

<b>Name:</b> Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools	<b>Meeting Date:</b> 06/23/2016	<b>Response Submit Date:</b> 05/31/2016	<b>Status:</b> Final Review	<b>Type:</b> Renewal Petition
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## U.S. Department of Education

Staff Report

to the

Senior Department Official

on

Recognition Compliance Issues

### Recommendation Page

1. **Agency:** Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools
2. **Action Item:** Renewal Petition
3. **Current Scope of Recognition:** "The accreditation of theological schools and seminaries, as well as schools or programs that are parts of colleges or universities, in the United States, offering post baccalaureate degrees in professional and academic theological education, including delivery via distance education
4. **Requested Scope of Recognition:** Same as Above
5. **Date of Advisory Committee Meeting:** June 23, 2016
6. **Staff Recommendation:** Renew the agency's recognition for a period of five years.
7. **Issues or Problems:** None

### Executive Summary

#### **Part I: General Information About The Agency**

The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS or Association) began as a conference of theological schools in 1918 and, in 1936, became an association that adopted standards for judging theological educational quality. The ATS Commission on Accrediting (Commission) had in the past conducted its accrediting activities on behalf of the ATS. However, in June 2004 a re-incorporation plan split the Association into two entities, namely the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada and the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools. The result was a clear and distinct separation of the accrediting operation from the primary association ensuring that the accrediting body and its operation remain separate and independent from the ATS.

#### **Recognition History**

The U.S. Commissioner of Education first granted recognition to the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (Commission) as a nationally recognized institutional accrediting agency in 1952.

At its June 2004 meeting, the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) recommended, and the Secretary concurred, that the agency be granted continued recognition for a period of five years and that its scope of recognition be expanded to include its evaluation of education delivery by distance education methodology. In June 2011 the NACIQI reviewed the agency's petition for renewal of recognition. The NACIQI and staff recommended, and the Senior Department Official concurred, that the agency's recognition be continued for 12 months, and that the agency submit a compliance report that demonstrates the agency's compliance with the issues identified in the staff report. The agency's compliance report was reviewed and accepted at the NACIQI June 2013 meeting and the recommendation to the Senior Department Official was to Revise the agency's scope of recognition to remove pre-accreditation and renew the agency's recognition for a period of three years. The COA's petition for continued recognition is the subject of this report. The Department did not receive any written third-party comments or complaints regarding this agency.

## **Part II: Summary Of Findings**

The agency meets the requirements of the Secretary's Criteria for Recognition.

## **Part III: Third Party Comments**

The Department did not receive any written third-party comments regarding this agency.