

Curriculum Guidelines

Accreditation Committee

Appendix A

South Pacific Association of Theological Schools

Introduction

The purpose of providing curriculum guidelines is to help the schools to review their existing curricula, and, where necessary, make appropriate revisions, so that the school will establish, and maintain, comparable and good standards of theological education for the different recognised levels – certificate, diploma, and degree.

The curricula, developed for the different levels, should be such that candidates can upgrade their level of education, without unnecessary repetition of courses, and avoid excessively long periods of theological studies.

Some guidelines are already indicated in the document on accreditation standards. For the certificate level, the minimum requirement for admission is middle-school graduation, and the minimum length of course is two years. For diploma level, the minimum requirement for admission is high-school graduation, and the length of course is a minimum of three years. For degree level, the minimum requirement is a degree from a college or university, or diploma from an accredited theological school. Degree holders are expected to fulfil leadership roles in theological reflection and religious education.

The proposed guidelines concentrate on the academic and pastoral program. We realise that the overall formation of our students should also include personal and spiritual formation, supported by community relationships and activities. Indeed, these are essential, and not less important, though not outlined here.

General Notes

(a) Language of Instruction

The main language of instruction, at the Certificate level, shall be (one of) the national, or official language, of the country. But the support studies should enable the student to read simple theological books in English or French. At the other levels, the language of instruction shall be English or French.

(b) Orientation Courses

At every level (Certificate, Diploma or Bachelor degree), the program should include some introductory, or orientation, courses at the beginning, so as to equip the students with sufficient study and reading skills, appropriate for the level.

(c) Biblical Languages

At the Diploma and Degree levels, it is desirable that all students are introduced to the biblical languages, both Hebrew and Greek. Appropriate credit should be given to students who satisfactorily complete courses in biblical languages. Colleges may consider the possibility of requiring students, who do not do biblical languages, to compensate by taking other biblical studies courses having comparable weightage.

(d) Coordination Between Different Levels

It is hoped that these guidelines will lead to greater cooperation and exchange among the island schools, and between these schools and the regional schools. Only students with a good record of performance in one level will be encouraged to proceed to the higher level. Students will not normally go directly from Diploma to the Master's level, though it is possible, under exceptional circumstances.

(e) Integration

In order to achieve an integrated curriculum, it is highly desirable that colleges will require the members of the teaching staff to produce course descriptions and outlines (syllabus) of each course they teach, and submit them for interdisciplinary scrutiny, both when the syllabus is first prepared, and whenever it is revised. The aim of this process is unity and cross-fertilisation among the different disciplines of theological study, as well as mutual learning from one another.

Specific Proposals

We first propose an overall program for each level. Then we develop, for each major section of the program, the appropriate level of studies. The major sections suggested are:

- Biblical Studies (BS)
- Doctrinal Studies (DS)

- History of Christianity (HC)
- Practical Ministry (PM)
- Supporting Studies (SS)

A. Overall Programs

A.1 Certificate of Theological Studies

A.1.1 The Program Should Cover:

- a. Biblical Studies (Weight:) Heavy
- b. Doctrine H
- c. History of Christianity Medium
- d. Practical Ministry H
- e. Supporting Studies Light

A.1.2 Weightage in Semester Hours

The two-year program has 80 semester hours (SH) available 4 x 20 hours per week, each semester. Each individual course will use 2-3 SH

A heavy section is taking 10 to 14 SH, or more

A medium section is taking 6 to 10 SH

A light section is taking 2 to 6 SH

The medium, or light, sections can be essential and integral to the whole program, and should not be considered electives.

A.1.3 Distribution over the 4 Semesters

In all 4 semesters, the proportion between the 5 sections should be more or less as follows:

BS 25% (incl. OT and NT)

DS 25% (incl. Ethics)

HC 15%

PM 25%

SS 10%

The weight of PM could increase from semester 1 to semester 4, and the weight of SS decrease in the same direction. It is very important that the various courses are related to one another, and a real effort of close integration be made.

A.2 Diploma of Theological Studies

A.2.1 The Program Should Cover:

- a. BS: Old Testament and New Testament with Exegesis
- b. DS: Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics, including the issue of Gospel and Culture or Enculturation
- c. HC: History of Christianity, in the World and in the Pacific
- d. PM: Evangelisation and Mission, Worship, Preaching, Christian Education, Pastoral Care, Church Administration (including Church Law)
- e. SS: Biblical Languages, Religious Studies, Philosophy, Social Anthropology, and other Human Studies

A.2.2 Weightage:

Suggested number of SH:

BS 32

DS 24

HC 20

PM 24

SS 20

This gives a total of 120 SH, divided into 6 semesters of 20 hours per week. It should be borne in mind that the Diploma program normally leads to an appointment as minister, and that the church may have guidelines that will modify our suggestions, or introduce different accents. The program should also enable the student to proceed to the Degree program, though not all students will do so.

A.2.3 Distribution:

In general, the emphasis on BS, DS, and HC can be stronger in the first four semesters, while PM will increase in the last two semesters.

A.3 Bachelor or Divinity (Degree)

- a. BS: OT, NT, Intertestament Literature, Hermeneutics, Exegesis
- b. DS: Systematic, Ethics, Methodology, with ecumenical and contextual emphasis
- c. HC: Besides the History of World and Pacific Christianity, also Methodology
- d. PM: The courses, mentioned under Diploma on a more advanced level, related to and compared with what is done in other churches, also including Communication, Mass media, etc.
- e. SS: The courses mentioned under Diploma, if not done already, and the study of modern ideologies
- f. Project, thesis, or synthesis of theology, as integral part of final product of degree studies

A.3.3 Level of Study

In general, the Degree program should move away from factual information towards critical reflection, from knowledge shared within the (church) community to dialogue and argument in the wider scholarly society. It should bring the student to search and reflect autonomously, and to communicate to others what he knows and understands. Creativity and other attitudes for life-long research and interest are to be encouraged above reception of package-deal convictions. Understanding of reasons and principles more than increase of pure content of knowledge. Experience should be deepened, and brought into contact with what the word and the Spirit are saying to the church today.

B.1 The Main Disciplines

B.1 Biblical Studies

B.1.1 Certificate level:

The program should cover:

OT Background: history of Israel, introduction to the books (yr 1). Bible study of important parts of OT (yr 2); local translation be used now and then, compared to other translations; practical and homiletical objectives.

NT Background: i.e., the situation of the writings in early communities; introduction to the writings, their plan (yr 1). Bible study of important parts of NT; local translations, etc.

B.1.2 Diploma Level

The main objective is ministerial information, but also preparation for the Degree program, at least for some. Study methods should be taught, and use of appropriate tools, e.g., concordance, dictionary, etc.

OT: Background of Near-Eastern cultures compared to Pacific cultures, History of Israel: critical interpretation of history and tradition, Introduction to individual books: Canon, Manuscripts. Exegesis: with use of biblical languages of selected passages from each of the main groups: Pentateuch, Historical books, Prophetic literature, Poetic/Wisdom writings.

Homiletical use: introduction to scientific approach, critical use of translations.

NT: Background including Intertestamental literature. Introduction to Writings: Canon, Synoptic problem, Authenticity. Exegesis of selected passages from each of the main groups: Synoptics, Johannine writings, including Revelation, Pauline, Catholic letters.

Use of Greek text (including comparison with local translations) recommended.

B.1.3 Degree Level

Study and library skills are needed; the use of biblical languages, Hebrew and Greek is highly desirable; the doctrine of scripture: Inspiration, Authority, presupposed, or covered, in DS.

OT: History of Israel, and its religion in the Near-Eastern context. Introduction to OT: Methodology, History of the discipline, literary Generas, Parallels between ancient Near-Eastern and Pacific religions, Textual criticism, Canon, Exegesis, including History of discipline, detailed exegesis of selected texts.

Theologies in and of the OT: Intertestamental Literature: Judaism; Hellenistic thinking: Neoplatonism and Gnosticism.

NT: Introduction to NT: Methodology, History of Discipline, Textual Criticism, Form Criticism, Canon, Exegesis: using Greek text, Methodology, History of discipline, detailed exegesis of selected texts in all groups, some critical translation work. Theologies of, and in, the NT, compared with non-Christian ideologies, Hermeneutics.

B.2 Doctrinal Studies

B.2.1 Certificate Level

The approach will be that of a factual, but also contextual, grasp of the church's doctrine, and its biblical foundations. Some introduction to development (history) of doctrine. The main divisions (articles) can be followed and explained: God, Creation, Christ, Redemption, Holy Spirit, Church, Sacraments, Ministry, Eschatology. Cultural studies should give the student basic insights in the national cultures(s), especially its myths and rites. Study skills should help to think in concepts and arguments, and enable to dialogue, not only to express convictions.

B.2.2 Diploma Level

Critical understanding of doctrine in historical development, and also in ecumenical context, relationship to the sources of theology, local and contextual theology. Basic texts should be read: ancient, classical, modern. A certain personal synthesis is to be aimed at; also the ability to read and judge general theological literature. The main sectors of systematic theology should be studied:

- Introduction (4 SH) Faith/Reason, Revelation, Inspiration, Biblical authority, Tradition of the church, History of theology
- Systematic reflection, or Christology and Ecclesiology (6 SH)
- Selective courses on Trinity Soteriology, Sacraments, Pneumatology, Eschatology (6 SH)
- Modern Theology Trends (2 SH)
- Fundamental or Introduction to Ethics: Sources, Systems, etc. (4 SH)
- Selected special ethics (2 SH)

Supportive studies are:

- Religious studies, including World religions
- Cultural studies: Regional and Pacific outlook

- Philosophy and Human sciences: Introduction level

B.2.3 Degree Level

Lecture method, gradually to be replaced by seminar and group study, using the method of case study.

All tools available (library, lecturers, interviews) to be used.

- In Systematic theology:
Introduction: aiming at doing theology, using sources critically, hermeneutics of the doctrine of own and other churches (2 SH)
Specific contemporary questions in Christology and Ecclesiology, and in other selected areas, so that at least three or four major topics are dealt with (5 SH)
One major trend in modern theology: in-depth study (2 SH)
- In Ethics:
One obligatory area (e.g., Social justice), and one other selected area, with emphasis on inductive, more than deductive, approach (4 SH)
- Supporting studies: (2 SH)
Languages: sufficient to do research, and write project, Philosophy and Psychology/Sociology of religion as electives

B.3 History of Christianity

B.3.1 Certificate Level

- Introduction: Integral survey of the History of Christianity; including the most important events, persons, movements
- History of Christianity in the country served by the school with special reference to the encounter of Christianity and culture

B.3.2 Diploma Level

- Students, at this level need to be made aware of the main events, movement, and persons in the history of Christianity. They could be arranged according to periods, or themes, or a combination of both, e.g., courses covering periods: beginnings of Christianity, patristic

time; Middle Ages; Reformation, Post-Reformation; Modern Times; 19th century, 20th century. Courses covering movements: monastic, missionary, Orthodox, Ecumenical, church and politics; sectarianism, etc.

- The course should cover the whole range of Christianity history, from the beginnings until modern times, and should include a study of the history of Christianity in the Pacific

The course should also give attention to historical developments of the following:

- The spread of the faith
- Beliefs and doctrines
- Patterns of worship and spirituality
- Patterns of organisation, leadership, ministry
- Relationship of Christianity and the church to society, culture and the state
- Ecumenical relationships among the churches

B.3.3 Degree Level

Courses at this level should introduce students to the findings of modern scholarly study of the various periods of Christian history. A critical approach to historical writing should be encouraged. Awareness of historical theory and methodology should be created. Opportunity should be given for students to do original research, using documentary and oral sources for writing history. The curriculum should include a course, or courses, on the history of Christianity in the Pacific. The courses covering periods should give attention to the topics mentioned under Diploma. A more in-depth study of themes is expected.

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B.4 Practical Ministry

B.4.0

The distinction between the different levels, Diploma and Degree, will be more a deepening of the experience, and contents of the course, than introducing

radically-new contents and elements. There is a “spiralling effect”, as a student moves to another level, and the course becomes more comprehensive in its depth and treatment of a particular aspect of practical ministry.

The different levels of the course need to take into account the other disciplines being offered at the same level. The different talents and charisms of the students, the policies and needs of the churches, will also determine modifications to the guidelines being offered.

B.4.1 Certificate Level

The following elements may be selectively included, according to the objectives of the college for this level, and bearing in mind the future of the student in the ministry. The courses on pastoral care and church administration may be omitted where the course is intended for lay training.

- a. Evangelisation and Mission:
 - Introduction to the main concepts: both theological and pastoral
 - Scriptural basis for Christ’s mission, the Spirit’s mission, and the mission of the Apostolic church (New Testament/Acts)
 - Methods and practices of evangelisation for the particular churches in the Pacific
- b. Worship:
 - Principles and guidelines according to particular church practice
 - Format of worship and service
 - Principles of creativity in worship and liturgy
 - Worship and spirituality: forms of worship and devotional life
 - Church music
- c. Preaching:
 - Basic public speaking skills and techniques, building confidence and presence before a congregation
 - Reading sacred scripture in public

- Methodology and theology of sermons: proclamation and composition of sermons
 - Application of the gospel to realities of life in the context of the local congregation
- d. Christian education:
- Meaning of Christian nurture and growth in faith
 - Introductory techniques and skills before a group: pedagogy
 - Programs for different age groups: teaching biblical lessons and leading bible study groups
 - Familiarity with church programs and syllabus
- e. Leadership training:
- Practical experience of handling responsibilities and authority in the school
 - Learning techniques and procedures of meetings and administration
 - Identifying the *ideal* qualities to be found in a Christian leader
 - People's expectations of a Christian leader
- f. Pastoral care:
- Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of traditional approaches to counselling and pastoral care
 - Basic guidelines towards recognition of different levels of pastoral problems and concerns of people (cf. Supporting Studies)
- g. Church administration:
- Familiarity with church discipline, written laws, and regulations
 - Fundamentals of financial administration: basic bookkeeping of accounts

- Methods and stewardship of fundraising
- Administrative structure of the church: polity, constitution, order

B.4.2 Diploma Level

Note: If the student has completed the Certificate course, the program should be arranged so that unnecessary repetition is avoided.

- a. Evangelisation and Mission:
 - Theology of evangelisation and mission: developing the scriptural basis in depth
 - Practical methods, and practices of evangelisation in the Pacific
- b. Worship:
 - Worship and spirituality
 - Use of different expressive arts in worship: drama, dance, mime
 - Forms of worship and devotional life
 - Historical development of liturgical worship forms
 - Cultural models re worship (cf. Supporting Studies)
 - Church music
 - Principles and praxis of creativity in worship
- c. Preaching:
 - Developing skills, using audiovisual techniques
 - Communications and modern technology in media
 - Construction and practice of sermons/homilies, using a variety of models: expository, story telling, dialogue, etc.
- d. Christian education:
 - Meaning of Christian nurture and growth in faith

- Techniques and skills of teaching, pedagogy
 - Familiarity with general programs for adult and Christian family education
 - Education programs of Christian ethics
 - Preparation of programs for different age groups
 - If applicable, familiarity with the administration of schools
- e. Leadership training:
- General models of leadership in everyday life
 - Leadership through service models
 - Practical experience of leadership and authority in the school and local community: deepen the experience
 - Awareness of personal weakness/strengths relevant for leadership
 - Outside resources can be used
- f. Pastoral care:
- Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of traditional approaches to counselling and pastoral care
 - Basic guidelines towards recognition of different levels of pastoral problems and concerns of people (cf. Supporting Studies)
 - Possibility to introduce CPE program (cf. Supporting Studies and reference to Psychology)
- g. Church administration:
- Familiarity with church discipline, written laws, and regulations for pastors/ministers
 - Familiarity with church and civil law re births, deaths, and marriages, and other register work
 - Comparative church polities

- Fundamentals of financial administration: basic bookkeeping of accounts
- Methods and stewardship of fundraising
- Development of resources to meet local needs of pastors/ministers

B.4.3 Degree Level

Note: For students who have completed the Diploma course, the program should be so arranged that unnecessary repetition is avoided.

- a. Evangelisation and Mission:
 - History of evangelisation in the Pacific re methods and practice
 - Church growth, in its various practical dimensions
 - Ecumenism in practice
 - Inter-faith dialogue in practice
- b. Worship:
 - Culture and Christianity: traditions re worship forms
 - Development of church music
 - Worship and spirituality
 - Use of different expressive arts in worship: dance, drama, mime, etc.
 - Creativity: practical experience and evaluation
- c. Preaching:
 - Developing skills using audiovisual techniques: praxis and critique
 - Integration of theology
 - Various models of the homily for different occasions
 - Construction and practice of sermons/homily using different methods: expository, storytelling, dialogue, etc.

- Communication and modern technology in media
- d. Christian education:
- Meaning of Christian nurture and growth in faith
 - Techniques and skills of teaching, pedagogy
 - Development of special programs for adult and Christian families according to the context
 - Preparation of programs for liturgical events: weddings, feasts (liturgical), etc.
 - Education programs of Christian ethics
 - Preparation of programs for different age groups
 - If applicable, familiarity with administration of schools
- e. Leadership training:
- Different models of leadership from culture, secular society, and gospel
 - The ideal leadership roles for the pastor/minister
 - Leadership/service/delegation/sharing with community, the responsibilities of the church and administration
- f. Pastoral care:
- Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of traditional approaches to counselling and pastoral care
 - Basic guidelines towards recognition of different levels of pastoral problems and concerns of people
 - CPE program, and related to other programs in the Supporting Studies courses
- g. Church administration:
- Church law (Canon law)
 - Constitution studies

- Comparative church politics
- Familiarity with civil law, as applicable to birth, marriage, death, etc.
- Fundamentals of financial administration: basic bookkeeping of accounts
- Methods and stewardship of fundraising
- Development of resources to meet local needs of pastors/ministers

B.5 Supporting Studies

It is recommended that each school will organise these studies according to the needs of the student and the guidelines of the church/churches concerned.

B.5.1 Certificate level

- a. Gospel and culture: Introduction to basic concepts:
 - Culture
 - Model of culture, as an integrated system
 - Culture change
 - Evolution versus creation
 - Values and traditions
- b. English/French language and study skills:
 - Comprehension and expression: written and oral
 - Communication
 - Methodology of study: research and writing

B.5.2 Diploma Level

- a. Gospel and culture: same as Certificate level
- b. Pacific studies
 - Genesis of Pacific cultures
 - Migration

- Kinship
 - Mythology
 - Oral traditions
 - Ritual/symbolism
- c. Remedial studies, and development of competency skills
Use of English/French language at a more advanced level
- d. Psychology I
- Experimental
 - Developmental

B.5.3 Degree Level

- a. Gospel and culture: same as Certificate level: more advanced
- b. Pacific studies: same as Diploma level: more advanced
- c. Remedial studies
Use of English language: comprehension, communication
- d. Sociology
Religion and society
Social analysis, directed to pastoral praxis
Social issues in the Pacific context (seminar/research)
- e. Psychology II
- Adult psychology
 - Pastoral psychology