

X. Sharing Commission Data Collected from Member Schools

- X.A. **Commission Policy on Collecting and Sharing Commission Data:** The primary purpose of the Commission is “to contribute to the enhancement and improvement of theological education through the accreditation of schools that are members...” (*Commission Bylaws*, Section 1.2). A secondary purpose is “to collect data from all members... for use in accrediting and to provide the data resources supporting applied research undertaken by ATS” (*ibid.*). On behalf of the Commission, the Board maintains a comprehensive institutional database on graduate theological schools in North America that are members. These data are provided by member schools on the ATS Annual Report Forms as a condition of membership. The database contains information related to a range of educational and accrediting issues and provides data central to the administrative and programmatic work of the Association. It also serves as a valuable resource for researchers and organizations that share an interest in theological education, for church and denominational bodies, for representatives of the media, and for the public. The Board shares all Commission data in the institutional database with the Association for its use. It shares with others per specific Board procedures.
- X.A.1 **Board Procedure on Principles and Purposes for Sharing Commission Data:** On behalf of the Commission, the Board collects, protects, and shares data based on the principles and purposes described here. A key principle is protecting the confidentiality of sensitive data (e.g., salaries of ATS member school employees and non-public data collected by the Commission (see X.A.2)). The Board delegates ATS staff to provide data to member schools and to others for these purposes: (a) to improve theological education; (b) to promote appropriate openness and transparency, (c) to cultivate more substantive and diverse conversations among member schools, their constituencies, researchers, and the broader public; and (d) to address key issues in theological education. All requests for sharing Commission data must be for one of these purposes.
- X.A.2 **Board Procedure on Sharing Commission Data Publicly:** The Board considers the following information in the Commission database to be public: (a) data published in the ATS Annual Data Tables on the ATS website, and (b) data published in the ATS membership directory on the ATS website. The only public data in the ATS Annual Data Tables that are identified by individual schools are found in Annual Data Table 1.2 “Significant Institutional Characteristics of Each Member School” and in Annual Data Table 2.15 “Head Count and Full-Time Equivalent Enrollments by Degree Category in All Member Schools.” Public data in the ATS membership directory that are identified by individual schools include personal contact information, selected statistics, and accreditation status (see VII.A.2).
- X.A.3 **Board Procedure on Sharing Commission Data in Other Ways:** The Board delegates ATS staff to provide data on requests from member schools or from other parties, contingent on adequate ATS financial and human resources. The Board-approved *Principles and Procedures for Sharing Commission Data* on the Research and Data webpage on the ATS website has a list of what data are shared with what constituencies, under what conditions, and at what cost, if any.