

# REVIEW REPORT

Seminar für Biblische Theologie  
Beatenberg (sbt)

Related to Cyclical Review visit: 9th to 12th of November  
2021

---

E|C|T|E

European  
Council for  
Theological  
Education

---

# INDEX

A. Executive Summary	3
B. Introduction to the review	3
C. Introduction to the institution and programmes	7
D. Findings of the review	14
E. Standards relating to the institution	14
F. Standards relating to the programme	22
G. Conclusions	30

## A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report relates to a process, including an online site visit from 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2021, for the purpose of accrediting the institution and programmes of the Seminar für Biblische Theologie Beatenberg (sbt) on the basis of the European Council for Theological Education (ECTE)'s current *Standards and Guidelines*, in the form of a Cyclical Review. It finds the school generally excellent in achieving its intentions in theological education, suggests to the ECTE Council eleven commendations, thirteen recommendations and one requirement.

## B. INTRODUCTION TO THE REVIEW

The Self-Assessment Report (SER) was constructed based on the *Standards and Guidelines* of the ECTE for the purpose of a **Cyclical Review** of the Bachelor in Theology equivalent programme (practice-oriented). This review reports the findings of an on-site accreditation visit for a Cyclical Review of an existing programme.

ETS was first accredited in 2009 and then reviewed in 2014. According to the ECTE *Criteria and Procedures* (p. 16), it is stated that in order to maintain accreditation, institutions and programmes need to undergo a Cyclical Review every 5 years. This latest review has been delayed in the case of SBT, with permission, because of the difficulties associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Fifteen recommendations were made in 2009 and these were responded to in subsequent Annual Progress Reports (APRs.) The 2014 visit resulted in re-accreditation in 2015 and seventeen recommendations were made and responded to in subsequent APRs. Sixteen of these were mentioned in the current SER referenced for this visit. These will be noted in the main body of this report.

Sbt applied for a Cyclical Review 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and sent in their SER with supporting documents on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021. The visit took place from 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2021.

The Standards and Guidelines which form the basis of this report are those applying post December 2019 and can be found at <http://ecte.eu/ga/standards/>. Since delivery of the programme sometimes included an online element, the ECTE *Guidelines for Online and Distance Education* were used as further guidance <http://ecte.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Guidelines-for-Distance-and-Online-Education.pdf>.

The review was authorised by Dr Hubert Jurgensen as the ECTE Quality Assurance Co-ordinator (QAC). It was conducted by a Visitation Evaluation Team (VET) put together by the Review Secretary of ECTE. The team consisted of peer experts, a student VET member and the review secretary, viz:

- Rev Horst Born, Germany, (team leader);
- Dr Erez Soref, Israel;
- James Lockwood, Ireland, (student representative);
- Dr Graham Cheesman, UK, (Review Secretary).

Dr Graham Cheesman, ECTE Review Secretary, was involved in the overall preparation of this visit on behalf of ECTE and participated in one of the days of the visit.

Rev Born and Dr Soref were members of the previous 2014 visitation team to SBT.

The SER was planned and written in a professional manner following the template set out in the ECTE protocol for writing a SER which can be found at <http://ecte.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Guidelines-for-Producing-Self-evaluation-Reports.pdf> . It addressed each area of the relevant standards competently and comprehensively. Other supporting documents were also well constructed and helpful. These were mostly in German but translations of key sections were provided for those team members who were unable to work in that language.

Logistical and administrative arrangements prior to the visit were set up as follows;

1. The Review Secretary sent the SER, accompanying documents, and all previous correspondence with the school, to all VET members using Dropbox links.
2. VET members communicated the results of their initial reading of the documents to the team leader and RS via email.
3. In conjunction with the VET leader, the school organised and agreed a programme for the visit.
4. An initial pre-visit meeting of the VET took place via Zoom.
5. A working report document was set up using Google Docs for members of the team to access and modify, which followed the structure of the worksheet or interim report form pertaining to the current standards and protocol of ECTE. This was filled out and commented on by members of the VET as the visit progressed in preparation for the interim report-writing on the last day of the visit.

The team was warmly received by the leadership and the staff. The school provided all means needed for an effective evaluation of the academic work and communal life of the institution. From the team's point of view, the documentation submitted, and discussions held were highly transparent. In addition to the SER and its accompanying documents, a number of other documents were submitted to the VET during the visit as the team sought further, more detailed, information in various areas. The totality of the documentation provided a good summary of the school's current state and reflects very positive development.

The review took place over two and a half days. The visit began in the afternoon of Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> of November and concluded with meetings on Thursday evening, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Meetings occurred as follows, sometimes including all the VET and sometimes the VET split up and attended different meetings:

Tuesday, 09.11	
16.00 - 17.00	Meeting of the VET team
17.00 - 18.00	Meeting with the contact person (Andreas Maul)
18.30 - 19.30	Evening meal
19.30 - 20.30	Visit of the library and meeting with the librarian (Matthias Hagel)
20.30 - 21.00	Visit of the compound and facilities (Andreas Maul)

Wednesday, 10.11	
7.30 - 8.30	Breakfast
8.30 - 10.00	Meeting with the Principal, the Dean of students, the chief Administrator and with a board member
10.30 - 12.10	Visit of lecturing hours Meeting with financial director Visit of compound and facilities
12.30 - 13.30	Lunch
14.00 - 15.00	Meeting with faculty representatives
15.30 - 18.30	Meeting with student and alumni representatives, meeting with a representative of the administrative staff, meeting with a representative of the board; meeting with Dean of Students; inspection of student papers and other important documents

18.30 - 19.30	Evening meal
19.30 - 21.00	Preparation of VET review report

Thursday, 11.11	
7.30 - 8.40	Breakfast Short VET meeting
8.40 - 10.20	Visit of lecturing hours
10.30 - 11.30	Meeting with the principal
11.30 - 12.30	VET meeting and preparation of a final report Preparation of review report
12.30 - 13.30	Lunch
14.00 - 17:00	VET meeting and preparation of a final report Zoom conference with Graham Cheesman (RS)
17.00 - 18.30 18:30 -19:30	Delivery and explanation of interim report to school leaders. Evening meal

Friday, 12.12.                      Breakfast and departure

The language employed during the visit was primarily English, although documents and some conversations and teaching observations were in German. The meetings all took place in a designated VET meeting room.

The whole evaluation process was conducted in a pleasant, open and constructive manner by the school and team and all those that took part welcomed the team's contribution to the further development of Sbt. The VET received every facility and had access to all information it needed and requested. The atmosphere was one of collegiality and professionalism on both sides.

# C. INTRODUCTION TO THE INSTITUTION AND PROGRAMMES

---

## History

---

The school, traces its beginning to a married couple, Drs Saturnin and Gertrude Wasserzug commencing training, writing and guest work in Beatenberg in 1934. A number of international conferences were held before the outbreak of the second world war, during which, soldiers and refugees were housed in the buildings.

In 1945, a bible school and missionary and bible seminary was established and in 1948, they purchased the Schweizerhof, now the main building of Sbt. It continued to host conferences, notably the large influential International Youth for Christ Conference in 1948, and the organisation began mission work in a number of European countries.

In 2003, the work was re-structured and the supporting organisation became the Bibelschule Beatenberg. In 2008, the Church and Mission course became BAföG-eligible. That same year, there was a further change of name to Seminar for Biblical Theology Beatenberg and the two courses; Study Programme Church and Mission (SGM) a three-year theology programme and Study Programme Practical Christianity (SPC) a one-year discipleship training programme were formalised. In 2009, the SGM was accredited by ECTE as equivalent to bachelor level.

The organisation continues to make good use of its guest house and holds significant conferences.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, classes were switched to on-line but are now being restored to on-site delivery as the situation allows.

---

## Facilities

---

Sbt functions with an enviable set of facilities in a beautiful part of Switzerland. These include a very substantial guest house, able to accommodate up to 150 guests, which provides useful finance for the educational arm of the organisation, provides opportunity for light employment for the students and space for substantial conferences in mission and Christian life on a regular basis. There is residential accommodation for students and teaching facilities are sufficient for the programmes of the school.



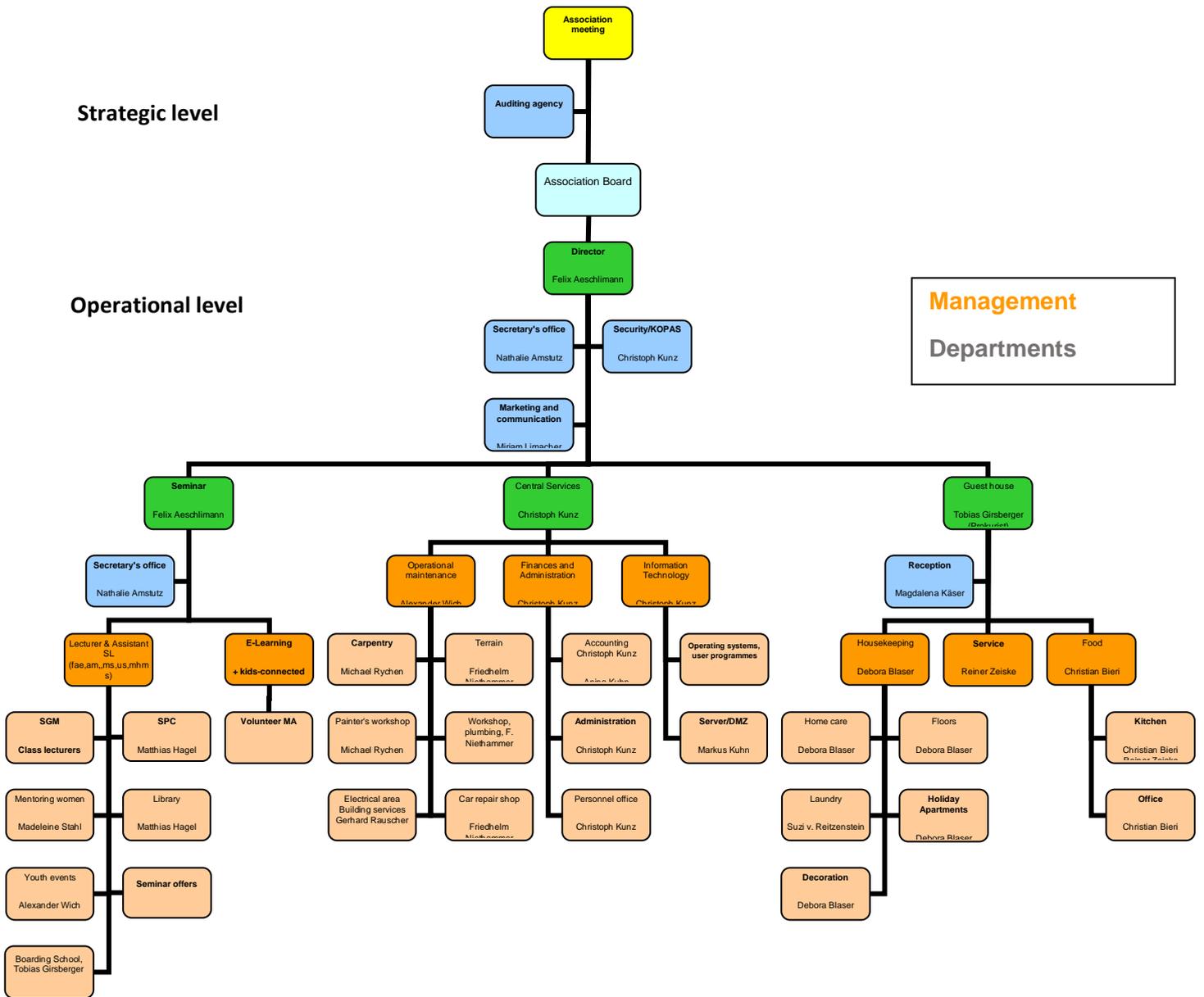
---

## Governance

---

The overall association, the Seminar für biblische Theologie Beatenberg, is responsible for the strategic intentions, planning and use of the facilities and the board of the organization is reported to by the director. The director is also responsible for leadership of the Seminar while others report to him for the running of operations and the guest house.

The organizational chart is as follows;



---

## Student numbers

---

For the SGM course accredited by ECTE;

SGM		Sem 6	Sem 5	Sem 4	Sem 3	Sem 2	Sem 1	Av.
Spring	2017	11		10		8		29.0
Autumn	2017		10		13		10	33.0
Average	2017							31.0
Spring	2018	10		13		9		32.0
Autumn	2018		12		9		15	36
Average	2018							34.0
Spring	2019	12		9		18		39.0
Autumn	2019		10		15		7	32.0
Average	2019							35.5
Spring	2020	10		15		10		35
Autumn	2020		17		7		16	40.0
Average	2020							37.5
Spring	2021	17		8		17		42.0
Autumn	2021		6		16		15	37.0
Average	2021							39.0

---

## Educational and non-educational staff

---

The student handbook introduces the teaching staff in some detail. They are divided between permanent staff with a variety of functions as well as teaching duties, and visiting lecturers as follows;

### Permanent lecturers:

#### **Felix AESCHLIMANN**

Function: Director

Lecturer for: Systematic Theology, New Testament Exegesis and

Homiletics

#### **Matthias HAGEL**

Position: Head of SPC and Library

Lecturer in Practical Theology and Biblical Studies

#### **Andreas MAUL**

Function: Head of Internships and Christian Ministries

#### **Madeleine STAHL**

Function: Head of e-learning and sbt-kids and mentor for female students

Lecturer for: Mentoring, pastoral care and women-specific teaching.

**Urs STINGELIN**

Lecturer for: Greek, Historical Theology and New Testament

**Giancarlo VOELLMY**

Lecturer for: Old Testament

**Theo WÜST**

Retired lecturer for: Interpretation of individual biblical books

**Guest lecturers:**

**Beat ABRY**

Lecturer for: Evangelism

**Reiner BAMBERGER**

Lecturer for: Adult Education

**André FELKER**

Lecturer for: Interpretation of the Epistles to the Corinthians and Thessalonians.

**Walter GISIN**

Lecturer for: Interpretation of individual biblical books

Background: Bible School Arau, Matura, studies of theology at the

**Michael HALLER**

Lecturer for: Missiology

**Martin KAMPHUIS**

Lecturer for: Buddhism

**Robert MINER**

Lecturer for: Islamic Studies

**Stephan OPPLIGER**

Lecturer for: Pedagogy and Educational Psychology

**Gerhard PRIGODDA**

Lecturer for: Pastoral care and ethics

**Peter SCHNEEBERGER**

Lecturer for: Conflict Management

**Jürg WÜTHRICH**

Lecturer for: Church planting and church building

For further discussion of teaching staff provision, see the relevant standard below.

There is adequate provision of non-teaching staff, working in a well thought out organisational structure, see above.

---

## Budget

---

The operating income for the 2019, 2020 and 2021 (stated budgets) has been relatively stable and the income and outcome has balanced for these years.

---

## Programmes and delivery modes

---

Programme	Delivery mode
Studiengang für Gemeinde und Mission -SGM. (equivalent, Bachelor of Theology practice-oriented).	Onsite (residential)

---

## Functions, activities and mission statement

---

### FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Delivery of tertiary theological education (subject to ECTE review)
2. Delivery of a shorter discipleship course
3. Organising conferences
4. Missions in various European countries
5. A Christian guest-house

### Core beliefs, values and goals

Here is a selection of the school's aspirations from the SER and the strategic plan;

"We are a Protestant theological training center. Our lecturers and students come from various churches and free churches.

Our goal is the theological education of Christians for the diverse areas of Christian work in churches and congregations. In this way, we support the building of God's kingdom by spreading the gospel throughout the world.

"SBT wants to strengthen the spiritual life of the congregations with a biblically based theology and lead Christians to the center of the Gospel.

With a clear commitment to the truth and authority of the Bible and in obedience to biblical truths, we set impulses against conformity to the 'Zeitgeist'".

---

## General description of institution and programme

---

The Bachelor of Theology equivalent course, the Studiengang für Gemeinde und Mission (SGM,) is intended for delivery onsite. Although the Covid pandemic caused teaching to go on-line temporarily, the school is glad to be back in the classrooms. The programme has a practice-orientation as a Bachelor of Theology, comparable to EQF Level 6 and ISCED (2011) Level 6, Category 65.

The language of delivery is German.

SBT is an historically established school with a clear mission in a specific context which goes beyond the provision of the course requested for renewal of accreditation with ECTE (the SGM).

Of its teaching aims, the following is stated:

“With our range of courses, we want to impart theological and practical skills. Furthermore, our goal is to develop students in their spirituality, social competence and self-management”

“With a convincing Bible-based theological education program on a full-time basis and favourable housing possibilities for students, good contacts to church associations, targeted advertising measures in print and internet media, the presence of our school at various youth events and external services of our lecturers in various Christian churches, we want to try to increase our student numbers in the long run, but at least maintain them at the current level.”

“Our practice-based theological education, with its emphasis on developing ministry practice and fostering a holistic life of faith and working directly with the Bible, is intentionally intended to be open to non-baccalaureate students and to provide an alternative to the highly academicized theological colleges.”

“our educational emphasis is on exegetical, biblical studies and dogmatic subjects and their implementation in church practise”.

Students have extensive employment prospects within a number of churches and mission organisations A sample of recent alumni employment was given by the school.

## D. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

---

### Description of the extent of the review

---

Since this was a Cyclical Review, standards relating to the institution (part A of *Standards and Guidelines*) and standards relating to the programme (part B of *Standards and Guidelines*) are both examined.

---

### D1 - Standards relating to the institution

---

#### A.1 - IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

INSTITUTIONS HAVE CLEARLY FORMULATED STATEMENTS OF IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

Guidelines examined	A.1.1 identity, A.1.2 Legal and Fiscal status, A.1.3 Vision and Mission, A.1.4 Public information.
Previous requirements or recommendations	None
Evidence of Compliance;	SER 4.1, examination of ancillary documents and discussion in meetings.
Analysis	<p>The C-SER is well organized and clearly formulated. It responds to the recommendations and requirements made by the 2014 VET team to Beatenberg.</p> <p>Sbt endorses the statement of faith and theological orientation of their stakeholders. Sbt subscribes to the European Evangelical Statement of faith and supports the Chicago declaration. It integrates core Christian values in its operations and programmes. Biblical grounding is evident in all its programmes.</p> <p>ECTE core values like faithfulness in doctrine etc. are applied and reflected in all learning activities, programmes and institutional aspects. Sbt's statement of faith influences all areas of operations.</p>

	<p>Sbt has an appropriate legal status within Switzerland and complies with its fiscal and financial laws and regulations. Sbt graduates receive a certificate for the BA equivalent degree. The SER says on page 181/2:  "The sbt BA is accredited internationally by the ECTE. But in Switzerland the degree is not recognized by the government. Therefore the degree may not be used in certain countries." ECTE says in its Standards and Guidelines: ECTE accreditation does not serve national degree recognition purposes but is for the purposes of international comparability and quality assurance and development.</p> <p>The seminary has a clear mission statement which influences its strategic and budget planning. The mission statement reflects the overall character of sbt.</p> <p>Sbt's identity, activities and programme are published in the student guide and diverse additional publications. The module catalogue is available on the Internet. Examples of evidence like the statement of faith, a budget approved and signed by a public auditor and minutes presenting review processes of the vision and mission statement exist.</p> <p>Suggestion: Many of the essential documents are not available in English and this would have been helpful to the visiting team.</p> <p>In summary, The Seminary's identity is clear, their vision and mission are presented openly, a strategic plan is in place.</p> <p>Sbt fulfills most of the aspects under A.1. Some areas mentioned above are the subject of recommendations.</p>
<p>Commendations, recommendations, requirements</p>	<p><b>Commendation:</b> SBT's identity is very clear, both in terms of its theological position, and also in regard to its rich and respectable long-term heritage.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> sbt's graduate certificate should indicate clearly ECTE's description of the accreditation, that it's accreditation does not serve national degree recognition purposes but is for the purposes of international comparability and quality assurance and development.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> The information about the programme should be published not only in the student guide but also in a stand</p>

	alone document, preferably also with a shortened version in English.
Panel conclusion	Substantial compliance

## A.2 - GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE.

### INSTITUTIONS HAVE APPROPRIATE AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE STRUCTURES

Guidelines examined	A.2.1 Governance, A.2.2 Leadership and Management, A.2.3 Decision-making structures, A.2.4 strategic planning, A.2.5 Internal Quality Assurance procedures, A.2.6 Cyclical External Quality Assurance.
Previous requirements or recommendations	2014. Sbt leadership is encouraged to develop a detailed, written plan on where you believe God is calling sbt to advance in the coming years as an institution, and specify this for each department and operation.
Evidence of Compliance;	SER 4.1.2, examination of QA processes on the ground and meetings with leadership and governance personnel.
Analysis	Governance and quality assurance are well practised overall. Quality assessment processes exist in writing and are implemented.
Commendations, recommendations, requirements	<p><b>Commendation;</b> Very effective governance is in place. Administrative and academic staff are firmly committed to sbt's vision and mission. There is clear stability of executive leadership. The institution has procedures in place that model Christian patterns of leadership.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Possibilities for input of external groups connected with sbt (such as the alumni) in quality assurance should be further developed.</p>
Panel conclusion	Substantially compliant

## A.3 - HUMAN RESOURCES

### HUMAN RESOURCES IN INSTITUTIONS ARE FIT FOR PURPOSE AND MANAGED FOR FLOURISHING

Guidelines examined	A.3.1 Human Resources; A.3.2 Non-Educational Staff; A.3.3 Educational Staff; A.3.4 HR Policies and procedures;
---------------------	--

Previous requirements or recommendations	None.
Evidence of Compliance;	SER 4.1.3, ancillary documents provided as to guidelines for employment, appraisal, interviews, employment contracts, and meetings with staff, teaching and non-educational.
Analysis	<p>The seminary leadership considers their personnel as their prime asset and responsibility. Human resources are tight. They carry out the educational programme effectively. In some cases, workload is especially heavy.</p> <p>The institution has clear and transparent procedures for staff recruitment and employment. Non-educational staff members are well qualified and show Christian character.</p> <p>The educational staff have appropriate academic qualifications.</p> <p>Comment: There is a substantial number of adjunct teaching staff. This has been noted as a strength by sbt staff. However, this can lead to a distancing from the students and other faculty and in some cases might cause sustainability issues in the future. Where possible more involvement from adjunct faculty with both students and faculty should be considered.</p> <p>Sbt has written policies concerning staff recruitment and development and salary regulations. Job descriptions, workload allocations, research leave policies and appeal procedures are in place.</p>
Commendations, recommendations, requirements	<b>Recommendation:</b> In some cases the workload of faculty members seems too high. A solution for the problem should be considered despite financial limitations at present.
Panel conclusion	Substantially compliant

## A.4 - COMMUNITY AND CONTEXT

### INSTITUTIONS DISPLAY HEALTHY COMMUNITY DYNAMICS IN ACTIVE RESPONSE TO CONTEXT

Guidelines examined	A.4.1 Learning Community; A.4.2 Stakeholder Community; A.4.3 Civil Community; A.4.4 Communication.
---------------------	--

<p>Previous requirements or recommendations</p>	<p>2014. We encourage SBT to provide for more regular out-of-classroom student-teacher interaction. This will build the students, and will also encourage a positive culture of discourse and discussion.</p> <p>2014. Based on students' comments, SBT is asked to look for ways to avoid a student [non-programme based] workload that is heavier than 8 hours per week, so as to allow students to fulfil properly their academic commitments.</p> <p>2014. The VET team recommends sbt to take more proactive measures in recruiting students beyond personal contacts.</p> <p>2014. Following reports that the number of young alumni visiting the annual meetings is low, the VET team makes the following suggestions: SBT is to proactively engage the current students with a sense that their time at sbt is sharing a family for a lifetime. Additionally, making alumni events especially attractive in content and form for younger alumni is crucial in order to recruit them for the years to come.</p>
<p>Evidence of Compliance;</p>	<p>SER 4.1.4, experience of the community created, knowledge of college relationships with other bodies.</p>
<p>Analysis</p>	<p>A sense of community life is fostered and considered as a core component of theological education. All students, members of staff, faculty and governing board are actively engaged in fulfilling this mission.</p> <p>The school has good relations with external stakeholders, that includes alumni, churches, supporting ministry organizations, other theological institutions, graduates and donors. Relations with future or potential employers of graduates exist.</p> <p>Sbt has correct relations with local civil authorities and the broader community.</p> <p>Students are encouraged to set an example of good behaviour when moving in the broader society.</p> <p>Communication policies are transparent and truthful. Social, spiritual and physical extra-curricular activities are provided. A code of ethics and disciplinary procedures exists in written form.</p> <p>Overall, The institution expresses healthy community dynamics and is aware of the context in which it functions.</p>
<p>Commendations, recommendations, requirements</p>	<p><b>Commendation:</b> Perhaps SBT's biggest strength is its community. A sense of community life is fostered and considered as a core component of theological education. All students,</p>

	<p>members of staff, faculty and governing board are actively engaged in fulfilling this mission.</p> <p><b>Commendation:</b> The school has good relations with external stakeholders, that includes alumni, churches, supporting ministry organizations, other theological institutions, graduates and donors.</p>
Panel conclusion	Fully Compliant

## A.5 - EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

### INSTITUTIONS HAVE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT THEIR MISSION AND STRATEGY

Guidelines examined	A.5.1 Student services; A.5.2 Study facilities; A.5.3 Library/Learning Resource Centres; A.5.4 Information management; A.5.5 Information Technology; A.5.6 Virtual Learning Environment and Educational Resources.
Previous requirements or recommendations	2014. The VET team recommends that the areas of Church History, Catechetics and Counselling, receive prominence in library acquisitions, that a development plan for the library be operated on, and that an increase in the annual expenditure for library books be considered.
Evidence of Compliance;	SER 4.1.5. Examination of campus and facilities, including library; student satisfaction expressed, examination of electronic platforms and equipment and their use.
Analysis	<p>Student services are adequate, readily accessible and fit for purpose. Student progress files are filled out and kept throughout a student's period of study.</p> <p>Sbt's student facilities are adequate for educational purposes. Buildings, furnishings and IT provision for use are suitable for the use of the students. Master plans for existing and possible extensions of facilities are in place.</p> <p>The library has a suitable development plan. Library holdings are adequate for a Vocational Bachelor programme (10.000 volumes). The library holdings offer appropriate volumes in all areas of theology and a well developed periodical selection. Electronic access to other appropriate libraries e.g. University of Bern, exists and are being used. The library has an electronic device to register the borrowing of books and the statistics of use</p>

	<p>of the library by students. The library is open to students 24 hours. The library is supervised by a faculty member on a 50% basis who is supported by a student. The library uses the Dewey system.</p> <p>Comment: It was mentioned by students that a portion of the books in the library are not the latest edition or are old and should be complemented with newer publications.</p> <p>Sbt administration collects, analyzes and uses data and information relating to the school's academic programmes and other activities. Appropriate record-keeping is in place. The archives contain student progress files and transcripts in printed as well as software form.</p> <p>Information technology and electronic devices are kept and managed by qualified staff.</p> <p>E-learning educational programmes could be developed. At the moment their use is limited.</p>
Commendations, recommendations, requirements	<p><b>Commendation:</b> The library is open to students 24 hours.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Facilities for e-learning should be expanded to catch up with international standards.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Development of e-learning programmes e.g. with Moodle should be considered.</p> <p><b>Recommendation;</b> The librarian be given additional time for further training in library science.</p>
Panel conclusion	Substantial compliance

## A.6 - Finances and sustainability

INSTITUTIONS HAVE SUITABLE FINANCIAL POTENTIAL, PLANNING, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Guidelines examined	A.6.1 Financial Potential and Planning; A.6.2 Financial Policies and Procedures; A.6.3 Sustainability; A.6.4 Remuneration and Fees; A.6.5 Fundraising.
Previous requirements or recommendations	None.
Evidence of Compliance;	SERE 4.1.6. Statements of accounts and budgets for the last three years, audited accounts, and reports of fundraising.

Analysis	<p>Sbt has sufficient financial resources to fulfill their educational and organisational mission. During the Covid-19 pandemic substantial donations helped to alleviate loss of income from the hotel and in fact surpassed usual annual income.</p> <p>However, more funds are needed to engage an additional 50% lecturer. Comment: New ideas should be sought for raising funds.</p> <p>Financial policies are documented in written form. All spending is carried out on the basis of an authorised budget. Accounting procedures are audited by a qualified public auditor.</p> <p>The institution shows clear signs of sustainability. This is proven by a stable financial condition and by a continuity of board membership and academic leadership.</p> <p>Staff and faculty salaries and additional social services are comparable to public salaries. Employment contracts exist in writing.</p> <p>Student fees are transparent and reviewed regularly.</p> <p>Fundraising procedures are transparent and truthful. Financial records and budgets are externally audited and made public. Financial planning and strategic plan are published likewise.</p> <p>Overall, financial planning, policies and procedures are highly effective and need to be applauded.</p>
Commendations, recommendations, requirements	<p><b>Commendation:</b> Financial planning, policies and procedures are highly effective and need to be applauded.</p>
Panel conclusion	<p>Full compliance</p>

---

## D2 Standards relating to the programme

---

### B.1 - HOLISTIC INTEGRATION

INSTITUTIONS FORM THEIR STUDENTS WITHIN A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION, CAREFULLY INTEGRATING SPIRITUAL FORMATION, CHARACTER EDUCATION, ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND PRACTICAL TRAINING

Guidelines examined	B.1.1 Holistic Integration; B.1.2 Spiritual Formation; B.1.3 Character Education; B.1.4 Academic Achievement; B.1.5 Practical training; B.1.6 Mentoring.
Previous requirements or recommendations	None.
Evidence of Compliance;	SER 4.2.1. Stated curriculum in the student guide (p. 27-29). Student satisfaction responses in student meeting. Meetings with staff organising programmes. Documents relating to mentoring (six).
Analysis	<p>Sbt has a holistic approach to curriculum design and delivery of the different courses and practice.</p> <p>The school has designed its curriculum in relation to character development and personality training and the school provides sufficient context where character and virtue are modelled and find examples of mature Christian character.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Where credits are awarded, examples of evidence are desirable.</p> <p>Sbt operates at the academic level expected from a Vocational Bachelor level training. Exam papers and Bachelor theses reveal effective preparation by lecturers, transparent grading procedures and adequate quality standards in examination levels.</p> <p>The school understands ECTS and indicates the number of ECTS credits for each course or practical activity in the academic calendar. ECTS are used according to ECTE standards. Credits awarded by other ECTE accredited schools can be fully transferred to sbt's final credit counting. In the case of non-accredited schools sbt decides on an individual basis.</p> <p>In its different courses sbt includes learning activities to develop abilities required of graduates in their ministerial service.</p>

	<p>Activities such as practice in church context, experiential learning and reflective practice are part of the formal learning plan and are included in the total calculation of ECTS credits. Generic learning activities are also part of the educational programme.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> A survey of mandatory and optional courses would be helpful.</p> <p>A mentoring programme sponsored by sbt includes an on-going evaluation of students by faculty members in order to inform them on their academic and spiritual progress. Graduate profiles are kept in the student files.</p> <p>Overall, Students are trained for service by a holistic approach in theological education, which includes spiritual formation, character training, academic progress and practical training.</p>
Commendations, recommendations, requirements	<p><b>Commendation;</b> A very strong point of sbt is its holistic approach to education. Students are trained for service by a holistic approach in theological education, which includes spiritual formation, character training, academic progress and practical training. Sbt has a holistic approach to curriculum design and delivery of the different courses and practice.</p> <p><b>Commendation:</b> A mentoring programme sponsored by sbt includes an on-going evaluation of students by faculty members in order to inform them on their academic and spiritual progress. Students highlighted this as a strength of the programme.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> More information as to the procedure for assessing objectively character development and personality training should be put in writing.</p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b> Standards for transfer of ECTS gained from non- accredited schools, percentage of guest students that may attend academic courses should be set out.</p>
Panel conclusion	Substantial compliance

## B.2 - CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

INSTITUTIONS DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT APPROVED, OUTCOME-BASED PROGRAMMES THAT ARE FIT FOR PURPOSE IN CONTEXT

Guidelines examined	B.2.1 Design and approval processes; B.2.2 Outcomes and fitness for purpose; B.2.3 Curricula, Module descriptors and learning activities; B.2.4 Graduate profiles; B.2.5 Content,
---------------------	---

	level, feasibility and progression; B.2.6 Credit allocation and duration; B.2.7 Content; B.2.8 Monitoring processes.
Previous requirements or recommendations	<p>2014.Sbt is asked to continue working towards integrating the curriculum, and finding the balance between bible overview and academic in-depth study and research of the Bible.</p> <p>2014. The VET advises that subjects related to historical theology will receive greater attendance in the curriculum, thereby providing more balance to it.</p> <p>2014. The VET team recommends that the decision regarding awarding ECTS for non-formal learning be finalized as soon as possible.</p>
Evidence of Compliance;	SER 4.2.2. Ancillary course documents, student handbook, meetings with staff and students.
Analysis	<p>Sbt's educational programme is outcome-based and includes all components that are needed for effective ministerial service. Students, stakeholders and external experts have contributed to the formation of the existing academic programme. The programme is geared to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.</p> <p>Sbt's academic programme is practice-oriented. It contains clearly defined learning outcomes that take into account fitness for purpose, the content of the school's mission statement and the ecclesiastical and cultural context of its students. The learning outcomes refer to academic skills, practical abilities, spiritual and character formation.</p> <p>The academic programme has standard module descriptors indicating learning outcomes and objectives, content, instructional methods, assessment criteria and the requirements for the award of credits for each module. Assessment of personality training needs more precision.</p> <p>Graduate profiles exist and are fit for purpose. For both current and past students there is support given for pursuing further study and employment opportunities.</p> <p>The programme offered by sbt includes different emphases: theological and biblical studies and practice-oriented units such as traineeships, internships and other periods of the programme that allow the student to gain experience outside the seminary. Theological modules have progression from foundational to advanced levels of study and of competence.</p>

	<p>Credit allocation is transparent and ECTS is understood and applied correctly. Student learning activities are evaluated on the basis of the demonstration of learning outcomes. Credits are awarded for all learning activities that match learning outcomes. Clear guidelines exist for the allocation of credits for prior learning, non-formal and informal learning.</p> <p>Sbt's curriculum correctly reflects a practice-based orientation which aligns well with its mission statement and, after the recommendation of the last review visit, the school has assigned ECTS credits to all practical activities. The percentage of practical theology calculated by the school is 37% of all credits which include two intensives totalling six months. The team notes that Church History, Ethics and Systematic theology have a relatively small ECTS count. The team thanks the school for responding to the last report in this way and suggests further work on integrating as well as balancing the theoretical and practical in the curriculum in a reflective practice framework. Curricular content and delivery modes are appropriate. Graduates are prepared for different vocations and contexts.</p> <p>Suggestion: Based on viewing a small number of lectures, we suggest that lecturers ensure that teaching is done in an interactive and collaborative way when appropriate, not only 40+ minutes of teaching from the front.</p> <p>The school has installed a regular review process of the curriculum. The review checks whether the programme responds to the needs of students, stakeholders and society. Evidence of excellence are module descriptors and a variety of learning activities.</p>
<p>Commendations, recommendations, requirements</p>	<p><b>Commendation:</b> the school uses excellent module descriptors and these chronicle an excellent variety of learning activities.</p> <p><b>Commendation:</b> Sbt's educational programme is strongly outcome-based and includes all components that are needed for effective ministerial service. Students, stakeholders and external experts have all contributed to the formation of the existing academic programme.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Assessment procedures should be described in detail in the field of personality training.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> That sbt develop further the integration of theoretical and practical credits and consider a further re-balancing of the credits in the light of some weak areas in church</p>

	history, systematic theology and ethics in a reflective practice atmosphere.
Panel conclusion	Substantial compliance

### B.3 - LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

#### INSTITUTIONS IMPLEMENT GOOD EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE IN AREAS OF LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Guidelines examined	B.3.1 Educational philosophy and adult pedagogy; B.3.2 Student centred learning and teaching and assessment; B.3.3 Module design and delivery; B.3.4 Variety; B.3.5 Delivery feedback; B.3.6 Assessment.
Previous requirements or recommendations	<p>2014. Sbt faculty members are encouraged to put in writing the various means of assessing learning outcomes when designing the courses.</p> <p>2014. We further suggest that part of the work of advanced students be done more independently (or online), therefore guiding the students in developing higher levels of cognition [and thus implementing the Dublin Descriptors' requirements for Bachelor level degrees (see p.89 EEAA Manual)].</p> <p>2014. Given the large proportion of adjunct faculty at sbt, we encourage sbt to put into writing clearer grading guidelines and a description of expectations for the different levels of exam papers.</p> <p>2014. Sabbatical for faculty is in process and needs to be finalized.</p> <p>2014. As mentioned in the 2008 VET report, the load on Felix Aeschlimann as principal, academic dean, and teacher has been very heavy for the past 12 years. We strongly recommend that a concrete consideration be made at sbt to finalize Felix Aeschlimann's plans for having a sabbatical.</p> <p>2014. The 2008 VET report included as a requirement that the school develop and present a clear plan for further training and research activity of faculty prior to the accreditation review visit. Unfortunately, this requirement has not been fulfilled. The VET team therefore requires that sbt will develop a clear written plan for further training and research activity of faculty to be presented to the EEAA before the next council meeting (in the first quarter of 2015) and in this connection, the VET suggests to sbt to encourage faculty members to publish academic and research papers on a regular basis.</p>

Evidence of Compliance;	SER 4.2.3, ancillary programme and module documents, student handbook. Attendance in classes by team members, examination of marked work submitted by students.
Analysis	<p>Sbt has a clear and transparent educational philosophy grounded on the school's mission.</p> <p>A faculty development programme exists (SER 3.1.5). Its realization however depends on the size of the available budget. A new fundraising programme should be considered for that purpose.</p> <p>Student-centered learning is one of the goals of the educational programme. Lecturers try to strengthen students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. Students are encouraged to be autonomous learners.</p> <p>Procedures for students' complaints, academic misconduct and plagiarism are in place and implemented.</p> <p>Module design and delivery are good.</p> <p>Sbt gives consideration to new technologies that enhance delivery. Online courses are being planned, but their part in the educational programme has not yet gone beyond an initial stage.</p> <p>Feedback from students and stakeholders is not a regular practice and feedback collection methods from stakeholders are not consistent across modules.</p> <p>Consistent and fair assessment is carried out in accordance with the requirements for each module and in accordance with learning outcomes. Different types of assessment are applied for the different areas of the programme. A final comprehensive examination and a Bachelor thesis lead to the successful completion of the academic programme. Assessment criteria for practice, final exam and thesis writing exist in printed form and are implemented. Assessment regulations are published in advance. Appeal procedures exist in written form and are applied.</p> <p>Overall, The seminary implements good educational practice in areas of learning, teaching and assessment. Adjustments are suggested in pedagogical training, the development of online courses and needed in the area of consistent application of students' feedback for all modules.</p>
Commendations, recommendations, requirements	<p><b>Commendation:</b> There is evidence of excellent module descriptors and a variety of learning activities.</p>

	<p><b>Commendation:</b> Sbt has a clear and transparent educational philosophy grounded on the school's mission. Student-centred learning is one of the goals of the educational programme.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Faculty members should be trained regularly in adult pedagogy practices. In particular, the methodological approach for achieving learning outcomes should be described in more detail.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> that sbt consider investing in the development and application of online courses. Due to the limited number of full time students the school should consider that this may be in keeping with their mission.</p> <p><b>Requirement:</b> A standardised student feedback form should be used for each module and reviewed and evaluated by the academic leadership on an ongoing basis.</p>
Panel conclusion	Partial compliance

#### B.4 - STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION

INSTITUTIONS FORMULATE AND IMPLEMENT SUITABLE POLICIES FOR THE STUDENT "LIFE CYCLE" THAT INCLUDES ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION.

Guidelines examined	B.4.1 Admission; B.4.2 Progression; B.4.3 Recognition; B.4.4 Graduation and certification.
Previous requirements or recommendations	None.
Evidence of Compliance;	SER 4.2.4, Student handbook, student records, student meeting.
Analysis	<p>Admission policies are clearly formulated and published in the student guide. Written candidate profiles enable the school to evaluate the suitability of the applicants for sbt's academic programme.</p> <p>Progress regulations exist in writing.</p> <p>Sbt has clear regulations for recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study or prior learning, of non-formal and informal learning.</p> <p>Graduation and certification regulations are clear and applied consistently. Assessment procedures including final exam or thesis ensure that the graduating students have met the</p>

	<p>described programme outcomes. Students are informed of graduation requirements when they are admitted to the educational programme. Graduates are given an accreditation certificate with a statement of comparability and a Diploma Supplement.</p> <p>Overall, Student admission and graduation regulations and practices fully meet ECTE standards for a Vocational Bachelor equivalent programme.</p>
Commendations, recommendations, requirements	None.
Panel conclusion	Full compliance

### **B.5 - QUALIFICATION NOMENCLATURE AND CREDITS**

INSTITUTIONS FOLLOW INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED QUALIFICATION NOMENCLATURE AND CREDIT-COUNTING SYSTEMS

Guidelines examined	B.5.1 Qualification nomenclature; B.5.2 Credits;
Previous requirements or recommendations	None.
Evidence of Compliance;	SER 4.2.5. Website and final certification. General programme descriptions for credit counting.
Analysis	<p>The qualification resulting from sbt's programme is clearly specified and communicated. The certificate awarded to students indicates comparability to the level of Vocational Bachelor.</p> <p>The ECTS awarded in connection with sbt's programme are in line with the ECTE Certification Framework.</p> <p>Sbt follows international credit counting systems.</p>
Commendations, recommendations, requirements	<p>None</p> <p>However, note recommendation one in standard A.1 above.</p>
Panel conclusion	Full compliance

# E. CONCLUSIONS

---

## Summary of commendations

---

SBT is a fine institution, with many strengths. The C-SER is well organized and clearly formulated. It responds to the recommendations and requirements made by the 2014 VET team to Beatenberg. We would like specially to mention the following:

1. SBT's identity is very clear, both in terms of its theological position, and also in regard to its rich and respectable long-term heritage.
2. Very effective governance is in place. Administrative and academic staff are firmly committed to sbt's vision and mission. There is clear stability of executive leadership. The institution has procedures in place that model Christian patterns of leadership.
3. Perhaps SBT's biggest strength is its community. A sense of community life is fostered and considered as a core component of theological education. All students, members of staff, faculty and governing board are actively engaged in fulfilling this mission.
4. The school has good relations with external stakeholders, that includes alumni, churches, supporting ministry organizations, other theological institutions, graduates and donors.
5. The library is open to students 24 hours.
6. Financial planning, policies and procedures are highly effective and need to be applauded.
7. A very strong point of SBT is its holistic approach to education. Students are trained for service by a holistic approach in theological education, which includes spiritual formation, character training, academic progress and practical training. Sbt has a holistic approach to curriculum design and delivery of the different courses and practice.
8. A mentoring programme sponsored by sbt includes an on-going evaluation of students by faculty members in order to inform them on their academic and spiritual progress. Students highlighted this as a strength of the programme.
9. Sbt's educational programme is strongly outcome-based and includes all components that are needed for effective ministerial service. Students, stakeholders and external experts have all contributed to the formation of this academic programme.
10. There is evidence of excellent module descriptors and a variety of learning activities.

11. Sbt has a clear and transparent educational philosophy grounded on the school's mission. Student-centred learning is one of the goals of the educational programme.
- 

## Summary of recommendations

---

1. Sbt's graduate certificate must indicate ECTE standards concerning the graduation nomenclature.
2. The information about the programme should be published not only in the student guide.
3. Possibilities for input of external bodies like donors, churches and alumni could be further developed.
4. With some adjunct faculty and new staff, clear written procedures and standards need to be in place to assure effective handover.
5. In some cases, the workload of faculty members seems too high. We encourage the school to consider alleviation of responsibilities despite financial limitations in the budget.
6. Facilities for e-learning should be expanded to catch up with international standards. Development of a distance learning programme e.g. with Moodle is recommended.
7. It would be beneficial for the librarian to get additional time for further training in library science.
8. It was mentioned by students that a portion of the books in the library do not contain the latest edition or are old and should be complemented by newer publications.
9. When assessing spiritual formation and character development, procedures for objectively assessing these qualities should be put in writing.
10. Sbt's curriculum correctly reflects a practice-based orientation which aligns well with its mission statement. The VET would recommend ensuring an appropriate balance

between theoretical and theologically based courses and strengthening the reflective practice connection between the two.

11. The VET team suggests that faculty members seek more training opportunities in adult pedagogy practices.
12. The methodological approach for achieving learning outcomes should be described in more detail (by giving examples of evidence) and distributed to students in the student guidebook.
13. A faculty development programme exists. Its realisation, however, depends on the size of the available budget. It would be beneficial to pursue additional fundraising opportunities for that purpose.

---

## Summary of requirements

---

1. A standardised student feedback form should be used for each module and reviewed and evaluated by the academic leadership on an ongoing basis. This needs to be implemented in a timeframe that will be decided by the council.

---

## Overall summary

---

The visitation team recommends to the ECTE Council that sbt be judged to be in compliance with the *Standards and Guidelines* of the ECTE in both institutional and programme areas for the onsite delivery of the Studiengang für Gemeinde und Mission (SGM) equivalent in standard to a Bachelor of Theology. The team recommends the renewal of accreditation, with the recommendations listed above monitored through the annual reporting processes of ECTE, subsequent to compliance with the one requirement.

The visitation team would like to record their gratitude to sbt for a warm welcome and constantly helpful interaction with the team throughout the process. It was truly a meeting of colleagues in the process from which we in the team learnt much and greatly appreciated the staff and leadership of sbt in their excellence and commitment in following their calling.

In producing this report, all those involved as peer experts have been free from undue influence or stakeholders on the findings, analysis, conclusions, commendations, recommendations and requirements.

The visitation team.

**Signed:**

**Rev Horst Born, Germany, (team leader);**

**Dr Erez Soref, Israel;**

**James Lockwood, Ireland, (student representative);**

**Dr Graham Cheesman, UK, (Review Secretary).**

**November 2021**