calculations used for credit hours. A CBTE program must demonstrate that it has appropriate rigor and quality consistent with the norms of graduate theological education and with the ATS Commission Standards of Accreditation (see Standard 3.2): \***

**11. If approved, when would this experiment begin and for how many years is the school requesting this experiment be conducted before a final decision on its ongoing status is made by the Board?**

**11a. Start date for this to begin: \***

Indicate both year and term

**11b. Number of years for the experiment: \***

(NB: typically three to five years)

## Implementing some other kind of experiment

(cf. Policies and Procedures, IV.G)

**1. What is the nature of the experiment? \***

**2. What Commission Standards are affected by this experiment? \***

**3. What is the rationale and planning process for this experiment? \***

**4. What resources does the school have (or need) to implement this experiment? \***

**5. How will this experiment be evaluated? \***

**6. If approved, when would this experiment begin and for how many years is the school requesting this experiment be conducted before a final decision on its ongoing status is made by the Board?**

**6a. Start date for this to begin: \***

Indicate both year and term

**6b. Number of years for the experiment: \***

(NB: typically three to five years)

When finished, please submit this petition to the ATS Accrediting Records Coordinator by hitting the "submit" button below. You can expect an automated confirmation email within a few minutes. There is no fee for this (or any) Commission petition. Please do not send any paper copies or any emailed attachments; submit only this completed, online form (including any links to additional

information requested).

NOTE: Petitions for experiment are decided by the Board of Commissioners only at their semi-annual meetings usually in February and June (see submission deadlines on [ATS petitions and notifications webpage](#)).

**ATS Commission Staff Liaison Email \***

A copy of your form will be sent to this address

**CEO Email**

A copy of your form will be sent to this address

**CAO Email**

A copy of your form will be sent to this address

**ALO Email**

A copy of your form will be sent to this address

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