

**RELATIONAL  
GUIDE**



**PROSPECTIVE  
LGBTQ+  
SEMINARIANS**

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designed and edited by  
Q Christian Fellowship



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# FOREWORD

by Lauren Moser, M.Div/MBA

Pursuing a graduate education in any field is not for the faint of heart. It will stretch and challenge you emotionally, psychologically, and, on occasion, even physically. Seminary, however, is unique in that it will also challenge you spiritually and morally. Your closest-held beliefs and presuppositions about the world are held up to the sun and examined for the most minute flaws. The diamond you thought was perfect may actually be a Walmart knock-off.

It is during this time of study and self-reflection that LGBTQ+ individuals can face additional, and sometimes insurmountable, challenges in non-affirming academic environments. While the author of this guide was (thankfully) able to explore his faith in an affirming environment, I personally struggled in a conservative, non-affirming Seminary. The faculty and staff were undoubtedly wonderful people with incredible insight and a genuine love for Scripture. I made great friends, grew as a person, and ultimately became much more fluent in the art of theology. I still cherish and think fondly of my time in Seminary.

However, it was in the moments where professors could condemn racism in one breath and condone homophobic policies in the next that made Seminary that much more difficult for me. It was the constant fear that if anyone knew I was queer, I would be in jeopardy of losing the scholarship that made it financially possible for me to finish my degree. It was the implicit understanding that the majority of my peers would say that being LGBTQ+ is a sin that made things harder in an already challenging program.

While I would never dissuade someone from attending a non-affirming seminary or divinity school, I would ask they count the cost before signing the bottom line of their student handbook. I believe there are places for brave, passionate individuals to be the change they want to see in their universities. I also believe those same individuals can easily become a casualty of friendly fire if they are not careful. Only you can determine which academic environment will be the healthiest for you. Discernment is key, and I hope this guide will help give you clarity and peace as you pursue the noble work of spiritual and academic development. Through it all, know that God is with you, She is for you, and They will sustain you.



# INTRODUCTION

## by Grayson Hester

Applying for and pursuing a seminary or divinity education can be a daunting process. This process is often more difficult for LGBTQ+ students as they navigate the educational policies around LGBTQ+ identities and theology at their prospective universities. This guide serves as a resource for LGBTQ+ Christians considering an advanced education in theology or biblical studies, and an overview of how students can discern which educational environment is right for them.

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# PERSONAL STORY

Before I share a little bit about my story, I want to locate myself and to acknowledge the insufficiency of my experience in addressing the challenges faced by my other siblings in the LGBTQ+ community. I am an able-bodied, thin, neurotypical, HIV-negative, cisgender, allosexual, middle-class, educated, English-speaking U.S. citizen, and a white, gay male. My process for choosing a place of religious higher education hinged primarily upon the one marginalized identity I embody, that is, my gay sexuality. All my other embodied identities are privileged and therefore not factors I have to consider as closely for my own survival and well-being. For those of my LGBTQ+ family members who endure oppression in a variety of ways and from myriad sources, I would encourage you to take my words with a grain of salt and as an impetus to seek advice from other people who better understand your specific experiences and needs.

That said, I personally chose not to consider any seminary in which my identity as a gay Christian would pose a problem. None of the schools I considered are non-affirming. Recognizing that seminary is a season of intense and beautiful growth and inquiry, I realized that conducting the same LGBTQ+ apologetics conversation over and over again would benefit very few people, and certainly not me. While I support and champion my LGBTQ+ siblings who feel called to more conservative, non-affirming seminaries, I chose to limit my search. At the same time, however, I do feel called to the work of helping moderate institutions live into their ideological convictions, putting legs to their desire for affirmation. This typifies, in part, my role at my current school, Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology.

When I started my seminary search, McAfee was not a top priority for me. I initially expressed interest in more well-known and progressive schools like Vanderbilt, Wake Forest, and Iliff School of Theology. But, after visiting each institution (side note: please visit any school you might like to apply to), McAfee just felt right — the most like home. In an effort to integrate mind and body, I hold in high regard the ability of our intuition to lead us on the right path. It goes by many names -- intuition, instinct, gut feeling, Spirit -- but lives within our whole bodies. It is not simply a project of rationality, and it affirms our spirits and our sexualities as reliable guides. Which seminary you attend, ultimately, is a decision you and your spirit have to make, by means beyond any metric or “how-to” guide’s attempts to make formulaic the process. (A pretty scholarship from McAfee also helped move my spirit in their direction. No shame in following the funds, y’all.)

I had felt a nudge towards seminary initially in my junior year of college. But upon graduating the next year, I had no idea if it was still the right choice. So, I took a gap year and decided, between long nights

of existential angst and tears and too many shots of gin, that, yes, seminary was the next step for my life. My way of concretizing this decision was simply to begin applying. If you know for sure that The Jesus Seminary of Divine Learning and Theological Hijinks is your educational soulmate, then, by all means, just apply there. But, if you're like me in needing to consider all the options and seek all the advice before making a decision, or if you're like me in not knowing who you are or what you really want, then applying to a variety of schools can serve as a helpful winnowing process. My schools were located in Atlanta, Nashville, Richmond, Denver, and Winston-Salem. I got to experience different cities and seriously consider moving to these places. But I landed on McAfee, truthfully, because Atlanta seemed like the most attractive option. (Almost two years in, and I can say yes, Atlanta is sexy as hell.) The city the seminary is in matters greatly, because you need to be happy on the four days of the week you're not within the school's four walls. You also need to consider the LGBTQ culture of the city, the politics, the resources available and the likelihood of finding community, friends, or romantic partners. Moving to a very heteronormative and/or conservative city, even if the seminary is progressive, could prove burdensome.

For me, applying to five schools, visiting all those schools, and investing myself in the process helped make my final decision credible. I knew I was not making the choice lightly or flippantly. I could envision myself living (and thriving!) in Atlanta and at McAfee; I felt a call towards both; and doors opened to make moving and studying there a practical possibility. I spoke with alumni, I sought advice from friends, and I considered what I valued. I hiked and prayed. I blasted My Chemical Romance to drown out the anxiety. I ate ice cream. I answered "WHaT's yOur NExT steP?" and "WHaT dO yOu WAnT To dO wltH YouR LiFE?" more times than I would care to count. (It was at least 162.) But it was all a necessary part of my process.

Your process will be your own. What's important is that you do what you need to do to make this decision in a way right for you. It's your experience and your journey, and no one else's. To paraphrase black theologian and mystic Howard Thurman, we need more people in this world who do things that make them come alive. Where do you come alive? And who else could come alive because of you? These are two great questions by which you can begin your process. They haven't steered me wrong yet.

Nor has gin.



# GUIDE INTRODUCTION

## Traditional —> Welcoming —> Affirming

Before going any further, it'd be helpful to define the language we're using in this guide. One thing you need to know about higher education is that language matters a crapton. And, yes, "crapton" is a highly technical and academic term, so don't @ me. To channel this linguistic emphasis, and to help with clarity in this guide, I'm going to define, in my own way, the following words:

### TRADITIONAL SEMINARY

This is a school that holds traditionalist views on LGBTQ+ identity, sexuality, eligibility for ministry, and theology. While there might be individual faculty/staff members and students who are quietly affirming, the school, in its affiliations, its culture, and/or its policies either implicitly or explicitly does not affirm and might penalize LGBTQ+ students and their allies. They likely uphold the "clobber" passages (Leviticus, Romans, 1 Timothy, 1 Corinthians, Sodom and Gomorrah, the Creation narratives, etc.) as normative and prescriptive and would not support conversations exploring trans\* identity, expansive gender and sexuality, sex positivity, or other topics related to LGBTQ+ life. Resources for LGBTQ+ community and well-being would be hidden or nonexistent, and worship would likely feature exclusively male pronouns for God. Conversion therapy might be viewed as helpful and good. The curriculum would not feature LGBTQ+ voices in a supportive way, and LGBTQ+ students would likely spend a large amount of energy advocating for their rights and their existences. Intersectionality would likely not be considered, and it is probable that conversations surrounding equity, diversity, inclusion, race, class, etc. would center primarily the opinions and priorities of cis hetero (cishet) white people (or cishet people of color (POC) in more POC-centric traditional seminaries).

Seminaries in this category would include any Southern Baptist seminary — Southeastern, Southern, Golden Gate, New Orleans, etc. — Azusa Pacific, Liberty, Bethel, IHOP, Moody Bible Institute, BIOLA, Dallas Theological Seminary, and others.

### WELCOMING SEMINARY

This is a school which would not bar openly LGBTQ+ students from attending and likely wouldn't take any official stance on LGBTQ+ identity. Professors and students would vary in their stances on LGBTQ+ affirmation. Queer theology might appear occasionally in academic life or in worship, but would still

occupy a marginal status in the overall life of the community. The “LGBT conversation” might still be a relevant topic, individually, institutionally, or culturally, and resources might be hard to find. LGBTQ+ students would be safe from expulsion at these places, but would potentially still find some aspects of their identities problematized. Conversations about equity, inclusion, and diversity, including expansive definitions of gender and sexuality, trans\* inclusion, non-monogamy, and sex positivity could occur, but might not occupy a central position of institutional concern. Conversion therapy would not be advocated for. School literature likely would not include explicit affirmation of LGBTQ+ people or use of LGBTQ+ iconography. These schools might either rest comfortably in their middle position or might legitimately want to become more affirming. There’s a spectrum within the category of “welcoming” that must be kept in mind.



Seminaries in this category would include McAfee School of Theology, Gardner-Webb Divinity School, Duke Divinity School, Ashbury, Central Baptist, Interdenominational Theological Center, Truett Theological Seminary, Campbell University Divinity School, Candler School of Theology, Princeton Theological Seminary, Northern Seminary.

**AFFIRMING SEMINARY**

This is a school that puts out front its commitment to affirming and including LGBTQ+ students. It likely contains an LGBTQ+ student group, features queer theology in its curriculum and worship, displays LGBTQ+ iconography on campus and in its literature, and has taken political, cultural, and institutional steps to becoming affirming — implementing gender-neutral bathrooms and dorms, non-discrimination policies, and the hiring of openly LGBTQ+ faculty, staff, counselors and clergy.) An affirming school might or might not participate in LGBTQ+ activism. It will feature LGBTQ+ cultural events and center LGBTQ+ voices. It might be open to conversations around sex positivity, non-monogamy, expansive definitions of gender and sexuality, trans\* inclusion, and how sexuality intersects with other identities. It will prepare students for LGBTQ+ ministry (to and for LGBTQ+ people) and will likely be more progressive on issues of equity. Conversion therapy will be expressly condemned.

Seminaries in this category would include Wake Forest School of Divinity, Vanderbilt Divinity School, Iliff School of Theology, Brite Divinity School, Union Theological Seminary, Columbia Theological Seminary, Andover Newton Seminary at Yale Divinity School, Harvard Divinity School, Chicago Theological Seminary, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Eden Theological Seminary, Pacific School of

Religion, Christian Theological Seminary.

**SEMINARY VS. DIVINITY SCHOOL**

This is not a hard-and-fast rule, as each school defines for itself what name it would like to bear, but, in general, seminaries are stand-alone institutions not beholden to any other school. They might receive primary funding from their denomination or from donors, but they are, generally, not affiliated with or under the umbrella of a college or graduate school. Divinity schools and schools of theology typically belong to institutions of higher education and are but one of many schools offered.



# THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE APPLYING

## Why Do you Want to Go to Seminary?

As the theological landscape of the world, the Western world, and the United States in particular continues to shift, as the locus of religious activity moves to the Global South and as church attendance and religious affiliation steadily declines in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the U.S., the role seminary plays in its students' lives has shifted accordingly. Seminaries these days are pushing for broader definitions of ministry and for wider applicability for their degrees, training people not simply to assume the pulpit but to think theologically in any calling they might want to pursue. Seminaries will typically focus on congregational ministry, chaplaincy, nonprofit work, counseling, and academia as their likely vocational outcomes, but, increasingly, their purview has widened as church attendance and the economic viability of full-time pastorship have wavered.

You might want to attend seminary because you feel called to any of the vocations listed above. You might want to attend because you're seeking a new vocation in the latter half of your life. You might want to attend because you don't know what else to do. You might simply enjoy thinking theologically and want to deepen your faith or your commitment to social justice. You might want to become a more equity-minded worker in whatever industry employs you. You might be in search of a safe place to study the Bible when you no longer trust the Church to guide you. There are an endless array of reasons for seminary attendance, and, as non-traditional student enrollment increases (that is, online-only students, bivocational students, older students, second-vocation students, etc.) the options for attending seminary and the reasons for doing so become all the more diverse. You need to be sure, though, that the school you're attending caters to and advances your needs. If you don't want to become a congregational minister, then it would probably be a good idea not to attend a school primarily focused on the church. Schools centered on academia or activism might be a better fit. Thorough research of their postures and their programs' focus is highly recommended. Admissions materials, websites, word-of-mouth, and presence at such conferences at Samuel DeWitt Proctor, Q Christian Fellowship, and Wild Goose -- to name a few -- can help you in discerning this. The Seminaries that Change the World website annually lists schools which take seriously their calls towards activism and social justice; it could serve as a useful winnowing tool, as well.

When people think of theological education, their minds typically go to one of a few places: "What is that?"

I've never heard of that before! What do you do with it? Do you want to be a pastor? But you're gay; are you actually religious?", or "Oh, so you're pursuing your M.Div?". The Master of Divinity is the standard degree for a theological education; it is typically a three-year professional degree encompassing theology, pastoral care, counseling, leadership, Biblical studies, at times Biblical languages, ethics, and other areas of interest. It is highly interdisciplinary and historically geared towards congregational ministry.

If you don't want to spend that much time in school, or don't have the money for three years of education, or want to pursue other vocational options, other degrees are increasingly becoming available. The Master of Theological Studies (MTS) is a typically two-year degree slanted towards academic study; the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry (MACM) is more for the creative sides of ministry; and the Master of Theology (ThM) is a post-M.Div.degree for one year of specified study. There are tons of degrees offered by tons of schools, and a unified, exhaustive list would be difficult to compile. Just know there are lots of options out there beyond the standard M.Div. for you to explore. Auditing classes is also an option, in which you don't have to submit assignments or do work, but can sit in on classes and observe for a small fee and no class credit. If you want to explore your interest in seminary practically, auditing could be a good choice.

At the end of the day, if seminary feels like a vital, indispensable step in your professional or personal journey, then go for it. You'll emerge more human, more empathetic, more wise, more keenly aware of just how little we actually know, and more prepared to engage with the world's desperate need for justice. These are qualities needed in every field. But if you simply possess a passing interest in seminary, then it may not be for you. It is demanding academically and spiritually and requires vast amounts of energy and time. (There's a reason seminary students are typically the most well-represented in school counseling and therapy programs.) If you don't need it for your vocation or spiritual health, then don't go. But if you really want to, have a plan to fund the degree, and feel like it could benefit you, then I can't recommend it highly enough.

## Possible Hiring Obstacles for LGBTQ+ People Coming from a Traditional School

While I doubt that employers would automatically discard an application because someone attended a traditional school, I would imagine it could raise an eyebrow. If LGBTQ+ people want to work in a setting in which they are fully affirmed, they might need to prepare answers to some questions related to their seminary training. Depending on the institution, prospective employers could harbor some very real reservations about the education received. If, for example, an LGBTQ+ student applies to a center for anti-racism, and that student carries a degree from a traditional, mostly white seminary, then the skills necessary to navigate whiteness and privilege may not have been communicated to them. It could certainly require further conversation.

Another obstacle is the lack of connections. One of the most valuable purposes of seminary is the creation of networks and relationships. Professors can mentor you, guide your studies, connect you with people in your desired field, and help you get a leg up in your vocational search. If your field of interest is queer theology, for example, attending a traditional seminary would provide virtually no help in furthering your study or meeting your professional goals. It might even inhibit you. Meanwhile, it's been immeasurably helpful that, in attending a welcoming school, I've been able to write about, present on, and work with my professors on LGBTQ+ issues and queer theology.

The community you form in seminary often becomes your support system for the rest of your life. The friends you make can be your best cheerleaders and advice-givers, and can also open up various opportunities you wouldn't have heard of otherwise. Non-affirming friends may not support you or your vocational goals, and would therefore be a) bad friends, and b) unhelpful in networking and professional development.

Another aspect to consider is your own maturity and well-being. Attending a school where your identity is little else but a hot-button issue or a political debate can stunt spiritual growth and can stagnate intellectual/educational development. It can also be traumatic. Any field for which seminary prepares its students is likely a field requiring of its employees great spiritual wisdom and discernment. Spending three years feeling unaffirmed and challenged could prove detrimental to your own spiritual growth and to the growth of those to whom you minister. On the other hand, it could provide you with a drive and a spirit of activism the church greatly needs.

If you want to be ordained in a non-affirming denomination, then you would usually have to commit to celibacy or to hiding your LGBTQ+ identity. Seeking ordination from a non-affirming institution is inadvisable, as it would likely end up with you getting severely hurt and your vocational goals impeded when they can no longer support your growth in authenticity. Additionally, a minister who is harboring a secret as large as their sexual or gender identity is a minister emotionally unavailable for their congregants.

## Personal Relationships

I've already addressed vocational plans, but we also need to talk about personal relationships. If you are an LGBTQ+ student who will likely engage in a non-traditional relationship (same-gender, non-monogamous, interracial, etc.), you need to consider how much support your seminary will provide your relationship(s) and partner(s). How would you be received if you and your partner(s) walked into the school? Would your seminary endorse or advertise your wedding (or other similar ceremony)? Would you still be included in mailing lists?

Additionally, if you're already committed to a partner or children, you should consider how being in

seminary will affect your family life and plans, regardless of whether the seminary is affirming. Seminary often brings about significant life and worldview changes and inspires rapid growth. This could seriously impact the relationships and plans formed before seminary.

## Self Care

Seminary, for anyone, is an arduous season of life. Unlike other grad school programs, seminary requires of you constant self-reflection, investigation of your worldview, revision of your deepest-held beliefs, unflinching engagement with the depths of human evil, and, to top it all off, tons of papers and reading! There's a reason why seminary students tend to be the most well-represented in campus counseling and psychological services. It is a spiritual crucible from which very few emerge unchanged.

For LGBTQ+ and other marginalized students, however, another layer of difficulty is added, the thickness of which gets influenced by the inclusivity of the institution. Even in affirming schools, it's not unusual for individual faculty, staff, and/or students to still hold non-affirming beliefs. When engaging with issues of inequity and social injustice, what, for privileged students, might simply be a distressing thought exercise could be, for marginalized students, a deeply retraumatizing event. To talk about LGBTQ+ injustice, to discuss "the LGBT question," to dive into the clobber passages -- among others -- places a burden upon LGBTQ+ students to which cisgender students cannot, by design, relate.

For our trans\* siblings, the intensity is ratcheted up when the inevitable misgendering, incorrect pronoun usage, or binary language for people and/or for God occurs, or when a school does not provide non-gendered restrooms.

Lack of attention to intersectionality also could contribute to mental unwellness for LGBTQ+ students who hold other marginalized identities (race, ability, age, etc.), and who may feel as if they have to choose between advocating for one part of themselves at the expense of another.

All this to say: You absolutely must take care of yourself. This is not a kind suggestion, or a "if you feel like it" -- it is a divine mandate. To love your neighbor as yourself, you must, necessarily, and primarily, love yourself.

One initial step you can take is researching what mental health options your institution offers. This can vary wildly from school to school. McAfee, for example, by way of Mercer University, offers complementary therapy with no referral cap or policy limits. In other words, a student can attend as many sessions of therapy as they like while they're still enrolled.

I started therapy the literal same day I started school; I could not bust down the counselor's door fast enough. It has been lifesaving and instrumental to my success at school.

Additionally, invest in your spiritual health through spiritual practices. This can look like journaling, meditating, praying, walking, church attendance, community service -- really, anything. Whatever your spirit requires, attend to it. It is a muscle you cannot allow to atrophy.

Also, take time to prioritize fun. It is crucial to play and do things that are completely unrelated to theology or justice. Go dancing. Play an escape room. Stay in with a bottle of wine and a Netflix binge. Just, please, for your own sake, have fun.

Exercise has been fundamental in my maintaining some degree of health. Its emotional and mental benefits have outweighed (pun intended) the physical for me, ensuring, perhaps better than anything else, that I can confront the endless to-do list's grad school places before me.

Finally, find LGBTQ+ community. Whether within or without the seminary walls, it is necessary to immerse yourself in LGBTQ+-created and centric environments. Moving through a heteronormative world can be, and often is, exhausting; take time to find your well and draw some living water.

## Size

Theological higher education skews towards smaller classes and student-to-teacher ratios. All told, theology is not the world's most popular field. That said, some seminaries are larger than others, and you need to decide for yourself what kind of experience you're looking for. Do you want an intimate community in which everyone knows your name, professors regard you as an individual, and your entire graduating class could fit in a group message? Or would you rather embrace a little more anonymity and enjoy the benefits of a larger school? The size of a seminary determines what kind of opportunities you can get, how competitive their admissions and programs are, and what kind of social experience you'll have. It also affects the likelihood you'll find other LGBTQ+ people in your school.

## Location

I already discussed above the importance of finding a city in which you can see yourself thriving. But there's more to location than the ZIP code. Schools can vary in their setting — rural, urban, suburban — in their architecture, and in their campus structure. You need to consider what kind of environment would make you feel most at home and most open to growth and learning. A school in a strip mall or in the middle of a bustling downtown, for example, might not work for you. A more forested, cloistered campus could be what you need, or you might want to eschew relocation altogether and just do your coursework online. Think about your personality and your needs, along with travel time and the cost of living in your desired city/neighborhood. Factor these into your seminary decision. Union Theological Seminary, for example, is smack dab in the middle of Manhattan and would definitely appeal to a more cosmopolitan sensibility. My school, McAfee, is in suburban Atlanta on 200 acres of undeveloped,

forested land. Your best choice really depends on what vibe you need to feel at peace and engaged. More importantly, your well-being is greatly impacted by the city which hosts your seminary. A helpful resource on this end is the Human Rights Campaign's annual Municipal Equality Index. It measures, on a scale of 100, the extent to which LGBTQ+ equity is present in a city. Atlanta, for example, scores over a 100, while Nashville sits at around 70.

(A helpful rule of thumb is this: If you have to set your Tinder radius to 25 or more miles to avoid refreshing every five minutes, then you might not want to settle there. This would make forming LGBTQ+ relationships and/or community difficult.)

## Faculty Composition

One thing you might immediately need to consider is how well the faculty reflects the schools' commitments and the demographics of its student body. If, for example, a school contains a high population of people of color and/or of LGBTQ+ people, but features predominantly white and cisnet professors, you might need to dig a little deeper to see just how affirming they actually are. Would these professors help or hinder your progress (personal and professional) as an LGBTQ+ student? Would they encourage you in studying LGBTQ+ topics, preaching sermons geared towards LGBTQ+ empowerment and liberation, and learning how to minister to LGBTQ+ needs? Or would they block your progress, miring your development in endless rounds of "the LGBT conversation"?

Professors can also serve as counselors or ministers when students are in need or crisis. I've often asked my professors for personal advice alongside academic help. You need to make sure you can bring your full self to their office. The relationships you develop with your professors can be among the most vital and valuable of your life.

Investigating their bodies of work would help; some professors may study the exact area you're interested in and could help you hone your skills. For example, Dr. David P. Gushee and Dr. Chanequa Walker-Barnes are on faculty at my school, which is one reason, as a Christian ethicist, I chose to study there. They're among the best in the biz, so to speak. Other schools feature faculty with similar pedigrees.

## Financing

### 1. Student Loans

- There is no shame in taking out a student loan to finance your theological education. Especially if, for whatever reason, parents are out of the monetary picture, loans can be an indispensable resource for making theological education a possibility. However, we all know how predatory the lending system is, so you need to be absolutely sure seminary is the right



choice for you before taking out student loans. No field that seminary prepares you for is particularly lucrative — as opposed to other fields like law or medicine — and therefore your education won't open as many financial opportunities afterward to pay those loans off.

- Understand your interest rates with federal and private lenders, repayment schedule, and monthly financial obligations after graduation before you take out loans. Students can be caught off-guard after graduating when they realize they will not be able to afford their monthly student loan payment year over year. Using a Student Loan Repayment Calculator like the ones provided at [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov) can be a helpful exercise in grounding your financial situation in reality.
- Taking out as little in student loans as feasibly possible and paying above your monthly payment requirement after graduation can save you thousands of dollars owed in interest over the years. Examine all your options, consult with trusted advisors and connect with your university financial aid office before starting your program to make the best decision for you.

## 2. Scholarships

- A vast array of third-party scholarships exists for virtually every identity, focus, and background imaginable. Some seminaries contain online scholarship databases for you to look through.
  - Some scholarships exist specifically for LGBTQ+ students in theological higher education. Apply for them. Every dollar helps in financing higher education. There are other scholarships for students with disabilities, students of color, first-generation students, etc. (Even left-handed students!)
- Each school will likely provide institutional scholarships, as well, ranging from book stipends to full rides. Research what money might be available to you and what steps you need to take to be eligible. Even a 70% scholarship is vastly preferable to 100% student loans or paying fully out of pocket.
  - If you belong to a non-affirming denomination, you might run into problems applying for their scholarships. Depending on how intensely they hold their non-affirming views, they might bar you from applicability. Some schools might exclude you, too. Other schools might throw more money at you because you're LGBTQ+. It just depends on what kind of school it is and what they value.
- Apply for scholarships.
  - Most universities offer scholarship opportunities at both an undergraduate and graduate level. Your University Financial Aid Office likely has an internal and external listserv of scholarship opportunities available online.
  - Apply for university/department funded scholarships first. You will have a higher probability of being selected for these scholarships. Apply for regional or denominational scholarships second and national scholarships last.
  - Some national scholarship search engines include [collegescholarships.org](http://collegescholarships.org), [Fastweb](http://Fastweb), and [CareerOneStep](http://CareerOneStep).



# AFFIRMING DIVINITY SCHOOL/ SEMINARY RESOURCES LIST

Most Seminaries and Divinity Schools will have a “Beliefs Statement” or “Statement of Faith” posted on their website. Be sure to read these statements carefully. Not all institutions will explicitly address their LGBTQ+ policies and will instead allude to “biblical gender roles” and/or “biblical marriage.” If a statement is unclear, make sure to contact the school to ask for their official stance on sexuality, gender identity, and marriage.

The following resources are helpful to use in locating seminaries, determining whether seminaries are affirming, and finding like-minded seminarians.

- [Church Clarity](#)
- [National LGBTQ Task Force Institute for Welcoming Resources](#)
- [QueerTheology](#)
- [Brave Commons](#)
- [OurBibleApp](#)
- [Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists](#)
- [UCC Theological Education](#)
- [Alliance of Baptists Theological Schools](#)
- [Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\) Seminaries at a Glance](#)
- [Seminaries that Change the World](#)

(This is by no means an exhaustive list. It definitely needs more representation from non-mainline, non-majority-white institutions.)

