

# DESIGNING PROGRAMMES WITH LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCES



SGGETE

ICETE Standards and Guidelines for  
Global Evangelical Theological Education

To be used as a supplemental resource to the Standards and Guidelines for  
Global Evangelical Theological Education (SG-GETE)

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## Elements of programme design

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:

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

Syllabi should 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.