



香港學術及職業資歷評審局
Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of
Academic & Vocational Qualifications

CONFIDENTIAL

ACCREDITATION REPORT

GRATIA CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

LEARNING PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

**BACHELOR OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRY (HONOURS)
PROGRAMME**

OCTOBER 2020

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Appendix HKCAAVQ Panel Membership

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.1 Based on the Service Agreement (No.: AA598), the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), in the capacity of the Accreditation Authority as provided for under the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance (Cap. 592) (AAVQO), was commissioned by the Gratia Christian College to conduct a Learning Programme Accreditation exercise with the following Terms of Reference:

- (a) To conduct an accreditation test as provided for in the AAVQO to determine whether the Bachelor of Christian Ministry (Honours) Programme of the Operator meets the stated objectives and the Qualifications Framework (QF) standard and can be offered as an accredited programme; and
- (b) To issue to Operator an accreditation report setting out the results of the determination in relation to (a) by HKCAAVQ.

2. HKCAAVQ'S DETERMINATION

Learning Programme Accreditation

2.1 HKCAAVQ has determined that, subject to the fulfillment of the pre-conditions set out below, the Bachelor of Christian Ministry (Honours) meets the stated objectives and QF standard at Level 5. Subject to the approval by the Chief Executive in Council, the Programme can be offered as an accredited programme with a validity period of five years.

2.2 In order for the validity period to take effect, the Gratia Christian College must be registered as a Post Secondary College under the Post Secondary College Ordinance (Cap. 320) and it must comply with any restrictions stipulated in the Institutional Review (IR) Report. The authority for registration under Cap. 320 rests with the Permanent Secretary for Education who may take into account the outcome of the IR Report and other considerations as deemed necessary.

2.3 Validity Period

2.3.1 The validity period will, provided the Operator fulfils all pre-conditions to the commencement of validity period as set out in Paragraph 2.5, commence on the date specified below. Operators may apply to HKCAAVQ to vary the commencement date of the validity period. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2.4 The determinations on the Programme are specified as follows:

Name of Operator	Gratia Christian College 宏恩基督教學院
Name of Award Granting Body	Gratia Christian College 宏恩基督教學院
Title of Learning Programme	Bachelor of Christian Ministry (Honours) Programme 基督教事工榮譽學士課程
Title of Qualification(s) [Exit Award(s)]	Bachelor of Christian Ministry (Honours) 基督教事工榮譽學士
Mode of Study	Full-time and Part-time
Primary Area of Study/ Training	A07 Humanities 人文科學
Sub-area of Study/ Training	A0701 Humanities 人文科學
QF Level	Level 5
QF Credits	565
Programme Length	4 years (full-time mode), 6 years (part-time mode)
Length of Programme Leading to Exit Award	Year 1 entry (full-time mode): 4 years Senior Year entry (full-time mode): 2 years Year 1 entry (part-time mode): 6 years

	Senior Year entry (part-time mode): 3 years Number of notional learning hours: 5646 Contact hours required for the above QF credits: 2042 Ratios of contact hours to self-study hours for various teaching and learning activities: • Lecture, tutorial, workshop – 1:2 • Practicum – 2:1
Start Date of Validity Period	1 September 2021
End Date of Validity Period	31 August 2026
Number of Enrolment(s)	One enrolment per year
Maximum Number of New Students Per Year	Year 1 entry (full-time) – 20 students Senior Year entry (full-time) – 20 students Year 1 entry (part-time) – 20 students Senior Year entry (part-time) – 20 students
Specification of Competency Standards-based Programme	☐ Yes ☒ No
Address of Teaching / Training Venue(s)	5 Wai Chi Street, Shek Kip Mei, Kowloon, Hong Kong 香港九龍石硤尾偉智街五號

- 2.5 **Conditions** (including pre-conditions for obtaining the HKCAAVQ accreditation status as applied for the commencement of the validity period)

2.5.1 Pre-conditions

2.5.1.2 The Operator is to review and revise, as appropriate, the aspect of 'To be' of the PILOs. All the intended learning outcomes should be measurable with clear outcome indicators. (Para. 4.18)

2.5.1.3 The Operator is to specify substantively the meaning of 'prepare students to serve as a pastor' in PO 5 and PILO 5. **The inclusion of a parenthetical clause to clarify that 'becoming a pastor should require undergoing further training after graduation' is needed.** (Para. 4.1.9)

2.5.1.4 The Operator is to define and differentiate clearly between Practicum and Internship, which constitute significant learning components in the Programme. (Para. 4.3.15)

2.5.1.5 The Operator is to provide evidence on how the host organisations can provide relevant learning elements for students in accordance with the requirements of Practicum and Internship respectively. (Para. 4.3.16)

2.5.1.6 The Operator is to provide evidence showing that all senior management and teaching staff of this Programme are qualified with relevant expertise, cumulative credentials and qualification(s) accredited by recognized academic institutions and/or established professional bodies. (Para. 4.5.12)

2.5.2 The Operator is to submit a report to HKCAAVQ for the fulfilment of the above pre-conditions on or before **26 February 2021**.

2.6 HKCAAVQ will subsequently satisfy itself whether the Operator remains competent to achieve the relevant objectives and the Programme continues to meet the standard to achieve the relevant objectives as claimed by the Operator by reference to, amongst other things, the Operator's fulfilment of any conditions and compliance with any restrictions stipulated in this Accreditation Report. For the avoidance of doubt, maintenance of accreditation status is subject to fulfilment of any condition and compliance with any restriction stipulated in this Accreditation Report.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 Gratia Christian College (GCC) was registered as an approved post-secondary college with degree-awarding status under the Post-Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap 320) in July 2015. It is a private, independent, and non-profit making Christian post-secondary college. The ultimate goal of GCC is to become a private and independent Christian university in the future.

3.2 The concept of servant leadership is a core element found in GCC's Vision Statements, desired characteristics of graduates and programme objectives.

3.3 GCC currently offers eight accredited programmes (according to the Qualifications Register) under six respective Schools. They are:

	Programme	QF Level
1	Bachelor of Service Management (Honours) (<i>formerly titled "Bachelor of Business Administration (Honours) in Service Marketing and Management"</i>)	5
2	Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)	5
3	Bachelor of Social Work (Honours)	5
4	Higher Diploma in Early Childhood Education	4
5	Higher Diploma in Transformative Business Management	4
6	Higher Diploma in Psychology and Counselling	4
7	Higher Diploma in Christian Ministry	4
8	Diploma in Pre-University Studies	3

3.4 The mission of GCC is to inspire students to have parallel development in both academic and spiritual aspects. It promotes integration of Christian values into students' learning experience vis-à-vis the curriculum design underpinned by the following core values:

C - Commitment
H - Humility
R – Resilience

I – Integrity
S – Service
T – Teamwork

- 3.5 For this learning programme accreditation exercise, HKCAAVQ formed an expert Panel (Panel members are listed in Appendix 1). Due to the corona virus pandemic, the site visit was conducted through videoconference at HKCAAVQ with the Operator. Moreover, Typhoon Signal no. 9 was hoisted in the morning of 19 August so that the original date arranged for videoconference schedule was postponed to 20-21 August 2020. The *Manual for the Four-stage Quality Assurance Process under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (Version 1.1 April 2019)* was the guiding document for the Operator and the Panel in conducting this exercise.

4. PANEL'S DELIBERATIONS

The following presents the Panel's deliberations on a range of issues pertinent to its major findings. For aspects of the accreditation standards where no observations are made they are considered to be appropriately addressed by the Operator.

Learning Programme Accreditation

4.1 Programme Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The learning programme must have objectives that address community, education and/or industry needs, with learning outcomes that meet the relevant QF standards, for all exit qualifications from the programme.

- 4.1.1 The Panel reviewed Report of the Employer Survey which was conducted in a form of luncheon seminar in August 2019. A total of 61 responses were collected from 100 representatives including Christian churches and non-profit making organisations. Majority (96.6%) indicated there were demands for knowledge and training in Christian ministry. In general, respondents would consider supporting their colleagues to undertake the proposed Bachelor of Christian Ministry (Honours) Programme (BCM), either in full-time or part-time mode.

4.1.2 There are more than 1,000 Christian churches and numerous social and educational services provided by churches in Hong Kong. In response to these demands, GCC launched a Higher Diploma in Christian Ministry (HDCM) Programme in September last year with the aim to develop graduates to serve as para-professional and supporting staff in the aforesaid organisations. Moreover, in order to realise the vision of developing servant leaders for the sake of fulfilling community and churches' needs, and be responsive to the expressed eagerness of the HDCM graduates, who want to continue their study through articulation to a degree programme, GCC proposed to launch a Bachelor of Christian Ministry (Honours) Programme under the School of Christian Ministry in 2021.

4.1.3 More specifically, the Programme Objectives (PO) are:

PO1: Provide students with a broad curriculum of theological knowledge, biblical knowledge, and pastoral leadership and care.

PO 2: Equip students with the biblical and theological foundations of evangelism.

PO 3: Provide students with knowledge in general education and life and character education.

PO 4: Nurture students to become servant leaders to exemplify the * "CHRIST" values.

PO 5: Prepare students to serve as a pastor or teacher, pursue further study, or serve in various organisations operated with Christian values.

* "CHRIST" values: Commitment, Humility, Resilience, Integrity, Service, and Teamwork.

4.1.4 The Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) are classified into two aspects:

"To do": focuses on instruction of knowledge and skills; and

"To be": focuses on developing the character of students

4.1.4.1 (To do) Graduates will be able to:

- PILO 1: Demonstrate a breadth of understanding of theological and biblical knowledge and a Christian worldview.
- PILO 2: Analyse, outline, interpret, and critically reflect on biblical scriptures for application to the contemporary context in ministry, preaching, or teaching.
- PILO3: Demonstrate the skills for leading individuals or communities in spiritual understanding and growth.
- PILO 4: Demonstrate the skills of a ministry practitioner in written and oral communication and the critical analysis and evaluation of information and ideas.
- PILO 5: Be prepared to serve as a pastor or teacher, serve in various organisations operated with Christian values, or pursue further study in related disciplines.

4.1.4.2 (To be) Graduates will become:

- PILO 6: Persons who holistically integrate knowledge, “CHRIST” values, and faith.
- PILO 7: Servant leaders who apply the principles of the Bible to contribute to the well-being of the world with Christian love, creativity, and a global perspective.
- PILO 8: Life-long learners who have the expertise and skills to independently and critically examine knowledge related to and beyond their profession.
- PILO 9: Principled individuals who are committed to building a Christ-centered life.

4.1.5 The abovementioned POs and PILOs revealed that graduates of BCM Programme are anticipated to serve as a pastor or teacher. However, it might be overstated or an unclear illustration on the exit prospect of the Programme. The Operator needs to refine the specific statements in POs and PILOs in a clearer manner in order to avoid false expectations from students. Graduates must receive further or additional professional training if they want to become a church pastor or to teach in school settings.

- 4.1.6 Echoed with the comments given in the Report of the Internal Learning Programme Accreditation, the Panel also found some anticipated outcomes stated in the PILOs are value-based, particularly the part of “To be”, and difficult to be assessed without identifying substantive and direct methods of measurement. The Panel expected the Operator to provide clear assessment indicators and methods for measurement of outcomes; otherwise, the PILOs should be rephrased.
- 4.1.7 The Panel appreciated the Operator’s intent to integrate GCC’s missions of promoting inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogues in designing the Programme. However, more effort is needed to strengthen the Programme content so as to demonstrate a more coherent alignment of POs and the PILOs with the aforesaid mission statements.

Pre-conditions

- 4.1.8 In this regard, **the Operator is to review and revise, as appropriate, the aspect of ‘To be’ of the PILOs. All the intended learning outcomes should be measurable with clear outcome indicators.**
- 4.1.9 **The Operator is to specify substantively the meaning of ‘prepare students to serve as a pastor’ in PO 5 and PILO 5. The inclusion of a parenthetical clause to clarify that ‘becoming a pastor should require undergoing further training after graduation’ is needed.**

The Operator is to submit a report to HKCAAVQ for the fulfilment of the above pre-conditions **on or before 26 February 2021.**

4.2 Learner Admission and Selection

The minimum admission requirements of the learning programme must be clearly outlined for staff and prospective learners. These requirements and the learner selection processes must be effective for recruitment of learners with the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake the programme.

- 4.2.1 Student admission and enrolment were of concerns, as well as the capability to recruit adequate number of students. At the site visit, the Panel was told that financial backup for the Programme is more

than sufficient, so that it can be operated even at the threshold level when only 5 students are admitted. However, a small cohort may bring forth corresponding issues like staff deployment plan, opening electives for students' choice, course planning, interactive learning activities among peer students, as well as availability of supportive facilities for their learning.

- 4.2.2 Upon the Panel's request, the Operator supplemented more information about the admission framework defined by different routes of entry. Projected number of new students from 2021/22 to 2025/26, mapped with staff deployment for full and in case of moderate enrolment scenarios, was also provided for the Panel's perusal at the site visit.
- 4.2.3 The Panel suggested the Operator further specify the requirements for admission via standard and non-standard routes respectively. For senior year entry, an equivalent qualification (such as holders of Associate Degree, 3-year Diploma or other overseas programmes, etc.) and accredited qualifications in discipline-related/specific domain, awarded by local or overseas relevant established professional bodies or authorities, should be stated and defined clearly. Admission through non-standard routes should be well-justified and it should not be a major source of student admission. Number of entrants via non-standard routes should be capped within 5% in total across all admission categories. Details are listed in the following table:

Admission Requirements for Standard and Non-standard Entry	
Standard Entry (Minimum Academic Requirements)	Non-standard Entry Admitted by Discretion (5% of actual intake)
Year 1 a) Level 3 in Chinese Language and English Language and Level 2 in Mathematics and Liberal Studies in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination. Applicants' scores in elective subjects will be considered as bonus points in the selection process; OR	a) Applicants who fail to meet the minimum academic admission requirements, but are nonetheless deserving, would be considered for entry the non-standard entry route by the selection panel. b) Non-standard entrants are limited to 5% of actual intake in the programme in an academic year. c) Deserving mature applicants (aged 21 or above) who do not

b) Secondary school graduates from other education systems with results comparable to the above; OR c) Hold an equivalent qualification (examples: HKALE, HKCEE, overseas university entrance examinations, etc.).	meet the minimum academic requirements may be considered for admission under this heading. d) Special consideration might be given to an applicant with recommendation from his/her secondary school principal or church pastor, and/or outstanding performance in nonacademic areas such as sports, music, arts and social services etc.
Year 3 (Senior Year entry) a) An Associate Degree or Higher Diploma in a related discipline; OR b) An equivalent qualification (examples: holders of associate degree, 3-year diploma, or degree in a related discipline offered by overseas universities, accredited bible seminary, or school of theology accredited by a relevant authority such as the Asia Theology Association (ATA), Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS), or Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE), etc.).	

4.2.4 The Panel showed appreciation to the Operator's passion and persistence in running a quality programme even though there is a probable circumstance of under-enrolment. However, the size of student intake should be maintained at optimal level to ensure that students have an inspiring and supportive learning environment. The Panel was concerned about whether the cohort size is facilitative and fit for enriching students' learning. It can be maximised if peer support, and interchange of ideas and knowledge in their learning are made possible; on the contrary, an oversized cohort may bring about space issue.

- 4.2.5 The Programme also welcomes non-Christians and non-religious people, which somehow echoes with the College's mission to promote inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogues. However, it is difficult for this group of learners to integrate into a learning environment mainly composed of Christians. Moreover, the Panel was concerned if any pre-requisites (such as years of baptism/service in church or teaching experience of biblical knowledge) are needed for entering a programme specialised in the domain of Christian ministry. In this regard, the Panel suggested the Operator should reexamine the admission requirements and state clearly if there are any preferred criteria assuring fruitful learning experience for prospective learners.
- 4.2.6 The Operator has to ensure adequate resources are available for helping entrants from non-standard routes to integrate into the mainstream learning environment that uses English as the medium of instruction (MOI). The Operator may consider providing intensive training to students with marginal grade, so as to ensure that graduates are able to attain certain exit requirements in English level.
- 4.2.7 The admission framework should clearly demonstrate different admission paths with specified criteria for respective category for the Operator to estimate learning needs of the prospective students. A desirable environment conducive to learning can thus be planned.

4.3 **Programme Structure and Content**

The structure and content of the learning programme must be up-to-date, coherent, balanced and integrated to facilitate progression in order to enable learners to achieve the stated learning outcomes and to meet the programme objectives.

- 4.3.1 The Programme curriculum incorporates 42 courses (565 QF credits) over 4 years of full-time study or 6 years of part-time study. Each year comprises 28 teaching weeks (14 weeks per semester).
- 4.3.2 The Programme consists of five structured curricular components, namely,
- (1) Foundation courses (8 courses);
 - (2) Major Required courses (9 courses);
 - (3) Major Elective courses (8 out of 18 choices);
 - (4) Integration courses (3 courses - Practicum, Internship and Honours Project); and

¹(5) General Education (GE) (14 out of 32 choices) as denoted underneath.

- 4.3.3 Based on the accreditation documents, written responses to the Panel's initial comments and discussion with the Programme team at the site visit, the Panel regarded that the curriculum design could be more aligned with the POs and PILOs. For instance, the curriculum content should involve some preliminary knowledge and skills about educational psychology and pedagogy, the Programme could be more sophisticated and coherent in accordance with the learning outcome of preparing prospective learners to work in contexts related to ministry, preaching, or teaching (as stated in PILOs 2, 4 & 5).
- 4.3.4 The Panel also reminded the Operator that curriculum design and course content should align with the vision, and mission statements, as well as values of GCC. For instance, to promote inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogues for developing Christian approaches to face current and future issues, to integrate the "CHRIST" values and to nurture "servant leadership", as well as graduate attributes of being innovative. These are all emphasized in the mission statements.
- 4.3.5 The Panel suggested the Operator to cover content in the curriculum design that can facilitate graduates to match with different paths of prospective employment claimed in the submitted documents. In this regard, the Panel suggested the Operator should differentiate clearly in respective curriculum designed to nurture pastoral ministry work in church settings, Christian ministry, teachers or counsellors work in education sector and/or Christian-affiliated service organisations, etc.
- 4.3.6 The Panel recommended the structural component of the curriculum is compact and rigid for students who also have to participate in community services besides attending classes. The Operator responded that 42 courses in the Programme represents at most 5% more than other degree programmes, and prospective learners are supposedly able to cope with this. The Panel expected

¹ The General Education Framework consists of 32 courses in total. Students have to take 14 courses out of the choices offered. The Framework is divided into 3 sectors – 10 courses in "Character and Life Education"; 9 courses in "Language and Communication" and 13 courses in "Culture, Society and Technology". Each sector has "Required" courses students should take while the remaining are their free choices.

the Operator to illustrate the rationales behind such design and how these tight arrangements align with the mission statements, especially those concerns about whole person development, given that students will not be overloaded by the curriculum design. However, there was no further illustration presented at the site visit.

- 4.3.7 The original purpose of including General Education (GE) is to encourage students to extend the breadth and depth in their knowledge accumulation. However, three courses enlisted in GE electives were found overlapping with students' major specialisation. When offering course options, which are already confined within a limited scope under the curricular structure, the Operator has to consider how to enrich students' learning with a broader spectrum of choices, whereas GE courses are preferably non-Major relevant.
- 4.3.8 The Operator may consider allowing students who already specialise in the domain of Christian Ministry to exempt those electives (both Major Electives and GE) that overlapped with their Major, and to re-arrange courses with equal credit weighting as in the exempted courses.
- 4.3.9 The Panel also expressed concerns about actual provision of electives for students to choose/enrol. If the number of enrolled prospective learners is limited, the offering of choices will be confined as the cohort size and availability of lead teachers determine how many and which thematic areas of elective(s) can be provided. The Panel reminded that the Operator should be prepared to deal with any issues arisen due to limited flexibility in offering elective choices as anticipated in actual circumstances.
- 4.3.10 The Panel showed great concern towards practical differentiation between Practicum (P) and Internship (I). Different expectations and requirements on students were heard from different stakeholders at the site visit due to variations in their understanding and interpretations about the nature and learning elements in the P and I.
- 4.3.11 The Operator should define and differentiate clearly between P and I, which constitute important learning components in the Programme. The following should be stated clearly in the Programme Handbook:
 - i. Specify differences in requirements of P (should satisfy QF Level 4) and I (should satisfy QF Level 5) in terms of their respective PILOs, expectations of host organisations,

potential learning elements, assessment tasks, requirements and rubrics in details with respective assessment tools and measurable outcomes, followed by justifications of mapping against the concerned QF Levels;

- ii. Differences in exposures and practical experiences that can be acquired (with reference to knowledge and skills learned in the domain of Christian Ministry practice) in host organisations between P and I respectively;
- iii. Specify and outline clearly the relevant tasks and activities involved and conducted in P and I as being major-specific, i.e. activities relevant to major domain of Christian Ministry

4.3.12 In seeking respective practice placements for students, the Operator should state clearly relevant learning elements and expected practical experience to be provided by host organisations for students in P and I respectively (relevance means: domains related to Christian Ministry sector; and/or aspects where students are required to demonstrate in accordance with the respective requirements of P/I.)

4.3.13 The Panel suggested the Operator may consider adding language proficiency as one of the graduation requirements for students, as the Programme also serves as a pathway for graduates' pursuit of higher academic qualifications.

4.3.14 The Panel showed appreciation to the Operator for compiling Handbooks for Practicum and Internship in the Main Submission with detailed coverage on guidelines, expectations and evaluations about these learning components in the Programme. Moreover, the Operator clearly mapped all the courses, practicum and internship in the curriculum against PILOs, "CHRIST" values, as well as Generic Level Descriptors (GLD) of the QF Level 4 and 5 accordingly.

Pre-conditions

4.3.15 In this regard, **the Operator is to define and differentiate clearly between Practicum and Internship, which constitute significant learning components in the Programme.**

4.3.16 **The Operator is to provide evidence on how the host organisations can provide relevant learning elements for**

students in accordance with the requirements of Practicum and Internship respectively.

The Operator is to submit a report to HKCAAVQ for the fulfilment of the above pre-conditions **on or before 26 February 2021.**

4.4 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

The learning, teaching and assessment activities designed for the learning programme must be effective in delivering the programme content and assessing the attainment of the intended learning outcomes.

- 4.4.1 The Programme aligns with the general approach and policies adopted by the Operator for promoting all-round education, cultivating active and independent learning, nurturing servant leader as well as preparing students to engage in self-directed life-long learning. Interactive approach as well as Outcomes-based Teaching and Learning are adopted in all the components of teaching, learning and assessment tasks.
- 4.4.2 The Panel observed that each course and Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) attempted to map with the POs and PILOs. Courses provided as Foundation and Major-relevant by the Programme were vetted by external examiners.
- 4.4.3 The Panel observed that the Operator followed their general approach and policies by adopting a variety of assessment strategies and methods for the sake of fulfilling formative and summative purpose. Structured assessment items such as written assignments, tests, presentations, formal examinations, etc. are usually planned for students in their earlier years of study. Less structured items that require greater skills of analysis, problem-solving and practical application, such as small-scale project assignments, are planned for later years of studies.
- 4.4.4 The Panel noted from the submitted documents that a taught course normally consists of 3 contact hours per week for a semester of 14 weeks; and carries 12.6 QF credits based on the standard ratio of 1:2 contact hours to self-study hours. Year-long course Honours Project (CM4203) carries 25.2 QF credits is also based on the standard ratio of 1:2 contact hours to self-study hours. For the 20-day Practicum and Internship, 24 QF credits are assigned respectively based on the ratio of 2:1 contact hours to

self-study hours. Supervisor will make 2 supervisory visits (usually once within the first 10 days and once in the latter 10 days) to the students at the host organizations for observing and assessing students' performance.

- 4.4.5 The Panel was concerned teaching of courses will be delivered in a mixed mode in which lectures, small group tutorials, group discussions and case studies, roleplay, demonstration, experiential learning, presentation workshops, e-learning and online teaching are integrated and adopted interchangeably in accordance with subject contents and students' needs.
- 4.4.6 The Programme uses Chinese supplemented with English as the official Medium of Instruction (MOI) to teach most of the foundation and major-elective courses which are mainly at QF Level 5. For GE courses, most of which are classified at QF Level 4, are taught in English supplemented with Chinese. The Panel were concerned about the competitiveness of graduates from the BCM Programme as compared to their counterparts from other Bachelor programmes at QF Level 5 provided within or/and outside campus. The Panel advised the Operator to review its language policy in order to strengthen prospective learners' English proficiency.
- 4.4.7 Echo to para. 4.2.6., for non-standard entrants, particularly part-timers, further support may be needed to help them accommodate with attending courses that use English as MOI.
- 4.4.8 The Panel was informed of the maximum number of students in various modes of teaching of the Programme as below:

Typical lecture	60 students
Typical tutorial, workshop, and small group teaching	20 students
Practicum, Internship and Honours Project (supervised learning)	Students will be supervised on one-to-one basis

In case of small group teaching, the Panel reminded the Operator of the importance to maximise learning experience of students if the size of classes/groups are too small (given that the enrolment result was undesirable) for effective interchange of views and knowledge.

- 4.4.9 In response to the Panel's requests and to further illustrate on the guidelines for continuous assessments, the Operator provided

samples of rubrics in several assessment tasks which are classified as less structured items for continuous assessment. Differentiation of assessment requirements corresponding to result grading were also demonstrated in the attachment of Response to the Panel's Initial Comments.

- 4.4.10 At the site visit, the Operator claimed that timely feedback to students' performance is important (within two weeks upon receipt of their submitted assignments as stated in the Response to the Panel's Initial Comments). The Panel suggested the Operator establish a mid-term evaluation mechanism for teachers to collect feedback for improvement of students' learning. The Panel reiterated that the mechanism as suggested should only be used for addressing areas for improvement to enhance students' learning, and should not be adopted for any appraisal-related uses.
- 4.4.11 In addition to the requirements stated in the submitted documents, the Operator also requires students to complete a 20-hour community service for attaining the BCM qualification. As mentioned in para. 4.3.6, the Panel was concerned whether students will be overloaded in order to meet the exit requirements.
- 4.4.12 Concerning graduation Requirements, students must fulfill all the attendance requirements and have:
- (a) completed and been assessed on 42 courses;
 - (b) obtained an overall GPA of 2.0 or above;
 - (c) obtained Grade D or above in 42 courses;
 - (d) obtained Grade C or above in the Honours Project course; and
 - (e) to complete a minimum of 20 hours of community service.

4.5 Programme Leadership and Staffing

The Operator must have adequate programme leader(s), teaching/training and support staff with the qualities, competence, qualifications and experience necessary for effective programme management, i.e. planning, development, delivery and monitoring of the programme. There must be an adequate staff development scheme and activities to ensure that staff is kept updated for the quality delivery of the programme.

- 4.5.1 In regard to the high concentration in teaching biblical content in the Programme, the Panel expected credentials and academic

qualifications of teaching staff to be accredited by recognised authorities in the industry and supposedly relevant to Christian ministry.

- 4.5.2 However, with reference to and upon the research of the qualifications listed in the submitted CVs of the Programme Team including the external examiners, the Panel showed great concerns about academic qualifications of the teaching staff.
- 4.5.3 It is found that three teachers, who mainly engage in teaching core biblical subjects, seem not having specialism in biblical education. Moreover, the Programme Director indeed has expertise in counselling instead of ministry education. At the site visit, the Panel asked about how to administer recruitment of teaching staff so as to assure they have relevant credentials and academic qualifications to teach concerned courses.
- 4.5.4 The Panel expected the Programme Leader has relevant qualifications by accredited or recognised authority, and even specialism in the discipline in order to take up headship competently and engage in steering staff and students' development in accordance with the domain of Christian Ministry.
- 4.5.5 The Operator frankly expressed difficulty in recruiting specialized teachers as a young institution and insisted that abundant teaching and in-service church experiences of the teachers could compliment and suffice for relevant leadership and teaching. Nevertheless, the Operator assured the Panel of continuous effort in recruiting talented and academically sounded teaching professionals.
- 4.5.6 The Panel also noted from the submitted documents that, teachers are encouraged to apply for research grants and committed in research activities on top of their teaching duties. It seemed to the Panel that teaching and professoriate tracks were mixed up in the Programme Team. Moreover, staff seems to lack room for engaging in staff development activities.
- 4.5.7 At the site visit, teaching staff reported that they had much engagement in teaching and other duties concurrently. Other than teaching, teachers also need to provide academic advice to students, identify and develop appropriate complementary learning activities for them. Though they showed much passion for being involved in the Team and the College, workload was an issue with some staff who hold multiple roles and/or headships.

- 4.5.8 It was reported the presence of optional development incentives, such as development leave, sponsorship and special time-tabling arrangements. The Panel was concerned about availability and sufficiency of active incentives for this group of devoted teachers.
- 4.5.9 The Panel advised the Operator to have plans to ensure reasonable workload for teachers. More proper incentives should be available for teachers to develop professionally. It was suggested that the Operator should prepare a long-term strategy for staff development. Upon request, the Operator presented long-term staff deployment plans under full and moderate enrolment scenarios on the second day of the site visit.
- 4.5.10 From the information provided, two potential teaching staff members have not yet confirmed their appointment. Thus, the Programme Team is not full-fledged to have 5 teaching staff as claimed. It may affect the staff-students ratio and their contact hours.
- 4.5.11 The Panel also noted that the Operator planned to hire part-time teachers, both for full- and part-time modes, to teach those subjects that the existing staff do not have expertise in teaching. The Operator was reminded that the number of part-time teaching staff should be minimised and they should not teach more than 20% of courses. Moreover, reasonable staffing ratio and workload should be maintained so as to ensure quality of teaching.

Pre-condition

- 4.5.12 In this regard, **the Operator is to provide evidence showing that all senior management and teaching staff of this Programme are qualified with relevant expertise, cumulative credentials and qualification(s) accredited by recognised academic institutions and/or established professional bodies.**

The Operator is to submit a report to HKCAAVQ for the fulfilment of the above pre-condition **on or before 26 February 2021.**

4.6 Learning, Teaching and Enabling Resources/Services

The Operator must be able to provide learning, teaching and enabling resources/services that are appropriate and sufficient for the learning, teaching and assessment activities of the learning programme, regardless of location and mode of delivery.

- 4.6.1 From the Response to the Panel's Initial Comments, the Operator mentioned that the break-even point is 50 students enrolled in total, or around 13 students per cohort. At the site visit, the Operator further confirmed that, resources are sufficient for the Programme's operation and they have not much financial concern. The Board of Directors pledged to backup with donations. If the Programme faces undesirable enrolment results, the Operator will then adopt the contingency plan of soliciting donations to cover the deficit.
- 4.6.2 From the supplementary documents, the Panel observed that if the total number of full-time enrolment is 224 in 2025/26 as projected, space issues and availability of physical resources under such a substantial growth of student population are of great concern.
- 4.6.3 In order to expand space to accommodate more students, the Operator submitted application to the Town Planning Board in June 2020, for relaxing height restriction of the campus from 8 to 12 storey. If the redevelopment plan is approved, it will take around 3 years for the process of construction.
- 4.6.4 The Panel was shown library services and campus facilities by PowerPoint and video presentations submitted before the site visit.
- 4.6.5 From the programme review of the Higher Diploma in Christian Ministry (HDCM) programme, students mainly rate positively in the aspects of programme content, workload and support received. The scores ranged from 4.17 to 5.17 (on a 6-point scale).
- 4.6.6 The Panel showed appreciation to the Operator for embracing students from diverse cultures, academic and religious backgrounds in admitting learners. In response to such diverse background, the Panel advised that students may need more help in their adaptation to the Programme and College life.
- 4.6.7 In order to cater for the needs of mixed-ability, diverse range of academic backgrounds, and demographics among students, the Operator responded to the initial comments that they will hire experienced English and Chinese teachers to support students' language learning, particularly to boost their English proficiency. The Operator will provide extra training, which are in the form of small-group intensive sessions, for weaker students to help them build a solid foundation in English. In response, the Panel suggested the Operator should have a comprehensive plan to provide support for those marginal students of the Programme to cope with curriculum using English as MOI.

- 4.6.8 Besides, feedback and results from the student evaluations of the HDCM also showed the needs of students for psychosocial support and library resources.
- 4.6.9 Though the Operator highlighted their collaboration with CityU and HKBU, from which students of BCM can borrow their library resources, however, feedback from the HDCM students still commented on lack of articles and related resources to facilitate their learning. The Panel suggested the Operator improves library resources, such as sourcing more digital contents and resources, and strengthening cross-university collaborations on library articles and references for loan.
- 4.6.10 From the response to initial comments, the Panel appreciated the Operator set in place the Mentoring System. Every student will be assigned a faculty staff member as his/her mentor right from the start of the academic year. The Operator was advised to make better use of such structured mechanism, in addition to collecting students' feedback, it can also serve as a mechanism of academic advisors to provide academic, religious and social-psycho support to students.

4.7 Programme Approval, Review and Quality Assurance

The Operator must monitor and review the development and performance of the learning programme on an on-going basis to ensure that the programme remains current and valid and that the learning outcomes, learning and teaching activities and learner assessments are effective to meet the programme objectives.

- 4.7.1 The Panel noted that the Programme was initiated and designed basing on market survey in a luncheon seminar, experiences of launching the HDCM Programme, discussions among members of the Programme Planning Committee (PPC) and also in consultation with academia and the industry, including Christian churches, social and educational services and Christianity-affiliated NGOs as well as potential employers, practicum/ internship host organisations and courses vetters.
- 4.7.2 The Panel was told that no equivalent programme in Hong Kong can serve as a prototype for benchmarking, so the Operator benchmarked the Programme with two programmes in the U.S. and the one of post-degree provided by the Chinese University of Hong

Kong. The former two were fine while there are great differences in terms of curriculum and entry requirement as compared to the local one. The Operator was recommended that benchmarking should be made on a comparable basis, in terms of entry requirements and curriculum, etc.

- 4.7.3 The Panel noted that the Programme underwent an internal assessment process, known as Internal Learning Programme Accreditation (Internal LPA), before the actual implementation of the accreditation exercise.
- 4.7.4 From the response to the Panel's initial comments, the Operator indicated that they have systematic procedures in place to review the courses regularly and the Programme as a whole. The Programme Committee/ School Board will also meet once a month or every two months to monitor and provide input for development and continuous improvement of the Programme.
- 4.7.5 It was noted that the Programme Committee would solicit opinions from the practicum and internship providers in their roles as host organisations and also potential employers, for their views during and after each practicum /internship session.
- 4.7.6 From the response to the Panel's initial comments, the Operator claimed to conduct employers' survey once there are graduates of the Programme, for soliciting views of their graduates' employers.
- 4.7.7 The Operator stated in the response to the Panel's initial comments that, they strictly follow the 5 stages in their process of quality assurance. Feedback and issues collected from set-in mechanism, such as Student-Staff Consultative Meetings, will be relayed to the responsible bodies and followed up by designed action parties with a proposed completion date. Students and involved parties will be informed accordingly. The course of actions will be documented in the Annual Programme Review Report after getting endorsement from the Academic Board.
- 4.7.8 The Panel concluded that the Operator has in place appropriate mechanisms to monitor and review the performance of the Programme on an on-going basis.

5. IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING THIS ACCREDITATION REPORT

5.1 Variation and withdrawal of this Accreditation Report

5.1.1 This Accreditation Report is issued pursuant to Section 5 of the AAVQO, and contains HKCAAVQ's substantive determination regarding the accreditation, including the validity period as well as any conditions and restrictions subject to which the determination is to have effect.

5.1.2 HKCAAVQ may subsequently decide to vary or withdraw this Accreditation Report if it is satisfied that any of the grounds set out in Section 5 (2) of the AAVQO apply. This includes where HKCAAVQ is satisfied that the Operator is no longer competent to achieve the relevant objectives and/or the Programme no longer meets the standard to achieve the relevant objectives as claimed by the Operator (whether by reference to the Operator's failure to fulfill any conditions and/or comply with any restrictions stipulated in this Accreditation Report or otherwise) or where at any time during the validity period there has/have been substantial change(s) introduced by the Operator after HKCAAVQ has issued the accreditation report(s) to the Operator and which has/have not been approved by HKCAAVQ. Please refer to the 'Guidance Notes on Substantial Change to Accreditation Status' in seeking approval for proposed changes. These Guidance Notes can be downloaded from the HKCAAVQ website.

5.1.3 If HKCAAVQ decides to vary or withdraw this Accreditation Report, it will give the Operator notice of such variation or withdrawal pursuant to section 5(4) of the AAVQO.

5.1.4 The accreditation status of Operator and/or Programme(s) will lapse immediately upon the expiry of the validity period or upon the issuance of a notice of withdrawal of this Accreditation Report.

5.2 Appeals

5.2.1 If the Operator is aggrieved by the determination made in this Accreditation Report, then pursuant to Part 3 of the AAVQO the Operator has a right of appeal to the Appeal Board. Any appeal must be lodged within 30 days of the receipt of this Accreditation Report.

- 5.2.2 If the Operator is aggrieved by a decision to vary or withdraw this Accreditation Report, then pursuant to Part 3 of the AAVQO the Operator has a right of appeal to the Appeal Board. Any appeal must be lodged within 30 days of the receipt of the Notice of Withdrawal.
- 5.2.3 The Operator should be aware that a notice of variation or withdrawal of this Accreditation Report is not itself an accreditation report and the right to appeal against HKCAAVQ's substantive determination regarding accreditation arises only from this Accreditation Report.
- 5.2.4 Please refer to Cap. 592A (<http://www.legislation.gov.hk>) for the appeal rules. Details of the appeal procedure are contained in Section 13 of the AAVQO and can be accessed from the QF website at <http://www.hkqf.gov.hk>.

5.3 **Qualifications Register**

- 5.3.1 Qualifications accredited by HKCAAVQ are eligible for entry into the Qualifications Register ("QR") at <http://www.hkqr.gov.hk> for recognition under the QF. The Operator should apply separately to have their quality-assured qualifications entered into the QR.
- 5.3.2 Only learners who commence the study of the named accredited learning programme during the validity period and who have graduated with the named qualification listed in the QR will be considered to have acquired a qualification recognised under the QF.

Gratia Christian College

**Learning Programme Accreditation for
Bachelor of Christian Ministry (Honours) Programme
20 -21 August 2020**

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