Where Funeral Service Is Our Only Major!

About Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service Online  »

Online Associate of Applied Science in Funeral Service  »

Admission | How to Apply  »

Tuition Information  »

Financial Aid  »

Application Form  »
History

In 1936, R. Victor Landig opened the Landig College of Mortuary Science in Houston, Texas. Landig saw a need in Southeast Texas for a college of mortuary science to train men and women as embalmers and funeral directors.

Landig, a pioneer in funeral service education, attracted to his faculty some of the leading experts in embalming and restorative art in the country, including A. O. Spriggs, author of *The Art and Science of Embalming* and *Champion's Textbook on Restorative Art*. Spriggs eventually became the director of research for Champion Embalming Fluid Co.

In 1955, the school was renamed the Commonwealth College of Science, reflecting Landig's plan to move the college to Commonwealth Street in downtown Houston. However, personal health problems stopped Landig's plans, and as a result, he sold his interests in the college to Tex Garton, a respected funeral director in the Houston area. Garton operated the college until 1966, when the Pierce Organization purchased it and built a new building on Barren Springs Drive in North Houston.

In the late 1980s, a team of the nation's top funeral service executives, practitioners and funeral service educators conducted an extensive feasibility study. The team sought to provide the finest contemporary funeral service education, including a curriculum that emphasized hands-on experience in embalming and restorative art, computer science, and funeral directing and management skills. In 1988, the "Institute of Funeral Service" was chartered as a Texas nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation, and instruction began on Aug. 29, 1988. In 1990, The Institute of Funeral Service acquired the Commonwealth College of Funeral Service and changed its name to the Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service (CIFS).

Over the years, the college has expanded and now offers the finest in educational facilities and faculty in the United States. Today, CIFS boasts a state-of-the-art embalming facility, a new restorative art laboratory, a casket display room and a learning resource center.

The funeral service program and CIFS are accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE), 3414 Ashland Avenue, Suite G, St. Joseph, Missouri 64506 (816) 233-3747. Web: www.abfse.org
Program Details

CIFS Online

The online education opportunities at CIFS offer students convenience and flexibility, thus helping them advance their education and future. CIFS has an established reputation as the leading provider of funeral service education in the nation.

Associate of Applied Science in Funeral Service
Offered Partially Online

CIFS’s Associate of Applied Science in Funeral Service program is offered partially online and is designed to teach students the skills and abilities essential for employment as an embalmer and funeral director. Students can obtain their degree in as little as 12-15 months. As a graduate of this program, you will possess the skills necessary to disinfect, preserve and restore a dead human body through embalming and restorative art for the purposes of burial or other means of final disposition.

Students will learn how to conduct funeral service ceremonies of various religious, fraternal, military, traditional, humanistic and nontraditional customs. Students will learn how to conduct funeral arrangement conferences with families, complete necessary paperwork in funeral home management and implement proper workplace safety guidelines for funeral service personnel.

Graduates of this program may find entry-level employment as an apprentice, intern or provisional licensee with funeral homes, embalming services, cemeteries, pre-need sales and affiliate funeral service merchandise companies, and embalming chemical companies.

Individuals seeking these credentials must also meet the requirements of the appropriate licensing agencies. Students must take the National Board Exam as a condition for licensure in most states.

Program Benefits

- **CONVENIENCE:** Flexibility is essential to students who manage a busy work schedule and personal commitments. Therefore, the online program at CIFS is proud to offer its students a chance to earn an education at their own convenience.

- **ACCELERATED FORMAT:** Online courses are taught in an accelerated format, allowing students to earn their degree in 12-15 months.

- **QUALITY INSTRUCTORS:** CIFS believes in utilizing industry-experienced instructors. Therefore, students can remain confident that they receive the highest-class education.

- **YEAR-ROUND HELP DESK:** In case technical difficulties arise, a 24/7/365 tech support team is available to address student concerns and resolve issues.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the employment growth for the next 10 years is expected to be 12%.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median annual salary for a funeral director and embalmer is $54,370.

(www.bls.gov)
Admission Details

Admission Process

If you are interested in CIFS's partially online Associate of Applied Science (fully online Certificate in Funeral Directing) program, you must:

1. Visit the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards to find out your state's regulations in licensing. Review your state's requirements and transfer options. If you have any questions, please contact CIFS at (281) 873-0262.

2. Complete and mail an official CIFS Application for Admission.

3. Pay the $50 nonrefundable application fee.

4. Have an official copy of your high school transcript or the certificate and official transcript of your GED sent directly to CIFS.

5. Have an official transcript of each vocational school, technical school, college and university that you plan to transfer credit from sent directly to CIFS.

6. Provide evidence that you have fulfilled ONE of the following:
   - Graduated in the upper 25 percent of your high school class.
   - Achieved an acceptable score on the SAT (990) or ACT (21) examination.
   - Successfully completed all of the general education core courses.

7. If your name is different than that appearing on your birth certificate, submit a copy of the document showing the name change (marriage license, divorce decree, etc.)

8. After CIFS receives the completed application, fee and all required supporting documentation the admission committee will review the application and notify the applicant of its decision. If the submission is incomplete the applicant will be notified.

* No uniform licensing laws govern funeral service in the United States. Some state licensing agencies require students to notify the agency prior to enrollment in mortuary school. Some require completion of pre-mortuary college educational requirements. Students are responsible for meeting licensure requirements in the state in which they wish to obtain a license.

Clinical Embalming and Restorative Art Labs

Students are responsible for being in residence, at their expense, to demonstrate technical competency in both restorative art and embalming. During your stay, you will complete your 10 clinical embalming cases and required restorative art lab.
**Tuition**

The total tuition cost for students who need to fulfill their general study courses at CIFS is $16,978.

The total tuition cost for students who have transferred general study courses to CIFS is $12,802.

---

**Contact Admissions Office**

Contact us by phone or email, and a counselor will assist you with the admissions process for becoming a student at CIFS.

**Office of Admissions**

Phone: (800) 628-1580 or (281) 873-0262  
Email: information@commonwealth.edu

**Mailing Address**

Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service  
415 Barren Springs Drive | Houston, TX 77090
Applying for financial aid is completely optional, but many students find financial aid necessary to help pay for college. At CIFS, we offer several types of Title IV federal student assistance.

**Title IV Federal Student Assistance**

To be considered for Title IV federal student assistance, a student must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). CIFS’s school code is 003556. Students must apply for each award year that they will be enrolled and are considered dependent or independent as a result of their answers to certain questions on the FAFSA. Once a student is accepted into CIFS, their financial aid will be processed.

**Types of Financial Aid Offered at CIFS**

**Pell Grant:** Qualification for grant money is based on financial need and determined by federal regulations. Pell Grants are not loans; therefore, the recipient is not expected to pay back the monies received. The maximum amount a student can receive is $5,775 per year.

**Subsidized Stafford Student Loan:** This loan must be repaid. Students must show a financial need, determined by federal regulations, to receive this loan. This loan does not accrue interest while a student is in school at least half-time, during the grace period and during deferment periods. The maximum amount for this loan is $3,500 per year. This loan’s interest rate is fixed at 4.29 percent.

**Unsubsidized Stafford Student Loan:** This loan must be repaid. This loan is not based on financial need. This loan accrues interest during all periods, which is charged to the borrower. The maximum amount for this loan is $6,000 for independent students and $2,000 for dependent students per year. This loan’s interest rate is fixed at 4.29 percent.

**Parent Plus Loan:** This loan is for parents of dependent students only. The maximum amount for this loan is the cost of attendance. This loan’s interest rate is fixed at 6.84 percent.

**Vocational Rehabilitation:** Within each state, a division of vocational and educational services operates in conjunction with the Department of Education in offering aid to qualified applicants. Eligible persons must contact their respective state vocational rehabilitation office to determine sponsorship. Following counseling with the appropriate agency, the counselor must submit a purchase voucher to the college prior to the enrollment of the student.

**Scholarships:** Several scholarship opportunities are available to students once they enroll. Many scholarships are based on academic progress. CIFS will announce these scholarships to the students once they become available. They range from $250 to $1,500 per award.

The financial aid office at CIFS will assist incoming students and answer questions related to financial aid. Once a student has been accepted for enrollment to CIFS, we will send the necessary financial aid paperwork to the student, or the student can apply online. Acceptance to the program is a prerequisite for financial assistance.
1. **How do I prepare for online courses?**
   For your convenience, we offer a student training presentation that provides instructions on taking an online course. The presentation is available upon request.

2. **How will I access my online course?**
   Enrolled students will receive a login ID and password. Upon entering the ID and password in the login window, students will be able to access their online class, view course information or retrieve their academic records.

3. **Will I have face-to-face meetings with my professor?**
   Online courses are delivered entirely through the Internet. However, students can schedule a meeting with professors during office hours, if desired.

4. **Will I have access to library resources?**
   Our library resources and services are available to all faculty and students wherever the programs or courses are located and however they are delivered.

5. **What times during the year can I enroll?**
   If you have all the general education courses completed and you plan to transfer them into our program, you can begin in January or July. If you are planning to take the general education courses online, then you can begin in April or October. Please contact us for specific start dates.

6. **What are general education courses?**
   The general education courses are core courses completed at another accredited college that can be transferred into our online program. The classes are biology, English, psychology, college algebra and U.S. history.

7. **How do I get help if I cannot access my online course?**
   Commonwealth provides all students with a 24/7/365 help center. Contact information for the help desk will be provided upon enrollment.

8. **Can I use my VA benefits for the online program?**
   No, you are not able to use VA benefits for the online program at this time, but you certainly can if you enroll in the in-session program.

9. **Do I have to pay for books?**
   No, your books are already included in your cost of tuition.