

**136A.657 EXEMPTION; RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS.**

Subdivision 1. **Exemption.** Any school or any department or branch of a school (a) which is substantially owned, operated or supported by a bona fide church or religious organization; (b) whose programs are primarily designed for, aimed at and attended by persons who sincerely hold or seek to learn the particular religious faith or beliefs of that church or religious organization; and (c) whose programs are primarily intended to prepare its students to become ministers of, to enter into some other vocation closely related to, or to conduct their lives in consonance with, the particular faith of that church or religious organization, is exempt from the provisions of sections 136A.61 to 136A.834.

Subd. 2. **Limitation.** This exemption shall not extend to any school or to any department or branch of a school which through advertisements or solicitations represents to any students or prospective students that the school, its aims, goals, missions or purposes or its programs are different from those described in subdivision 1. This exemption shall not extend to any school which represents to any student or prospective student that the major purpose of its programs is to prepare the student for a vocation not closely related to that particular religious faith, or to provide the student with a general educational program recognized by other schools or the broader educational, business or social community as being substantially equivalent to the educational programs offered by schools or departments or branches of schools which are not exempt from sections 136A.61 to 136A.71, and rules adopted pursuant thereto.

Subd. 3. **Scope.** Nothing in sections 136A.61 to 136A.834, or the rules adopted pursuant thereto, shall be interpreted as permitting the office to determine the truth or falsity of any particular set of religious beliefs.

Subd. 4. **Statement required; religious nature.** Any degree awarded upon completion of a religiously exempt program shall include descriptive language to make the religious nature of the award clear.

Subd. 5. **Application.** A school that seeks an exemption under this section from the provisions of sections 136A.61 to 136A.71 must apply to the office to establish that the school meets the requirements of an exemption. An exemption expires two years from the date of approval or when a school adds a new program or makes a modification equal to or greater than 25 percent to an existing educational program. If a school is reapplying for an exemption, the application must be submitted to the office 90 days before the current exemption expires.

**History:** 1978 c 603 s 7; 1995 c 212 art 3 s 59; 2007 c 144 art 3 s 9; 2015 c 69 art 2 s 15,16; 2017 c 89 art 3 s 10