

# PROCEDURES

*Related to Membership  
in The Association of Theological Schools*



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

- I.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.
- I.B. The school has operated long enough, typically three or more years, for at least one group of students to have fulfilled all degree requirements and to have graduated with the Master of Divinity degree or the first theological degree offered by the school.
- I.C. The school has an adequate number of properly qualified professors working full time at postbaccalaureate theological education. Normally, this adequacy will be fulfilled by the equivalent of six to ten full-time faculty.
- I.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.
- I.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.
- I.F. The school demonstrates openness to the community of theological schools through all of the following:
  - I.F.1. regular participation of faculty in activities of professional or learned societies;
  - I.F.2. an openness to cooperative relationships with current Association member schools; and
  - I.F.3. a commitment to participate in the larger community of theological education, affirming the diversity that characterizes the community.
- I.G. The school conducts an educational program of quality, stability, and permanence by having:
  - I.G.1. adequate physical facilities;
  - I.G.2. 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;

- I.G.3. adequate financial resources; and
- I.G.4. other institutional and educational resources required for the program.
- I.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

- II.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.
- II.B. Attaining Associate Membership
- II.B.1. 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”).
- II.B.2. If the ATS Commission staff determines, on the basis of the 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.
- II.B.3. Prior to the staff visit, the school shall provide five letters of support from Association member institutions.
- II.B.4. The Board will review the school’s application, the ATS Commission staff visit report, and letters of support from Association member institutions. The Board may take one of several actions:
- II.B.4.a. propose the school for Associate Membership to the Members of the Association;
- II.B.4.b. delay action for clearly stated reasons, permitting the school to correct any deficiencies and resubmit its application; or
- II.B.4.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.)
- II.C. Maintaining Associate Membership
- II.C.1. The institution shall continue to meet the Membership Eligibility Criteria.
- II.C.2. The institution shall complete the Commission’s Annual Report Forms.

- II.C.3. The institution shall pay annual dues as prescribed by the Association.
- II.C.4. At the end of each five-year term of Associate Membership, if the institution has not been granted accreditation by the Board of Commissioners, it shall either petition the ATS Board for one additional five-year term of Associate Membership (following the *Guidelines for Renewing Associate Membership*) or notify the ATS Board that it is voluntarily withdrawing.
- II.D. Withdrawal from membership: A school may, on its own initiative, withdraw as an Associate Member by written notice to the Board.

### III. Full Membership

III.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.

III.B. Maintaining Full Membership

III.B.1. The institution shall continue to meet the Membership Eligibility Criteria and to be accredited by the Commission.

III.B.2. The institution shall complete the Commission's Annual Report Forms.

III.B.3. The institution shall pay annual dues as prescribed by the Association.

III.C. Withdrawal from membership

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

## IV. Policy on Disclosure and Confidentiality

### IV.A. Members

Each Member institution shall publish its formal status with the Association: Associate or Full. Associate Members shall disclose that they are not accredited by the Commission but are seeking accreditation. Full Members shall disclose their complete accredited status according to Commission *Policies and Procedures*. References to membership status shall comply with the designations on the institution's webpage listed on the ATS website.

### IV.B. The Association

IV.B.1. The Association's website will include Associate Member schools on its Member Schools List. Each Associate Member School will have its own webpage that provides contact, enrollment/faculty, and accreditation information.

IV.B.2. Each academic year, institutions removed or withdrawing from Associate or Full Membership are identified in Annual Data Table 1.1-B.