

## **Preface**

The Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA), under the sponsorship of the Theological and Christian Education Commission of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA), operates with internal autonomy in the accreditation of programmes of theological education throughout Africa, in order to stimulate the improvement and standardisation of such programmes, and in order to provide a basis for academic recognition of such programmes.

The following document presents ACTEA standards and procedures for accreditation of programmes of theological education offered at the DOCTORAL level. Similar documents for accreditation of programmes at the post-graduate, post-secondary and secondary levels are also available.

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## PRELIMINARIES

### 1. Foundational Guidelines

These standards and procedures for doctoral level accreditation are supplemental to the ACTEA standards and procedures for post-graduate accreditation.

### 2. Accreditation Procedures

2a. In general, accreditation procedures for post-graduate programmes apply.

2b. An institution seeking doctoral-level accreditation may be already accredited by ACTEA at the post-graduate level. The accreditation of a doctoral programme will then necessitate a separate self-evaluation, visit and visitation report, supplementary to the main accreditation (primarily covering sections of the doctoral standards concerned with teaching staff, facilities, and educational programme).

2c. Alternatively, an institution may combine the accreditation of both post-graduate and doctoral level programmes simultaneously. In such cases, the accreditation procedures require a self-evaluation which includes, in addition to the post-graduate accreditation procedures: (a) a Self-Evaluation Report which includes two sections covering educational programmes (i.e., one focusing on the post-graduate programme and another on the doctoral programme). The Self-Evaluation Report should also attend to those doctoral standards in the areas concerned with administration, teaching staff, facilities, and students which are different than those for post-graduate programmes; (b) a visit focused on both post-graduate and doctoral level programmes; and (c) a visitation report which includes two sections covering educational programme, i.e., one focusing on the post-graduate programme and another on doctoral programme.

### 3. Accreditation Standards

3a. Standards relating to (1) administration, and (5) students, are covered substantially by what is already specified by ACTEA for the post-graduate level. The principal additional standards relate to: (2) teaching staff, (3) facilities, and (4) educational programme.

## STANDARDS

These standards apply to programmes of theological education in Africa at the doctoral level. These programmes shall be either academic (e.g., PhD or ThD) or professional (e.g., DMin) in orientation.

### 1. Administration

*1a. Objectives.* As with post-graduate standards.

*1b. Organisation.* As with post-graduate standards, except: The governing of the institution, including the operations of the proprietors, the board of control, and the administration, must be carried out in accordance with written regulations appropriate to the nature and size of the institution and its respective programmes.

*1c. Finances.* As with post-graduate standards. Guide will clarify the standard, “More than half of the annual expenditure on operation of the institution should be derived from within the continent”. This is referring to current local expenditure, and does not include costs incurred by students studying and/or undertaking special projects outside of the institution's local setting (e.g. study abroad and field-based research projects).

*1d. Stability.* As with post-graduate standards.

*1e. Review.* As with post-graduate standards.

## **2. Teaching Staff**

*2a. Number.* The teaching staff must be of sufficient number to support the programme effectively. The number of teaching staff needs to be adequate to attend to the needs of the number of students and to the scope and sequence of the curriculum, so that the expected academic progress of the students is not hindered. In addition to any visiting and adjunct teaching staff, for each specified field of study, there must be a core of teaching staff regularly teaching or supervising on-site at the school. This core must consist of at least one full-time member of the teaching staff, or the equivalent, qualified in that field.

*2b. Qualifications.* All doctoral teaching staff must hold a masters degree and an earned doctorate, both from recognised institutions and in relevant fields. (In the Guide: Exceptions must be rare and only where the teaching staff member possesses recognised expertise in the specialised field in which he or she is teaching, demonstrated by sustained critical reflection in a relevant academic setting.) Doctoral teaching staff must also have a record of research and publication in relevant fields (minimally, for example, a book and/or a corpus of articles and reviews in learned journals). All doctoral teaching staff must be experienced both in teaching and in supervising independent study.

The teaching staff should have been trained in a variety of institutions and should include a variety of scholarly viewpoints and approaches. Institutions are encouraged to make regular use in their doctoral programme of local university professors, qualified in relevant fields, and of international guest professors, academically distinguished in their professional field, as adjunct teaching staff.

*2c. Commitment.* As with post-graduate standards.

*2d. Responsibilities.* Teaching and administrative loads of doctoral teaching staff shall be limited to permit ample time for attending to the needs of students and for research.

*2e. Nationality.* As with post-graduate standards.

2f. *Compensation and welfare.* As with post-graduate standards.

2g. *Development.* As with post-graduate standards, but in addition, doctoral teaching staff must demonstrate a pattern of regular scholarly and professional interaction and contribution, which is actively encouraged and facilitated by the institution.

### 3. Facilities

3a. *Buildings and grounds.* As with post-graduate standards.

3b. *Library holdings.* The library holdings should be of a size and quality suitable to the academic programme of the institution, in relation to the literature available in the language of instruction. At doctoral level a library in an anglophone institution should contain at least 20000-25000 volumes, and maintain subscriptions to at least 100-120 journals; a library in a francophone institution should contain at least 16000-18000 volumes, and maintain subscriptions to at least 60-80 journals. Quantity should not be attained at the expense of consistent quality; superficial and superfluous titles should be avoided in acquisitions and eliminated from holdings. The holdings should represent both breadth and concentration; breadth with reference, for example, to academic levels, theological orientations, and subjects covered; concentration with reference, for example, to the theological orientation of the institution, the geographical and cultural context of the institution, and the subjects of instruction at the institution. The reference collection and periodicals received should manifest a similar blend of general breadth and specific concentration.

The library should contain at least 2000 volumes particular to each specified doctoral field, including a substantial portion of the major scholarly titles, reference materials, and journals (including back issue collections) in that field.

In order to supplement their on-site holdings of books and journals, institutions are strongly encouraged to provide access to off-campus holdings for their teaching staff and students. This may be done by establishing ready access to relevant nearby libraries, maintaining aggressive inter-library loan facilities, and/or providing on-site internet access. Where institutions do not supplement their on-site holdings, they must substantially increase the size of their collection of books and journals in the area(s) of their specialisation.

(For Guide under 3b. Requirements for physical holdings of books can be reduced through the holdings of titles on CD-ROM, if the institution demonstrates they are easily and regularly accessed.)

3c. *Library funding.* Institutions with doctoral programmes must spend on library acquisitions a minimum of 5% of the institution's annual operational income [Guide will indicate that this includes donated salaries of any missionary staff as income in the calculation], including a minimum of US\$1000 a year for accessions in each specified field of study.

3d. *Library administration and services.* The library should be administered according to standard library procedures; the staff should be sufficient in number and training; the facilities and procedures should be adequate for preserving the holdings

against special hazards arising from climate and insects; and the hours of operation should reflect a concern to make the holdings as accessible as reasonably possible. For institutions offering academic doctorates, the library staff should include a trained and experienced librarian, with both a recognised library qualification and a recognised theological degree at bachelor's level or above. Institutions are required to ensure that doctoral teaching staff and doctoral students have access to computer resources, with appropriate support facilities, and the ability to use them. The library should make available separate study facilities for each doctoral student.

#### **4. Educational Programme**

*4a. Programme relevance.* The curriculum as a whole and the syllabus for each individual course subject, where taught, should show that the institution has not merely borrowed these from elsewhere nor simply allowed them to develop on an ad hoc basis, but that the institution has carefully planned the curriculum and each syllabus to meet its own particular objectives, for the specific Christian community it is serving, for the specific vocations for which the students are being prepared, and for the specific cultural context in which the students will minister. Selection of textbooks should also show sensitivity to contextual relevance.

*4b. Programme publication.* The institution's current educational programme, with its rationale, should be available in printed or duplicated form. A syllabus for each individual taught course subject should be updated regularly and be on file.

*4c. Educational objectives.* Institutions should develop written objectives for each doctoral programme, for each specialisation, and for each taught course subject, which correlate with the objectives of the institution as a whole.

*4d. Programme specifications:*

*(i) Orientation.* A doctoral programme may have either an academic or a professional orientation. The academic doctorate shall be oriented on an advanced academic specialisation in a particular discipline, in preparation for a senior teaching vocation and scholarly research. The professional doctorate shall be oriented on an advanced professional specialisation in a church-related vocation, in preparation for senior ministry responsibilities. (In particular situations the DMin may also be structured as a professional / academic degree, provided the professional orientation is designated as predominant; or the PhD may be structured as an academic /professional degree, provided the academic orientation is designated as predominant.)

*(ii) Specialisation.* Each doctoral programme must have a stated specialisation focus, relating to a field of scholarly inquiry or to a church-related vocation. Curricular requirements for each programme must be clearly defined in terms of this specialisation focus.

(For Guide under 4d(ii): Professional programmes may choose a broader, general advance of the practice of ministry in its many forms.)

*(iii) Entrance, residency, and duration.* Admission requirements for an academic doctorate must include at least a recognised two-year theological masters degree, plus

demonstrated competence in research and writing in the intended field of specialisation. Academic doctoral students must be admitted into a probationary period which confirms this competency and lasts for at least one year and which results in either continuation in the doctoral programme or termination. (In the latter case, a lower degree, such as an MTh or an MPhil may be awarded in lieu of continuation.) Admission requirements for a professional doctorate must include a recognised MDiv or equivalent (e.g., maîtrise).

Admission requirements for an academic doctorate may require a ministry experience component dependent upon the intended field of specialisation. Since professional doctoral students need a period of experience in ministry upon which to reflect, admission requirements for a professional doctorate must include at least 3 years experience in ministry after the completion of the last theological degree, a period which may be reduced by consideration of total life-time ministry experience.

Applicants holding a recognised MTh (four-year post-graduate) degree with superior performance may be admitted to the academic doctoral programme with up to 1 year of advanced standing.

An academic doctoral programme shall be a minimum of 3 years of full-time study or equivalent. (A year of full-time study is the equivalent of 34-36 weeks per year.) A professional doctoral programme shall be a minimum of 3 years of in-service study, including a course component of the equivalent of at least one and a half year's full-time study, plus the writing of the final project.

For academic doctoral programmes, the institution shall demonstrate that each of its students has access to library resources, peer interaction, academic supervision, and sustained periods of undistracted learning. Normally institutions would require minimum periods of full-time residency on the campus of the institution (perhaps combined with another designated research centre) to achieve these ends. Professional doctoral programmes shall require substantial periods of interaction with peer students and teaching staff in order to create a community of learning, reflection, and development. Periods of on-campus activity or residency will normally be part of this requirement.

Programmes must be completed within a maximum of 7 years from commencement. [Guide will allow for exceptions in extraordinary circumstances.]

(iv) *Designations.* The nomenclature of the doctoral credentials shall correspond both to continental and to international academic patterns. In general, ACTEA will recognise the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Doctor of Theology (ThD) as academic degrees, and the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) as a professional degree.

[Guide: Other nomenclature for academic or professional degrees may, with approval, be used for the terminal credentials, but the programmes must conform to the standards of one or the other orientation.]

(v) *Dissertation or project.* The academic doctorate programme shall include the design and completion of a dissertation that shall represent an independent and original scholarly contribution by the student within the field of specialisation. It shall dem-

onstrate the student's thorough grounding in the field of specialisation, and thorough understanding of the particular topic of the dissertation, and shall demonstrate competence to conduct original research that contributes to the scholarly field.

The professional doctorate programme shall include the design and completion of a written project that addresses both the nature and the practice of ministry. The project should be of sufficient quality that it contributes to the practice of ministry as judged by professional standards. The ministry project should demonstrate the student's ability to identify a specific topic in ministry, organise an effective research model, use appropriate resources, and evaluate the results, and should reflect the student's depth of theological insight in relation to ministry.

The dissertation or project should be defended before, and accepted by, an examination panel of at least three distinguished professionals in the field, at least one of whom should be external to the institution.

*(vi) Research tools and language proficiencies.* Doctoral programmes shall require students to demonstrate competency throughout their programme in the use of research tools (including language proficiency) appropriate for their field of study. Students in academic doctoral programmes shall be required to use competently the language(s) in which relevant primary texts are written, as well as those in which there is important secondary material. Normally, this would include at least one ancient and one or more modern languages. Students in professional doctoral programmes shall be required to demonstrate proficiency in appropriate behavioural or social scientific research methods.

*(vii) Curriculum and examinations.* All doctoral programmes shall promote reflection on spiritual and character development; integration between learning and context; competency in teaching skills; and competency in administrative leadership. The curricular requirements should be designed to equip the student with a substantial mastery of the subject material, theory, bibliography, research, and methodology, of a significant portion of the field of specialisation, with a capacity for independent thinking and creative contribution in this field, and with an acquaintance with relevant cognate fields sufficient for effectiveness in this field. These requirements may be met through a curriculum that is either entirely researched-based or is a combination of taught courses and directed research. For academic doctoral programmes, oral and/or written comprehensive assessment tools (for example, comprehensive examinations) are required, and should be designed to confirm achievement with respect to the above criteria.

*(viii) Course access.* Doctoral students may take courses available to students in masters-level accredited programmes at the same institution only (a) where the teaching staff meets the teaching qualifications for the doctoral programme; and (b) where the assignment requirements for doctoral students are distinctly higher. Doctoral students may not take courses accessible to students in the first year of a masters programme.

*(ix) Enrolment.* The enrolment in each academic programme must be of sufficient number to serve the objectives of the programme and to maintain its viability. Aca-

ademic doctoral programmes must have at least 3 students on average in any academic year. Professional doctoral programmes must have at least 6 students on average in any academic year.

*(x) Supervision.* Sufficient orientation to the process and requirements of the doctoral programme should be provided for each student. Mentoring and interactive seminars should be a principal emphasis of the programme. Each doctoral student must have regular, extensive access to a designated supervisor throughout the course of the programme. Institutions should also ensure that sufficient provision is in place for pastoral care of the students.

*4e. International engagement.* Institutions offering academic doctoral programmes must demonstrate a pattern of engagement with the international network of doctoral level scholarship in order to provide for breadth and enrichment of learning, cross-fertilisation of ideas, and international comparability. This is to take place at the institutional level, among the teaching staff, and among the students. Academic doctoral programmes are strongly encouraged to arrange for students to undertake a portion of the programme in an academic setting outside the country.

*4f. Supplementary programmes.* The institution is encouraged to provide placement counselling, organised contacts, and continuing education opportunities for its graduates.

## **5. Students**

As with post-graduate standards.