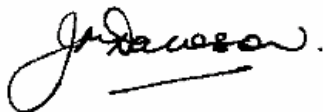


Charter for: Ecumenical Board of Theological Studies (EBTS)

Also trading as: Ecumenical Institute of Distance Theological Studies (EIDTS)

MOE Number: 7269

Authorised Signature:



Name and Title: Jenny Dawson, Chairperson

Date: September 2003

Contact Person: Bruce Hansen, Director, Ecumenical Institute of Distance Theological Studies

Contact Details: The Director, EIDTS, PO Box 12 286, Christchurch 8002.
Phone 03 354 2207; email: bahansen@xtra.co.nz

1. Mission

EBTS offers distance and dispersed study programmes at tertiary level to adult learners throughout New Zealand.

Our mission is to equip people for leadership and participation in society by providing quality theological education that –

- is accessible, affordable and consistent with the Christian traditions and policies of our member churches¹;
- upholds the commitments of our member churches to bicultural relationships, gender equity, social justice and ecological responsibility.

2. Special Character

EBTS is a non-profit Trust providing a distinctive distance and dispersed theological education.

- EBTS offers the only registered diploma in theology (Licentiate in Theology) available by distance throughout New Zealand. The LTh is a well-respected qualification in the sector (NZQA level 6), and has a long history (over ninety years).
- EBTS is the only provider in New Zealand of the internationally highly regarded group study programme, Education for Ministry (EFM). (EFM is not currently a TEC funded programme).
- Both programmes focus on open enquiry and critical thought, not doctrinal or denominational positions.
- Tutors for the LTh are contracted because of their expertise irrespective of where in New Zealand they live. Typically they hold academic positions in universities and other institutions. This enhances their contribution to EBTS and its students.

¹ Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Salvation Army. See Section 10

- Participation in courses is open to adult learners, irrespective of religious background or personal aspirations.
- Students study in their own communities and in their own time.
- Students are encouraged to relate their study to their context and community, enhancing social capacity in dispersed communities around New Zealand.
- Students are well supported by a tutor (LTh), or a mentor and group (EFM).
- Students' personal circumstances are readily allowed for (see Section 8).
- Courses are particularly suitable for later learners and those seeking entry to tertiary study.
- Courses can to be offered irrespective of numbers enrolled, and at times to suit the student.
- EBTS courses have proved popular with and valuable to people living in smaller towns and rural communities without access to other tertiary study options.
- EBTS courses encourage on-going learning and enquiry.
- EBTS sees itself enhancing the way in which New Zealanders participate in society and contribute thinking and leadership around cultural, spiritual and ethical issues.

3. Contribution to New Zealand's identity and economic, social, and cultural development

The courses EBTS provides contribute strongly to New Zealand's identity and social and cultural development.

As New Zealand develops and uses more innovative forms of technology, citizens will need to become more skilled in considering cultural, spiritual and ethical issues in relation to policy development and the well-being of society. EBTS courses are ideally suited to equipping people for this need.

As New Zealand becomes a more diverse and culturally rich, pluralistic society, citizens will need to become more skilled in understanding different cultural and spiritual heritages and how to articulate issues of identity, culture and spirituality in ways that contribute to open debate. EBTS equips people for this environment.

Students with EBTS undertake critical study of how religion and spirituality impact on society, how different religious and cultural traditions have contributed to contemporary New Zealand society, and how beliefs and culture interact with ethical decision-making.

EBTS is in the business of both personal and leadership development. Although this may be related to training for employment, our goal is to equip people with the skills needed for the knowledge society through helping develop skills for active citizenship and enhancing New Zealand's cultural identity.

Because our students are studying in their own communities, often outside main centres, their study with EBTS enhances the leadership they offer in those communities. Our students are typically involved voluntarily or professionally in their communities in ways that contribute to social fabric and cohesion.

By strengthening lay leadership in local churches, the social contribution of those churches is also strengthened.

Being distance and dispersed programmes, EBTS courses are building social capacity in communities that are typically light on tertiary-trained leadership.

EBTS is an affordable and accessible entry point to tertiary study, providing foundation skills for on-going study.

Over 85% of our students satisfactorily complete courses they have enrolled in. We have and expect a high satisfaction rating from the mainstream churches that constitute a key sector in which many of our students and graduates exercise their skills.

EBTS works closely with key stakeholder church denominations to remain responsive to their future leadership training needs. An important trend that EBTS programmes are catering for is the need for appropriate academic training for lay leaders.

4. Contribution to the tertiary education system as a whole

EBTS programmes are affordable and accessible entry points for further tertiary study. No educational prerequisites are required other than the potential for self-directed study. To encourage success, students are offered individual support, positive feedback, and guidance on study and writing skills.

The Licentiate in Theology (LTh) provides a fifteen-paper, registered, level six diploma which is recognised for credit toward degrees in theology at the University of Otago. Individual courses from the diploma can be taken separately or combined to suit individual or sector needs.

EBTS also offers its own (unregistered) advanced credential (Scholar in Theology [STh]) for a piece of supervised research presented as a dissertation.

5. Approach to collaboration and co-operation with other tertiary education providers and organisations

EBTS has an acknowledged track record in providing tertiary study in theology and ministry for over ten years. It has established strong links with other providers.

- We participate in the sector group, the Christian Theology and Ministry Education Society (CTMES). We are working with the sector to demonstrate complementarity and collective added value to New Zealand society.
- We are members of the New Zealand Association of Private Education Providers.
- We are members of and participate in the New Zealand Association of Theological Schools.
- We have initiated relationships with both the University of Otago Theology and Religious Studies Department, and the University of Auckland School of Theology.
- We contract tutors and assessors from other institutions, including the University of Otago and the University of Auckland.
- We maintain co-operative links with tertiary educators associated with the mainstream churches; St John's College (Anglican); Trinity College (Methodist); School of Ministry, Knox College (Presbyterian); Taapapa (Maori, Anglican).
- We have a working relationship that allows our students to use the Hewitson Library (Knox College), Kinder Library (St John's College) and Theology House Library (Christchurch).
- EBTS is a signatory to the Statement of Intention to investigate the formation of the Institute of Christian Studies as per the correspondence between the CTMES (Bruce Knox) and the TEC (Pauline Marshall) on 18.7.03 and 26.8.03. EBTS intends to actively pursue throughout 2004 this discussion with other Christian theological and ministry education providers.

These give EBTS the opportunity to be in regular dialogue with other tertiary providers in the sector.

6. Approach to fulfilling Treaty of Waitangi obligations

EBTS, as a nation-wide provider, regards its tangata whenua stakeholders as the Maori sections within each of the member churches.

EBTS is predominantly an expression of the pakeha or tauwiwi partner in each of the member churches, and as such positions itself as a pakeha partner to the Maori sections of those churches and their theology and ministry training units.

EBTS is committed to –

- expressing and promoting principles of partnership as implied by the Treaty;
- ensuring its methods and programme content recognise, where appropriate, the particular cultural and historical context of Aotearoa New Zealand;
- equitable access for Maori and to respecting the cultural values of its students.

EBTS can provide assessment for any students using te reo Maori, and has Maori cultural advisors. All tutors are expected to develop and maintain competence in understanding Treaty of Waitangi issues and student cultural needs.

The nature of EBTS programmes is such that students can study within the support of their own iwi, hapu and whanau setting.

7. Approach to meeting the needs of Pacific peoples

EBTS looks to Pacific Island leaders within the member churches, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Salvation Army, to provide cultural advice and support where necessary. All these churches have strong involvement of Pacific peoples.

We note, however, that EBTS programmes have not proved attractive to Pacific Island learners. We are undertaking further enquiry to see if the programmes may be made more useful and attractive to Pacific peoples in New Zealand.

8. Approach to meeting the educational needs of learners

EBTS programmes are flexible, allowing students to negotiate suitable start dates and assessment times.

Each student in our TEC funded programme (LTh) is provided with –

- direct access to a tutor by phone, email and/or post; and to the Academic Registrar (by 0800 phone number), who is charged with student support;
- a unit outline (purpose, outline, outcomes, tutor introduction, marking schedule and criteria, bibliography, study support, assignments);
- a study guide (guidance in the use of the course material);
- a set of readings (to supplement the set text/s for the course);
- a writing and study guide;
- a regular newsletter;
- distance access to library services, by arrangement with Kinder Library (Auckland), Wellington Institute of Theology Library (Wellington), Theology House Library (Christchurch) and Hewitson Library (Dunedin).

In some cases courses are supported by residential block courses.

EBTS is currently piloting an e-learning approach through an ‘internet classroom.’

EBTS works actively with its founding churches to identify current and future education needs for church and society, and develops courses to meet perceived need.

Participants in our non-funded group-learning programme (EFM) are –

- part of a group with a trained mentor;
- provided with a set of readings.

9. Approach to ensuring that the organisation develops and supports a staff profile that reflects its mission and special character

EBTS is committed to good employment and EEO practices. Along with expertise required for the specific courses, EBTS ensures that staff are kept up-to-date in the art and skills of distance education.

Management and Administration

EBTS programmes employ permanent staff to provide management and administrative services, and contract other staff as required. The EFM programme relies extensively on trained volunteers to run the programme.

The LTh programme is delivered by the Ecumenical Institute of Distance Theological Studies (EIDTS) established by and accountable to EBTS.

The EIDTS Director is charged by the Board with responsibility for educational management, financial management, student support, quality management and staff management. He achieves this through his own and the Academic Registrar's expertise, and by working with skilled volunteers (particularly Board members) and by contracting expertise as required.

Academic

Course subject expertise is achieved by using specially commissioned study guides and course content tailored for the New Zealand context by acknowledged experts in each field. This is supplemented, in the case of EFM, by mentors and academic advisors, and, in the case of EIDTS, by expert tutors and assessors contracted each year to provide tutoring, feedback and assessment for students.

Tutors (EIDTS) and mentors (EFM) are required to undertake on-going professional development through training events provided by EBTS and through other opportunities. Self and peer appraisal is also required.

10. Governance and management structure and principles

The Ecumenical Board of Theological Studies Trust is incorporated under the Charitable Trusts Act 1957 and is subject to its trust deed (1998).

The trustees are members of a board made up of two members each from the participating churches and church bodies:

- The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia
- The Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa
- The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
- The Salvation Army, New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga Territory
- The Churches' Education Commission
- Distance Education (Distance Education representative from member churches)

EBTS is a co-signatory with the EFM Trust Board in the licence agreement with The University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee to deliver the Education for Ministry programme in NZ. This programme does not receive any government funding.

EBTS is registered as a Private Training Establishment with the NZ Qualifications Authority. The LTh diploma is registered as a local qualification, and attracts funding through TEC.

EBTS has established EIDTS to manage and deliver the LTh programme and the STh.

The EFM Executive has responsibility for the management and delivery of EFM.

A director manages EIDTS, working with the Academic Registrar and the Academic Committee to deliver the LTh and STh. Tutors and assessors are responsible to the Director for the learning and assessment of students.

The EBTS Board undertakes regular strategic planning and establishes goals and objectives that are reviewed annually. Each delivery arm (EIDTS and EFM) annually reviews its performance against the vision, purpose, values, goals and objectives of EBTS and develop revised objectives for the year ahead for submission to the board. EIDTS and EFM each have their own finance committees who report to EBTS Board.

11. Consultation undertaken in preparation of the Charter

- Strategic planning with focus group to clarify mission and goals; 28 May 2003.
- Distribution of draft strategic planning document to Board, staff, Academic Committee, and EFM Executive, for feedback.
- Draft changed in the light of feedback and approved by Board.
- Draft Charter document circulated to above group and placed on website; August 2003;
- Summary of Charter with link to website and offer of hardcopy sent to students, tutors, church stakeholders, partner libraries, Theology House, Otago University Theology and Religious Studies Department, Auckland University School of Theology, and the Christian Theology and Ministry Education Society. Feedback invited. August 2003.
- Advertise stakeholder list in NZ Herald, Dominion Post, The Press, and Otago Daily Times; 26 August 2003.
- Amendments made in response to feedback from stakeholders; final version distributed for approval to Board, September 2003.

12. Glossary of Abbreviations

CTMES	Christian Theology and Ministries Education Society; an association of education providers in this sector in New Zealand.
EBTS	Ecumenical Board of Theological Studies
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EFM	Education for Ministry programme; operated under licence from The University of the South, Sewanee, USA
EIDTS	Ecumenical Institute of Distance Theological Studies; a delivery arm of EBTS to deliver the LTh and STh programmes.
LTh	Licentiate in Theology; a level 6 diploma approved by NZQA and receiving public funding through TEC.
NZQA	New Zealand Qualification Authority
STh	Scholar in Theology; a credential issued by EBTS for an examined dissertation.
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission