

# REVIEW REPORT

International School of Theology and Leadership (ISTL), Tirana  
Related to a visit for first review;  
November 7-9, 2022

European Council for  
Theological Education

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## A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International School of Theology and Leadership (ISTL) in Tirana, Albania, is an Alternative Provider of Higher Theological Education. The purpose of the review is for the initial accreditation of the institution and one programme delivered on site and in a blended manner, comparable to an EQF level 6 (First Cycle) programme (180 ECTS credits). The practice-oriented programme is in line with the relevant framework of higher education: the EQF (European Qualifications Framework) and QF-EHEA (Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area). The programme is referred to as *Programi Bachelor* in the local language. The school has ascertained that it is permitted under local law to use this nomenclature for their programme.

This report relates to a process, including an on-site visit, for the purpose of accrediting the institution (ISTL) in Tirana, Albania, and one EQF Level 6 (First Cycle Programme) based on the European Council for Theological Education (ECTE)'s current *Standards and Guidelines*, in the form of an institutional and programme review. It finds the school highly committed in planning to achieve its intentions in theological education and suggests to the ECTE Council eight special commendations among other comments on good practice, nine recommendations, and eleven requirements prior to accreditation.

## B. INTRODUCTION TO THE REVIEW

ISTL with its programme is seeking accreditation with ECTE for the first time. The SER process has given the school the opportunity to go through ECTE's Standards & Guidelines and conduct a self-evaluation on how ISTL is providing theological education.

The SER was written in English though the primary language of the institution is Albanian. The programme is delivered in Albanian and English. The core part of the professors are English speakers, and translation to Albanian is offered.

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### Programme

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Name in the language of delivery	ECTS-Points	EQF Level	ISCED	ICETE-level	Delivery mode
PROGRAMI BACHELOR	180 ECTS	Level 6 practice-oriented	65	Bachelor	On site Blended Learning

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## The Visiting team

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The review was authorised by Carmen Crouse, Accreditation Director (AD), in April 2022. It was conducted by a Visitation Evaluation Team (VET) put together by the Review Secretary and approved by the ECTE Accreditation Commission. The team consisted of peer experts, a student VET member and the Review Secretary, viz;

Dr. Patrick Mitchel Team Leader

Dr. Göran Janzon, Team Member

Mrs. Katharina Penner, Team Member

Mrs. Grace Al-Zoughbi, Student Representative<sup>1</sup> and Review Secretary (RS)

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## Visit Arrangements

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The SER was written in English following the template set out in the ECTE [Guidelines for Producing Self-Evaluation Reports](#). It addressed each area of the relevant standards competently and sufficiently. Other supporting documents were also well constructed and helpful.

The [Standards and Guidelines](#) form the basis of this report. Since delivery of the programmes included online elements, the ECTE [Guidelines for Online and Distance Education](#) also applied.

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

1. The RS sent the SER, accompanying documents, and all previous correspondence with the school, to all VET members using Google Drive links.
2. VET members communicated the results of their initial reading of the documents to the team leader and RS via Google doc sheet.
3. The Internal Review Coordinator (IRC) of the school was identified.
4. Two WhatsApp groups were set up, one internally for the VET members for fast communication and another one with the school.
5. In conjunction with the VET leader, the IRC organised and agreed to a programme for the visit.
6. A request for additional documents was sent to the IRC and were received in a prompt manner.
7. An initial pre-visit meeting of the VET took place.
8. A working report document was set up using Google Docs for members of the team to access and modify which followed the structure of the interim report form pertaining to the current standards and protocol of ECTE. This was filled out and commented on by all members of the VET, the RS and the AD, as the visit progressed in preparation for the interim report-writing on the last day of the visit.

The team was very warmly received by the leadership and the staff to the school. The school provided all means needed for an effective evaluation of the academic work and communal life of the institution. From the team's point of view, the documentation submitted, and discussions held were transparent. In addition to the SER and its accompanying documents, additional documents were submitted to the VET during the visit as the team sought further, more detailed, information in various areas. The totality of the documentation provided a good summary of the school's current state and reflected positive development in many areas. The review took place over three days. The visit began on Monday morning 7<sup>th</sup> November and concluded with meetings Wednesday evening 9<sup>th</sup> November. It followed a modified version of the schedule proposed in the protocol for on-site visits.

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the late withdrawal of the student representative, Grace Al-Zoughbi took on a double role of a Review Secretary and a student representative in this visit.

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## Visit Schedule

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Meetings with the various stakeholders occurred as follows, at times including all the VET and other times the VET split up and attended different meetings. The team had various meetings with stakeholders that included:<sup>2</sup>

- Leadership of ISTL
- Staff members
- Academic Dean
- Faculty
- ISTL Board members
- Finance Officer
- Students
- Person responsible for student formation
- Church leaders
- Alumni
- People responsible for practicum
- Placement and internship leaders
- Employers

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<sup>2</sup> Please see addendum 1 for the full schedule.

## C. INTRODUCTION TO THE INSTITUTION AND PROGRAMMES

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### General Description of Institution and Programmes

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ISTL is a training centre for theology, counselling, and leadership in Tirana, Albania. In the words of the school: 'ISTL is committed to the training and promotion of new leaders. Young people are empowered and equipped for full-time service in the Kingdom of God. Theological expertise, personality development, and the fire for evangelism go hand in hand at ISTL. The holistic endeavour of developing leaders for substantial service is built on the key values of Integrity, Servant Leadership, Theological Foundation, and Learning Christ-Centred Life.' P.8 SER

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### Mission statement

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**Mission:** ISTL's mission is to equip and develop future generations of Christian leaders through strategic and innovative Bible education.

**Vision:** That every church in Albania, region, and beyond will have effective leaders that will impact their churches, cultures, and communities for Christ.

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### History

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The school describes its history this way:

'ISTL is now at the beginning of its 14th school year since its start in September 2008. Initially, it was intended as a local church educational program in order to equip its own members for leadership and church planting. Yet, soon after its early developing months, several pastors joined in participation as they saw the need for their own church members to be equipped for ministry. At first, mostly on a voluntary basis, some pastors and missionaries offered to teach, mentor, and consult. As a result, ISTL has progressively grown beyond denominational and national borders. The school has trained students from over 40 different denominations and independent churches primarily from Albania, but it has also had the privilege to receive students from the countries of Kosovo, Macedonia, the Philippines, and Ireland as well as other countries. This way ISTL has truly become an international and interdenominational leadership Bible school and a dynamic voice in reaching and discipling the Balkans. Many of its students are already pastors and leaders, whereas the majority of the remaining students have started ministries and planted churches while studying and being mentored at the school. We have been in awe of God's favor being able to see over 80 churches planted and numerous ministries within some churches.' SER p.3.

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## Facilities

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ISTL owns the first floor of a building where its offices are based. On the second floor are the facilities of a church that the school rents. Each classroom has sufficient tools for offering the teaching including the proper technology. ISTL has its library in its facility as well. The school is only a short walk from the National Library of Albania.

ISTL provides student accommodation in collaboration with a Christian Guest House close to its facilities. All services are in accordance with the local standards. The facilities are in the centre of Tirana, easily accessible by all ways of transport. The library contains more than 6000 titles in English and Albanian. The books are listed in *All My Books* on the internet and are accessible to all students and alumni as well as local pastors, church leaders, and students at other Bible schools upon request (Adapted from the SER. p.13).



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## Governance

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ISTL has clear organisational Structure. The organisational chart of the institution is as follows:



The board of directors is comprised of five people from Canada, Switzerland, Albania, England, and USA.

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## Educational and non-educational Staff

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ISTL has the following educational and non-educational staff:

- Executive Director and Academic Dean
- Executive Assistant Director, Office Manager, and Registrar
- Course Coordinator, Teacher Assistant, and Book Translator
- Course Coordinator and Teacher Assistant
- Course Coordinator, Teacher Assistant, and Communications
- Finances
- Director of Media and Worship
- Students' Life Coordinator and Moodle Consultant
- Librarian Assistant
- Graphic Design and Photographer
- Website Maintenance
- Website and Social Media Manager

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## Faculty

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The educational staff at ISTL comprises 24 teachers and three teaching assistants. One faculty and three teaching assistants are full-time educational staff and paid by the school. Six teachers who live in Albania and are in ministry elsewhere are committed to teach at ISTL three or four times per academic year. All others are non-salaried volunteers and mission staff. There are no part time staff members. The proportion between educational staff/faculty and mission staff is 50%: 50%.

The faculty have adequate qualifications for the level of teaching.

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## Budget

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ISTL's main source of funding comes through several consistent local and international partners that support the mission and vision of the school and its students. The approximate budget size for ISTL is 140,000 euro. The school presented balanced budgets for the last three years. Accounts are externally audited.

The financial statements have been compiled by the studio "EA Financial Services" registered in the branch of Taxation, Tirana with [NUIS L51512007L](#). This agency ensures that everything is appropriately documented. They maintain all the accounting procedures by qualified personnel.



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## Programmes and Delivery Modes

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For its EQF level 6 programme, ISTL offers ten courses per academic year, delivered in a blended mode including an intensive one week (15 contact hours) on-site teaching portion per subject. Assignments and readings are made available to students on the VLE.

ISTL delivers the programmes in a blended/hybrid delivery. ISTL has students who attend the classes at the central facility, satellite study centres, and simultaneously attend online through Zoom from distant cities. The interaction during the teaching segments is the same so that all students can actively participate in lectures.

ISTL operates through satellite study centres. It has one central campus located in Tirana and three satellite centres located in Korça, Pogradec and Katjel. A fourth centre is located in Kosovo. They are dependent on and coordinated by the central campus in Tirana with a designated facilitator per centre. Further, all the centres are located in local churches where current students or alumni serves as leaders and members. The staff regularly visits the centres, organises retreats and conferences with the purpose of strengthening ISTL community life.

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## Student numbers

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ISTL reported 118 students at the time of the site visit.

	<b>Breakdown of age groups</b>	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>Graduates</b>
2020 (on campus)	From age 19 to 30, 35% of students Age 31 to 50, 58 % of students Age 51-65, 7% of students (50% M, 50%F)	47	Graduation Delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, number of graduates 12.
2021 (20% on campus, 80% online)	From age 19 to 30, 40% of students Age 31 to 50, 55 % of students Age 51 to 65, 5 % of students (55% Female, 45% male)	116	31 Graduates (2020-2021 Cohort)
2022 (40% on campus, 60% online)	From age 19 to 30, 40% of students Age 31 to 50, 55 % of students Age 51 to 65, 5 % of students (55% Female, 45% Male)	118	2022-2023 cohort will graduate on October 1, 2023. (30 graduates plus 12 whose graduation was delayed)

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## How the school prepared for the review

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The school describes the process and the people involved as follows: ISTL had several staff meetings; designated staff retreats, board retreats and personal assignments to begin developing the SER. The expectation for the institutional site visit is that the Visiting Evaluation Team (VET) can evaluate the current state and establish what are the strengths and challenges and with their help determine a roadmap to meet the required standards of ECTE for the accreditation.

## D. Findings of the review

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### Description of the extent of the review

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This report relates to a Review of the International School of Theology and Leadership (ISTL) with a view to accreditation. The Review includes accreditation of the institution and its level 6 (first cycle) programme.

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### Standards relating to the Institution

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#### STANDARD A.1: - Identity and Purpose

INSTITUTIONS HAVE CLEARLY FORMULATED STATEMENTS OF IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

Standards examined	A.1.1 identity, A.1.2 Legal and Fiscal status, A.1.3 Vision and Mission, A.1.4 Public information.
Evidence of Compliance	SER A.1. Meetings with leaders, faculty, stakeholders and students of the school, examination of ancillary documents, in particular:  A.1.1 Statement of Faith  A.1.2 Law Nr9228 Date 29.04.2004
Analysis	<p>ISTL understands itself as an interdenominational evangelical theological institution; they endorse the faith statement of the European Evangelical Alliance and train students in that framework. Their core values – Integrity, Servant leadership, Christ-centred life - as a welcome supplement to the statement of faith, influence the school’s operation, the selection of students, are part of course contents, professors and staff are expected to model them (A2.2). Biblical/theological grounding is evident in the programme and also part of the mission statement.</p> <p>Most ECTE values - though not explicitly mentioned/listed as such - are fully reflected, some (3,7,8) will be discussed in relation to respective standards.</p> <p>ISTL has appropriate legal status as a non-for-profit foundation registered in the court of Tirana since 2017, with many provisions conducive to theological education. ISTL follows national fiscal regulations; the financial statements and annual audits are prepared by an outside professional firm in accordance with the Albanian accounting and tax legislation. They understand that the ECTE accreditation establishes international comparability, quality assurance</p>

	<p>and development, and that it is not a substitute for national accreditation.</p> <p>ISTL has clear vision and mission statements that reflect its identity, are owned by its internal and external stakeholders, and which are displayed on its website. The vision and mission are matched by strategic planning and budget operations.</p> <p>ISTL displays information in English and Albanian publicly for promotion and recruitment, including information on identity, activities and programmes, core values, board of directors, staff, and professors. Most of it is updated, all information is accessible and designed attractively. ISTL is present on social media (Instagram and FB).</p> <p>Programme information for current students includes a list of courses, teaching schedule (not yet for fall semester 2022), access to Moodle. No public information is available on selection criteria, learning outcomes and graduate profiles (could, for example, include how graduates will be able to serve during and after training), teaching and learning procedures, delivery mode, assessment procedures, pass rates, costs etc. ISTL understands that they will need to work on it.</p>
<p>Commendations, recommendations, requirements</p>	<p><b>1 Commendation, 1 Recommendation</b></p> <p><b>Commendation:</b> The VET commends the good quality work ISTL has invested in Media and public information.</p> <p><b>Recommendation (A.1.4):</b> The VET recommends ISTL to expand its public information to include further details about, for example, the programme, learning outcomes, connectivity requirements and assessment procedures.</p>
<p>Panel conclusion</p>	<p>Substantial Compliance</p>

## A.2 - Governance and Quality Assurance

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

Standards examined	A.2.1 Governance, A.2.2 Leadership and Management, A.2.3 Decision-making structures, A.2.4 strategic planning, A.2.5 Internal Quality Assurance procedures, A.2.6 Cyclical External Quality Assurance
Evidence of Compliance	<p>SER A.2 Meetings with leaders, faculty, stakeholders and students of the school, examination of ancillary documents, in particular:</p> <p>A.2.2 Job Description</p> <p>A.2.4 Strategy Summary</p> <p>A.2.4 Capital Campaign Overview</p> <p>A.2.5 Internal Regulation</p>
Analysis	<p>ISTL has an appropriate board governance and though the school is rather young there is evidence of stability and sustainability.</p> <p>ISTL has had effective leadership in the person of its founder since its foundation. In this phase of establishment, the leadership has successively involved the staff in the management of the growing institution. However, the VET finds, not least because of the process towards accreditation, that it is necessary to distinguish the role of a dean/director for academic affairs from the role of the executive director.</p> <p>There is strategic planning in the board and on the executive level. However, there is only a short version of a Strategic Plan document in written form from 2020 after demand from potential donors was voiced.</p> <p>ISTL has an internal culture of integrity, self-assessment, and continual quality development as well as a written general policy for internal quality assurance.</p> <p>The financial statements are compiled year by year by “EA Financial Services”. Regarding the academic structures and programmes, ISTL has so far not been the object of a cyclical external quality assurance</p> <p>As a growing institution ISTL has put in place a generally good governance structure and quality assurance mechanisms, but these still need to be strengthened, structured, and formalized according to the ECTE Standards.</p>
Commendations, recommendations, requirements	<p><b>2 Recommendations and 2 Requirements</b></p> <p><b><u>Recommendation A.2.1:</u></b> The VET recommends that the ISTL board develop a “governing board handbook” to include appropriate governance policies.</p>

	<p><b><u>Recommendation A.2.1:</u></b> The VET recommends that the board in future recruitment of board members assures an increase of stakeholder representation by Albanian nationals and provides venues for input in decision-making by the student body related to academic and community life.</p> <p><b><u>Requirement: (A.2.2)</u></b> The VET requires that ISTL establishes a leadership and management structure which separates and distinguishes overall leadership of the institution from educational management (many institutions refer to these positions as President/Rector and Academic Dean).</p> <p><b><u>Requirement (A.2.4):</u></b> The VET requires that a more comprehensive Strategic Plan be worked out (cf SG-GETE A2.4) and approved by the board, including for each element when, how and by whom it should be realized.</p> <p><b><u>Requirement (A.2.5)</u></b> The VET requires that the existing document be revised and expanded according to the standards for “Internal quality assurance policies and procedures” (cf SG-GETE A2.5. and ESG 1.1).</p>
Panel conclusion	Non-Compliance

### A.3 – Human Resources

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

Standards examined	A.3.1 Human Resources; A.3.2 Non-Educational Staff; A.3.3 Educational Staff; A.3.4 HR Policies and procedures.
Evidence of Compliance	SER A.3 Meetings with leaders, faculty, stakeholders and students of the school, examination of ancillary documents, in particular: A.3.3 Agreement with TCMI
Analysis	<p>The school values its personnel as demonstrated by the strong ethos of mutual respect, with input by faculty and non-educational staff, men and women, encouraged and valued. Staff feel supported in their roles. Recent steps have been taken to increase the staff team and diversify workloads in management, IT, social media, and publicity. With the growth of the school, it is clear that there is a need for an Academic Director or Dean to help ensure sustainability and realistic workloads, especially for the Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director. (See A.2.2)</p> <p>The non-educational staff are adequately qualified, with relevant experience - and are all involved in the wider educational process. The school tends to appoint people who are former or current graduates and who are committed to the vision, mission, and values of ISTL. Annual staff reviews are in place alongside an open and flexible</p>

	<p>approach to personnel development albeit without strategic plans for staff development. Staff feel supported and valued.</p> <p>Educational staff comprise of 24 teachers (all adjuncts with one exception) and three teacher assistants. Six teachers are Albanian with graduate degrees in their teaching areas - one of whom is on ISTL staff (the Executive Director). The other teachers are from North America, Australia, and Europe. Teachers are experienced and well qualified in a variety of contexts (catalogue lists teachers but full CVs were not provided). All teachers are committed to the vision, mission, and ethos of ISTL and are adequately qualified to teach at EQF level 6.</p> <p>There are three Albanian teaching assistants who play an important role in the administration, delivery, assessment, and formative learning of each course. Each has either completed or is completing a Master of Arts from TCM International Institute.</p> <p>A high reliance on adjunct teachers enables the school to deliver over 30 courses at EQF level 6. It also brings particular challenges in ensuring that adjuncts are familiar with and practice student-centred learning and ECTE standards around setting assessments, learning outcomes and ECTS credits. Having said that, local educational staff who are more familiar with the context would help reduce dependence on long-distance adjunct teachers, who can become unavailable to teach courses for various reasons.</p> <p>Most, if not all, non-national adjuncts teach in English which requires translation in class and means that the teaching assistants mark the papers in Albanian with a suggested grading criteria/rubric by the teacher. The blended delivery method with one-week on campus portions means that most teachers are less available to participate in the regular activities and worship of the school, and in developing personal involvement in the physical and spiritual welfare of students. The use of WhatsApp groups, email, and an open communication ethos, help to facilitate relational learning outside of class. This structure means that the teaching assistants play a key role in student engagement both inside and outside of class.</p> <p>ISTL is responsible for the equipping and support of their educational staff. For example, the executive director is supported to begin his PhD studies.</p> <p>While in English, the ICETE Academy is a (free) and valuable resource for the teaching faculty, especially around teaching and learning. It could be a helpful resource for professional development of the faculty and especially teaching assistants if they are to become more directly engaged in teaching.</p> <p>The school has been experiencing significant growth and change. There is evident progress being made on developing HR policies and procedures. However, work lies ahead in publishing faculty and staff handbooks. See A.4.4 below.</p>
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	<p>The school relies on a number of volunteers. Regional facilitators are particularly important given the development of remote teaching hubs.</p> <p>The staff team is the School's primary asset. Staff and volunteers work hard and efficiently and are to be commended for their passion and enthusiasm.</p>
Commendations, recommendations, requirements	<p><b>1 Commendation, 3 Recommendations</b></p> <p><b>Commendation:</b> The VET commends the teaching assistance system developed by the school and the quality work that is being done by the teaching assistant team.</p> <p><b>Recommendation (Standard A.3.3):</b> The VET recommends that the school continues to invest in the professional development of their teaching assistants, with the aim of increasing the number of Albanian teachers and reducing reliance on English translation / non-nationals.</p> <p><b>Recommendation (Standard A.3.3):</b> The VET recommends that the school develop a strategy for increasing the numbers of full-time or part-time ISTL Albanian educational staff versus international adjuncts.</p> <p><b>Recommendation (Standard A.3.4)</b> The VET recommends that the school, as part of the overall Strategy Plan, consider a longer-term strategy for training and supporting volunteers, specifically in terms of role descriptions, volunteer policy, and whether personnel who fulfil key roles in the delivery of course content should be remunerated.</p>
Panel conclusion	Substantial Compliance

#### A.4 - Community and Context

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

Standards examined	A.4.1 Learning Community; A.4.2 Stakeholder Community; A.4.3 Civil Community; A.4.4 Communication.
Evidence of Compliance	SER A.4 Meetings with leaders, faculty, stakeholders and students of the school, examination of ancillary documents, in particular:  The school's catalogue.
Analysis	Community is important for ISTL and so the school encourages a healthy sense of community life among its members. This includes strategies to develop healthy relationships and providing student support systems. Student services include teaching assistants who are dedicated to help students with the successful completion of courses. Staff are involved in advising, mentoring the students,

	<p>discussing job opportunities, housing needs, organizing conferences and retreats for students. Satellite sites have facilitators.</p> <p>The school organises corporate worship and prayer thus nourishing a community where character is modelled. Students are involved in local churches including placement opportunities for students. Integration with local communities is happening through ministry placements. Provision is made for social and spiritual activities and pastoral care.</p> <p>ISTL considers community life as an important component of theological education and all students, members of staff and faculty are engaged within this community thus contributing to its mission and vision. ISTL is encouraged to further develop its ethical codes and disciplinary regulations and procedures as appropriate.</p> <p>ISTL serves the local community and is strategically building relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders that include alumni, churches and supporting ministry organizations including, provision of professors, acquisition of books and teachers exchange. ISTL alumni are active within the school's network although there is no formal alumni programme.</p> <p>Good work is being done by the school in terms of its relations to the civil community. The VET would like to further encourage ISTL to continue to build relationships with other higher educational institutions and expose students to this context through further collaborations.</p> <p>ISTL has done some work in terms of communication, however more deliberate work is required with relation to developing student handbooks, faculty handbooks, internal and external policies. The rudimentary catalogue is a helpful start.</p>
<p>Commendations, recommendations, requirements</p>	<p><b>2 Commendations, 1 Requirement</b></p> <p><b><u>Commendation:</u></b> The VET commends ISTL and its leadership for its efforts in seeking to serve and strengthen the local Christian faith communities and churches within its unique post-communist Albanian context.</p> <p><b><u>Commendation:</u></b> The VET commends the efforts ISTL has undertaken to engage with the civil community, particularly the ecumenical initiatives including the Catholic and Orthodox churches of Albania and academic institutions.</p> <p><b><u>Requirement: (Standard A4.4)</u></b> The VET requires that ISTL develops a solid and written communication structure allowing the dissemination of policies and documents as appropriate within its community.</p>
<p>Panel conclusion</p>	<p>Non-Compliance</p>



## A.5 - Educational Resources

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

Standards examined	A.5.1 Student services; A.5.2 Study facilities; A.5.3 Library/Learning Resource Centres; A.5.4 Information management; A.5.5 Information Technology; A.5.6 Virtual Learning Environment and Educational Resources.
Evidence of Compliance	SER A.5 Meetings with leaders, faculty, stakeholders and students of the school, examination of ancillary documents, in particular:  A.5.3 All My books  A.5.4 Grade Scale
Analysis	<p>Student services are readily accessible and fit for purpose. While there is no Student Dean or chaplain, student services are provided by the Executive Director Assistant (advising/mentoring students, discussing job opportunities, housing needs, organizing conferences/retreats for students/alumni), by the Teaching Assistants (any help related to succeeding in courses, including an Orientation at the beginning of studies, partly digital and video materials), by the IT specialist (technical support) and facilitators at satellite locations (distribute reading materials, ensure technology works, communicate with students and ensure attendance).</p> <p>ISTL offers a convenient hybrid evening mode of delivery that pays attention to special needs and a diversity of circumstances. From what it seems, students at satellite locations receive needed support of good quality.</p> <p>Study facilities are available, though it seems that limitations are quickly becoming obvious due to the growth in student numbers. Facilities are easily accessible, partly owned (offices) and partly rented (classrooms), accommodation for students is available in a nearby Christian Guest house.</p> <p>The Board is in the process of strategizing for a Capital campaign for construction of a new campus.</p> <p>There are four satellite centres located in churches in different cities that have all necessary technological equipment but no physical or digital library.</p> <p>The ca. 6 000 item library in Tirana is housed in several rooms, including 1 167 Albanian resources. The collection was classified according to the Dewey system by a volunteer library assistant, who has in the meantime left. The library grows primarily through donations of English books or the translation and production of Albanian books. There is a budget for the production of approximately five Albanian books annually. No other budget allocations for the library are available, though the library is slowly growing through gifts.</p>

	<p>English language books seem to cover all study foci, though recent publications are not available (the latest book was stated to be from 2006). As there are not enough Albanian books for each focus area, readers are sometimes created for courses. Many students seem to know and read English.</p> <p>The library serves students and alumni as well as pastors, local leaders and students of other Bible schools. Students at satellite locations have more challenges with obtaining needed books. A list of books held in the library is accessible on Moodle, awareness of its accessibility is raised during teaching weeks and through Facebook. There are plans to start developing a digital library of required textbooks. Digital reading materials are available in some Moodle courses. There are no periodicals.</p> <p>The students have access to the Albanian National Library, but the VET was unable to evaluate the collection related to the ISTL programme.</p> <p>Appropriate record-keeping is in place that includes partly print and partly digital student files, contact information, grades, transcripts, finances.</p> <p>Much information relevant for the educational process exists orally and is, therefore, less accessible for collection, analysis and use for working towards best practice and internal quality assurance. Information management with evidence-based decision-making is not quite coherent or purposeful. Examples of good information management include programme and course evaluation, assessments of course design and delivery, determination of key performance indicators, student population profiles, student satisfaction surveys, evaluation of learning resources and student support systems.</p> <p>IT technology has seen much improvement in the last 1-2 years with each classroom, including at satellite locations, being equipped with necessary technology for hybrid delivery. Some activities, including Moodle and website hosting and updates, are outsourced. Qualified personnel are servicing the technology, provide technical support to staff, faculty and site facilitators and are proactive in planning ahead for further successful implementation.</p> <p>Many courses are developed on Moodle, some in a more elaborate and attractive way, some providing a satisfactory minimum of information for the learners. Lectures are being recorded and all audio recordings are made available for personal study (participation in class is mandatory). Students see their progress and grades on Moodle. Technical and data protection security measures are in place, though not published as policy.</p> <p>Faculty receive technical and pedagogical support in use of Moodle from the IT and the teaching assistants, students also by one of the teaching assistants.</p>
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<p>Commendations, recommendations, requirements</p>	<p><b>1 Commendation, 2 Recommendation, 1 Requirement</b></p> <p><b><u>Commendation:</u></b> The VET commends ISTL for a rapid, creative, and effective response to circumstances during the COVID-19 Pandemic by adapting its delivery mode and investing in efficient technology to ensure continued delivery of its programme.</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation (Standard A.5.1):</u></b> The VET recommends that ISTL further articulates policies for student support in the student handbook. This will ensure that students know and understand policies and procedures related to their studies at ISTL.</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation (A.5.4):</u></b> The VET recommends that ISTL review their process of collecting, analysing and using information for the improvement of educational resources that support its mission (See examples above).</p> <p><b><u>Requirement (Standard A.5.3):</u></b> The VET requires that library development is included in the Strategic Plan with the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the collection be expanded with current publications in sufficient numbers (normally a total of approximately 10.000 appropriate volumes), some of which should be digital, as well as subject specific academic and semi-academic periodicals.</li> <li>- That the library be administered by a trained staff with access to continuing professional development.</li> <li>• That the library be arranged in easily accessible and adequate space for students, staff, and faculty (that the current multi-purpose use of rooms as offices and library space be separated).</li> </ul>
<p>Panel conclusion</p>	<p>Non-Compliance</p>

## A.6 - Finances and Sustainability

### INSTITUTIONS HAVE SUITABLE FINANCIAL POTENTIAL, PLANNING, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Standards examined	A.6.1 Financial Potential and Planning; A.6.2 Financial Policies and Procedures; A.6.3 Sustainability; A.6.4 Remuneration and Fees; A.6.5 Fundraising.
Evidence of Compliance	<p>SER A.6 Meetings with leaders, faculty, stakeholders and students of the school, examination of ancillary documents, in particular:</p> <p>A.6. Financial Manual</p> <p>A.6 Procurement Procedures</p> <p>A.6 Financial Statement</p> <p>A.6.Samples of Minutes of Directors Meetings (1 &amp;2).</p>
Analysis	<p>According to the draft budget for 2022, the total annual income is ca. €175,000. It appears that about 65% of this is donation income, mostly from ministry partnerships. Income from student fees is not listed as a separate figure. From the 2021 budget the school financial planning is reasonably prudent, operating a small surplus with reserves of ca. €58,000. This equates to about 4 months of operating reserves. There is evidence that fundraising and other income sources are appropriately allocated to operational costs and contingency funds.</p> <p>The school functions out of a local church building at very reasonable rent and it owns the ground floor housing its offices. The Board is ultimately responsible for the financial viability and planning of the institution. There is a summary of strategic fund-raising objectives, and the Board is working on a plan to support how these objectives are to be met. One objective includes the launch of a capital fundraising campaign to raise 4 million Euros to purchase a site and build a new facility within the next 2-4 years. A missing component is evidence of a comprehensive, approved business plan to match the school's summary objectives. Such a strategic plan is required to meet the ECTE Standards and Guidelines. Cf (Requirement /A.2.4)</p> <p>The school has clear written policies for establishing, approving, and revising budgets. Procedures are also in place to ensure that all spending is accounted for and appropriately authorized within budgetary provisions. Incoming funds are appropriately documented, allocated and acknowledged. Accounting procedures are maintained and audited at a State recognised professional level by qualified personnel contracted by the school for this purpose. Overall, the School demonstrates commendable practice in financial policies and procedures.</p> <p>The school demonstrates sustainability in its budget and financial management. After 14 years of operations there is a strong core team of staff, with low turnover in leadership and at Board level. Student enrolment is strong.</p>

	<p>The salaries and benefits of employed staff appear reasonably comparable to Albanian remuneration scales. Student fees are listed in a school’s Catalogue in English which was being developed at the time of the VET visit. They are not listed on the ISTL website (See Recommendation A.4.4 for communication). Fees are set in the context of the Albanian economy and student ability to pay.</p> <p>Given the context that many students have limited financial resources, the school operates a scholarship programme funded mostly by international organisations. As noted in A.6.1. such donations contribute a significant amount of the annual budget. Memorandums of Understanding between ISTL and such partner organisations would provide an additional measure of clarity for budgetary purposes.</p> <p>In public documents and ethos, there is a commendable sense of transparency, truthfulness, and gratefulness to God for his provision.</p>
Commendations, recommendations, requirements	<p><b><u>Recommendation (A.6.5)</u></b>: The VET recommends that the school produces a fundraising policy outlining its ethos and practice in a formalised way, i.e. in the Governance Handbook for the board.</p>
Panel conclusion	Substantial Compliance

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## Standards relating to the Programme

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### Standard: 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

Standards examined	B.1.1 Holistic Integration; B.1.2 Spiritual Formation; B.1.3 Character Education; B.1.4 Academic Achievement; B.1.5 Practical training; B.1.6 Mentoring.
Evidence of Compliance	SER B.1 Meetings with leaders, faculty, stakeholders and students of the school, examination of ancillary documents, in particular:  The school's Catalogue.
Analysis	<p>ISTL recognises the importance of integrating academically focused and competence-oriented learning activities with spiritual formation and character education. However, not all programme components are linked to programme learning outcomes and learning activities.</p> <p>The VET found evident passion for spiritual formation within the ISTL community. There is a deliberate intention to help students discover their calling and gifting with the help of the mentors and advisors. More specifics of how it is mapped into the curriculum and credits is encouraged.</p> <p>ISTL demonstrates evident commitment to holistic learning. There are several specific conferences provided by the school which include in its focus spiritual and character formation. Students commended the work done by the ISTL leadership and faculty to invest in their spiritual lives. However, this is not reflected explicitly in programme learning outcomes or learning activities.</p> <p>Students are provided with cognitive knowledge in four foci areas and are encouraged to contextualize it for their local contexts and for pioneering new ministries. Syllabi don't usually specify teaching methods or articulate the extent of interaction, discernment, integration between theory and practice and between different disciplines.</p> <p>ISTL does not yet monitor outcomes and learning activities in their programmes.</p> <p>The SER states that 'there has been a consistent and passionate combination of several concentrations of subjects that join, fortify, complement, and equip the students with knowledge and critical thinking about the complexity and challenges of church service, mission, and pioneering new ministries.' However, it is important that ISTL introduces the students to the concept of critical thinking as part</p>

	<p>of their academic achievement and that it is demonstrated in learning activities and assignments. More intentional efforts should be taken for ISTL to operate at EQF level 6 as defined in the QF-EHEA descriptors. Students' experience of academic training is not in line with these descriptors.</p> <p>Having said that, it is commendable that 'each student is followed up by a teaching assistant', especially as there are many English-speaking teachers and courses taught in English. Students are required to be part of a ministry and are informally engaged in practical training. See requirement below.</p> <p>Though there is admirable commitment to one-on-one mentoring, the SER acknowledges this is a challenge to maintain with larger student numbers. There is no mention of how mentors are trained and resourced or how mentoring is integrated into ECTS / assessment. Group mentoring was suggested as a viable approach by the VET. It is important, however, to clarify contents and processes of mentoring (for example documented information on what is being discussed or what spiritual disciplines are practised). This also includes clarity as to responsibility and accountability for mentor and for mentee. See requirement below.</p> <p>The SER states that ISTL attempts to establish a road map for the implementation of ministry. It is important that ISTL provides such a road map and how it includes components of spiritual/character formation, practical training, mentoring and course selection.</p>
<p>Commendations, recommendations, requirements</p>	<p><b>2 Commendations, 1 Requirement</b></p> <p><b>Commendation:</b> The VET commends the efforts undertaken to intentionally provide a context where character and virtue are modelled and can be emulated.</p> <p><b>Commendation:</b> The VET commends ISTL leadership for providing a community context where spiritual formation is nourished and practised.</p> <p><b>Requirement (Standard B.1,3,4,5,6.):</b> The VET requires that ISTL intentionally implements holistic approaches to integrated curriculum design and module delivery and that the components of learning (spiritual formation, character education, practical training and mentoring) are mapped into the curriculum, are appropriately assessed and included in the total calculation of ECTS credits.</p>
<p>Panel conclusion</p>	<p>Non-Compliance</p>

## B.2 - Curriculum Development

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

Standards examined	B.2.1 Design and approval processes; B.2.2 Outcomes and fitness for purpose; B.2.3 Curricula, Module descriptors and learning activities; B.2.4 Graduate profiles; B.2.5 Content, level, feasibility and progression; B.2.6 Credit allocation and duration; B.2.7 Content; B.2.8 Monitoring processes.
Evidence of Compliance	SER B.2 Meetings with leaders, faculty, stakeholders and students of the school, examination of ancillary documents, in particular:  B.2.3 Syllabus Example
Analysis	<p>The ISTL programme was designed by the executive director together with the board and its curriculum is based on four foci (Biblical Studies, Systematic Theology, Leadership and Christian Counselling). This curriculum has been further developed on an ad hoc basis.</p> <p>The ISTL three-year programme was designed with the fitness for purpose in mind according to the vision and mission of the school. However, there are no written programme learning outcomes (relating to the academic work, practical skills, spiritual formation, and character education) in place, to inform and determine the learning outcomes of each module or course. Some of these modules/courses do have learning outcomes, others may only have teaching objectives.</p> <p>There are descriptions of almost every course in the programme. Some module descriptions do not include all learning activities. There is no discernible structure to these descriptions.</p> <p>The curriculum for the three years seems to lack a rationale allocating courses sequentially (from basic to more advanced). The need for progression in analytical skills and theological reflection from year-to-year culminating in a final paper as in the concept of “constructive alignment” is not discernible.</p> <p>ISTL aims to operate in a contextual manner. The VET encourages that this contextual aspect be more often reflected in discussions and assignments whenever appropriate.</p> <p>In the area of curriculum development, ISTL needs to work more on adjusting its academic programme to the ECTE Standards for EQF level 6 programmes.</p> <p>The monitoring process regarding the academic aspect of the ISTL work needs to be more structured under the leadership of an academic “dean/director” (see A.2.2, A.2.3.) to enhance the internal quality assurance (see A.2.5.).</p>



Commendations, recommendations, requirements	<p><b>1 Commendation, 3 Requirements</b></p> <p><b>Commendation:</b> The VET commends ISTL for striving to be relevant in its unique context.</p> <p><b>Requirement (Standard B.2.2, B.2.4):</b> The VET requires that ISTL work out a written graduate profile that will determine the programme learning outcomes and course learning outcomes respectively (cf SG-GETE 2.2).</p> <p><b>Requirement (Standard B.2.3, B.2.5):</b> The VET requires that the curriculum be revised with the progression from basic to more advanced in mind and documented in a curricular map. Also, that the place of the course within the curriculum be explicitly described in standardized templates for module/course descriptions.</p> <p><b>Requirement (Standard B.2.6):</b> The VET requires that the school in the revision of the curriculum (cf B.2.2, B.2.3., B. 2.5.) implement the ECTS system for credit allocation (see <u>Guidelines for Programme Design and Using ECTS</u>).</p>
Panel conclusion	Non-Compliance

### B.3 - Learning, Teaching and Assessment

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

Standards examined	B.3.1 Educational philosophy and adult pedagogy; B.3.2 Student centred learning and teaching and assessment; B.3.3 Module design and delivery; B.3.4 Variety; B.3.5 Delivery feedback; B.3.6 Assessment.
Evidence of Compliance	SER B.3 Meetings with leaders, faculty, stakeholders and students of the school, examination of ancillary documents, in particular:  B.3.5 Course Evaluation
Analysis	<p>ISTL has a theologically grounded educational philosophy, focussing on preparing the next generation for ministry in church and mission, on community-based learning and the integration of theory and practice. They follow adult pedagogy practices, quite in contrast to former communist and partly current post-communist pedagogical approaches of secular universities.</p> <p>ISTL values their students as current and future colleagues and ministers in God's kingdom and offers an open and supportive learning environment. Student-centred learning is evident in the flexibility of the study programme, schedule, the adoption of hybrid delivery and satellite centres, in help with connecting to ministries etc.</p>

	<p>Not all assessment is clearly student-centred. A systematic review of module descriptions is desired where learning outcomes, teaching methodologies and assessment are evaluated for coherency, fitness for purpose and student-centredness.</p> <p>The programme is delivered in hybrid mode in Albanian and English, mainly by English speaking professors. Translation is provided into Albanian by teaching assistants who also design the course on Moodle, translate teaching materials, grade course assignments, and interact with students on arising questions. Courses differ in design as there is no standardized syllabus template; they also do not indicate course weight in ECTS.</p> <p>Interaction with students at satellite sites is through Zoom, part of the face-to-face contact session that takes place at the main site in Tirana. Facilitators on site lead group work (if it's part of the class), supervise technology, take students' questions.</p> <p>There is a procedure in place for dealing with students' complaints though it is not clear to whom the appeal goes and what happens if no agreement is reached. A progressive discipline model is practised in cases of academic misconduct and plagiarism.</p> <p>See also B.2.3. on progression.</p> <p>ISTL professors employ a variety of teaching methods such as classroom lectures, small group assignments, individual reading, mentoring in small groups as well as personal mentoring and guided learning in relevant ministry contexts. Assessment includes participation in class, exams, written assignments, personal reflections. Some critical and reflective engagement with provided lectures and reading is expected.</p> <p>A basic course assessment form is included in each course on Moodle that evaluates content, delivery, teacher performance and personal benefit for the student. It seems that oral feedback is being collected during staff meetings and from external stakeholders.</p> <p>The VET encourages more purposeful engagement with collected data, including longitudinal observation and evidence-based decision making for the improvement of the educational process and learning quality.</p> <p>Formative assessment is provided mainly by the TA's and professors. Some courses provide written grading rubrics for assignments, others only oral information. It is not apparent that there are different types of assessment at differing levels, see under 2.3 Progression.</p> <p>Although practice-oriented learning takes place there is no evidence of its assessment and there is no guided ministry internship or a practice-oriented final project.</p> <p>The VET encourages that ISTL evaluates how assessment impacts learning design and delivery (closing the assessment loop).</p>
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Commendations, recommendations, requirements	<b>Requirement (Standard B.3.1):</b> The VET requires that a written public document is prepared that details principles of ISTL’s educational philosophy and adult pedagogy.
Panel conclusion	Non-Compliance

**B.4 - Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification**

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

Standards examined	B.4.1 Admission; B.4.2 Progression; B.4.3 Recognition; B.4.4 Graduation and certification.
Evidence of Compliance	SER B.4 Meetings with leaders, faculty, stakeholders and students of the school, examination of ancillary documents, in particular:  B.4.1 Application and Reference B.4.4 Diploma, Certificate and Transcript
Analysis	<p>ISTL has admission procedures that are clear and fit for purpose. Admission requirements and application forms are found on the ISTL official website. There is a database with the students’ information. Given the increased number of students at ISTL, the VET encourages the school to consider obtaining a software for a more systemised management of data.</p> <p>Students complete an application including their personal data, previous education, professional and ministry experience. Letters of references are also required from applicants preferably from mentors/pastors of applicants. See B.2.5.</p> <p>ISTL has clear recognition of learning regulations. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on national principles.</p> <p>ISTL implements suitable policies for graduation. Upon successful completion of course requirements of the students, the progress is presented to the Board of Directors for their approval and appropriate certifications are awarded to the students. The VET examined samples of diplomas, transcripts, student files, character reference letters.</p> <p>However, Diploma Supplements are missing.</p>
Commendations, recommendations, requirements	<b>1 Requirement:</b> <b>Requirement (Standard B.4.4):</b> The VET requires that ISTL issues a Diploma Supplement for its graduates (See <u>Guidelines for the Diploma Supplement</u> )
Panel conclusion	Non-Compliance

## B.5 - Qualification Nomenclature and Credits

INSTITUTIONS FOLLOW INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED QUALIFICATION NOMENCLATURE AND CREDIT-COUNTING SYSTEMS

Standards examined	B.5.1 Qualification nomenclature; B.5.2 Credits.
Evidence of Compliance	SER B.5.1 Meetings with leaders, faculty, stakeholders and students of the school, examination of ancillary documents, in particular:
Analysis	<p>ISTL generally follows a system of credit hours, based on class hours and the equivalent number of hours for personal study. Work is required in developing module descriptors that articulate total learning hours and ECTS credits.</p> <p>ISTL understands that qualification nomenclature used in public-facing information should be appropriate in context and not breach protected terminology</p>
Commendations, recommendations, requirements	See requirement B.2.6. related to ECTS allocation throughout the curriculum.
Panel conclusion	Non-Compliance

## E. CONCLUSIONS

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### SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS

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**Commendation 1:** The VET commends ISTL and its leadership for its efforts in seeking to serve and strengthen the local Christian faith communities and churches within its unique post-communist Albanian context.

**Commendation 2:** The VET commends ISTL for striving to be relevant in its unique context.

**Commendation 3:** The VET commends the efforts ISTL has undertaken to engage with the Civil community, particularly the ecumenical initiatives including the Catholic and Orthodox churches of Albania and academic institutions.

**Commendation 4:** The VET commends ISTL for a rapid, creative, and effective response during the COVID-19 Pandemic by adapting its delivery mode and investing in efficient technology to ensure continued delivery of its programme.

**Commendation 5:** The VET commends the good quality work ISTL has invested in Media and public information.

**Commendation 6:** The VET commends the teaching assistance system developed by the school and the quality work that is being done by the teaching assistant team.

**Commendation 7:** The VET commends the efforts undertaken to intentionally provide a context where character and virtue are modeled and can be emulated.

**Commendation 8:** The VET commends ISTL leadership for providing a community context where spiritual formation is nourished and practised.

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### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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**Recommendation 1: (Standard A.1.4):** The VET recommends ISTL to expand its public information to include further details about, for example, the programme, learning outcomes, connectivity requirements and assessment procedures.

**Recommendation 2: (Standard A.2.1):** The VET recommends that the ISTL board develop a “governing board handbook” to include appropriate governance policies.

**Recommendation 3: (Standard A.2.1):** The VET recommends that the board in future recruitment of board members assures an increase of stakeholder representation by Albanian nationals and provides venues for input in decision-making by the student body related to academic and community life.

**Recommendation 4: (Standard A.3.3):** The VET recommends that the School continue to invest in the professional development of their teaching assistants, with the aim of increasing the number of Albanian teachers and reducing reliance on English translation / non-nationals.

**Recommendation 5: (Standard A.3.3):** The VET recommends that the School develop a strategy of increasing the numbers of full-time or part-time ISTL Albanian educational staff versus contracted staff.

**Recommendation 6: (Standard A.3.4)** The VET recommends that the school, as part of the overall Strategic Plan, consider a longer-term strategy for training and supporting volunteers, specifically in terms of role descriptions, volunteer policy, and whether personnel who fulfill key roles in the delivery of course content should be remunerated.

**Recommendation 7: (Standard A.5.1):** The VET recommends that ISTL further articulates policies for student support in the student handbook. This will ensure that students know and understand policies and procedures related to their studies at ISTL.

**Recommendation 8: (Standard A.5.4):** The VET recommends that ISTL review their process of collecting, analysing, and using information for the improvement of educational resources that support its mission (See examples above).

**Recommendation 9: (Standard A.6.5): Recommendation (A.6.5):** The VET recommends that the school produces a fundraising policy outlining its ethos and practice in a formalised way, i.e in the Governance handbook for the board.

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## SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS

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**Requirement 1: (Standard A.2.2):** The VET requires that ISTL establishes a leadership and management structure which separates and distinguishes overall leadership of the institution from educational management (many institutions refer to these positions as President/Rector and Academic Dean).

**Requirement 2: (Standard A.2.4):** The VET requires that a more comprehensive Strategic Plan be worked out (cf SG-GETE A2.4) and approved by the board, including for each element when, how and by whom it should be realized.

**Requirement 3: (Standard A.2.5):** The VET requires that the existing document be revised and expanded according to the standards for “Internal quality assurance policies and procedures” (cf SG-GETE A2.5. and ESG 1.1).

**Requirement 4: (Standard A.4.4):** The VET requires that ISTL develops a solid and written communication structure allowing the dissemination of policies and documents as appropriate within its community.

**Requirement 5: (Standard A.5.3):** The VET requires that library development is included in the Strategic Plan with the following aspects:

- That the collection be expanded with current publications in sufficient numbers (normally a total of approximately 10.000 appropriate volumes), some of which should be digital, as well as subject specific academic and semi-academic periodicals.
- That the library be administered by a trained staff with access to continuing professional development.

- That the library be arranged in easily accessible and adequate space for students, staff, and faculty (that the current multi-purpose use of rooms as offices and library space be separated).

**Requirement 6: (Standard B.1,3,4,5,6):** The VET requires that ISTL intentionally implements holistic approaches to integrated curriculum design and module delivery and that the components of learning (spiritual formation, character education, practical training, and mentoring) are each mapped into the curriculum, are appropriately assessed, and included in the total calculation of ECTS credits.

**Requirement 7: (Standard B.2.2, B.2.4):** The VET requires that ISTL work a written graduate profile that will determine the programme learning outcomes and course learning outcomes respectively (cf SG-GETE 2.2).

**Requirement 8: (Standard B.2.3, B.2.5):** The VET requires that the curriculum be revised with the progression from basic to more advanced in mind and that such a progression should also be clearly reflected in standardised templates for module/course descriptions.

**Requirement 9: (Standard B.2.6):** The VET requires that the school in the revision of the curriculum (cf B.2.2, B.2.3., B. 2.5.) implement the ECTS system for credit allocation (see [Guidelines for Programme Design and Using ECTS](#)).

**Requirement 10: (Standard B.3.1):** The VET requires that a written public document is prepared that details principles of ISTL's educational philosophy and adult pedagogy.

**Requirement 11: (Standard B.4.4):** The VET requires that ISTL issues a Diploma Supplement for its graduates (See [Guidelines for the Diploma Supplement](#))

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## IN CONCLUSION

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The visitation team recommends to the ECTE Accreditation Commission that ISTL be judged to be in compliance with the *Standards and Guidelines* of the ECTE in both institutional and programme areas with the exception of the 11 requirements listed above.

The team recommends to the ECTE Accreditation Commission granting accreditation of the institution once the relevant requirements have been met and consider accreditation of its Bachelor programme once the relevant requirements have been met. Work on the relevant recommendations listed above will be monitored through the annual reporting processes of ECTE.

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

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

The visitation team

**Signed:**

Dr. Patrick Mitchel, Team Leader

Dr. Göran Janzon, Team Member

Mrs. Katharina Penner, Team Member

Mrs. Grace Al-Zoughbi, Student Representative and Review Secretary (RS)

**December 2022**



APPENDICES

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Visitation Schedule

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MONDAY 07 NOVEMBER 2022

Time	Activity (Purpose)	Who is involved	Location	notes
07.30-08.15	Breakfast	VET	Overnight location Hotel Boka	4 minute walk from ISTL
08.30-09.15	VET team shown to office space, initial meeting	VET Hervin & Eri	VET office will be in one of the Classes. Second floor/ same building with ISTL Office	Eri will meet us at the Hotel
09.15-10.00	Opening meeting with chief administrative and executive officers (Introductions, establishing purpose)	VET ISTL leadership team: Hervin & Eri	VET office	Hervin Fushekati (Executive Director) will host this first meeting
10.00-10.30	Tour of facilities (reviewing place, classrooms, offices)	VET Hervin & Eri		
10.30-11.00	Meeting with the chief academic officer(s) (Reviewing curriculum design and delivery)	VET; Hervin	VET office	Patrick lead
11.00-11.15	Coffee/tea break	VET office		
11.15-11.45	Library visit <del>with Librarian</del> (Reviewing library resources and plans)	VET Meeting Librarian/ Anamarie via ZOOM		Katharina lead
11.45-12.45	Staff in Administration, Application, Registration (Reviewing databases, student records - from application to graduation)	VET Enxhi	VET Office Or ISTL Office	
12.45-13.00	Break			

Time	Activity (Purpose)	Who is involved	Location	notes
13.00-14.00	Lunch	Lunch with ISTL Staff and Teachers of that week	ISTL Kitchen /same building	
14.00-14.30	Staff in finance, facilities, HR (Reviewing organizational issues)	VET ISTL Finance Manager Edlira	VET office	
14.30-16.00	Meeting with educational staff (Reviewing faculty development: educational and specializations)	VET Pal Pasqual, Erion Cuni, Aad Van Der Mass. Jona Asmani, Enxhi Tashi, Greta Pina	VET Office	Zoom and technical equipment provided by ISTL if required.  Patrick lead: team ask questions on different areas
16.00-16.30	Coffee/tea break			
16.30-17.30	Meeting with Board members (Reviewing governance)	VET; ISTL Chairman of the Board Jim Thiessen, Board members: <del>Stefan Von Ruti</del> Mande Chapman Elton Prifti (board member) <del>will meet you in person at the Devotion time</del>	VET office  Zoom	Zoom and technical equipment provided by ISTL if required  Yes  Göran lead: team ask questions on different areas
17.30-18.00	College Worship	VET join with ISTL Community		Grace Al-Zoughbi to share a devotional
18.00-19.00	Dinner		Dinner with Hervin	
19.00-20.30	VET team meeting			

TUESDAY 08 NOVEMBER 2022

Time	Activity	Who is involved	Location	Notes
07.30-08.15	Breakfast	VET	Overnight location	
08.30-9.00	VET team	VET	VET office	
9.00-10.30	Meeting with Ac. Dean + select faculty (Reviewing Teaching, Learning, and Assessment practices and processes)	VET Hervin & Paul Pasqual	VET Office	Katharina lead: team ask questions on different areas
10.30-11.15	Meeting with non-educational staff representatives  Zoom meeting with regional facilitators	VET; non-educational staff: Mariol, Greta, Eri  - Renato - Urtan - Banush - Martin	Work areas of the different groups	
11.15-11.30	Coffee/tea break		VET Office	
11.30-12.15	Mtg about Holistic Formation and Community (Reviewing mentoring processes, pastoral and personal care, character, and spiritual formation)	VET Hervin Aad van der Mass	VET Office	
12.15-13.00	Mtg with Practical training / Placements (Reviewing ministry training and placements)	VET; Hervin Aad van der Mass	VET Office	
13.00-14.00	Lunch (Gaining student input)	Lunch with students, alumni, student representative	ISTL	
14.00-14.30		Break		

Time	Activity	Who is involved	Location	Notes
14.30-16.00	Meeting with the official student representatives and an unofficial selection of students past and present	VET; ISTL student representatives; a selection of current students; a selection of Alumni Ambla, Eriola, Erioni, Gjystina, Adelina, Albano, Genta, Xhulio	At Pazari I Ri Stephan Center	Zoom and technical equipment provided by ISTL if required  Grace meets student reps and current students. VET meet Alumni
16.00-16.30	Coffee/tea break			
16.30-18.00	VET meeting and writing report	VET	VET Office	
18.00-19.30	Join classes	VET members join different classes, join community worship		3 classes
19.30-21.00	Dinner and VET meeting and writing report	VET	Dining area and VET office	

### WEDNESDAY 09 NOVEMBER 2022

Time	Activity	Who is involved	Location	Notes
07.30-08.15	Breakfast	VET	Hotel Boka	
08.30-09.45	Report finalising	VET and anyone invited	VET Office	
09.45-10.30	Report finalising	VET and anyone invited	VET Office	
10.30-11.00	Coffee/tea break			
11.00-13.00	Report finalising (VET compiling and editing)	VET	VET office	
13.00-13.45	Lunch	ISTL Center		

Time	Activity	Who is involved	Location	Notes
14.00-15.30	Final meeting (VET team leader leads)	VET, ISTL Administrative council/leadership team: - Hervin & Eri	VET Office	