

GBFE PARTNERSHIP

ACCREDITED EUROPEAN
MASTER OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

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SUMMARY

The GBFE would like to provide an additional avenue for an accredited Masters program for their current 13 consortium institutions across Europe in addition to their existing South African Masters degrees through UNISA and UP.

Theologische Hochschule Friedensau (ThHF) has a state accredited Master of Theological Studies program and is already a consortium member institution with the GBFE. This provides ThHF an opportunity to provide the GBFE with an accredited European degree option for its 12 other consortium institutions that will strengthen academic collaboration with other theological institutions across Europe.

This opportunity also has significant potential to increase the recognition, prestige, and prevalence of the ThHF and their Master of Theological Studies Degree throughout Europe.

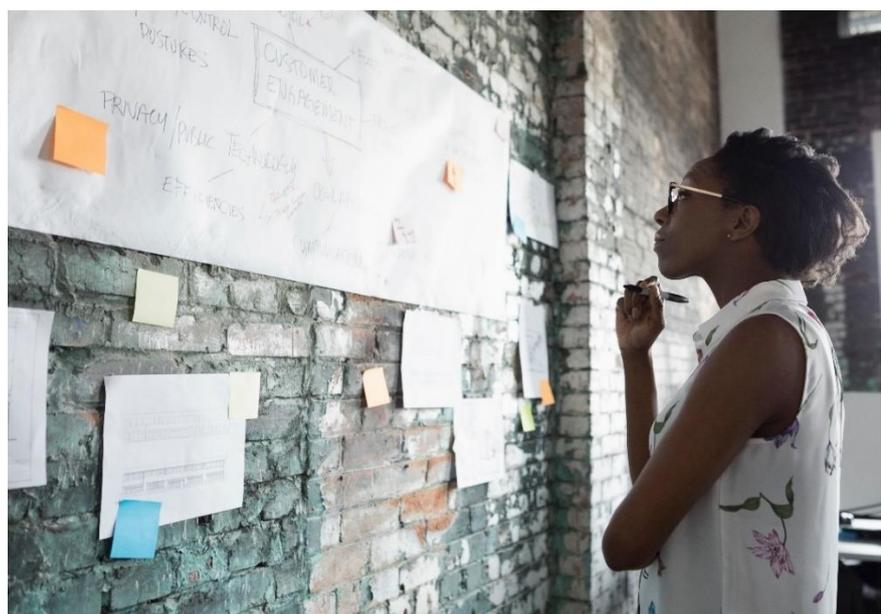
BACKGROUND

Theologische Hochschule Friedensau became a member of the Gesellschaft für Bildung und Forschung in Europa (GBFE) in 2019. GBFE is a European network of thirteen theological institutions located in Switzerland (3 institutions), Germany (7 institutions), Norway, Denmark, and Russia – these institutions are listed in Appendix 1.

This European consortium of institutions has formed a partnership with the University of South Africa (UNISA) and University of Pretoria (UP), making it possible to bestow a South-African accredited degree to the students enrolled at the consortium member institutions that is also recognized in Europe. Thus, students who attend one of the GBFE institutions without state accreditation for their Master or PhD program are also enrolled at either UNISA or UP who bestows their accredited degree upon completion.

Currently, the GBFE partnership with UNISA confers the degrees: Master of Arts, Master of Theology, and PhD. While their newly established partnership with UP confers the degrees: Master of Theology and PhD. They already fulfil the high standards required by these institutions for accreditation purposes and have in place protocols to ensure quality control.

The Theologische Hochschule Friedensau became a member institution to provide its students a pathway to an accredited PhD degree with the option of a partnership approved supervisor/secondary supervisor from Friedensau.



OPPORTUNITY

GBFE institutions currently have to offer high quality teaching and educational resources to ensure its continuing partnership with the UNISA and UP. Thus, it becomes an easy opportunity for the ThHF to offer the Master of Theological Studies to GBFE institutions, without jeopardizing their own accreditation and without lowering their standards for high academic aptitude among students. The GBFE already has protocols in place for processing and assessing student and faculty appropriateness, thus, ensuring the continuing quality of this partnership with minimal financial and personnel investment from the ThHF.

The ThHF already has a faculty representative with the GBFE, currently the Doctoral Program Coordinator - Jan Sigvartsen PhD, who's role could be easily expanded to include external GBFE Master of Theological Studies students as well.





DENOMINATIONAL SPECIFICITY

Accreditation wise, the ThHF should be able to adjust emphases or add new ones so GBFE and the consortium institutions could customize these modules (or create new ones) to suit the needs of their specific denomination. At Friedensau, the MTS program is taught in English, however, the Croatian students that graduated in 2020, were taught in Croatian. This creates a precedent for teaching the MTS program in the language best suited for the students enrolled at their consortium school. The emphases currently offered and those under consideration are:

- Biblical Studies
- Adventist Studies
- Mission Studies
- Pastoral Ministry (under consideration)

The MTS in Seventh-day Adventist Studies could easily be replicated for a different denomination – MTS in [name of the denomination] Studies. The ThHF would only have to add two new modules that parallel module 04 and module 06 covering the history and theology of the specific denomination.

The elective Module 17 in the MTS in Biblical Studies, *Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology and History*, is centered on the Archaeological dig that Friedensau participates in at the *Balu'a Regional Archaeological Project* in Jordan. Students from the GBFE consortium schools could also participate in the dig and sign up for the module for credit (taught only in English). The next planned dig-seasons are June-July 2022 and June-July 2024. The participation of more students from the ThHF will potentially make this trip more cost effective for those attending.





ADVANTAGES

While not comprehensive (and more could develop or become evident over time) below are some of the advantages this partnership could bring.

1. Deepening the GBFE partnership by giving consortium schools the option of providing their students with a state accredited Master of Theological Studies (MTS) degree through the ThHF. This could further deepen the academic collaborations between the GBFE consortium schools and provide students a European degree.
2. Significantly increase student and alumni numbers at Friedensau to create a broader academic community across Europe.
3. A goal of the ThHF is to gain permission to bestow a state accredited PhD degree. This deepening partnership with GBFE may help Friedensau towards this goal and could provide GBFE an additional PhD track option in the future.
4. Consortium schools that take advantage of the state accredited MTS program from the ThHF could allow their students to take classes from one of the other consortium schools, thus, we could take advantage of the academic strengths of each of the schools and may even be able to share teaching resources and costs.
5. If one school does not have the teaching capacity available to teach a specific course (or have a low student number for a course), its students could enroll in this specific course at one of the participating GBFE consortium schools, either through synchronous or asynchronous distance education, or even in person. It could also add scheduling flexibility as a consortium school may teach a course that a student may need during a semester when it is not available at their institution.

For example: Currently at Friedensau, there is an opening for a Hebrew and Greek teacher, due to the retirement of a faculty member. Thus, ThHF students could enroll in Greek and Hebrew courses offered by one of the GBFE partnership institutions until a new faculty member is secured, or give the current faculty member flexibility to continue to teach these classes on a contract basis if he would like to. This allows students to continue their studies in a timely manner without disruption, and overcome any issues associated with retiring faculty looking for greater flexibility.

6. It can create a deeper pool of academics who can serve as Master level thesis supervisors and second readers.
7. A larger, vibrant academic community could be created that would allow consortium schools to come together for scheduled academic presentations and symposiums. This partnership could also provide academics within the consortium opportunities to present and publish with colleagues at scheduled academic presentations and symposiums and undertake comparative studies between denominations.
8. It can also build strong inter-denominational relationships and peer relationships among clergy in Europe strengthening employment retention and shared strategies to common issues all clergy face in a European context. Trips, excursions, and research projects organized by consortium schools, including the ThHF, could be offered to a larger group of students from all GBFE institutions, increasing cost effectiveness for all students.



QUALITY CONTROL

For accreditation purposes, it is important for the ThHF to ensure quality control regarding its MTS program. The advantage with the proposed partnership with GBFE, is that GBFE will function as the liaison between the ThHF and the consortium institutions. This means that the ThHF would only have to deal with one entity when it comes to any potential concerns.

- Currently, the MTS program offers three specializations: Adventist Studies or Mission Studies or Biblical Studies (and a fourth under consideration in Pastoral Ministry). If customizations of current modules are requested or additional specializations are needed by the GBFE partnership institutions, the necessary changes and additions are negotiated with GBFE.
- If the ThHF should for some reason have a concern with one of GBFE consortium institutions, the concern would be raised with GBFE who would then address the concern with the relevant institution.
- All potential student applications for the MTS program coming from the consortium institutions would go through GBFE, and be forwarded to the ThHF together with all requested documentation.
- GBFE would also ensure that GBFE students module exams, module papers, and final grades are made available to the ThHF for accreditation and quality assurance purposes.
- Each semester, GBFE would also provide a list of all actively enrolled students from the GBFE institutions who are pursuing the MTS degree together with a progression report for each individual student.

The following list provides suggested mechanisms for ensuring quality control:

- GBFE will provide the ThHF a CV, that includes a publication list, from all GBFE faculty members who will be teaching courses toward the MTS degree from the ThHF.
- GBFE should provide the ThHF a Syllabus each semester from each course taught towards the MTS degree. For this purpose, a Syllabus template has been developed and is attached as Appendix 2. This ensures uniformity, consistency, and transparency across institutions.
- The ThHF retains the right to spot-check graded module papers or exams, or serve as a second grader.
- Regarding the MTS thesis, all thesis proposals need to be presented by the primary supervisor from the GBFE institution and approved by the faculty at the ThHF.
- Friedensau also retains the right to have one of their faculty members serve as a secondary supervisor or a third reader for all MTS theses.
- Regarding MTS thesis defense, it will be a public defense organized in collaboration with GBFE and the ThHF. It will take place via Zoom, or at an agreed upon location after the Covid19 pandemic. The ThHF retains the right to add a faculty member to the examination team as an external examiner, if a ThHF faculty member is not already involved as a secondary supervisor or a third reader.

A representative from the ThHF will participate in the yearly GBFE graduation and the students who are graduating with a MTS degree from the ThHF are invited to participate in the October graduation ceremony on the ThHF campus, either in person or via Zoom.



GRATUITY PAYMENT

While the costs to the ThHF would be minimal, a gratuity payment for each GBFE student could be negotiated with the GBFE to compensate the ThHF for the additional financial and personnel costs associated with offering this proposed partnership. It could also provide a budget for this proposed partnership to offer additional specialist symposiums, shared academic resources, language translation of shared resources, trips and excursions among partner schools, advertise the program, or to develop new projects or meet new needs as required. This will eliminate any financial burden being placed on the ThHF and ensure service delivery remains high to both GBFE institutions and their students.

CONCLUSION

While this is not a comprehensive proposal, it provides a means of exploring and negotiating the viability of such a partnership and considers some of the advantages while providing solutions to potential concerns. The document is intended to be a starting point for the consideration of this significant academic opportunity that would be beneficial to all while maintaining financial viability.





APPENDIX 1

GBFE CONSORTIUM INSTITUTIONS

Switzerland

- IGW - THEOLOGIE LEBEN – Independent (Evangelical Alliance and Lausanne Movement)
- Bildungszentrum Bienenberg – Anabaptists tradition
- Theologisches Seminar St. Chrischona – Evangelical learning and training community

Germany

- Akademie für christliche Führungskräfte
- Biblisch - Theologische Akademie Wiedenest – German Evangelical Alliance
- Institut für Transformationsstudien – CVJM Hochschule
- Theologisches Seminar Adelshofen - Kommunität Adelshofen e.V.
- Theologisches Seminar Rheinland - Neues Leben eV
- Therapeutische Seelsorge - eigenständiger Arbeitszweig des EC-Landesverbandes Bayern e. V.
- Theologische Hochschule Friedensau

Norway

- Norwegian School of Leadership and Theology - Norwegian Baptist Theological Seminar

Denmark

- Menighedsfalkultetet - Lutheran School of Theology on Aarhus

Russia

- Saint Petersburg Christian University - Union of Evangelical Christian – Baptists



APPENDIX 2

Proposed Syllabus Template for Consortium Schools

Friedensau Logo Here

Course Acronym & Number

COURSE TITLE

*Semester 20***

Instructor/Faculty Member Name

Your College/University Logo Here

COURSE ACRONYM & NUMBER
COURSE TITLE
SEMESTER 20**

GENERAL CLASS INFORMATION

Class acronym: Course Acronym and Number
Class name: Class Name
Semester & year: Semester 20**
Class location: List Building and Classroom Number
Class time/day: **.**.am/pm – **.**.am/pm, day/s
Credits offered: Number of credits

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT DETAILS

Instructor: Instructor Name Instructor Credentials
Telephone: 269-471-****
Email: *****@andrews.edu
Office location: List Building and Room Number
Office hours: List office hours

CLASS DISCRIPTION

Please copy the class description as written in the Bulletin or Student Handbook. You may also like to briefly expand upon the Bulletin description and cover the topics contained in the course more specifically.

Prerequisite: Please list any prerequisites required for this class.

CLASS OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of this class are to:

List your primary objective beginning with the most important one. This should be a skill or knowledge base which a student pastor will be able to use in their future career as a result of taking this class. (Later, these primary objectives will be used to design assessment which will measure how well the student has actually learned these objectives.) *Please note: If you cannot actually measure a primary objective with an appropriate assessment, then include it as a secondary objective. This is because it is impossible to know if a student can demonstrate a competent/required standard and has achieved that objective. Accreditation Organizations/Offices will question primary objectives that cannot be assessed, or have assessments that could not possibly measure that objective.*

For example: An objective such as “Improve the marriage of a student” could not be used as a primary objective as it is virtually impossible to assess. You would have to ask a non-student spouse to write an assessment in which he/she may say anything to help their spouse get a good grade. A primary of objective of “Have students understand the important of and undertake ongoing Bible study” cannot be assessed with a paper or an exam. How would you know if they have actually done this? Rather, a journal of their Bible study during that semester may be a more appropriate assessment.

- List more primary objectives if you have them. Limit them to five, because you will have to design assessments like papers, presentations, exams, projects, etc, that will specifically measure how successfully a student has learned the skill or knowledge base associated with every primary objective.

Secondary objectives include:

- List your secondary objectives beginning with those of most importance. These objective don’t necessarily have to correspond with an assessment, but are skills, knowledge bases which may inadvertently occur as a result of taking your class.
- List as many secondary objectives as you like, but to avoid scaring your students, best practice is to keep them to about five.

Required:

1. List the textbooks required for this class using the bibliography referencing style (APA, SBL etc) you require in your class.
2. List more if you need to.

Recommended:

1. List the recommended readings required for this class using the bibliography referencing style (APA, SBL etc) you require in your class.
2. List more if you need to.

Class Bibliography:

1. List the books and journal articles from which you drew the materials/information for your class. Use the bibliography referencing style (APA, SBL etc) you require in your class.
2. List more if you need to.

Criteria for Grades

Please give a specific description of how you determine a grade for written assessment like papers, reports etc. You may also like to provide a table as an appendix which outlines succinct criteria for each grade. A sample grading system can be made available to you by Fridensau.

Passing Grades

Do your students need to pass certain assessments like the exam etc in order to pass the class? Disclose this information here in a brief statement. (e.g. Please note that a student will only receive a passing grade for the course if he/she has attained a passing grade on their final examination.)

Assessment Submission

Give a brief description of how you would like your assessment submitted to you. Do you prefer hard copies, email, in-house electronic submission, or Moodle. (e.g. Please email me an electronic version of your completed assessments. Hard copies will not be accepted.

Late Submission

Give a brief description of penalties for late submission of assessment items. (e.g. All late assessment will incur a 10% per day penalty.)

Other Guidelines (if applicable)

List any other guidelines relevant to assessment you may wish to disclose to the student.

1.	Title of Assessment	**%
2.	Title of Assessment	**%
3.	Title of Assessment	**%
4.	Title of Assessment	**%
	Total	100%
5	Bonus Assessment Title	**%

1. **Title of Assessment.** Give a detailed description of this Assessment. Ensure assessment will adequately measure the primary objectives you identified earlier.

Provide the due date (bold it) at the end of your description.

2. **Title of Assessment.** Give a detailed description of this Assessment:
 - i. **List specific criteria if you need to:** give a detailed description of criteria contained with an assessment if required.
 - ii. **List specific criteria if you need to:** give a detailed description of criteria contained with an assessment if required.
 - iii. Xxxxx

Provide the due date (bold it) at the end of your description.

3. **Title of Assessment.** Give a detailed description of this Assessment. Ensure they will adequately measure the primary objectives you identified earlier.

Provide the due date (bold it) at the end of your description.

4. **Title of Assessment.** Give a detailed description of this Assessment. Ensure they will adequately measure the primary objectives you identified earlier.

Provide the due date (bold it) at the end of your description.

5. **Title of Assessment.** Give a detailed description of this Assessment. Ensure they will adequately measure the primary objectives you identified earlier.

Provide the due date (bold it) at the end of your description.

CLASS POLICIES

Classroom Seating

Give a statement about your policy on classroom seating (e.g. To facilitate the instructor in learning each student's name, please select a permanent seat (for at least the first half of the semester) in the classroom.)

Disability Accommodations

Give a statement about how you will fulfill disability accommodations (e.g. If you qualify for accommodations under your country's disabilities legislation, please see the instructor as soon as possible for referral and assistance in arranging such accommodations.)

Late Submission of Assessment

Give a statement about your policy on late submission of assessment (e.g. All late assessment will incur a 10% per day penalty.)

Other Policies

Include additional statements about any other policies relevant to your class. You may use quotes from your bulletins or student handbooks to cover issues like examinations, class attendance, or excused absences.

Academic Integrity

The Theologische Hochschule, Friedensau takes seriously all acts of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) falsifying official documents; plagiarizing; misusing copyrighted material; violating licensing agreements; using media from any source to mislead, deceive or defraud; presenting another's work as one's own; using materials during an examination other than those specifically allowed; stealing, accepting or studying from stolen examination materials; copying from another student; or falsifying attendance records.

Consequences may include denial of admission, revocation of admission, warning from a teacher with or without formal documentation, warning from an academic dean with formal documentation, receipt of a reduced or failing grade with or without notation of the reason on the transcript, suspension or dismissal from the course, suspension or dismissal from the program, expulsion from the university, or degree cancellation. Disciplinary action may be retroactive if academic dishonesty becomes apparent after the student leaves the course, program or university.

OUTLINE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

This page is to help students know when a particular class will be taught.

Week	Date	Class Topic	Assignments Due
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			

INSTRUCTOR PROFILE



Give a brief professional overview of your work history, professional achievements, education, and research specialty.

Provide your contact details along with links to online faculty pages that provide students with your full academic publication record.

You may like to add a sentence which provides some personal details like your wife/husband/children/fiancé/fiancée's name/s etc. Keep this brief.