

ICETE ALIGNMENT

PROCEDURES AND STANDARDS

The ICETE aims to foster the quality and the recognition of evangelical theological education worldwide.

This document outlines the criteria, procedures and standards for ICETE Alignment that serve to transparently validate the quality of the standards and processes of its member accrediting associations.



BACKGROUND

Trust, quality and harmonization are three key terms in international higher education accreditation. Trust, as that which students and stakeholders need in relying on educational institutions, programmes and qualifications. Quality, as the agreed terrain of assurance. And harmonization, as the response to internationalization and to the demands of recognition.

In order to enhance trust, quality and harmonization, standards and procedures have been put in place around the world to externally review accreditation agencies.

In Africa, for example, the issue of harmonization of higher education has been high on the agenda of the Pan-African Quality Assurance Accreditation Framework (PAQAF) and this has led to the development of the *African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (ASG-QA). The ASG-QA aim to 'contribute to the provision of quality higher education (and) ensure that the qualifications obtained by students and their experience of higher education remain consonant with programme requirements, institutional vision and mission, and the objectives of higher education'.¹

Likewise, in Europe, the *European Standards and Guidelines* are in place as the tool through which quality assurance agencies are reviewed² (if successful, agencies are listed on the European Quality Assurance Register - EQAR). In North America, similar functions are carried out by the US Department of Education through the standards and procedures for recognition found in the *Accreditation Handbook*³ and by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) that publishes and oversees the implementation of the *CHEA Standards and Procedures for Recognition*.⁴

In Asia, the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) has established the Asia-Pacific Quality Register (APQR) as a register of external quality assurance agencies to demonstrate that certain

¹ http://diposit.ub.edu/dspace/bitstream/2445/126939/4/ASG-QA_Manual_en_09.FINALE%20with%20License.pdf

² <http://www.ehea.info/page-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance>

³ <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation-handbook.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.chea.org/chea-standards-and-procedures-recognition>

thresholds of maturity and have been externally reviewed. The standards of these reviews are found in the *Guidelines and Templates for the APQR*⁵ and include the APQN membership criteria⁶ as well as the *Chiba Principles*⁷ (the IQAAHE *Guidelines for Good Practice* - GGP are also mentioned). In South Asia, a similar framework and QA principles is expressed in the *ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF)*.⁸ In Ibero-American regions the Ibero-American Quality Assurance System of Higher Education (SIACES - Spanish acronym) has agreed to promote compliance to the *Principles of Good Practices in Quality Assurance Systems (PBP)*.⁹

Globally, the most evolved tool for the review of quality assurance agencies is found in the alignment procedures to the INQAAHE *International Standards and Guidelines (ISG)* formerly known as the *Guidelines for Good Practice* – GGP¹⁰. The intent of ISG alignment is to ‘frame international quality hallmarks’ (p.4) and ‘offer quality assurance framework specifically developed to respond to a diversity of needs’ (p.7). The term ‘alignment’ used for ICETE Alignment has been acquired from the INQAAHE vocabulary.

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

When it comes to accreditation agencies serving theological education, different situations are found around the world. Some accreditation agencies have been formally reviewed and recognized in their region. In other regions there is either no mechanism for granting official alignment to the operational standards of higher education accrediting agencies or recognition is not accessible to agencies that are serving Christian theological education.

In this context, ICETE Alignment is a unique opportunity for accreditation agencies serving theological education to be able to publicly demonstrate their quality against commonly accepted standards. The *ICETE Alignment Standards* in part 2 of this document have been carefully collated from agreed standards used around the world for quality assurance agencies and thus contribute to speaking to international higher education stakeholders about the quality of the work of ICETE aligned agencies.¹¹

ICETE Alignment also represents a unique opportunity for accrediting agencies dealing with Christian theological education to formally demonstrate their alignment to the values and standards that are specific to the field of theological education. This is usually not done in ‘secular’ recognition processes. ICETE Alignment thus also speaks to the specific stakeholders of theological education, enhancing trust in ICETE accredited institutions and graduates.

The ICETE Board offers this tool to help accreditation agencies in their continued quest for quality in their service to global theological education.

⁵ <https://www.apqr.co/media/contents/APQR-TEMP-WEB-NoV-2016-JP-JX-CT-DB.pdf>

⁶ <https://apqn.org/members/application-process-for-members>

⁷ <https://www.apqr.co/appeal/eligibility-chiba-principles>

⁸ <https://www.share-asean.eu/sites/default/files/AQAF.pdf>

⁹ https://www.siaces.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Principles-of-Good-Practice_SIACES_EN.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.inqaahe.org/sites/default/files/INQAAHE-International-Standards-and-Guidelines-ISG.pdf>

¹¹ The standards are a collation of those found in the ASG-QA, ESG, CHEA, APQR, AQAF and ISG and thus represent best practice in Africa, Asia, Western Europe and North America, the Arab States, Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe, Latin America and Caribbean. The mapping exercise seen in Appendix 1 demonstrates that there is a set of core standards over which there is global agreement, and these have been adopted for the ICETE Alignment process.

The ICETE Board, 12 June 2023¹²

Editorial Committee: Dr Marvin Oxenham, Dr Orbelina Eguizabal, Dr Steve Hardy

¹² The original version of this document was approved by the ICETE Board in 2021 but never implemented in practice. Minor amendments to the current document may be made.

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1 - ICETE ALIGNMENT PROCEDURES

1.1 - ICETE Alignment criteria

To successfully obtain ICETE Alignment an accreditation agency must meet the following criteria.

1. The agency is an ICETE Member Association (see article 5.1 and 5.2 of ICETE Constitution and Bylaws).¹³
2. The agency is compliant with the *ICETE Alignment Standards and Guidelines* as laid out in part 2 of this document. This is demonstrated through a self-evaluation report and an external review procedure (which may include a site visit).
3. The agency pays relevant review procedure fees and annual Alignment fees.

ICETE Alignment will have a duration of 10 years, after which the agency must undergo a new review. Should the agency undergo significant changes while the Alignment is still valid, the ICETE may request an intermediary review.

A simplified procedure is provided for agencies that have been successfully reviewed by an acceptable external reviewer (see 1.3 below).

1.2 - ICETE Alignment Procedures

The procedures for ICETE Alignment are as follows. Depending on the initial level of compliance of the agency, this procedure can take between 6 months and 2 years.

1. **Initial application and review fee.** The agency fills out the *ICETE Alignment Application form*¹⁴. This application includes a timeline for the submission of the *Self-Evaluation Report* (SER) and suggested dates for the desk-based review. A review procedure fee is paid.¹⁵
2. **Authorisation.** The ICETE Quality Assurance Director (QAD) either
 - approves the application or
 - provides alternative instructions (should the application be insufficient or unsuitable as a *bona fide* case for ICETE Alignment).

¹³ This means agencies need be a) to multinational, and trans-denominational associations of evangelical higher and postsecondary theological education institutions, b) include among their principal functions the provision of academic accreditation that is recognised and accepted by the Council's existing membership c) affirm and maintain adherence to the ICETE Statement of Faith (WEA)

¹⁴ See <https://icete.info/services/qa/ega/application-form/>

¹⁵ See <https://icete.info/alignment/> for updated fees

- 3. Self-Evaluation Report.** The agency produces a *Self-Evaluation Report* (SER) and sends it to the ICETE QAD at least two months before the desk-based review. This is a major internal quality assurance exercise whereby the agency evaluates its operations in light of the *ICETE Alignment Standards and Guidelines* (see Section 2 below). It is important that the agency understands this as an opportunity for reflection that might call for change, innovation, and quality improvement. The result of this exercise, which normally takes several months and involves the stakeholders of the agency, is a substantial document (normally 10-20 pages) that responds to each of the standards and relative guidelines (see below) in detail along with documentary evidence of compliance. See Appendix A for the template of this Self-Evaluation Report.

The SER and all key documents must be submitted in digital form in English. Automatic translations (e.g. with Deepl.com) are accepted.

The SER will be accompanied by a narrative report describing the extent to which its accreditation processes follow their accreditation standards and practices. This report can read like a detailed case study for one or two institutions, showing how the accreditation process has been applied during the last two years. The member agency should also provide contacts so that ICETE can follow-up this report with independent feedback from the institution.

Agencies that have been successfully reviewed by an acceptable external reviewer (e.g. AQAN, APQR, PAQAF, CHEA, EQAR, INQAAHE, etc), do not need to produce a Self-Evaluation Report but must submit current documentation of the external review outcome and request the simplified Alignment procedure (see below 1.3 – ICETE Alignment Simplified Procedure).

- 4. Desk-based review.** As the agency prepares the SER, the ICETE Quality Assurance Director (QAD) begins to collect a team of independent Expert Peer Reviewers (EPR) and determine a date for the desk-based review. In composing the EPR team, the criteria of expertise, availability, representation and no-conflict of interest will be used. The agency will be asked to sign off on the team and agree on the date for the visit.

It is good practice for agencies engaging in the alignment procedures to nominate an internal review coordinator who will be the main interface with the ICETE throughout the process.

Once the SER and the documentation has been submitted, the Expert Peer Reviewers will perform a desk-based review associated with a set of key interviews¹⁶ to determine compliance to each of the ICETE Alignment standards. This review will be coordinated by the ICETE QAD.

As an alternative to the desk-based review, a site visit may be conducted. This may be requested by the agency (with additional costs to cover travel, accommodation, etc) or by the ICETE QAD.

¹⁶ Interviews may include key players in the agency, representatives of the decision-making body, peer-experts, accredited institutions, etc. Interviews may be held remotely by online means.

5. **Review report.** The Expert Peer Reviewers (EPR) will produce a review report rating the compliance to each of the ICETE Alignment standards. The rating for each standard can be:

- COMPLIANT (either full or substantial¹⁷) – possibly followed by commendations or recommendations
- PARTIALLY COMPLIANT¹⁸ – normally followed by recommendations
- NON-COMPLIANT – followed by requirements

The compliance rating includes each component of each standard.¹⁹

6. **Decision-making process.** The Member Association Review Committee (MARC) makes decisions concerning ICETE Alignment outcomes. This committee, nominated by the ICETE Board, is composed of 4-5 individuals in good standing, representing a variety of stakeholders, and understand the ICETE Alignment process.²⁰ The MARC will operate under conditions of freedom from conflict of interest.

After considering the review report by the EPR, the MARC vote by simple majority to either:

- Determine SUBSTANTIAL COMPLIANCE and grant Alignment . Substantial compliance is determined when an agency is compliant to all standards. It may also be determined within a holistic judgment when an agency is partially compliant in one or more standards.
- Determine SUBSTANTIAL NON-COMPLIANCE and not grant Alignment . Substantial non-compliance is determined when an agency is non-compliant in one or more standards. It may also be determined within a holistic judgment when an agency is partially compliant in one or more standards.

In cases of partial compliance the MARC will exercise discretion to reach a holistic judgment that may be either of substantial compliance or of substantial non-compliance. The holistic judgment should consider both the *quantity*²¹ and the *importance*²² of standards in which the agency has been rated as partially compliant.

¹⁷ A 'substantial' compliance rating is given when one or more components of a standard are in place, but they are not of high quality. For example, concerning Standard B.4, an agency may have a published appeals process in paper form within a manual but not online, hence reducing its accessibility. In this case, substantial compliance would be the appropriate rating.

¹⁸ A 'partial' compliance rating is given when one or more components of a standard are missing. For example, concerning Standard B.4, an agency may have an appeals procedure but not a complaint procedure. Or the agency may both appeal and complaints procedure, but they are not published. In these cases, partial compliance would be the appropriate rating.

¹⁹ Standard B.4, for example, might be seen as having at least 6 components: 1) a complaint procedure, 2) an appeal procedure, 3) clarity of procedures, 4) publication of procedures, 5) independence in adjudication, 6) follow up procedures. All of these need to be in place to be rated as compliant.

²⁰ The MARC is a standing committee that is also responsible for evaluating new ICETE member associations (see <https://icete.info/services/qa/member-association-review/>).

²¹ For example, an agency that has been rated as partially compliant in four different standards will likely be judged as substantially non-compliant (quantity). Conversely, an agency that has been rated as partially compliant in only one standard, will likely be judged as substantially compliant.

²² For example, an agency that has been rated as partially compliant in adhering to the SG-GETE in their accreditation standards (A.1) may be judged as substantially non-compliant, because this standard is core to the ICETE Alignment process. Conversely, an agency that has been rated as partially compliant recruitment processes for peer experts (B.3), publication of appeals processes (B.4) and regular review of mission statement involving stakeholders (C.2), will likely be judged as substantially compliant because these elements are of less importance.

The following table summarises the review report outcomes and the decision-making process.

For each standard in the Review Report (Expert Peer Reviewers – EPR)		Overall judgment in the decision-making process (MARC)		
Compliance (full or substantial)	Followed by possible commendations or recommendations	Compliance to all standards (full or substantial)	SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLIANT	ICETE Alignment Granted
Partial compliance	Followed by recommendations	Partial compliance in one or more standards (holistic judgement)		
		Partial compliance in one or more standards (holistic judgement)	SUBSTANTIALLY NON-COMPLIANT	ICETE Alignment not granted
Non-compliance	Followed by requirements	Non-compliance		

7. **Publication.** In line with best practice, the alignment decision, together with the integral review report, will be published on the ICETE website. Institutions have the right to appeal the decision of the MARC (appeals and their outcomes will also be published). The agency that has gained ICETE Alignment will be listed in the ICETE Alignment Directory, given an ICETE Alignment Certificate and be authorised to advertise the claim “ICETE Aligned”.
8. **Appeals.** Agencies may appeal the decision of the MARC. Two levels of appeal are foreseen. The first level appeal will be to the MARC itself, with a written letter describing the issue and supporting evidence. Should this not be satisfactory, agencies can appeal to the ICETE Board that will give final adjudication.
9. **Follow up** is envisioned at different levels, depending on the outcomes of the review decision (see n.6 above).
 - No follow up is required if SUBSTANTIAL COMPLIANCE has been determined with full compliance to all standards (no recommendations).
 - Agencies for whom SUBSTANTIAL COMPLIANCE has been determined with a ‘substantial’ and/or ‘partial’ compliance rating in one or more standards, must produce a follow up report within one year of the review responding to recommendations.
 - Agencies for whom SUBSTANTIAL NON-COMPLIANCE has been determined must produce a compliance report within the given timeframe responding to the requirements. The report must also include a response to recommendations if present. Once new evidence is submitted, the MARC will convene for a further focused evaluation.

If the MARC can determine substantial compliance on the basis of the new evidence, the judgement will be converted to SUBSTANTIAL COMPLIANCE. If the MARC cannot determine

substantial compliance on the basis of the new evidence, the application may be deferred to a later date, or a new review may be requested.

All follow-up reports must be submitted digitally to the ICETE QAD.

10. **Reporting and fees.** All agencies will produce a mid-term report after 5 years, in which they will evaluate their ongoing compliance to the ICETE Alignment standards and provide a set of operational data as requested by ICETE.

Agencies pay the annual ICETE Alignment fees.²³

1.3 - ICETE Simplified Alignment Procedures

Agencies that have been successfully reviewed in the last 10 years by an acceptable external reviewer (e.g. AQAN, APQR, PAQAF, CHEA, EQAR, INQAAHE, etc), may benefit from the following simplified procedure.

1. **Initial application and review fee.** The agency fills out the *ICETE Alignment Application* form indicating that it intends to apply for the 'simplified' Alignment procedure.²⁴ A reduced review procedure fee is paid.
2. **Authorisation.** The ICETE Quality Assurance Director (QAD) either
 - a) approves the application or
 - b) provides alternative instructions (should, for example, the external review be deemed as potentially inadequate)
3. **Documentation.** The agency submits the following documents for the simplified procedure:
 - a) The Self Evaluation Report (SER) submitted to the external agency.
 - b) The formal review decision by the external agency (this decision normally has a timeframe of validity which must be current).
 - c) A Simplified Self-Evaluation Report evaluating compliance to Standard 1 - 'Accreditation Standards', in the *ICETE Alignment Standards and Guidelines*, (see Section 2 below). This measure amounts to evaluating whether the agencies' accreditation standards substantially reflect *ICETE Standards and Guidelines for Global Evangelical Theological Education* (SG-GETE). See Appendix B for the template of this Simplified Self-Evaluation Report.

The SER, review decision and all key documents must be submitted in digital form in English. Automatic translations (e.g. with Deepl.com) are accepted.

4. **Desk-based review.** (same as n.4 above).

²³ See <https://icete.info/services/qa/ega/> for updated fees

²⁴ See <https://icete.info/services/qa/ega/application-form/>

5. **Review report.** The EPR will produce a review report that recognises a) the successful external review and b) compliance rating vis Standard 1 - 'Accreditation Standards', in the *ICETE Alignment Standards and Guidelines*.
6. **Decision-making process** (same as n.6 above)
7. **Publication** (same as n.7 above)
8. **Appeals** (same as n.8 above)
9. **Fees** (same as n.9 above)²⁵

²⁵ See <https://icete.info/services/qa/eqa/> for updated fees

2. ICETE ALIGNMENT STANDARDS

To successfully obtain ICETE Alignment, an accreditation agency must demonstrate compliance to the following standards. The standards follow a three-fold division that distinguishes Accreditation Standards (A1-A2), Methods and Procedures (B1-B5) and Organization and Policy (C1-C7).

A. Accreditation standards

These standards address the (minimum) standards that the agency uses in the accreditation of programmes and institutions. They answer the question: ‘What is being required in accreditation?’

A.1 - INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAMME STANDARDS

The agency ensures that the institutions and programmes it accredits substantially adhere to the standards as expressed in the *Standards and Guidelines for Global Evangelical Theological Education* (SG-GETE).²⁶

As appropriate, additional and specific quality assurance standards guidelines are also in place.²⁷

A.2 - INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE STANDARDS

The agency ensures that institutions have internal QA policies and processes.

Through these policies, institutions are required to demonstrate ownership of the quality assurance processes as well as active and systematic pursuit, improvement and compliance to the standards expressed in A1.

B. Methods and procedures

These standards address the operational aspects of the reviews conducted by the QA agency. They answer the question: ‘How is it done?’

²⁶The SG-GETE include both internationally recognised institutional and programme standards for higher education, and specific standards for theological education <https://icete.info/resources/sggete/>

²⁷ For example, specific quality assurance guidelines for online delivery.

B.1 - METHODOLOGIES

The agency has quality assurance methodologies that are published and consistently used in accreditation reviews.

Methodologies are fit for purpose, and normally include an application procedure, the submission of a self-evaluation report, a site visit by an independent expert panel, the production of a review report by the expert panel, an independent review decision, the publication of the decision, follow up procedures and the possibility of appeal.

B.2 - CRITERIA FOR OUTCOMES

The agency has clear, published criteria for accreditation outcomes.

These criteria are used consistently and aligned to accreditation standards (see A.1 and A.2 above). Criteria include the provision of recommendations and requirements.

B.3 - EXPERT REVIEWERS

The agency deploys independent expert reviewers in their reviews.

Expert reviewers represent different stakeholders and normally include students. Procedures are in place for the recruitment, selection and training of expert reviewers. Policies and procedures are in place to guarantee the independence of the expert review panels.

B.4 - COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

The agency has a complaint and appeal procedure.

These procedures are clear and published and assure independence in adjudication. Follow up procedures are in place.

B.5 - PERIODIC REVIEWS

The agency periodically reviews accredited institutions and programmes.

Periodic/cyclical reviews normally run as cycles of 5-10 years between reviews. Clear criteria and procedures are in place for these reviews.

C. Organisation and policy

These standards address the 'internal' identity and the operations of the QA agency itself. They answer the question: 'How is the agency set up?'

C.1 - LEGAL STATUS

The agency has an appropriate legal status in its context.

The legal status of the agency permits quality assurance activities of institutions and programmes in the discipline of theological education. Full disclosure is provided on the status of accreditation outcomes, and whether they lead to formally recognised qualifications and degrees in national contexts (or not).

C.2 - VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

The agency has a published vision and mission statement that includes quality assurance activities.

The vision and mission statement is developed in consultation with stakeholders and is regularly reviewed. The operations of the agency express its vision and mission statement.

C.3 - RESOURCES

The agency has adequate resources for its operations.

Resources include human, financial and material resources. Sustainability and investment plans are in place to ensure ongoing operations and potential improvements.

C.4 - INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

The agency has its own internal quality assurance processes.

Internal quality assurance processes cover the entire operation of the agency and are supported by published policies, regularly monitored and result in improvement plans. Agencies publish their own internal quality assurance outcomes in accountability to their stakeholders. Internal quality assurance processes for the agency include ethical practices.

C.5 - STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

The agency involves stakeholders in its governance and work.

The agency identifies its stakeholders to normally include: accredited institutions, students, graduates, employers, the ecclesial community, funders, peer experts, their own staff, other QA agencies and higher education authorities.

C.6 - INDEPENDENCE

The agency is independent in its operations and in its review decisions.

Independence is expressed in full responsibility and autonomy of operations without third party influence. Review decisions are normally made by an independent commission on the basis of

the review report, following the site visit from the expert review panel. Full review reports are normally published.

C.7 - EXTERNAL REVIEW

The agency undergoes regular external review.

Periodic reviews comply to international standards and procedures. They are conducted to ensure independent judgement and the results are published.

APPENDIX A: ICETE ALIGNMENT SER TEMPLATE

This template is to be used by agencies submitting an ICETE Alignment Self-Evaluation Report (IA-SER) for the purpose of being reviewed for ICETE Alignment. The main body of the narrative should follow the outline below. Although bullet points are appropriate in some sections, a narrative style is generally most suitable. The entire IA-SER should not be longer than 20 pages (plus external resources).

A. Executive summary²⁸

- Indicate the name of the agency, the date of submission of the IA-SER and the classification of the report (initial IA review or cyclical IA review).
- Summarise areas of strength and weakness in relation the *ICETE Alignment Standards* (these should reflect section F. Conclusions).

B. Introduction to the IA-SER and the external review process²⁹

- Give the background and reason for the report.
- Describe the process and the people involved in producing the IA-SER and the overall responsibilities in the review process.
- Define the terms of reference of the review, including a description of the main stages and timescale of the process.
- Indicate the primary language of the agency (if applicable, list supporting documents that have been translated).

C. Introduction to the QA agency³⁰

- General description of the agency: indicate the legal status of the agency in your region, a brief history and a mission/vision statement that includes quality assurance activities. Specify whether accreditation by the agency can lead to formal degree Alignment .
- Activities of the agency: describe all the activities of the agency, including both accreditation activities and other activities (e.g. research and development, networking, training, publication, QA of non-formal education, quality enhancement, consultancy, etc.). Concerning accreditation activities, specify whether they include both institutional and programme accreditation.
- Facilities: Brief description of agency's facilities.
- Institutions: provide statistics about the institutions served by the agency (number of institutions, student numbers, countries represented, etc). Also include a description of the status of the institutions served (higher education institutions, universities, alternative providers, non-recognised Bible schools, non-formal training organisations, etc).
- External stakeholders and graduates: describe the external stakeholders of the agency and the main graduate destinations.
- Accreditation statistics: provide data on the accreditation activities of the agency (e.g. yearly number of reviews, programme levels being accredited, etc.)
- Staff: list staff employed by the agency. Also indicate whether external peer reviewers receive compensation.

D. Evaluation of compliance with the *ICETE Alignment Standards*³¹

²⁸ This section should normally not be more than 1 page.

²⁹ This section should normally not be more than 1-2 pages.

³⁰ This section should normally not be more than 3-4 pages.

³¹ This is the main section of the IA-SER and should normally be about 5-10 pages.

- This section should follow the outline the *ICETE Alignment Standards*:
 - A.1 – *Institutional and programme standards*
 - A.2 – *Internal quality assurance standards*
 - B.1 – *Methodologies*
 - B.2 – *Criteria for outcomes*
 - B.3 – *Expert reviewers*
 - B.4 – *Complaints and appeals procedures*
 - B.5 – *Periodic reviews*
 - C.1 – *Legal status*
 - C.2 – *Vision and mission statement*
 - C.3 – *Resources*
 - C.4 – *Internal quality assurance processes*
 - C.5 – *Stakeholder involvement*
 - C.6 – *Independence*
 - C.7 – *External review*
- Provide a detailed response to each statement of each of the fourteen standards. For example, in responding to standard C.3 – *Resources*, describe the resources for your operations and how they are adequate, making sure to include human resources, financial resources and material resources. Also describe both sustainability and investment plans and how they ensure operations and potential improvements.
- List evidence. Where possible, provide evidence of compliance (e.g. mission statements, accreditation manuals, policy documents, staff lists, organisational charts, regulations, etc). These may take the form of supporting documentation and should be hyperlinked and numbered in accordance with the Supporting Documentation Index in section G of the report (see below).³²

E. Narrative report³³

- Produce a narrative report describing how the agency follows its accreditation standards and practices. This report can read like a detailed case study for one or two institutions, showing how the accreditation process has been applied during the last two years.
- Contacts should be provided to enable the ICETE expert review team to follow-up on the report with independent feedback from the institutions used for the case studies.

F. Conclusions³⁴

- Provide a brief self-assessment overview of compliance with the *ICETE Alignment Standards*.
- Include additional reflections and plans for development.

G. Supporting Documentation Index

- Reference documents that have informed the IR-SER such as the *ICETE Alignment Standards*, the *SG-GETE*, and principal agency documents (e.g. your statutes, accreditation manual, procedures policies, etc).
- Provide a numbered index of supporting documentation (e.g. examples of evidence) that matches the sections of the report;
- In the index, include direct links to access all individual documents.³⁵ Please do not submit digital attachments nor links to folders containing multiple documents.

Your IA-SER must be submitted digitally in English to the ICETE Quality Assurance Director
marvin.oxenham@icete.info

³² Supporting documentation does not count toward the 20-page limit.

³³ This should normally be about 1-2 pages.

³⁴ This section should normally not be more than 1 page.

³⁵ This might entail using your own cloud storage and sharing facilities (e.g. Dropbox).

APPENDIX B: ICETE ALIGNMENT SIMPLIFIED SER TEMPLATE

This template is to be used by agencies using the ICETE Simplified Alignment Procedures (S-IA-SER) (see 1.3 above). The purpose of this report is to evaluating compliance to Standard 1 - 'Accreditation Standards', in the *ICETE Alignment Standards and Guidelines*, (see Section 2 below). This measure amounts to evaluating that the agencies' own accreditation standards substantially reflect *ICETE Standards and Guidelines for Global Evangelical Theological Education* (SG-GETE). The main body of the narrative should follow the outline below. Although bullet points are appropriate in some sections, a narrative style is generally most suitable. The entire S-IR-SER should not be longer than 10 pages (plus external resources).

A. Executive summary³⁶

- Indicate the name of the agency, the date of submission of the S-IA-SER and the classification of the report (initial IA review, simplified IA review or cyclical IA review).
- Summarise areas of strength and weakness in relation the agencies' own standards vis the SG-GETE (these should reflect section F. Conclusions).

B. Introduction to the S-IA-SER and the external review process³⁷

- Give the background and reason for the report.
- Describe the process and the people involved in producing the S-IA-SER and the overall responsibilities in the IR review process.
- Define the terms of reference of the review, including a description of the main stages and timescale of the process.
- Indicate the primary language of the agency (if applicable, list supporting documents that have been translated).

C. Introduction to the QA agency³⁸

- General description of the agency: indicate the legal status of the agency in your region, a brief history and a mission/vision statement that includes quality assurance activities. Specify whether accreditation by the agency can lead to formal degree Alignment .
- Activities of the agency: describe all the activities of the agency, including both accreditation activities and other activities (e.g. research and development, networking, training, publication, QA of non-formal education, quality enhancement, consultancy, etc.). Concerning accreditation activities, specify whether they include both institutional and programme accreditation.
- Facilities: Brief description of agency's facilities.
- Institutions: provide statistics about the institutions served by the agency (number of institutions, student numbers, countries represented, etc). Also include a description of the status of the institutions served (higher education institutions, universities, alternative providers, non-recognised Bible schools, non-formal training organisations, etc).
- External stakeholders and graduates: describe the external stakeholders of the agency and the main graduate destinations.
- Accreditation statistics: provide data on the accreditation activities of the agency (e.g. yearly number of reviews, programme levels being accredited, etc.)
- Staff: list staff employed by the agency. Also indicate whether external peer reviewers receive compensation.

³⁶ This section should normally not be more than 1 page.

³⁷ This section should normally not be more than 1-2 pages.

³⁸ This section should normally not be more than 3-4 pages.

D. Evaluation of compliance with Standard 1 in the *ICETE Alignment Standards*³⁹

- This section should evaluate to what degree the agencies' own accreditation standards reflect the *ICETE Standards and Guidelines for Global Evangelical Theological Education (SG-GETE)*.

E. Conclusions⁴⁰

- Provide a brief self-assessment overview of compliance with Standard 1 in the *ICETE Alignment Standards*.
- Include additional reflections and plans for development.

F. Supporting Documentation Index

- Reference documents that have informed the S-IA-SER such as the *ICETE Alignment Standards*, the *SG-GETE*, and principal agency documents and your accreditation manual.
- Provide a numbered index of supporting documentation (e.g. examples of evidence) that matches the sections of the report;
- In the index, include direct links to access all individual documents.⁴¹ Please do not submit digital attachments nor links to folders containing multiple documents.

Your S-IA-SER must be submitted digitally in English to the ICETE Quality Assurance Director
marvin.oxenham@icete.info

³⁹ This is the main section of the IA-SER and should normally be about 5-10 pages.

⁴⁰ This section should normally not be more than 1 page.

⁴¹ This might entail using your own cloud storage and sharing facilities (e.g. Dropbox).

The *ICETE Alignment Process* was approved by the ICETE Board on 9 June 2023