# **Learning about The United Church of Canada Theological Schools**

## Atlantic School of Theology

### Recruiter or Admission contact person

Rev. Dr. Susan MacAlpine-Gillis, smacalpinegillis@astheology.ns.ca

### Open houses or events people can attend in the coming year (virtually or in-person)

Prospective students are invited to tour our campus at any time by contacting Susan, and open houses and other events are listed on [our website](http://www.astheology.ns.ca/home/welcome.html).

### How does the coming school year look different from usual?

This fall all classes are being offered online, many with both synchronous and asynchronous aspects. A decision about the winter term will be made later this fall.

### What programs do you offer?

Atlantic School of Theology offers two versions of the Master of Divinity: the five-year summer distance program that integrates the Supervised Ministry Education requirements for ordination into the program and the on-campus program that can be completed in three years of full-time study. Students can enroll in the Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies (GCTS), which is 10 credits and mirrors the first year of the MDiv. Courses done for the GCTS can be transferred into the MDiv. AST also offers a Master of Arts in Theology and Religion as well as three diploma programs that do not require an undergraduate degree. The diploma programs are in theological studies, youth ministry, and the New Evangelization, which is primarily designed for the Roman Catholic community.

### Can people study by distance?

Yes. Our MA and GCTS can both be done completely online. Our MDiv can be done partially online. Every year we offer both hybrid and online courses for students.

### What financial support does your school offer students?

All candidates for ministry in The United Church of Canada receive tuition bursaries from Pine Hill Divinity Hall that cover all 30 credits of the MDiv. Pine Hill also offers support for those who have had a successful Promise interview, as well as lay bursaries. AST also offers scholarships and bursaries. You can contact Brenda Munro for more information about support from Pine Hill: bmunro@astheology.ns.ca

### Can people take Centre for Christian Studies or Designated Lay Ministry externals with you?

Yes. We also have students who are completing required courses for Testamur as well as letter of permission students from other accredited theological schools.

### What is your approach to equipping people preparing for ministry leadership?

Our Academic dean, the Rev. Dr. Rob Fennell, writes this on our website, “Atlantic School of Theology is a small university but a mighty place to learn, grow, discover, and become. As a learning community of students, scholars, and staff, we are on a journey together to discover our best selves, to develop our skills and knowledge, to deepen our sense of purpose and faith, and to be drawn into greater service to the world around us.”

At AST we work in an ecumenical setting that integrates academic and pastoral learning. Our students spend time in supervised field education and seminars where they can reflect on the practice of ministry, and in their final year our students engage in a substantive piece of qualitative research on a topic of interest to them and the wider church.

### Do you have an affiliation with an undergraduate school?

No.

### What makes your school unique?

Atlantic School of Theology is an ecumenical school of theology and Christian ministry founded in 1971 by institutions of the three founding parties: the Divinity Faculty of the University of King’s College (Anglican Church of Canada), Holy Heart Theological Seminary (The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Halifax), and Pine Hill Divinity Hall (The United Church of Canada). It is specially characterized as an ecumenical, tri-denominational theological school with an ecumenical board of governors, senate, faculty, student body, and curriculum. The school welcomes students from other denominations and faith traditions.

### Anything else people should know?

Leaders come in many forms. Atlantic School of Theology helps develop postgraduate students for ministry as well as for meeting the theological and ethical challenges of today's world.

At AST, students can explore new avenues for theological education, such as interfaith dialogue, which is becoming a major part of the societal context in which ministry and community leadership must now exercise their calling.

Our peaceful grounds are highly conducive to study. AST is in the heart of Halifax’s grand South End—the beautiful waterfront of the Northwest Arm is in our backyard, with the woodland Point Pleasant Park nearby.

AST is shaped by a tradition of cooperation and respect, going back over 40 years, to create an open and welcoming environment.

AST serves Christ’s mission by shaping effective and faithful ordained and lay leaders and understanding among communities of faith.