

INTRODUCING THE ECTE

IDENTITY, ACTIVITIES AND
ORGANISATION

ECTE

European
Council for
Theological
Education

(Formerly the
EEAA)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
1 - IDENTITY	4
1.1 – HISTORY	4
1.2 - OFFICIAL STATUS	4
1.3 - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	5
1.4 – AFFILIATIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS	7
1.5 – ECTE CORE VALUES	8
2 - ACTIVITIES	11
2.1 – NETWORKING	11
THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE ECTE NETWORK	11
REGULAR MEMBERSHIP	12
ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP	12
2.2 – DEVELOPMENT	13
RESEARCH	13
TRAINING	13
2.3 – QUALITY ASSURANCE	14
ECTE ACCREDITATION IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA	14
ECTE ACCREDITATION IN GLOBAL EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION	15
THE AIMS OF ECTE ACCREDITATION	15
3 – ORGANISATION	17
3.1 - ECTE STATUTES	17
1. NAME, LEGAL ADDRESS, REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL YEAR	17
2. PURPOSE AND NON-PROFIT STATUS	17
3. MEMBERSHIP	17
3.2 - ECTE BYLAWS	20
3.3 - GOVERNANCE, COUNCIL AND STAFF	21
3.4 – POLICIES ON INDEPENDENCE, APPEALS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST	23
INDEPENDENCE	23
APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS	23
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	23
3.5 - FINANCIAL POLICIES	24
3.6 – ECTE QUALITY MANIFESTO	25
ECTE AND INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (ESG 1)	25
ECTE AND EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (ESG 2)	26
ECTE AS A QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY (ESG 3)	27
CONSISTENCY GUARANTEE	28

INTRODUCTION

In 2019 the Council of the ECTE decided to discontinue the production of the ECTE Manual and to replace it with a series of documents corresponding to specific topics. The entire collection of these documents related to standards, procedures and guidelines can be found at <http://ecte.eu/qa/>.

This document contains important introductory information about ECTE Identity, Activities and Organisation (replacing section 1, 2, 4.5 and 4.10 of the Sixth Edition, 2018 of the ECTE Manual).

Since the Sixth Edition of the EEAA Manual in 2018, the identity, activities and organisation of the ECTE have remained largely the same. However, a number of important additions and clarifications have been added to this document.

The first section, on ECTE Identity, contains an introduction to the history of the ECTE and an updated description of its current official status, goals and objectives as well as its affiliations and stakeholders. This section also lists the Core Values that all ECTE members subscribe to.

The second section, on ECTE Activities, provides a synopsis of the three main activities that the ECTE engages in: 1) membership and networking, 2) development through research and training, and 3) quality assurance. The latter is further distinguished as the quality assurance and accreditation of tertiary theological education (featuring a new distinction between institutional and programme accreditation). The present document is to be considered only a general introduction to these activities, and readers should follow up the references that are provided to the detailed documents.

The final section, on ECTE Organisation, contains the ECTE statutes and bylaws, information on ECTE governance and staff and a number of policies relating to independence, appeals, conflict of interest and finances. This section also contains the ECTE Quality Manifesto responding to the quality assurance standards of the European Standards and Guidelines.

We offer this updated introduction to the ECTE as a tool in helping our stakeholders progress toward greater fitness for service, for God's greater glory in Europe.

ECTE Review committee

Dr Bernhard Ott, Chairman

Dr Hubert Jurgensen, Vice Chairman

Dr Marvin Oxenham, General Secretary

November 2019



1 - IDENTITY

1.1 – History

The European Council for Theological Education (ECTE) is a subject-specific quality assurance network related to the discipline of theology and to the practices of theological education and serving evangelical theological education and its stakeholders.

The ECTE (formerly the European Evangelical Accrediting Association - EEAA) was officially founded by the delegates of 23 institutions on October 31, 1979, at St. Chrischona (Switzerland). To date, approximately 80 institutions have joined forces with the ECTE. The work of the association is carried out by a Council, a General Secretary and a staff team. It is funded by its members fees and governed by a General Assembly of member institutions that meets on a bi-annual basis.

The ECTE is registered in Germany, operates out of its office in Italy, and serves a constituency comprised mainly of European institutions of evangelical theology (together with a number of institutions from the Middle East). Each institution reflects its own national culture, history, and ecclesiological affiliation and contributes to the wealth of experience and diversity in European theological education.

The ECTE aligns its operations with European quality assurance standards, being sensitive to higher education issues in Europe and encouraging institutions to adapt to national situations. The ECTE also cultivates a meaningful relationship with European and international stakeholders and seeks to enhance the quality in theological education on their behalf.

The ECTE is sensitive to global issues in quality assurance and participates actively in global networks of theological education.

1.2 - Official status

The ECTE is a cross-border, professional, discipline-specific, independent accreditation agency that operates according to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the Standards and Guidelines for Global Evangelical Theological Education (SG-GETE).

Through its activities, the ECTE contributes to the continuous enhancement of the quality of higher theological education in Europe and the Middle East. Accreditation by the ECTE involves external reviews of institutions and programmes of theological education by independent, international peer experts, provides statements of comparability to published standards and certifies levels within a nomenclature framework.

The ECTE conducts autonomous, voluntary reviews and can conduct reviews in cooperation with national QA requirements. The ECTE is currently applying for registration on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

The is a not-for-profit association, registered on 14.10.2018 (with its current name) in Baden-Württemberg, Germany (Registration Number: VR 201286). The ECTE is formally recognised by German public authorities as an association whose purpose includes quality assurance. This is stated in the ECTE statutes that indicate that: 'The purpose of the association is the promotion of religion and education. This is

achieved both at home and abroad, in particular by promoting and securing the quality of the theological training of the member institutes based on uniform standards' (ECTE Statutes, 2.1).

1.3 - Goals and objectives

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of ECTE is to assist evangelical theological education in Europe to become and to be 'fit for purpose' so that it equips the church for God's mission.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are expressed in the ECTE's Mission statement.

1. *Excellence and fitness for purpose.* The ECTE's entire network of people and services should strive for excellence, aiming at fitness for purpose in all that God has put into our care.
2. *Evangelical.* The ECTE is privileged to serve the entire Evangelical Church community and to inspire by its example its institutions to work in harmony with all evangelicals for God's greater glory. The ECTE, in the spirit of the European Evangelical Alliance, respects denominational particularities and traditions, but considers them as secondary to the fundamentals of the Christian faith. The ECTE seek to maintain a balance between clear beliefs held under the Lordship of Christ and an attitude of "gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:16) towards all those outside of the evangelical tradition.
3. *Contextual and Relevant.* The ECTE network, located in Europe with its own particular history and context, should serve its constituency in light of the uniqueness and needs of today's European peoples and cultures, while meeting the highest European educational standards. Located in Europe, in a climate of religious and social diversity and freedoms and serious challenges to the Christian faith, the ECTE also exists to meet the diverse leadership needs of the European churches and ministries by empowering and encouraging evangelical theological training institutions in our network.
4. *Missional.* The ECTE does not conceive evangelical theological education as an end in itself, but rather as a means for contributing to the kingdom of God in Europe and beyond through the qualitative and quantitative growth of the Church in Europe. The ECTE believes that theological education must not only produce knowledge and understanding in the minds of students, but also a deep spiritual, life-changing impact that will prepare graduates for effective service and healthy Christian living. The ECTE also believes that that European churches and ministries will benefit as evangelical institutions of higher and vocational theological education collaborate and network more closely.
5. *Flexible and Developing.* The ECTE is committed to assisting its member institutions in adapting to the innovations within higher and vocational education in Europe and to the changing needs of the evangelical community and the world they are called to serve. The ECTE is also committed to assisting its member institutions in creating a flexible and developing network that will respond to needs and opportunities as they arise.
6. *Accountable.* The ECTE does not accredit on behalf of itself, but on behalf of the evangelical churches of Europe, seeking to encourage the training of workers and leaders in response to the needs and ideas of the evangelical community in Europe, while recognising the dynamic input and contributions of evangelical theological institutions to those churches. The ECTE also seeks to remain accountable to the standards and guidelines for quality in higher and vocational education in Europe.

VISION STATEMENT AND STRATEGIC FOCUS

The ECTE is to be a vibrant community of theological institutions that, rooted in Scripture, in commitment to God, to His church and to His mission to the world, impacts evangelical theological education in Europe through a vision for quality assurance, training and resourcing. Because of this impact, leaders of theological institutions will consider the ECTE network to be of vital significance for them.

The ECTE will develop as an organisation which fulfils its mission by strategically focusing on quality assurance and development, resourcing and networking to build capacity in European evangelical theological education. Whereas interdisciplinary work is encouraged, the primary scope of institutions and programmes seeking the services of the ECTE is in the discipline of evangelical theology.

Three main areas of work shape the strategic focus and the day-to-day operations of the agency (see Section 2 below for greater detail):

- 1. Membership for networking.** The ECTE seeks to be a major voice of evangelical theological education in Europe connecting evangelical colleges and seminaries with each other and with theological institutions that have state accreditation or university validation to effectively serve one another by connecting their strategic resources in a common educational enterprise. The ECTE network will also seek to reinforce connections with the wider international world of theological education, with the broader church community, with non-tertiary providers of theological training and with the European academic higher education and vocational education context.

(See more below: 2.1)

- 2. Development through research and training.** The ECTE seeks to further serve theological education in Europe and beyond through publication, the creation and maintenance of key resources, organisation of events and the training of those involved in the delivery of theological education.

The ECTE seeks to understand the present and future movements in evangelical theological education, in order to maintain relevance in delivering its services and to take part in developing a contemporary vision for theological education in Europe and beyond. This will be done through international collaboration where appropriate.

(See more below: 2.2)

- 3. Quality assurance.** The ECTE seeks to nurture and certify a culture of quality assurance in theological education through institutional and programme accreditation. ECTE accreditation seeks both comparability to European and international standards and guidelines and coherence with the values of evangelical theology.

The ECTE's quality assurance services are subject-specific and cross-border in nature.

Institutions that undergo quality assurance processes with the ECTE provide a witness to churches, missions and to the broader community of the academic, vocational and formational values they wish to communicate to their graduates.

(See more below: 2.3)

1.4 – Affiliations and stakeholders

AFFILIATIONS

EEA. Besides serving European institutions, the ECTE also seeks to cultivate a meaningful relationship with churches, denominations and evangelical organizations that are based in Europe. These relationships are particularly important as the ECTE works to keep theological education relevant and sensitive to the needs of the churches. The ECTE is affiliated with the European Evangelical Alliance (EEA) and all member institutions generally endorse the statement of faith and theological orientation of their relevant evangelical stakeholders and communities (<https://www.europeanea.org>).

To strengthen the link with evangelical Christianity, the ECTE also has a Council of Reference composed of the key European evangelical leaders.

ENQA. The ECTE values the importance of educational QA contexts in Europe and is an Affiliate of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The ECTE's standards and framework are designed to implement standards of the Bologna Process (European Standards and Guidelines) and of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in theological education. The ECTE's quality assurance procedures are carried out in compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)(<https://enqa.eu>).

FEET. As a subject-specific network and quality assurance agency dealing with the discipline of theology, the ECTE is a full member of the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians (<http://www.feet-europe.net>).

ICETE. The ECTE is a founding member of the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE) through which it is linked to nine evangelical quality assurance agencies across the world representing over 1200 training institutes of theology (<http://icete.info>).

In the years since its founding in 1980, the ICETE has become the established forum for dialogue and cooperation among evangelical theological educators internationally. ICETE has also taken a leading role in fostering renewal and excellence in evangelical theological education globally. The purposes of the ICETE are:

- To promote the enhancement of evangelical theological education worldwide
- To serve as a forum for contact and collaboration among those worldwide involved in evangelical theological education, for mutual assistance, stimulation and enrichment.
- To provide networking and support services for regional accrediting bodies for evangelical theological education worldwide
- To facilitate among these bodies the enhancement of their services to evangelical theological education within their regions
- To foster the quality and the academic recognition of evangelical theological education worldwide through the accreditation services of these bodies

The eight continental/regional associations of theological institutions that constitute the ICETE are: ACTEA (Africa); ATA (Asia); CETA (the Caribbean); ECTE (Europe); E-AAA (Euro-Asia); AETAL (Latin America); ABHE (North America); and MENATE (Middle East and North Africa). For a complete directory of ICETE affiliated institutions see <http://icete.info>.

In this manual, the ECTE substantially adheres to the ICETE *Standards and Guidelines for Global Evangelical Theological Education* (SG-GETE 2019), thus enhancing ECTE's accreditation with a global comparability scheme.

INQAHEE. The ECTE values the importance of higher educational quality standards worldwide and since 2005 has been a full member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher

Education (INQAAHE). The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) is a world-wide association of near 300 organisations active in the theory and practice of quality assurance in higher education. The great majority of its members are quality assurance agencies that operate in many different ways, although the Network also welcomes (as associate members) other organisations that have an interest in QA in higher education (<https://www.inqaahe.org>).

STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders of the ECTE include:

- ECTE member institutions who actively participate in its support and governance and determine the peer-accreditation scheme;
- Local churches sending and receiving graduates from ECTE institutions;
- Evangelical church denominations sending and receiving graduates from ECTE institutions;
- Evangelical mission agencies sending and receiving graduates from ECTE institutions;
- National and international evangelical organisations and networks;
- Charities sending and receiving graduates from ECTE institutions;
- The International Council for Evangelical Theological Education and its member agencies who share a peer-accreditation commitment to quality in evangelical theological education;
- Graduates of ECTE institutions;
- Staff and faculty of ECTE institutions;
- Local churches of staff and faculty of ECTE institutions.

1.5 – ECTE Core Values

All ECTE member institutions must subscribe to the following core values and be prepared to provide evidence. This applies equally to institutions that are joining the ECTE network as members and institutions that engage with ECTE’s quality assurance and accreditation services. Organisations applying for affiliate membership should also subscribe to these core values as is relevant to their operations.

Given the importance of these core values, institutions are strongly advised to involve the institution’s leadership, staff and faculty in subscribing to them. A copy of these values might also be given to each student at the time of enrolment.

Each core value below completes the phrase ‘Theological education should be...’ and is followed by examples of evidence.

Theological education should be...	Examples of Evidence
1. Faithful to Bible and doctrine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The institution’s doctrine and teaching are evangelical, and Scripture based. - Faculty members should be mature Christians that abide by the institution’s doctrinal position - The programme has a robust commitment to Biblical studies.
2. Trusted by the church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The institution is in good standing with the evangelical community and networks with evangelical churches and organizations - Faculty and staff members should have a good standing within the national evangelical community at large, be respectable members of a



	<p>church and exhibit character traits that are worthy of imitation by the student body.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The institution is attentive to the needs and expectations of the community it serves - The institution works in partnership with the churches in the training of students
<p>3. Excellent in academics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The institution aims at providing educational means that are fit for purpose. - The teaching in the classroom is at an appropriate academic depth. - The institution encourages students and faculty to achieve their intellectual potential. - The institution trains students to be on-going learners
<p>4. Operating as community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The institution functions as a culturally appropriate learning community. - The institution's community is seen as a place where spiritual formation, character and service skills are developed. - The institution models cooperation by networking with other theological institutions
<p>5. Integrated in approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The institution's programmes integrate and balance academic quality, spiritual and personal formation and ministry effectiveness. - The institution has a variety of learning activities that are fit to achieve varying outcomes. - This balanced approach is modelled in faculty and staff that shall, wherever possible, actively participate in the life and worship of the theological institution and show personal involvement in the physical and spiritual welfare of the students and not only the intellectual and academic needs
<p>6. Aimed at service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The institution actively models and promotes servant leadership. - The institution should have sound procedures for evaluating the prospective student's commitment to Christian truth, ethics, values and community - The institution's programme aims at training graduates who will be able to serve in changing contexts. - The institution's programme should aim at fitness for purpose, and generally should include evaluated ministry experience - The institution offers vocational and ministerial guidance to its students and graduates
<p>7. Focused on outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The activities of the institution are inspired by the intended outcomes in the lives of its alumni and the kingdom - The institution has a carefully formulated mission statement and strategic plan
<p>8. Evaluated with integrity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The institution has procedures for internal quality assurance. - The institution continuously reviews its objectives, programmes, and entire operation. - The institution is accurate, transparent and truthful in its public face. - The institution's leadership, staff and faculty are accountable.



<p>9. Governed with competency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The institution has a clear legal operation, unambiguous governance structures and joint decision-making procedures - The institution's governing body is free from conflict of interest.
<p>10. Managed efficiently</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The institution is run by an efficient administration. - The institution's staff and faculty are sufficient in number and suitably qualified. - The institution's staff and faculty are provided with adequate working conditions. - The institution makes provision for on-going training of its staff and faculty. - The institution is transparent, accountable and viable in its financial dealings.
<p>11. Effective within context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The institution's learning activities, objectives and structure exist in response to its specific context and the needs of its stakeholders. - The institution's programme is culturally relevant and appropriately staffed by nationals. - The institution fosters a Christian mind and world view that can apply theological knowledge to context.

Although many of the ECTE's core values are specific to educational institutions, non-educational organisations and individuals applying for associate membership should likewise endorse the core values listed above.



2 - ACTIVITIES

The ECTE performs three main sets of activities. Of these, quality assurance, and specifically institutional accreditation and programme accreditation, fall under the scope of the ESG and are subject to external review. Networking and development, instead, do not fall under the scope of the ESG and are not subject to external review.

2.1 – Networking

As globalisation and internationalisation shape the world, networking is becoming the way of the future in higher and vocational education. The vision of the ECTE is to respond to the challenges of a changing world by developing an effective and sustainable network of European theological institutions and leaders that adhere to a set of common values and that can effectively serve one another by connecting their resources in a common evangelical educational enterprise.

THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE ECTE NETWORK

There are many advantages to a European network of theological institutions: within the network members become acquainted and confident in each other, overcoming cultural and theological barriers in order to enrich each other and stimulate their institutions. The bonding and peer friendships within a network also create a forum where problems can be faced together, and solutions elaborated while avoiding the dangers of isolation.

The human resource “multiplier effect” that occurs within a network of higher education is also of great value and the influence of many institutions together is much greater than the sum of all participating institutions. Many projects (i.e. investments in e-learning technology) that cannot be managed by a single institution, may well be jointly sponsored within the network and made available to all members. Networking students in theology in exchange programmes (i.e. Erasmus) can also contribute to creating future Christian leaders with a European mind-set that will be able bear a positive influence beyond their national borders and interact significantly in a unified Europe with a greater sense of European evangelical identity.

Many other advantages have been found by higher education networks in Europe and worldwide, such as curriculum innovation and development, student mobility, shared intensive short modules, summer institutions, training periods, double diplomas or multinational diplomas, postgraduate activities, mutual knowledge of partners in specific areas of competence, PhD joint supervision, research co-operation and formation of faculty research clusters where members list their areas of interest to collaborate in trans-national research, mobility of teaching staff and module sharing, common alumni databases and placement services for alumni and faculty .

The ECTE network also aims at providing specific services to its members. These could include seminars and upgrading tools for staff and faculty in the areas of management and teaching or contact with other evangelical organizations, foundations, missions and resource providers in Europe and worldwide on behalf of its members. Theological institutions that network with other institutions and with the European evangelical world at large can benefit from many opportunities of ministering and being ministered to within a healthy and learning community of like-minded men and women with similar dreams and goals.

The member institutions of the ECTE network benefit from the following potential advantages:

- The requirements for ECTE membership are designed to testify to the quality of institutions within evangelical Europe, both to the supporting constituency and among other theological

institutions. ECTE membership thus well represents tangible evidence of the desire to be a part of what God is doing through theological education in Europe.

- Being part of the ECTE network enables confident interchange with fellow institutions that share common values. This interchange can produce lasting friendships among peers and many profitable enterprises.
- Mission boards, denominations and service groups welcome an evangelical seal of quality, especially in the case of institutions that operate under government or secular university accreditation. If necessary, the ECTE will provide recommendation of its members to foundations.
- The network is committed to assist in launching and managing networking projects of any member institution and in giving them publicity both on the ECTE website and in the ECTE magazine.
- Member institutions will be included in the list of member institutions on the ECTE website and can claim ECTE membership on their publications.
- All institutions will receive updated information regarding service benefits, projects, seminars, library grants, and all of the ECTE's publications. Members will also have priority in being invited to participate in reserved events, seminars, consultations and projects.
- Through the ICETE, member institutions will have access to a worldwide network of over 1200 theological institutions. The ECTE is one of the nine agencies that comprise the ICETE, through which institutions become members of a global network of over 1200 institutions, organisations, denominations and agencies (see www.icete.info).
- Member institutions may also benefit from orientation visits to investigate ECTE accreditation and access to quality assurance services for institution programmes.
- ECTE members also benefit from financial assistance in educational modules offered through the ICETE Academy (see <https://icete.academy>).

Institutions interested in ECTE Membership can request an Orientation Visit from a Council member. Member institutions can also request an Orientation Visit to gain advice on accreditation or quality assurance issue. Regular visitation fees apply for this kind of visit.

REGULAR MEMBERSHIP

Regular membership in the ECTE network is available to all institutions of evangelical theological education operating formally at post-secondary or tertiary level (Associate membership is also available, see below).

Through membership, the ECTE seeks to create an institutional network that groups academic units together for multiple purposes and that promotes projects that deal with multiple aspects and persons involved in theological education. Regular membership in the ECTE is also the first phase in the ECTE accreditation procedures.¹

Criteria and procedures to become a regular ECTE member are outlined in a separate document.²

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Associate membership is open to 1) non-formal, non-tertiary providers of theological education, 2) individuals or 3) organizations (such as an association of theological institutions, a theological association, a church, a denomination or a mission) that have vested interest in theological education. Associate members have a voice but no vote in the General Assembly (see *ECTE Statutes*, 3.1 below).

¹ See: *Criteria and Procedures for ECTE Accreditation* <http://ecte.eu/qa/procedures/>

² See: *Criteria and Procedures for ECTE Membership* <http://ecte.eu/network/membership/>

Criteria and procedures to become a regular ECTE member are outlined in a separate document.³

2.2 – Development

The ECTE seeks to further serve theological education in Europe and beyond through the development quality in theological education through research and training.

RESEARCH

The ECTE seeks to understand the present and future movements in evangelical theological education, in order to maintain relevance in delivering its services and to take part in developing a contemporary vision for theological education in Europe and beyond. This is done through international collaboration where appropriate.

ECTE research activities are carried out by ECTE staff and Council members and can include academic and popular publishing of articles and monographs, facilitation of conferences, reporting, thematic analysis and partnership agreements with institutions conducting research in theological education.

TRAINING

The ECTE invests strategically in initiatives that enhance the educational training of its member institutions. These include training of VET members that carry out accreditation visits, training of institutions on a variety of topics through international and local events and the provision of key materials.

The ECTE has provided training materials through which the *London School of Theology* has produced a suite of postgraduate programmes (PGCertTE, PGDipTE, MATE) aimed specifically at the educational needs in the field of theological education.⁴ The ECTE also endorses programmes such as the Certificate and PhD programmes in theological education at the European School for Culture and Theology in Korntal (DE).

The ECTE is also a partner of the *ICETE Academy*, an educational development platform providing certified professional training for theological educators. The *ICETE Academy* provides short courses within a fellowship scheme on wide range of topics and through flexible delivery modes.⁵

³ See: *Criteria and Procedures for ECTE Associate Membership* <http://ecte.eu/network/associate-membership/>

⁴ See: <https://lst.ac.uk/home/courses/postgraduate-programs/ma-in-theological-education-de/>

⁵ See <https://icete.academy>

2.3 – Quality assurance

The historic mission of the ECTE has been the accreditation of formal tertiary theological education in Europe through a peer-evaluation approach to cross-border recognition and certification.

ECTE quality assurance activities fall within the scope of the European Standards and Guidelines and include. Procedures and standards for these activities are published separately⁶.

1. Institutional accreditation
2. Programme accreditation

The ECTE currently provides accreditation and certification of comparability within the following framework of levels:⁷

- Certificate in Theology
- Diploma in Theology
- Bachelor of Theology
- Master of Theology

ECTE ACCREDITATION IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

The ECTE operates in the field of accreditation within the overall context of European higher learning where the progressive enlargement of the European Union has generated a process of profound change and the realization of a common European Higher Education Area (the EHEA). In this process, a major role is being played by the “Bologna Process” which has united over 47 European Ministers of Education and numerous educational and governmental agencies around the project of creating a common framework of reference for European tertiary education.⁸

In recognising the value of the EHEA educational framework and desiring to better contextualise to the European situation, the ECTE has integrated several of the EHEA tools into its own standards and procedures. These include, for example, the *European Qualifications Framework* (EQF) and the *European Standards and Guidelines* (ESG) that have been incorporated into the *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation* to define levels and standards.⁹ The *European Standards and Guidelines* (ESG) have also been used as points of reference for ECTE’s own internal quality manifesto (see Section 3.6 in this document). The ECTE also encourages the use of specific EHEA tools such as the ECTS credit system, the Dublin Descriptors¹⁰ and the Diploma Supplement as well as the implementation of educational strategies such as learning-outcome based programmes and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

At the request of an ECTE member school seeking accreditation a joint procedure with a national agency may be conducted. Prerequisite to the joint accreditation is a cooperative agreement between both agencies which have their own strengths and expertise. A collaborative accreditation process with merged evaluative criteria needs to be defined as standards will be applied in a complementary way.

⁶ See *Criteria and Procedures for ECTE Accreditation* <http://ecte.eu/ga/procedures/> and *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation* <http://ecte.eu/ga/standards/>.

⁷ For a detailed description of the *ECTE Certification Framework*, see Appendix A, in the document: *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation* <http://ecte.eu/ga/standards/>. Both Bachelor of Theology and Master of Theology levels include the distinction between practice-oriented or research-oriented programmes.

⁸ For a description of the Bologna Process see the Council of Europe Higher Education and Research website at http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/HigherEducation/EHEA2010/BolognaPedestrians_en.asp

⁹ See: *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation* <http://ecte.eu/ga/standards/>

¹⁰ In 2018, the earlier Dublin Descriptors were published as the ‘Overarching Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area’ http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/EHEAParis2018_Communique_AppendixIII_952778.pdf

ECTE ACCREDITATION IN GLOBAL EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

In addition to being uniquely European, ECTE accreditation also reflects global evangelical theological education.

Over the decades, many evangelical theological institutions have been established in many parts of the world and a number regional accrediting agencies, such as the ECTE, have risen up to provide networking and quality assurance services to these agencies. Eight such regional accrediting agencies cooperate in the international network known as the International Council For Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE), representing nearly 1200 schools in Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Europe, Euro-Asia, Latin America, Middle East and North Africa and North America.¹¹

ICETE's origins are rooted in the emergence of networks of evangelical theological schools in the majority world during the late 1960s and early 1970s. From among these new associations came a call for some means by which they might be in regular contact and collaboration at the international level. The WEA Theological Commission agreed to sponsor the project, and ICETE was formed in March 1980.¹²

The ECTE reflects the values and standards of global theological education by endorsing key documents like the *ICETE Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education*¹³ and by substantially including the *ICETE Standards and Guidelines for Global Evangelical Theological Education (SG-GETE)* into its own accreditation standards.¹⁴

Joint accreditation is also being implemented within the ICETE network. Occasionally ECTE has been asked to conduct a joint accreditation with an agency of the ICETE network (e. g. with the ATA or the MENATE). A procedural agreement for such a collaborative accreditation taking into consideration the standards of both agencies has then been defined as a work basis.

THE AIMS OF ECTE ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is a process which requires prolonged time for self and external evaluation, during which the total institution's setting, programme, structures and life are carefully reviewed. Very simply stated, accreditation is the process whereby an external agent verifies the internal quality assurance processes of an institution and the achievement of mutually agreed upon standards.

As an accrediting agency, the ECTE aims to alongside theological institutions to:

- help set appropriate outcome standards for programmes;
- ensure that institutional management is able to ensure these standards;
- encourage the creation of a culture of inner quality assurance processes;
- verify whether or not the set standards are achieved;
- provide qualified guidance to institutions on issues of development and best practice;
- provide certification of quality to stakeholders, students and the general public.

Accrediting associations are often perceived as constraining structures that hunt out weaknesses in institutions and impose predetermined standards. Rightly understood however, the accreditation process is didactic and is meant to help institutions achieve their own objectives and increase their "fitness for purpose".

'At the heart of all quality assurance activities are the twin purposes of accountability and enhancement. Taken together, these create trust in the higher education institution's performance'¹⁵.

¹¹ See <https://icete.info/directory/members/>

¹² See <https://icete.info/about/>

¹³ See <https://icete.info/resources/manifesto/>

¹⁴ See: *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation* <http://ecte.eu/qa/standards/>

¹⁵ *Context, scope, purposes and principles of the ESG* (p.2) <https://revisionesg.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/context-scope-purposes-esg-february-2013.pdf>

The ECTE aims to help institutions ask the right questions, find the answers that fit their context and establish appropriate internal quality assurance procedures that will meet the desired outcomes. The ECTE's main task is not to criticise institutions, but to lend expertise and assistance and to identify areas of weakness in order to stimulate institutions to greater excellence and relevance.

Here are some further aims that are achieved through the ECTE accreditation process:

- Accreditation helps to clearly formulate objectives and to evaluate educational programmes within the framework of these objectives to guarantee and improve fitness for purpose;
- Evangelical accreditation helps to develop quality objectives and criteria for evaluating academic, ministerial and formational outcomes;
- ECTE's accreditation processes do not contradict, but rather contribute to institutions wishing to obtain governmental or ecclesiastical recognition;
- Evangelical accreditation sends a positive message to churches concerning the evangelical ethos of an institution. It is also an instrument that helps an institution preserve its evangelical identity and stability over time;
- Accreditation helps to establish reliable points of comparison to enhance cooperation between theological educational institutions and student mobility;
- Accreditation helps to foster communication with partner churches, missions and Christian organisations, as well as with churches and organisations abroad. The quality assurance standards and their evaluation form a common vocabulary and frame of reference for mutual understanding and collaboration;
- Reference to good practice in the EHEA and use of the ESG in the ECTE standards and procedures can help institutions prepare for future government review and accreditation opportunities;
- Theological institutions that do not pursue accreditation may sacrifice quality and hinder hard-working students from attaining recognised certification desired by the faith communities they serve;
- Use of the SG-GETE in the ECTE standards and guidelines and reference to ICETE and ISCED international nomenclature provides international recognizability by potential graduate employers and progression to further study. Having an accredited programme with the ECTE means that the institution's degrees will usually be recognized by evangelical institutions worldwide.

Quality assurance of evangelical theological education in Europe is both sensitive to higher education issues in Europe and based on evangelical values. Thanks to this kind of accreditation, institutions can improve their educational programmes and offer study degrees that are recognized in many contexts.

Standards and guidelines as well as criteria and procedures for ECTE accreditation are outlined in two separate documents.¹⁶

¹⁶ See *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation* and *Criteria and Procedures for ECTE Accreditation* <http://ecte.eu/qa/standards/>. The ECTE also provides a set of supplemental *Guidelines* around good practice in a number of specific areas <http://ecte.eu/qa/guidelines/>.

3 – ORGANISATION

3.1 - ECTE statutes

This is an English translation, the original legal document *Satzung ECTE* is in German and deposited with ECTE's registration as a non-profit organisation. These statutes were approved by the ECTE General Assembly in Athens, 27 October, 2017.

1. NAME, LEGAL ADDRESS, REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL YEAR

1.1 The Association is called the "European Council for Theological Education", abbreviated as ECTE.

1.2 The Association has its legal address in Korntal-Münchingen and is registered in the registry of non-profit organisations (*Vereinsregister*).

1.3 The financial year is the calendar year.

2. PURPOSE AND NON-PROFIT STATUS

2.1 The purpose of the association is the promotion of religion and education. This is achieved both at home and abroad, in particular by:

- promoting and securing the quality of the theological training of the member institutes based on uniform standards.
- promoting and supporting the development of theological training primarily in Europe through publications, conferences, training and the provision of further resources.
- strengthening the significance of evangelical theological education through the networking of the members among themselves, with European higher education, with international theological education and with churches.

2.2 The association pursues exclusively and directly non-profit purposes within the meaning of the section "Tax Beneficiary Purposes" of the German Tax Rules & Regulations. The association acts selflessly and does not pursue primarily economic purposes. Funds of the Association may be used only for the purposes stated in the statutes. Members do not receive remunerations from the Association. No person may be remunerated for expenses which are foreign to the purpose of the association or which are disproportionately high.

2.3 Persons who act on behalf of the association will receive reimbursements for documented reasonable expenses; the details can be regulated in separate rules and regulations for business by the Governing Board. The granting of appropriate remuneration for services is made only on the basis of a written contract. Remuneration for members of the Governing Board is to be communicated to the General Assembly.

3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Regular members of the Association are evangelical theological educational institutions. The ECTE Council decides on applications for membership

3.2 Associate membership (with voice, but no right of application or vote) is open to individuals and to organisations such as associations of evangelical theological institutions, churches and/or missions who subscribe to the purposes and core values of the Association. The ECTE Council decides on their admission.

3.3 A list shall be kept of the members, their legal representatives and, if appropriate, a delegate deviating from them. Any changes to the contact data, in particular also a valid e-mail address, must be communicated to the Governing Board without delay. The processing and use of the data takes place solely for association purposes in compliance with the Federal Data Protection Act (of Germany).

3.4 Membership in the ECTE may be terminated in writing by regular and associate members. The withdrawal shall take effect at the end of the year in which it is declared. When the withdrawal becomes effective, the former members are prohibited from continuing to refer to their membership in their publications. Any fees and contributions for the year of the withdrawal that are still due and due in the year of departure shall be paid at the latest with the declaration of withdrawal and shall not be refunded.

3.5 A member may be excluded from the association for important reasons, in particular if his conduct violates the interests of the association in a gross way or if the member is in default with the payment of the fees for two years. The ECTE Council decides on the exclusion with immediate effect.

Before the decision is made the member shall be given the opportunity to justify before the Governing Board his / her written objection. The exclusion decision shall be made known to the excluded by registered letter, indicating the essential reasons.

A letter of appeal may be lodged against the exclusion decision within one month of receipt of this letter to the next General Assembly, which then decides finally on the decision against the member not present in the meeting. The appeal must be justified. In so far as this remedy is not used or is not used in time, or without justification, or if the decision is confirmed, the member submits to this decision with the result that the latter is no longer accessible to further judicial control. This is to be pointed out in the exclusion decision.

3.6 If a member ceases to operate, the membership automatically ends.

4. ORGANISATIONAL BODIES

Organisational bodies of the Association are:

- the General Assembly
- the Council
- the Governing Board

5. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

5.1 At least every two years, all members are to be convened at a general assembly, the date of which is announced at an early stage. The meeting is convened in writing by the Council at least 14 days before the meeting date. The invitation contains the agenda.

- Requests for the agenda must be received by the Council no later than 2 months before the date of the meeting.
- Members must register for the meeting within the deadline set by the Council and declare who is to represent them in the General Assembly.

5.2 The General Assembly is chaired by a person appointed by the Council.

5.3 Additional General Assemblies must be convened if the interest of the association requires it, or at least one third of the regular members of the association require the convening of the meeting in writing, specifying the purpose and reasons.

5.4 Any duly convened General Assembly shall be quorate without regard to the number of the members present.

5.5 Associate members may delegate up to two non-voting observers in an advisory capacity to the General Assembly.

5.6 The responsibilities of the General Assembly are:

- to elect the Council as well as its Governing Board
- to approve the budget;
- to accept the report of the Council
- to commission an independent expert to audit the accounting and to report his/her findings to the General Assembly
- to discharge the treasurer, Council and governing board (Entlastung erteilen)
- to approve the EEAA accreditation standards
- to discuss and decide on future activities of the association.

5.7 Decisions of the General Assembly are made by simple majority of the valid votes cast. This also applies to decisions, which are made in text form outside a general meeting.

- Decisions are made by public vote unless a secret ballot is requested by at least 30% of the voting members present.
- Changes of the statutes need a 2/3 majority of the valid votes cast.
- The Council may - by simple majority of valid votes cast - amend those parts of the statutes which have been questioned or a change has been requested by the registry or the tax authorities. These changes are to be communicated to the members in minutes.

5.8 Minutes of the decisions are to be recorded at the General Assemblies and signed by the appointed secretary and meeting chairman.

- The minutes must be sent to all members in written format.
- Objections against the correctness of the minutes may only be raised within four weeks from the date of dispatch of the minutes. The Council decides on an objection by hearing the meeting chairman and the secretary compiling minutes.

6. THE COUNCIL

6.1 The Council consists of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, and three to seven other members. Three Council members shall, if at all possible, not be directly associated with a member. Should the Council appoint a General Secretary she or he is an ex-officio member of the Council (with voice but no vote).

6.2 The Governing Board according to § 26 of BGB consists of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Each of them is authorized to represent the Association individually.

- Members of the Governing Board and the Council are elected by secret ballot for a period of four years. The Governing Board remains in office until a new election has taken place. Re-election is possible.

6.3 The Council conducts the day-to-day business of the association, unless tasks have been assigned to another entity of the association by the statutes. The tasks of the Council are in particular to

- formulate, monitor and implement the association's strategic plan
- vet the decisions of its departments, i.e. the "EEAA" accreditation department for quality assurance
- give instructions to the employees
- decide on the admission of new members to the association
- prepare the General Assembly and elections
- monitor the handling of finances of the association and elect the treasurer
- select staff, such as a general secretary.

6.4 The Council may appoint committees to deal with special issues, invite advisors and hire staff as needed.

6.5 The Council is to be convened in writing by the Governing Board at least once a year through written invitation including an agenda two weeks prior to the scheduled date of meeting. Minutes of the decisions made during the meeting are to be kept. The minutes are to be signed by the meeting chairman and the appointed secretary and sent to all Council members.

6.6 Details can be defined in a business regulation.

7. INCOME AND PROFITS

7.1 Income consists of fees, asset management and grants/donations.

7.2 The General Assembly decides on the type, amount, basis and due date of the membership fee and can determine this in detail in a contribution schedule. The annual membership fee currently determined by the Annual General Meeting shall be due upon admission to the association, otherwise the dates apply as determined by the meeting. The Council may, in justified individual cases, reduce the membership fee or waive it altogether.

8. DURATION AND DISSOLUTION

8.1 The Association exists for an unlimited period of time.

8.2 The dissolution of the Association can only be decided at a General Assembly by a 3/4-majority vote of members present as long as the dissolution was part of the submitted agenda.

- The invitation to this General Assembly must be sent out at least four weeks prior to the meeting.

8.3 In the event of the dissolution of the association or in the event that tax-privileged purposes cease to exist, the assets of the association fall to a tax-privileged body for use for non-profit purposes within the meaning of § 2 of these Statutes, i.e. for the promotion of evangelical theological training in Europe.

8.4 In the event of dissolution of the Association, the liquidation shall be carried out by the members of the Governing Board who are in office at the time of dissolution, on the provisions governing the resolution and representation in the Articles of Incorporation unless the resolution of the General Assembly decides otherwise

3.2 - ECTE Bylaws

The following bylaws apply to elections of Council members in the General Assembly. Adopted by the 1997 ECTE General Assembly.

1. The Accrediting Council, through the General Secretary, informs the members of the vacancies to be filled in its ranks and calls for nominees to be proposed before a fixed date well in advance of the next biennial General Assembly.

2. The Accrediting Council, through the General Secretary, must inform all ECTE members which persons have been nominated, on its convocation for the General Assembly.

3. During the General Assembly, nominations from the floor are excluded. It is determined by the Council how many members are to be elected.

4. The General Assembly elections are chaired by a person selected by the Council. This person designates those who count the votes.

5. Before the elections, the nominees are introduced to the Assembly.

6. The voting members indicate their choices for election:

- Elections will be held by secret ballot.
- Each voting member has as many persons to vote for as members to be elected for the Council.
- No voting member may cast more than one vote for the same person.
- The number of persons to be elected receiving the highest number of votes are elected.

7. After the new configuration of the Accrediting Council has been thus established, a second election by secret ballot will take place for the election of a Chairman and /or Vice-Chairman, according to current need.

3.3 - Governance, Council and Staff

The ECTE is an agency that has demonstrated over time to have adequate and appropriate human resources to carry out its work. The ECTE Council and VET teams normally operate on a volunteer basis and select staff positions are remunerated. Remunerated positions normally include the General Secretary and other positions as necessary.

GOVERNANCE

This section of describes the governance of the ECTE and is meant to be referenced to the Association's legal status.

ECTE Members. The European Council for Theological Education is formed by member institutions of theological educational institutions that generally endorse the statement of faith and theological orientation of their relevant evangelical stakeholders and communities and are interested in ECTE services and fellowship. Application for membership in the association is to be made to the Coordinator. The Accrediting Council votes on applications. Members pay an annual membership fee as it is determined by the ECTE General Assembly.

ECTE General Assembly. The ECTE General Assembly is convened every two years. The ECTE Accrediting Council sends out the invitations and sets the agenda. The General Assembly elects the Accrediting Council, the Chairman and vice chairman of the ECTE by secret ballot, votes on the budget, hears and approves the reports of the Coordinator and the Chairman. It deliberates and makes decisions relative to the future work of the Association. It has the right to entertain motions.

COUNCIL

The ECTE Council normally consists of nine members elected by the General Assembly which is to give due consideration to the various language areas of Europe. Three council members shall if possible, not be directly associated with the institutions involved. The General Secretary of the Association is an ex officio member of the Council. The Council decides on its by-laws according to which its business is conducted, and elections are held. The functions of the Council are:

- to represent the ECTE
- to appoint the General Secretary
- to nominate accrediting commissions as needed
- to provide advice to the General Secretary and the accrediting commissions,
- to decide on the admission of new member institutions
- to decide on the status of accreditation of institutions on the recommendation of the accrediting commissions
- to plan the ECTE general assembly and elections

- to handle the finances of the ECTE and to elect the Treasurer.
- The Council may appoint commissions as needed.

ECTE Council Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Association are elected by the General Assembly. As Governing Board according to §26 of BGB (Civil Law) of the FRG they are the legal representatives of the Association and legally accountable for all transactions. Chairman or Vice Chairman call and preside at meetings of the Accrediting Council and the General Assembly as stipulated in the Statutes and By-Laws of the association. The Statutes are included in the end of this Appendix.

STAFF

ECTE General Secretary. The General Secretary is the chief executive officer of the ECTE. He or she:

- conducts the business of the ECTE and is accountable to the Council;
- is an ex officio member of the Council;
- co-ordinates and presides over the work of the commissions and is available to advise institutions on matters of accreditation as requested;
- is entitled to the use of an office as needed.

Quality Assurance Coordinator. The Quality Assurance Coordinator oversees all accreditation activities and chairs the Accreditation Commission in the ECTE Council

Review Coordinator. The Review Coordinator oversees all accreditation visits, coordinates the Visitation evaluation teams (VET) and oversees the production and publication of accreditation review reports.

Treasurer. The Treasurer is responsible for the ECTE budget, for invoicing schools and reports to the Council and the General Assembly

Other staff. Other staff can be appointed by the ECTE Council and remunerated according to need.

ECTE Visitation Evaluation Teams. Visiting Evaluation Teams (VET) are appointed as the need arises. A roster of twelve to fifteen qualified persons should be available to serve as VT members according to need. They must have the confidence of the Accrediting Council as well as that of the member institutions. The Visitation Teams are responsible for visiting a theological institution upon invitation from the General Secretary, and for writing a report. Visitation Evaluation Teams generally operate on a voluntary basis.¹⁷

The ECTE's Visitation Evaluation Teams (VET) conduct on-site reviews of institutions and programmes that are seeking ECTE accreditation. VET members include educationalists, academics, stakeholders and students. Each VET has a team leader that coordinates the visit and the production of the report. At the end of each on-site visit, VETs produce a Review Report that is submitted to the ECTE Council for accreditation decisions.

ECTE Visitation Evaluation Teams operate independently from the ECTE Council. The ECTE Council is responsible for all final accreditation decisions based on the VET report.

¹⁷ See more about VETs in *Guidelines for Site Visits* <http://ecte.eu/qa/guidelines/>

3.4 – Policies on independence, appeals and conflict of interest

INDEPENDENCE

The ECTE operates independently in full autonomy from other bodies and is fully responsible for its operations and outcomes.

Although the association is governed by the General Assembly and operates within a peer-accreditation scheme, accreditation decisions are performed by the ECTE Council independently, with no influence or interference from the General Assembly nor by the institutions that are the beneficiaries of the accreditation.

VETs (Visitation Evaluation Teams) make recommendations to the ECTE Council by means of written Review Reports following on-site visits, but do not participate in the accreditation decision-making processes. Both the independence of the reviewers and the independence of decisions are thus safeguarded.

APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

The right to appeal the decisions of the Council applies to both institutions and organizations applying for membership and to institutions whose programmes are being accredited.

Since the ECTE Council acts for an autonomous and voluntary association of evangelical institutions of biblical and theological training, its decisions cannot be put in question by appeal to public law or to public courts. Two levels of appeal are available to an institution that does not agree with a decision made by the Council.

1. First Level appeals must be made in written form to the Council itself through the General Secretary. The Council will discuss the appeal and reply in written form to the institution. If necessary, a visit or other forms of personal contact will be organized.
2. If the first level appeal is not satisfactory, the institution may write a Second Level appeal to the General Assembly of the ECTE that meets every two years. Second level appeals should be sent to the General Secretary and brought to the General Assembly which will designate an ad hoc committee to deal with the specific appeal. Both the Council and the institution must submit to the decision of this committee. Failure to do so will cause the re-election of the Council or the exclusion of the institution from membership. Once the appeal procedure is complete, the ad hoc committee will disband.

All appeal procedures and relative results and statistics will be published on the ECTE website.¹⁸ This procedure was approved by the General Assembly, 2007.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Site Visits. The ECTE has a *No-Conflict of Interest Declaration*¹⁹ meant to prevent situations where doubt is cast on an accreditation recommendations or decisions because those involved might not be fully impartial.

To ensure that the VETs performing review visits and the ECTE Council that is responsible for making the final accreditation decisions are free of conflict of interest, VETs and Council members (on being elected) will

¹⁸ See <http://ecte.eu/about/organisation/policies/>

¹⁹ See <http://ecte.eu/about/organisation/policies/>

be asked to sign the *No-Conflict-of-Interest Declaration* that includes a declaration to decline review involvement should conflict situations arise.

In deploying the VET teams, care will be taken to safeguard operational independence in practice, in defining procedures and methods and nominating experts. The ECTE will not send experts to visit institutions with whom they have proven close relations. Generally speaking, VET teams will also have an international composition so as to avoid regional competition or conflicts of interest.

3.5 - Financial policies

FEE SCHEDULE

The ECTE fee schedule, generally speaking, breaks down into three categories:

1. Yearly membership fees
2. Yearly accreditation fees
3. Visitation fees for institutions in the accreditation process
4. Visitation fees for institutions not in the accreditation process

All fees will be invoiced to the address provided by the institution with instructions on payment. Accreditation fees are calculated through a combination of a flat fee and a per-student fee. Institutions in the accreditation process must use the Annual Progress Report to report their student numbers.²⁰

FEE POLICIES

- Outstanding fees. No visits will be authorised for institutions which are one year or more behind with their payments of fees. Institutions which have a strong case for reduction of fees due to un-usual financial constraints should appeal to council for this with supporting documentation and these will be considered on a case by case basis. Institutions or organizations which are two years or more behind with their payments of fees will receive a formal notice, after which their membership and accreditation will be suspended. If, after being suspended for two years, institutions have still not settled their arrear payments, their membership and accreditation will be revoked, and they will need to apply again.
- Institutional and programme accreditation fees. With the introduction in 2019 of the distinction between institutional and programme accreditation and the abolition of the Candidacy phase, the following fee structure is approved: 1) Yearly fee for Institutional accreditation; 2) Yearly fee for each Programme accreditation.
- Visitation team travel expenses. Travel expenses of the visitation team members will be settled directly between the institution and each visitation team member. In addition, a flat €100 fee for expenses for each VET member is collected by each VET member from the institution.

²⁰ For updated fees see <http://ecte.eu/about/fees/>

3.6 – ECTE Quality Manifesto

This section provides a summary of the ECTE's commitment to external and internal quality standards as outlined in the *European Standards and Guidelines* Part 1, 2 and 3.²¹ Areas of compliance are noted together with areas where further development is undergoing.²²

ECTE AND INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (ESG 1)

The ECTE is committed to the *European Standards and Guidelines* Part 1 as it ensures the internal quality of its accredited institutions in the following areas²³. The following are example of evidence of this commitment.



ESG 1.1 – Policy for quality assurance. The ECTE requires institutions to have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders. This can be seen in *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation*, section A.2.

ESG 1.2 – Design and approval of programmes. The ECTE requires institutions to have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. This can be seen in *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation*, sections B.2 and B.5.

ESG 1.3 – Student-centred learning. The ECTE requires institutions to ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach. This can be seen in *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation*, section B.3.

ESG 1.4 – Student admission, progression, recognition and certification. The ECTE requires institutions to consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification. This can be seen in *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation*, section B.4.

ESG 1.5 – Teaching staff. The ECTE requires institutions to assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff. This can be seen in *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation*, section A.3.

ESG 1.6 – Learning resources and student support. The ECTE requires institutions to have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided. This can be seen in *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation*, sections A.5, A.6.

²¹ https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf

²² These responses summarize a set of self-study SWOT exercises undertaken by the ECTE Council between 2018 and 2019 relating to the *European Standards and Guidelines*.

²³ This list makes reference only to the standards of ESG-1 and is not exhaustive of the ECTE's internal quality assurance standards that are contained in *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation* <http://ecte.eu/qa/standards/>.

ESG 1.7 – Information management. The ECTE requires institutions to ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities. This can be seen in *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation*, section A.5.

ESG 1.8 – Public information. The ECTE requires institutions to publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible. This can be seen in *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation*, section A.1.

ESG 1.9 – On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes. The ECTE requires institutions to monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned. This can be seen in *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation*, section B.2.

ESG 1.10 – Cyclical external quality assurance. The ECTE requires institutions to undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis. This can be seen in *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation*, section A.2.

ECTE AND EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (ESG 2)

The ECTE is committed to the *European Standards and Guidelines Part 2* in as it carries out its own external quality assurance procedures. The following are example of evidence of this commitment

ESG 2.1 – Consideration of internal quality assurance. The ECTE accreditation standards and processes address the effectiveness the internal quality assurance processes of institutions as they relate to two bodies of standards: ESG 1 and the ICETE SG-GETE. This can be seen in the document *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation*.

ESG 2.2 – Designing methodologies fit for purpose. The ECTE standards and procedures are designed and defined as fitting the purposes of European theological education and operating within the relevant regulations and frameworks that pertain to cross-border professional accreditation in the European Higher Education Area. ECTE's internal stakeholders, identified as ECTE's member institutions within a peer-accreditation scheme, are involved in the design and improvement of the ECTE's standards.²⁴ Involvement of external stakeholders is described in the *Stakeholder Expansion Policy and Involvement Plan*.

ESG 2.3 – Implementing processes. The ECTE applies processes that are reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. The ECTE's accreditation procedures include self- assessment, site visits, production of reports from external assessment and consistent follow up with recommendations and requirements.²⁵ We collect evaluation of utility of process after cycle is complete. A Review Secretary and external experts act independently from the deciding body and full final reports are published on the ECTE website.²⁶

ESG 2.4 – Peer-review experts. The ECTE avails itself of external peer experts to carry out reviews that include academics, stakeholders and students. ECTE VETs are selected, subject to ongoing training and cleared for conflict-of-interest. VET recruiting policy and criteria, VET training, broadening of VET expertise and in distinguishing of the roles of external experts from the deciding body are defined in the *Guidelines for Site Visits*.²⁷

ESG 2.5 – Criteria for outcomes. The ECTE makes accreditation judgments on the basis of explicit, published and consistent criteria as found in the *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation*. ECTE accreditation applies these criteria consistently on the basis of both documentary and visitation evidence

²⁴ See ECTE Statutes (section 5.6 in Introducing the ECTE)

²⁵ See *Criteria and Procedures for ECTE Accreditation* <http://ecte.eu/qa/procedures/>

²⁶ See <http://ecte.eu/qa/reports/>

²⁷ See <http://ecte.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Guidelines-for-Site-Visits.pdf>

and makes a distinction between requirements and recommendations. External experts are trained to ensure the consistency of interpretation of ECTE criteria.

ESG 2.6 – Reporting. The ECTE has an approved policy to publish reports by its external experts as well as decisions based on these reports. Full reports and related formal decisions are published.²⁸

ESG 2.7 – Complaints and appeals. The ECTE has a published complaints and appeals process and a VET evaluation procedure that is regularly employed.²⁹

ECTE AS A QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY (ESG 3)

The ECTE is committed to the *European Standards and Guidelines Part 3* in relation to its own internal quality procedures. The following are example of evidence of this commitment.

ESG 3.1 – Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance. The ECTE undertakes QA activities on a regular basis in coherence with explicit goals and objectives that are made public and that translate into its daily work.³⁰ Stakeholders are involved in the governance of the ECTE through the General Assembly.³¹ Clear distinctions are made between ECTE activities of accreditation and activities of networking and development (the latter two are not regulated by the ESG).

ESG 3.2 – Official status. The ECTE has official status under German law as a non-profit agency whose purposes include the ‘promotion and securing of quality of theological training of the member institutes based on uniform standards’.³² Although registered in Germany, the ECTE is an international agency that is involved in professional cross-border accreditation. The ECTE does not carry out QA for regulatory purposes nor does it perform accreditation activities for authorisation. Further development is envisaged in clarifying ECTE’s official status within the changing European scenario of cross-border accreditation.

ESG 3.3 – Independence. The ECTE operates independently in full autonomy and responsibility for its operations and outcomes without third party influence. Although formally governed through a General Assembly of member schools as a peer-accreditation agency, the nomination of external experts, the production of reports and all accreditation decisions are performed independently by the ECTE Council with no influence or interference from the General Assembly. VET contracts contain clauses related to independence. Further development is envisaged in making the responsibility for accreditation decisions and issues of independence more explicit in the ECTE statutes.

ESG 3.4 – Thematic analysis. The ECTE has a strategic plan for thematic analysis and reports on general findings of its external QA activities. Initial production has begun in this area.

ESG 3.5 – Resources. The ECTE ensures adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, through a fee structure that supports its staff and operations. A substantial part of the work of the ECTE is supported by volunteer work, both in the Council and in the external experts. This model has proven feasible over time. Further development is envisaged in expanding the financial basis and human resources.

ESG 3.6 – Internal quality assurance and professional conduct. The ECTE has internal QA processes that define, assure and enhance the quality of its operations. This are published in a variety of documents³³ and regularly implemented. Further development is envisaged in the production of a policy document that includes: definitions of persons and activities as competent, ethical and professional; internal and external feedback mechanisms; intolerance prevention; communication policies; and issues of

²⁸ See <http://ecte.eu/qa/reports/>

²⁹ See <http://ecte.eu/about/policies/>

³⁰ See see Goals and Objectives (section 1.3 in *Introducing the ECTE*)

³¹ See ECTE Statutes (section 5 in *Introducing the ECTE*)

³² See ECTE Statutes (section 2.1 in *Introducing the ECTE*)

³³ See *Introducing the ECTE* <http://ecte.eu/about/>, and *Procedures for ECTE Accreditation* <http://ecte.eu/qa/procedures/>

subcontracting. Further development is envisaged in developing and implementing internal quality assurance and improvement monitoring.

ESG 3.7 – Cyclical external review of agencies. The ECTE is committed to the importance of undergoing regular external reviews to demonstrate compliance to quality assurance standards as a quality assurance agency and in 2020 has applied for eternal review for listing in the EQAR.

CONSISTENCY GUARANTEE

The ECTE values consistency and guarantees it by applying processes that are implemented consistently and that are publicly available. The ECTE's accreditation procedures include consistent phases, including follow up with commendations, recommendations and requirements. The consistency of reviews is also guaranteed by obligatory training of peer experts in the knowledge and interpretation of ECTE criteria and by the oversight of the Review Coordinator who reviews reports for consistency.

The ECTE makes accreditation judgments on the basis of explicit, published and consistent criteria and applies these criteria consistently on the basis of both documentary and visitation evidence following reviews. The ECTE Council meets at least twice a year and considers all accreditation activities and review reports leading to accreditation decisions that are voted on by the Council members by means of simple majority.

Accreditation decisions are consistently published on the ECTE website, communicated by the Quality Assurance Coordinator to institutions and can be appealed through published procedures. The lack of consistency of ECTE services can also be object of complaint or appeal.

Consistent follow up occurs through the Annual Progress Reports that are considered annually by the ECTE Council. Arising concerns or lack of compliance to requirements are followed up by the Quality Assurance Coordinator.

This original version of document *Introducing the ECTE* has been approved by the ECTE Council, 28 November 2019. The current version was revised and approved 12 November 2021.

The European Council for Theological Education
has its legal address in Korntal-Münchingen (DE)
and is registered in the registry of non-profit organisations (*Vereinsregister*)

For additional information about the ECTE, contact:
Dr Marvin Oxenham – General Secretary, ECTE
Via dei Lucumoni 33 1015 Sutri (VT) Italy

Email: office@ecte.eu Website: www.ecte.eu