

# STANDARDS

AND

# GUIDELINES

## FOR ACCREDITATION

(2021 REVISION WITH 2022 REVISED CERTIFICATION  
FRAMEWORK)

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ECTE

European  
Council for  
Theological  
Education

(Formerly the  
EEAA)

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# INTRODUCTION

In 2019 the Council of the ECTE decided to provide information about its accreditation activities through a series of documents corresponding to specific topics. The entire collection of these documents related to quality assurance standards, guidelines and procedures can be found at <http://ecte.eu/qa/>. For a general introduction to the ECTE, see *Introducing the ECTE*<sup>1</sup>. For information on ECTE accreditation procedures, *Criteria and Procedures for ECTE accreditation*<sup>2</sup> and the supplemental guidelines section on the ECTE website<sup>3</sup>.

This document contains the *Standards and Guidelines* for ECTE accreditation.

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## The sources of ECTE accreditation standards

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In the first place, the new *Standards and Guidelines* for ECTE accreditation have been carefully assembled in reference to European and international sources. Although many of the standards have remained the same as in previous editions, this has entailed a thorough revision of the ECTE accreditation standards and guidelines.

**1. European Standards and Guidelines – Part 1 (ESG).**<sup>4</sup> In 2005, the European Ministers responsible for higher education adopted the first version of the ESG, which has now been updated by the 2015 version. The purpose of the ESG is to ‘contribute to the common understanding of quality assurance for learning and teaching across borders and among all stakeholders. They have played and will continue to play an important role in the development of national and institutional quality assurance systems across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and cross-border cooperation’.<sup>5</sup>



Part 1 of the ESG, outlining the standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance in HEIs has been incorporated into both the ECTE institutional and programme standards and guidelines. They are referenced in this Manual using the ESG 1-10 numeration.

The use of the ESG firmly anchors ECTE accreditation in European quality assurance practices. While aligning itself and its institutions to the culture of the European Higher Education Area, the ECTE however remains a cross-border, professional, peer-accrediting organization that should not be considered on the par of national ministries of education nor of national accrediting agencies. In Europe, the legal authority to accredit academic degrees abides with the single states. Degree awarding is the prerogative of each institution within the legal framework of their own state, and it must be clear that the ECTE does not award degrees nor perform accreditation for recognition or national authorisation. Accreditation by the ECTE certifies levels within a nomenclature framework and provides a statement of comparability to the standards published in this document, but it is not a replacement for national accreditation.

**2. Standards and Guidelines for Global Evangelical Theological Education (SG-GETE).** In 2017, the nine regional agencies of the ICETE gathered together in Rome to develop a set of globally shared quality assurance standards for evangelical theological education. This process, known initially as the Rome

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://ecte.eu/about/>

<sup>2</sup> See <http://ecte.eu/qa/procedures/>

<sup>3</sup> See <http://ecte.eu/qa/guidelines/>

<sup>4</sup> *European Standard and Guidelines (ESG)* [https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG\\_2015.pdf](https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> ESG, p.6

Roadmap, was developed and formally approved in April 2019 by the ICETE Board as the *Standards and Guidelines for Global Evangelical Theological Education (SG-GETE)*.

The structure, standards, guidelines and examples of evidence listed in the SG-GETE have been generally adopted into the Standards and Guidelines. Where necessary, adaptations have been made to the context of the European Higher Education Area.

The use of the SG-GETE connects ECTE accreditation to global quality assurance practices in the field of evangelical theological education and strengthens the links with global stakeholders.



**Other sources and resources.** The *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE Accreditation* also incorporate reference to a number of other key sources. These include:

- The *European Qualification Framework (EQF)*<sup>6</sup> is used to determine the levels of ECTE accreditation in the EHEA cycles and the amount of ECTS credits for each level.
- The revised overarching *Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA)* with its descriptors according to cycles as formulated in the Paris Declaration (2018).<sup>7</sup>
- The *UNESCO International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)*.<sup>8</sup> This international classification of levels supplies an internationally comparable set of categories. For ease in international recognition and comparability purposes, each ECTE accreditation levels is mapped onto the ISCED classification.
- The *ICETE Qualification Comparability Framework*.<sup>9</sup> This an important tool in seeking to provide greater transparency and international readability to the EFQ levels of ECTE accreditation and how they are comparable to nomenclature and levels in other regions of the world.
- Bologna Process documents and recommendations for good practice with references, for example, to the *Dublin Descriptors*,<sup>10</sup> the *Diploma Supplement*, use of ECTS credit system, etc.
- Building on 40 years of experience in the quality assurance of theological education, the ECTE provides supplemental guidelines in a number of key areas that should be read in conjunction with this document. These include areas such as: distinguishing research and practice orientation, guidelines in preparing a SER, good practice in on-site visitations, guidelines for special access cases, developing internal quality assurance cultures, special provisions in accreditation and guidelines for quality in distance and online programmes.<sup>11</sup>




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## Integrated review procedures

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In May 2022, the ECTE Council approved an integrated review procedure, removing the two-phase process of institutional and programme accreditation. This means that all ECTE accreditation procedures

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/european-qualifications-framework-efq>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial\\_declarations/EHEAParis2018\\_Communique\\_AppendixIII\\_952778.pdf](http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/EHEAParis2018_Communique_AppendixIII_952778.pdf). See here for a general presentation of the QF-EHEA <http://ehea.info/page-qualification-frameworks>

<sup>8</sup> <https://icete.info/icete-qualification-comparability-framework/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> 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](http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/EHEAParis2018_Communique_AppendixIII_952778.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> The supplemental guidelines that are referenced throughout the current document are regularly updated and can be found at [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines).

now consist in a *single* integrated review covering both institutional and programme accreditation and hence the full ESG 1.<sup>12</sup>

For information on the ECTE accreditation procedures, see the separate document *Criteria and Procedures* for ECTE accreditation.<sup>13</sup>

## ECTE Certification Framework

In 2022, the ECTE Council agreed to revise the ECTE *Certification Framework* (Appendix A).

The revised definitions of levels and synopses of standards are mainly based on the *European Qualifications Framework* for Higher Education (EQF).<sup>14</sup> The EQF is a learning outcomes-based framework that provides a comprehensive map of all types and levels of qualifications in Europe and serves as a translation tool between different frameworks<sup>15</sup>. The tables in the ECTE *Certification Framework* indicate credits (ECTS<sup>16</sup>), outcomes and duration (FTE) for each EQF level. References to the QF-EHEA cycles and outcomes<sup>17</sup> are included to ensure that qualifications are aligned with the typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with higher education qualifications.

In order to provide comparability to contexts outside of Europe, the ECTE *Certification Framework* also includes references to the UNESCO *International Standard Classification of Education* (ISCED 2011)<sup>18</sup> and to the English nomenclature used in the *ICETE Qualification Comparability Framework*<sup>19</sup>. This provides an important and helpful framework for alternative providers (APs) operating in contexts where academic nomenclature is protected and reserved for higher education institutions.

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We offer this major update as a tool in helping our stakeholders progress toward greater fitness for service, for God's greater glory in Europe.

ECTE Review committee

Dr Steffen Schulte, Chairman

Dr Marvin Oxenham, General Secretary

Carmen Crouse, Accreditation Director

<sup>12</sup> Distinct institutional and programme accreditation procedures still remain as an option, and standards A7 and B6 will apply to these procedures to ensure full ESG1 coverage.

<sup>13</sup> <http://ecte.eu/qa/procedures/>

<sup>14</sup> See here for a general description of the EQF <https://europa.eu/europass/en/european-qualifications-framework-efq>

<sup>15</sup> See here for a description of the 8 EQF levels: <https://europa.eu/europass/en/description-eight-efq-levels>

<sup>16</sup> The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is used in all ECTE accreditation to quantify programmes at each level. One ECTS = roughly 25-30 hours of learning. 60 ECTS = one year of full time learning.

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.ehea.info/media/ehea.info/file/WG\\_Frameworks\\_qualification/85/2/Framework\\_qualificationsforEHEA-May2005\\_587852.pdf](http://www.ehea.info/media/ehea.info/file/WG_Frameworks_qualification/85/2/Framework_qualificationsforEHEA-May2005_587852.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> See <https://icete.info/icete-qualification-comparability-framework/>. The *ICETE Qualification Comparability Framework* specifies that its levels '... refer to the quality and level of learning opportunities but do not determine the status of institutions nor their ability to award formal degrees. This is in recognition that the global situation of higher education is complex and that not all providers of theological education are in a place to obtain formal recognition or the ability to award degree in their local contexts.' For more information on international nomenclature and credit conversion, see Section 2.3 of *Guidelines for Programme Design and Using ECTS* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

# A. ECTE INSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

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## A.1 - Identity and purpose

INSTITUTIONS HAVE CLEARLY FORMULATED STATEMENTS OF IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

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### A.1.1 - IDENTITY

Institutions understand themselves as providers of tertiary level evangelical theological education, endorsing the statement of faith and theological orientation of their relevant evangelical stakeholders and communities and integrating core Christian values into their operations and programmes. Biblical grounding is evident in all programmes.<sup>20</sup>

ECTE core values<sup>21</sup> should be endorsed, applied, and reflected in learning activities, programmes and institutional aspects.<sup>22</sup> Institutions' statements of faith should influence every area of operations, including what is taught in the classroom, what is modelled by staff and faculty, and what is required of graduates.<sup>23</sup>

### A.1.2 - LEGAL AND FISCAL STATUS

Institutions have appropriate legal status within the country where they operate in accordance with local laws and as suitable for their purposes. Institutions comply with fiscal and financial regulations in the country in which they operate<sup>24</sup> and operate within national legal frameworks in their usage of academic terminologies and award nomenclatures.

Institutions demonstrate understanding that ECTE accreditation does not serve national degree recognition purposes but is for the purposes of international comparability and quality assurance and development.

### A.1.3 - VISION AND MISSION

Institutions have a clear vision and mission statement which is periodically reviewed by the leadership, understood by internal and external stakeholders, and matched with strategic planning and budget operations. The vision and mission statement clearly reflect institutional identity.<sup>25</sup>

### A.1.4 - PUBLIC INFORMATION

Institutions publish information about their identity, activities and programmes that is accurate and accessible. Programme information includes access and selection criteria, programme learning outcomes and graduate profiles, qualifications, teaching and learning procedures, assessment procedures, pass rates

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<sup>20</sup> SG-GETE A1.1

<sup>21</sup> See *Introducing the ECTE* <http://ecte.eu/about/> and <http://ecte.eu/about/identity-and-mission/core-values/>

<sup>22</sup> EAAA 3.2.1

<sup>23</sup> EAAA 3.2.1

<sup>24</sup> SG-GETE A1.2

<sup>25</sup> SG-GETE A1.3

and student retention data, learning opportunities for students, progression and mobility opportunities and graduate employment information.<sup>26</sup>

Institutions provide easy access to adequate information on the conditions to be fulfilled for the completion of a given programme of studies, the earning of an award or the transfer of accumulated credits to another institution. In particular, it must specify all financial charges.<sup>27</sup>

Institutions have an information package/module catalogue (or equivalent) that makes its study programmes easy to understand and compare for all students and staff – local and foreign – and provides them with essential institutional, academic and practical information. The module catalogue not only lists and describes the study programmes and their module units and modules, but also supplies all the information which a student needs to make decisions regarding study at that institution, enrolment in any of its specific programmes, or to take certain modules. It is strongly recommended that the module catalogue be available on the Internet and be updated every year. It should be published in the local language of instruction essential parts should and also be available in English.<sup>28</sup>

#### **EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:**

- statement of faith or equivalent
- written and published vision and mission statement
- approved budgets
- minutes that document review processes of the vision and mission statement
- internal and external stakeholder input on vision and mission statement
- publicity materials
- public information

#### **RESOURCES:**

- *Introducing the ECTE* (section 1.5)
- *Guidelines for Information Packages*<sup>29</sup>

#### **SOURCES:**

SG-GETE A1; ESG 1.8; EAAA Manual 6<sup>th</sup> Edition 3.2.1, 3.2.2

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<sup>26</sup> ESG 1.8 and SG-GETE A1.4

<sup>27</sup> EAAA 3.2.14

<sup>28</sup> EAAA 3.2.14

<sup>29</sup> See [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

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## A.2 - Governance and quality assurance

INSTITUTIONS HAVE APPROPRIATE AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE STRUCTURES

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### A.2.1 - GOVERNANCE

Institutions have appropriate institutional governance that represents stakeholders and constitutes the body to which executive leadership is accountable. Effective governance is in place to preserve and protect the institutions' identity and purpose, ensure the necessary means to accomplish the institutions' mission, intervene in institutional crises and leadership succession and to clearly delineate lines of responsibility between board governance, executive management and delegated authority.

Those involved in diverse aspects of institutional governance are firmly committed to the institutions they serve and understand the distinctive nature of evangelical theological education and the particular mission and vision of their institution.

Evidence of stability and sustainability indicate appropriate and effective governance, reflected, for example, in continuity of board members, executive leaders and faculty, in quality oversight and in good financial practice.<sup>30</sup>

### A.2.2 - LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Institutions demonstrate a clear understanding of the distinction between governance and leadership and management in their organisational structures. Leadership and management are accountable to governance and guide, inspire and manage the personnel team to achieve the mission of the institution through strategic planning and implementation.<sup>31</sup>

Effective leadership and management are contextually sensitive in adopting various leadership styles, optimizing the human resources of the institution, reflecting adaptability to contextual factors, administering finances and facilities, inspiring Christian character in the learning community and operating within the context of board-approved policies. Institutions consciously seek to model Christian patterns of leadership and community in the ways that leaders at all levels relate to each other, their subordinates and to all members of the educational community.<sup>32</sup>

### A.2.3 - DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES

Institutions provide opportunities for faculty, staff and student participation in decision-making as regards to both community life and academic programmes as appropriate to cultural contexts and to good practice in their national higher education settings.

Student government structures are in place. The governance and leadership structures also provide space for active participation and input of external stakeholders, including potential employers, alumni, donors and churches.<sup>33</sup>

### A.2.4 - STRATEGIC PLANNING

Institutional activities are based on predetermined and evaluated outcomes and are supported by clearly articulated policies. Strategic planning is based on valid research data and involvement of relevant

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<sup>30</sup> SG-GETE A2.1

<sup>31</sup> SG-GETE A2.2

<sup>32</sup> SG-GETE A2.2

<sup>33</sup> SG-GETE A2.3

stakeholders. Governance and leadership structures cooperate in designing, approving, implementing and reviewing strategic plans that are linked to institutional mission statements, programmes and resources. Appropriate project management is in place to implement strategic planning.<sup>34</sup>

There are several key elements to be included in the theological institution's strategic plan that include: 1) a mission statement with institutional values, core values and mission; 2) short and long-term development plans to fulfil the mission statement that include financial forecasting.<sup>35</sup>

### **A.2.5 - INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The leadership promotes an internal culture of integrity, self-assessment, self-improvement and quality development.

Institutions have a general policy for internal quality assurance that is formal and public. This policy should be used for continual improvement of the institution, and should generate further detailed policies, practices and processes. The policy should be well managed, owned by all internal stakeholders and reviewed regularly by all internal stakeholders. The policy should also reflect the expectations of external stakeholders, the national context and the strategic vision and mission of the institution.<sup>36</sup>

The internal quality assurance policy should support: the organization of a quality assurance system; departments, institutions, faculties and other organizational units, as well as those of institutional leadership, individual staff members and students, as they take on their responsibilities in quality assurance; academic integrity and freedom and vigilance against academic fraud; guarding against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff; the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance; evaluation of activities that are subcontracted or carried out by other parties; the relationship between research and learning & teaching;<sup>37</sup>

### **A.2.6 - CYCLICAL EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Institutions are cyclically involved in institutional and programme assessment and in ongoing reporting practices to external entities. Where relevant, national legislative frameworks should be taken into account. External quality assurance verifies the effectiveness of internal quality assurance, catalyses improvement, offers new perspectives and provides public information on the quality of the institution.<sup>38</sup> Quality assurance is a continuous process and institutions should ensure that the progress made since the last external quality assurance activity is taken into consideration when preparing for the next one.<sup>39</sup>

#### **EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:**

- registration documents and legal status
- evidence of compliance with fiscal and financial regulations
- terms of reference, constitution, by-laws and internal regulatory policies of governing boards, including policies on board stability
- a governing board handbook, including, for example, orientation of new board members, policies on conflict of interest, documenting procedures, quorum and voting regulations, delineation of relationship between the board and executive leadership and separation between board and executive functions
- documented external and internal review reports of the board of governors

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<sup>34</sup> SG-GETE A2.4

<sup>35</sup> EEAA 3.2.2

<sup>36</sup> SG-GETE A2.5

<sup>37</sup> ESG 1.1

<sup>38</sup> SG-GETE A2.6

<sup>39</sup> ESG 1.10

- minutes of budgetary exercises and budget approvals
- documented and approved short-term and long-term strategic plans, minutes from boards and leadership teams reflecting engagement with strategic planning
- project management documents and matching budgets
- personnel turnover statistics
- policies and procedures for leadership succession and conflict resolution
- general policy and compliance documents
- adequate record-keeping procedures
- active student government, student participation in board meetings, student social committees
- research data and link to strategic planning
- policy documents and records
- reviews with any external agencies contracted for objective analysis of its operations
- internal quality assurance policy that is public and linked to strategic planning
- evidences of internal stakeholder involvement in developing and implementing internal quality
- evidences of external stakeholder involvement in quality assurance

**RESOURCES:**

- *Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance Policies*<sup>40</sup>

**SOURCES:**

SG-GETE A2; ESG 1.1 and 1.10; EAAA Manual 6<sup>th</sup> Edition 3.3.2

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<sup>40</sup> See [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

## A.3 - Human Resources

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

### A.3.1 - HUMAN RESOURCES

Institutions consider their personnel as their prime asset and responsibility. Institutions consequently treat their faculty, staff and occasional collaborators with respect, Christian love and in regard of legal conventions. Anti-discrimination policies and staff protection policies are in place and institutions are sensitive to diversity and issues in consideration of gender, ethnicity and national representation. Human resources are sufficient to carry out the educational programme effectively, tailored to the objectives and activities of the institution and monitored to ensure personal sustainability and realistic workloads across the institution.<sup>41</sup>

### A.3.2 - NON-EDUCATIONAL STAFF

Non-educational staff<sup>42</sup> are adequately qualified, spiritually mature and demonstrate Christian character. Institutions support staff in all departments, actively plan for their ongoing professional development and carefully monitor workloads, conditions of employment, job descriptions and line management procedures.<sup>43</sup>

The institution has clear, transparent and fair processes for staff recruitment and conditions of employment.<sup>44</sup>

### A.3.3 - EDUCATIONAL STAFF

Educational staff understand and accept the institution's educational philosophy and are adequately qualified, spiritually mature and demonstrate Christian character.<sup>45</sup> They should have a good standing within the national evangelical community at large, be respectable members of a church and exhibit character traits that are worthy of imitation by the student body. They 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.<sup>46</sup>

Teachers should understand student-centred learning, facilitate high quality student experience and be able to actively promote the acquisition of knowledge,<sup>47</sup> the development of generic and specific competences and contribute to nourishing spiritual and character formation.<sup>48</sup>

Educational staff have appropriate academic qualifications for the level of study, which is normally at least one level above the degree being taught. Hence:

- EQF LEVEL 5: most faculty members should possess or be working toward a Master level degree in their teaching area.
- EQF LEVEL 6: Research-oriented programmes: all faculty members should possess or be working toward a Doctoral level in their teaching area. Practice-oriented programmes: all faculty

<sup>41</sup> SG-GETE A3.1

<sup>42</sup> The term 'non-educational staff' refers to those that do not have formal, direct roles in teaching and learning (as, for example, faculty members do), but they are to be nonetheless considered a part of the overall educational community that is shaping students.

<sup>43</sup> SG-GETE A3.2

<sup>44</sup> ESG 1.5

<sup>45</sup> SG-GETE A3.3

<sup>46</sup> EEAA 3.2.10

<sup>47</sup> ESG 1.5

<sup>48</sup> SG-GETE A3.3

members should possess a Master level in their teaching area and corresponding professional experience.

- EQF LEVEL 7: all faculty members must possess a Doctoral level in their teaching area. Profiles are given special attention in faculty selection.

In exceptional cases, a limited number of educational staff without required academic qualifications, but with proven ability and experience, is acceptable. The minority of educational staff falling below such qualifications are distinguished by above average experience and proven competence, but do not carry significant module loads nor supervise academic departments.

An institution may likewise employ a number of non-lecturing faculty members that will be responsible for educating through other learning activities (mentoring, ministry experience, etc). Their academic qualifications may fall below those outlined above, but they should display proven competence in their area of teaching.

A theological institution should aim at having faculty that is adapted to its cultural and linguistic context.<sup>49</sup>

Institutions assure themselves of the competence of their educational staff<sup>50</sup> and take responsibility for the quality of their faculty and for providing them with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively. Such an environment sets up and follows clear, transparent and fair processes for conditions of employment that recognize the importance of teaching; encourages scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research; encourages innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies.<sup>51</sup>

Educational staff engage regularly in educational development and training suitable for their profession<sup>52</sup> and institutions offer and promote fair and transparent opportunities for professional development. This might include faculty development plans, research leaves aimed at ongoing publication and provision of study time to keep updated in fields of teaching and educational enhancement. In particular staff involved in EQF Level 6 and 7 programmes may be expected to be active in their academic field of research.

The workloads and total responsibilities of the educational staff do not impair the quality of instruction or the contact with the students. Careful attention should be given to the student-instructor ratio, to teaching loads and to adequate numbers of full-time, contracted educational staff.<sup>53</sup> For EQF Level 5, instruction the faculty teaching load should normally not be more than 15 hours of teaching per week and for the EQF Levels 6 and 7 approximately 10-12 hours.<sup>54</sup>

### A.3.4 - HR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Institutions have written policies relating to areas such as recruitment, faculty and staff development, employee care, job security, annual leaves, human resource procedures, redundancy and dismissal procedures, inflation salary adjustments, fees and remuneration for visiting lecturers, etc. Institutions apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment of all staff and faculty.<sup>55</sup>

#### EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:

- job descriptions and workload allocations
- hiring, contract and interview procedures and required documentation for applicants

<sup>49</sup> EEAA 3.2.10

<sup>50</sup> SG-GETE A3.3

<sup>51</sup> ESG 1.5

<sup>52</sup> For training and development opportunities, see <http://ecte.eu/training/> and [www.icete.academy](http://www.icete.academy).

<sup>53</sup> SG-GETE A3.3

<sup>54</sup> EEAA 3.2.10. *Different dispositions can be discussed in the case of intensive teaching or distance education delivery formats.*

<sup>55</sup> ESG 1.5 and SG-GETE A3.4

- appeals procedures
- publication records
- educational development records
- research leave records and policies
- book purchase allowances
- conference attendance records
- written policy for staff and faculty development and matching budget
- line managing procedures, annual review procedures, job descriptions and terms of reference for all personnel
- pastoral care provision for personnel
- internal appraisal of faculty, administration and board
- employment and recruitment policy documents

**SOURCES:**

SG-GETE A3; ESG 1.5; EAAA Manual 6<sup>th</sup> Edition

## A.4 - Community and context

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

#### A.4.1 - LEARNING COMMUNITY

Institutions foster a healthy sense of community life among their members. This includes strategies to develop healthy relationships, provide student support systems, provide access to social and physical recreation, facilitate graduate employment and alumni care, organize times of corporate worship and prayer and nourish a community where character is modelled and can be emulated. While considering challenges and logistic limitations, these strategies relate to all modes of educational delivery.

Institutions consider community life as a core component of theological education and all students, members of staff, faculty and governing board are actively engaged. Non-curricular activities are designed to develop the community and to contribute to the institutions' mission and vision.

Although preference is given to the cultivation of responsible character in community, ethical codes and disciplinary regulations and procedures are in place as appropriate.<sup>56</sup>

#### A.4.2 - STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITY

Institutions see themselves as serving Christian faith communities and churches and strategically build relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders that include alumni, churches, supporting ministry organizations, other theological institutions, graduates, donors. These relationships include accurate communication, consultation and sharing of information. The institution actively cooperates with other academic and professional communities<sup>57</sup> and demonstrates clear relationships with potential/future employers of its graduates.<sup>58</sup>

Institutions have structures to assist students in maintaining close ties with their home communities and churches.<sup>59</sup> Institutions also maintain contact with graduates and an alumni programme is in place.<sup>60</sup>

#### A.4.3 - CIVIL COMMUNITY

Institutions nurture awareness of local and global cultures and contexts and develop activities of theological reflection and teaching accordingly. As appropriate, institutions are connected to and culturally embedded within the broader community composed of civil authorities, cultural representatives, other higher educational institutions and local neighbourhoods.<sup>61</sup>

#### A.4.4 – COMMUNICATION

Institutions understand that good communication is constituent to healthy community and information is developed and disseminated as is appropriate to various audiences within the community. Internal information is accurate, objective, updated and readily accessible. This would include, for example, student handbooks, faculty handbooks, internal and external policy repositories, module information, fee schedules, budgets, board minutes, employment opportunities, publicity and general news of institution life.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>56</sup> SG-GETE A4.1 with slight modifications

<sup>57</sup> SG-GETE A4.2

<sup>58</sup> EEAA 3.2.14

<sup>59</sup> EEAA 3.2.7

<sup>60</sup> EEAA 3.2.14

<sup>61</sup> SG-GETE A4.3

<sup>62</sup> SG-GETE A4.4

## EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE

- community character covenants
- disciplinary regulations and procedures
- social gatherings, small groups, care groups
- pastoral care provision
- board of governors' representation
- student, faculty and staff involvement in local churches, including placement opportunities for students
- integration with local communities in ministry placements
- consultation events, attendance of civil and stakeholder community events
- promotional materials
- written policies on contextualization
- social and community involvement
- contact and dialogue with other educational institutions
- application forms with references from churches
- student handbooks, faculty handbooks, internal and external policy repositories, module information, fee schedules, board minutes, budgets, employment opportunities, general publicity
- communication policies
- provision made for social, spiritual and physical extra-curricular activities.
- appropriate code of ethics and disciplinary procedures

## SOURCES:

SG-GETE A4; EEAA Manual 6<sup>th</sup> Edition

## A.5 - Educational resources

INSTITUTIONS HAVE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT THEIR MISSION AND STRATEGY

### A.5.1 - STUDENT SERVICES

Institutions consider student services as an essential educational component in their overall delivery. Institutions ensure that student support is adequate, readily accessible and fit for purpose. Students are informed of available services which may include qualified tutors, advisers and qualified administrative staff.<sup>63</sup>

Student services take into account special needs, exceptional circumstances, diversity in student population, issues of mobility across educational systems and the shift towards student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching.<sup>64</sup> Support and services provided to on-campus students and to online and distance learners are of comparable quality although the delivery method may vary.<sup>65</sup>

### A.5.2 - STUDY FACILITIES

Institutions provide study facilities that are adequate, fit for purpose and readily accessible.<sup>66</sup> This applies to all modes of delivery. Institutions offering on-site educational programmes normally provide (either directly or through external facilitation) the appropriate spaces for educational activities (e.g. classrooms), student accommodation and food services. The site, layout, buildings, furnishings and IT provision of the institution are suitable for its purpose and in accordance with local standards and building regulations. Efficient maintenance facilitates the implementation of the institutions' mission and long-range campus master plans for existing and new facilities is in place.

Institutions ensure that all services are in accordance with normal local standards, including accessibility requirements.<sup>67</sup>

### A.5.3 - LIBRARY/LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRES

Institutions ensure access to adequate learning resources, such as libraries.<sup>68</sup> The library has a development plan that is suitable in terms of quality, quantity, level, variety, concentration, theological orientation, subjects covered, and language of the programmes being offered. The library development plan is reflected in the institutional budget.<sup>69</sup> Collections should also highlight the theological orientation of the institution and its areas of specialization. Demonstrated access to major public or private libraries to provide additional library resources in theological studies is of primary importance for postgraduate programmes<sup>70</sup> (see 4.1.5 - *Library Holdings*).

The library holdings support the instructional objectives, levels and learning outcomes of the institutions' programmes. Hence:

- EQF LEVEL 5: The most important standard works in theology; a good selection of periodicals. About 5000 appropriate volumes. Accessible libraries in closer proximity can be taken into consideration. Part of the holdings may be in electronic form.

<sup>63</sup> ESG 1.6

<sup>64</sup> ESG 1.6

<sup>65</sup> SG-GETE A5.1

<sup>66</sup> ESG 1.6

<sup>67</sup> SG-GETE A5.2

<sup>68</sup> ESG 1.6

<sup>69</sup> SG-GETE A5.3

<sup>70</sup> EEAA 3.2.12

- EQF LEVEL 6: In addition to the Level 5 requirements, important standard works of all areas of theology; a well-developed periodical section. Normally about 10.000 appropriate volumes, including electronic resources. Provisions for access to Internet for faculty and students.
- EQF LEVEL 7: In addition to the Level 6 requirements, library holdings, administration and accessibility effectively support Level 7 programmes and possess adequate specialised collections in all Level 7 concentrations offered. The library should include adequate access to scholarly/peer-reviewed journals. Where necessary, the theological institution carries on effective cooperative arrangements with and electronic access to other appropriate libraries. Good access to university and public libraries in the vicinity and normally 25.000 appropriate volumes. This figure could also be less if an institution offers a Level 7 programme exclusively in a specific area of study.

Preference is to be given to reference works, sources and standard publications in the various areas. In addition to printed books, the library should include other media of instruction such as periodical literature electronic learning resources, etc. Popular and semi-popular Christian literature should normally be present only in limited quantity.

In countries with little theological literature in the vernacular, foreign language works may be substituted, provided they are clearly usable by the faculty and students.

Library facilities and equipment allow for adequate preservation, use and expansion of library holdings. Library administration is carried out by a sufficient number of trained staff who have access to ongoing professional development.<sup>71</sup> Students benefit from library induction services. Wherever local structures permit, computerization of the library should be undertaken according to a clear plan, wherever possible in collaboration with other library databases.<sup>72</sup>

Distance education programmes provide adequate and readily accessible access to digital holdings and/or facilitate students in accessing local resource centres and libraries.<sup>73</sup>

#### **A.5.4 - INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

Institutions effectively collect, analyse and use relevant information as it relates to their programmes and other activities. Data collection and analysis involves students and staff in providing and analysing data and in planning follow-up activities that relate to internal quality assurance.<sup>74</sup>

Institutions utilise data, for example, to build on good practice, evaluate programme relevance, assess design and delivery, monitor marking trends and grade inflation, determine key performance indicators, create student population profiles, collect student satisfaction surveys, evaluate learning resources and students support systems, analyse career paths of graduates and deal with progression, success, failure and dropout rates.<sup>75</sup>

Appropriate record-keeping is in place that includes updated contact information, student files, grades and transcripts, finances, alumni.

Student progress files are kept on record in which assessments of learning outcomes are communicated to the student and prepared for the final transcript.<sup>76</sup> This file must include a record of an individual's learning and achievement (the transcript) and represent an instrument by which students can monitor, build and reflect upon their personal development. The progress file contains an individual's personal records of learning and achievements, progress reviews and plans that are used to clarify personal goals. It can provide

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<sup>71</sup> SG-GETE A5.3

<sup>72</sup> EEAA 3.2.12

<sup>73</sup> SG-GETE A5.3

<sup>74</sup> ESG 1.7 and SG-GETE A5.4

<sup>75</sup> ESG 1.7 and SG-GETE A5.4

<sup>76</sup> EEAA 3.2.5

a resource from which material is selected to produce personal statements (e.g. CVs etc) for employers, admissions tutors and others as well as provide an on-going help to individuals to reflect upon their own learning and achievement as they study and plan for their own personal educational and career development.<sup>77</sup>

#### **A.5.5 – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

Information Technology (IT) and electronic instruments are employed and managed, as appropriate, by qualified personnel and are employed in the service of the educational mission and organisational structures of the institution.<sup>78</sup>

#### **A.5.6 - VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

Institutions offering distance or online educational programmes, provide the necessary virtual learning platforms as well as qualified technical, student and faculty support.<sup>79</sup>

#### **EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:**

- QA policies for student services
- policies for students with special needs and exceptional circumstances
- student support staff
- student mobility data
- master campus development plan
- library holdings (physical and digital)
- information management processes
- information databases
- documentation on the impact of information in programme management
- library catalogue, library committee minutes, library development plan and budget
- database, demonstration of record-keeping procedure and relative related software
- IT strategy, procedures linking to strategic plan development, terms of reference and inventory
- A response to the guidelines for distance or online education<sup>80</sup>

#### **RESOURCES**

- *Guidelines for Distance and Online Education*<sup>81</sup>

#### **SOURCES:**

SG-GETE A5; ESG 1.6 and 1.7; EEAA Manual 6<sup>th</sup> Edition

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<sup>77</sup> EEAA 3.2.5

<sup>78</sup> SG-GETE A5.5

<sup>79</sup> SG-GETE A5.6. See also *Guidelines for Distance and Online Education* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>80</sup> See *Guidelines for Distance and Online Education* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>81</sup> See [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

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## A.6 - Finances and sustainability

INSTITUTIONS HAVE SUITABLE FINANCIAL POTENTIAL, PLANNING, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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### A.6.1 - FINANCIAL POTENTIAL AND PLANNING

Institutions provide rationale and evidence that sufficient financial resources are available to sustain their mission. In terms of financial planning, budgetary procedures are in place and a comprehensive, approved business plan matches the mission and strategic planning of the institution. Fundraising and other income sources are appropriately allocated to operational costs, contingency funds and investments.<sup>82</sup>

### A.6.2 - FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Clear written policies are in place for establishing, approving and revising budgets. Procedures are in place to ensure that all spending is accounted for and appropriately authorized within budgetary forecasts. Likewise, all incoming funds are appropriately documented, allocated and acknowledged. Accounting procedures are maintained and audited at professional level by qualified personnel.<sup>83</sup>

### A.6.3 – SUSTAINABILITY

Institutions have appropriate funding to support the quality of their programmes and other activities.<sup>84</sup> There is demonstrated continuity in income and expenses over time. Institutional budgets manifest reasonable expenditures and forward-looking investments to serve the mission of the institution. The financial condition of the institution aims at stability of operations, investment in personnel, adequate workloads and allowance of vacation time and research leaves.

Sustainability is typically demonstrated over time, hence new institutions that have not yet graduated one class in their programmes may be advised against immediate accreditation.<sup>85</sup> Stability is also demonstrated in such factors as continuity of board membership and administrative leadership, low rate of staff turnover, satisfactory student enrolment and continuity in its programme(s) of instruction.<sup>86</sup>

### A.6.4 - REMUNERATION AND FEES

Staff and faculty salaries, social security, pensions and fringe benefits are reasonably comparable to the prevailing scales of the country or otherwise agreed upon in writing.

All student fees are transparent and public and give due consideration both to the financial ability of the students and to the actual expenses of the institution.<sup>87</sup> Scholarship programmes are to be administered according to written regulations with formal records of action taken.<sup>88</sup>

Both personnel compensation and student fees are reviewed regularly.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> SG-GETE A6.1

<sup>83</sup> SG-GETE A6.2

<sup>84</sup> ESG 1.6

<sup>85</sup> SG-GETE A6.3

<sup>86</sup> EEAA 3.2.13

<sup>87</sup> SG-GETE A6.4

<sup>88</sup> EEAA 3.2.13

<sup>89</sup> SG-GETE A6.4

### **A.6.5 – FUNDRAISING**

Fundraising procedures are transparent and illustrate true needs. Fundraising proposals are truthful, and reports are marked by gratefulness.<sup>90</sup>

#### **EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:**

- financial policies and records
- budgets, presentation of accounts and budgetary meeting minutes
- annual externally audited financial statement
- documents matching financial planning with strategic plans
- overall health and low rates of personnel turnover
- satisfactory student enrolment with statistics and projections
- programme continuity
- fundraising proposals and reports

#### **SOURCES:**

SG-GETE A6; ESG 1.6; EAAA Manual 6<sup>th</sup> Edition

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<sup>90</sup> SG-GETE A6.5

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## A.7 – Quality assurance of programmes

### INSTITUTIONS DELIVER PROGRAMMES THAT SATISFY ESG STANDARDS

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ESG standards 1.1, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8 and 1.10 are covered above in Standards A1-A6. ESG standards 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.9 are covered in this Standard A7.

#### A.7.1 – DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF PROGRAMMES

Institutions 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.<sup>91</sup>

Institutional accreditation focuses in particular on the following aspects:

- Institutions have processes for the design and approval of programmes that involve students, other stakeholders and external expertise and reference points.
- Institutions design and approve programme objectives, learning outcomes and curricula that reflect their institutional mission and strategy.
- Institutions specify and communicate programme qualifications referring to correct qualification frameworks and ECTS workloads.

Further aspects are implemented in programme accreditation.

#### A.7.2 – STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Institutions 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.<sup>92</sup>

Institutional accreditation focuses in particular on the following aspects:

- Institutions have a written educational philosophy that covers areas related to student-centred learning, teaching and assessment.
- Institutions have procedures to monitor the role of students in creating the learning processes in the delivery and assessment of programmes.

Further aspects are implemented in programme accreditation.

#### A.7.3 – STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION

Institutions consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.<sup>93</sup>

Institutional accreditation focuses on the following aspects:

- Institutions have published regulations covering all phases of the student life cycle.
- Institutions consistently apply regulation for admission, progression, recognition and certification.

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<sup>91</sup> ESG 1.2

<sup>92</sup> ESG 1.3

<sup>93</sup> ESG 1.4

Further aspects are implemented in programme accreditation.

#### **A.7.4 – ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES**

Institutions should 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.<sup>94</sup>

Institutional accreditation focuses in particular on the following aspects:

- Institutional processes are in place for the ongoing review and improvement of programmes.
- Communication procedures of programme changes are in place to inform all those concerned.

Further aspects are implemented in programme accreditation.

#### **SOURCES:**

ESG 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.9; *Standards and Guidelines for ECTE accreditation Part B.*

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<sup>94</sup> ESG 1.9

# B - ECTE PROGRAMME STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

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## 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

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### B.1.1 - HOLISTIC INTEGRATION

Institutions recognize the foundational importance of integrating academically-focused and competence-oriented learning activities with spiritual formation and character education. Holistic curricula give proper attention to learning activities geared to producing knowledge and understanding in the various disciplines of biblical, historical and theological study, without neglecting activities that nourish spiritual formation, character building and practical competences. All programme components are linked to programme learning outcomes and learning activities.<sup>95</sup>

Institutions understand and implement holistic approaches to integrated curriculum design and module delivery that go beyond mere addition of components to learning.

Dialogue across theological sub-disciplines and specializations is modelled and disciplines other than theology are theologically reflected on.<sup>96</sup>

### B.1.2 - SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Institutions include and monitor outcomes and learning activities in their programmes related to spiritual formation and provide community contexts where spiritual formation is nourished and practiced.<sup>97</sup>

Spiritual formation components that are part of the formal learning plan and are mapped onto the curriculum, are appropriately assessed, given credit and included in the total calculation of ECTS credits.

### B.1.3 - CHARACTER EDUCATION

Institutions include and monitor outcomes and learning activities in their programmes related to character and virtue education, both through specific modules dealing with virtue knowledge, virtue reasoning and virtue practice and through the integration of character and virtue education across the curriculum. Learning communities intentionally provide a context where character and virtue are modelled and can be emulated.<sup>98</sup>

Character education components that are part of the formal learning plan and are mapped onto the curriculum, are appropriately assessed, given credit and included in the total calculation of ECTS credits.

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<sup>95</sup> SG-GETE B1.1

<sup>96</sup> EAAA 3.2.5

<sup>97</sup> SG-GETE B1.2

<sup>98</sup> SG-GETE B1.3

### B.1.4 - ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Institutions include and monitor outcomes and learning activities in their programmes related to the study of academic theology. Institutions operate at the academic level that is expected for the degrees it offers. Students' experience of academic training in theology is in line with the level descriptors of higher education in the relevant frameworks. In addition to subject knowledge and understanding, students develop intellectual virtues and abilities such as critical thinking, ability to find information and ability to apply knowledge. Students are motivated and equipped to be lifelong learners.<sup>99</sup>

Academic components that are part of the formal learning plan and are mapped onto the curriculum, are appropriately assessed, given credit and included in the total calculation of ECTS credits.

### B.1.5 - PRACTICAL TRAINING

Institutions distinguish between generic (transferrable) and subject-specific competences in their programs and outcomes.

Institutions include and monitor learning activities related to developing specific competences that are typically required of theology graduates in their contexts. Institutions provide appropriate opportunities for practical learning through activities such as field placement, work-based learning, experiential learning and reflective practice. Institutions can also consider designing entire programmes that combine substantial work/ministry training with theoretical reflection.<sup>100</sup>

Institutions also include and monitor generic learning activities related to developing generic competences such as problem-solving, ability to communicate and work in teams. Students are motivated and equipped to contribute to faith communities and society in a variety of contexts.<sup>101</sup>

Practical training components that are part of the formal learning plan and are mapped onto the curriculum, are appropriately assessed, given credit and included in the total calculation of ECTS credits.

### B.1.6 - MENTORING

Institutions provide forms of mentoring in which students can be kept accountable, helped in problem-solving and conflict resolution and assisted in mapping their personal growth. Mentoring components should address the students' relationship with God, the spiritual disciplines and relational issues that deal with the family, the church and human relations in general. Mentoring components should support outcomes related to spiritual formation, character education, academic achievement and practical training.

Mentoring programmes include an overall on-going evaluation through which students are informed periodically on their progress. This evaluation is included in the graduation requirements and included in the student progress file.<sup>102</sup>

Where suitable, mentoring components that are part of the formal learning plan and are mapped onto the curriculum, are appropriately assessed, given credit and included in the total calculation of ECTS credits.

### EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE

- holistic curricular map of academic, ministry skills and competences, spiritual formation and character education
- graduate profiles
- list of learning activities related to different learning outcomes

<sup>99</sup> SG-GETE B1.4

<sup>100</sup> In German contexts this kind of apprentice model is sometimes referred to 'cooperative' education.

<sup>101</sup> SG-GETE B1.5

<sup>102</sup> EEAA 3.2.8

- strategy documents related to spiritual formation and character education
- community enhancement plans
- comparability studies with higher education academic descriptors
- mentoring programmes
- programme learning outcomes and module descriptors
- learning materials
- training and in-service programmes
- distinction between generic and subject specific competence outcomes

**RESOURCES:**

- *ECTE Certification Framework – Appendix A*
- *Guidelines for Programme Design and Using ECTS*<sup>103</sup>

**SOURCES:**

SG-GETE B1; EAAA Manual 6<sup>th</sup> Edition

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<sup>103</sup> See [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

## B.2 - Curriculum Development

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

### B.2.1 - DESIGN AND APPROVAL PROCESSES

Institutions have approved processes for the design and formal approval of their programmes. The design of programmes includes analysis and consultation, determination of learning outcomes and graduate profiles, curricular structure, level and duration, module content and delivery strategy.<sup>104</sup> Institutions involve students, stakeholders, external experts and reference points<sup>105</sup> in designing, developing and evaluating programmes that reflect their vision and mission in context.

Programmes are subject to formal institutional approval processes and regular evaluation.<sup>106</sup>

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.<sup>107</sup> Programmes that are not recognized by national authorities should ensure that the qualification nomenclature that is used is appropriate and not in breach of protected terminology.<sup>108</sup>

### B.2.2 - OUTCOMES AND FITNESS FOR PURPOSE

Programmes are designed to meet clearly defined learning outcomes.

Institutions articulate curricula that are fit for purpose<sup>109</sup> and that provide students with opportunities for spiritual and character formation, with academic knowledge and with skills that include those that are transferable and may be applied in their future careers.<sup>110</sup> Programmes also reflect the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe which are: 1) preparation for sustainable employment; 2) preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies; 3) personal development; 4) the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base and stimulating research and innovation.<sup>111</sup>

In defining learning outcomes, each institution must consider its own context, needs, mission statement and the cultural, ecclesiastical and social context of its graduates.<sup>112</sup> The institution must formulate a programme profile that includes the purpose and nature of the programme of studies and state the specific field of learning (ie: Theological and Religious Studies).

For Level 6 and Level 7 programmes, the institution must specify whether the programme is research-oriented or practice-oriented and consequently design programme outcomes, learning activities, assessment and certification to match.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>104</sup> See *ECTE Certification Framework* – Appendix A

<sup>105</sup> ESG 1.2

<sup>106</sup> SG-GETE B2.1

<sup>107</sup> ESG 1.2

<sup>108</sup> Degree awarding is the prerogative of each institution within the legal framework of their own state, and it must be clear that the ECTE does not award degrees nor perform accreditation for recognition or national authorisation. Accreditation by the ECTE certifies levels within a nomenclature framework and provides a statement of comparability to the standards published in this document, but it is not a replacement for national accreditation. For the nomenclature framework used by the ECTE, see *ECTE Certification Framework* – Appendix A

<sup>109</sup> SG-GETE B2.2

<sup>110</sup> ESG 1.2

<sup>111</sup> ESG 1.2, see also *Council of Europe Recommendation*

[https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/PublicResponsibility/Explanatory%20Memorandum%20public%20responsibility\\_EN.asp](https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/PublicResponsibility/Explanatory%20Memorandum%20public%20responsibility_EN.asp)

<sup>112</sup> EEAA 3.2.3.

<sup>113</sup> EEAA 3.2.2. For more information on the distinction in ECTE nomenclature between ‘research and ‘practice’ oriented programmes, see *Guidelines*

Learning outcomes determine curricular maps, module learning activities and assessment. Learning outcomes normally include academic outcomes, outcomes related to practical skills and competences as well as outcomes related to spiritual formation and character education.

Learning outcomes are established and regularly reviewed to align with the institution's mission and strategic vision and with stakeholder input regarding the knowledge, skills and attributes required for varying contexts that graduates will engage with.<sup>114</sup>

### **B.2.3 - CURRICULA, MODULE DESCRIPTORS AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

Institutions have published curricula for each programme of study that are focused, unified and relevant.<sup>115</sup> A curriculum map demonstrates where programme learning outcomes are achieved in the programme.

Institutions have standard module descriptors that indicate learning outcomes and objectives, content, credit and duration, instructional methods, assessment criteria and the minimum requirements for the award of credit for each module.<sup>116</sup> All modules and learning activities are harmonized with each other to avoid content duplication and to ensure that all stated outcomes are covered.<sup>117</sup> Module descriptors must be written for all credit-bearing learning activities, including mentoring, spiritual formation activities, character education projects, practical ministry and any activity that receives credit within the programme.<sup>118</sup>

Learning activities are designed within modules to help meet learning outcomes. Learning activities will be varied, informed by recent adult learning theories, theologically coherent, appropriately creative, making use of available technologies and designed to be fit for purpose.

Curricula and module descriptors are developed in close cooperation with the teaching faculty and stakeholders who share in the ownership of the overall curriculum criteria and design. All programmes and curricula undergo quality assurance processes leading to institutional approval and external validation.<sup>119</sup>

Learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment tasks are carefully aligned.

### **B.2.4 - GRADUATE PROFILES**

Institutions develop and regularly review graduate profiles that match programme learning outcomes. Institutions also regularly review employability opportunities and further study opportunities for its graduates and review programmes accordingly.<sup>120</sup>

### **B.2.5 - CONTENT, LEVEL, FEASIBILITY AND PROGRESSION**

Institutions normally design programmes in which learning outcomes are met through robust engagement with theological and biblical studies.<sup>121</sup>

Practice-oriented programmes normally include and give credits to well-structured placement opportunities aimed at practical training, such as traineeships, internships and other periods of the programme that are not spent in the institution but that allow the student to gain experience in an area

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*in Distinguishing Research and Practice Oriented Programmes [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines) and ECTE Certification Framework – Appendix A.*

<sup>114</sup> SG-GETE B2.1

<sup>115</sup> EEAA 3.2.3

<sup>116</sup> SG-GETE B2.3 with modifications

<sup>117</sup> EEAA 3.2.3

<sup>118</sup> EEAA 3.2.3

<sup>119</sup> SG-GETE B2.3

<sup>120</sup> SG-GETE B2.4

<sup>121</sup> Normally, to be recognized as a programme of theological education, no less than 30% of total credits should be awarded in the area of theology or biblical studies. Allowance will be made for programmes that pursue an approach that integrates theological engagement across the curriculum.

related to their studies.<sup>122</sup> Research-oriented programmes normally include and give credits to training in research skills and research activities. Programmes normally also include opportunities to engage with local and global culture and contexts.<sup>123</sup>

Curricula reflect the level descriptors and outcomes of each programme. Modules reflect progression and sequencing, from foundational to advanced levels of competence.

Programmes are designed in such a way that students can feasibly complete them in the given time frames.<sup>124</sup> and so that they enable smooth student progression.<sup>125</sup>

### B.2.6 - CREDIT ALLOCATION AND DURATION

The level of an institution programme is measured in terms of credits and duration<sup>126</sup>. Concerning credits, institutions should use the Europe-wide framework provided by the *European Credit Transfer System* (ECTS), designed to improve the transparency and comparability of study programmes and qualifications and facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications. The *European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System* is a student-centred system, based on the student workload required to achieve the objectives of a programme.<sup>127</sup>

Institutions use ECTS to quantify all student learning activities, with the focus being on the demonstration of learning outcomes rather than on the accumulation of hours/years. Contact hours (face-to-face instruction) constitute one of many possible learning activities but are not an essential requirement for assigning module credit. Credit allocation is modality neutral and equally adapted to diverse models of distance and campus-based instruction.

Module descriptors quantify duration and related credit-count and institution calendars balance the distribution of learning time. Credits are awarded for all learning activities that match learning outcomes and institutions make provision for assessment and allocation of credit for prior learning, non-formal and informal learning.<sup>128</sup> In all cases of recognition of learning outside of the accredited programme, students must gain at least the last third of their credits (at award exit level) with a theological institution accredited by the ECTE in order to receive ECTE certification for the academic award received.<sup>129</sup> No more than a third of the total credits in a degree can be assessed and allocated to non-formal and informal learning.

Institutions support student mobility between different credit systems and adopt and implement comparability tables.<sup>130</sup>

### B.2.7 - CONTEXT

Curricular content and delivery modes are contextually appropriate and address the challenges and opportunities of the stakeholders' social and religious environments. Graduates are prepared for different vocations, various social and cultural contexts, different service settings and employment contexts.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> ESG 1.2; EEAA 3.2.8

<sup>123</sup> EEAA 3.2.8

<sup>124</sup> SG-GETE B2.5

<sup>125</sup> ESG 1.2

<sup>126</sup> For more information on credit and duration requirements for each level see *ECTE Certification Framework* – Appendix A

<sup>127</sup> For more information on how to calculate ECTS credits see *Guidelines for Programme Design and Using ECTS* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>128</sup> SG-GETE B2.6. For more information see *Guidelines for Recognition of Formal, non-Formal and Informal Learning* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>129</sup> EEAA 3.3.3

<sup>130</sup> For more information on comparing international credit systems, see Section 2.3 of *Guidelines for Programme Design and Using ECTS*

[www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>131</sup> SG-GETE B2.7

## B.2.8 - MONITORING PROCESSES

Institutions have regular monitoring and review processes to ensure that programmes achieve intended outcomes. These processes are included in the institutions' internal quality assurance processes and involve staff, students, alumni and other stakeholders in improving the programme and in evaluating its effectiveness in responding to the needs of students and society.<sup>132</sup>

Monitoring will evaluate programme content in light of: the latest research to ensure that it is up to date; how programmes are responding to the needs of students, stakeholders and society; issues of student progression, completion and workload; student satisfaction in areas of teaching, learning and assessment; overall student satisfaction and expectations; the fitness for purpose of the learning environment and support services.<sup>133</sup>

Institutions collect and analyse information and adapt, update and modify programmes as a result of monitoring processes.<sup>134</sup> Revised aspects of all programmes are communicated to all those concerned.<sup>135</sup>

### EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE

- criteria and policies for programme design and approval process
- contextual research and stakeholder involvement in programme design and approval
- programme learning outcomes and graduate profiles
- curriculum maps
- course module descriptors / module descriptors
- a variety of learning activities operating within a balanced curriculum to achieve learning outcomes
- level descriptors and progression/sequencing criteria
- information on calculations of credit
- placement opportunities and structures
- programme development, objectives and learning outcome criteria
- mapping of curriculum to institutional mission and strategic plan
- programme outcomes included in an academic/student handbook
- student feedback
- evidence of internal stakeholder engagement in curricular design and module descriptors writing
- correct understanding and use of the ECTS.
- correct calculations of ECTS credits for each cycle of study.
- correct duration for each level of study.
- ECTS credits awarded for all learning activities

### RESOURCES:

- *ECTE Certification Framework – Appendix A*
- *Guidelines for Programme Design and Using ECTS*<sup>136</sup>
- *Guidelines in Distinguishing Research and Practice Oriented Programmes*<sup>137</sup>
- *Guidelines for Recognition of Formal, non-Formal and Informal Learning*<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> ESG 1.9 and SG-GETE B2.8

<sup>133</sup> ESG 1.9

<sup>134</sup> ESG 1.9

<sup>135</sup> SG-GETE B2.8

<sup>136</sup> See [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>137</sup> See [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>138</sup> See [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

## **SOURCES**

SG-GETE B2; ESG 1.2 and 1.9; EEAA Manual 6<sup>th</sup> Edition 3.2.2, 3.2.3

## B.3 - Learning, teaching and assessment

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

### B.3.1 - EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND ADULT PEDAGOGY

Institutions have a clearly articulated educational philosophy that is grounded theologically and that undergirds the curriculum and the learning and teaching strategy. The entire learning community understands and actively engages with the institution's approach to the nature, purpose and practice of theological education.

Institutions also have a clearly articulated adult pedagogy practices, grounded in educational theory, studies of best practice and theological understandings of adult learning. Andragogic practices determine learning and teaching strategies at appropriate level and academic depth for each programme. Institutions make their statements of educational philosophy and andragogy publicly available.<sup>139</sup>

### B.3.2 - STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING AND TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Institutions deliver their programmes in a way that takes careful consideration of the stimulation of students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. Students are encouraged to be autonomous learners with adequate guidance, support and input from teachers in a climate of mutual respect.

Students are respected in the diversity of their needs and, where suitable, are provided with flexible learning paths, diversity of delivery modes, differentiated andragogy that is regularly evaluated and with teaching that is sensitive to a variety in learning styles and at the appropriate level and academic depth for the programme.<sup>140</sup> Equal opportunity policies and strategies are in place in the delivery of teaching and learning.<sup>141</sup>

Indicators of quality in learning and teaching include the following: instruction is accompanied by adequate learning materials/support (hand-outs, visuals, etc.) that fit the lesson objectives and the style of teaching; the learning environment is made to be cohesive, caring and conducive to learning; most of the available classroom time is allocated to curriculum related activities; students are prepared for learning through an initial structure that clarifies intended outcomes; content is explained clearly and developed with emphasis on its structure and connections; questions are planned to engage students in sustained discourse structured around powerful ideas; students are given sufficient opportunities to practice and apply what they are learning and receive improvement-oriented feedback; the teacher provides assistance for students in order to enable them to engage in learning activities productively; faculty members model and instruct students in learning and self-regulation strategies, and encourage work in small groups to construct understandings or help one another master skills; faculty members use a variety of formal and informal assessment methods to monitor progress towards learning goals; teachers establish and follow through on appropriate expectations for learning outcomes.<sup>142</sup>

Institutions have appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints<sup>143</sup> and appropriate regulations and procedures to deal with academic misconduct and plagiarism.

<sup>139</sup> SG-GETE B3.1

<sup>140</sup> EEAA 3.2.5. EEAA 3.2.2. For more information on the distinction in ECTE nomenclature between 'research and 'practice' oriented programmes, see *Guidelines in Distinguishing Research and Practice Oriented Programmes* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines) and *ECTE Certification Framework – Appendix A*.

<sup>141</sup> SG-GETE B3.2 with modifications

<sup>142</sup> EEAA 3.2.5

<sup>143</sup> This section directly reflects ESG 1.3. See also SG-GETE B3.2

### B.3.3 - MODULE DESIGN AND DELIVERY

Institutions implement good practice in module design in relation to programme delivery strategies and programme level. Programme delivery approaches include, but are not limited to, residential face-to-face delivery, research-oriented programmes, competency-based theological education, hybrid or blended programmes, extension programmes and fully online programmes. Programmes that are delivered by distance education or online education fulfil additional standards as suitable.<sup>144</sup>

In choosing delivery strategies, institutions demonstrate creativity and awareness of issues such as accessibility, quality, cost and scalability. Academic and student services offered across different models of instruction are of comparable access and quality. Institutions offering the same program through diverse delivery approaches ensure that a uniform level of academic rigor is maintained, though the learning activities may vary widely.<sup>145</sup>

### B.3.4 – VARIETY

Institutions utilize a variety of approaches to teaching and learning and are attentive to sociological changes impacting learning abilities and learning styles. Appropriate consideration is given to new technologies that enhance delivery. Institutions also implement different approaches to learning in relation to module aims and learning outcomes. Approaches to assessment are also varied and tailored to learning outcomes.<sup>146</sup>

Assessment may be accomplished in a variety of ways: oral or written exams, graded projects, portfolios, practical tests focusing on skills and competencies, presentations or assessment of skills and competences in supervised field assignments, etc. For some learning activities such as mentoring or ministry experience, a written evaluation or even a self-evaluation may substitute for a numerical assessment (marks). This assessment however must include a clause that specifies whether the student has satisfactorily achieved the learning outcome or not.<sup>147</sup>

### B.3.5 - DELIVERY FEEDBACK

Institutions regularly gather feedback from students and from stakeholders on module delivery, quality of teaching methodologies and overall design effectiveness and consequently implement improvement strategies. Feedback can be collected using a variety of methods, such as student feedback, peer-evaluation or stakeholder research.<sup>148</sup>

### B.3.6 – ASSESSMENT

Institutions treat assessment as a formative learning activity that is part of the overall learning and teaching process that contributes to students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. Students are given feedback which is linked to advice on the learning process.

Consistent and fair assessment is carried out in accordance with requirements that reflect programme and module learning outcomes. Different types of assessment are used in order to fit different learning activities and differing levels.<sup>149</sup> Institutions stipulate and publish assessment regulations in advance and marking criteria are implemented consistently by faculty. If possible, assessment is carried out by more than one examiner. Regulations include consideration of mitigating circumstances and appeal procedures are in place. Students are accurately informed of assessment requirements, marking criteria, submission

<sup>144</sup> See *Guidelines for Distance and Online Education* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>145</sup> SG-GETE B3.3

<sup>146</sup> SG-GETE B3.4

<sup>147</sup> EEAA 3.2.5

<sup>148</sup> SG-GETE B3.5

<sup>149</sup> EEAA 3.2.5

procedures, marking procedures, penalties and the possibilities of resits, extensions and appeals. Credits in the ECTS can only be obtained after completion of required work and appropriate assessment of the learning outcomes; minimum requirements for awarding credit are public and determined in advance.<sup>150</sup>

Faculty are familiar with assessment regulations and existing testing and examination methods and are supported in developing their assessment skills.<sup>151</sup>

Practice-oriented programmes must include the assessment (external and self-evaluation) of at least one ministry internship. Research-oriented programmes must include the assessment of at least one major research paper.<sup>152</sup>

The use of a credit framework (such as the ECTS) presupposes that a continuous assessment of learning outcomes is being carried on. In addition, however, many institutions assess the overall learning outcomes in a final comprehensive examination administered after a successful completion of a level of study. As an alternative, or in addition, institutions may require the completion of a final thesis or project; this is especially appropriate for research-oriented programmes.<sup>153</sup>

#### EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:

- articulated educational philosophy including andragogy documentation
- plans for flexible learning paths
- variety of delivery methods and andragogy
- complaint and appeal procedures and policies
- student and stakeholder feedback policies, procedures and results
- board minutes discussing design and delivery issues
- delivery strategies
- examples of variety
- course module descriptors
- feedback results and procedures
- learning materials
- assessment policies and procedures
- published marking criteria
- mitigating circumstances criteria and procedures
- faculty development strategies
- records of assessment feedback to students following assessment
- assessment regulations, marking criteria

#### RESOURCES

- *ECTE Certification Framework* – Appendix A
- *Guidelines in Distinguishing Research and Practice Oriented Programmes*<sup>154</sup>
- *Guidelines for Distance and Online Education*<sup>155</sup>
- *Guidelines for Programme Design and Using ECTS*<sup>156</sup>

<sup>150</sup> EEAA 3.2.5. ECTS grades and marking scales are not required, although in some cases they may represent good practice (for example to monitor grade inflation). See *Guidelines for Programme Design and Using ECTS* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>151</sup> Much of this section directly reflects ESG 1.3. See also SG-GETE B3.6

<sup>152</sup> EEAA 3.2.5. See *Guidelines in Distinguishing Research and Practice Oriented Programmes* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines).

<sup>153</sup> EEAA 3.2.5. See *Guidelines in Distinguishing Research and Practice Oriented Programmes* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>154</sup> See [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>155</sup> See [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>156</sup> See [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

**SOURCES:**

SG-GETE B3; ESG 1.3; EAAA Manual 6<sup>th</sup> Edition 3.2.5

## B.4 - Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

INSTITUTIONS FORMULATE AND IMPLEMENT SUITABLE POLICIES FOR THE STUDENT 'LIFE CYCLE' THAT INCLUDE ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION

### B.4.1 – ADMISSION

Institutions have admissions procedures that are clear and fit-for-purpose, and application forms and competent support staff to assist students in the application process. Admissions procedures are public, implemented consistently and transparently and are sensitive to issues of equality of access and of student mobility across higher education systems.<sup>157</sup>

Institutions have clear candidate profiles that can be used during the admissions process to evaluate the suitability of candidate students for specific programmes. In addition to academic access standards, candidate students might be evaluated on the basis of their Christian commitment, character and sense of vocational calling. A recommendation from the student's local church or employer is often appropriate. Institutions support academic equality, making provisions for special access cases, for candidates with special needs and for exceptional circumstances.<sup>158</sup>

Institutions admit students whose academic potential allows them to achieve the academic objectives of the graduate profile. Clear academic admission standards are published by institutions for each programme, specifying the required previous level of study. These admissions standards will be aligned with comparable higher education access.<sup>159</sup> Normally, the following academic access standards should be referred to:

- EQF LEVEL 5:: Completion of secondary education.
- EQF LEVEL 6: Completion of secondary education
- EQF LEVEL 7: Completion of EQF Level 6

### B.4.2 – PROGRESSION

Institutions have progression regulations that are clear, fit-for-purpose, public and are applied consistently. The requirements for progression between qualification levels (i.e. EQF Level 6 to Level 7) are transparent and clear. They take into consideration comparable standards in the wider academic community in their country and issues of student mobility within and across higher education systems.<sup>160</sup>

Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering progression. Institutions need to put in place both processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression.<sup>161</sup>

### B.4.3 – RECOGNITION

Institutions have recognition of learning regulations that are clear, fit-for-purpose, public and are applied consistently. Institutions give fair recognition to higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, as well as to the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.<sup>162</sup> Appropriate recognition procedures rely on national and international recognition principles and on cooperation with other

<sup>157</sup> ESG 1.4. For help in the recognition of international credit systems, see Section 2.3 of *Guidelines for Programme Design and Using ECTS* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>158</sup> See *Guidelines for Special Access* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>159</sup> SG-GETE B4.1

<sup>160</sup> SG-GETE B4.2 with modifications

<sup>161</sup> ESG 1.4

<sup>162</sup> See *Guidelines for Recognition of Formal, non-Formal and Informal Learning* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

institutions, quality assurance agencies and international agencies. Where appropriate, practices align with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and cooperate with national ENIC/NARIC centres.<sup>163</sup>

Recognition regulations are applied in sensitivity to student mobility within and across higher education systems.<sup>164</sup>

#### B.4.4 - GRADUATION AND CERTIFICATION

Institutions have clear, fit-for-purpose and public graduation and certification regulations that are applied consistently. Graduation requirements demonstrate the achievement of programme learning outcomes. Institutions make use of appropriate assessment procedures, such as final exams or ongoing monitoring, to ensure that graduating students have satisfactorily met the intended programme outcomes.

Students are informed of graduation requirements at the time of admission and no changes will affect their module of study unless mutually agreed. Institutions retain the right to review graduation of students on the basis of other factors in addition to academic achievement. These factors reflect the learning outcomes of the programme and, in evangelical institutions, typically include issues of ethics and character.

Certification documents may include a diploma, an accreditation certificate, a transcript, a character reference letter and accompanying supplemental document such as the *Diploma Supplement* for international mobility.<sup>165</sup> Certification includes essential data such as the student's identity, date of completion, level of degree, qualification gained, achieved learning outcomes (specifying practice-orientation or research-orientation for EQF Levels 6 and 7), content, credit value, issuing institution as well as the context, level and status of the completed programme.<sup>166</sup> A certificate from the ECTE with a statement of comparability to the ECTE levels as described in this Manual is available on request to all ECTE students graduating from ECTE accredited institutions.<sup>167</sup>

Certification provisions are applied in sensitivity to student mobility within and across higher education systems.<sup>168</sup>

#### EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE:

- admission regulations, procedures, forms and criteria
- candidate profiles
- mobility policies
- academic access standards for each programme
- special needs and equality policies and provision
- progression regulations
- recognition regulations
- graduation requirements
- samples of diplomas, accreditation certificates, transcripts, character reference letters, accompanying supplement document
- final examination procedures or equivalent
- Induction materials relative to each moment in the student-cycle

#### RESOURCES:

- *ECTE Certification Framework* – Appendix A

<sup>163</sup> ESG 1.4

<sup>164</sup> SG-GETE B4.3 with modifications. See Section 2.3 of *Guidelines for Programme Design and Using ECTS* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>165</sup> See *Guidelines for the Diploma Supplement* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>166</sup> ESG 1.4

<sup>167</sup> See <http://ecte.eu/qa/forms/>

<sup>168</sup> SG-GETE B4.4 with modifications

- *Guidelines in Programme Design and Using ECTS*<sup>169</sup>
- *Guidelines for Special Access*<sup>170</sup>
- *Guidelines for the Diploma Supplement*<sup>171</sup>
- *Guidelines for Recognition of Formal, Non-formal and Informal Learning*<sup>172</sup>

**SOURCES:**

SG-GETE B4; ESG 1.4; EAAA Manual 6<sup>th</sup> Edition 3.2.6, 3.2.11

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<sup>169</sup> See [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>170</sup> See [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>171</sup> See [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>172</sup> See [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

## B.5 - Qualification nomenclature and credits

INSTITUTIONS FOLLOW INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED QUALIFICATION NOMENCLATURE AND CREDIT-COUNTING SYSTEMS

### B.5.1 - QUALIFICATION NOMENCLATURE

The qualification resulting from a programme is clearly specified and communicated and indicates comparability 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.<sup>173</sup> If the qualification is not recognised by competent national authorities, this should be specified.<sup>174</sup>

Institutions demonstrate awareness of international systems of degree nomenclature and provide comparability tables to enhance international mobility. Degree nomenclature takes into account issues of duration, level, nature of study, distinction of practice-orientation or research-orientation for EQF Level 6 and 7 qualifications and credits.<sup>175</sup>

### B.5.2 – CREDITS

Institutions define the expected student workload in their programmes in terms of ECTS<sup>176</sup> in line with the *European Framework for Qualifications* and the *ECTE Certification Framework*.<sup>177</sup>

Institutions demonstrate awareness of international systems of credit counting (e.g. Carnegie, UK Credits, etc.) and provide comparability tables of credit value to enhance international mobility.<sup>178</sup>

### EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE

- minutes, documentation, policy engaging with international nomenclature and credit counting issues
- definition of expected workload in terms of credits
- international nomenclature and credit comparative tables
- description of degrees in terms of duration, level, nature of study and credits
- communication to students on nomenclature and credit-counting issues
- samples of documentation and international correspondence relative to student mobility
- national higher education classification frameworks
- information on calculation of credits

### RESOURCES:

- *ECTE Certification Framework* – Appendix A
- *Guidelines in Programme Design and Using ECTS* <sup>179</sup>

<sup>173</sup> ESG 1.2. See [http://ecahe.eu/w/index.php/Framework\\_for\\_Qualifications\\_of\\_the\\_European\\_Higher\\_Education\\_Area#Source](http://ecahe.eu/w/index.php/Framework_for_Qualifications_of_the_European_Higher_Education_Area#Source) and also <https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/content/descriptors-page>

<sup>174</sup> See section 2.3.1 in *Identity, Activities and Organisation*. For a description of the programme levels at which the ECTE provides accreditation and certification of comparability, see Appendix A

<sup>175</sup> SG-GETE B5.1

<sup>176</sup> ESG 1.2. See *Guidelines for Programme Design and Using ECTS* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>177</sup> See Appendix A

<sup>178</sup> SG-GETE B5.2. For further information on comparability and equivalence of international credit systems, see Section 2.3 of *Guidelines for Programme Design and Using ECTS* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>179</sup> See [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

**SOURCES:**

SG-GETE B5; ESG 1.2; EAAA Manual 6<sup>th</sup> Edition

## B.6 – Quality assurance of institutions

### PROGRAMMES OPERATE IN INSTITUTIONS THAT SATISFY ESG QUALITY STANDARDS

ESG standards 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.9 are covered above in Standards B1-B5. ESG standards 1.1, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8 and 1.10 are covered in this Standard B6.

#### B.6.1 – POLICY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

Institutions 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.<sup>180</sup>

Programme accreditation focuses in particular on the following aspects:

- Institutions have quality assurance policies that include programme development and delivery.
- Quality assurance policies reflect the relationship between learning and teaching and research activities.
- Quality assurance policies include issues of academic integrity and academic fraud.

Further aspects are implemented in institutional accreditation.

#### B.6.2 – TEACHING STAFF

Institutions assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.<sup>181</sup>

Programme accreditation focuses in particular on the following aspects:

- Institutions monitor the quality of their educational staff and offer development opportunities.
- Programmes embrace student-centred learning practices.
- Institutions encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies.

Further aspects are implemented in institutional accreditation.

#### B.6.3 – LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

Institutions have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.<sup>182</sup>

Programme accreditation focuses in particular on the following aspects:

- Institutions support their programmes with learning resources that are fit for purpose.
- Institutions offer a range of student services to adequately support learning.

Further aspects are implemented in institutional accreditation.

#### B.6.4 – INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Institutions ensure that they collect, analyse, and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> ESG 1.1

<sup>181</sup> ESG 1.5

<sup>182</sup> ESG 1.6

<sup>183</sup> ESG 1.7

Programme accreditation focuses in particular on the following aspects:

- Information on programmes is collected, analysed and used for their management, evaluation and improvement.
- Institutions involve both students and staff in managing programme information.

Further aspects are implemented in institutional accreditation.

#### **B.6.5 – PUBLIC INFORMATION**

Institutions publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.<sup>184</sup>

Programme accreditation focuses in particular on the following aspects:

- Institutions publish information about their programmes which includes selection criteria, intended learning outcomes, qualifications, teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, pass rates, learning opportunities available and graduate employment information.

Further aspects are implemented in institutional accreditation.

#### **B.6.6 – CYCLICAL EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Institutions undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.<sup>185</sup>

Programme accreditation focuses in particular on the following aspects:

- Institutions and programmes undergo a cyclical quality assurance review.

Further aspects are implemented in institutional accreditation.

#### **SOURCES:**

ESG 1.1, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.10; *Standards and Guidelines* for ECTE accreditation Part A.

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<sup>184</sup> ESG 1.8

<sup>185</sup> ESG 1.10

# APPENDIX A –ECTE CERTIFICATION FRAMEWORK

This appendix provides the certification framework within which the ECTE provides accreditation of programmes offered by higher education institutions (HEIs) and alternative providers of higher education (APs).<sup>186</sup>

The definitions of levels and synopses of standards are mainly based on the *European Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EQF)*<sup>187</sup> that provides a comprehensive map of all types and levels of qualifications in Europe. The EQF is a learning outcomes-based framework that serves as a translation tool between different frameworks. To ensure that qualifications are aligned with the typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with higher education qualifications, the *Overarching Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA)* is also referenced and the outcomes for each level match the typical expectations of the Short Cycle, First Cycle and Second Cycle in the QF-EHEA (formerly Dublin Descriptors).<sup>188</sup>

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)	60-120	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).<sup>189</sup>

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)*<sup>190</sup> and to the English nomenclature used in the *ICETE Qualification Comparability Framework*<sup>191</sup>.

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.

## RESOURCES<sup>192</sup>

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

<sup>186</sup> See more about ECTE Accreditation and institutional status <http://ecte.eu/ecte-accreditation/ecte-accreditation-and-institutional-status/>

<sup>187</sup> <https://europa.eu/europass/en/european-qualifications-framework-efq>

<sup>188</sup> [http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial\\_declarations/EHEAParis2018\\_Communique\\_AppendixIII\\_952778.pdf](http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/EHEAParis2018_Communique_AppendixIII_952778.pdf)

<sup>189</sup> 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](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.

<sup>190</sup> <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>

<sup>191</sup> <https://icete.info/icete-qualification-comparability-framework/>

<sup>192</sup> See [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://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 be oriented toward fields of research and/or of practice and can give transfer into EQF Level 6/First Cycle programmes. They can consist in 10-120 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 less than 120 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 (<120 ECTS)
QF-EHEA	Short cycle (120 ECTS). Partial Short Cycle (<120 ECTS)
ECTS Credits	10-120
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 <120 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. <sup>193</sup>
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’.

<sup>193</sup> 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. <sup>194</sup>
ISCED level	Level 7 - Master level or equivalent (research-oriented programmes: category 74; practice-oriented programmes: category 75) < 60 ECTS = category 761

<sup>194</sup> See *Guidelines in Distinguishing Research and Practice Oriented Programmes*

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

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](mailto:office@ecte.eu) Website: [www.ecte.eu](http://www.ecte.eu)

As a subject-specific QA agency, the ECTE specialises in level certification for higher education institutions (HEIs) and alternative providers (APs) with programmes of theology at EQF levels 5-7. The ECTE aims to determine the quality and level of learning opportunities but does not determine the status of institutions nor their ability to award formal degrees.<sup>195</sup>

The definitions of levels and synopses of standards are mainly based on the *European Qualifications Framework* for Higher Education (EQF)<sup>196</sup> that provides a comprehensive map of all types and levels of qualifications in Europe. The EQF is a learning outcomes-based framework that serves as a translation tool between different frameworks<sup>197</sup>. To ensure that qualifications are aligned with the typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with higher education qualifications, references are included to the revised overarching framework of qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) with its descriptors according to cycles<sup>198</sup> as formulated in the Paris Declaration (2018). The tables also indicate credits (ECTS<sup>199</sup>), duration (FTE) and both EQF and QF-EHEA outcomes for each level.

In order to provide comparability to contexts outside of Europe, references are also included to the UNESCO *International Standard Classification of Education* (ISCED 2011)<sup>200</sup> and to the international nomenclature (in English) that used in the *ICETE Qualification Comparability Framework*<sup>201</sup>.

Each accredited institution should identify and use appropriate qualification nomenclatures within their respective national legal frameworks, in the language of delivery. The Diploma Supplement should be used to further describe the qualification within the accredited level.

## RESOURCES<sup>202</sup>

- *Guidelines for Programme Design and Using ECTS*
- *Guidelines for Alternative Providers and Qualification Nomenclature*
- *Guidelines in Distinguishing Research and Practice Oriented Programmes*
- *Guidelines for the Diploma Supplement*

<sup>195</sup> Qualifications by HEIs can be nationally recognized as degrees. Qualifications by APs are not nationally recognized as degrees, even if they offer the same learning opportunities.

<sup>196</sup> See here for a general description of the EQF <https://europa.eu/europass/en/european-qualifications-framework-eqf>

<sup>197</sup> See here for a description of the 8 EQF levels: <https://europa.eu/europass/en/description-eight-eqf-levels>

<sup>198</sup> [http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial\\_declarations/EHEAParis2018\\_Communique\\_AppendixIII\\_952778.pdf](http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/EHEAParis2018_Communique_AppendixIII_952778.pdf). See here for a general presentation of the QF-EHEA <http://ehea.info/page-qualification-frameworks>

<sup>199</sup> The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is used in all ECTE accreditation to quantify programmes at each level. One ECTS = roughly 25-30 hours of learning and 60 ECTS = one year of full-time learning.

<sup>200</sup> <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>

<sup>201</sup> See <https://icete.info/icete-qualification-comparability-framework/>. The English terms, such as ‘certificate’, ‘diploma’, ‘bachelor’ and ‘master’, that are used in this international framework are descriptive and comparative of learning levels, but do not represent ECTE formal nomenclature nor do they indicate the formal status of a degree. The *ICETE Qualification Comparability Framework* specifies that its levels ‘... refer to the quality and level of learning opportunities but do not determine the status of institutions nor their ability to award formal degrees. This is in recognition that the global situation of higher education is complex and that not all providers of theological education are in a place to obtain formal recognition or the ability to award degree in their local contexts.’ For more information on international nomenclature and credit conversion, see Section 2.3 of *Guidelines for Programme Design and Using ECTS* [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

<sup>202</sup> See [www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines](http://www.ecte.eu/qa/guidelines)

## EQF Level 5

### DEFINITION

At EQF Level 5, the ECTE certifies short, higher education learning opportunities 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 be oriented toward fields of research and/or of practice and can give transfer into EQF Level 6 programmes or give directly access to the profession. They can consist in 10-120 ECTS credits and up to two full-time academic years (or equivalent).

Programmes of 120 ECTS, are considered full qualifications at Level 5, corresponding to a ‘short-cycle’ qualification in the QF-EHEA. In the ICETE Framework these programmes are referred to as ‘Diplomas’.

Programmes of less than 120 ECTS, are considered as *partial* qualifications at Level 5. In the ICETE Framework these programmes are referred to as ‘Certificates’ if consisting of at least 60 ECTS.

### SYNOPSIS

<b>EQF level</b>	EQF Level 5 <120 ECTS = partial at Level 5
<b>QF-EHEA level</b>	Short cycle (120 ECTS)
<b>ECTS Credits</b>	10-120
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<p><b>EQF outcomes:</b> Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within the field of theology (work or study) and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge; a comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems; responsibility and autonomy to exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; ability to review and develop performance of self and others.</p> <p><b>QF-EHEA outcomes for the short cycle:</b> 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.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	Flexibility for shorter programmes For 60 credits = one-year For 120 credits = two years
<b>ISCED level</b>	Level 5, category 544 <120 ECTS = category 541
<b>ICETE level</b>	The level of these programmes is described as ‘Certificate’ for shorter programmes (60 ECTS) and as ‘Diploma’ for longer programmes (120 ECTS).

## EQF Level 6

### DEFINITION

At EQF Level 6, the ECTE certifies higher education learning opportunities 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 practice<sup>203</sup> and/or of research<sup>204</sup> and can give transfer into EQF Level 7 programmes or give directly access to the profession. They should normally consist of 180-240 ECTS credits and last three-four years of full-time study (or equivalent).

For these programmes, EQF and ISCED comparability can be established at Level 6, corresponding to a 'first cycle' qualification in the QF-EHEA. In the ICETE Framework these programmes are referred to as 'Bachelor' level programmes.

### SYNOPSIS

<b>EQF level</b>	EQF Level 6
<b>QF-EHEA level</b>	First cycle
<b>ECTS Credits</b>	180-240
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<p><b>EQF outcomes:</b> Advanced knowledge within the field of theology (work or study), with a focus on professional qualification or preparation for further study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles; advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in the field of theology (work or study); responsibility and autonomy to manage complex professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts; ability to take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups.</p> <p><b>QF-EHEA outcomes for the first cycle:</b> 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.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	Three to four years (full-time).
<b>ISCED level</b>	Level 6 – Bachelor level or equivalent (research-oriented programmes: category 64; practice-oriented programmes: category 65).
<b>ICETE level</b>	The level of these programmes is described as 'Bachelor'.

<sup>203</sup> Practice-oriented programmes place a greater emphasis on preparation for work, practical theology, behavioural sciences as applied to ministry, missiology and ministry components. Practice-oriented programmes offer advanced knowledge in the field of theology and critical skills as the basis for professional practice. They also generally place a greater emphasis on practical engagement and advanced problem-solving skills related to the field of work. Developing advanced professional skills and practical application of knowledge are given priority. Normally, an important element of supervised practice and the completion of a final project or practice-related thesis is included. This type of programme usually pursues the objective of qualifying for immediate professional employability. It corresponds to Category 65 of ISCED Level 6: 'professional' Bachelor programmes.

<sup>204</sup> Research-oriented programmes place a greater emphasis on the study of theology, academic skills, exegesis, research and biblical languages. Research-oriented programmes aim at acquiring comprehensive knowledge and critical skills in the field of theology as the basis for further research. They also generally place a greater emphasis on academic engagement and advanced problem-solving skills related to the field of study. Normally, they include a basic knowledge of the Biblical languages and the preparation of a major final thesis. The programme profile usually qualifies for access to a consecutive second degree in the field of theology. It corresponds to Category 64 of ISCED Level 6: 'academic' Bachelor programmes.

## EQF Level 7

### DEFINITION

At EQF Level 7, the ECTE certifies higher education programmes aimed at building specialised knowledge, critical understanding and specialised skills in the field of theology. These programmes can be oriented toward fields of practice<sup>205</sup> and/or of research.<sup>206</sup> Depending on the programme, they can give transfer into further EQF Level 7 programmes or EQF Level 8 programmes or give directly access to the profession. They can consist in 10-180 ECTS credits and normally up to two-three full-time academic years (or equivalent) beyond the completion of Level 6. These programmes may also be consecutive (i.e. building on Level 6 theological studies) or non-consecutive (i.e. designed for graduates of other fields of studies).

For programmes between 90-180 ECTS, EQF and ISCED 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 of less than 60 ECTS are considered as *partial* qualifications at Level 7. In the ICETE Framework, these shorter programmes are referred to as 'Postgraduate Certificates'.

### SYNOPSIS

<b>EQF level</b>	EQF Level 7 <60 ECTS = partial at Level 7
<b>QF-EHEA level</b>	Second cycle (90-180 ECTS), with a minimum of 60 credits at the level of the 2nd cycle
<b>ECTS Credits</b>	10-180
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<p><b>EQF outcomes:</b> Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in the field of theology (work or study), as the basis for original thinking and/or research; critical awareness of knowledge issues in theology and at the interface with other fields; specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields; responsibility and autonomy to manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches; ability to take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams.</p> <p><b>QF-EHEA outcomes for the second cycle:</b> 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.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	Flexibility for shorter programmes.

<sup>205</sup> Practice-oriented programmes place greater emphasis on fields of work and procedures featuring an emphasis on developing professional skills. Practice-oriented programmes offer highly specialised knowledge in the field of work as the basis for professional occupation. They generally place a greater emphasis on professional practice and specialised problem-solving skills that will develop new procedures. This type of programme corresponds to Category 75 of ISCED Level 7: 'professional' master programmes.

<sup>206</sup> Research-oriented programmes place a greater emphasis on fields of study and knowledge featuring an emphasis on advanced studies in theology and research skills. Research-oriented programmes offer highly specialised knowledge in the field of study as the basis for original thinking and/or research. They generally place a greater emphasis on specialised problem-solving skills that will develop new knowledge and normally include the preparation of a major final thesis. This type of programme corresponds to Category 74 of ISCED Level 7: 'academic' master programmes.

Normally up to 2-3 years (full-time).

**ISCED level**

Level 7 - Master level or equivalent  
< 60 ECTS = category 761

**ICETE level**

The level of these programmes is described as 'Master'. The term 'Postgraduate certificate' is used for shorter programmes (=<60 ECTS).

These *Standards and Guidelines* for ECTE Accreditation have been approved by the ECTE General Assembly, 30 November 2019

This revised Certification Framework was approved 5 May 2022 and included in Appendix A

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](mailto:office@ecte.eu) Website: [www.ecte.eu](http://www.ecte.eu)