



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

**STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR
GLOBAL EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL
EDUCATION
- 2019 -**



SGGETE

ICETE Standards and Guidelines for
Global Evangelical Theological Education

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INTRODUCTION

HISTORY OF THE SG-GETE

This is the first version of the *Standards and Guidelines for Global Evangelical Theological Education - 2019*.

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 (<http://www.icete.edu.org/manifesto/>), 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 is being formally recommended in its present form to the ICETE network of quality assurance agencies.

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 includes undergraduate and postgraduate theology degrees. These degrees are commonly ‘taught’ degrees, but the SG-GETE can also accommodate research degrees. The SG-GETE may be seen as a distinct but corollary document to the ICETE Beirut Benchmarks (2010) and the Bangalore Affirmations (2011) that deal with doctoral level programmes (research and professional).

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.¹ 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.

¹ 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.

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The current version of the *Standards and Guidelines for Global Evangelical Theological Education - 2019* was completed by the Review Committee, 5 April 2019. The Review Committee welcomes feedback and dialogue from all ICETE member associations regarding this first version (2019) of the SG-GETE in order to enrich future versions.

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 and budget operations. The vision and mission statement clearly reflects 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
- 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 practice 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 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.

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, student 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
- evidences of internal stakeholder involvement in developing and implementing internal quality
- evidences of external stakeholder involvement in quality assurance

Resources:

Appendix A: *Developing an Internal Quality Assurance Policy*

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 and monitored to ensure personal sustainability and realistic workloads across the institution.

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 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 should be 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.

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:

- job descriptions and workload allocations
- hiring, contract and interview procedures and required documentation for applicants
- appeals procedures
- publication records
- 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

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.

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.

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 would include, 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, issues of mobility across educational systems and 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.

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. 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. 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.

Distance education programmes 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.

A5.6 - Virtual Learning Environments and educational resources

Institutions offering distance or online educational programmes, provide the necessary virtual learning platforms as well as qualified technical, student and faculty support.

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
- 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, procedures linking to strategic plan development, terms of reference and inventory

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 provides 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 degrees 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

Programmes are designed to meet clearly defined learning outcomes.

Institutions articulate curricula that are fit for purpose. Learning outcomes are regularly reviewed and aligned with the institution's mission and strategic vision and with stakeholder input regarding the knowledge, skills and attributes required for varying contexts of ministry

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. Curricula and syllabi are developed in close cooperation with the teaching faculty and 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

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

B2.5 - Content, level and feasibility

Institutions prescribe a minimum amount of credits in theological and biblical studies in the curriculum that is not less than 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.

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.

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 will evaluate 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.

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

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

Resources:

Appendix B: *Designing Programmes with Learning Outcomes*

Appendix D: *Comparing International Credit Systems*

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. 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.

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, quality of teaching methodologies and overall design effectiveness 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. Institutions stipulate and publish assessment regulations and marking criteria are implemented consistently by faculty. Regulations include consideration of mitigating circumstances and appeal 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.

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

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:

- articulated educational philosophy including andragogy documentation
- plans for flexible learning paths
- 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
- examples of variety
- course syllabi
- feedback results and procedures
- learning materials
- assessment policies and procedures
- published marking criteria
- mitigating circumstances criteria and procedures
- faculty development strategies
- records of assessment feedback to students following assessment
- assessment regulations, marking criteria

Resources:

Appendix F: *Standards and Guidelines for Online Theological Education*

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. Clear academic admission standards are published by institutions for each programme, specifying the required previous level of study. These admissions standards will be aligned with comparable higher education access.

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) are transparent and clear. They take into consideration comparable standards in the wider academic community in their country 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. 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 reflect the learning outcomes of the programme and, in evangelical institutions, typically include 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, achieved learning outcomes, content, credit value, 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

Resources:

Appendix C: *Special Access Guidelines*

Appendix D: *Comparing International Credit Systems*

Appendix E: *Best Practice in Accreditation of Formal, Informal and Non-formal Theological Education*

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. Degree nomenclature takes into account issues of duration, level, nature of study and credits.

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.

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

Resources:

Appendix D: *Comparing International Credit Systems*

APPENDICES

The following appendices supplement selected guidelines and provide further explanation of good practice.

APPENDIX A: DEVELOPING INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICIES

In a healthy quality assurance system, institutions own, develop and implement their quality assurance processes. External quality assurance activities serve to ensure the suitability of these processes and the efficacy of their implementation. Institutions therefore should have a clear written policy for internal quality assurance.

The following are some indications of good practice in developing and implementing an internal quality assurance policy:²

- The policy should have formal status, meaning that it has been approved by the institution's governance, and be available to all stakeholders and the public.
- The policy should form part of institutions' strategic management within a cycle of continuous improvement that is translated into practices and processes that contributes to institutional accountability.
- All internal stakeholders should take responsibility for the quality of the institution and contribute to develop and implement this policy at all levels. External stakeholders should also be involved.
- The internal quality assurance policy should reflect the relationship between research and learning & teaching and take account of both the national context in which the institution operates, the institutional context and its strategic approach.
- The policy should support areas such as:
 - o the organisation of a quality assurance system,
 - o departments, schools, faculties and other organisational units as well as those of institutional leadership, individual staff members and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance;
 - o academic integrity and freedom and vigilance against academic fraud;
 - o guarding against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff;
 - o the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance
 - o evaluation of activities that are subcontracted or carried out by other parties.
- The policy should be implemented, monitored and revised regularly.

² Quoted from the European Standards and Guidelines (1.1).

APPENDIX B: DESIGNING PROGRAMMES WITH LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCES

Learning outcomes, competences, learning activities and syllabi design represent the starting point of programme design.

Learning outcomes express what the student will be, know, understand and be able to do after completion of a process of learning. For theological schools, learning outcomes are not limited to the areas of knowledge and understanding but also consider holistic aspects including practical skills, character, interpersonal attitudes and personal spiritual life.

Competences (general / transferrable and specific) express ways that graduates can be expected to apply a combination of learning outcomes (i.e. knowledge, skills, holistic formation) to life, work and ministry contexts. The choice of holistic learning outcomes and competences is crucial to curriculum building and influences all learning activities taking place in the school. Theological education is a wide field with many possible learning outcomes. Graduates of theological institutions will be required to demonstrate competency in diverse range of ministries. In determining which learning outcomes and competences should form part of the graduate profile, institutions must consider their own context, constituency, needs, mission statement and the cultural, ecclesiastical and social contexts of its graduates.

The process of defining learning outcomes and general and specific competences should include a consultation with the school's constituency, internal and external stakeholders, employers, student representatives, alumni and the school's faculty. Institutions should also consult international and national guidelines, level descriptors and higher education benchmarks.

Learning activities are constructed in a curriculum to match all learning outcomes and competences.

A good curriculum is focused, unified and relevant and institutions must be able to demonstrate that learning activities are mapped to learning outcomes and vice-versa.

A good curriculum also includes a variety of learning activities. Some learning activities will contribute to outcomes in knowledge and understanding and others will contribute to the areas of spiritual formation or character building. Others yet will help develop generic and subject-specific competences. In a holistic programme, learning activities should include a combination of lectures, course work, independent study, research papers, thesis writing, field studies, practical projects, group work, internships, habituation practices, spiritual direction, mentoring programmes, etc..

Syllabi. Updated standardised syllabi should be available and include adequate information, such as:

- o course learning outcomes and competences
- o objectives of the different learning activities in the course
- o explanation of the relevance and contribution of the course in relation to the competences expressed in the graduate profile
- o number of credits awarded
- o teaching and learning methodologies used
- o evaluation and assessment criteria as related to the learning outcomes
- o minimum passing requirements for the award of credit

Syllabi must be written for all courses and include all the activities that contribute to achieving credit within the programme. Learning activities must be justified in terms of the requirements of the amount of credit given and in terms of the relevance to achieving and evaluating the learning outcomes of the course.

APPENDIX C: SPECIAL ACCESS GUIDELINES

Institutions normally require standard access qualifications to higher educational programmes that are in line with national and international standards.

It is however possible to consider the following special provisions for access to higher education.

Mature students. If a mature applicant can demonstrate that his/her professional or personal experience has produced results comparable to the outcomes of a given certification, admission to higher education should be considered. For a bachelor level programme, for example, this might apply to a mature student who is over 21 and has not attempted to achieve standard entry qualifications in the last 5 years.

In the case of a substantial use of mature student access, schools will need to develop specific questionnaires, student self-evaluation reports and procedures for collecting and demonstrating professional and personal experiences.

Equivalency examination. One useful tool to verify the fitness of mature students is the equivalency examination. Where this solution is adopted, students without the necessary legal requirements (generally adult students) may sit for an examination that proves their ability to study at the higher educational level. Institutions that choose to devise equivalency examinations must do so in consideration of the final outcomes of their degree programme and of the necessary knowledge, understanding and learning skills required to perform successfully in a higher education programme of study.

In the case of substantial use of an equivalency examination, institutions will need to provide models of the examination that will be used. The examination should include two components: one whereby the general level knowledge is certified and the other which certifies the academic skills of the candidate. This second part is very important and may include, for example, the reading of texts of selected difficulty with subsequent evaluation of the degree of understanding, interpretation and critical thought. Writing and language proficiency should also be examined.

Propaedeutical training. Another possible solution for students without the necessary formal access qualifications is to offer “propaedeutical” training. This is especially useful in Europe at the moment because there are so many differing entry points from which theological schools wish to attract students. Since there are no entry requirements at all into this kind of propaedeutical training, schools should be reasonably rigorous so that only those who genuinely demonstrate their ability to benefit from the school’s level of studies eventually pass.

In the case of substantial use of a propaedeutical year, schools will need to develop objectives for this programme, a set of learning outcomes the programme seeks to achieve and the detailed curricular plan to be used. The duration and content of this curriculum must also be specified and evaluated by the ECTE in advance of its implementation.

Procedures for special access need to be monitored carefully. Where substantial use is made of these special provisions there is the risk of lowering the standard of admission requirements. Care must be taken that this provision does not contribute to lowering of both class and overall degree levels.

It is generally suggested that special access in any programme be limited to 25% of the student body.

APPENDIX D: COMPARING INTERNATIONAL CREDIT SYSTEMS

How can programs or degrees across countries and continents be compared? What degrees can count for access as students move internationally? How can credit systems be translated across international educational standards and practices? Is there something like a common currency? These are questions that particularly important in a global framework like the SGGETE.

General criteria

No international standards. The first thing to notice is that there is no single international standard for the quantitative measurement of educational units (courses, programs, degrees). The transfer of credits from system to another is a matter of calculations and certain ambiguities cannot always be excluded.³ It is not possible, for example, to define globally applicable “total credit requirements for each degree program (i.e. MA, MDiv, etc)” or even to “identify an acceptable range” of credits. Nomenclature and regulations are different in the various educational systems.

For example, whereas the rule MA = 2 years, MDiv = 3 years, MTh = 4 years works in the American structure, in Europe there are different kinds of Master’s degree studies, which generally must comprise at least 300 ECTS and can mean either 5 years full-time; 3 years (180 ECTS) for the Bachelor level plus 2 years (120) ECTS; or 4 years plus 1. Also, in Europe, there is often no difference in duration between an MA and an MTh. The degree nomenclature is thus very difficult to compare.

Need for careful calculations. Since duration (credit requirements for degrees) and nomenclature differ in the various educational systems, institutions should be required to identify the duration of the programs (total credit hours). Transfer across educational systems should always require careful calculation (degree nomenclature alone is not a solid indicator for the duration of programs).

Time based credits? We also need to be aware of the fact that the concept of ‘time based’ credits has been criticized on educational grounds. The credit system puts the emphasis on duration, however in educational terms, achievement can only be measured by the demonstration of competences. How much time a student needs to acquire certain competences is a secondary issue. What ultimately counts are learning outcomes not hours of learning.

However, in the process of growing international mobility in Higher Education and an increasing number of part-time students, the need for comparability of duration emerged. A currency to at least measure tentatively the total learning time a student invests facilitates the comparison of courses and programs. But it should be kept in mind that this is only an auxiliary structure. Therefore, terms such as “notional hours of learning” or “average hours of learning” are often used. While credit systems are helpful tools to quantify educational processes, it should always be clear that the quality of education can only be measured by the assessment of learning outcomes.

³ Robert Wagenaar, “Credit and Credit Reference Systems: A World View,” <http://studylib.net/doc/18677855/credit-and-credit-reference-systems--a-world-view>.

Comparing credit systems

In what follows, two major credit systems (US and ECTS) will be introduced and the most common transfer practices will be explained.⁴

The US-Credit System is based on the so called “Carnegie Unit”, a standard defined in 1906 “as a basis for measuring school work.”⁵ The standard Carnegie Unit is defined as 120 hours of contact time with an instructor, which translates into one hour of instruction on a particular subject per day, five days a week, for twenty-four weeks annually.

In higher education, students receive “credit hours,” a metric derived from the Carnegie Unit and based on the number of “contact hours” students spend in class per week in a given semester. A typical three-credit course, for example, meets for three hours per week over a fifteen-week semester. A student, then, might earn fifteen credit hours per semester (fifteen is standard full-time registration for a semester, thirty for an academic year) *en route* to a four-year bachelor’s degree requiring a total of 120 credits.

Because of the presupposition of contact hours, the Carnegie Unit, as traditionally defined, is difficult to accommodate to modes of distance education that do not involve face-to-face instruction, such as online and correspondence studies.

In 2010, the United States Department of Education issued a new definition of academic credit, required of US higher education institutions by law, that calls for a reasonable approximation of the amount of work required by the traditional Carnegie Unit, while not imposing or presupposing a particular model of instruction. Based on this definition the US federal regulations define one credit as follows:⁶

- One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
- At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practice, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

The actual amount of academic work that goes into a single semester credit hour is often calculated as follows:

- (1) One lecture (taught) or seminar (discussion) credit hour represents 1 hour per week of scheduled class/seminar time and 2 hours of student preparation time. Most lecture and seminar courses are awarded 3 credit hours. Over an entire semester, this formula represents at least 45 hours of class time and 90 hours of student preparation.
- (2) One laboratory credit hour represents 1 hour per week of lecture or discussion time plus 1-2 hours per week of scheduled supervised or independent laboratory work, and 2 hours of student preparation time. Most laboratory courses are awarded up to 4 credit hours. This calculation represents at least 45 hours of class time, between 45 and 90 hours of laboratory time, and 90 hours of student preparation per semester.

⁴ Structure of the U.S. Education System: Credit Systems”, published by the International Affairs Office, U.S. Department of Education (February 2008). <https://sites.ed.gov/international>.

⁵ “The Carnegie Unit. A Century-Old Standard in a Changing Education Landscape” by The Carnegie Foundation (2015). <https://www.carnegiefoundation.org/resources/publications/carnegie-unit>.

⁶ The Code of Federal Regulations, 34 CFR 600.2.

- (3) One practice credit hour (supervised clinical rounds, visual or performing art studio, supervised student teaching, field work, etc.) represents 3-4 hours per week of supervised and /or independent practice. This in turn represents between 45 and 60 hours of work per semester. Blocks of 3 practice credit hours, which equate to a studio or practice course, represent between 135 and 180 total hours of academic work per semester.
- (4) One independent study (thesis or dissertation research) hour is calculated similarly to practice credit hours.
- (5) Internship or apprenticeship credit hours are determined by negotiation between the supervising faculty and the work supervisor at the cooperating site, both of whom must judge and certify different aspects of the student's work. The credit formula is similar to that for practice credit.

Government recognized accrediting agencies basically follow this standard and require institutions of higher learning to apply this definition. Regarding the implications of the new legislation for online and emerging instructional models, the Department of Education has clarified that:

- the new credit requires an equivalent amount of work as that required by the Carnegie system, without requiring strict adherence to classic definitions of contact hours;
- the new credit is modality neutral, applying equally to face-to-face, blended, online and distance instructional models, that are oriented around contact hours, workload or any combination thereof;
- the definition of credit is sufficiently broad and encompassing so as not to exclude certain types of delivery;
- US schools can structure their academic programs with whatever administrative credit system they choose, as long as the official definition of credit is used in applications for Federal financial aid;
- the new definition of credit is compatible with competency-based education and with programs that grant academic credit based on the demonstrated prior learning;
- the definition of credit allows for the assignment of credits by Direct Assessment under certain conditions without necessarily being linked to the fulfilment of a certain amount of clock hours (e.g. a student could receive credit for the course "Algebra 1" by passing an equivalency exam that demonstrates the mastery of the subject);
- the definition of credit does not contain any requirement of "seat-time."⁷

In order to compare the US-System with the European ECTS-System, we have to look at the "total learning time" (comprising class work and all other learning activities). Based on the figures given in the statements above, we can conclude that one US-credit in higher education normally comprises 135 hours of total learning time (normally 45 hours lecture and/or seminar plus 90 hours).

The European ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) follows a different philosophy. It does not start the calculation with the class hours (contact hours) but with the total learning time including all teaching/learning activities. The standard defined in the context of the Bologna-Process is 25 to 30 hours of teaching/learning for one ECTS credit.

⁷ U. S. Department of Education, "Subject: Guidance to Institutions and Accrediting Agencies Regarding a Credit Hour as Defined in the Final Regulations Published on October 29, 2010," <https://ifap.ed.gov/dpclatters/attachments/GEN1106.pdf>;
 U. S. Department of Education, "Program Integrity Questions and Answers - Credit Hour," <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/reg/hearulemaking/2009/credit.html>.

The official definitions are as follows:⁸ ECTS credits express the volume of learning based on the defined learning outcomes and their associated workload. 60 ECTS credits are allocated to the learning outcomes and associated workload of a full-time academic year or its equivalent, which normally comprises a number of educational components to which credits (on the basis of the learning outcomes and workload) are allocated. ECTS credits are generally expressed in whole numbers.

Workload is an estimation of the time the individual typically needs to complete all learning activities such as lectures, seminars, projects, practical work, work placements and individual study required to achieve the defined learning outcomes in formal learning environments. The correspondence of the full-time workload of an academic year to 60 credits is often formalized by national legal provisions. In most cases, workload ranges from 1,500 to 1,800 hours for an academic year, which means that one credit corresponds to 25 to 30 hours of work. It should be recognised that this represents the typical workload and that for individual students the actual time to achieve the learning outcomes will vary.

For our calculations this means:

- 1 ECTS comprises 25 to 30 hours of teaching/learning.
- One full-time academic year comprises 60 ECTS, equals 1,500 to 1,800 hours of teaching/learning.

The European countries have defined in their National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) how many hours per credit need to be calculated in their country.⁹

Calculations: Some examples

Transferring from the US-System to the European System. The table below illustrates how many hours of learning are entailed in 1 US credit and how to many ECTS this equates. The ECTS are expressed in a min-max range in reflection of the different amounts of hours that European countries allocate to 1 ECTS (this ranges between 25 and 30 hours per credit). These figures leave space for calculations between a minimal ratio of 1:1.5 and a maximum of 1:1.8.

According to these calculations, a common 3 credit US course counts between 4.5 and 5.4 ECTS credits.

US credits	US hours	European credits (min-max)
1 credit	45 hours	1.5 - 1.8 ECTS
30 credits (one full time year)	1,350 hours	45 - 54 ECTS

⁸ ECTS Users' Guide. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union (2015), p. 10 (https://ec.europa.eu/education/ects/users-guide/docs/ects-users-guide_en.pdf).

⁹ For the applications of this definition in different European countries see ECTS Users' Guide 2009, Annex 5: Overview of national regulations on the number of learning hours per academic year. http://www.hubologna.hacettepe.edu.tr/ECTS_users_guide.pdf.

It should be noted that European universities quite often apply a 1:2 ratio (1 US credit = 2 ECTS).¹⁰ This practice is not based on the calculation of exact hours but on the comparison of entire semesters or academic years. The assumption is: If a European student studies in the US one full semester full-time, he/she will earn 15 US credits. One full-time semester in Europe comprises 30 ECTS. This leads to a 1:2 ratio.

Transferring from the European System to the US-System. The same calculations above can be made in reverse, from ECTS to US Carnegie units.

European ECTS	ECTS hours	US Carnegie credits (min-max)
1 credit	25 - 30 hours	0.55 - 0.66 US credits
60 credits (one full time year)	1,500 - 1,800 hours	33 - 40 US credits

Other Credit Systems

Besides the US and the ECTS system, the UK credit counting is also be widespread. A document published by the UK government, based in the Higher Education Credit Framework for England, the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales, and Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, states that “one credit is equivalent to 10 notional hours of learning (which includes time spent preparing for taught sessions, independent reading and study, completion of course work as well as time in formal taught sessions); and current practice equates one ECTS credit with two UK credits.”¹¹

¹⁰ See Academic Embassy, an independent German organization, advising international students (www.academic-embassy.de/blog/umrechnung-und-anerkennung-nordamerikanischer-usa-oder-kanada-credit-units-in-ects), and The University of Zurich, “Anerkennung und Anrechnung von extern erbrachten Studienleistungen“ (https://www.khist.uzh.ch/dam/jcr:00000000-3282-b194-0000-00002608b73c/E_Dossier_Anrechnung_100909_AKTUELL.pdf).

¹¹ “Credit Transfer in Higher Education. A review of the literature,” <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/credit-transfer-in-higher-education>.

APPENDIX E: BEST PRACTICE IN ACCREDITATION OF FORMAL, INFORMAL AND NON-FORMAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

It is common understanding in education today that significant and relevant learning takes place outside (prior and alongside) the formalised course of studies. As more students enter formal education with considerable prior experience, and stakeholders more urgently ask for skills and competences which often are not covered by traditional curricula but acquired ‘in practice’, the entire realm informal and non-formal learning comes into focus.

In order to encompass and understand the issues several terms and categories need to be defined:

- **Lifelong learning and life wide learning.** Learning takes place not only in formalized settings (schools, programmes, courses etc.) but in everyday life. For an inclusive understanding of learning sometimes the terms lifelong learning and life wide are used.
- **Formal learning.** Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner’s point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.
- **Non-formal learning.** Learning which is embedded in planned activities not always explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support), but which contain an important learning element. Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner’s point of view.
- **Informal learning.** Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner’s perspective.
- **“Accreditation of Prior Learning” (APL), ‘Accreditation of Certified Prior Learning’ (APCL) and “Accreditation of Experiential Prior Learning” (APEL).** While there is a general consensus on the need for some sort of recognition of prior informal and non-formal learning, the nomenclature may vary. Generally these terms are used to describe the process of giving formal recognition within a degree programme to formal, non-formal and informal learning.
- **Global and individual recognition.** Prior learning can be recognised globally to components that are clearly defined, consistent and recognized from a particular provider. Prior learning can also be recognised individually on a case by case assessment basis.

What follows are some general principles for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning

1. Not all of life, i.e. not every experience, can or should be measured, recognized and validated.
2. Informal and non-formal learning experiences must be considerable and significant (quantity, quality and relevance) in view of the intended learning outcomes of the formal training for which they should count.
3. Experience as such may not yet be learning! Experience leads to learning to the degree that it is reflected in dialogue with relevant theory
4. Informal and non-formal learning must be demonstrably similar in terms of outcomes relative to the learning outcomes of the programme for which it is going to count. This explicitly includes the proper integration with the larger curriculum.
5. Non-formal and informal learning must be documented in order to be assessed, and it must be assessed according to predefined learning outcomes, methods, standards and procedures of assessment at the level of the programme for which it will count. Institutions that want to acknowledge non-formal and informal learning need a policy statement for the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning.

6. Caution: Schools are strongly advised to apply the recognition of non-formal and informal learning very cautiously and restrictively. The intention of the recognition of non-formal and informal learning is to honour and recognise learning which takes place outside the formalised course of studies. It avoids duplications in education and releases students from spending time and money for doing the same thing twice. However, this is only appropriate if it refers to larger components of learning which are clearly identifiable and assessable.
7. Costs: Due to the fact that the recognition of non-formal and informal learning involves time, work and expertise, it is appropriate to charge students for that. Such fees can amount up to the fee per credit for normal courses.
8. Quality management and policy: Recognition of non-formal and informal learning should not be done occasionally and superficially. Schools which plan to provide recognition of non-formal and informal need to be prepared well. This includes (a) a solid policy, (b) proper quality assurance mechanism which ensure consistent assessment of non-formal and informal learning, (c) expertise (training) in the evaluation and assessment of non-formal and informal learning.
9. As a general rule a maximum of 25% of credits may be awarded for all aforementioned forms of non-formal and informal learning within the boundaries of the specifications outlined in the following chapters of this Guidelines.

Institutions should investigate specific guidelines for good practice in the area of recognition of prior learning in their national frameworks of reference.

APPENDIX F: STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR ONLINE EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The Standards and Guidelines for Global Evangelical Theological Education (SG-GETE) are intended to be modality neutral, and thus to be equally applicable to varying types of theological institutions and instructional models without presupposing any one in particular. The applicability of the SG-GETE to online programmes is therefore assumed and serves as the basis for more specific standards and guidance offered here in Appendix F with regards to what are minimum accreditable and aspirational levels of quality for programmes and institutions that offer online and blended theological education.

Although the scope of this Appendix does not permit a detailed development of each standards area and their sub-sections, a more comprehensive treatment is presently being prepared by the ICETE Workgroup on Standards for Online Evangelical Theological Education. This is projected for completion in late 2019.

In the discussion that follows, it will be helpful to keep the following definitions and distinctions in mind:

- **Online Learning (also referred to as electronic or e-Learning¹²).** Online Learning as a mode of delivery commonly refers to educational programmes that are mediated by the Internet and are taught online with little or no physical face-to-face interaction between instructors and students. Virtual interaction takes place in a variety of ways and may be either synchronous or asynchronous. In the SG-GETE and this Appendix, “online learning” or “online education” will be used generically to embrace multiple modes and types of online educational delivery.
- **Technology Enhanced Learning.** Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) refers to the use of computers, the internet and other technological means as tools to improve the quality of teaching, learning and research. TEL is an integral part of online education, but is also commonly used in other delivery models, including face-to-face instruction.
- **Distance Education.** For the purposes of SG-GETE and this Appendix, Distance Education is understood as referring to any instructional model in which the teacher and learners are geographically separated during part or all of the learning process. Under this broad definition, diverse instructional models may be classified as subsets of distance education, including correspondence studies and programs mediated totally or partially online.¹³
- **Blended Learning (also referred to as Hybrid Learning or B-Learning).** Blended Learning refers to a hybrid instructional model that combines face-to-face instruction with periods of online or other modes of distance learning. It should be noted that many theological programmes popularly classified as “fully online” actually possess a blended element, in the sense that student learning involves formal, informal and nonformal interaction with on-the-ground components, such as the student’s context of life and ministry, participation in the local church, a mentoring or discipleship relationship. From a holistic formative perspective¹⁴ that pursues learning outcomes related to being, doing and living in community, as well as knowing, intentional strategies of blended learning are a necessary complement to online theological education.
- **Situated Learning.** Situated learning refers to learning that takes places in the various spheres of regular life-situations of students, usually outside their formal education programmes. While not in itself a form of online learning, situated learning is an appropriate and often essential complement to various forms

¹² In this Appendix “e-Learning” is deliberately spelled with a lowercase “e” and upper case “L” to emphasize the notion that [student] *learning* is more important than the use of technology.

¹³ This definition is broader than that proposed by the United States Department of Education, which draws a distinction between Distance and Correspondence Education. According to this more narrow understanding, Correspondence Education is not Distance Education because it does not involve “regular and substantive” interaction between students and their instructor. USDE, “Accreditation in the United States,” https://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg12.html, 602.3.

¹⁴ See above, Programmatic Standard B1: Holistic Integration.

of online study for the creation of blended learning opportunities. The most significant of these for theological students is often the church or believing community that they belong to. Through active partnerships with local churches and community groups education providers can intentionally draw upon situated learning opportunities for their students in holistic formation areas that they may not otherwise be able to address adequately through formal online studies.¹⁵

This Appendix identifies six major areas that should be taken into consideration in applying the SG-GETE Institutional and Programmatic standards to the assessment of online theological education programs. Although the Appendix specifically deals with online education, some parts may be applicable to quality assurance and evaluation in other models of distance education.¹⁶

- F1: Institutional support for e-Learning
- F2: Academic preparation for quality e-Learning
- F3: Online educators and their qualifications
- F4: Holistic educational programme
- F5: Educational components in the online medium
- F6: Support for online students and educators

For each of these six standards areas, the Appendix includes specific reference to:

- The philosophy or educational rationale behind the online standards;
- Representative standards and guidelines for online theological education, divided into “threshold standards” and “quality standards”;¹⁷
- Evidentiary measures that would help to demonstrate compliance with the standards; and
- Suggestive examples of evaluation tools and rubrics for Visiting Evaluation Teams.

Finally, the SG-GETE Bibliography at the end of this document also contains a selection of excellent references pertaining to online learning for further consideration by accrediting agencies. The ICETE Online Standards Workgroup leaders welcome further input into these Standards and Guidelines to make them more effective and relevant within the rapidly growing and changing sector of online theological education.

F1. Institutional support for e-Learning

F1 - Philosophy/educational rationale. To ensure effectiveness, quality and adequate support, online learning must be fully integrated into the institution’s regular systems of planning, budgeting, administration and evaluation. Teachers and learners should be prepared for and supported in their respective roles through adequate policies, expenditure, services and technical infrastructure (see below, Section 6).

F1 - Threshold standards. The following are the threshold standards for this area:

- Online learning is reflected in the mission, vision and goals of the institution and is embraced by the administration, with support from the governing body, as a strategic means toward the accomplishment of these ends.

¹⁵ For initial (and further) reading in the field of Situated Learning, see references to S. D. Lowe & M. E. Lowe, S. J. Kemp, and M. B. Nicholls in the Bibliography below.

¹⁶ One such model, which may or may not include online learning elements, is Theological Education by Extension (T.E.E.). It should be noted that, formally speaking, Theological Education by Extension is not considered as “distance education” due to the presence of local (face-to-face) learning groups led by trained facilitators.

¹⁷ In each major section, the first standards listed are considered to be “threshold” standards, meaning they would normally be considered as essential or minimum standards for accreditation to be achieved. Other standards listed are regarded as “quality” standards or measures, describing better practice, but which are not necessarily required for accreditation.

- Online learning is fully represented in institutional planning, budgeting, fund-raising, and quality assurance processes.
- Institutional planning and budgeting take into account the needs of online education with regard to both current operations and future development.
- Online learning is supported by adequate technical infrastructure and by qualified personnel who assure that all related systems function correctly, safely and reliably.
- Online learning is fully integrated into the institution's structure of academic administration.
- Online learning meets the same institutional and programmatic standards as other modes of instruction at the same academic level, although these standards may be evaluated in different ways that take into account the particular characteristics of each delivery model.
- Online learning is supported by mechanisms and policies that provide for technical and pedagogical support to faculty and students.
- An appropriate system for managing course payments and enrolment online is in place.
- Program and other types of information that are provided online are updated and accurate.

F1 - Quality Standards. The following are the quality standards for this area:

- Online learning is evaluated systematically and included in the institution's regular processes of program, course and faculty evaluation.
- The institution applies a benchmarking methodology to assess and promote quality in both programmatic and institutional aspects of online learning.

F1 - Examples of evidential measures to demonstrate compliance

- Mission and Vision statements
- Planning, budgetary, and fund-raising documents concerning the online programmes
- Organizational charts
- Program, Course and Faculty evaluations
- Policy statements and orientation for online academic and student services
- Institutional Website
- Academic Catalogue or Handbook
- e-Learning Benchmarking initiatives being used for by the Institution for quality assessment and enhancement

F1 - Examples of evaluation tools/rubrics for Visiting Evaluation Teams. The selected rubrics in each of the following six online standards areas are adapted from the Pick&Mix benchmarking tool. Pick&Mix is an open content resource that includes nearly a hundred benchmarks that institutions and accrediting associations can select from according to their relevance, and which can then be applied to the evaluation of nearly every aspect of online learning.¹⁸

Another recommended resource that is freely available for use by institutions and accrediting associations is the OLC Scorecard Suite, a free collection of benchmarking tools developed by the Online Learning Consortium that covers both institutional and programmatic aspects of online education.¹⁹ Additional helpful resources are included in the Bibliography at the end of the SG-GETE.

The selected rubrics which follow are provided as representative, illustrative examples of evaluative criteria related to each area. They are neither intended to be comprehensive rubrics nor to describe every standard specified in this Appendix.

¹⁸ "Pick&Mix." <http://bela.referata.com/wiki/Pick%26Mix> (accessed 26 March, 2019). Pick&Mix is offered freely under a Creative Commons BY-SA 3.0 License, which allows users to share and adapt without restrictions. "Attribution-Sharealike 3.0 United States (CC BY-SA 3.0 US)" <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/us/> (accessed 26 March, 2019).

¹⁹ "OLC Quality Scorecard Suite," <https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/consult/olc-quality-scorecard-suite/> (accessed 26 March, 2019).

Evaluation criteria	Indicators of Inadequate Practice			Threshold Practice	Indicators of Highly Effective Practice	
	Level 1 statement (Minimal or Nil Practice)	Level 2 statement (Inadequate practice)	Level 3 statement (Marginally inadequate practice)	Level 4 statement (Accreditable practice)	Level 5 statement (Better practice)	Level 6 statement (Excellent practice)
(13) Planning Annually	Annual plans do not mention e-Learning at all.	Annual plans in some departments mention e-Learning.	Annual plans correlate with major e-Learning initiatives in most departments.	Annual plans correlate with most e-Learning initiatives in most departments.	Integrated annual planning process for e-Learning integrated with overall course planning.	Integrated planning process allowing, for example, trade-offs of courses versus buildings.
(23) Leadership in e-Learning	Leaders play no role in decisions affecting e-Learning.	The capability of leaders to make decisions regarding e-Learning is moderately developed at department level but not institutionally.	The capability of leaders to make decisions regarding e-Learning is moderately developed at departmental and institutional level.	The capability of leaders to make decisions regarding e-Learning is adequately developed at departmental and institutional level.	The capability of leaders to make decisions regarding e-Learning is fully developed at departmental and institutional level.	In addition, leaders are able to mentor other leaders in their own and other institutions.
(99) Benchmarking	The institution has not recently undertaken a benchmarking e-Learning project and has no plans to do so in the near future.	The institution is planning its benchmarked its e-Learning project.	The institution is in the active phase of its benchmarked its e-Learning project.	The institution is in the reflection phase of its benchmarked its e-Learning project.	The institution has recently benchmarked its e-Learning and is working through the implications of the results.	In addition, the institution is planning the next round of benchmarking at institutional or departmental level.

F2. Academic preparation for quality e-Learning

F2 - Philosophy/educational rationale. Institutions venturing into various modes of online learning need to ensure that its lead educators and programme directors are well aware of what constitutes quality online pedagogy, appropriate educational philosophy for teaching and learning **online** and best practices in the field. Those involved in online education should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the online medium and its strengths and limitations for TE in comparison to more traditional delivery methods. Such an understanding must include an awareness of the relative strengths and weaknesses of face-to-face, blended, and so-called “fully online” approaches. Curricular planning, design and implementation at all levels needs to be built upon such an understanding and awareness. Pedagogically speaking, how technology is to be used to enhance learning is more important than what technology is to be used.

Part of the preparation for quality e-Learning is also the intentional commitment to holistic educational outcomes, which itself necessitates a commitment to active partnerships with local churches, organisations and mentors for each student. For this aspect please see Section 4 of this Appendix below.

F2 - Threshold standards. The following are the threshold standards for this area:

- Senior educators and online programme directors can demonstrate that they are conversant with the literature of the field of online learning and are aware of what constitutes best practices in the field. They can demonstrate an understanding of the various strengths and weaknesses of face-to-face, blended and “fully online” approaches.
- Curricular design shows a high level of pedagogical insight into the online medium for TE delivery. Instructional design parameters and philosophy are clear, and a rationale is provided for the choice and balance of blended and online learning elements in the programme.
- Educational leadership has clearly identified the target audience for the online programme and is aware of the diversity of their students’ digital experience and accessibility.
- Online learning tools are selected according to their effectiveness in helping to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme. A rationale for all technological choices made can be supplied, including any learning (or content) management system adopted.
- Graduate outcomes for online programmes are consistent with those expected for regular programmes offered by the institution.
- Plans for the provision of holistic learning elements in the programme are clearly articulated.

F2 - Quality Standards. The following are the quality standards for this area:

- Pedagogical awareness includes an appreciation of best practices in the use of online videos (especially of “talking heads”), and of the inherent weaknesses of video lectures (whether live or recorded). This awareness can be demonstrated, and strategies are in place to ensure that student learning is constantly active (rather than passive) learning.
- Awareness of the respective strengths and weaknesses of both face-to-face and online discourse can be demonstrated by senior educators.
- A system for internal review and clear evaluation and assessment procedures are in place.

F2 - Examples of evidential measures to demonstrate compliance

- Table of educators involved in online curricular development, listing their qualifications and experience, alongside any specific training received or courses taken in online learning
- An illustrative bibliography of sources used by senior educators to develop their pedagogical understanding of online learning.
- Internal strategy and planning documents for the online programmes, and reports to executive and board leadership
- Published curricular documentation for the online programmes
- Academic Catalogue or Handbook
- Graduate profiles of both online and non-online programmes
- Training tools developed by the institution for its online educators in all roles
- Self-assessment tools and reports

F2 - Examples of evaluation tools/rubrics for Visiting Evaluation Teams.

Evaluation criteria	Indicators of Inadequate Practice			Threshold Practice	Indicators of Highly Effective Practice	
	Level 1 statement (Minimal or Nil Practice)	Level 2 statement (Inadequate practice)	Level 3 statement (Marginally inadequate practice)	Level 4 statement (Accreditable practice)	Level 5 statement (Better practice)	Level 6 statement (Excellent practice)
(9) Pedagogy	Terms to do with pedagogy related to e-Learning not understood in the institution.	Terms understood within the learning and teaching core team and among a few academic staff outside that.	Terms well understood within the learning and teaching core team and among some academic staff.	Terms well understood within the learning and teaching core team and among most academic staff.	Pedagogic guidelines for the whole institution with permitted variants, and understood and acted on by all staff.	A culture where techno-pedagogic decisions are made naturally, within guidelines.
(10) Training	No systematic training for e-Learning.	Some systematic training for e-Learning, for example, in some departments.	Institution-wide training programme set up but little monitoring of attendance or encouragement to go.	Institution-wide training programme set up with monitoring of attendance and strong encouragement to go.	All staff trained in e-Learning, appropriate to job type - and retrained when needed.	Staff increasingly keep themselves up to date, "just in time", except when discontinuous system change occurs, when training is provided.
(62) Pedagogical Research	The institution is not aware of outcomes of research which will enhance the experience of its students by suitable use of e-Learning.	Some departments are aware of outcomes of research which will enhance the experience of its students by suitable use of e-Learning.	Many departments are aware of outcomes of research which will enhance the experience of its students by suitable use of e-Learning.	Most departments are aware of outcomes of research which will enhance the experience of its students by suitable use of e-Learning.	The institution is fully aware of outcomes of research which will enhance the experience of its students by suitable use of e-Learning.	In addition, the institution makes full use in its programmes of its own research into pedagogy of e-Learning.

F3. Online educators and their qualifications

F3 - Philosophy/educational rationale. The “unbundling” of the educator’s role into several different responsibilities, often carried out by an interdisciplinary team, is one of the most significant shifts that has accompanied the growth of online higher education. In this scenario, the creation and teaching of a single online course may involve the participation of (i) a content expert (developer, author or writer), as well as (ii) persons experienced in online pedagogy and e-Learning course design (instructional designers), (iii) multimedia production experts, (iv) online teachers, tutors or facilitators, (v) local mentors,²⁰ and (vi) technical support staff. In smaller institutions, a single person might occupy several or all of these roles.

Quality online learning requires that those involved in each aspect of the creation and teaching of online learning be adequately equipped and resourced for their respective roles. The standards

²⁰ Local mentors include local church and organisational leaders residing in the local physical context of each online student, who are able to help students achieve a programme’s holistic learning outcomes. See further the Holistic Educational Programme standards in the next section (F4).

listed below also apply to those who are contextualizing or adapting courses originally derived from other programs and situations.

F3 - Threshold standards. The following are the threshold standards for this area:

- The institution recruits suitably qualified educators and administrators with adequate experience and ideally with specialized training in online education.
- Content experts, authors or writers meet the qualifications expected of faculty in the main body of the Standards and Guidelines. They are qualified at one degree level higher than the level they are writing or developing content for.
- Course development team members who have a role in instructional design have completed studies at the level of the course they are designing.
- Course development team members receive adequate training in best practice for their role, in adult learning, and instructional materials design for student self-study, which are relevant to the media being used for course delivery.
- Course development team members do not necessarily need to be content experts themselves, provided they have appropriate access to such context experts.
- There is a well-documented process of course development including rigorous field testing, editing and revision.
- Online tutors or facilitators have completed studies at least at the academic level that they are facilitating or demonstrate a similar level of learning and maturity. However, if they are teaching or facilitating online Masters or Doctoral level courses, they either have a doctoral degree with specialisation or appropriate experience in the subject areas being taught or work alongside an SME (with a doctoral degree) during the delivery of their course.
- Institutions provide adequate orientation and training in online education and Technology Enhanced Learning for all educators and staff involved in the design and teaching or delivery of online courses, appropriate to the medium of course delivery being used.
- Online facilitators are given specific training in the facilitation of group discussion. They are assessed during training and demonstrate appropriate ability before being officially appointed for their role. Trainers of online facilitators have a rich experience in online learning.
- For under-graduate level studies (Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor) it is not always the case that online facilitators must also be subject matter experts (SMEs), provided that course learning content has been developed by an SME, and that course materials have been designed appropriately for student self-study. In this case the online teaching role is one of facilitating learning through the already prepared self-study materials and group discussions, rather than one of instruction in a field of expertise.
- Where they are needed to facilitate the achievement of holistic learning outcomes, local mentors may be identified by students during their course and/or programme application procedures, and institutions create and implement an appropriate approval process for these mentors.

F3 - Quality Standards. The following are the quality standards for this area:

- Interdisciplinary team course development is encouraged and practiced, though with clearly defined leadership and role responsibilities.
- Designs for e-Learning programs, courses and courseware as well as other aspects of online teaching and learning are subjected to mechanisms of quality control and systematic evaluation.
- Special attention is paid to ensuring that all courses include tested and contextualized guides for online tutors/teachers/facilitators, including helps to facilitate online group discussion, and the application and assessment of learning.

- Online course development includes the provision of two types of simple, well-tested student guides that: (i) (on a per course basis) help the student progress through each step of the course, and (ii) (on a per program basis) offer practical assistance in using the technological tools and resources employed by the program.
- The institution pays particular attention to continuing encouragement, support, evaluation and further training of online facilitators.
- Appropriate training of local mentors is provided, and suitable assessment, evaluation and feedback tools developed to assist in the process. Additionally, institutions also liaise closely with those local mentors.

F3 - Examples of evidential measures to demonstrate compliance.

- Table of educators involved in online curricular development and course delivery, listing their qualifications and experience, alongside any specific training received or courses taken in online learning
- Lists of educators involved in creating/developing each online course, highlighting their respective roles and any subject matter expertise
- Educator job/role descriptions
- Academic Catalogue or Handbook
- Faculty Handbook
- Training Tools for training educators for various online roles
- Educator evaluation tools and sample reports
- Technical guide for students and facilitators
- Illustrative student learning guides for individual courses

F3 - Examples of evaluation tools/rubrics for Visiting Evaluation Teams

Evaluation criteria	Indicators of Inadequate Practice			Threshold Practice	Indicators of Highly Effective Practice	
	Level 1 statement (Minimal or Nil Practice)	Level 2 statement (Inadequate practice)	Level 3 statement (Marginally inadequate practice)	Level 4 statement (Accreditable practice)	Level 5 statement (Better practice)	Level 6 statement (Excellent practice)
(22) Adoption by Staff of Enhanced Learning	Innovators only are delivering “enhanced learning” via appropriate use of e-Learning and can evidence their claims.	Early adopters are delivering “enhanced learning” via appropriate use of e-Learning and can evidence their claims.	Early majority are delivering “enhanced learning” via appropriate use of e-Learning and can evidence their claims.	Late majority are delivering “enhanced learning” via appropriate use of e-Learning and can evidence their claims.	All staff except laggards are delivering “enhanced learning” via appropriate use of e-Learning and can evidence their claims.	All staff are delivering “enhanced learning” via appropriate use of e-Learning and can evidence their claims.
(24) Teaching 2.0	Only a few staff are comfortable using web 2.0 tools and most cannot judge appropriateness.	Some staff are comfortable using web 2.0 tools where appropriate.	Many staff are fully comfortable using web 2.0 tools where appropriate.	Most staff are fully comfortable using web 2.0 tools where appropriate.	The institution is fully comfortable using web 2.0 tools where appropriate.	The institution is a source of wisdom on using web 2.0 tools where appropriate.

(35) Recruitment of Staff	The institution has little understanding of the staff roles that require staff knowledgeable and enthusiastic about e-Learning.	The institution has categorised the staff roles that require staff knowledgeable and enthusiastic about e-Learning.	The institution has processes designed to attract, for appropriate roles, employees knowledgeable and enthusiastic about e-Learning, but they are not adequately effective.	The institution has processes designed to attract, for appropriate roles, employees knowledgeable and enthusiastic about e-Learning, but they are not fully effective.	The institution has effective processes designed to attract, for appropriate roles, employees knowledgeable and enthusiastic about e-Learning.	In addition, the institution is a source of wisdom on recruitment of staff with enthusiasm for e-Learning.
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F4. Holistic educational programme

F4 - Philosophy/educational rationale. The need for holistic integration (see SG-GETE B1. above) is no less important for online theological education than for other instructional models. All too often, institutional plans to offer programmes more widely and at less cost through online education do not give adequate consideration for the provision of those holistic learning elements. At times, holistic learning outcomes are deliberately sacrificed in online programs.

Where holistic learning elements are an integral part of an award programme (e.g. specific training for Christian ministry in the church), providers of “fully online” or online distance education courses will not usually be able to achieve adequate holistic integration by themselves. This is where situated and blended learning becomes very significant, and especially for accreditation purposes. As such, it is generally necessary for online education providers within evangelical theological education to incorporate sufficient blended learning elements so that holistic graduate outcomes can be fulfilled in the lives of their students, and for the programme to merit accreditation.²¹

Provision for holistic learning elements will normally involve face-to-face learning activities and practical/field ministry opportunities that are rooted in the local communities of each student. Therefore, online TE providers must make *intentional* provision for holistic learning elements in situated learning opportunities through *active* partnerships with local churches, local community or para-church organisations, and local mentors, for each of their online students. Generally speaking, the capacity of the institution to provide these holistic learning elements by itself is in inverse relation to its need for such local partnerships.

Accrediting agencies, therefore, need to guard very carefully against compromise and mere “lip-service” in this area by their member schools. It is *not* appropriate for institutions to assume that since spiritual, character and ministry formation generally take place more effectively in the local church, then as a result the institution no longer carries a responsibility to ensure that those holistic learning elements are being realised in the lives of their students. The opposite is in fact true, and intentional, active commitment in this area is crucial.

F4 - Threshold standards. The following are the threshold standards for this area:

- Institutions can demonstrate a strategic pastoral and educational commitment to active partnerships with local churches, organisations, and mentors to facilitate aspects of holistic learning that cannot adequately be provided to students online.
- Providers of online programs can demonstrate that these holistic learning activities are integrated into their overall educational delivery.

²¹ Exceptions to this, for narrowly focussed award programmes, including post-graduate programmes, that do not require such holistic learning outcomes may be permitted, on a case by case basis.

- A clear process and system to identify, approve, train, and resource local, on-the-ground, partners and mentors is in place and implemented for each enrolled student. The institution has a liaison officer to supervise this process. Students and local mentors are made aware of the process, its rationale and their responsibilities through published documents.
- Remedies are in place for cases where students are unable themselves to identify local mentors.
- The institution can demonstrate, for any of its enrolled students, how local feedback and evaluation tools are being used to determine whether course and graduate outcomes are being achieved, and that growth in these areas is demonstrable in students' lives.

F4 - Quality Standards. The following are the quality standards for this area:

- Individual online courses are designed intentionally to tap into these local partnerships for fulfilment of holistic learning outcomes.
- Online facilitators have a means to communicate with local mentors, and are informed about and supportive of the role of those local partners in the holistic educational process.

F4 - Examples of evidential measures to demonstrate compliance.

- Graduate profiles for each programme
- Online learning strategy plans and documents, relating to holistic formation and achievement of the graduate profile
- Academic Catalogue or Handbook
- Documentation related to the approval and training of local mentors
- Student evaluation/feedback tools used by students and local mentors
- Tabulation of student numbers for whom local mentors have been identified and contacted, and for those without any local mentors; identification of local mentor data for any given student

F4 - Examples of evaluation tools/rubrics for Visiting Evaluation Teams.

Evaluation criteria	Indicators of Inadequate Practice			Threshold Practice	Indicators of Highly Effective Practice	
	Level 1 statement (Minimal or Nil Practice)	Level 2 statement (Inadequate practice)	Level 3 statement (Marginally inadequate practice)	Level 4 statement (Accreditable practice)	Level 5 statement (Better practice)	Level 6 statement (Excellent practice)
Spiritual formation	The institution assumes or ignores spiritual formation for online students but provides no curricular strategies that promote spiritual development.	Some courses and instructors emphasize spiritual formation through online or blended curricular strategies.	Many courses and instructors emphasize spiritual formation through online or blended curricular strategies.	A programme-wide, coordinated emphasis promotes spiritual formation for online students through a variety of complementary blended strategies.	Blended curricular strategies for spiritual formation are refined through stakeholder feedback and closely related to course and program learning outcomes.	The institution is a source of wisdom in the use blended strategies to promote spiritual formation in online students.

Character development-Academic integrity	The institution assumes or ignores the issue of academic integrity for online education.	Some courses and instructors incorporate policies and mechanisms to promote academic integrity and protect against cheating.	Many courses and instructors incorporate policies and mechanisms to promote academic integrity and protect against cheating.	Programme-wide policies and mechanisms are used to promote academic integrity in online studies and protect against cheating.	The institution uses WCET’s “Best Practice Strategies” ²² (or similar) as a model in developing its own academic integrity policy and safeguards.	The institution is a source of wisdom in the use of appropriate policies and mechanisms to promote character development in online students and the academic integrity of programs.
Competence for ministry	The institution assumes or ignores ministry competence for online students but provides no curricular strategies that promote ministerial development.	Some courses and instructors emphasize training for ministry through online or blended curricular strategies.	Many courses and instructors emphasize training for ministry through online or blended curricular strategies.	A programme-wide, coordinated emphasis promotes training for ministry through a variety of complementary blended strategies.	Blended curricular strategies designed to develop competences for ministry are refined through stakeholder feedback and closely tied to course and program learning outcomes.	The institution is a source of wisdom in the use of blended strategies to prepare online students for competency in ministry.

F5. Educational components in the online medium

F5 - Philosophy/educational rationale. The pedagogical awareness of senior educators concerning best practices for effective online learning now needs to be translated into the design and delivery of individual courses. Various structural elements should be in place, and a wide variety of learning activities employed, in the delivery of each course so that student learning will be made more effective, more engaging, and more enjoyable. Online learning elements must enhance student learning, and content “dumping” (simply uploading large chunks of reading or content to be merely read or watched by students) will thus be studiously avoided. Both the instructional design and delivery of each course will be integrated with the overall curricular aims and desired outcomes for the programme they contribute towards. And both design and delivery of courses should be carried out with an awareness of the strengths and limitations of the online medium.

Library and learning resources provided or made available to students must be adequate to support the academic level being studied. The higher the academic level the greater the resource provision must be. Post-graduate awards that are offered fully or in part online are expected to conform to normal expectations for the various types of awards that might be offered by a theological education provider. The general requirement for learners studying at this level to achieve a degree of mastery of their subject area should not be lessened with the online delivery of their courses.

At the same time, there is a danger for online programmes at lower levels of academic study to be unrealistic in their expectations of student abilities and capacities. For Certificate and Diploma studies that are below Bachelor level, higher-order thinking skills (analysing, evaluating, creating), should not be assumed by instructors but rather encouraged and developed gradually.

²² WCET, “Best Practice Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity in Online Education, Version 2.0, 2009,” <https://wcet.wiche.edu/sites/default/files/docs/resources/Best-Practices-Promote-Academic-Integrity-2009.pdf> (accessed 27 March, 2019).

F5 - Threshold standards. The following are the threshold standards for this area:

- Welcome, orientation and introduction elements are presented for each course, helping students to feel that they belong in the class, are encouraged and listened to, and so they know how to access technical, pastoral or administrative support when needed.
- Content delivery methods are chosen to ensure frequent active and varied student engagement with learning materials. A variety of different learning activities is present in each course.
- Learning activities chosen contribute intentionally to meeting lesson and course learning objectives and outcomes.
- Assessment of student growth through the learning activities is planned as they are designed, and mechanisms are created to provide prompt, regular feedback to students.
- Special provisions to support holistic educational outcomes (for both the course and the overall programme) are included in each course.
- A high level of student access to one or more Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) is provided for online post-graduate studies, though SMEs do not necessarily need to be the online teacher or facilitator.
- Access to necessary learning resources is supplied to all students, including access to research tools and an adequate range of relevant learning resources for higher degrees.
- For post-graduate studies, learning resources provided or made available enable students to achieve mastery in the subjects being studied by giving students access to an adequate range of critical literature dealing with their field of learning, especially for the case of research-based post-graduate degrees. Online course providers ensure that all their students have access to an adequate range of relevant critical sources at the Masters level and an extensive range of such sources at the Doctoral level, and can demonstrate this to outside evaluators.
- Appropriate policies and mechanisms are in place to safeguard against cheating and ensure the academic integrity of online programs.

F5 - Quality Standards. The following are the quality standards for this area:

- Learning guides are prepared for each course, guiding students through the various steps they need to complete each lesson of each course. Ideally such guides are printable.
- Large chunks of passive reading materials and lengthy video lectures are generally avoided.
- Where possible provision for students to construct their own learning is built into course design and delivery.
- Course components and activities are developed using a suitable taxonomy for e-Learning, such as the “Five Stage Framework” proposed by Gilly Salmon,²³ that seeks to help students move from lower levels of engagement (Access and Motivation, Online Socialisation and Information Exchange) to more advanced levels of interaction and learning (Knowledge Construction and Development).
- Group, collaborative learning activities and projects are employed in most courses.
- Instructional designers and online facilitators have an awareness of what constitutes quality online discourse, and facilitators are well trained in online group dynamics.
- Facilitators have adequate support to assess student work and to provide suitable feedback to students on tests, assignments and other learning activities.
- Facilitators are trained to genuinely “facilitate” student learning and group discussion, rather than taking the role of being an online lecturer.
- For Bachelor level studies employing already prepared course materials, access to an SME for at least part of a course is strongly encouraged and regularly provided.

²³ Gilly Salmon, “The Five Stage Model,” <https://www.gillysalmon.com/five-stage-model.html> (accessed March 28, 2019).

- Fully online courses, for Bachelor and post-graduate levels of study, have at least an asynchronous vehicle for online group discussion, led by an online facilitator, and normally ensure at least a weekly asynchronous discussion forum during a synchronic course.
- Generally speaking, learners studying below Bachelor level are not required to engage in substantial asynchronous online discussion forums, and alternative forms of discussion (whether synchronous or face-to-face) are provided where class discussion is deemed important.

F5 - Examples of evidential measures to demonstrate compliance.

- Academic Catalogue or Handbook
- Curricular design documentation
- Graduate profile
- Course syllabi (and syllabus template)
- Access to representative online courses, and representative online discussion forums
- Interviews with instructional designers and online tutors/facilitators
- Interviews with students
- Training tools used for online facilitators
- Lists of SMEs wherever used for each course
- Assessment tools used to assess achievement of course and programme learning outcomes

F5 - Examples of evaluation tools/rubrics for Visiting Evaluation Teams.

Evaluation criteria	Indicators of Inadequate Practice			Threshold Practice	Indicators of Highly Effective Practice	
	Level 1 statement (Minimal or Nil Practice)	Level 2 statement (Inadequate practice)	Level 3 statement (Marginally inadequate practice)	Level 4 statement (Accreditable practice)	Level 5 statement (Better practice)	Level 6 statement (Excellent practice)
(25) Collaboration for e-Learning	The institution does not have collaborations to gain additional benefit from sharing e-Learning material, methodologies and systems.	A few departments or projects have a reasoned approach to collaboration to gain additional benefit from sharing e-Learning material, methodologies and systems.	Many departments and projects have a reasoned approach to collaboration to gain additional benefit from sharing e-Learning material, methodologies and systems.	Most departments and projects have a reasoned approach to collaboration to gain additional benefit from sharing e-Learning material, methodologies and systems.	The institution has a reasoned approach to collaboration at various levels to gain additional benefit from sharing e-Learning material, methodologies and systems.	The institution is a source of wisdom on its approaches to collaboration in respect of e-Learning.
(76) Library Services e-Resources	No students have electronic resources appropriately embedded within their curriculum.	Some students have electronic resources appropriately embedded within their curriculum.	Many students have electronic resources appropriately embedded within their curriculum.	Most students have electronic resources appropriately embedded within their curriculum.	All students have electronic resources appropriately embedded within their curriculum.	All students have electronic resources appropriately embedded within their curriculum and also in informal learning support beyond the curriculum.

(97) Learning Objects	The institution makes no use of learning objects and has no plans to do so.	The institution makes some use of learning objects but no recognition of the problems they cause and how to overcome them.	The institution makes some use of learning objects and has some recognition of the problems they cause and how to overcome them.	The institution makes considerable use of learning objects when appropriate but has not a good understanding of the literature on them.	The institution has an approach to use of learning objects which balances pedagogy and technology within an agenda of cost-effectiveness, quality assurance and the research literature.	The institution is a source of wisdom on learning objects.
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F6. Support for online students and educators

F6 - Philosophy/educational rationale. Quality online education requires various types of institutional, pedagogical and technical support for both students and educators. At the institutional level, the same range of academic and student services that are available on campus should be provided in ways that are accessible to online students.²⁴ Educators should be supported by the institution by policies that recognize and compensate, financially or otherwise, the additional investment of time that preparing and teaching online courses requires (see above, Section 1).

From the pedagogical and technical standpoints, both faculty (see above, Section 3) and students must receive adequate orientation and support for their respective roles in online teaching and learning. Beginning students may have no prior experience with online learning and, depending upon their age and background, only minimal experience in the technology used for course delivery. Pedagogical and technical support must be adequate to meet the foreseeable needs of such beginner online learners, as well as those who are more competent with the technologies and practices of online learning. In a similar fashion, instructors may possess varying levels of experience and familiarity with online pedagogy and the application of different forms of information and communications technology (ICT) to teaching and learning online. Both new and seasoned instructors require adequate initial orientation and ongoing support to be effective.

These diverse needs require a dedicated, trained team of support personnel to provide necessary administrative, technical, pedagogical and pastoral/spiritual support to online students, as well as to tutors or teachers facilitating online courses. While the institution may be able to provide pastoral and spiritual support to students itself, it is likely that it will need local partners, primarily in the context of the local churches of students, to do that. Intentionality in providing and empowering such local support is crucial.

F6 - Threshold standards. The following are the threshold standards for this area:

- Adequate provision is made for academic and student services for online students, although not at the same level as those available on campus.
- Policy governing faculty workload and compensation gives due consideration to the implications of online education.
- Institutional and program administrators are sensitive to student and faculty needs with regards to online education and are proactive and creative in the development of policies, mechanisms and strategies that serve to provide different types of support.

²⁴ Academic services would include such things as online access to academic advising, orientation and remediation, library and research materials and grades. Student services would include online mechanisms for enrollment and payment of tuition, application for financial aid and access to counseling and chaplaincy.

- Instructors are adequately trained in the use of the LMS and other technologies used in the online programme.
- Students are provided with technical guides and instruction that explain the use of the LMS and other technologies used in online learning.
- Students are provided with learning guides that detail the steps to follow in each course (i.e. a course syllabus).
- Online learning is supported by digital library and learning resources that are accessible and appropriate to the academic level of the program.
- Students receive timely and effective technical assistance from the institution's IT department.
- Online instructors and instructional designers are assisted as needed throughout the school year by the IT department.
- The institution ensure that the technologies that undergird online programmes and Technology Enhanced Learning (i.e. LMS, Internet access, a dedicated server or web hosting service, cyber security) are available, functioning properly and appropriate to meet the demands of the size of the institution and the number of users.
- Local partners who assist in the development of holistic outcomes in students receive adequate orientation and ongoing support as needed.

F6 - Quality Standards. The following are the quality standards for this area:

- Online learners are supported by academic and student services that reasonably approximate the level of quality and access of those offered to residential students.
- The institution offers extensive online resource support through subscription to a provider of research databases, journals and books.
- Frequently asked technical questions are answered step-by-step through help videos created using screen capture technology.
- Faculty and student satisfaction with regards to teaching and learning online and the quality of available support is periodically evaluated by the institution and improvements are made in response to feedback and requests.
- Student progress and drop-out rates are closely monitored with a view to remove unnecessary obstacles to student success and satisfaction in online learning.
- Where not provided through local learning support, spiritual support is offered to online students through asynchronous (i.e. email) and synchronous (i.e. chat, video conference) technologies.

F6 - Examples of evidential measures to demonstrate compliance.

- Academic Catalogue or Handbook
- Student Handbook
- Faculty Handbook
- Technical how-to guides and videos
- Student learning guides
- List of support personnel, qualifications, job descriptions, and hours worked
- Employment policy
- Faculty and student satisfaction surveys
- Training tools used to equip support personnel
- Interviews with support personnel
- Statistics for course enrolment, course completion, and course/programme drop-outs

F6 - Examples of evaluation tools/rubrics for Visiting Evaluation Teams.

Evaluation criteria	Indicators of Inadequate Practice			Threshold Practice	Indicators of Highly Effective Practice	
	Level 1 statement (Minimal or Nil Practice)	Level 2 statement (Inadequate practice)	Level 3 statement (Marginally inadequate practice)	Level 4 statement (Accreditable practice)	Level 5 statement (Better practice)	Level 6 statement (Excellent practice)
(11) Academic Workload	No allowance given for the different workload pattern of e-Learning courses.	Some allowance given, but distortions in the system, of concern to staff.	A work planning system which makes some attempt to cope, however crudely, with e-Learning courses.	A work planning system which makes a reasonable attempt to cope with e-Learning courses.	Work planning system which recognises the main differences that e-Learning courses have from traditional.	Full Activity-Based Costing or similar system used and adapted to e-Learning work planning.
(85) Staff Satisfaction	No attempt made to measure staff satisfaction in respect of their activities involving e-Learning.	Staff satisfaction survey done occasionally which contains some relevant e-Learning questions.	Staff satisfaction survey done every few years which contains some relevant e-Learning questions.	Staff satisfaction survey done every year which contains many of the most relevant e-Learning questions.	Annual Staff Satisfaction survey which explicitly addresses the main e-Learning issues of relevance to staff (e.g. support, workload).	Annual Staff Satisfaction survey which explicitly addresses all e-Learning issues of relevance to staff and is regarded as a sector exemplar.
(93) Student Help Desk	Help Desk is not functional for all students, or is but is widely viewed as unhelpful.	Help Desk exists for all students, with many lapses from service levels.	Help Desk is adequate but has some lapses.	Help Desk is viewed by students as "quite good" at solving their e-Learning related problems.	Help Desk is viewed by students as "good" at solving their e-Learning related problems.	Help Desk is viewed by students as "excellent" at solving their e-Learning related problems.



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