

Approved by

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N(N) LP - Tbilisi Theological Academy and Seminary  
Of the Autocephalous Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia

The Plan of Strategic Development (2021 - 2027)

### **The Mission of TTAS**

Tbilisi Theological Academy and Seminary is the first theological school, a higher educational institution, established by the Autocephalous Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia.

Based on the Constitutional Agreement concluded between the State of Georgia and the Autocephalous Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia (2002), based on the “Law of Georgia on Higher Education” and the Canon law, TTAS implements academic programs for Bachelor’s, Master’s and doctoral degrees.

Tbilisi Theological Academy and Seminary is the spiritual and intellectual successor of the old Georgian theological educational centers and schools,

Christian traditions and scientific centers. It strives for the education of individuals who are ordained as clergy and/or are preparing for pedagogical or scientific work, as well as for the training of qualified painters, restorers and architects for the restoration and renewal of cultural property owned by the Church.

The purpose of TTAS is to conduct pedagogical, scientific and research work in theological sciences, Christian philosophy and psychology, ecclesiastical architecture and Christian art, in the field of icon painting, easel and monumental icon painting.

Tbilisi Theological Academy and Seminary, within the framework of its purpose and aspirations, promotes educational and scientific work, which serves to strengthen the Orthodox faith, values and ecclesiastical consciousness in the society.

#### **The Vision of TTAS:**

TTAS, within the framework of a continuous educational process, with the help of academic programs compatible with the framework of national higher education, higher education and the necessary academic/scientific/material-technical resources of the relevant level, prepares highly qualified scholars, teachers and educators in the field of theology.

TTAS, as part of its scientific research activities, should constantly strive to propel and strengthen the scientific potential in the fields of theology, liturgy, theology, philology, history, philosophy, religion and Church history, theology, Christian psychology, Christian theology, Christian art, ecclesiastical architecture, icon painting, restoration of easel and monumental icon painting.

Through the strengthening of research activities and international scientific relations, TTAS should be actively involved in the process of spreading and strengthening Christian values in the country.

The vision of TTAS is to be an internationally leading center for higher theological education and to have an irreversibly growing reputation with both local and foreign partners and within the bosom of the Orthodox Church.

### **Principles of Action at TTAS:**

1. Responsibility to the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, the Church, the community and the state, which is reflected in the activities of each member of TTAS and the ongoing educational process at this school, at all levels of management. At the same time, the awareness of responsibility is conditioned by the qualified leadership system and a high level of teaching/learning;
2. Orientation to the Academic Personnel and the Community of the School.

TTAS cares about the development and well-being of its employees, supports the increase of their level of activity, distribution of responsibilities and accountability in terms of achieving educational goals;

### **3. Quality Orientation**

High priority for TTAS is quality assurance both in the field of teaching/learning and research and also in the administrative activities at this educational institution;

### **4. Academic Freedom**

TTAS takes care of free and unrestricted formation and development of the scientific interests/profile of its academic personnel, researchers and students, access to and discussion of scientific novelties, seeks the means and opportunities to disseminate and introduce new scientific achievements;

#### 5. Academic Culture

The collegial environment at TTAS is based on Christian values, principles of academic ethics, mutual respect, mutual interest, support and fair relations;

#### 6. Teamwork

TTAS is guided by the principles of equality, collegiality, teamwork, harmonious and dynamic relations between the personnel;

#### 7. Development Orientation

Research interests in the field of theology form the basis for a variety of activities at TTAS, including the development of various forms of curriculum development and knowledge dissemination to the public (formal and non-formal education, distance and e-learning, continuing education, etc.). With devotion and respect for the Christian doctrine and ecclesiastical traditions, TTAS strives to better understand and strengthen the high spirituality, principles of Christian ethics and Orthodox Teaching in the society.

### **Current Situation and Challenges:**

#### **1. Challenges;**

**2. Environmental analysis;**

**3. SWOT analysis.**

- Strong sides;
- Improvements;
- Capacity;
- Risks.

### **1. Challenges**

As the irreversible processes of globalization deepen, higher educational institutions face new challenges. Among them, the most important is the training of professional personnel in Christian ethics and values, who will be able to carry out the service/activities entrusted to them in the conditions of global challenges.

It is also important to refine and improve educational programs and institutional management according to modern standards for quality assurance in higher education, sharing the experience of various partner higher education institutions, including the international mobility of students and academic/administrative personnel.

The development of scientific relations and international research cooperation, in turn, will ensure the improvement of the quality of teaching.

In terms of higher education and research, we consider the possibility of international cooperation as a permanent stream of resources in the teaching, research and community activities at TTAS.

The development of modern informational technologies and e-learning has further accelerated the process of globalization of educational services.

Currently, there is a moment in the historical development of the world higher education system, when the participation of higher educational institutions provides more opportunities for cooperation in a single European space. The alienation from the world educational space affects such important issues as recognition of qualifications, development of international forms of quality assessment and international accreditation. Accelerated and widespread introduction of e-learning in the current pandemic conditions has exposed national education systems to different realities and challenges. In these conditions, a special role is given to the material and technical readiness of the institutions, the development of effective mechanisms for improving the quality of the teaching/learning process and the introduction of new, modern forms of teaching.

## **2. Environmental Analysis**

We have studied the current state and potential of the structural links/units of TTAS, based on the monitoring research and analysis, as well as sharing the principles of administration of Georgian and foreign universities, we have developed the concept/vision of the educational environment.

Throughout last year, TTAS made significant changes in terms of improving the institutional arrangement, improving the quality of the

learning process and ensuring its continuity. It also deepened partnerships with Georgian and foreign universities, scientific societies and research institutes. TTAS also cooperates fruitfully with various public organizations and institutions.

Resources have been allocated to strengthen activities that have a great impact on the development of educational programs, internships, employment of students and graduates, research and implementation of various topical projects. It also focused on working closely with employers to explore their needs and demand for qualified personnel in the labor market.

In order to attract entrants, TTAS organizes important information campaigns and cooperates with a number of institutions, including media outlets, general education and other educational institutions.

In view of all the above, we conclude that today TTAS realizes its responsibility to the Autocephalous Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia, the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia and the state, successfully realizes its aspiration and constantly cares for development.

### **3. Analysis of Current Situation (SWOT analysis)**

Surveys for the study of the situation at TTAS were conducted from November 2020 to February 2021. This period coincided with a difficult pandemic situation; therefore, all surveys were conducted remotely, using appropriate electronic resources/platforms.

To direct the SWOT analysis in a qualified manner, we created four

target groups of six to six members (1. Academic and visiting personnel; 2. Students; 3. TTAS administration; 4. Faculty leaders). Complex work was done with all four groups, including informational, research meetings, and in-depth interviews. In the process of analysis, we invited an external academic and expert community to objectively assess the institutional form and authority. By processing and summarizing the information obtained, we formulated research findings.

**Strong Points:**

Tbilisi Theological Academy and Seminary, as the leading theological higher educational institution in Georgia, realizes its responsibilities and duties before the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, the Church and the state. For decades, it has directed its work and functioned to the protection of the inseparable principles of the saving faith and knowledge, as well as to the scientific study of the most sacred ecclesiastical doctrines - the immutable Law of the Church - and its immaculate observance, with established traditions and diverse educational programs.

Its strong points are:

- High authority;
- Free tuition for all three levels of theological educational programs and other social services, including medical, dormitory and boarding.
- Highly qualified academic personnel in theology and other scientific fields;
- The only three-level theological high school in the country



implementing Orthodox educational programs;

- Focus on continuous development, including refining quality assurance mechanisms and deepening international cooperation.

Improvements to be made:

From the set of problems, based on the results of their analysis, the following improvements can be identified:

- Development of material and technical base - arrangement of classrooms and laboratories equipped with modern technologies, library space;
- Introduction of the results of theological research into educational resources and educational process;
- Increasing access to electronic libraries and learning resources, electronic scientific databases;
- Drawing finances through external funds and mechanisms;
- Drawing the interest of students with high academic achievement;
- Promoting student services, including career advancement;
- Use of electronic technologies and modern teaching methods in the learning process.

**Capacities:**

The following opportunities should be put to use for the further refinement and improvement of the strong points of TTAS:

- Working closely with employers to improve the graduate employment rates, including their involvement in the development of the curriculum of learning outcomes;

- Development of master's level educational programs;
- Effective participation and the deepening of relations in the international educational space;
- Promoting international scientific-research cooperation;
- Strengthening of the mobility of academic personnel and students;
- Intensification of the institutional cooperation with both local and international training organizations;
- Finding effective support for the effectiveness of the academic staff and students' research activities: scientific/field, practical/informational-research trips; Mediating for access to archival materials/documents/manuscripts; Support for sending to conference and symposia; Financial and publishing support for scientific-research publications; Support for competence in foreign languages;
- Inculcation of mechanisms for academic responsibility and ensuring of their effectiveness.

**Risks:**

- Prolongation of the existing pandemic situation;
- Existence/deepening of financial-economic or other crisis in the country and reduction of state budget subsidy;
- Reduction of the demand for programs implemented by TTAS:
  - A) Intensification of international competition against the background of the development of e-learning and distance learning;
  - B) Dissemination of disgraceful disinformation



## Goals, Objectives, Action Plan, Deadlines and Expected Results

<b>Objective 1</b>	<p>Preparation of highly qualified personnel with specialties of theological profile for scientific-research and pedagogical activities;</p> <p>Training of qualified personnel for the restoration of monuments of cultural heritage owned by the Autocephalous Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia – iconographers, restorers and architects.</p>						
<b>goal</b>	<p>Development of the quality of teaching and research to achieve the goal;</p> <p>Development of infrastructure and material resources to achieve the goal;</p> <p>Targeted updating of the library resources.</p>						
<b>Ways for achieving goals</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>
Assessment, upgrading and development of the educational programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improvement/Development of an Individual curriculum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Study and development of practice for evaluating learning outcomes	✓	✓					
Increase of the share of academic staff compared to the invited staff					✓	✓	
Effective use of e-learning system	✓	✓	✓				
Strengthening and supporting of Scientific-research activities		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Introduction of the practice of evaluation of Scientific-research activities	✓	✓	✓				
Introduction and development of the management of a system for detecting plagiarism and academic misconduct	✓	✓	✓				
Upgrading and equipping of	✓	✓	✓	✓			

classrooms							
Development of infrastructure tailored to the needs of people with disabilities (partially and fully regulated)			✓				
Upgrading of the student dormitory and inventory	✓	✓					
Arranging the interior space for the library and for the students' independent work, and equipping them with appropriate technologies.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provide access to international library networks and scientific databases.		✓	✓	✓			

<b>Expected Results</b>	<p>Promoting high spirituality and Christian values by strengthening Ecclesiastical consciousness in society.</p> <p>Improving Educational environment, including methodology of program design, its planning, evaluation and development.</p> <p>When managing the development process of educational programs, studying and taking into account the best local and international experience.</p> <p>Development of educational programs to match the purpose of this educational institution.</p> <p>Achievement of the framework/the classifier of the areas of study, and its connection with modern standards of achieving high quality education.</p> <p>Improving of methodology of individual program planning, its elaboration and development; Improving of the evaluation of results of learning; Availability of teaching and research resources.</p> <p>To achieve a high quality of teaching, alignment of suitability of the electronic teaching system to the requirements of the students and academic personnel.</p> <p>Strengthening of research potential and defining of the priority of research directions. Implementation of the results of the latest studies in the process of teaching. Co-participation of international and local partners of the relevant profile in research activities. Unwavering protection of good faith, as a necessary condition for reliability in raising the level of knowledge and academic activities in the field of theology. Improving of the ratio of Academic and invited personnel for further enhancement of the sustainability of educational programs. Improving of infrastructure; upgrading of the infrastructure of information technology (Computer hardware, software security); Adaptation of learning and environmental conditions, according to the needs of people with disabilities.</p>
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<b>Objective II</b>	Developing international relationships in order to improve the quality of teaching and research activities.
<b>Goal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Acquisition of scientific knowledge in the field of theology;</li> <li>✓ Implementation of European standards and recommendations for securing the quality of higher education;</li> <li>✓ Promoting of student international mobility;</li> <li>✓ Leading of the scientific research according to the international scale.</li> </ul>

<b>Ways for achieving goals</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>
<b>Promoting the mobility of academic/administrative staff/students within the scope of Erasmus + program</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Finding of new partner organizations within the scope of Erasmus + program</b>			✓	✓	✓		
<b>Expanding of cooperation with foreign theological higher educational institutions for joint research</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Personnel (academic/administrative) Training – retraining for higher Quality of education Issues of European standards and recommendations (institutional and programmatic).</b>	✓	✓	✓				

<b>Expected results</b>	<p>Sharing of international experience and promoting of best practices is considered further refinement of the existing system as well as introduction of modern methods of teaching and development of effective evaluation systems.</p> <p>Administrative support of Students/Academic/Administrative personnel: In accordance with the requirements of Erasmus +, students' enhanced training in European languages and suggestion of necessary knowledge for the development of project applications.</p> <p>Support of the personnel - Training them for securing higher quality in their education, in terms of international standards and recommendations, which will contribute to the establishment of high educational quality of teaching and research level improvements; by raising staff competencies, the use of human resources for international mobility and joint studies; introduction of international programs on consulting services. Finding new partners and increasing collaboration with them in the field of teaching and research as an opportunity to raise the international authority of the institution, development</p>
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	of the educational programs, and planning of joint research collaboration for the future. Promoting of international mobility, supporting of training of the students in foreign languages, within the framework of extracurricular studies (beyond the program) and appropriate provision of the students with information services.
<b>Objective III</b>	Permanent strengthening of ecclesiastical consciousness in society and protection of Christian values.
<b>Goal</b>	Dissemination of accumulated knowledge in order to raise Christian awareness in spirituality, culture, education in the community.

Ways for achieving goals	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Preparation of Theological collections and periodicals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Implementation of social, cultural programs and events	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Organizing events, symposia, conferences in the public space	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Organizing presentations and public lectures for teachers and students at general educational institutions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Arranging of exhibitions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

<b>Expected results</b>	Increasing of the contribution of TTAS in the dissemination and strengthening of theological knowledge and Christian values. Publication of scientific literature and Theological texts and supporting of their availability for the public; Promotion of a better cognition of Christian teaching; Cognition of aesthetic principles/visions of Christian art by the public; Introduction of the system of continuous development.
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