

EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION DOCUMENTS

Bachelor in Bible Art

European Christian Academy

Jūrmala, Latvia

June 2025

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International evaluation and accreditation

EVALUATION REPORT

Bachelor in Bible Art

European Christian Academy

Jūrmala, Latvia

May 2025

The European Christian Academy (ECA) has mandated the Hcéres to perform the evaluation of its bachelor programme in Bible Art. The evaluation is based on the “External Evaluation Standards” of foreign study programmes, adopted by the Hcéres Board on September 18th 2024. These standards are available on the Hcéres website ([hceres.fr](https://www.hceres.fr)).

In the name of the expert committee¹ :

Mathieu Schneider, President of the committee

In the name of Hcéres¹ :

Coralie Chevallier, President

The High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (Hcéres) is an independent public authority. It is responsible for evaluating higher education and research institutions, research organisations, research units, and training programmes.

¹In accordance with articles R. 114-15 and R. 114-10 of the Research Code, evaluation reports are signed by the chairman of the expert committee and countersigned by the President of Hcéres.

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1. STUDY PROGRAMME IDENTITY SHEET

- University/institution: European Christian Academy
- Component, faculty or department concerned: None
- Programme's title: Bachelor Bible Art
- Training/speciality: Fine Arts
- Year of creation and context: 1997 after the independence of Latvia
- Site(s) where the programme is taught (Town and campus): Jūrmala, Latvia

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

- Surname, first name: Agnese Sējāne
- Profession and grade: Administrative staff member
- Main subject taught: none

METHODS AND RESULTS OF THE PREVIOUS ACCREDITATION(S)

- Methodology and agency: Latvian agency
- Results: Quality (4 out of 4), Resources (4 out of 4), Sustainability (4 out of 4), Cooperation (3 out of 4)

HUMAN AND MATERIAL RESOURCES DEDICATED TO THE PROGRAMME

- Human resources:

Teaching staff: breakdown by status (full professor, associate professor, assistant professor, invited professor, lecturer, instructor), full-time or part-time, gender and nationality, degree hold (PhD, Master, other), distribution by campus (if relevant),

No.	Gender	Status	Degree	Full-time/ Part-time	Nationality	Campus
1.	F	Professor	<i>Dr.philol.</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
2.	M	Professor	<i>Dr.habil.phil.</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
3.	M	Guest - Professor	<i>Dr. art.</i>	Part-time	Romanian	Jūrmala
4.	F	Associated guest professor	<i>Dr.art.</i>	Part-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
5.	M	Professor	<i>Dr.theol.</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
6.	F	Associated Professor	<i>Dr.theol.</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
7.	M	Professor	<i>Dr.theol.</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
8.	F	Assistant	<i>Dr.hist. in church history</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
9.	F	Professor, painter	<i>Mag.art.</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
10.	F	Associated Professor, painter	<i>Mag.art.</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
11.	F	Professor, graphic artist	<i>Mag.art.</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
12.	M	Assistant Professor	<i>Dr.theol.</i>	Part-time	American	Jūrmala
13.	M	Assistant Professor, iconographer	<i>Mag.art.</i>	Part-time	Russian	Jūrmala

No.	Gender	Status	Degree	Full-time/ Part-time	Nationality	Campus
14.	F	Assistant Professor, history of arts	<i>Mag.art. history of arts</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
15.	M	Associated Professor, iconographer	<i>Dr.theol.</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
16.	M	Assistant Professor	<i>Mag.theol.</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
17.	M	Assistant Professor, Calligrapher	<i>Mag.art.</i>	Part-time	Macedonian, German	Jūrmala
18.	F	Assistant Professor, Iconographer	<i>Mag.sc.sal., Mag.art.</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
19.	F	Assistant professor, painter	<i>Mag.art.</i>	Full-time	Russian	Jūrmala
20.	F	Assistant professor, iconographer	<i>Mag.art.</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
21.	F	Assistant professor, iconographer	<i>Mag.art.</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
22.	F	Assistant professor, iconographer	<i>Mag.art.</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
23.	M	Lecturer, liturgical arts	<i>Mag.theol.</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
24.	F	Lecturer, history of Latvian arts	<i>Mag.theol.</i>	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala

Non-teaching staff: breakdown by degree hold (PhD, Master, other), status (permanent, under contract), full-time or part-time, gender and nationality, distribution by campus (if relevant).

No.	Gender	Degree hold (PhD, Master, etc.)		Status (permanent, under contract)	Full-time/ Part-time	Nationality	Campus
1.	F	Mag.art.	Study department management and administration	Permanent	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
2.	F	Mag.sc.ing.	Financial accounting and bookkeeping	Permanent	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
3.	M	Mag.theol.	Coordinator of international studies and Erasmus+	Permanent	Full-time	Latvian	Jūrmala
4.	M	Mag.sc.ing.	Computer system administrator, IT specialist	Under contract	Part-time	Latvian	Jūrmala

- Digital resources for steering and monitoring, teaching, documentation and internal/external communication

Adequate IT provision:

Zoom platform;

Moodle platform

Access to scientific databases;

Access to Wi-Fi connection;

Various IT, photo and video equipment necessary for the study process.

- Rooms and technological equipment

Location: Vienības prospekts 23, Jūrmala, LV-2010 (European Christian Academy)

Legal status and purpose of use of the premises: educational institution

Surface: 455,7 m².

The study programme is implemented in beautiful, renovated premises in Jūrmala. The Academy moved to new, renovated premises at Vienības prospekts 23. The infrastructure of the university is adequate for academic work.

In the current premises, on the 1st floor of the university there is a Library (20,9 m²), Reading Room (33,1 m²), Chapel (auditorium No.1; 62,4 m²), an Art Therapy and Iconography Class (auditorium no. 2; 41,2 m²); Painting and Drawing classes (auditorium no. 3; 51,9 m² and no. 4; 44,3 m²). the Senate Hall, and work offices are located on the 2nd floor.

Academic library (approx. 15,500 items), copying, printing, scanning equipment. The Library of the Academy is a member of the Latvian Library Universal Catalog (LIIS). Nine databases are available through signed cooperation agreements with the National Library of Latvia (EBSCO, Rubicon, Britannica Online, Academic Edition, AkadTerm, Encyclopedia of Religions, Mythica, Central Intelligence Agency, etc.)

Personal computers (5 pcs.) – for information processing.

Copiers (5 pcs.).

STUDENT POPULATION: EVOLUTION AND TYPOLOGY OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS, INCLUDING NUMBERS OF GRADUATES

- Number of students enrolled (per year)

Bible Art Bachelor	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Nbr. of student enrolled	8	5	9	6	8

- Statistics on students over the last four years

		2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Year 1	Male	-	-	1	-	-
	Female	8	5	8	6	8
	Nationals	8	4	8	6	8
	Foreigners	-	1	1	-	-
	Student with grants / fundings	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL	8	5	9	6	8
Year 2	Male	-	-	-	1	-
	Female	8	8	8	3	5
	Nationals	6	8	7	3	5
	Foreigners	2	-	1	1	-

	Student with grants / fundings	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL	8	8	8	4	5
Year 3	Male	-	-	-	-	-
	Female	5	7	7	5	5
	Nationals	5	5	7	4	4
	Foreigners	-	2	-	1	1
	Student with grants / fundings	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL	5	7	7	5	5
Year 4	Male	-	-	-	-	-
	Female	4	5	6	6	6
	Nationals	4	5	4	6	5
	Foreigners	-	-	2	-	1
	Student with grants / fundings	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL	4	5	6	6	6
Graduates	Male	-	-	-	-	-
	Female	4	5	5	5	6
	Nationals	4	5	3	5	5
	Foreigners	-	-	2	-	1
	Student with grants / fundings	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL	4 (100%)	5 (100%)	5 (62% of cohort)	5 (62% of cohort)	6 (100%)

Year 1 (19/20) – Year 2 (20/21) – Year 3 (21/22) – Year 4 (23/24) – 1 cohort of BA students / graduates

Year 1 – Year 2 – Year 3 – Year 4 – 1 cohort of BA students / graduates

Year 1 – Year 2 – Year 3 – Year 4 – 1 cohort of BA students / graduates

2. COMPOSITION OF THE EXPERTS PANEL

Chair:

- Mathieu Schneider, full professor, musicology (University of Strasbourg)

Experts:

- Caroline Arnould-Béhar, associate professor in history of art, Institut catholique de Paris
- Antonella Bellantuono, associate professor in history of religions, Université catholique de Lille
- Mathilde Leïchlé, PhD student in history of art, Université Paris-Cité

Hcéres was represented by Nicolas Zorzin, Head of project, Europe and International Department.

3. EVALUATION PROCESS

VISIT DESCRIPTION

- Date of the visit: 5-7 May 2025
- Summary of the proceedings: During the on-site visit, the panel met with ca. 40 individuals over a span of three days, following the schedule included hereinafter. Once written by the panel chair, the report was circulated to all panel members for review.
- Organisation of the visit: The visit has been organised by ECA in a permanent dialogue with HCERES.
- Cooperation of study programme and institution to be accredited: The university provided full access to the areas and documents, and answered all the committee's questions.
- People met: See below.
- Any problems: The committee had to clarify on several occasions the specific methodology of the evaluation process, especially the confidentiality and exclusivity of the interviews, which do not permit the participation of individuals who were not formally listed as interviewees. This aspect poses some challenges, particularly due to the need for continuous translation from Russian or Latvian and the varying levels of English fluency among interviewees.

PEOPLE MET

Date	Hour	Interviews
5 May 2025	10h00 - 12h30	1/ Opening session with top management Top Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor and Rector of the ECA, Vice-rector of the ECA, and Chairman of the Senate Iconography and Calligraphy teachers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study program director, study program consultative director, and 8 assistant professors.
	14h00 – 15h00	Visit of the Jurmala Orthodox Church to see a Master student's icons restorations
	15h00 - 17h00	Display of Bachelor and Master study programme Diploma works in Iconography
6 May 2025	10h00 - 11h30	2/ Presentation of the Bachelor and the Master & Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study program director, professor and graphic painter, associate professor and painter, and assistant professor and painter
	11h30 - 12h30	3/ Bachelor and Master Teaching staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rector of ECA, 3 professors, 7 assistant professors, and 1 guest professor
	14h30 – 16h00	4/ Alumni & Employers of the Bachelor and Master programs External actors:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pastor of Ev. Luth Church, priest of Latvian Orthodox Church, bishop of Roman Catholic church in Latvia, cultural un public affairs officer of Embassy of Israel to Latvia, National Museum of Arts, Museum of Foreign Arts (Latvia) <p>Alumni:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iconographer of Latvian Orthodox Church, iconographer of Latvian Orthodox Church, master study program, and tattoo artist
7 May 2025	10h00 - 11h30	<p>5/ Quality assurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 academic accreditation representatives, rector, 3 assistant professors, study program director, study department
	11h30 – 13h00	<p>6/ Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 MA Student 8 BA Students
	13h30 – 14h30	<p>7/ Closing session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professor, Rector of the ECA Vice-rector of the ECA Study program director Assistant Professor

40 participants were met during the interviews.

4. OVERALL PRESENTATION

1 – PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The European Christian Academy (ECA) is a private university located in Jūrmala, in the western suburbs of Riga, Latvia. The institution was initially founded in 1993 to address the training needs of icon painters within the context of renewed religious and cultural freedom following the fall of the Soviet regime. Due to its small size, ECA is not divided into faculties but instead offers three main academic programmes: Theology, Bible Art, and Social work.

The bachelor in Bible art (BArt) was first accredited in 1997, four years after the Academy's establishment. This four-year programme awards 240 ECTS credits and typically trains between five and ten students per cohort. It focuses on the painting and restoration of icons for Latvia's three major Christian denominations: Lutheran, Catholic and Orthodox. Combining practical teaching in drawing and painting with theoretical teaching in theology, philosophy, anthropology and art history, the programme maintains active engagement with various religious and cultural institutions across Latvia. It also benefits from partnerships with several universities in neighbouring Baltic states.

The programme is open to both first-time and continuing education students, and is offered in Latvian, Russian and English.

2 - PRESENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME'S SELF-EVALUATION APPROACH

The programme's self-evaluation was documented through a package that included the Self-Evaluation Report, an Identity Sheet, a Swot Analysis, and a set of annexes compiled in a single document entitled "Evidence". The self-evaluation was overall thorough and well-prepared. During the visit, the committee was able to gather additional insights through interviews with students, faculty, senior management, alumni and external stakeholders. The visit also included presentations, exhibitions, and tours of the Academy's facilities, including its art gallery and teaching venues.

3 – FOLLOW-UP OF THE PREVIOUS HCERES RECOMMANDATIONS

There were no previous recommendations by HCERES, since it is the first evaluation done by our evaluation agency. Previous recommendations of the Latvian evaluation agency in 2013 were:

1. Student admission criteria should be improved by developing admission regulations;
2. Experts recommend developing wider cooperation with creative associations and art professionals;
3. Develop wider international cooperation;
4. Introduce a church music study program.

Recommendations 1-2 have been taken in account. Recommendation 3 has partially been implemented. Further international cooperation is still expected. Recommendation 4 is for the moment not possible by lack of financial means.

5. EVALUATION REPORT

FIELD 1- TEACHING POLICY AND CHARACTERISATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The Bachelor study programme in Bible Art (Bart) is fully aligned with the European Christian Academy's educational strategy and reflects the core values upon which the institution was founded.

This specialised programme offers advanced technical training in icon painting, complemented by a strong theoretical foundation. This theoretical component is closely linked to the institution's founding vision and mission.

ECA is a private Christian institution established by its current rector, Prof. Skaidrīte Gūtmane, with the aim of contributing to the reconstruction of Latvian society following the collapse of communism. The Academy's mission includes restoring the cultural heritage of religious icons—many of which were destroyed or damaged under Soviet rule—and re-establishing spirituality as a key dimension of personal and societal development. Promoting interreligious harmony is also considered vital for national cohesion. The programme frequently references the concept of "Judeo-Christian-Orthodox anthropology," which appears prominently in its descriptions and informs its philosophical and theological framework. In this context, the term refers to the study of the human being (*Anthropos*) in relation to God—a perspective distinct from the academic discipline of anthropology, which focuses on the comparative study of humanity's physical and social characteristics across different cultures and historical periods.

The curriculum is deeply rooted in the Bible and Patristic writings, particularly to foreground the Byzantine heritage and foster a renewed sense of European identity for Latvia grounded in Christian tradition. The Academy advocates what it calls "classical European values," with an emphasis on tradition and continuity. ECA is a member of the European Centre for Workers' Questions (EZA), an organisation that promotes "social-ethical principles that are found in Christian social teaching". Students are encouraged to participate in EZA seminars as part of their broader formation. Reinforcing Orthodox Christianity is another institutional goal, with the training of artists in creating and restoring icons seen as a direct contribution to this objective.

The BArt programme has no equivalent in the Baltic region, with few comparable offerings elsewhere, positioning it as reference point in this specialised field.

As the primary aim of the programme is to train artists capable of decorating Latvian churches, its international outreach remains limited.

The Academy maintains a clearly Latvian orientation but has established cooperative ties with universities in neighbouring countries, particularly Klaipėda and Vilnius in Lithuania. These partnerships are evident in the participation of visiting professors and of short-term student mobility through the Erasmus+ programme. A longstanding connection with the Holy Land has also enabled students to join archaeological excavations in Israel and the Palestinian territories, especially during the programme's first fifteen years. Additional targeted partnerships exist with institutions in Norway and Greece (Crete).

The international dimension of the Bachelor's programme is further reflected in the presence of faculty members and students from diverse national backgrounds.

Nonetheless, broader international engagement could be beneficial. This may be achieved through expanded academic partnerships with institutions in related fields, increased faculty contributions to international journals, or the organisation of thematic workshops that bring together researchers from different countries to explore shared areas of interest.

Students are engaged in research to some extent, but the curriculum does not place a strong emphasis on it.

To graduate, students must submit an original thesis (in Latvian, Russian or English), which encourages them to engage in research activities. They are supported in this process through access to the Academy's library as well as the National Library of Riga.

The research environment is generally supportive:

- The library, housed in the same building as the classrooms, provides convenient access and holds a collection of approximately 15,000 volumes.
- Bachelor's students benefit from regular interaction with Master's students and close mentorship from faculty members.

Faculty members are required to publish two academic articles annually, and the qualification awarded by the University of Applied Sciences is a prerequisite for their recruitment.

Nevertheless, the programme's primary purpose is clearly oriented towards practical artistic training. This focus explains the relatively limited role that research plays within the Bachelor's curriculum.

The program is fully aligned with the needs of local churches while also preparing graduates for integration into other professional sectors.

Both the European Christian Academy and the BArt study programme respond to ecclesiastical needs in several key ways:

- There is consistent demand for the creation of canonical icons, primarily from Orthodox churches, but also from Catholic and Lutheran congregations. The Church remains the principal source of commissions for graduates;
- In the broader context of restoring and preserving Orthodox heritage, skilled artists are needed to restore icons and church painting decorations;
- The Academy also contributes to the training of clergy across different congregations for both practical and spiritual purposes. Notably, twelve members of the Lutheran Church have received training at ECA.

Private icon commissions represent an additional market segment, including requests from hospitals and private individuals. One alumna reported receiving approximately six such commissions annually, with some originating from Western Europe and the United States.

Beyond the religious sphere, the programme equips students with competencies relevant to the broader job market, notably within the cultural and creative sectors. Throughout their studies, students engage with prominent Latvian cultural institutions—such as museums, galleries, and libraries. For instance, classes are regularly held at the Art Museum Riga Bourse and the manuscript department of the National Library of Latvia (for calligraphy). Professionals from museums and galleries are occasionally invited to teach. Students also take part in organising exhibitions, which supports their integration into the cultural sector. Alumni have pursued diverse paths, including roles in cultural mediation, private museums management, design, school administration, and exhibition curation. The high quality of artistic instruction also enables students to work in fields such as interior decoration (as freelance artists collaborating with designers), tattoo artistry, and textile painting.

In conclusion: The study programme is fully aligned with the institution's foundational principles and objectives. It stands as a unique and essential contribution to the revitalisation of Orthodox religious art and the affirmation of Latvian cultural identity. The successful integration of graduates into the labour market reflects both the programme's high academic and artistic standards, and the strong, sustained connections between the European Christian Academy and the relevant professional sectors—connections from which students benefit directly throughout their training.

FIELD 2 – PEDAGOGICAL ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The programme's structure and teaching methods are of high quality, fostering both technical and personal development

The programme delivers high-quality, well-structured teaching, with a clear focus on students' individual progression throughout the Bachelor's cycle. Learning objectives and expected competencies are explicitly communicated, allowing students to understand the outcomes they are expected to achieve at each stage. This structured progression is particularly evident in practical courses such as drawing, painting, and iconography.

The pedagogical approach is rooted in strong technical rigour, drawing inspiration from classical traditions such as the St. Petersburg school of fine arts, an increasingly rare model in today's art education landscape. This solid foundation enables students to develop a broad artistic repertoire expanding beyond icon painting to include other disciplines such as calligraphy. This diversity of training equips graduates with a range of versatile and transferable skills relevant to professional fields such as museum management, restoration, and social work.

The curriculum integrates theoretical, artistic, and practical components in a balanced manner, fostering a holistic understanding of iconographic art. In addition to artistic techniques, students acquire valuable soft skills such as patience, discipline, and precision, that are essential for both professional success and personal development.

Finally, the committee noted that during the interviews, some references were made to courses in areas such as narrative or art therapy. However, these offerings were not clearly described in the self-evaluation report, nor were they listed in the BA programme documentation provided. Despite targeted questions during the visit, the nature, scope, and status of these courses remained unclear. Greater clarity and alignment between documented materials and interview responses would have been necessary to fully assess the relevance and integration of such components within the programme.

The pedagogical approach is built on a strong commitment from the teaching team to support each student's academic development

Courses may be delivered simultaneously in multiple languages—Russian, Latvian, and English—thereby enhancing accessibility and facilitating comprehension for a diverse student body. This multilingualism is part of a broader commitment to flexible and personalised learning.

The quality of the learning environment is further reinforced by professional-grade resources, including fully equipped studios, specialised tools, and painting models, all of which support intensive hands-on artistic training. Students benefit from close supervision, with regular home assignments and frequent evaluations that ensure consistent and structured academic progress.

Hybrid teaching formats — especially for theoretical subjects — offer additional flexibility, helping students manage their time more effectively. This personalized support was also highlighted by three international students from the St. Ignatius Loyola University of Applied Sciences in Vilnius, who reported receiving attentive academic guidance as well as assistance with practical matters such as housing during their stay.

The international accessibility of the programme could be significantly strengthened.

At present, the programme exhibits limited international openness, even if 20 partnerships with international universities are mentioned in the self-evaluation report. More generally, it lacks a coherent strategy for fostering mobility. Outgoing Erasmus participation remains minimal (2-3 students per year) and is not actively promoted, even though some students have expressed interest in exchanges with Western European institutions. While individual consultations with professors are possible, there is no clearly defined mobility framework, nor structured linguistic or preparatory support to facilitate such opportunities. This could be addressed by implementing a more transparent and accessible mobility system, including dedicated information sessions, presentations of partner institutions, and clearer pathways for participation.

Similarly, the programme currently offers no dedicated options for incoming students, such as short-term training modules. This limitation is partly due to the programme's highly specialised curriculum ("niche"), which restricts compatibility with broader exchanges schemes. Nevertheless, targeted areas—such as calligraphy instruction in the Scriptorium—could serve as entry point for exchanges with institutions focused on related disciplines.

Despite current limitations, the programme holds strong potential to expand its international dimension. Strategic partnerships with institutions offering complementary training — such as the "Sacred Art School" in Florence, the Vatican Apostolic Library's School of Library Science, or the Iconographic Academy in Brussels — could enhance the educational offer while exposing students to a variety of artistic traditions and methodologies. Such collaborations would not only enrich the curriculum but also support students' academic growth and intercultural development.

Finally, offering an optional English course could further support students with limited language proficiency, enhancing their ability to attract commissions and participate in restoration or training projects abroad.

The programme effectively responds to lifelong learning and socio-economic needs

The programme attracts a diverse student body, including many mature learners who are already professionally active and seek either a career shift or a deeper engagement with artistic, spiritual, and religious practice through the study of icon painting. The training is characterised by a high level of technical and conceptual rigour, aligned with the strict canonical standards required for icons to be consecrated by ecclesiastical authorities.

Importantly, the programme also plays an ecumenical role, welcoming students from various Christian denominations. Some are sent by their respective churches to acquire iconographic techniques—even when these do not traditionally belong to their own confessional frameworks. This openness fosters dialogue and mutual understanding between Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant traditions.

Professional integration is encouraged from the outset. Students are invited to participate in public exhibitions, which enhance both their artistic visibility and entrepreneurial skills. Beyond the sphere of religious art, the programme facilitates engagement in broader European contexts—for instance, through participation in seminars organised by the European Centre for Workers' Questions (EZA), which address major social issues such as labour mobility, migration, education, equal opportunity, and youth engagement.

In conclusion, the programme offers a high-quality, student-centred education that successfully integrates artistic, spiritual, and professional development within a rigorous and coherent pedagogical framework. Its core strengths include technical excellence, personalised mentoring, and a strong alignment with the needs of lifelong learners. Although the current international strategy remains limited, there is significant potential through targeted partnerships and mobility schemes. Strengthening the programme's global accessibility would not only enhance its visibility but also increase its cultural and academic relevance within the broader European higher education landscape.

FIELD 3 – STUDENTS' PATHWAY

The study programme enjoys a strong national reputation, which significantly contributes to its appeal. Nonetheless, its visibility could be further enhanced through the implementation of targeted outreach initiatives.

Latvian students interested in icon painting or in integrating a spiritual and theological dimension into their artistic practice are typically introduced to the programme through word-of-mouth. They tend to enrol after completing secondary education, following prior studies in visual arts, or upon recommendation from their parish or religious congregation. The programme is perceived as a highly specialised and high-quality alternative to secular art programmes offered at the Art Academy of Latvia in Riga. Most international students come from Lithuania and are introduced to the programme through institutional partnerships, particularly with Klaipėda University and St. Ignatius Loyola University of Applied Sciences.

The programme's appeal lies in its niche positioning. Its strength is further reinforced by the commitment of the Rector, Professor Skaidrīte Gūtmane, and the teaching staff, who actively promote the programme through media engagement and by cultivating a strong network within Latvian cultural and religious communities. Outreach initiatives, such as the "Teens Without Screens" project, contribute to establish ties with secondary schools in Latvia and with partner institutions abroad, notably in Norway, Finland, and Lithuania.

Although there is fixed admission quota, class sizes remain small—typically around eight students per year. This is due to the programme's specialised nature, the need for alignment with the ECA's spiritual values, and the relatively high tuition fees.

The BArt programme would benefit from increased visibility through the organisation of targeted initiatives such as open days, stronger integration into Erasmus+ exchange networks, and the provision of scholarships or financial aid. Financial support mechanisms could be developed through private philanthropy, dedicated fundraising campaigns, or the creation of a philanthropic foundation affiliated with the Academy. Such initiatives would not only enhance the programme's public profile but also promote greater accessibility and diversity among prospective students.

The programme ensures high student success through personalised academic support tailored to individual needs and through the accessibility of both teaching and administrative staff.

Faculty members play a key role in facilitating student integration by providing individualised guidance and adapting instruction as necessary. Practical teaching is equally attentive to specific requirements—for instance, accommodating left-handed students or those who need quiet environments to concentrate. This bespoke approach, combined with pedagogical rigour and effective methodologies, allows even students with no prior experience to progress rapidly and attain a high level of technical proficiency alongside a solid foundation in theoretical knowledge.

A hallmark of the program is its regular and direct engagement with works of art. Courses take place not only at the ECA's premises but also in archives and museums, where students study drawing, painting, calligraphy, and art analysis, cultivating a refined visual sensibility. From the outset of their undergraduate studies, students combine practical training with theoretical coursework. The completion of a research thesis, supported by the resources of the ECA's library, is a graduation requirement. This contextualised approach to both the observation and the creation of artworks prepares students to enter the professional world as well-rounded and highly competent practitioners.

Small class sizes and the Academy's strong commitment to student-support, embodied in the motto "We believe in the power of students", allow for flexible and adaptive learning environment. As most students work alongside their studies, the Academy accommodates this with flexible scheduling. Studios are available during standard opening hours, with the possibility of extended access upon request. The Moodle platform facilitates remote learning, provides access to course materials, and support direct communication with professors. Faculty and administrative staff remain consistently accessible and responsive. The Academy's physical layout fosters a close-knit, collegial atmosphere that reflects its broader commitment to a supportive, student-centred educational experience.

Erasmus students are warmly welcomed and supported throughout their transition, with particular attention given to practical matters such as securing accommodation. A strong sense of peer support is cultivated throughout the programme: students regularly meet to discuss coursework. At the conclusion of each course, students are invited to evaluate the instructor's teaching and pedagogical approach.

Although some students discontinue the programme each year (typically due to evolving professional goals, a lack of alignment with the ECA's spiritual ethos, or financial constraints), many of these departures could potentially be prevented. The introduction of targeted scholarships, supported by private donations or targeted fundraising initiatives, would enhance retention and ensure that talented students can pursue their studies regardless of financial circumstances.

The Bachelor's study programme offers strong employability outcomes upon graduation, as well as excellent preparation for continued studies at the Master's level within the ECA.

Through high-quality instruction and regular exposure to professional settings, the programme effectively prepares students for entry into the labour market. Students frequently participate in exhibitions, allowing them to showcase their work and connect with potential patrons. Professional integration is further supported by a well-established network, particularly within religious, museum, and cultural sectors. An annual Career Day facilitates direct engagement with religious congregations and private clients interested in commissioning icons. Graduates are equipped with skills in both the creation and restoration of icons and are also well-prepared for roles in museum professional settings—as guides, curators, or director—as well as in education.

Students have the opportunity to publish their research in the ECA's institutional journal (non-peer-reviewed), with the guidance and support of faculty advisors. The programmes' integration of theoretical and practical components also enables students to secure project grants, particularly in the areas of restoration and conservation for local churches.

Graduates maintain close ties with the ECA and often turn to their former professors for professional advice or recommendations. The ELEUSA Alumni Association serves a valuable platform, bringing together iconographers trained at the Academy, compiling their CVs, and promoting their work to potential clients to support the commissioning process.

In conclusion, the Bachelor study programme BArt is widely recognized in Latvia for its academic rigour, high-quality instruction, personalised support, and strong professional outcomes. Its distinctive curriculum, methodological excellence, and genuinely student-centred approach make it a high-quality program, particularly well-suited for future icon painters, artists, museum professionals, and educators seeking to incorporate traditional techniques, such as drawing, painting, and various calligraphic styles, with a spiritual dimension in their practice. The programme's attractiveness could be further enhanced through expanded communication initiatives (such as "open days" or "career days"), deeper participation in the Erasmus+ network, and the establishment of privately funded scholarships. Initiatives such as a philanthropic foundation or targeted crowdfunding campaigns could also be considered. These measures would promote broader access and inclusion for students from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

FIELD 4 – ACADEMIC PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The study programme benefits from extensive, high-quality support.

A total of 30 teachers are involved in delivering the Bachelor BArt programme. Among them, seven are professors (including two visiting professors); 19 are associate or assistant professors; and four are lecturers. This sizable and well-organised teaching body ensure that students receive individualised supervision and academic

guidance. The average teacher-to-student ratio is 3.71 to 1, an exceptionally high figure that reflects the programme's artistic nature and the consequent need for close individual mentoring.

The teaching staff is composed of both academics and practising professionals, all of whom hold at least a Master's degree. This guarantees the quality of the teaching and demonstrates the strong, consubstantial link between the study programme and the professional world.

The roles and responsibilities of teaching staff are clearly defined in accordance with the ECA's internal quality assurance framework, notably through the LOGOS platform. Professional relationships among staff are based on subsidiarity and mutual trust, fostering an effective and collaborative learning environment.

The premises and equipment available to students and staff are of a high standard and well aligned with the programme's objectives and teaching methods.

The ECA is committed to supporting the career development of its teachers and to the renewal of its teaching body. It actively encourages its most promising Master's students to pursue doctoral studies at other universities in the Baltic region. These graduates then acquire the qualifications required to teach on the highly specialised Bible art programme, for which the eligible teaching pool remains limited.

In addition to the 30 academic teaching staff, the programme is supported by four non-teaching staff, based in premises immediately adjacent to the teaching facilities. This physical proximity fosters regular and fluid communication with students. The decision to locate all of the ECA's activities in a single building in Jūrmala ensures a high degree of informal and formal interaction between students and teaching staff, enhancing the exchange of information and contributing to a cohesive academic environment. These premises, though modest in size (comprising two floors of a villa and an annex with three flats for visiting professors), are situated in an idyllic setting in the heart of Jūrmala residential area. They are open to students during the day (from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and occasionally until 9 p.m. for evening classes). Facilities include several teaching rooms tailored to various course formats, and a specialised library focused on arts and theology. The ECA provides students with the necessary materials and tools for art and calligraphy classes (such as pencils and brushes). The environment is conducive to concentrated study, and artistic practice, and reflective learning. With small student cohorts (approximately 30 students in total across the full Bachelor's cycle), the programme fosters a tight-knit academic community. This is further strengthened by the ECA's clear affirmation of Christian values, which underpin both its pedagogical ethos and the shared sense of purpose between students and professors.

Looking ahead, attention must be paid to the financial sustainability of the Academy. The former ECA building, which belongs to the founding rector, was closed due to high operating costs. The institution has since reallocated to a more modest and energy-efficient site. Nevertheless, the former premises have not yet been sold, leaving the Academy in a financially fragile position. This situation could have an impact on tuition fees, currently set at €2,000 per year, which is already considered high by Latvian standards. That said, the ECA has put in place monitoring indicators to assess training cost and guide future decisions regarding the property and operational management.

The programme benefits from a robust quality management system, which enables the collection of suggestions for improvement from both students and lecturers.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the ECA introduced a comprehensive Quality Charter, published on the institutional LOGOS platform. This document articulates the university's core values and strategic vision, outlines the role of its partners, and defines the overall structure of its governance. It serves both as the institutions' internal regulations and as a reference for all operational procedures.

The study programme council is responsible for monitoring and improving the training programme. It comprises the programme head, three teachers, and one student representative, who is elected by their peers. Under national legislation, the curriculum may be adjusted by up to 5% per year, and by up to 30% over the course of the accreditation cycle. Both students and lecturers report high levels of satisfaction with this arrangement. As many of the teaching staff are also active professionals, the study programme council integrates critical input from external stakeholders. The principle of subsidiarity, clearly defined in the ECA documentation, ensures that the council can make informed proposals to the University Senate via the programme director.

The programme has also undergone regular external evaluations as part of accreditation procedures. The most recent accreditation, originally granted in 2013, was extended in 2020 for a further three years. This marked the first time the ECA engaged the services of a foreign evaluation agency, demonstrating its commitment to international standards.

The university's quality approach is transparent and known to its users. It is based on strong moral values and high ethical standards.

All quality-related processes, as outlined above, are made publicly available via the ECA website and the LOGOS platform. While students may not always be fully familiar with the platform's contents, they are generally well aware of the values and regulations underpinning their study programme. In addition, each student benefits from a personalised portfolio and individualised career support through the so-called 'Landmark route'.

The Moodle platform provides students with advance information on assessment procedures and enables real time updates regarding any changes to course content or evaluation criteria. Teaching and teaching staff are formally evaluated at the end of each semester through anonymous questionnaires, supporting a process of continuous programme improvement aligned with the recommendations of the Study Programme Council.

The LOGOS platform also outlines the Academy's ethical principles, including respect for others, freedom of conscience, and a strong commitment to scientific and educational integrity. The ECA enforces internal procedures to detect and sanction instances of plagiarism or breaches of academic integrity.

In conclusion, the Bachelor's degree in Bible Art benefits from the support of a large, highly qualified teaching staff. The ECA is committed to both the career development of its academic staff and the renewal of its teaching pool. The Academy's premises, while modest in scale, are well-maintained and tailored to the specific needs of the programme. Shared with other courses, these facilities foster frequent and meaningful interaction between students, academic staff, and senior management. A comprehensive quality assurance framework was implemented across the institution in 2022, supporting the continuous improvement of teaching quality and ensuring ongoing dialogue between all stakeholders. Looking ahead, particular attention must be paid to the institution's financial sustainability and, by extension, to the economic viability of the Bachelor's programme. With current tuition fees already relatively high for Latvia, any further increase may risk limiting access for prospective students.

6. CONCLUSION

The overall impression of the Bachelor's degree in Bible Art (Bart) is positive. It is a niche and distinctive programme, unique in the Baltic region and even at the European level. The programme responds to a genuine and ongoing demand from the three main churches present in Latvia (Lutheran, Catholic and Orthodox) for trained icon painters and restorers. This demand is situated in a post-Soviet context in which much of the national religious and artistic heritage was damaged or lost. Beyond its vocational aims, the programme also supports a broader societal and cultural ambition: to educate a selected group of undergraduate and postgraduate students in "classical European values within modern society". The moral and spiritual commitment of students enrolled in the BArt programme is both explicit and shared, forming part of the programme's identity. Pedagogically, the study programme is based on a highly specific and rigorous form of instruction, centred on the acquisition of classical techniques in drawing and figurative painting. These canonical methods have largely disappeared from contemporary art education. They are taught alongside interdisciplinary knowledge in theology, anthropology, and art history. This theoretical instruction is anchored in direct engagement with heritage and historical sources, facilitated through workshops held in archives, libraries, and museums. The BArt programme is embedded within a dense and well-established professional network in Riga and across Latvia. This network includes churches of the three principal denominations, as well as cultural centres and professional associations.

The Bachelor's degree is a four-year programme (240 ECTS) that is closely aligned with the Master's degree in Bible Art, to which it provides almost exclusive access. However, graduates of the Bachelor's programme are well-equipped to enter the professional world directly, particularly as icon painters, restorers, directors of cultural institutions, or school teachers. The Bachelor's programme places a stronger emphasis on practical training and is less research-oriented than the Master's. Nevertheless, the requirement for students to complete a final thesis involving research methodology ensures the academic and university-level integrity of the programme.

While the BArt Bachelor's degree is unique in Europe, its internationalisation could be strengthened by developing partnerships beyond the Baltic region (currently including Lithuania, Latvia, and Norway). Welcoming art and design students from other parts of Europe for short-term mobility courses would help broaden the definition of "Europe" on which the programme claims to rely—particularly by incorporating greater interaction with the Western or Southern European cultural spheres, which are currently underrepresented.

Student cohorts are very small, which enables close individual supervision and allows teaching to be tailored to each student's level and language skills. The academic calibre of the teaching staff, combined with their linguistic and intercultural competences, fosters a rich blend of cultural perspectives and teaching approaches, while respecting each student's personal beliefs and identity. The premises and equipment available to students provide excellent study conditions in a very pleasant environment, well suited to both artistic and spiritual creation. However, the cost of training remains a key concern in a region of Latvia where living expenses are relatively high. It is essential to avoid passing on additional costs to students.

The continuous improvement of the programme is ensured through well-structured governance at the ECA and through regular formal and informal exchanges between students and staff, as well as among students themselves. Management tools are in place, supported by indicators outlined in the self-evaluation report and confirmed during the site visit.

In conclusion, this is a high-quality and distinctive study programme that responds to the very specific and current needs of Latvian churches and the broader artistic and cultural sectors.

STRENGTHS

- A virtually unique study programme in Europe, underpinned by a strong identity and explicitly rooted in Christian values
- An undeniable reputation in Latvia and neighbouring countries, largely attributed to the high quality of teaching
- A curriculum that effectively responds to the needs and expectations of both churches and cultural institutions
- A high academic standard and level of rigour that ensures the undeniable quality sought by students and lecturers alike
- A near-individualised approach to teaching, which fosters the development of personal qualities such as patience, and spirituality
- Strong engagement and availability of the teaching staff
- Exceptionally high success rates and professional integration of graduates

- Quality management that is particularly explicit about the ECA's values, strategy and student life

WEAKNESSES

- A limited strategic vision in terms of international relations and partnerships
- High tuition and training costs, which may deter potential students

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop partnerships with universities and art schools elsewhere in Europe that specialise in icon painting (e.g., Romania, Florence), or that engage with this specific heritage
- Ensure the long-term sustainability of the programme and the academy by preparing for the succession of the current Rector, particularly to preserve and maintain the extensive networks she has built around the Academy and its training provision
- Strengthen the Academy's financial stability by securing the sale of the former academy building. This will avoid tuition fee increases and support wider social accessibility
- Establish an association of friends of the ECA to encourage private sponsorship and philanthropic support

7. COMMENTS OF THE INSTITUTION



ORA ET LABORA

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In JŪRMALA

11.06.2025., No. 2-9/11

**To Coralie Chevallier,
President of the Hcéres**

We are writing to express our sincere gratitude for time and expertise in Evaluation of our study programs: Bachelor in Bible Art, and Master in Bible Art – done by Experts' panel team.

We thank you for administrative activities done by Head of Europe and International Department Dr. Nicolas Zorzin, and Chair of the Experts' panel Dr. Matthieu Schneider!

We appreciate the thoroughness and insights provided in Evaluation report!

As part of quality policy, quality culture and quality assurance process development at ECA, the Evaluation and our mutual discussions during the expertise were crucial for our development as institution and regarding Study programs.

Research, Strategy, International Practice Committee of the Senate and Senate Academic Quality Unit, and me personally, carefully reviewed Experts' findings and we are committed to implement valuable recommendations for continuous improvements of our education and research process at Academy as a whole and particularly in the mentioned Study programs.

We didn't find errors regarding facts, however we would like to point to some misunderstandings and omissions.

We are pleased to note Experts' positive feedback regarding **Bachelor study program "Bible Art"**. ECA agree with constructive suggestions and detailed characteristics, which will be helpful to improve the quality of the Program. We highly evaluate the Experts' recognition of our Areas of Strength – they are greatly appreciated, – not only from professors but as well from students.

We acknowledge Experts' concerns about our weaknesses:

- limited strategic vision in terms of international relations and partnership;
- high tuition and training costs, which may deter potential students.

We are working on these issues, and already several actions have been taken regarding targeted partnerships and mobility schemes – in relation to recommended institutions for cooperation in arts education in future. We already made a step to meet in Budapest in May with some representatives from mentioned institutions in Evaluation – for strengthening Program's wider accessibility and enhancement of visibility, which would increase its cultural and academic relevance within the broader European higher education landscape.

Regarding tuition fees, we have to stress that in arts education we have the lowest tuition fees from all other art universities in Latvia. In comparison, tuition fees of art programs at Latvian Academy of Art vary from 4000 to 7000 euros per year.

Until now, if a student has had difficulty paying tuition fees, the Academy have addressed Orthodox parishes and pastors for private sponsorship and philanthropic support for particular students. Several times, Senate has voted for reducing tuition fees for students with special needs, and students from larger families. We appreciate the recommendation regarding establishment of Association of friends of ECA. It will need several meetings with potential sponsors to reveal the level of our work and to reveal therapeutic effects of icon painting for young persons with special needs. We hope that the results will be positive.

The action will be taken in response to Experts' suggestion in Conclusion to go forward with distinctive study program that responds to the very specific and current needs of Latvian churches and the broader artistic and cultural sectors.

Regarding comments on international relations and partnerships, which Experts see as weakness, we would like to stress that already for years it is being increasingly important topic as well as the component of competition between HEIs in Latvia.

Our development in networking was driven by the growing demand for mobility.

Internationalization and platform building takes place, on the one hand, through mobility, and on the other hand, through research.

In 2022, we have received from the Latvian Ministry of Economics, the Ministry of Education and Science, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – “Certificate Agreement on Good Practice of Attracting Foreign Students in Providing Studies”. Only a few HEIs received such a Certificate, which states the good development of internationalization vision in a relatively short time and implementation of consortial research (although more in the field of social work than in art), which the Academy leads. And it positively evaluates implementation of international Intensive Programs that take place at the Academy and bring together students from different European universities. Perhaps we did not highlight these serious internationalization results enough.

In December 2024, we received the ERASMUS+ annual quality award “Wings 2024” in the nomination “Mobility of Persons in the Higher Education Sector” from the Agency of the Ministry of Education and Science, which is responsible for internationalization in connection with Intensive Programs that brings together students from different European countries.

We agree that strategic vision always can be fulfilled more qualitatively, which we are going to improve in following years.

We thank you again for the valuable insights of Experts' team and guidance we fully trust in! We look forward to further collaboration and continuous improvement of the study programs and research.

We appreciate Hcéres commitment to ensure the future steps and quality of our Program!

Rector of European Christian Academy

prof.



Skaidrīte Gūtmane

International evaluation and accreditation

ACCREDITATION DECISION

Bachelor in Bible Art

European Christian Academy (ECA)

Latvia

June 2025

SCOPE OF THE ACCREDITATION GRANTED BY HCERES

Hcéres has based its evaluation process on a set of objectives that higher education institution study programs must pursue to ensure recognised quality in France and Europe. These objectives are divided into four areas common to both the evaluation framework and the accreditation criteria.

The Accreditation Commission issues an opinion on the accreditation of the program after examining the application. The Hcéres President takes the decision based on this opinion and the final evaluation report of the program. This accreditation decision, taken in plenary session, is the result of a collegial and reasoned process.

The decision issued by Hcéres regarding the accreditation of the program corresponds to the award of a label, on behalf of Hcéres, to the evaluated entity.

This decision is independent of the accreditations carried out by the French State and therefore does not entail recognition in France of the diplomas delivered by the institution.

Decision n° EI-2025-08 on the accreditation of the Bachelor in Bible Art delivered by the European Christian Academy (ECA), Latvia.

The President of the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education,

Considering the Research Code, in particular Articles L. 114-3-1 to L. 114-3-6;

Considering the Decree No. 2021-1536 of 29 November 2021 on the organisation and operation of the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education;

Considering the Board's deliberation No. 2022-5-02 of 29 September 2022 on the accreditation criteria for international study programmes (Except for doctorates/PhDs);

Considering the Decision No. 2023-9 of 16 March 2023 on the international accreditation procedure of the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education;

Considering the agreement No. DEI_2024_CONV17 – European Christian Academy (ECA) – Latvia for the evaluation/accreditation of Bachelor in Bible Art;

Considering the opinion issued by the Accreditation Commission on June 27th 2025.

Decides:

Article 1

Having determined that the Bachelor in Bible Art delivered by the European Christian Academy (ECA), Latvia meets the four accreditation criteria, voted by the Board of the High Council on 29 September 2022, as follows:

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 1: TEACHING POLICY AND CHARACTERISATION

The Bachelor's study programme is a niche and distinctive curriculum, unique in the Baltic region and even at the European level. The programme responds to a genuine and ongoing demand from the three main churches present in Latvia (Lutheran, Catholic and Orthodox) for trained icon painters and restorers. It stands as a unique and essential contribution to the revitalisation of Orthodox religious art and the affirmation of Latvian cultural identity. It is fully aligned with the institution's foundational principles and objectives.

The successful integration of graduates into the labour market reflects both the programme's high academic and artistic standards, and the strong, sustained connections between the European Christian Academy and the relevant professional sectors—connections from which students benefit directly throughout their training.

The programme's primary purpose is clearly oriented towards practical artistic training. This focus explains the relatively limited role that research plays and the fact that there is no formal research laboratory supporting the curriculum. Nevertheless, must submit an original thesis and receive personalized guidance from the teaching staff.

The Academy maintains a clearly Latvian orientation but has established cooperative ties with universities in neighbouring countries, particularly Klaipėda and Vilnius in Lithuania. Nonetheless, broader international engagement could be beneficial. This may be achieved through expanded academic partnerships with institutions in related fields, increased faculty contributions to international journals, or the organisation of thematic workshops that bring together researchers from different countries to explore shared areas of interest.

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 2: THE PEDAGOGICAL ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAM

The programme offers a high-quality, student-centred education that successfully integrates artistic, spiritual, and professional development within a rigorous and coherent pedagogical framework. Its core strengths include technical excellence, personalised mentoring, and a strong alignment with the needs of lifelong learners. Although the current international strategy remains limited, there is significant potential through targeted partnerships and mobility schemes. Strengthening the programme's global accessibility

would not only enhance its visibility but also increase its cultural and academic relevance within the broader European higher education landscape.

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 3: STUDENTS' PATHWAY

The study programme's distinctive curriculum, methodological excellence, and genuinely student-centred approach make it a high-quality programme, particularly well-suited for future icon painters, artists, museum professionals, and educators. It ensures high student success through personalised academic support tailored to individual needs and through the accessibility of both teaching and administrative staff. Because of the relatively limited size of the country and of the labour market, it has precise information about the situation of the students after graduation. Its attractiveness could be further enhanced through expanded communication initiatives (such as "open days" or "career days"), deeper participation in the Erasmus+ network, and the establishment of privately funded scholarships.

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 4: MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAM

The study programme benefits from the support of a large, highly qualified teaching staff. The ECA is committed to both the career development of its academic staff and the renewal of its teaching pool. The Academy's premises, while modest in scale, are well-maintained and tailored to the specific needs of the programme. Shared with other courses, these facilities foster frequent and meaningful interaction between students, academic staff, and senior management. A comprehensive quality assurance framework was implemented across the institution in 2022, supporting the continuous improvement of teaching quality, research integrity and ensuring ongoing dialogue between all stakeholders. Looking ahead, particular attention must be paid to the institution's financial sustainability and, by extension, to the economic viability of the Bachelor's programme. With current tuition fees already relatively high for Latvia, any further increase may risk limiting access for prospective students.

Article 2

The Bachelor in Bible Art delivered by the European Christian Academy (ECA), Latvia is accredited for a period of five years from the date of this decision.

Article 3

The decision is accompanied by the following recommendations:

- Develop partnerships with universities and art schools elsewhere in Europe that specialise in icon painting (e.g., Romania, Florence), or that engage with this specific heritage
- Ensure the long-term sustainability of the programme and the academy by preparing for the succession of the current Rector, particularly to preserve and maintain the extensive networks she has built around the Academy and its training provision
- Strengthen the Academy's financial stability by securing the sale of the former academy building. This will avoid tuition fee increases and support wider social accessibility
- Establish an association of friends of the ECA to encourage private sponsorship and philanthropic support

Article 4

This decision will be published on the Hcéres website.

Paris, June 30th 2025



Coralie Chevallier
Présidente

19 rue Poissonnière
75002 Paris, France

President

signed

Coralie Chevallier

The evaluation reports of Hceres
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