

Quality Assurance Policy for the Middle East and North Africa Association for Theological Education (MENATE)

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1.0 Introduction

The Middle East and North Africa Association for Theological Education (MENATE) is committed to encouraging high-quality theological education across the MENA region. This Quality Assurance Policy establishes a framework to ensure that MENATE assists educational organizations to comply with established standards and continuously improve the quality of theological training.

This policy applies to all member institutions engaged in theological education under MENATE's oversight. It addresses membership, accreditation, reaccreditation, and encompasses the quality of all aspects of the institution and its programs, for both the core alignment and the micro-credentials (MCs).

Through this Quality Assurance Policy, MENATE seeks to promote a culture of transparency and accountability within member institutions, and to ensure that theological education organizations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) meet regional and international standards of quality. In addition, MENATE aims through this policy to promote continuous improvement in teaching, learning, and administrative practices.

1.1 Overview

MENATE's commitment to theological education rests on a clear and intentional quality assurance framework designed to ensure excellence, transparency, and continuous improvement. This framework articulates seven core parameters that guide MENATE in applying its Quality Assurance Policy consistently across its work. It is not a set of guidelines for member institutions but a structure for MENATE itself to monitor, evaluate, and strengthen its processes and engagement with institutions.

Each parameter, from assessment practices to implementation, represents a dimension of MENATE's quality assurance work, ensuring that policies are applied effectively and that learning, growth, and accountability are embedded in the process. Together, they form a comprehensive approach that enables MENATE to uphold high standards while supporting member institutions toward sustained improvement.

MENATE will implement the following framework to uphold quality assurance in theological education:

1. **Assessment Practices:** MENATE ensures fair, transparent, and consistent assessment practices for member institutions.
2. **Feedback Mechanisms:** MENATE establishes systems for gathering and analyzing feedback to evaluate MENATE's own effectiveness and to make informed recommendations for improvement.
3. **Quality Reviews of MENATE's Policies and Procedures:** MENATE Conducts regular quality assurance reviews of programs and institutions to identify areas for improvement.
4. **Professional Development:** MENATE Provides opportunities for professional development for personnel, MENATE staff, and the Accreditation Commission (AC) to enhance educational and administrative practices.

5. **Reporting:** MENATE Requires member institutions to submit annual reports detailing quality assurance activities, outcomes, and areas for improvement, along with evaluation forms following review visits.
6. **Closing the Assessment Loop:** MENATE Ensures feedback is effectively evaluated and used to improve MENATE's processes.
7. **Implementation:** MENATE Provide resources, training, and support to member institutions to facilitate the implementation of MENATE's Quality Assurance Policy by sharing knowledge and best practices.

1.2 MENATE Internal Quality Assurance

To provide clarity and ensure alignment, this section outlines the key internal policies that guide our procedures. These policies establish the principles MENATE follows in its operations, including the selection of VET members and evaluation processes.

Created in January 2025, this Quality Assurance Policy incorporates several significant updates introduced in recent years to improve the efficiency and scope of MENATE's accreditation processes. Internal key revisions include:

Adjustments 2022-2026:

- A new Accreditation Commission was elected in 2022, forming a committee that is vested in MENATE and in theological education.
- In 2022, an Accreditation Officer was appointed to oversee accreditation activities and maintain educational standards.
- In 2024, the Accreditation Commission (A/C) acquired independence over accreditation decisions, no longer requiring ratification by the Executive Committee (ExCom).
- In 2024, a Micro-credential Accreditation coordinator was appointed to represent MENATE in the research and implementation of micro-credentials in the MENA region.
- Starting from 2026, members of the MENATE Executive Committee, Accreditation Commission, staff, and VET must sign a [Conflict of Interest Declaration](#) to ensure transparency and uphold the integrity of the accreditation process.
- This Quality Assurance Policy will be reviewed every two years or as needed to ensure its effectiveness and relevance in addressing the evolving needs of theological education in the MENA.

The document comprises the following core areas of the accreditation process:

1.3 Membership Procedures

Membership Applications: Institutions seeking to join MENATE engage in a membership application process, which generally takes a 3-6 months to complete. Initially, institutions join as associate members without voting rights, and after two years, they are eligible to apply for full members status, with voting rights.

MENATE welcomes institutions engaged in evangelical theological education within the MENA region to apply for membership. Joining MENATE is the first step toward pursuing accreditation and a commitment to quality assurance in theological education.

1.4 Ensuring Quality through the Application Process

The application process for MENATE membership is designed to uphold the integrity and quality of theological education within the region. Each stage of the process ensures that applicants demonstrate commitment to MENATE's doctrinal, educational, and ethical standards. Through clear eligibility criteria, transparent review procedures, and adherence to governance and accountability requirements, MENATE ensures that all member institutions align with the values of evangelical theological education.

This quality assurance process includes:

- **Doctrinal Consistency:** Verifying that the applicant's statement of faith and theological orientation align with MENATE's doctrinal foundations.
- **Institutional Integrity:** Assessing legal status, governance structures, and financial sustainability to ensure responsible and transparent operation.
- **Educational Standards:** Reviewing programs, faculty qualifications, and institutional goals to confirm consistency with MENATE's mission for theological excellence.
- **Community Accountability:** Ensuring that applicants maintain positive relationships within their local evangelical community and broader context.

Through this structured approach, MENATE not only admits qualified institutions, but also strengthens collective credibility and encourages continuous improvement across all member schools

1.5 The application process applies to both Associate and Full Membership requests.

1. **Submission of Application:** MENATE ensures that institutions seeking membership must submit a completed [Membership Application form](#) along with all supporting documents to the Executive Director and/or Accreditation Officer.
2. **Initial Screening:** The Executive Director and Accreditation Officer will review the application for completeness and compliance with membership criteria, as outlined in the [MENATE Constitution](#) and Quality Assurance Policy.
3. **Executive Committee Review:** The Executive Committee appraises each application on a rolling basis. It may:
 - Contact referees to verify the institution's standing and reputation.
 - Request further documentation if needed.
 - Recommend a field visit to assess institutional health and academic quality.
4. **Decision Process:** Based on its review, the Executive Committee will:
 - Recommend the institution for membership to the General Assembly, or
 - Reject the application, providing clear reasons and constructive feedback. Institutions may reapply after two years following the recommended improvements.
5. **Approval by the General Assembly:** The final decision rests with the General Assembly, where a majority vote of present members is required to confirm membership.
 - The complete application package will be circulated to relevant parties at least two weeks before the scheduled vote.
 - In exceptional circumstances, a special meeting may be convened, or an electronic vote (e-vote) may be requested by the General Assembly.

1.6 Associate Membership

Associate membership is open to theological schools and other organizations concerned with evangelical theological education in the MENA region, but who do not meet all the conditions for full membership. Associate members agree to:

- Abide by the MENATE Constitution and MENATE's stated purposes.
- Accept the MENATE Doctrinal Statement, the Statement of Faith of the World Evangelical Alliance, and the Lausanne Covenant (Article 3).
- Be on good terms with the evangelical community of their context.
- Have clear goals and purposes consistent with evangelical theological education.
- Possess legal ownership: have a constitution and exercise proper governance.
- Not to belong to or be linked with any political party.
- Pay the annual membership dues and other service fees.
- Send a representative(s) to each MENATE GA at their own expense.

Associate members of MENATE have the right to participate and voice their views at the General Assembly but do not have voting rights. Associate members may nominate individuals from their institution to serve on any MENATE committees except the Executive Committee. After two years of membership, associate members become eligible to apply for full membership status, subject to meeting all full membership criteria. Accreditation of Micro-Credentials is normally limited to full members. In exceptional cases, and where the provider demonstrably meets the relevant academic and quality assurance requirements, associate members may be considered for MC accreditation subject to approval by the Accreditation Commission and endorsement by the Executive Committee.

1.7 Ensuring Quality through the Associate Membership Policy

The inclusion of associate members in MENATE provides a structured pathway for developing institutions to progress toward full membership while maintaining alignment with MENATE's theological and educational standards. This policy enables institutions that share MENATE's vision to engage with the network, and strengthen their governance, academic, and doctrinal foundations.

The two-year associate membership serves as a formative quality assurance period during which institutions demonstrate commitment to MENATE's principles, active participation in its activities, and adherence to its governance and faith statements. It also allows MENATE to assess the institution's consistency, maturity, and accountability before granting full membership.

This process ensures that new members enhance the network's integrity and uphold the standards of evangelical theological education in the region.

1.8 Full Membership

Full members of MENATE have the right to speak and cast one vote at the General Assembly. They may also nominate individuals from their institution to serve on the Executive Committee, the Accreditation Commission, and other MENATE committees.

Full membership is open to theological institutions of higher learning operating in the MENA region, including but not limited to:

- Seminaries
- Bible colleges
- Programs for theological education by extension
- Distance-learning institutions

To qualify for full membership, these institutions must primarily serve and benefit the Church within the MENA region and agree to:

- Have served as associate member for at least two years.
- Abide by the MENATE Constitution and MENATE stated purposes.
- Accept the MENATE Doctrinal Statement, the Statement of Faith of the World Evangelical Alliance, and the Lausanne Covenant (Article 3).
- Be on good terms with the evangelical community of their context. They should also have positive and collaborative relationships with neighboring theological schools.
- Have clear goals and purposes related to evangelical theological education.
- Possess legal ownership: have a constitution and exercise proper governance.
- Have a clear prospectus/course catalogue.
- Not belong to or be linked with any political party.
- Pay the annual membership dues and other service fees.
- Send a representative(s) to each MENATE GA at their own expense.
- Have students who have graduated from its program(s).

1.9 Withdrawal from Membership

- Full and associate members may withdraw their membership by submitting an official letter of withdrawal addressed to the MENATE Executive Director or Chairperson.
- Upon receipt, the Executive Committee will review the withdrawal request and engage in appropriate communication with the member institution to clarify or discuss the decision.
- Once the withdrawal is confirmed and finalized, the institution must cease any reference to MENATE membership in all publications and communications.
- Fees and contributions already paid will not be refunded.

The withdrawal policy is implemented in alignment with MENATE's Quality Assurance principles of transparency, accountability, and open communication. The process ensures that member institutions can make informed and voluntary decisions, supported by clear communication with the Executive Committee. Through this, MENATE upholds fairness and integrity in its membership processes. The feedback and communication mechanisms embedded in the QA framework allow for constructive dialogue before finalizing withdrawal decisions, ensuring mutual understanding and documentation of reasons for withdrawal. The process and outcomes are reviewed as part of MENATE's continuous improvement efforts to strengthen institutional relationships and organizational learning.

1.10 Termination of Membership

Full and associate members may lose their membership status if they:

- Fail to meet respective membership criteria, specifically by not sending a representative to the General Assembly for two consecutive sessions without valid excuse, or
- Do not respond positively to formal notices from the MENATE Executive Committee regarding their membership standing.

Upon such failure, the Executive Committee shall review the case and make a recommendation to the General Assembly at its earliest meeting for ratification of membership termination.

1.11 From Membership to Candidacy for Accreditation

After obtaining full membership status, an institution may submit an [application for Candidacy](#) for MENATE Accreditation. The pre-requisite criteria for candidate status for accreditation are:

- The institution has clear and publicly stated purposes, consistent with its mission and appropriate to a post-secondary educational institution.
- The institution may only be accredited after demonstrating at least four years of stable operation.
- The institution has effectively organized adequate human, financial and physical resources into its educational and other programs so that it is accomplishing its immediate purposes.
- The institution has adopted and is following realistic plans to acquire and organize any additional resources needed to accomplish its long-term stated purposes.
- As part of the self-evaluation process, the institution should be able to demonstrate that the intended learning outcomes of its degree programs are being achieved in the lives of its graduating students. Thus, the institution has (or soon will have) graduates in each of the specific programs for which accreditation is to be sought. It may apply for accreditation prior to having graduates but must have graduates before preparing its SER and before the evaluation visit. The only exception is that, for micro-credential accreditation, an institution may apply as soon as the micro-credential is ready, even if it has not yet been offered.
- The institution has the potential to achieve accreditation within the four-year candidacy period.

MENATE's Quality assurance policies will ensure that it is the institution's responsibility to show that it conforms to MENATE's criteria for candidacy. By separate means an application fee set by MENATE must be sent before an application can be reviewed, whether for the Core Alignment or the Micro-Credentials.

The Accreditation Commission will review the application and determine if the applicant is likely to fulfill the conditions of accreditation within the four-year candidacy period. If the A/C determines that the institution is not likely to achieve accredited status within a four-year candidacy period, Candidacy status will be denied. A letter to the member stating reasons for denial will accompany the returned application.

An institution may remain a candidate for a period of four years. At the end of this time its candidate status will be automatically terminated, unless the accreditation process has been initiated or an extension is granted by the A/C for a maximum of one additional year.

Institutions which are registered candidates under MENATE may indicate this in their publications, i.e., “Institution X is a candidate for accreditation with the Middle East and North Africa Association for Theological Education (MENATE).” They may not use the phrase “accredited by MENATE” until full accreditation is granted.

1.12 From Candidacy to Accreditation

After an institution has officially obtained candidate status, it is required to submit [Application for Accreditation](#) when it has met the necessary criteria to transition from Candidate status to Accredited status. The same application works for the Core Alignment and the Micro-Credentials. This involves a process of careful self-evaluation, which leads members to progressively make adjustments necessary to meet MENATE standards.

As part of the self-evaluation process, institutions are required to produce a Self-Evaluation Report (SER), offering a detailed review of their educational programs, institutional policies, and overall compliance with MENATE standards. At the end of the self-evaluation process, the institution will submit its SER, along with the supporting documentation electronically to MENATE, three months prior to the visit. Institutions may submit a single SER document if they are applying for both Core Alignment and Micro-Credential accreditations, provided that the document meets the requirements for both types of accreditation. However, in addition to the main application and the SER, the institution must submit a micro-credential design template for each micro-credential for which it seeks accreditation.

Upon receiving the application and completed SER, the institution will undergo a site visit conducted by a MENATE Visiting Evaluation Team (VET). MENATE appoints VET members based on their relevant expertise and suitability for the programmes under review. All VET members are trained by experts in the Core Alignment /or Micro-credential manuals to guide the VET members to be ready for the visit, review, and the writing of the report. Consideration is given to their educational background in relation to the institution and the specific context of the visit. This approach ensures that the evaluation team is well-equipped to provide a meaningful, informed, and contextually sensitive assessment. For micro-credential accreditation, if an institution has already received Core Alignment accreditation from MENATE, it only needs to apply for an online visit conducted by the Micro-Credential VET members (MC-VET). However, if the institution has not yet received Core Alignment accreditation, a site visit is required.

The overall tasks of the VET are to verify the claims, statements and facts presented in the institution’s SER, to determine the academic credibility of the program(s)/MCs being assessed, and to identify areas where the institution should be commended and where it can or must improve. The VET produces a Review Report based on a [template](#), which includes recommendations regarding whether or not accreditation should be granted. At the end of the evaluation visit, the VET will share its overall assessment with the school. However, the VET will make it explicit to the institution that the final decisions regarding accreditation are made by the Accreditation Commission and not by the VET.

The Accreditation Commission will discuss the Review Report and may decide to

- Grant accreditation to the institution for a specific program(s) or MCs;

- Grant provisional accreditation, with requirements and a stated time-frame for their fulfilment; Should there be a prolonged failure to implement the requirements (typically within a timeframe of no more than two years), accreditation may be withdrawn.
- Deny accreditation, for stated reasons.

If specific changes are noted, these will supersede the relevant statements contained in the VET Report. The AC has the right to change a recommendation to a requirement, or change a requirement to a recommendation, or to remove either.

The Accreditation Officer will draft a supplementary letter summarizing the Accreditation Commission's (AC) decisions and highlighting any changes made to the Visiting Evaluation Team (VET) Report. This decision letter, together with the final VET Report, will then be sent to the school's leadership team, thereby concluding the accreditation evaluation process.

If the institution wishes to [appeal](#) the Accreditation Commission's decision, it must follow the appeal procedures outlined on the MENATE website.

Institutions granted accreditation by MENATE may indicate the type(s) of accreditation they hold on their websites, publications, and official credentials.

1.13 Joint Evaluation Visits

MENATE accreditation visits are scheduled according to the readiness of both the institution and the Visiting Evaluation Team (VET) members. To promote collaboration and resource efficiency, joint accreditation visits with recognized ICETE agencies, such as ATA, ECTE, or ACTEA, may be approved by the Accreditation Officer. Such joint visits depend on evaluator availability and require adequate advance notice, including the institution's submission of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) at least three months prior to the visit.

In the case of joint visits, MENATE will produce its own accreditation report, reflecting its specific standards and findings.

1.14 Maintaining Accreditation Procedures

Once accredited, institutions must adhere to MENATE's Maintenance of Accreditation Procedures, which include ongoing compliance reporting, fee payment, and periodic review:

- **Annual Progress Reports:** Initiated by a communication from the accreditation officer, Institutions must submit their [Annual Progress Report](#) (core)/ [Annual Progress report](#) (MC) online by the first week of October each year, covering the previous academic year (e.g., the APR for the 2024–25 academic year is due by October 2025). Upon receipt, the Accreditation Officer will acknowledge the submission, review the report, and provide feedback as necessary.
- **Fee Payments:** Institutions are required to stay current with all membership and accreditation fees. Institutions that fall two years or more behind on payments, despite receiving reminders, will receive a formal notice from the Executive Director. If fees remain unpaid six months after the formal notice, the institution's membership and

accreditation will be suspended. The Accreditation Officer will actively follow up to ensure timely submissions and payments.

- **Suspension and Revocation:** If an institution remains suspended for two years without clearing outstanding fees, its membership and accreditation will be revoked. Revocation results in:
 - Loss of membership and accreditation for all programs
 - Removal of the institution's name from the MENATE websiteReinstatement requires submitting a new application for membership and accreditation.

The procedural steps for maintaining accreditation for both the Core Alignment and the Micro-credentials through the cyclical review process are as follows:

- Six to twelve months before the end of the six-year cycle, the institution should contact the Accreditation Officer to complete [the Cyclical Review Request](#). This request will outline a timeline for submitting the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and propose three potential dates for a site visit.
- The Accreditation Officer will instruct the institution to prepare the (SER), assemble a VET, obtain approval of the VET from the AC, and coordinate a mutually agreed date for the site visit.
- The institution is responsible for creating an SER that addresses the standards outlined in the MENATE standards and guidelines as outlines in the [Accreditation Manual](#) and [Guidelines for MC providers](#). The completed SER should be submitted to the Accreditation Officer at least three months before the scheduled site visit and must include hyperlinks to all relevant supporting documentation.
- Upon receipt of the SER, the Accreditation Officer provides the VET panel with a copy of the SER, along with access to the institution's historical archive, including previous review reports.
- From there, the process for evaluating accreditation renewal mimics the process for first time visits, outlined above.

1.15 Voluntary Withdrawal from Accreditation Process

An institution may, at any point during the MENATE accreditation process, voluntarily withdraw from the process and relinquish its candidate status. Please be advised that fees and charges are non-refundable upon withdrawal.

1.16 Evaluation Feedback from Institutions

Following accreditation site visits, institutions are requested to provide evaluation feedback via a designated feedback form. The Accreditation Officer reviews this feedback and presents it to the Accreditation Commission and the Executive Director as appropriate, to inform ongoing improvements in the accreditation process.

1.17 Accreditation Fees

Maintaining membership and accreditation fees is essential to ensure MENATE's financial stability and sustainability. These resources enable the organization to continue serving its member institutions effectively.

1. Candidacy and Initial Accreditation Fees

- **Candidacy Fee: \$500**
This is a necessary step in the journey toward accreditation.
- **Accreditation Site Visit Fee: \$500**
This fee covers all Micro-credentials (MCs) included in the application for review.

2. Membership Fee

- **Annual Membership Fee: \$500 per year**

3. Annual Accreditation Fees

Annual accreditation fees are charged based on the highest degree accredited by the institution:

- **Master's Degree (MA): \$700**
- **Bachelor's Degree (BA): \$500**
- **Diploma Programs: \$400**
- **Certificate Programs: \$300**
- **Micro-credential (MC): \$ 300**

4. Accreditation of New Micro-credentials During the Accreditation Period

Schools that wish to publish and accredit new Micro-credentials during the six-year accreditation period are required to pay:

- \$50 per MC for a desk-based review (non-refundable processing fee).

6. Accreditation Period

- Accreditation remains valid until the next site visit.
- Following a site visit, accreditation is valid for six years, similar to the Core accreditation period.

7. Site Visit Financial Responsibilities

- The institution covers the costs of Verification, Evaluation, and Training (VET) site visits, including travel and accommodation.

- Honoraria for the evaluation team are covered by MENATE.

8. Renewal (Reaccreditation) Fees

Once an institution is accredited, it must maintain its accreditation status through periodic reaccreditation and by settling the corresponding accreditation fees.

Appendix: Accreditation Timeline for both the Core Alignment and the MC

1. Pre-Accreditation Phase (6-12 months before the visit)

- Institution to research accreditation requirements and decide to apply.
- Institution to assign an Internal Review Coordinator (IRC) and assess alignment with standards.
- Complete and submit the accreditation application.
- Pay the required fees

2. Application Submission (3 months before the visit)

- Gather necessary documents and evidence of compliance
- Submit the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and supporting documents electronically.

3. Site Visit

- On-site visit by the accrediting team to assess compliance and meet with stakeholders (3 days plus travel).
- Report writing (4-6 weeks after the visit).

4. Accreditation Commission Decision (A/C meets quarterly)

- The accreditation commission makes a decision: accredited, provisional with a specific timeline, or denied

5. Continuous Improvement

- Ongoing monitoring and annual reports to maintain compliance throughout the accreditation period.

6. Cyclical Review (after 6 years)