

Upcoming changes for ATS Student Questionnaires

BY CHRISTOPHER M. THE

The ATS Student Questionnaires (Qs) remain a valuable resource for gaining vital insight into the student experience. Now is a great time to invest in their ongoing development. Starting in the next academic year (2025–26), the Qs will transition back to a pay-to-use feature for the ATS membership. This change coincides with a more profound transformation on the horizon as ATS embarks on a multi-year redevelopment of its Student Data Services, encompassing both the Qs and related resources.

Developments since 2020

Paid access to the Entering Student Questionnaire (ESQ) and Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ) was subsidized for all member schools following the 2019–20 launch of the Organizational and Educational Models in Theological Education (OEM) initiative. Originally intended to last for three years, this membership-wide subsidy was subsequently extended through the end of this academic year (2024–25). Several programmatic improvements were made during that time:

- Schools can now customize up to 20 additional questions for any Qs survey, enhancing data collection flexibility.



- Online platform for the Qs now supports a mobile-responsive design, making it easy for students and alums to respond on smartphones and tablets.
- Security measures were tightened to protect access to custom question banks, student responses under review, and all resulting data exports and reports.
- Multilingual versions of the Qs were developed in Spanish, Korean, Chinese Simplified, and Chinese Traditional to enfranchise broader student participation across diverse populations.

Looking back, looking forward

The OEM initiative's impact on the Qs has been substantial, providing a half decade of material support to nearly 180 participating institutions that use the ESQ or GSQ. With support from both OEM and the Pathways for Tomorrow Coordination Program, nearly 130 member

schools used the [Alumni/ae Questionnaire \(AQ\)](#) at no cost, contributing to the [2022–2023 Alum/Mapping the Workforce](#) study.

With the sunset of OEM, now is the time for institutions to evaluate their budget allocations for student data resources to ensure that comparable and actionable student data are available next year. For member schools that have not used the ESQ or GSQ, the opportunity to use them at no cost is running out. ATS staff remain available to guide institutions in leveraging the Qs for:

- benchmarking educational effectiveness,
- optimizing student services,
- tracking vocational trajectories, and
- identifying emerging constituent needs

Readying for redevelopment

[ATS Student Data Services](#) has initiated the *preparatory phase* of a comprehensive Qs redevelopment project, working with several consultants and research experts on appraising the current state of the Association’s student data-related services and programming. The project seeks to improve the quality and relevance of student information and to enhance institutional resources for data analysis and decision-making. Key aspects of this project phase include:



- establishing a core set of questionnaire prompts that are durable, representative, accessible, relevant, and responsive,

- conducting technical assessments and metrics analyses to define core prompts, gathering member input, and researching assessment tools, and

- addressing the evolving needs of ATS member schools related to student formation

The Association recognizes the value of student data and has committed notable resources for their improvement and enhancement. By midyear 2026, focus will shift to the *implementation phase*, which will result in a completely redeveloped set of Qs planned for fall of 2027.

Investing in insights

With pricing adjustments and programmatic redevelopment on the horizon, maintaining perspective is important. Since 2001, more than 250 member schools have participated in the AQ (introduced in 2010), GSQ, or ESQ—good for 80 percent of the cumulative membership during that span.

Join us at the [2025 Student Personnel Administrators Conference](#) (March 11–13 in Newport Beach, CA) and engage your ATS colleagues, including members of the [Student Data and Resources Advisory Committee](#) who are hosting a roundtable discussion about Qs redevelopment.



Each participating member school has been instrumental in making the Qs what they are today. Whether submitting a few responses or many, every participating school has contributed substantively to the only robust, shared knowledge base of student information that cuts across the binational Association.

Watch for announcements in the [Engage ATS Student Questionnaires](#) community about virtual feedback

opportunities. We invite you to send any questions, comments, or ideas to Qmail@ats.edu. Your input helps shape the Association's collective efforts to promote meaningful research, practical insights, and robust leadership in theological education.



Christopher M. The is Director of Student Research and Initiative Management at The Association of Theological Schools in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.