

REVIEW REPORT

Visoko Evandeosko Teološko Učilište-
Osijek

Related to a visit for a cyclical review;
October 18-20, 2023

European Council for
Theological Education

ECTE

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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Report of a Cyclical Review of Visoko Evandeosko Teološko Učilište (EVTOS), Evangelical Theological Seminary (abbreviated in this report as ETS), Osijek, Croatia a nationally accredited Higher Education Institution.

This report relates to a process, including a desk analysis of the Cyclical Self Evaluation Report (C-SER) plus supplemental documentation provided to the Visitation Evaluation Team (VET) and an on-site visit October 18-20, 2023, for the purpose of accrediting ETS' programmes based on the ECTE's *Standards and Guidelines* and relevant ECTE Supplemental Guidelines. The VET suggests to the ECTE Accreditation Commission nine commendations of excellence, nine recommendations and one requirement.

B. INTRODUCTION TO THE REVIEW

Description of the review

This is a cyclical review of ETS as a nationally accredited Higher Education Institution, dedicated to the development of men and women for Christian ministry in both national and international contexts.

ETS obtained institutional and programme accreditation from ECTE in 2018.

The documents guiding this review are the Standards and Guidelines of the ECTE (part A and B), the Guidelines for Programme Design and Using ECTS the Guidelines for Site Visits and VETS, the Guidelines for Institutional Status and Qualification Nomenclature and Guidelines for Distance and Online Education.

Programmes

Programmes submitted for re-accreditation in 2023:

EQF/QF-EHEA	Name of qualification used by ETS	ECTS	ISCED Level	ICETE Level	Delivery Mode
EQF 6 /First Cycle (R)	Stručni Prvostupnik (Baccalaureus)	180	6	Bachelor	In classroom, online and synchronous remote classroom participation online.
EQF 7 /Second Cycle (R)	Stručna Specijalistica Teologije	120	7	Master	In classroom, online, and synchronous classroom remote participation online.

The Visitation Team

The composition of the Visitation Evaluation Team (VET) to ETS was as follows:

Dr. Patrick Mitchell (Team Leader)
Dr. Edith Vilamajó Sanchis (VET Member)
Walid Zailaa (Student Representative)
Dr. Graham Cheesman (Review Secretary)

Visit Arrangements

The Self Evaluation Report (SER) was written following the template set out in the [ECTE protocol for writing an SER](#) and was received, along with supporting documents, in time by the Accreditation Director (AD). The Review Secretary (RS) recommended the team to the Accreditation Commission (AC). The Accreditation Commission approved the team and the dates of the review visit, and these were communicated to ETS by the RS who also asked the institution whether they had any reservations about the team members, but there were none.

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

- The RS provided access for the VET-members to the SER, supplemental documents, and previous correspondence with the institution via hyperlink.
- A shared worksheet report document was set up for members of the team to access and modify throughout the visit. The document follows the structure of the interim report form pertaining to the current standards and protocol of ECTE. This was filled out and commented on by members of the VET prior to the visit and as the visit progressed in preparation for the interim report writing on the last day of the visit.
- VET members recorded the results of their initial reading of the documents within the shared worksheet.
- The Internal Review Coordinator (IRC) of the institution was identified and received a copy of the visit protocol.
- A WhatsApp group was set up internally for the VET members for fast communication.
- In conjunction with the VET leader, the IRC organised and agreed to a schedule for the visit.
- Initial pre-visit meetings of the VET took place via video-conferencing to discuss the SER, supporting documents and arrangements.
- The team leader met online with the IRC.

The team was very warmly received by the leadership and the staff. The institution provided all online and on campus means needed for an effective evaluation of the academic work and communal life. Documentation was submitted and discussions held were transparent and, by the end of the visit, the team had sufficient documentation for the purposes of the evaluation. The documentation provided a useful summary of the institution's current state and response to

previous recommendations and was supplemented by meetings of key personnel. The review took place over three days plus travel. The on-campus visit began on October 18 to 20, 2023. The review was conducted in English and where needed translation from/to Croatian was provided by the institution.

Visit Schedule

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. They included meetings with:

- Dean (principal role in ETS)
- Study Director
- Chief of Administration
- Leadership Team
- Administrative Staff
- Teaching Faculty and other Educational Staff (mentors and tutors)
- Librarians
- IT Manager
- Board Representatives
- Stakeholders including Church Representatives, Alumni
- Students

The team also attended chapel services and classes.

The complete schedule is in the Appendix to this report.

C. INTRODUCTION TO THE INSTITUTION AND PROGRAMMES

General Description of Institution

ETS has been a member of ECTE since 2016 and has been ECTE accredited as an institution since 2018.

Following ECTE accreditation for three programmes (1-year certificate, 3-year Academic Bachelor equivalent and 2-year Academic Master equivalent) on April 18, 2018, ETS was nationally accredited and then granted the right to confer legal degrees by the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia on September 12, 2018 for two study programmes: the undergraduate professional theological studies programme and the specialised graduate theological studies programme. ETS has maintained national accreditation and successfully completed national re-accreditation in 2022.

The institution was accredited with the legal status of visoka škola (equivalent to a professional or vocational college) in 2018. In 2023 the government of the Republic of Croatia approved a new Act on Higher Education which abolished the visoka škola institutional status. Institutions such as ETS which held this status have now been given the mandate of fulfilling the requirements of the status of veleučilište, translated as “university of applied sciences” by the Croatian accrediting agency. Institutions have been given a period of 6 months to make the necessary modifications to their governing statutes and programmes and ETS is now engaged in this process. Thus, the names of the accredited study programmes will officially change in the near future.

In addition to the two approved theological studies programmes, ETS offers a certificate lifelong learning programme, hosts the Osijek Doctoral Colloquium and other academic and ministry conferences and events. In 2022 ETS was granted an Erasmus+ Charter and the institution has established Erasmus agreements with 6 institutions (two more to follow).

Mission and Vision Statement

The *vision* of ETS is to be a leading global evangelical learning and research centre for Christian mission in Central and Eastern Europe and the world.

The *mission* of ETS is to advance learning and foster growth among evangelical leaders and movements in Central and Eastern Europe for faithful service and mission in church and society through quality and innovative education and research.

ETS is an international, interdenominational institution of higher education established in 1971 whose *chief outcome* is to extend the Kingdom of God by training and educating leaders for ministry.

History

The history of ETS began on October 1, 1972, when the Biblical Theological Institute in Zagreb was founded with the aim of educating and preparing candidates from the wider region for pastoral, educational and other Christian services. When it was founded to educate pastors and laity in biblical and theological studies, it was part of a small number of Protestant, theological institutions that existed during communist rule throughout Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Due to the great restrictions on religious freedom in the surrounding countries, ETS became a strategic centre of education and training for Christian service at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

A decade later, in 1983, a decision was made to establish an institution in Osijek, and ETS began offering full-time studies which, in the meantime, developed into a significant, internationally recognised, interdenominational, theological institution. The main standards of excellence and basic educational profiles established at that time were maintained in 2002, when the name of the institution was formally changed to ETS. The institution has continuously developed its material base, teaching spaces and didactic equipment, a library with specialised book funds and a basic and expanded teaching base.

Over the last fifty years of development ETS has established valuable international connections and achieved high-quality standing in ecclesiastical, teaching, student, administrative, financial, scientific and cultural-educational fields. Formerly, ETS had successfully passed the international academic evaluation of the British Higher Education System, according to which they licensed postgraduate (master's) studies in the field of the New Testament with the University of Leeds and in partnership with Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS). The many students who completed this and other postgraduate studies, have gone on to receive their doctorates at prestigious theological institutions, such as Leeds, Oxford, Cambridge, Birmingham, Tübingen, Paris, Pasadena, as well as at the universities of Ljubljana and Zagreb. With their academic and subsequent professional achievements, they represent a significant objective indicator of the institution's academic excellence.

ETS regained national accreditation in July 2018, which had been suspended since 2014, stimulating an increase in enrolment from 14 to 34 students with a peak of 38 enrolled students in 2021-22. ETS also initiated a lifelong learning programme, completed renovation of its student dorm and made great strides in its long-term development. Due to the retirement of Dr. Peter Kuzmič, ETS has recently named Dr. Dalibor Kraljik as new Dean, as of September 1, 2023. A new full time faculty appointment and assistant position are also expected to be filled soon.

Facilities

ETS has lecture halls, faculty offices, a large library, multimedia hall, office space, and guest apartments for visiting professors. The institution also has a private student dormitory for students and other guests, a professional kitchen with a dining room and spaces for recreational use. In total, the institution has sixteen instructor office spaces. The institution believes that this number is currently sufficient. If additional space is needed, some office spaces can accommodate two or three instructors. Office spaces are suitable for teaching and research.

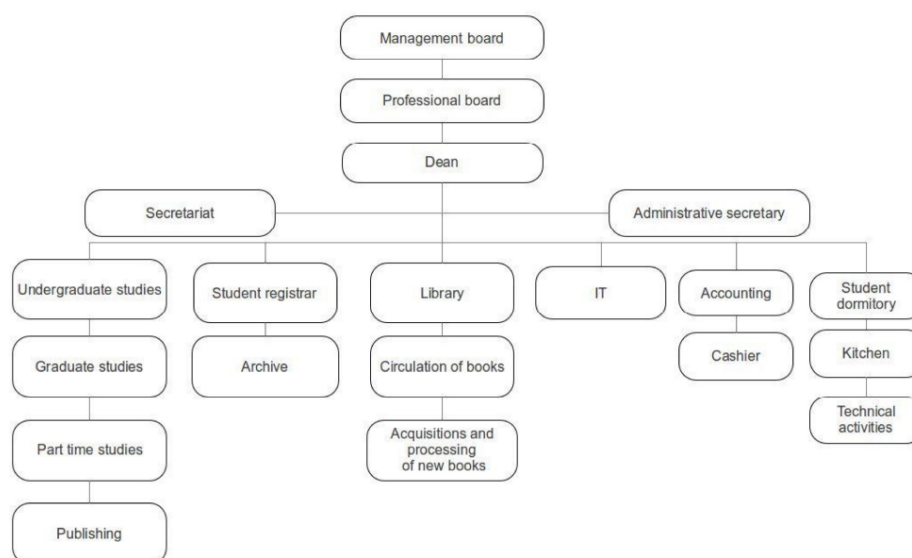
The institution has a large hall, three classrooms and three smaller seminar rooms that can be used for lectures, seminars and other project activities. They are equipped with suitable furniture and educational equipment, including multimedia equipment in the hall and classrooms. The classroom facilities are more than enough for current enrolment and sufficient even for allowing significant growth in enrolment. Office space for the work of professional services - secretariats, student services, accounting and campus managers - are fully consistent with modern standards. The rooms are spacious and equipped with modern office equipment. The IT service of the institution is fully equipped for the work of staff, teachers and students.

In addition to office space, ETS has two separate communication/server rooms that guarantee suitable air-conditioned conditions for all IT/telecommunications equipment, restricted access and uninterruptible power supply. ETS invests in other IT and telecommunications equipment and video surveillance. In 2020, 153,443.12 HRK were invested for these purposes. In 2021, 11,450.00 HRK were utilised for these purposes. The student dormitory, including the kitchen and dining room, the J. J. Strossmayer hall, recreational room and other student and guest rooms have been completely renovated in 2021 and are available for ETS students and other ETS or guest events.



Governance

The organisational chart below is current at the time of writing this report. However, the incoming Board and his executive leadership team will thoroughly analyse the organisational structure and significant revisions and improvements are expected. These revision plans were in process at the time of the accreditation visit.



Educational and non-educational Staff

ETS currently employs seven full-time lecturers, four of which hold PhD degrees, and one a Doctor of Ministry degree. One is currently enrolled in a university PhD programme, while the final lecturer holds two master's degrees. There are four male and three female full-time lecturers.

Over the past five years, ETS has also employed a total of twenty-two adjunct lecturers. Among these, the highest degrees obtained are as follows: Thirteen hold PhD degrees; two hold Doctor of Ministry degrees; six hold Master's degrees, three of whom are currently enrolled in doctoral programmes; and one holds an undergraduate degree in theology.

Three of the full-time employed staff have external missionary support and have individual agreements with the institution as to the level of support provided for their salary. Of the external associates, nine are non-salaried missionaries (either full-time missionaries, or short-term visitors). The remainder of the external teaching staff are compensated by an agreed honorarium for the teaching performed.

Budget

ETS transparently, efficiently and purposefully manages financial resources, i.e., those funds that it realises from its own activities or according to special regulations.

The institution's income stems from student fees, investments made through renting out real estate and from donations. There is a substantial endowment that allows investment in commercial real estate in Zagreb, and which brings in significant funding.

Market revenues from fees and revenues from their own activities (rental of surplus space and revenues from accommodation in the student dormitory) are the institution's only market revenues. Balanced budgets and annual financial reviews have been provided by the institution.

Student Numbers

From SER – charts per programme submitted for review.

	EQF Level 6/ First Cycle		
	Newly enrolled	Total number enrolled	Graduating
2018-19	3	13	/
2019-20	4	17	8
2020-21	5	18	3
2021-22	6	26	6
2022-23	2	20	7

	EQF Level 7/Second Cycle		
	Newly enrolled	Total number enrolled	Graduating
2018-19	4	4	/
2019-20	4	7	/
2020-21	5	11	2
2021-22	3	12	/
2022-23	5	14	5

How the institution prepared for the review

The C-SER was prepared by the Committee for re-accreditation of ETS as part of the re-accreditation procedure of the institution appointed by the decision of the Professional Board at the 3rd session in the academic year 2021/2022 held on November 10, 2021 and based upon the decision of the Professional Board on June 21, 2023, in the following composition: Dr. sc. Peter Kuzmič, President; Mr. sc. Julijana Mladenovska-Tešija, Interim Vice-Dean for academic affairs; Dr. sc. Gregory Thellman, Member; Mr. sc. Maja Seguin, Secretary.

This self-analysis document was adopted at the 25th session of the Professional Board held on July 26, 2023 under item 1 of the agenda.

D. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

INSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS

Standard A1 - 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:

Documents reviewed:

- Vision and Mission statements on ETS web page
- Institutional brochure and publicity material
- Strategic Plan 2019
- SER
- Website
- State accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's degrees 2022
- Statement of faith
- Budget
- Website has detailed programme information including:
 - [Elaborat strucnog studija Teologije - EN.pdf](#)
 - [2.3.0. Elaborat specijalistickog diplomskog studija Teologije - EN.pdf](#)
 - [2.4.5. Report on changes to study programmes 2018-21.pdf](#)

Meetings with:

- Board
- Dean
- Registrar
- Leadership Team
- Students
- Stakeholders

Analysis and Assessment:

The VET found evidence that representatives throughout the institution operate with an established and clear identity within the institution's particular context and constituency.

ETS is exceptionally strong in state recognition / accreditation, both legal and fiscal. The institution is a recognised Higher Education Institution (HEI) of degree programmes by the Croatian state and staff have considerable experience of working within the parameters of state law in governance, fiscal reporting, and the use of academic terminologies and degree nomenclature. In addition, there is a clear understanding of the distinct role of ECTE accreditation. The Registrar also works closely with state authorities in navigating law around study visas and permits for non-EU students.

In the SER and in person the VET found that ETS leadership team, staff and stakeholders have a shared understanding of the identity, purpose, and mission of the institution and this is reflected not just in day-to-day work but also in strategic planning and operations.

As stated above, the vision of ETS is to be a leading global evangelical learning and research centre for Christian mission in Central and Eastern Europe and the wider world. The stated mission of ETS is to advance learning and foster growth among evangelical leaders and movements in Central and Eastern Europe for faithful service and mission in church and society through quality and innovative education and research. There is a clear commitment to partnership, collaboration, social engagement, mission-oriented theology and peace making/reconciliation. This current vision and mission statements will be reviewed by the new Dean, Board and senior leadership team as they develop and implement a new strategic plan.

The two degree programmes, EQF Level 6/First Cycle and EQF Level 7k/Second Cycle, have detailed catalogues on the website. These date to 2013 when the programmes were first accredited by the State. There is also a report on changes to these two study programmes 2018-21 after reaccreditation in 2018 (up to 20% of each programme could be altered without triggering a new accreditation). The catalogues are comprehensive, if now rather out of date in terms of teachers, academic resources and what modules are available. The senior academic team are well aware of this, and it will be a priority to update the catalogues as soon as possible. According to ETS leadership this task has not been possible to date, with all the other changes happening at the institution.

Commendations:

- The institution has managed to navigate a period of significant change: appointing a new Dean after the retirement of Dr. Peter Kuzmic, achieving national re-accreditation in 2022 for their EQF Level 6/First Cycle and EQF Level 7/Second Cycle programmes as well as now negotiating a new Act on Higher Education regarding institutions (2022-23) that has required a change of name (in Croatian only), some adjustments to governance structure and significant investment in faculty in order to meet national ranking criteria. ETS is strongly embedded within its Croatian context and, for this, has been pushed to develop its academic and legal frameworks.
- We commend ETS for the detailed public information available on the website and institutional brochure. The webpage and brochure are in both Croatian and English and detail essential practical, institutional and academic information.

Recommendation:

While there were updates in 2018-21, we recommend that the two programme catalogues are brought up to date as soon as possible and that any gaps in the public information listed in this standard be addressed during that process. In particular, given the significant changes in programme delivery with the use of hybrid classrooms for both programmes, it should be made very clear to students what study options are available and how they work in practice in learning experience of both remote and local students- It is strongly recommended that the module catalogue be updated every year (A.1.4).

Panel Conclusion: Substantial compliance

Standard 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.

Previous recommendations (2017/18):

- Complementing its Strategic Vision, ETS should develop a specifically elaborated business plan.
- Existing quality assurance procedures need to be put together into a quality assurance manual.

Evidence of Compliance:

Documents reviewed:

- SER
- Strategic Plan 2019
- Organisational chart
- Management Board procedures Poslovnik o radu IV ETV_ENG
- QA strategy Pravilnik o osiguravanju kvalitete - Strategija EN
- QA Regulations Pravilnik o osiguranju kvalitete
- Erasmus+ Charter 2022
- Questionnaires for employers, students, faculty and alumni asking questions around quality assurance.

Meetings with:

- Leadership Team in which detailed QA policies and procedures were described. These had not been documented in the SER and were later translated and given to the team.
- Board
- Cashier on finances
- Faculty
- Staff
- Students

Analysis and Assessment:

The institution celebrated 50 years in 2022, demonstrating considerable stability and sustainability through some significant political and social upheavals such as the fall of Communism and the Balkan war.

Effective governance is in place. There are 10 members on the Board, 4 of which are representatives of the founding organisations. The Board is also representative of stakeholders such as Assemblies of God, the Croatian Evangelical Alliance, American donors and so on. The Board is experienced, engaged and well informed.

The new Dean Dr. Dalibor Kraljik was just appointed in September 2023 after a lengthy recruitment process. There is clarity regarding the role of the Dean as executive leader who is a Board member with voice but no vote. There is evidence of a clear distinction between governance and leadership in the organisational structures and in what the VET saw in practice in discussion with senior leadership, the Dean and the Board. The Dean is responsible to the Board regarding implementation of strategic planning and his job description is well described.

There is a clear division of responsibilities between the Dean and Vice-Deans. One of the first actions of the new Dean has been to create a third Vice-Dean position, to help clarify roles and share workloads (Vice Dean of international partnerships and Vice-Dean of student affairs and Vice-Dean of academic affairs).

The institution has a professional Board that has representatives from students, staff, and faculty. Student government structures are in place. Overall, faculty, staff, and students appear to have reasonable opportunities to participate in decision-making related specific jobs, community life, and the academic programmes. This happens on a formal and an informal basis. As noted in A.2.5, there are systems of student feedback and evaluation of individual modules and overall programmes that also help to inform decision making.

From meetings with alumni and stakeholders, there is also evidence of active participation and input from both groups. The level of enthusiasm for the work of ETS in these groups was impressive and there are active relationships and cooperation in ministry, partnerships and events. The composition of the Board facilitates input from both local stakeholders and donors.

Dr. Dalibor Kraljik will be developing and renewing the existing strategic plan (2019-2023). The 2019 plan lacked detail on how and when goals may be attained and who will be responsible and to whom they are accountable. Development and finalising a new strategic plan are a priority for the new Dean, working alongside senior staff and reporting to the Board. He plans to develop and agree a four to five year integrated Strategic Plan across departments with input from all stakeholders.

In talking with the Dean and senior staff, there are clearly plenty of ideas for future development, including faculty development, the possible introduction of new academic programmes (new laws in Croatia mean that new educational programmes must be justified in terms of employability and meeting student needs). ETS are thinking about new Certificate programmes related to counselling and Sunday School teaching pedagogy for example. There are also plans for the expansion of the Erasmus programme, new institutional partnerships, as well as other areas such as library development.

The team discussed with the leadership of the institution how a new strategic plan will need to be a formal, comprehensive document that is overseen and approved by governance and leadership, and which is tied to the mission and vision of the institution and includes financial forecasting.

A formal written plan will include the following elements:

- How and when the goals may be attained.
- What resources are required (including finance and people).
- Who will be responsible for each element and to whom they are accountable.
- What group will monitor the process.
- Description of the role of the Board in the development and approval of the Plan.

In 2018 the institution was granted the right by the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia to confer legal degrees for the EQF Level 6/First Cycle and EQF Level 7/Second Cycle programmes and passed through re-accreditation with the State in 2022 (p. 16 SER). Further changes by the State in 2023 require recognised educational institutions like ETS to make changes to the governing statutes and education programmes, including changes to the names of the two accredited degree programmes. This process, alongside accreditation by ECTE, has involved considerable attention to quality assurance and ETS has documentation related to a QA policy, QA strategy and QA Regulations. Due to pressures of this transition, plus changes in leadership, the SER did not really do justice to the commitment to quality development that exists in the institution. However, the VET gained a better understanding of QA policies and procedures during the visit. In fact, the current documents on QA regulations and QA strategy describe robust QA processes and structures of internal review of both academic programmes and the wider institutional culture. There is evidently a good culture of self-reflection and self-critical assessment in the institution.

Nevertheless, there is room for development in terms of public dissemination of the QA regulations and strategy. A few areas emerged from the visit that could be looked at (by way of suggestions rather than formal recommendations):

- With the development of hybrid delivery in both programmes, to pay particular attention to ensuring a comparable learning experience between remote and in-person students.
- From discussion with faculty, especially adjuncts, to pay particular attention to closing the QA loop of student feedback to faculty and then faculty back to students so the latter know that they have been heard. (Some faculty were not aware of what feedback students had given on particular courses).
- It would also be useful for ETS to consider and use the recently published (March 2023) ECTE Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance Policies (IQAP) to further develop their internal QA policy and ensure appropriate information on their internal QA policy be made public.

Commendation:

The VET was impressed by, and wishes to commend, the leadership styles of the Dean, Vice-Deans and the General Secretary in how they work together as a team, and with other staff and students. In ETS, there is obviously a strong culture of trust reflecting Christian values in working relationships that is evident in all staff the VET talked to, at all levels.

Recommendation:

The VET recommends that the Academic Dean develop and renew the existing strategic plan along the lines of the advice in this report.

Panel Conclusion: Substantial Compliance

Standard 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.

Previous recommendations (2017/18):

“To upgrade faculty development and research with provisions for research travel, conference participation and sabbatical leave.”

Evidence of Compliance:

Documents reviewed:

- SER
- QA strategy Pravilnik o osiguravanju kvalitete - Strategija EN
- QA Regulations Pravilnik o osiguranju kvalitete
- Erasmus+ Charter 2022
- Questionnaires for employers, students, faculty and alumni around quality assurance
- Description of the study programme specialised graduate professional theological studies
- Description of external associates at the High Evangelical Theological College
- List of lecturers
- List of external associates

Meetings with:

- Faculty and adjunct teachers
- Academic Dean
- Registrar
- Facilities manager

Analysis and Assessment:

Overall, despite being in a busy transition period, and with some HR work to be done (see below), ETS has high appreciation and priority for their personnel, both educational and non-educational staff. The new Dean has spent time with each member of the staff in recent weeks to assess how each person is feeling and doing. There is general satisfaction among staff. In fact, there is a great team spirit and good relationships. Even though roles are well defined, they have all been able to serve one another when needed.

There is mention of HR policies in the SER and elsewhere but no developed written policies or a systematic staff handbook exists. There are contracts for most staff and these are being updated. There was oral evidence of good practice and, in interviews with various staff members, there seemed to be clear practices and processes in place.

There has been an overload of the workload in the senior leadership and some of the faculty due to the senior management changes of the recent couple of years. New structures are now in place for a better and more realistic workload, to suit roles according to needs and profiles and to better serve the purposes and goals of the institution. In particular, there has been an overload of the workload for at least one faculty member due to vacancy and him being available and willing. Nonetheless there is flexibility and staff are asked what they are able and

willing to invest on each occasion. There are plans to hire new personnel in the near future. There is an intentional practice to encourage students to continue their studies and some are fed into becoming faculty for the institution.

The faculty team consists of both employed full-time faculty and associates who serve on a part-time basis. Based on the list of lecturers, faculty have the academic qualifications required for teaching at the respective levels of the programmes reviewed. Some of the non-educational staff in key positions (facilities manager, registrar, finance) have been in the institutions for many years and they have a wide understanding of the institution and are highly committed to it.

As to professional development, the institution used to run bi-annual “teacher’s forums” to address and explore issues related with educational matters, such as teaching methodology, etc. and they are planning to reinstate these. Faculty have been encouraged particularly in the past couple of years to attend conferences, present papers, etc. as part of the development. This will continue in the future but there is an overall sense that there needs to be intentional planning to release available time. Covid has forced the institution and faculty to go online and the teaching methodology has remained what ETS now calls hybrid, where students can be either present or online. It has been and is a major learning curve for faculty, even though there have been some measures taken to equip them.

One additional issue: Faculty feel they could do with being fed back student evaluations so they can improve in their teaching. This will also enable them to implement practice reflection. This is presented by the VET as good practice advice rather than a formal recommendation.

Recommendations:

- While HR policies and practices are in place and mentioned in the SER, we recommend that ETS put together a comprehensive HR handbook with all relevant regulations and policies.
- We recommend that ETS ensure that all procedures relevant to any employment situation are clearly stated in writing so that someone can pick up the job when the existing person retires or where there are emergency situations.
- While faculty development is taking place in various ways, we recommend that ETS develop a written, formal and comprehensive faculty development plan.

Panel Conclusion: Substantial Compliance

Standard 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.

Previous recommendations (2017/18):

- Disciplinary procedure communicated in writing.
- Multiply efforts at setting up an effective alumni network.

Evidence of Compliance:

Documents reviewed:

- SER
- Chapel calendar
- Website
- Brochure
- Description of the study programme specialised graduate professional theological studies.
- Curriculum
- Erasmus+ Charter
- Information institutional booklet (both in paper and pdf)
- Facebook page

Meetings with:

- Faculty and senior educational staff
- Students
- Stakeholders
- Board
- Also, tour of the facilities

Analysis and Assessment:

Even though in recent years, the in-person community of students has significantly declined, the community, and specifically, the learning community is still very much an important aspect of the learning experience of the students at ETS, both in person and online. Some students reside on campus in a newly renovated facility that includes common spaces to foster community. The institution provides weekly chapel services and mentoring groups, where faculty model to emulate. Also, some extra-curricular activities (football, barbecues) are organised to foster community and there is a programme called “student body” where experienced students are available for students who have queries, needs, etc. The institution also operates with an “Open door” policy for students with respect to staff and faculty access.

The institution is in strong and good relationships with external stakeholders both represented in the Board and some key alumni connections, representing a varied range of church communities and other parachurch organisations including Roma, Hope for the Homeless and

other theological institutions such as in Zagreb and Romania. ETS shares some of its premises with the Evangelical Pentecostal Church Osijek and is well connected with several church denominations. In fact, ETS was founded by four Croatian churches which continue to be represented on the Board of ETS. Stakeholders met by the team are keen to foster and develop projects in partnership and they all show a high view of the institution. The 50th anniversary last year was an opportunity to bring this larger community together and year by year, there is a strong suite of events and conferences.

The alumni base is large and yet it is difficult to keep the alumni engaged in the life of the institution. ETS should consider how to improve or develop links with alumni - there does not seem to be a structure of maintaining links beyond a mailing list and informal relationships. No association is in place.

The institution (staff and faculty) has established strong relationships with the wider secular community. There are several traditional events that take place in the institution in which the community is invited to take part. ETS has close working relationships with the Croatian local government and cultural representatives. ETS is very strong in this standard relating to the civil community.

For external communication: The institution clearly makes the required information available both on the website and in the brochure. Both of them will need to be updated to a certain extent because of the changes in leadership.

For internal communication: The institution has most of the documents necessary available, but documentation is not organised in handbooks, for students or staff, thus making it difficult to locate information on various topics.

The possession of the Erasmus+ Charter is already helping to build academic links with other institutions in Europe.

Commendation:

We commend ETS on its engagement with the civil community - local and national.

Recommendations:

- The institution has excellent relationships with a section of their alumni, the VET recommends that ETS consider how to improve or develop links with other alumni who are less connected.
- While most relevant information is available to both students and faculty, we recommend that ETS gather this information together in a student handbook and a faculty handbook (see previous recommendation for a faculty handbook).

Panel Conclusion: Substantial Compliance

Standard 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.

Previous recommendations (2017/18):
“Hire a professional librarian”.

Evidence of Compliance:

Documents reviewed:

- SER
- Website
- Students’ folder

Experiences and Meetings with:

- Students
- Staff
- Registrar
- Classroom experience
- Two librarians and library tour
- Moodle platform
- Campus Tour

Analysis and Assessment:

ETS possesses strong student services - a comprehensive and good range of services. Online and part-time students attend three intensive weeks every semester, which grants them access to all the services provided by the institution, such as the library, chapel, and community life.

Having students physically in the classroom as well as online at the same time poses technological challenges in ensuring that each set of learners have as comparable a learning experience as possible. Systems are in place but there is a constant need to ensure comparability. Some classes are streamed live and students can participate in them. However, if the institution is going to continue to have students in class and online it should consider upgrading their classroom facilities to improve provision for online learners to facilitate online courses and virtual meetings.

The institution uses Moodle as its online learning platform for all courses in both programmes.

Although ETS has an IT person to assist with the process, some faculty members, particularly adjuncts, struggled to use Moodle fully. Ongoing training for adjunct faculty would be useful and should be part of the professional development policy and plan (see above).

The study facility is exceptional because of substantial investment over the years. ETS have renovated the dormitory and constructed a modern building for offices and classrooms. The facility is spacious and well-equipped. However, technology remains a challenge and requires

some enhancement and upgrades. In general, it is a great facility for students to utilise during their studies.

The library is a three-story building that houses more than 100,000 books, of which 80% are in English and 20% in Croatian. Its primary purpose is to cater to the needs of the institution's students and faculty. The books cover all the needs of the programmes. The library has two librarians working in shifts. Apart from regular use by the institution's community, the library also invites PhD students from all over the world to utilise its resources twice a year for a maximum of four weeks. During their stay, they can write, present, and engage in discussions with students and faculty. They hope also to use the institution's facilities as a cultural/artistic venue.

The registrar plays a critical role in maintaining student data. She does an excellent job of preserving and archiving all the necessary documentation for current students and graduates and tracking academic progress and the institution is reliant on her presence. However, she still spends a lot of time manually backing up information on paper instead of relying on software. The VET could not identify anyone responsible for data analysis. Most likely, such analysis has not taken place yet due to the institution's ongoing transition.

Commendations:

- The VET commends ETS on its excellent study facilities and how they are used for the wider community, international students and for events like the doctoral colloquium.
- The VET also commends ETS on its excellent library facilities and how they are used for the wider Christian community in the area and plans for it to develop as an international study centre.

Panel Conclusion: Full Compliance

Standard 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:

Documents reviewed:

- SER
- Mozvag2022__Analiticki_prilog_EN_20012_6631435130944067410.pdf
- Budget updated and separate from the SER provided

Meetings with:

- Board

Analysis and Assessment:

During the meeting with the Board, the team gained a thorough understanding of their financial model. The Board has multiple sources of funding, including students, endowment, property renting, and fundraising. With the endowment, they were able to purchase properties in Zagreb that generate substantial yearly income. Although the last budget showed a deficit, they are optimistic that the trend is reversing.

The institution has a finance office that consists of a cashier and an accountant. Their main responsibility is to ensure that the institution's finances are managed transparently, in accordance with the law and local best practices. The institution's financial books and processes are reviewed annually by an independent accredited auditor, and the findings are reported to the managing Board.

As per the Board's report, the institution is currently in a good position and is sustainable despite the aftermath of COVID-19 and the recent transition to a new Dean. They have a substantial reserve and a significant endowment that they have invested in properties to generate income for the institution. The new Dean is planning on fundraising trips to promote the new vision of the institution.

Stability is evidenced by 50 years of history, continuity with the new Dean and high commitment to the vision.

Although the SER mentions that the salaries provided are below the market standards, the Board has raised the salaries two times in the past few years. According to the Board, the staff is content with their current remuneration. The newly appointed Dean is aware of the issue of staff remuneration and has plans to address it within the renewed strategic plan.

The appointment of the new Dean marks the beginning of a fundraising plan. He believes it is his duty to establish connections and persuade potential donors to support the institution's vision. Although there is no written plan yet, he has clear intentions about how to approach fundraising. This links closely to the revised 4-5 year Strategic Plan that is top of the Dean and Board's priorities.

Panel Conclusion: Full Compliance

PROGRAMME STANDARDS

Standard B1 - 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:

Documents reviewed:

- SER
- Syllabi
- Description of the study programme
- Brochure/website
- Practical ministry regulations
- Chapel schedule
- Syllabus on practical training
- Practical ministry forms
- Practical ministry documents:
 - Evaluation questionnaires for mentors.
 - The application for practical ministry.
 - A diary of the student's practical ministry work.
 - The confirmation form of completed practical ministry.

Documents reviewed relating specifically to the EQF level 6 programme:

- Regulations on professional practice students (English)

Meetings with:

- Faculty
- Dean of students
- Students

Analysis and Assessment:

It is not clear how holistic integration in the programme is happening nor is it documented. From the syllabi the VET have received, none seem to show a clear integration. The stated learning outcomes are predominately academic. It is not clear how the module specific learning results are connected to the programme learning results. In discussion, the educational leadership has shared with us the intention to renew all their programmes soon. The institution also is constrained by the regulations of the country authorities who would not understand learning outcomes that are related to spiritual formation and character development. Nevertheless, the VET-members have extensively talked together about the need to integrate more fully and the comments have been taken on Board.

The following are some comments designed to help progress in this area and the team would expect these to be reflected in the new programme redesign.

The institution understands the ethos and need of holistic integration in theory. It comes through in conversations (faculty/students/stakeholders), information (website/brochures). It is also clearly laid out in the intention and description of the general curricula and the programme learning outcomes. In the institution, both educational and non-educational staff understand the ethos and need for spiritual formation and take opportunities both formally and informally to convey and apply it. Faculty in particular intentionally work on integrating not only in the classroom but as they share life with students. It is also clear that faculty are models of spiritual formation and character.

Nonetheless, there is no clear alignment between stated learning outcomes and learning activities, both in the classroom and the other curricula activities such as mentoring or practical ministry and some elements of the syllabi reviewed have only defined academic learning outcomes. Reference is made to how spiritual formation is mapped on to the curriculum and given credit - but specifics are not given (this seems to be a copy/paste statement from the standards). It is mentioned that spiritual formation is given attention, but it needs to be clear how it is assessed against learning outcomes and examples given so it would be evident that spiritual and character formation learning outcomes must happen in curriculum/subject design.

The VET agreed that ETS should design learning outcomes that integrate all academic, spiritual formation, character formation and practical formation and align learning activities to achieve such learning outcomes for both the syllabus, and all other curricular activities (mentoring, practical ministry). This is formulated in a recommendation and a requirement below that applies to this standard and to others listed.

Character education also needs attention. The response to this standard is very vague. The institution provides spaces that clearly provide opportunities for character development, some extra-curricular activities (football, barbecues) foster character formation and the questionnaire for mentors to evaluate practical ministry has a question to evaluate Christian character. However, more documented evidence is needed. There are no stated learning outcomes designed for character development nor is there clear assessment. How do pastors/mentors assess? How are they briefed? How is the assessment both impartial/objective and personal?

There is a much good practice evident in the academic achievement area. Syllabi are comprehensive with learning outcomes (academic), learning activities, contents and assessment. There is a wide range of learning activities and assessment.

Expectations and requirements for practical training are also clearly stated.

There is a wide range of areas and contextual opportunities of placement: campus life (chapel), local churches (student choice or suggested by the Dean of students), NGO's. However, again, the alignment between learning outcomes and learning activities is not clearly evident, even though faculty help students reflect on their own context and integrate what they have learned.

Students need to reflect on the practice. There are no clear guidelines on how practical placement mentors are briefed or trained although the Dean of Students meets with mentors to establish good relationships.

Mentoring takes place in ETS as students are divided in "mentoring" groups (both in-person and online) led by faculty and meet weekly. These groups are not officially part of the curriculum (no ECTS given) but are part of the weekly schedule and students are expected to be present. The meetings have an academic and spiritual formation component. This section in the SER is brief, however, and further documentation is needed. The VET found no evidence of the purpose and regulations of mentoring groups and there are no learning outcomes designed for the mentoring groups. It is not clear how mentoring is part of the curriculum and how it is organised or assessed. Mentoring also happens in the context of practical ministry (see above), where pastors are asked to supervise and assess students in their practical placement. Students are also helped to get involved in a local church.

The VET agreed that mentoring should be embedded more clearly in the formal curriculum and design purpose and regulations and learning outcomes for the mentoring groups. This was included within the recommendations and the requirement below.

Recommendations:

- While external mentors are actively involved in student professional training, we recommend that ETS provide clear guidelines on expectations and assessment for professionally training mentors and consider ways in which this training could be provided.
- The VET recommends that ETS applies the requirement below in all relevant areas (B.1.1 / B.1.2 / B.1.3 / B.1.6 / B.2.3) related to holistic education.

This recommendation is linked to the requirement below.

Requirement:

B.1.1 / B.1.2 / B.1.3 / B.1.6 / B.2.3: While curriculum maps are functioning, programme learning outcomes for both programmes need to be developed that integrate academic formation , spiritual and character formation along with , character formation and practical formation. Learning activities are to be aligned and assessed to achieve such learning outcomes, also with explicit reference to QF-EHEA, for both, the syllabus, and all other curricular activities (mentoring, practical ministry). Include mentoring as part of the formal curriculum and design purpose and regulations and learning outcomes for the mentoring groups. There should be two graduate profiles, one for each programme, aligning with the respective curricular maps. This process should result in a document that articulates the above requirement for working with holistic learning outcomes.

Panel Conclusion: None Compliance

Standard 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 & approval processes; B.2.2 Outcomes & fitness for purpose; B.2.3 Curricula, Module descriptors & learning activities; B.2.4 Graduate profiles; B.2.5 Content, level, feasibility & progression; B.2.6 Credit allocation & duration; B.2.7 Content; B.2.8 Monitoring processes.

Evidence of Compliance:

Documents reviewed:

- SER
- Report on changes to study programmes 2018-21
- Curriculum map (produced for state accreditation)
- Syllabi
- Diploma supplement
- Brochure
- Regulations on Quality Assurance
- Quality Assurance Strategy
- Questionnaire for employers
- Questionnaire for ETS teaching staff
- Questionnaire for ETS students

Documents reviewed relating specifically to the EQF level 6 programme:

- Curriculum undergraduate programme
- Elaborat specijalistickog diplomskog studija Teologije – EN
- Various syllabi for undergraduate courses

Documents reviewed relating specifically to the EQF level 7 programme:

- Curriculum graduate programme
- Elaborat strucnog studija Teologije – EN

Meetings with:

- Leadership Team
- Stakeholders
- Board
- Faculty
- Students

Analysis and Assessment:

Aspects relating to all programmes under review:

The professional Board adopts an implementation curriculum at the beginning of the academic year. In addition, ETS' curricula for both programmes will be further adjusted in accordance with the changes of the new Act on Higher Education of Croatia. These adjustments will be made based on external recommendations from experts and agencies as well as internal evaluations from students and stakeholders. There is a clear path of progression with allocated credits. Students can complete the EQF Level 6/First Cycle programme in 3 years (180 ECTS) and the EQF Level 7/Second Cycle programme in 2 years (120 ECTS). ECTS are also allocated for extra-curricular activities. Coursework workload information, quantified in ECTS, is available, along with module descriptors that quantify duration and credit count. Minimum completion time is also defined.

The institution is conscious of its context and strives to ensure that the learning outcomes are in line with the evolving circumstances. These outcomes comply with the "Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area." The institution warmly welcomes students from a variety of national and cultural backgrounds and views it as an essential part of its mission. The institution is situated in the southern part of Europe, specifically in the Balkans region. Its mission is to serve the region. The institution aims to cater to its constituents' unique needs while also adhering to the highest European educational standards, given its European embeddedness.

The institution values feedback and actively seeks input from all members of its community as well as external stakeholders through a variety of review processes. As part of the quality assurance process, ETS conducted several surveys with different stakeholders. Interviews with stakeholders and past students were impressive in terms of the variety of vocations being followed, in different cultural contexts, from high-level academic work to work with the excluded and marginalised (e.g. Roma).

However, the learning outcomes described in the syllabi do not align completely with a holistic approach. While some faculty members express a holistic approach in their teaching, they are unable to reflect this in their syllabi due to state accreditation requirements. In this respect also, the graduate profile needs to be developed for each programme. It is unclear if what ETS has in place is considered a graduate profile, or whether this rather describes how the objectives of the programme are outlined.

The recommendation and requirement below reflect this issue of the documentation of a holistic approach, which also occurs in standard B.1.

Aspects relating to individual programmes:

EQF Level 6/First Cycle: Graduate profile is articulated. This document dates back to the original launch of the nationally recognised programme in 2013 and is due to be updated. The graduate profile will be refreshed and updated in this process. The programme has been accredited by the Croatian state in 2022.

EQF Level 7/Second Cycle: Graduate profiles is articulated. This document dates back to the original launch of the nationally recognised programme in 2013 and is due to be updated. The graduate profile will be refreshed and updated in this process. The programme has been accredited by the Croatian state in 2022.

Commendations:

- The VET commends ETS on its very strong response to the political, social and spiritual context in Croatia and the region of Central and Eastern Europe.
- The VET commends ETS for actively engaging its stakeholders in the life of the institution including the development of its curriculum and teaching.

Recommendation: See recommendation for standards B.1.1 / B.1.2 / B.1.3 / B.1.6 / B.2.3 above.

Requirement: See requirement for standards B.1.1 / B.1.2 / B.1.3 / B.1.6 / B.2.3 above.

Panel Conclusion: Non Compliance

Standard 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.

Previous recommendations (2017/18):

“To put the assessment and right of appeal policies in writing.”

Evidence of Compliance:

Documents reviewed:

- Description of the study programme
- SER
- Student focused brochure
- Moodle - sample course
- Various syllabi
- Outline of various assessment strategies culled from syllabi
- QA Regulations Pravilnik o osiguranju kvalitete EN
- QA strategy Pravilnik o osiguravanju kvalitete - Strategija EN
- Diploma supplement
- ECTS points and workloads for students

Documents reviewed relating specifically to the EQF level 6/First Cycle programme:

- Curriculum undergraduate programme
- Elaborat specijalistickog diplomskog studija Teologije – EN
- Various syllabi for undergraduate courses
- Upitnik VETU studenti _ Questionnaire for ETS students odgovori
- Regulations on professional practice students

Documents reviewed relating specifically to the EQF Level 7/Second Cycle programme:

- Curriculum graduate programme
- Elaborat strucnog studija Teologije – EN
- Upitnik VETU studenti _ Questionnaire for ETS students odgovori

Meetings with:

- Senior Leadership Team and faculty
- Students
- Also, observation of lectures
- Also, access to Moodle VLE

Analysis and Assessment:

Aspects relating to all programmes under review:

Different teaching and assessment methods as well as student feedback processes in place although it was not easy to evaluate assessment variety beyond written documentation in the two detailed programme documents. The mentoring / cultural awareness document talks about mentoring and practical placements and the requirements for successful completion. The emphasis seems to be on hours/completion and may benefit from integration of critical self-evaluation / reflection by the student.

While there are substantial indicators of quality in learning and teaching as outlined in the standard and described in the documentation, the VET agreed that more could be done in this area in two ways:

1. That a stand-alone document setting out their education philosophy be produced, collecting the practice and present references to this in various sources and the institution articulate their philosophy of student-centred learning within this educational philosophy.
2. That adult pedagogy practices be applied to their full extent in their in-person and online delivery models where classes are heavily lecture based.

The SER mentioned delivery feedback in various places. The VET saw a student feedback questionnaire and also good policies on QA and monitoring of programme quality.

The Diploma Supplement document contains outline of Learning Objectives, ECTS, study hours, grades and comments about evaluation criteria.

Aspects relating to individual programmes:

EQF Level 6/First Cycle: In this documentation, reference is made to awareness that development is needed in student centred learning and training is planned.

The documentation includes regulations for periodic review of this programme.

EQF Level 7/Second Cycle: The documentation includes regulations for periodic review of this study programme.

Recommendation:

The VET-members noted that adult pedagogy and student-centred learning are present in the documentation and practice of ETS learning and teaching practice but recommend that a specific document of ETS's Educational Philosophy be produced.

Panel Conclusion: Substantial compliance

Standard 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.

Previous recommendations (2017/18):

"To hand out to graduates a Bologna type of "Diploma Supplement".

Evidence of Compliance:

Documents reviewed:

- Full description in SER
- Diploma supplement

Documents reviewed relating specifically to the EQF level 6 programme:

- Curriculum undergraduate programme
- Elaborat specijalistickog diplomskog studija Teologije – EN
- Various syllabi for undergraduate courses
- Upitnik VETU studenti _ Questionnaire for ETS students odgovori
- Regulations on professional practice students
- Mozvag2022_ LOs Study Programmes_IshodiUcenje_EN_20012_7511805809732512682
- ECTS points and workload doc

Documents reviewed relating specifically to the EQF level 7/Second Cycle programme:

- Curriculum graduate programme
- Elaborat strucnog studija Teologije – EN
- Upitnik VETU studenti _ Questionnaire for ETS students odgovori
- Mozvag2022_ LOs Study Programmes_IshodiUcenje_EN_20012_7511805809732512682

Meetings with:

- Registrar
- Leadership Team
- Students

Analysis and Assessment:

Aspects relating to all programmes under review:

There is a well-established admission process with clear steps, deadlines, and scholarship opportunities overseen by the admission committee. Well-tested processes as to admissions, interview, and academic qualifications. Because ETS is a Higher Education Institution, it works closely with the Croatian authorities in admitting students from outside the country. The VET did not see any formal documentation outside of the SER which has a full description of the regulations and processes. Under both state and ECTE accreditation, ETS recognises non-formal and informal learning.

The learning outcomes for each programme show clear progression and both programmes are accredited nationally and fit within EHEA standards. In addition, ETS offers a clear progression path from EQF Level 6/First Cycle to EQF Level 7/Second Cycle studies, and actively supports potential students interested in pursuing a PhD and a career in academics. ETS has gained Erasmus+ Charter in higher education 2021-27 and is negotiating partnerships with other theological institutions regarding student mobility, and faculty.

The commendation below came out of discussions with the leadership team, faculty, alumni, and stakeholders (who overlapped quite a bit). There is a good focus on developing leaders and thinkers within the Croatian context.

In compliance with the relevant regulations, ETS provides the necessary documentation, diplomas, and diploma supplements.

Commendation:

The VET was impressed with how ETS is actively encouraging students to pursue higher education and commends how the institution is actively investing in selected individuals regarding the development of future ETS faculty.

Panel Conclusion: Full Compliance

Standard 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:

Documents reviewed:

- Diploma Supplement
- SER
- Publicity brochures and documents
- ECTS points and student workload analysis
- Programme handbooks for undergraduate and graduate programmes
- Programme tables with ECT points per module

Documents reviewed relating specifically to the EQF Level 6/First Cycle programme:

- Curriculum undergraduate programme
- Elaborat specijalistickog diplomskog studija Teologije – EN

Documents reviewed relating specifically to the EQF Level 7/Second Cycle programme:

- Curriculum graduate programme
- Elaborat strucnog studija Teologije – EN

Meeting with:

- Registrar

Analysis and Assessment:

Aspects relating to all programmes under review:

The documents and staff are very clear and correct on nomenclature because of detailed understanding of Croatian law and state accreditation as well as ECTE accreditation.

ETS correctly defines expected student workload in their programmes in terms of ECTS in line with the European Framework for Qualifications and the ECTE Certification Framework.

ETS is informed and aware of international systems of credit counting. When a student from outside the EU applies, ETS Registrar must work with Croatian educational authorities who determine whether a student can enter the country. If they can, ETS works with international credit tables and with experts in various countries to determine what and how previous study in non-EU countries can transfer.

Panel Conclusion: Full compliance

E. CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS

1. A.1.2 The VET commends ETS for managing to navigate a period of significant change: appointing a new Dean after the retirement of Dr. Peter Kuzmic, achieving state re-accreditation in 2022 for undergraduate and graduate programmes as well as now negotiating a new Act on Higher Education regarding seminaries (2022-23) that has required a change of name (in Croatian only), some adjustments to governance structure and significant investment in faculty in order to meet national ranking criteria. ETS is strongly embedded within its Croatian context and, for this, has been pushed to develop its academic and legal frameworks.
2. A.1.4 The VET commends ETS for the detailed public information available on the website and institutional brochure. The webpage and brochure are in both in Croatian and English and detail essential practical, institutional and academic information.
3. A.2.2 The VET was impressed by, and wishes to commend, the leadership styles of the Dean and Vice-Deans and the General Secretary and how they work together as a team and with other staff and students. There is obviously in ETS, a strong culture of trust reflecting Christian values in working relationships that is evident in all staff we talked to, at all levels.
4. A.4.2 The VET commends ETS on its engagement with civil community - local and national.
5. A.5.2 The VET commends ETS on its excellent study facilities and how they are used for the wider community and international students and for events like the doctoral colloquium.
6. A.5.3 The VET also commends ETS on its excellent library facilities and how they are used for the wider Christian community in the area, and plans for it to develop as an international study centre.
7. B.2.7 The VET commends ETS on its very strong response to the political, social and spiritual context in Croatia and region of Central and Eastern Europe.
8. B.2.8 The VET commends ETS for actively engaging its stakeholders in the life of the institution including the development of its curriculum and teaching.
9. B.4.2 The VET was impressed with how ETS is actively encouraging students to pursue higher education and commends how the institution is actively investing in selected individuals regarding the development of future ETS faculty.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A.1.4 While there were updates in 2018-21, the VET recommends that the two programme catalogues are brought up to date as soon as possible and that any gaps in the public information listed in this standard be addressed during that process. In particular, given the significant changes in programme delivery with the use of hybrid classrooms for both programmes, it should be made very clear to students what study options are available and how they work in practice in learning experience of both remote and local students.
2. A.2.4 The VET recommends that the Academic Dean develop and renew the existing strategic plan along the lines of the advice in this report.
3. A.3.1 While HR policies and practices are in place and mentioned in the SER, the VET recommends that ETS put together a comprehensive HR handbook with all relevant regulations and policies.
4. A.3.2 The VET recommends that ETS ensure that all procedures relevant to any employment situation are clearly stated in writing so that someone can pick up the job when the existing person retires or where there are emergency situations.
5. A.3.3 While faculty development is taking place in various ways, the VET recommends that ETS develop a written, formal and comprehensive faculty development plan.
6. A.4.2 The institution has excellent relationships with a section of their alumni, the VET recommends that ETS consider how to improve or develop links with other alumni who are less connected.
7. A.4.4 While most relevant information is available to both students and faculty, the VET recommends that ETS gather this information together in a student handbook and a faculty handbook.
8. B.1.1 / B.1.2 / B.1.3 / B.1.6 / B.2.3 The VET recommends that ETS applies the requirement (9) below in all relevant areas related to holistic education.
9. B.1.5 While external mentors are actively involved in student professional training, the VET recommends that ETS provide clear guidelines on expectations and assessment for professional training mentors and consider ways in which training could be provided.
10. B.3.1 / B.3.2 We note that adult pedagogy and student-centred learning are present in the documentation and practice of ETS learning and teaching practice but the VET recommends that a specific document of ETS's Educational Philosophy be produced.

SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS

B.1.1 / B.1.2 / B.1.3 / B.1.6 / B.2.3 While curriculum maps are functioning, programme learning outcomes for both programmes need to be developed that integrate academic formation, spiritual formation, character formation and practical formation and align learning activities and assessment to achieve such learning outcomes, also with explicit reference to QF-EHEA, for both the syllabus, and all other curricular activities (mentoring, practical ministry). Include mentoring as part of the formal curriculum and design purpose and regulations and learning outcomes for the mentoring groups. There should be two graduate profiles, one for each programme. This process should result in a document that articulates the above requirement for working with holistic learning outcomes. See relevant recommendation above.

IN CONCLUSION

The VET recommends to the ECTE Accreditation Commission that Evandeosko teološko veleučilište, Evangelical Theological Seminary, Croatia (EVTOS, Osijek) be judged to be in compliance with the *Standards and Guidelines* of the ECTE in programme areas with the exceptions of the requirement listed above.

The team recommends to the ECTE Accreditation Commission that, subsequent to documenting compliance with the requirement, it grant ETS accreditation, with the relevant recommendations listed above monitored through the annual reporting processes of ECTE.

The VET would like to record their gratitude to ETS staff 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 ETS 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, assessment, conclusions, commendations, recommendations, and requirements.

The Visitation Team:

Signed:

Dr. Patrick Mitchell (Team Leader)

Dr. Edith Vilamajó Sanchis (VET member)

Walid Zailaa (Student Representative)

Dr. Graham Cheesman (Review Secretary)

November 2023

APPENDIX: VISITATION SCHEDULE

Wednesday, 18 October 2023

Time	Activity (Purpose)	Who is involved	Location
07.30-08.15 - Breakfast			
08.30-08.45	VET team shown to office space, initial team meeting.	VET, ETS person (J. Tešija)	ETS 2 nd floor, 202.2
09.00-10.00	Opening meeting with Senior Leadership Team (introductions, establishing purpose, strategic plan).	VET, Senior Leadership Team: RS (G. Cheesman) ETS Dean, Vice-Deans, Heads of Institutes (OSIMS, ISKUS)	VET room? + <u>zoom facility</u> ETS 3 rd floor, Faculty room
10.00-10.30	Tour of facilities (reviewing place, classrooms, offices, accommodation, IT etc).	VET, ETS personnel ETS Secretary (M. Seguin), Campus Manager (I. Kotris)	various
10.30-11.00 - Coffee/tea break			
11.00-12.00	Learning resources / library and online resources (reviewing library plans).	VET, ETS Librarians, Dean and IT manager & former Library Director (A. Seguin)	Library
12.00-13.00	Chapel: VET & ETS - Preaching: ETS Vice-Dean for academics (G. Thelmann)		J.J. Strossmayer's hall
13.00-13.45	Lunch with students (informal - gaining student input).	VET, students	ETS Cafeteria
14.00-15.00	Teaching staff (review faculty development: educational approaches and specialisations).	VET; faculty / lecturers (local and external)	ETS 3 rd floor, Faculty room
15.00-16.30	Attending classes (sampling learning experiences).	VET attending Introduction to Philosophy class	Parallel groups to different classes
16.30-18.00	Coffee & meeting students (official student representatives across programmes and an unofficial selection of students (Walid Zailaa) / meeting with alumni from different programmes).	Walid Zailaa and a selection of students / other VET members meet with alumni from different programmes.	Parallel groups - ETS students - Student Body Reps - ETS Alumni
18.00-19.00	Local Church service (Evangelical Pentecostal Church Osijek).	Translation provided – via translation app	On the campus
19.00-19.30 - Dinner			
19.30-20.30	VET: studying documents, exchanging findings of parallel agenda items.	VET	VET room

Thursday, 19 October 2023

Time	Activity	Who is involved	Location
07.30-08.15 - Breakfast			
09.00-10.00	Ac. Dean + select faculty on quality assurance (reviewing curriculum design and delivery / Teaching & Learning / Assessment system).	VET; Vice-Dean for academics (G. Thelmann), ETS Secretary (M. Seguin), Vice-Dean for students (D. Kovačević), Vice-Dean for International Rel (J. Tešija)	ETS 3 rd floor, Faculty room
10.00-10.30 - Coffee/tea break			
10.30-11.30	Non-educational staff representatives.	VET, non-educational staff: - Facilities & kitchen (I. Kotris) - Finance (S. Kotris) - Extra-curricular life (D. Kovačević)	work areas of the groups ETS offices
11.30-12.15	Holistic formation and community (reviewing mentoring processes, pastoral and personal care, character and spiritual formation).	VET, ETS personnel / mentors and tutors ETS mentors (D. Kovačević, A-M. Kool, M. Seguin, M. Wachsmooth) (via zoom)	ETS offices ETS 3 rd floor, Faculty room
12.15-13.00	Practical training & placements (reviewing ministry training and placements).	VET, ETS personnel including mentors (D. Kovačević, M. Segiun)	VET Room
13.00-13.45 - Lunch with students - (gaining student input).			ETS Cafeteria
13.45-14.45	Staff in educational admin (registration, databases, student records, assessments VLE. Links to samples of assessments and VLE shared before visit).	VET, ETS personnel (M. Špoljarić, M. Segiun, A. Segiun)	ETS Student Registrar Office
14.45-15.30	Board members (reviewing governance; organisational strategy; financial stability).	VET, ETS Board reps Various, some in person, others via Zoom	ETS 3 rd floor, Faculty room +Zoom
15.30-16.00 - Coffee/tea break			
16.00-16.45	Stakeholders (partnerships, relationships, community impact)	VET, select representative stakeholders	ETS 3 rd floor, Faculty room
17.00-18.00 - VET meeting and writing report			
18.00-18.45 - Dinner - ETS Cafeteria			
19.00-20.30 - VET meeting and writing report.			

Friday, 20 October 2023

Time	Activity	Who is involved	Location
07.30-08.15	Breakfast	VET	ETS Cafeteria
08.30-10.30	Report finalising (VET compiling and editing) / Other meeting(s) if required.	VET	VET Room
10.30-11.00	Coffee/tea break		
11.00-12.30	Report finalising (VET compiling and editing).	VET, RS (G. Cheesman)	VET room + Zoom with RS
12.30-13.15	Lunch		ETS Cafeteria
13.15-14.00	Final meeting (VET team leader leads).	VET, RS (G. Cheesman), Senior Leadership Team	VET room + Zoom with RS