

Quality Assurance Report: Global Institute of Theology—Malta

October 2014

INTRODUCTION

An internal quality assurance review of Global Institute of Theology (GIT) was conducted during the period 4 October 2014 – 8 October 2014 by Global University’s Vice Provost, Randy J. Hedlun, D.Th. This review included a site visit to the office and classroom facilities in Malta. During this site visit, Dr. Hedlun inspected administrative systems and records, observed classroom delivery and dynamics, interviewed students and board members, and interacted with the GIT Director, Joseph Agius, about past, present, and future quality assurance issues.

This report reflects the findings of this site visit review. It is structured to correspond to the Framework Standards as presented in the *National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education Proposal for Consultation, July 2014* (pp. 20–23). This report is intended to be GIT’s initial effort in applying the Quality Assurance Framework and represents several benchmarks against which future growth, development, and improvement can be both initiated and measured.

Dr. Randy Hedlun, the academic officer who conducted the site visit and prepared this report, serves as the Vice Provost of Global University. GIT is Global University’s accredited identity in Malta. Global University’s international offices are in Springfield, Missouri, USA. As Vice Provost, Dr. Hedlun serves as the assistant to Global University’s chief academic officer. Additional information about this report, including supporting documentation and exhibit material, may be accessed by contacting Dr. Hedlun at rhedlun@globaluniversity.edu.

1 POLICY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

GIT’s Policy for Quality Assurance includes an extensive narrative analysis of GIT’s history, current status, and established policies for its operation and its delivery of education experiences to students. The policy, with its constituent components, is available in both printed and digital formats. The policy is thoroughly articulated and comprehensively addresses the concerns, priorities, and values of Malta’s higher education accrediting bodies.

[Update 02-May-2017: The QA policy remains current and available via the GIT website and in printed format.](#)

2 INSTITUTIONAL PROBITY

GIT’s annual budgeted revenue and expense does not meet the quality assurance threshold to require an annual independent audit. However, Global University’s international office in Springfield, Missouri, USA, submits its financial affairs to an independent, external audit annually.

Although an external, independent audit is not required, GU’s Vice Provost reviewed GIT’s accounting systems and practices. Records are accurate and current accounting systems are adequate for the financial transactions required by GIT to service its students and maintain its representation of Global

University. Financial records are available to governing board members upon request and are also provided at regular intervals by GIT's Director.

Although current records are accurate and current and systems adequate to GIT's operational demands, GIT management is exploring acquisition of more advanced data recording systems. The desired systems will enhance the integration of financial records with student academic records to make revenue records related to student activities more readily available visually associated. New systems should be fully functional by June 2015.

[Update 02-May-2017: A new student information system \(SIS\) was adopted in fall 2016. This system integrates individual student academic records with financial accounts and billing statements. Reports are available from this software system.](#)

3 DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF PROGRAMMES

The programmes offered by GIT are designed by Global University and comply with the standards in all respects. Learning outcomes for all programmes are described fully in the Global University Undergraduate School of Bible and Theology catalogue, which is updated and published annually. Global University's programme documentation includes descriptions of delivery modalities, instructor and tutor qualifications and related administrative processes, and descriptions of instructional design of the curriculum, both theoretical and practical.

Learning resources are available in print publication form in Malta in addition to the substantial volume of digital learning and research resources available online through Global University's online library services.

Great effort has been invested by GIT's director to illustrate how thoroughly all programmes comply with or exceed MQF standards and requirements.

Both the director of GIT and Global University management personnel remain in regular communication with Christian ministries and churches whose leadership needs will be met by GIT graduates. This communication maintains that programme development will remain aware of and sensitive to the constituencies served by GIT students and graduates.

Students, both active and graduates, are routinely surveyed in order to apply student needs, observations, and suggestions to curriculum and programme content and delivery. Programmes are also reviewed by multiple external reviewers within the accreditation processes of Global University in the USA. Global University maintains accreditation by two district entities: national accreditation through the Distance Education and Training Council, and regional accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission, North Central Region.

[Update 02-May-2017: Global University resigned its accreditation with the DEAC in the USA in June 2016. This is a voluntary resignation motivated by several factors. The DEAC accreditation is considered a less meaningful and influential accreditation in the US academic context to the HLC's regional accreditation. Because the dual accreditation was redundant, it became increasingly difficult to justify the considerable expense of maintaining the lesser accreditation offered by DEAC.](#)

4 STUDENT CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Learning, teaching and assessment is demonstrably student centred. Several dimensions of the undergraduate programmes confirm this. Global University's instructional design is built on the theories of mastery learning, which provide flexibility that allows each student to invest the time required to achieve mastery of the curriculum content. In addition, each module includes a Service Learning Requirement, which is a content application assignment. These assignments direct students to apply module content in a real ministry activity. The actual activity is designed by the student in order to accommodate individual interests, ministry calling, and local opportunities.

The faculty of GIT and GU are available to students as local and distance tutors respectively. Students may proceed at their own self-determined pace or study in cohorts that meet in classroom environments. Classroom facilitators and distance tutors are available to provide instruction, encouragement, and accountability to students upon request.

Programme assessments include both objectively and subjectively graded student work. Object exams are reviewed through a computerized item analysis at regular intervals. These item analyses reveal weaknesses in exam items and allow for exam revisions and improvements. Subject grading rubrics are published to students within module materials. Subjective grading faculty are systematically vetted to confirm they meet academic qualifications prescribed by accreditation standards. No individual is allowed to perform academic grading services without qualifying through the vetting process.

All assessments are uniform in content and delivery, making measurement of learning consistent and predictably meaningful. Processes and policies providing for and governing student complaints are fully described in Global University's academic catalogues.

[Update 02-May-2017: No significant changes to report, as the student-centric delivery is maintained as reviewed and reported.](#)

5 STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION

GIT administers requirements, policies, and procedures as established and published by Global University. These policies are available in GU's catalogues and on its Website. In addition, GIT implements procedures and requirements as established by Malta's regulatory bodies, as well as providing documentation reflecting these requirements.

Global University maintains all permanent student academic records and provides upon request official transcripts of enrolment and study activity. GIT maintains limited duplicate records of enrolment activity, which records are routinely synchronized with those held at Global University.

At the completion of a programme of study, each student receives certification from Global University and an official transcript of credits earned, programmes completed, and degrees, certificates, and diplomas earned. GIT also provides, in addition to those certifications provided by Global University, Europass Supplement documents that fully identify and describe completed programmes, including how these programmes align with MQF and other qualifying standards.

[Update 02-May-2017:](#)

6 TEACHING STAFF

Teaching staff at the undergraduate level must meet strict, published qualifications. These qualifications are published in Global University's Faculty Handbook. In addition, a faculty review and renewal process is administered that annually inspects faculty qualifications.

A GIT faculty training seminar was conducted in October 2014 during the Vice Provost's site visit. This professional development event included instruction about adult learners and the educator's responsibility toward adult learners. The event presentation included both lecture and discussion.

Material has been prepared and delivered to the GIT director for a subsequent professional development event at future date. This event will review the history and educational theories upon which the Global University instructional design is built.

[Update 02-May-2017: The GIT director maintains support of faculty professional development through communicating PD opportunities and requirements.](#)

7 LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

The recent site visit, combined with the accreditation documentation from Global University's international offices, confirm that adequate teaching and learning resources are available to GIT's students. The number of faculty available to students personally combined with faculty available via distance communication represent a dependable and more than sufficient support staff for student learning. The diverse faculty, in terms of age, cultural orientation, and subject expertise, is adequate to the current and future student population in its potential diversity.

[Update 02-May-2017: Global University continues to increase its online library title availability. The number of available electronic titles is approaching 6,000. This e-book collection is concentrated in the theological and biblical studies disciplines and subject areas relevant to GIT's programmes. In addition to this e-book collection, Global's online library provides full access to several electronic resource research databases, such as EBSCO host.](#)

8 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

GIT's programmes are narrowly designed to target a niche student population, namely those adult learners who seek specialized education and training in Christian ministry, theology, and Bible-based academic subjects. The narrow scope of the programmes, which are not designed to necessarily enhance employability outside of Christian evangelical ministry, along with the relatively limited number of students currently studying, allow for programme management to be accomplished relatively easily.

Global University provides to GIT director and staff upon request, all information related to student performance, retention, persistence, and completion. This information is readily available.

[Update 02-May-2017: A new Student Information System \(SIS\) was launched in the fall of 2016. This system improves student information management and supplements the records maintained in the US by Global University. The SIS records student transactions, including course/module enrolment, dates, fees, payments, and account balances. It also tracks course work submission and grading processes. It is not an official academic record, which is maintained in Springfield, Missouri, USA, nor is it intended to produce official academic transcripts of student academic records.](#)

9 PUBLIC INFORMATION

Information about GIT's programmes and related policies and procedures is readily and easily available via its online presence. The GIT website is an excellent presentation of pertinent information about GIT, its schedules, opportunities, requirements, and processes. In addition, link are provided to Global University's online presence, which includes academic catalogues and additional institutional information.

An information deficiency was identified as a result of the site visit and the quality assurance inspection. Some information related to MQF levels and credits has yet to be posted online, along with a description of academic opportunities that may be opened to student through the qualifications offered. This information will be expanded during the next few months.

[Update 02-May-2017:](#)

10 ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES

Global University systematically and periodically reviews all programmes and the comprising modules. These reviews include student feedback which has been collected through formal survey instruments and less formal personal interviews and unsolicited student input. GU will supplement this ongoing programme review process by applying Malta's quality assurance standards as appropriate along with existing standards.

[Update 02-May-2017: Programme review and monitoring continues per existing policy and procedure using course satisfaction surveys, graduation \(programme completion\) surveys, and five-year graduate follow-up surveys.](#)

11 CYCLICAL EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

GIT benefits directly from Global University's multiple accreditations, which in fact represent rigorous and routine external reviews. In addition, GIT seeks review from external experts within the Maltese context of higher education.

[Update 02-May-2017: EQA scheduled for November 2017](#)

Respectfully submitted,



Randy J. Hedlun, D.Th.
Vice Provost
Global University

[This IQA audit report was updated by Randy Hedlun on May 2, 2017.](#)