



ICETE

International Council for Evangelical Theological Education  
strengthening evangelical theological education through international cooperation

# STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR GLOBAL EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

- Second edition, 2021 -



SGGETE

ICETE Standards and Guidelines for  
Global Evangelical Theological Education

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## ICETE Contacts

Email: [info@icete.info](mailto:info@icete.info)

Website: <https://icete.info>

*To access the latest version of the SG-GETE,  
please visit: <https://icete.info/resources/sggete/>*

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# INTRODUCTION

## HISTORY OF THE SG-GETE

This is the second edition of the *Standards and Guidelines for Global Evangelical Theological Education - 2021*.

On September 4-9, 2017, and on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the *International Council for Evangelical Theological Education* (ICETE) held a global consultation in Rome, Italy. Theological educators from seventeen nations and nine regions participated in the consultation and discussed the future shape of global evangelical theological education. The Declaration and Commitment below was issued at the conclusion of the consultation.

*ICETE Rome Declaration and Commitment:*

Based on the values stated in the ICETE Manifesto<sup>1</sup> and in re-affirmation of our mutual respect and trust, while recognising our regional identities, and in relation to our calling as evangelical theological educators and accreditors, we commit to:

1. Strengthening the identity, transferability, and consistency of ICETE criteria and procedures for quality assurance and improvement;
2. Developing a common global framework for the accreditation of evangelical theological education, including: global indicators of quality assurance and comparability of regional degree specifications;
3. Formulating quality assurance indicators for technology-enhanced learning;
4. Integrating principles, quality measures and assessment of character education into our global indicators, within our vision of holistic theological education;
5. Exploring our specific calling to be a prophetic voice for service of God and his church and world, with particular attention to relationships with the ecclesial communities in our regions;
6. Revising the ICETE member recognition process and encouraging members subsequently to engage with it;
7. Ensuring the vital sustainability of ICETE and ICETE member bodies and leaders.

These, we must accomplish, by God's grace

Following the consultation, a team took the 'raw materials' developed during the consultation and elaborated a first draft of the 'Rome Roadmap (V.1)'. A second draft was refined by a small working group in January 2018 and was distributed internally as the 'Rome Roadmap (V.2)'. In February 2019, the ICETE Board adopted the document and renamed it: *Standards and Guidelines for Global Evangelical Theological Education - 2019* (SG-GETE). After further revision, in April 2019, it was formally recommended to the ICETE network of quality assurance agencies.

There are two main changes in the current second 2021 edition. The first is the broadening of the scope of the SG-GETE to include doctoral research programmes. This has been possible thanks to the work of the Doctoral Initiative Steering Committee (DISC). The second change is the removal of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://icete.info/resources/manifesto/>

the Appendix with supplemental resources that have been published as a set of independent guideline documents on the ICETE website.<sup>2</sup>

## SCOPE OF THE SG-GETE

The SG-GETE lists core standards that represent agreed common denominators in quality assurance work of global theological education. It is a global summary that includes a list of essential standards, guidelines for each standard, examples of evidence and further resources.

The SG-GETE embraces all levels of theological education, including taught undergraduate and postgraduate theology degrees as well as research degrees and doctoral level degrees. Concerning the latter, the SG-GETE includes the work done in the ICETE Beirut Benchmarks (2010) and in the Bangalore Affirmations (2011) that deal with research and professional doctoral level programmes. Unless otherwise specified, the standards generally apply to all levels of theological education. Exceptions or additions, that are required to fit the nature of specific programme levels, will be specified in the guidelines (this relates in particular to doctoral programmes).

In its service to theological institutions worldwide, the global Church and the mission of God, the SG-GETE presupposes and seeks to promote the convictions and aspirations expressed in the ICETE Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE SG-GETE

The terms ‘Standards and Guidelines’ is used to denote both the norms and the means to achieve them.<sup>3</sup> The structure of each standard reflects this, and the guidelines are divided into explanations and examples of evidence. Examples of evidence are not intended as exhaustive or normative, but only as illustrative. This is common practice in quality assurance.

The standards distinguish areas of Institutional (A) and Programme (B) related standards. The institutional standards look at the quality of an institution, and deal with areas such as identity and purpose, governance, etc. The programme-related standards examine the specific norms and guidelines that can enhance the quality of programmes of study, including issues of design, teaching and learning, student services, etc. This division is useful for accreditors who wish to distinguish institutional and programme-related dimensions in their own procedures.

Appendixes of good practice are provided to supplement selected guidelines.

## USE OF THE SG-GETE

ICETE accrediting agencies are warmly invited to reference and incorporate parts or all of the SG-GETE in their own Accreditation Manuals. Agencies may also wish to supplement the SG-GETE with additional or modified standards, examples of evidence or explanations that are relevant to their contexts.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://icete.info/resources/supplemental-sg-gete-resources/>

<sup>3</sup> Precise definition of terms is often complicated by the nuanced debate of specialists and the complexities of translation. Unless otherwise noted, terms and definitions used in SG-GETE are in accordance with those given in Lazar Vlasceanu, Laura Grünberg, and Dan Parlea, eds. *Quality Assurance and Accreditation: A Glossary of Basic Terms and Definitions*. UNESCO-CEPES, 2007.

## AUTHORS

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>THE ICETE BOARD</b><br/>         Phil Dearborn - ABHE, US<br/>         David Tarus - ACTEA, Kenya<br/>         Paul Branch - AETAL, Guatemala<br/>         Marcio Matta - AETAL, Brazil<br/>         Theresa Lua - ATA, Philippines<br/>         Dieumeme Noelliste - CETA, Caribbean<br/>         Taras Dyatlik - E-AAA, Ukraine<br/>         Bernhard Ott - ECTE, Switzerland<br/>         Elias Ghazal - MENATE, Lebanon<br/>         Paul Sanders - Consultant, France<br/>         Steve Hardy - Consultant, USA<br/>         Fritz Deininger, Consultant, Germany<br/>         Marvin Oxenham - ICETE Academy, Italy</p> | <p><b>ROME DECLARATION AND COMMITMENT SIGNATORIES</b><br/>         Riad Kassis (ICETE), Roger Kemp (ICETE), Ron Kroll (ABHE), Shane Wood (ABHE), Emmanuel Chemengich (ACTEA), Dwight Singer (ACTEA), Marcio Matta (AETAL), Paul Branch (AETAL), Mike Wheeler (AETAL), Theresa Lua (ATA), Ronnie Poon (ATA), Paul Cornelius (ATA), Dieumeme Noelliste (CETA), Errol Joseph (CETA), Taras Dyatlik (E-AAA), Roman Soloviy (E-AAA), Marvin Oxenham (ECTE), Bernhard Ott (ECTE), Hubert Jurgensen (ECTE), Elias Ghazal (MENATE), Rick Weymouth (MENATE), Charles De Jongh (SPAEC).<br/>         Special guests included Jason Ferenczi, Steven Hardy, Gloria Noelliste, Paul Sanders and Lester Ruiz.</p> <p><b>SG-GETE REVIEW COMMITTEE</b><br/>         Marvin Oxenham - ECTE, Italy (Chair)<br/>         Theresa Lua - ATA, Philippines<br/>         Taras Dyatlik - E-AAA, Ukraine<br/>         Paul Branch - AETAL, Guatemala<br/>         Dieumeme Noelliste - CETA, Caribbean<br/>         Bernhard Ott - ECTE, Switzerland<br/>         Paul Sanders - ICETE, France (consultant for RR2 phase)</p> <p><b>ONLINE STANDARDS WORKGROUP LEADERS</b><br/>         Paul Branch - AETAL, Guatemala<br/>         Rick Weymouth - ATA/MENATE, New Zealand</p> <p><b>DOCTORAL INITIATIVE STEERING COMMITTEE</b><br/>         Steven Chang (Torch Trinity Graduate University, Korea) Paul Cornelius (Asia Theological Association, India), Scott Cunningham (Overseas Council International, USA), Evan Hunter (Vice President, ScholarLeaders International), John Jusu (Overseas Council International, Africa), Kevin Lawson (Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, USA), Jung Sook Lee, (Torch Trinity Graduate University, Korea), Melody Mazuk (Global Theological Librarian), Parush Parushev (Senior Research Fellow, Bulgaria), Katharina Penner (Library Development, Austria), David A. Roldán (Instituto Teológico FIET, Argentina), Cephas Tushima (ECWA Education Department, Africa), Michael Wheeler (Seminario Bíblico de la UCE, Bolivia).<br/>         Others Providing Input: Theresa Lua (Asia Theological Association, Philippines), Emiola Nihinlola (Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Nigeria), Jessie Jaison (New India Bible Seminary, India).</p> |
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# A. INSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

## A1. IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

**Standard:** Institutions have clearly formulated statements of identity and purpose.

### Guidelines

#### A1.1 - Identity

Institutions understand themselves as providers of tertiary level evangelical theological education, subscribing to an evangelical statement of faith and integrating core Christian values into their operations and programmes. Biblical grounding is evident in all programmes.

#### A1.2 - Legal and fiscal status

Institutions have appropriate legal status within the country where they operate in accordance with local laws and as suitable for their purposes. Institutions comply with fiscal and financial regulations in the country in which they operate.

#### A1.3 - Vision and mission

Institutions have a clear vision and mission statement which is periodically reviewed by the leadership, understood by internal and external stakeholders, and matched with strategic planning, budget operations and programme provision. The vision and mission statement clearly reflect the institutional identity.

#### A1.4 - Public information

Institutions publish information about their identity, activities and programmes that is accurate and accessible. Programme information includes access criteria, programme learning outcomes and graduate profiles, qualifications, teaching and learning procedures, assessment procedures, pass rates and student retention data, progression and mobility opportunities and graduate employment information.

#### EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:

- officially recognised statement of faith
- written and published vision and mission statement
- budgets
- minutes that document review processes of the vision and mission statement
- internal and external stakeholder input on vision and mission statement
- correlation of programme outcomes to mission statements
- publicity materials
- public information

## A2. GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

**Standard:** Institutions have appropriate and effective governance and quality assurance structures.

**Guidelines:**

### A2.1 - Governance

Institutions have appropriate institutional governance that represents stakeholders and constitutes the body to which executive leadership is accountable. Effective governance is in place to preserve and protect the institutions' identity and purpose, ensure the necessary means to accomplish the institutions' mission, intervene in institutional crises and leadership succession and to clearly delineate lines of responsibility between board governance, executive management and delegated authority.

Those involved in diverse aspects of institutional governance are firmly committed to the schools they serve and understand the distinctive nature of evangelical theological education and the particular mission and vision of their institution.

Evidence of stability and sustainability indicate appropriate and effective governance, reflected, for example, in continuity of board members, executive leaders and faculty, in quality oversight and in good financial practice.

### A2.2 - Leadership and management

Institutions demonstrate a clear understanding of the distinction between governance and leadership in their organisational structures. Leadership and management are accountable to governance and guide, inspire and manage the personnel team to achieve the mission of the institution through strategic planning and implementation.

Effective leadership is contextually sensitive in adopting various leadership styles, optimising the human resources of the institution, reflecting adaptability to contextual factors, administering finances and facilities, inspiring Christian character in the learning community and operating within the context of board-approved policies. Institutions consciously seek to model Christian patterns of leadership and community in the ways that leaders at all levels relate to each other, their subordinates and to all members of the educational community.

### A2.3 - Decision-making structures

Institutions provide opportunities for faculty, staff and student participation in decision-making as regards to both community life and academic programmes as appropriate to cultural contexts and to good practices in their national higher education settings. Student government structures are in place. The governance and leadership structures also provide space for active participation and input of external stakeholders, including potential employers, alumni, donors and churches.

### A2.4 - Strategic planning

Institutional activities are based on predetermined and evaluated outcomes and are supported by clearly articulated policies. Strategic planning is based on valid research data and involvement of relevant stakeholders. Governance and leadership structures cooperate in designing, approving, implementing and reviewing strategic plans that are linked to institutional mission statements, programmes and resources. Appropriate project management is in place to implement strategic planning.

### A2.5 - Internal quality assurance policies and procedures

The leadership promotes an internal culture of integrity, self-assessment, self-improvement and quality development.

Institutions have a general policy for internal quality assurance that is formal and public. This policy should be used for continual improvement of the institution, and should generate further detailed policies, practices and processes. The policy should be well managed, owned by all internal stakeholders and reviewed regularly by all internal stakeholders. The policy should also reflect the expectations of external stakeholders, the national context and the vision and mission of the school.

The policy includes improvement cycles based, for example, on student and staff feedback, on assessment of completion and drop-out rates and on the academic and vocational pursuits and impact of graduates.

### A2.6 - Cyclical external quality assurance

Institutions are cyclically involved in institutional and programme assessment and in ongoing reporting practices to external entities. Where relevant, national legislative frameworks should be taken into account. External quality assurance verifies the effectiveness of internal quality assurance, catalyses improvement and provides public information on the quality of the institution.

#### EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:

- registration documents and legal status
- evidence of compliance with fiscal and financial regulations
- terms of reference, constitution, by-laws and internal regulatory policies of governing boards, including policies on board stability
- a governing board handbook, including, for example, orientation of new board members, policies on conflict of interest, documenting procedures, quorum and voting regulations, delineation of relationship between the board and executive leadership and separation between board and executive functions
- documented external and internal review reports of the board of governors
- minutes of budgetary exercises and budget approvals
- documented and approved short-term and long-term strategic plans, minutes from boards and leadership teams reflecting engagement with strategic planning
- project management documents and matching budgets
- personnel turnover statistics
- policies and procedures for leadership succession and conflict resolution
- general policy and compliance documents
- adequate record-keeping procedures
- active student government, student participation in board meetings, social committees
- research data and link to strategic planning
- policy documents and records
- reviews with any external agencies contracted for objective analysis of its operations
- internal quality assurance policy that is public and linked to strategic planning
- evidence of internal stakeholder involvement in developing and implementing quality
- evidence of external stakeholder involvement in quality assurance

### Supplemental Resources<sup>4</sup>

*Developing an Internal Quality Assurance Policy*

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<sup>4</sup> <https://icete.info/resources/supplemental-sg-gete-resources/>

## A3. HUMAN RESOURCES

**Standard: Human resources in institutions are fit for purpose and managed for flourishing.**

**Guidelines:**

### A3.1 - Human resources

Institutions consider their personnel as their prime asset and responsibility. Institutions consequently treat their faculty, staff and occasional collaborators with respect, Christian love and in regard of legal conventions. Anti-discrimination policies and staff protection policies are in place and institutions are sensible to diversity and issues in consideration of gender, ethnicity and national representation. Human resources are sufficient to carry out the educational programme effectively, tailored to the objectives and activities of the institution, monitored to ensure personal sustainability and realistic workloads across the institution and regularly assessed.

### A3.2 - Non-educational staff

Non-educational staff are adequately qualified, spiritually mature and demonstrate Christian character. Institutions support staff in all departments, actively plan for their ongoing professional development and carefully monitor workloads, conditions of employment, job descriptions and line management procedures.

### A3.3 - Educational staff

Educational staff understand and accept the institution's educational philosophy and are adequately qualified, spiritually mature and demonstrate Christian character.

Institutions assure themselves of the competence of their educational staff. Teachers should understand student-centred learning, facilitate high quality student experience and be able actively promote the acquisition of knowledge, the development of generic and specific competences and contribute to nourishing spiritual and character formation.

Educational staff have appropriate academic qualifications for the level of study, which is normally at least one level above the degree being taught. In exceptional cases, a limited number of educational staff without required academic qualifications, but with proven ability and experience, is acceptable. The minority of educational staff falling below such qualifications are distinguished by above average experience and proven competence, but do not carry significant course loads nor supervise academic departments.

Educational staff teaching and supervising research in doctoral programmes have doctoral degrees, experience in graduate teaching, experience in research supervision, research and publication records, and meet existing governmental requirements.

Educational staff engage regularly in educational development and training suitable for their profession and institutions offer and promote fair and transparent opportunities for professional development. This might include faculty development plans, research leaves aimed at ongoing publication and provision of study time to keep updated in fields of teaching and educational enhancement.

The workloads and total responsibilities of the educational staff do not impair the quality of instruction or the contact with the students. Careful attention is given to the student-instructor ratio, to teaching loads and to adequate numbers of full-time, contracted educational staff.

### A3.4 - HR policies and procedures

Institutions have written policies relating to areas such as recruitment, faculty and staff development, employee care, job security, annual leaves, human resource procedures,

redundancy and dismissal procedures, inflation salary adjustments, fees and remuneration for visiting lecturers, etc. Institutions apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment of all staff and faculty.

### **A3.5 – Human resources for research doctoral level programmes**

Educational staff teaching and supervising research in doctoral programmes hold doctoral degrees in the field of study in which the programme is offered, have experience in post-graduate level teaching and research supervision, have suitable publication records and meet any further national requirements. The core teaching and supervision team is composed of contracted faculty and only marginal (or temporary) reliance on adjunct faculty is admitted. A limited number of teachers and supervisors without experience is allowed provided that they are mentored by more experienced faculty members.

Educational staff is sufficient in number to ensure the quality of teaching, research supervision and mentoring of doctoral level students. Research supervision is included in the overall faculty workload calculations and used to determine how many students can be admitted to the programme at any one time (see A.3.3 above on educational staff workloads).

Educational staff teaching and supervising research in doctoral programmes benefit from time allowances for research and writing in order to develop a research culture and remain on the cutting edge of their disciplines. Ongoing professional development opportunities related to delivering doctoral level instruction and providing research supervision are also in place.

#### **EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:**

- job descriptions and workload allocations
- hiring, contract and interview procedures and required documentation for applicants
- workload calculation tools
- summary reports on faculty who teach and/or supervise research in doctoral level programmes, including the background, experience and qualifications of full, part-time and adjunct faculty
- guidelines on the roles of those involved in doctoral level programmes (e.g. supervisors, mentors, second readers, external reviewers, etc).
- appeals procedures
- publication records
- faculty development policy
- educational development records
- research leave records and policies
- book purchase allowances
- conference attendance records
- written policy for staff and faculty development and matching budget
- line managing procedures, annual review procedures, job descriptions and terms of reference for all personnel
- pastoral care provision for personnel
- internal appraisal of faculty, administration and board
- employment and recruitment policy documents

### **Supplemental Resources<sup>5</sup>**

*Guidelines for Research Doctoral Programmes*

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<sup>5</sup> <https://icete.info/resources/supplemental-sg-gete-resources/>

## A4. COMMUNITY AND CONTEXT

**Standard:** Institutions display healthy community dynamics in active response to context.

**Guidelines:**

### A4.1 - Internal learning community

Institutions foster a healthy sense of community life among their members. This includes strategies to develop healthy relationships, provide student support systems, facilitate graduate employment and alumni care and nourish a community where character is modelled and can be emulated. These strategies relate to all modes of educational delivery and all programme levels.

Institutions consider community life as a core component of theological education and all students, members of staff, faculty and governing board are actively engaged. Non-curricular activities are designed to develop the community and to contribute to the institutions' mission and vision. Particular care is given to intentionally create both local and international learning communities for research-based doctoral programmes in order to increase global awareness and discourage isolated scholarship.

Although preference is given to the cultivation of responsible character in community, disciplinary regulations and procedures are in place as appropriate.

### A4.2 - Stakeholder community

Institutions see themselves as serving Christian faith communities and churches and strategically build relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders that include alumni, churches, supporting ministry organisations, other theological institutions and donors. These relationships include accurate communication, consultation and sharing of information. The institution actively cooperates with other academic and professional communities.

### A4.3 - Civil community

Institutions nurture awareness of local and global cultures and contexts and develop activities of theological reflection and teaching accordingly. As appropriate, institutions are connected to and culturally embedded within the broader community composed of civil authorities, cultural representatives, other higher educational institutions and local neighbourhoods.

### A4.4 – Communication

Institutions understand that good communication is constituent to healthy community and information is developed and disseminated as is appropriate to various audiences within the community. Internal information is accurate, objective, updated and readily accessible. This includes, for example, student handbooks, faculty handbooks, internal and external policy repositories, course information, fee schedules, budgets, board minutes, employment opportunities, publicity and general news of school life.

**EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:**

- community character covenants
- disciplinary regulations and procedures
- social gatherings, small groups, care groups
- pastoral care provision
- board of governors' representation
- student, faculty and staff involvement in local churches, including placement opportunities for students
- integration with local communities in ministry placements
- consultation events, attendance of civil and stakeholder community events

- promotional materials
- written policies on contextualisation
- social and community involvement
- contact and dialogue with other educational institutions
- application forms with references from churches
- student handbooks, faculty handbooks, internal and external policy repositories, course information, fee schedules, board minutes, budgets, employment opportunities, general publicity
- communication policies

## A5. EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

**Standard:** Institutions have educational resources that support their mission and strategy.

**Guidelines:**

### A5.1 - Student services

Institutions ensure that student support is adequate, readily accessible and fit for purpose. Students are informed of available services which may include qualified tutors and advisers.

Student services take into account special needs, exceptional circumstances, diversity in student population, diversity of levels and nature of programmes, issues of mobility across educational systems, the shift towards student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support and services provided to on-campus students and to online and distance learners are of comparable quality although the delivery method may vary. Likewise, for doctoral research students, specific administrative and academic support is in place that is tailored to their communication needs and to the nature of their studies.

Induction programmes for new students are available and tailored to the nature of each programme. Induction to taught programmes at undergraduate and post-graduate level is differentiated from induction to research programmes at doctoral level.

### A5.2 - Study facilities

Institutions provide study facilities that are adequate and readily accessible. Institutions offering on-site educational programmes provide the appropriate spaces for educational activities (e.g. classrooms), student accommodation and food services. Institutions offering doctoral level programmes with residential components provide dedicated spaces for student research activities, suitable either for residential students and/or for students that study at a distance and only come to the campus for short periods of time.

The site, layout, buildings, furnishings and IT provision of the institution are suitable for its purpose and in accordance with local standards and building regulations. Efficient maintenance facilitates the implementation of the institutions' mission.

Institutions ensure that all services are in accordance with normal local standards, including accessibility requirements.

### A5.3 - Library/learning resource centres

Institutions ensure access to adequate learning resources, such as libraries. The library has a development plan that is suitable in terms of quality, quantity, level, variety, concentration, theological orientation, subjects covered, and language of the programmes being offered. Institutions offering doctoral level programmes ensure, on admission, that students are able to access library holdings that are suitable to support their intended research and that might involve interdisciplinary research and access to resources that are located in libraries other than the institutional library (e.g. institutional partnerships, collaborative arrangements and use of local libraries). The library development plan is reflected in the institutional budget. The library holdings support the instructional objectives, levels and learning outcomes of the institutions' programmes.

Library facilities and equipment allow for adequate preservation, use and expansion of library holdings. Library administration is carried out by a sufficient number of trained staff who have access to ongoing professional development. Doctoral programmes ensure that library staff is trained to support research students who may be working from a distance.

Distance education programmes, including programmes involving doctoral research, provide adequate and readily accessible access to digital holdings and/or facilitate students in accessing local resource centres and libraries.

#### **A5.4 - Information management**

Institutions effectively collect, analyse and use relevant information as it relates to their programmes and other activities. Data collection and analysis involves students and staff in providing and analysing data and in planning follow-up activities that relate to internal quality assurance.

Institutions utilise data, for example, to build on good practice, evaluate programme relevance, assess design and delivery, monitor marking trends and grade inflation, determine key performance indicators, create student population profiles, collect student satisfaction surveys, evaluate learning resources and students support systems, analyse career paths of graduates and deal with progression, success, failure and dropout rates.

Appropriate record-keeping is in place that includes updated contact information, student files, grades and transcripts, finances, alumni.

#### **A5.5 – Information Technology**

Information Technology (IT) and electronic instruments are employed and managed, as appropriate, by qualified personnel and are employed in the service of the educational mission and organisational structures of the institution.

Institutions offering programmes at doctoral level ensure that educational staff and students are equipped and trained to use appropriate hardware, software and have access to digital databases and resources.

#### **A5.6 - Virtual Learning Environments and educational resources**

Institutions offering programmes that entail distance or online education provide the necessary virtual learning platforms, sufficient Internet bandwidth as well as qualified technical, student and faculty support.

#### **A5.7 – Teach-out and contingency provisions**

Institutions ensure that, in the case of the closure of a programme, there are contingency policies and/or teach-out provisions in place for enrolled students.

#### **EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:**

- QA policies for student services
- policies for students with special needs and exceptional circumstances
- student support staff
- student mobility data
- master campus development plan
- library holdings (physical and digital)
- information management processes and information databases
- documentation on the impact of information in programme management
- library catalogue, library committee minutes, library development plan and budget
- database, demonstration of record-keeping procedure and relative related software
- IT strategy, links to strategic plan development, terms of reference and inventory

### **Supplemental Resources<sup>6</sup>**

*Guidelines for Research Doctoral Programmes*

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<sup>6</sup> <https://icete.info/resources/supplemental-sg-gete-resources/>

## A6. FINANCES AND SUSTAINABILITY

**Standard:** Institutions have suitable financial potential, planning, policies and procedures.

**Guidelines:**

### A6.1 - Financial potential and planning

Institutions provide rationale and evidence that sufficient financial resources are available to sustain their mission. In terms of financial planning, budgetary procedures are in place and a comprehensive, approved business plan matches the mission and strategic planning of the institution. Fundraising and other income sources are appropriately allocated to operational costs, contingency funds and investments.

### A6.2 - Financial policies and procedures

Clear written policies are in place for establishing, approving and revising budgets. Procedures are in place to ensure that all spending is accounted for and appropriately authorised within budgetary forecasts. Likewise, all incoming funds are appropriately documented, allocated and acknowledged. Accounting procedures are maintained and audited at professional level by qualified personnel.

### A6.3 – Sustainability

Institutions have appropriate funding to support the quality of their programmes and other activities. There is demonstrated continuity in income and expenses over time. Institutional budgets manifest reasonable expenditures and forward-looking investments to serve the mission of the institution. The financial condition of the institution aims at stability of operations, investment in personnel, adequate workloads and allowance of vacation time and research leaves. Sustainability is typically demonstrated over time, hence new schools that have not yet graduated one class in their programmes may be advised against immediate accreditation.

### A6.4 - Remuneration and fees

Staff and faculty salaries, social security, pensions and fringe benefits are reasonably comparable to the prevailing scales of the country or otherwise agreed upon in writing. All student fees are transparent and public and give due consideration both to the financial ability of the students and to the actual expenses of the institution. Both personnel compensation and student fees are reviewed regularly.

### A6.5 – Fundraising

Fundraising procedures are transparent and illustrate true needs. Fundraising proposals are truthful, and reports are marked by gratefulness.

#### EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:

- financial policies and records
- budgets, presentation of accounts and budgetary meeting minutes
- annual externally audited financial statement
- documents matching financial planning with strategic plans
- overall health and low rates of personnel turnover
- satisfactory student enrolment with statistics and projections
- programme continuity
- fundraising proposals and reports

## B. PROGRAMME STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

### B1. HOLISTIC INTEGRATION

**Standard:** Institutions form their students within a holistic approach to theological education, carefully integrating spiritual formation, character education, academic achievement and practical training.

**Guidelines:**

#### **B1.1 - Holistic integration**

Institutions recognise the foundational importance of integrating academically-focused and competence-oriented learning activities with spiritual formation and character education. Holistic curricula give proper attention to learning activities geared to producing knowledge and understanding in the various disciplines of biblical, historical and theological study, without neglecting activities that nourish spiritual formation, character building and practical competences. All programme components are linked to programme learning outcomes and learning activities.

#### **B1.2 - Spiritual formation**

Institutions include and monitor outcomes and learning activities in their programmes related to spiritual formation and provide community contexts where spiritual formation is nourished and practiced. Mentoring services are in place for personal, spiritual and ministry formation.

#### **B1.3 - Character education**

Institutions include and monitor outcomes and learning activities in their programmes related to character and virtue education, both through specific courses dealing with virtue knowledge, virtue reasoning and virtue practice and through the integration of character and virtue education across the curriculum. Learning communities intentionally provide a context where character and virtue are modelled and can be emulated.

#### **B1.4 - Academic achievement**

Institutions include and monitor outcomes and learning activities in their programmes related to the study of academic theology. Institutions operate at the academic level that is expected for the levels it offers. Students' experience of academic training in theology is in line with the level descriptors of higher education in the relevant frameworks. In addition to subject knowledge and understanding, students develop intellectual virtues and abilities such as critical thinking, ability to find information and ability to apply knowledge. Students are motivated and equipped to be lifelong learners.

#### **B1.5 - Practical training**

Institutions distinguish between generic (transferrable) and subject-specific competences in their programs and outcomes. Institutions include and monitor learning activities related to developing specific competences that are typically required of theology graduates in their contexts. Institutions provide appropriate opportunities for practical learning through activities such as field placement, work-based learning, experiential learning and reflective practice. Institutions also include and monitor generic learning activities related to developing generic competences such as problem-solving, ability to communicate and work in teams. Students are motivated and equipped to contribute to faith communities and society in a variety of contexts.

**EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:**

- holistic curricular map of academic, ministry skills and competences, spiritual formation and character education
- graduate profiles
- list of learning activities related to different learning outcomes
- strategy documents related to spiritual formation and character education
- community enhancement plans
- comparability studies with higher education academic descriptors
- mentoring programmes
- programme learning outcomes and course syllabi
- learning materials
- training and in-service programmes
- distinction between generic and subject specific competence outcomes

## B2. PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

**Standard:** Institutions design and implement approved, outcome-based programmes that are fit for purpose in context.

**Guidelines:**

### B2.1 - Design and Approval Processes

Institutions have approved processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The design of programmes includes analysis and consultation, determination of learning outcomes and graduate profiles, curricular structure, level and duration, course content and delivery strategy. Institutions involve students and stakeholders in designing, developing and evaluating programmes that reflect their vision and mission in context.

Programmes are subject to formal institutional approval processes and regular evaluation.

### B2.2 - Outcomes and fitness for purpose

Institutions articulate curricula that are fit for purpose and design programmes that meet clearly defined learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes are regularly reviewed and aligned with the institution's mission and strategic vision and with stakeholder input regarding the knowledge, skills and graduate attributes required for varying contexts.

Learning outcomes determine curricular maps, course learning activities and assessment. Learning outcomes normally include academic outcomes, outcomes related to practical skills and competences as well as outcomes related to spiritual formation and character education.

### B2.3 - Curricula and syllabi

Institutions have published curricula for each programme of study and course syllabi that indicate outcomes and objectives, content, credit and duration, instructional methods and assessment criteria. Research based programmes, such as doctoral level programmes, have specific programme descriptors and guidelines for students, teachers and supervisors.

Curricula and syllabi are developed in close cooperation with the teaching faculty and with stakeholders who share in the ownership of the overall curriculum criteria and design. All programmes and curricula undergo quality assurance processes leading to institutional approval and external validation.

### B2.4 - Graduate profiles

Institution develop and regularly review graduate profiles that match programme learning outcomes. Institutions also regularly review employability opportunities for graduates and review programmes accordingly.

### B2.5 - Content, level and feasibility

For taught programmes, institutions prescribe a minimum amount of credits in theological and biblical studies in the curriculum that is not less than  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the total credits. Curricula reflect the level descriptors and outcomes of each programme. Courses reflect progression and sequencing, from foundational to advanced levels of competence. Programmes are designed in such a way that students can feasibly complete them in the given time frames.

For research programmes, institutions ensure that students are sufficiently prepared for independent research work and are adequately supported, guided and supervised during the dissertation production phase.

## **B2.6 - Credit allocation**

Institutions use credit counting to quantify student learning activities, with the focus being on the demonstration of learning outcomes rather than on the accumulation of hours/years. Contact hours (face-to-face instruction) constitute one of many possible learning activities but are not an essential requirement for assigning course credit. Credit allocation is modality neutral and equally adapted to diverse models of distance and campus-based instruction.

Syllabi quantify duration and related credit-count and school calendars balance the distribution of learning time. Credits are awarded for all learning activities that match learning outcomes and institutions make provision for allocation of credit for prior learning, non-formal and informal learning.

Depending on national frameworks, credit allocation may, or may not apply to doctoral level research programmes.

## **B2.7 - Context**

Curricular content and delivery modes are contextually appropriate and address the challenges and opportunities of the stakeholders' social and religious environments. Graduates are prepared for different vocations, various social and cultural contexts, different service settings and employment contexts.

## **B2.8 - Monitoring Processes**

Institutions have regular monitoring and review processes to ensure that programmes achieve intended outcomes. These processes are included in the institutions' internal quality assurance processes and involve students and other stakeholders in improving the effectiveness of programmes.

Monitoring evaluates programme content in light of the latest research to ensure that it is up to date; how programmes are responding to the needs of students, stakeholders and society; issues of student progression, completion and workload; student satisfaction in areas of teaching, learning and assessment; overall student satisfaction and expectations; the fitness for purpose of the learning environment and support services; the degree to which programme outcomes are accomplished in the lives of students; the degree to which graduates are able to find placement in settings where their training is being put to good use; the impact of graduates in various spheres.

For doctoral level programmes, institutions pay particular attention to attrition rates, graduation rates and average completion time, implementing improvement strategies where necessary.

Institutions adapt, update and modify programmes as a result of monitoring processes. Revised aspects of all programmes are communicated to all those concerned.

## **B2.9 – Outcomes for doctoral programmes**

Doctoral programmes may be developed with different kinds of purposes in mind. These normally include equipping those who will research, write, teach, and give leadership in theological education and in other aspects of the life of the church.

Within a framework of Christian identity and commitment, the doctoral qualification will be awarded to students who are church members commended for faithful discipleship and recognized leadership, and who demonstrate the following qualities through appropriate examination:<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> This list is taken from the *Beirut Benchmarks* <https://icete.info/resources/the-beirut-benchmarks/>

1. Comprehensive understanding, having demonstrated a breadth of systematic understanding of a field of study relevant to the Christian community of faith, and mastery of the skills and methods of research appropriate to that field.
2. Critical skills, faithfully exercised, having demonstrated their capacity for critical analysis, independent evaluation of primary and secondary source materials, and synthesis of new and inter-related ideas through coherent argumentation, and their commitment to exercise such skills on the foundation of biblical faithfulness to Jesus Christ and his church.
3. Serious inquiry with integrity, having demonstrated the ability to conceive, design and implement a substantial project of inquiry resulting in a sustained and coherent thesis, and to do so with Christian and scholarly integrity.
4. Creative and original contribution, having produced, as a result of such disciplined inquiry, a creative and original contribution that extends the frontiers of knowledge, or develops fresh insights in the articulation and contextual relevance of the Christian tradition, some of which merit national or international refereed publication.
5. Contextual relevance, having shown their capacity, in the course of their doctoral program and in their expectation of its future potential, for biblically-informed critical engagement with the realities of their cultural contexts.
6. Ability to communicate, having shown an ability in communicating about their area of expertise to peer-level academic audiences, and, where appropriate, to non-specialists in local Christian communities and the wider society in culturally relevant ways, including their mother tongue, for example through teaching, preaching or writing.
7. Missional impact, having shown that they are committed, and can be expected to use the fruit of their doctoral study, the skills it has given them and the opportunities it affords them, to promote the kingdom of God and advance the mission of the church (both local & global), through Christ-like and transformational service, to the glory of God.

Growth in codes of academic and research ethics relevant to the kind of scholarship students are engaged in and to future vocational service are also included as programme outcomes.

**EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:**

- criteria and policies for programme design and approval process
- contextual research and stakeholder involvement in programme design and approval
- programme learning outcomes and graduate profiles
- curriculum maps, course syllabi / module descriptors
- level descriptors and progression/sequencing criteria
- information on calculations of credit
- placement opportunities and structures
- programme development, objectives and learning outcome criteria
- mapping of curriculum to institutional mission and strategic plan
- programme outcomes included in an academic/student handbook
- student feedback
- evidence of internal stakeholder engagement in curricular design and syllabi writing

**Supplemental Resources<sup>8</sup>**

*Designing Programmes with Learning Outcomes*  
*Comparing International Credit Systems*  
*Guidelines for Research Doctoral Programmes*

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<sup>8</sup> <https://icete.info/resources/supplemental-sg-gete-resources/>

## **B3. LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT**

**Standard:** Institutions implement good educational practice in areas of learning, teaching and assessment.

**Guidelines:**

### **B3.1 - Educational philosophy and andragogy**

Institutions have a clearly-articulated educational philosophy that is grounded theologically and that undergirds the curriculum and the learning and teaching strategy. The entire learning community understands and actively engages with the institution's approach to the nature, purpose and practice of theological education.

Institutions also have a clearly articulated andragogic practice, grounded in educational theory, studies of best practice and a theological understanding of adult learning. Andragogic practices determine learning and teaching strategies at appropriate level and academic depth for each programme. Institutions make their statements of educational philosophy and andragogy publicly available.

### **B3.2 - Student-centred learning and teaching and assessment**

Institutions deliver their programmes in a way that encourages and motivates students to engage in self-reflection and take an active role the learning process. Students are encouraged to be autonomous learners with adequate guidance, support and input from teachers in a climate of mutual respect.

Students are respected in the diversity of their needs and, where suitable, are provided with flexible learning paths, diversity of delivery modes, differentiated andragogy and with teaching that is sensitive to a variety in learning styles. Equal opportunity policies and strategies are in place in the delivery of teaching and learning. Institutions have appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.

### **B3.3 - Course design and delivery**

Institutions implement good practice in course design in relation to delivery strategies and to the level of the programme. Delivery approaches include, but are not limited to, residential face-to-face delivery, research-oriented programmes, competency-based theological education, hybrid or blended programmes, extension programmes and fully online programmes.

In choosing delivery strategies, institutions demonstrate creativity and awareness of issues such as accessibility, quality, cost and scalability. Delivery strategies are evaluated in light of programme learning outcomes, as not all outcomes might be achievable through all delivery modes. Academic and student services offered across different models of instruction are of comparable access and quality. Institutions offering the same program through diverse delivery approaches ensure that a uniform level of academic rigor is maintained, though the learning activities may vary widely.

For doctoral programmes, students and faculty need to engage in the kinds of processes that support doctoral level learning outcomes. These might include class sessions, specific kinds of learning activities, approaches to evaluation of student achievement, feedback, and the provision of mentoring. Faculty are available to interact with students (even at a distance), supporting their progress in courses, seminars, and in independent research and dissertation production. As students progress through doctoral programmes, clear policies and guidelines are in place regarding the process by which a student accomplishes the requirements of the programme.

### **B3.4 – Variety**

Institutions utilise a variety of approaches to teaching and learning and are attentive to sociological changes impacting learning abilities and learning styles. Appropriate consideration is given to new technologies that enhance delivery. Institutions also implement different approaches to learning in relation to course aims and learning outcomes. Approaches to assessment are also varied and tailored to learning outcomes.

### **B3.5 - Delivery feedback**

Institutions regularly gather feedback from students and from stakeholders on course delivery, on the quality of teaching, supervision and support methodologies and on the overall effectiveness of course design, and consequently implement improvement strategies. Feedback can be collected using a variety of methods, such as student feedback, peer-evaluation or stakeholder research.

### **B3.6 – Assessment**

Institutions treat assessment as a formative learning activity that is part of the overall learning and teaching process that contributes to students’ motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. Students are given feedback which is linked to advice on the learning process.

Consistent and fair assessment is carried out in accordance with requirements that reflect programme and course learning outcomes and the programme level. Institutions stipulate and publish assessment regulations, and marking criteria are implemented consistently by faculty. Regulations include consideration of mitigating circumstances and appeals procedures are in place. Students are accurately informed of assessment requirements, marking criteria, submission procedures, marking procedures, penalties and the possibilities of resits, extensions and appeals. Penalties and procedures are in place to consistently address cases of academic misconduct, with particular reference to plagiarism issues. Students are appropriately trained to recognise and avoid academic misconduct.

Faculty are familiar with assessment regulations and existing testing and examination methods and are supported in developing their assessment skills.

For research doctoral programme, in addition to an extensive dissertation, assessment tools may include key assignments, capstone course projects and comprehensive exams.

#### **EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:**

- articulated educational philosophy including andragogy documentation
- plans for flexible learning paths and examples of variety
- variety of delivery methods and andragogy
- complaint and appeal procedures and policies
- student and stakeholder feedback policies, procedures and results
- board minutes discussing design and delivery issues
- delivery strategies and course syllabi and learning materials
- assessment policies, regulations, procedures and published marking criteria
- mitigating circumstances criteria and procedures
- faculty development strategies
- feedback results and procedures including feedback to students following assessment

### **Supplemental Resources<sup>9</sup>**

*Standards and Guidelines for Online Evangelical Theological Education*

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<sup>9</sup> <https://icete.info/resources/supplemental-sg-gete-resources/>

## **B4. STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION**

**Standard:** Institutions formulate and implement suitable policies for the student 'life cycle' that include admission, progression, recognition and certification.

### **Guidelines:**

#### **B4.1 – Admission**

Institutions have admissions procedures that are clear and fit-for-purpose, and application forms and competent support staff to assist students in the application process. Admissions procedures are public, implemented consistently and transparently and are sensitive to issues of equality of access and of student mobility across higher education systems.

Institutions have clear candidate profiles that can be used during the admissions process to evaluate the suitability of candidate students for specific programmes. In addition to academic access standards, candidate students might be evaluated on the basis of their Christian commitment, character and sense of vocational calling. A recommendation from the student's local church or employer is often appropriate. Institutions support academic equality, making provisions for special access cases, candidates with special needs and exceptional circumstances.

Institutions admit students whose academic potential allows them to achieve the academic objectives of the graduate profile and the programme level. Clear academic admission standards are published by institutions for each programme, specifying the required previous level of study. These admissions standards are aligned with comparable higher education access.

Admission procedures to doctoral level programmes verify that candidates have the necessary academic accomplishments, prerequisite knowledge, skills and aptitude for doctoral study as well as the necessary time and resources available to succeed in the programme and complete it in a timely manner. Faculty who teach and supervise in doctoral programmes are involved in reviewing potential candidates and have input into the decision of who their students will be.

#### **B4.2 – Progression**

Institutions have progression regulations that are clear, fit-for-purpose, public and are applied consistently. The requirements for progression between qualification levels (i.e. bachelor to master or master to doctoral) are transparent and clear and take into consideration comparable standards in the wider national academic community and issues of student mobility.

#### **B4.3 – Recognition**

Institutions have recognition of learning regulations that are clear, fit-for-purpose, public and are applied consistently. Institutions give fair recognition to higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, as well as to the recognition of non-formal and informal learning where suitable for programme outcomes. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on national and international recognition principles and on cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and international agencies.

Recognition regulations are applied in sensitivity to student mobility within and across higher education systems.

#### **B4.4 - Graduation and certification**

Institutions have clear, fit-for-purpose and public graduation and certification regulations that are applied consistently. Graduation requirements demonstrate the achievement of programme learning outcomes. Institutions make use of appropriate assessment procedures, such as final exams or ongoing monitoring, to ensure that graduating students have satisfactorily met the intended programme outcomes.

Students are informed of graduation requirements at the time of admission and no changes will affect their course of study unless mutually agreed. Institutions retain the right to review graduation of students on the basis of other factors in addition to academic achievement. These factors may, for example, reflect the learning outcomes of the programme, cases of academic misconduct and issues of ethics and character.

Certification documents may include a diploma, an accreditation certificate, a transcript, a character reference letter or accompanying supplemental document for international mobility. Certification includes essential data such as the student's identity, date of completion, level of degree, qualification gained, grade average and classification of degree, achieved learning outcomes, content, credit value (if applicable), issuing school as well as the context, level and status of the completed programme.

Certification provisions are applied in sensitivity to student mobility within and across higher education systems.

#### **EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:**

- admission regulations, procedures, forms and criteria
- candidate profiles
- mobility policies
- academic access standards for each programme
- special needs and equality policies and provision
- progression regulations
- recognition regulations
- graduation requirements
- samples of diplomas, accreditation certificates, transcripts, character reference letters, accompanying supplement document
- final examination procedures or equivalent

#### **Supplemental Resources<sup>10</sup>**

*Special Access Guidelines*

*Comparing International Credit Systems*

*Accreditation of Formal, Non-formal and Informal Theological Education*

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<sup>10</sup> <https://icete.info/resources/supplemental-sg-gete-resources/>

## B5. QUALIFICATION NOMENCLATURE AND CREDITS

**Standard:** Institutions follow internationally recognised qualification nomenclature and credit-counting systems.

**Guidelines:**

### B5.1 - Qualification nomenclature

Institutions demonstrate awareness of national qualification frameworks for higher education and of international systems of degree nomenclature and adopt the system that is most suitable for their context and students. Institutions provide comparability tables to enhance international mobility such as the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011) published by the UNESCO.<sup>11</sup> Degree nomenclature takes into account issues of duration, level, nature of study and credits (where applicable).

### B5.2 – Credits

Institutions demonstrate awareness of international systems of credit counting (e.g. Carnegie, ECTS, UK Credits, etc.), and define the expected student workload through the system that is most suitable for their context and students. Institutions provide comparability tables of credit value to enhance international mobility.

Depending on the context, research doctoral programmes may or may not award credits.

#### EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:

- minutes, documentation, policy engaging with international nomenclature and credit counting issues
- definition of expected workload in terms of credits
- international nomenclature and credit comparative tables
- description of degrees in terms of duration, level, nature of study and credits
- communication to students on nomenclature and credit-counting issues
- samples of documentation and international correspondence relative to student mobility
- national higher education classification frameworks
- information on calculation of credits

#### Supplemental resources<sup>12</sup>

*Comparing International Credit Systems*

<sup>11</sup> <http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/international-standard-classification-education-isced>

<sup>12</sup> <https://icete.info/resources/supplemental-sg-gete-resources/>

## SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

The following additional resources have been developed to be used in conjunction with the SG-GETE and are published on the ICETE website:<sup>13</sup>

- Comparing International Credit Systems
- Standards and Guidelines for Online Evangelical Theological Education
- Guidelines for Research Doctoral Programme

Further guidelines for good practice can be found in an expanding list of resources that are shared in the ICETE network. Some of these resources may contain information that is region-specific and not necessarily applicable everywhere. At the time of publishing, the following are available on the ICETE website:<sup>14</sup>

- Developing Internal Quality Assurance Policies (ECTE)
- Special Access Guidelines (ECTE)
- Designing Programmes with Learning Outcomes and Competences (ECTE)
- Accreditation of Formal, Non-formal and Informal Theological Education (ECTE)
- Guidelines for Distance and Online Education (ECTE)
- Protocol for Online Site Visits (ECTE)
- Guidelines for Dual and Joint Accreditation (ECTE)

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<sup>13</sup> They can be found at <https://icete.info/resources/supplemental-sg-gete-resources/>

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