

ECTE CERTIFICATION FRAMEWORK

This document is a copy of Appendix A in the *Standards and Guidelines*¹ for ECTE accreditation, providing the certification framework within which the ECTE provides accreditation of programmes offered by higher education institutions (HEIs) and alternative providers of higher education (APs).²

The definitions of levels and synopses of standards in the *ECTE Certification Framework* are based on the *European Qualifications Framework* for Higher Education (EQF)³ and on the typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with higher education qualifications, the *Overarching Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area* (QF-EHEA), with typical level expectations for the Short Cycle, First Cycle and Second Cycle in the QF-EHEA (formerly Dublin Descriptors).⁴

ECTE qualification	ECTS Credits	EQF level	QF-EHEA Cycle
EQF 5 (Short Cycle)	90-120	5	Short Cycle
EQF 5-Partial (Short Cycle-Partial)	60		
EQF 6 (First Cycle)	180-240	6	First Cycle
EQF 7 (Second Cycle)	60-180	7	Second cycle
EQF 7-Partial (Second Cycle-Partial)	Less than 60		

The ECTE accredits programmes that signify the completion each level/cycle as well as partial qualifications that operate at the level of the relevant cycle but are not end-of-level/cycle qualifications (these are denoted in the table above by the boxes shaded in grey).⁵

In order to provide comparability to contexts outside of Europe, references are included in the tables below to the UNESCO *International Standard Classification of Education* (ISCED 2011)⁶ and to the English nomenclature used in the *ICETE Qualification Comparability Framework*⁷.

Within national legal frameworks, each accredited institution should identify and use further qualification nomenclatures in the language of delivery. The Diploma Supplement should be used to fully describe the qualification within the accredited EQF/QF-EHEA level.

RESOURCES⁸

- *Guidelines for Programme Design and Using ECTS*
- *Guidelines in Distinguishing Research and Practice Oriented Programmes*
- *Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework* (EQF)
- *Overarching Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area* (QF-EHEA)
- *Guidelines for Alternative Providers and Qualification Nomenclature*

¹ <http://ecte.eu/qa/standards/>

² See more about ECTE Accreditation and institutional status <http://ecte.eu/ecte-accreditation/ecte-accreditation-and-institutional-status/>

³ <https://europa.eu/europass/en/european-qualifications-framework-eqf>

⁴ http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/EHEAParis2018_Communique_AppendixIII_952778.pdf

⁵ The *Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA* envisions a 'range of qualifications, partial qualifications and levels' (p. 33) http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/WG_Frameworks_qualification/71/0/050218_QF_EHEA_580710.pdf. These are sometimes also referred to as 'intermediate' qualifications.

⁶ <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>

⁷ <https://icete.info/icete-qualification-comparability-framework/>

⁸ See www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines

1. EQF 5 (Short Cycle)

DEFINITION

At EQF Level 5 (QF-EHEA Short Cycle), the ECTE certifies basic, short programmes of higher education aimed at building comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge as well as a range of cognitive and practical skills in the field of theology. These programmes can give transfer into EQF Level 6/First Cycle programmes. They can consist in 60 or 120 ECTS credits and up to two full-time academic years (or equivalent).

For programmes of 120 ECTS, comparability can be established at EQF Level 5 and as ‘Short Cycle’ qualifications in the QF-EHEA. In the ICETE Framework these programmes are referred to as ‘Diplomas’.

For programmes of 60 ECTS, comparability can be established as partial EQF Level 5 and partial Short Cycle qualifications. In the ICETE Framework 60 ECTS, one-year programmes are referred to as ‘Certificates’.

SYNOPSIS

Description	Programmes of foundational theological education aimed at providing a comprehensive knowledge in the field of theology and a selection of skills.
EQF	Level 5 (120 ECTS) Partial Level 5 (60 ECTS)
QF-EHEA	Short cycle (120 ECTS). Partial Short Cycle (60 ECTS)
ECTS Credits	120 (60 for partial qualification)>
Learning Outcomes (QF-EHEA)	Demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon general secondary education and is typically at a level supported by advanced textbooks; such knowledge provides an underpinning for a field of work or vocation, personal development, and further studies to complete the first cycle; application of knowledge and understanding in occupational contexts; ability to identify and use data to formulate responses to well-defined concrete and abstract problems; communication about understanding, skills and activities, with peers, supervisors and clients; learning skills to undertake further studies with some autonomy.
Duration	Flexibility for shorter programmes For 60 credits = one-year For 120 credits = two years
ISCED level	Level 5, category 544 60 ECTS = category 541
ICETE level	The level of these programmes is described as ‘Certificate’ for 60 ECTS programmes and as ‘Diploma’ for 120 ECTS programmes.

2. EQF 6 (First Cycle)

DEFINITION

At EQF Level 6 (QF-EHEA First Cycle), the ECTE certifies programmes of advanced education aimed at building knowledge and critical understanding as well as advanced skills in the field of theology. These programmes can be oriented toward fields of work and/or of study. They should normally consist of 180-240 ECTS credits and last three-four years of full-time study (or equivalent).

For these programmes, ISCED comparability can be established at Level 6, and in the ICETE Framework, they are referred to as ‘Bachelor’ level programmes.

SYNOPSIS

Description	Programmes of advanced theological education aimed at building knowledge and critical understanding as well as advanced skills in the field of theology.
EQF	Level 6
QF-EHEA	First Cycle
ECTS Credits	180-240
Learning Outcomes (QF-EHEA)	Demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study; application of knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to work or vocation, and competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within the field of study; ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within the field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues; communication of information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences; development of learning skills that are necessary to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.
Duration	Three to four years (full-time).
Orientation	EQF Level 6/First Cycle higher education programmes may be oriented toward fields of practice and/or of research. ⁹
ISCED level	Level 6 – Bachelor level or equivalent (research-oriented programmes: category 64; practice-oriented programmes: category 65).
ICETE level	The level of these programmes is described as ‘Bachelor’.

⁹ See *Guidelines in Distinguishing Research and Practice Oriented Programmes*

3. EQF 7 (Second Cycle)

DEFINITION

At EQF Level 7 (QF-EHEA Second Cycle), the ECTE certifies highly specialised programmes of education aimed at building knowledge, critical understanding and specialised skills in the field of theology. These programmes can be oriented toward fields of work and/or of study. They can consist in 10-180 ECTS and may be consecutive or non-consecutive (i.e. designed for graduates of other fields of studies).

For programmes between 60-180 ECTS, EQF comparability can be established at Level 7, corresponding to a Second Cycle qualification in the QF-EHEA. In the ICETE Framework these programmes are referred to as ‘Master’ level programmes.

Programmes with less than 60 ECTS remain as partial EQF Level 7 and partial QF-EHEA Second Cycle qualifications. In the ICETE Framework, these shorter programmes are referred to as ‘Postgraduate Certificates’.

SYNOPSIS

Description	Programmes of highly specialised theological education aimed at building knowledge, critical understanding and specialised skills in the field of theology.
EQF	Level 7 (60-180 ECTS) Partial Level 7 (<60 ECTS)
QF-EHEA	Second Cycle (typically, 60-120 ECTS with a minimum of 60 credits at the level of the 2nd cycle) Partial Second Cycle (< 60 ECTS)
ECTS Credits	10-180
Learning Outcomes (QF-EHEA)	Demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with the first cycle, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context; application of knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to field of study; integration of knowledge and handling of complexity, and formulating judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements; communication of conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non- specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously; learning skills to allow to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.
Duration	Flexibility for shorter programmes. Normally up to 2-3 years (full-time).
Orientation	EQF Level 7/Second Cycle higher education programmes may be oriented toward fields of practice and/or of research. ¹⁰
ISCED level	Level 7 - Master level or equivalent (research-oriented programmes: category 74; practice-oriented programmes: category 75) < 60 ECTS = category 761

¹⁰ See *Guidelines in Distinguishing Research and Practice Oriented Programmes*

This Certification Framework was published in 2022 and is included in Appendix A of *Standards and Guidelines* for ECTE accreditation.

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