

Provisional admission when the baccalaureate degree is incomplete or insufficient

1. Bachelor's Degree Equivalency -
 - a. An applicant for admission may be considered to have the educational equivalent of a baccalaureate degree if one of the following is demonstrated:
 - i. The applicant holds a bachelor's degree from an unaccredited and/or unrecognized college or university where it can be demonstrated that actual courses were taken and academic credit was awarded. Each institution's curriculum will be subject to the admission's committee evaluation.
 - ii. The applicant has accumulated 120 semester hours or more in one or more accredited and/or recognized undergraduate or graduate programs, provided that at least one-third of the hours accumulated are at or above the junior-year level (of a four-year program).
 - iii. The applicant holds one associate's degree (sixty plus hours) from an accredited and/or recognized program along with at least forty additional semester hours at or above the junior-year level (of a four-year program) in one or more undergraduate or graduate programs where it can be demonstrated that actual courses were taken and academic credit was awarded.
 - b. Applicants in this category will be considered for provisional admission only. Provisional admission will be re-assessed after 9 hours. If the applicant has a minimum of a 3.0 GPA, the student will be granted admission.
 - c. Applicants for non-degree admission must also meet other admission requirements.
2. "The Fifteen Percent Rule"
 - a. The accrediting standards of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) give member schools discretion to admit as many as fifteen percent of candidates into a professional master's degree program (i.e., MDiv or MACM) who do not possess a bachelor's degree or its educational equivalent provided that the school can demonstrate by some objective means that such persons possess the knowledge, academic skills, and ability generally associated with persons who hold the baccalaureate degree.
 - b. In addition to factors such as professional experience, technical school experience, military service, continuing education units, church or ministry service, and/or any prior academic record, the Committee will require an admissions interview and may require additional evidence to support the applicant's assertion that he or she is capable of producing graduate-level work. Indicate in writing the circumstances (age, family, finances, etc.) that make it unrealistic for him to obtain a bachelor's degree prior to enrollment.
 - c. Applicants in this category will be considered for provisional admission only. Provisional admission will be re-assessed after 9 hours. If the applicant has a minimum of a 3.0 GPA, the student will be granted admission.
 - d. Applicants for non-degree admission must also meet other admission requirements.

Our accrediting agency (Association of Theological Schools, Commission on Accrediting, Degree Program Standards) requires applicants to have "a baccalaureate degree from an institution of higher education accredited by a US agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation... or the demonstrated educational equivalent of an accredited or approved North American baccalaureate degree." They provide an exception to allow up to 15% of the MDiv, MACM or MAGS degree to be admitted "without possession of the baccalaureate degree or its educational equivalent."

Also, ATS allows an alternative method to allow certain non-accredited schools like the Baxter Institute to receive special certification from an ATS partner institution (AETH, Spanish acronym for the Association of Hispanic Theological Education). Schools that go through their certification process can be recognized/allowed by ATS without taking up the 15% rule. It's nice to see ATS recognizing the expanding market for theological education in Latin America and providing a way for their members to pursue it. But that's assuming the folks at Baxter want to seek that certification. We haven't had those conversations yet.

Here's an interesting tidbit I dug up while I was verifying the degree program standards for ATS. While the 15% rule applies to both the MDiv and "Basic Programs Oriented Toward Ministerial Leadership" which would include both our MACM and MAGS, that same rule does not apply for "Basic Programs Oriented Toward General Theological Studies." That includes our academic MA but it would also include the fully online, 36-hour Master of Theological Studies we're talking about. Here's the exception language for that degree category: "Educational equivalency for a baccalaureate degree shall be determined by the institution. The institution shall demonstrate that its means for determining equivalency require formal postsecondary education consisting of general and specialized studies comparable to the baccalaureate degree." That reads to me like they're more willing to allow un-accredited degrees. They're not allowing informal education like 20 years of church experience - they require some sort of formal postsecondary education for all of their degrees - but that could open some doors for us for a school like Baxter Institute.

Equivalent to baccalaureate degree or a "feeder" program into a degree completion option:

- IBICA: *Instituto Bíblico de las Iglesias de Cristo en Argentina*: <https://www.ibica.org/english-info.html>. This forwarded email is Joel Bank's periodic report.
- *Instituto Latinoamericano de estudios bíblicos*, Toluca, Mexico, associated with Sunset: <http://ilebtoluca.wixsite.com/ileb>
- *Escuela quiteña de estudios bíblicos*: <http://eqeb.org/eng/>
- *Baxter Institute*: <http://www.baxterinstitute.org/>. Steven Teel.
- *Texas International Bible Institute*: <http://ibitibi.org/en/start-home-page>, also see: <https://uccabilene.org/ministries/texas-international-bible-institute/>. This is directed by Steven Austin and is based at University Church of Christ here in town.

Additionally, the Association for Hispanic Theological Education (AETH: *Asociacion para la Educacion Teologica Hispana*).

- They are now working in cooperation with ATS.
- They accredit Bible institutes and thus those students can be pipelined into the Seminaries sans the 15% rule.
- The director of AETH is Dr. Fernando Cascante. They just hired a person who begins in July to coordinate the accreditation process: Dr. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier was formally dean of Esperanza Colleges (PA).

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