

Deputies for Theological Training  
Report to Synod Mamelodi 2024

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## Executive summary

Over the last few years Deputies Theological Training (DTT) have endeavoured to secure theological training in line with the profile of a Minister of the Word as adopted by the Synod in 2006. We praise the Lord that He has greatly blessed the work done over the last ten years including the planning, approval by Synods and the actual implementation of our theological training program.

The situation of our bond of churches was very bleak in terms of the availability of ministers a few years ago with over 4 vacancies for ministers, which is significant in the FRCSA. With intensive calling on consistories and through information sessions held in our different churches since 2011, Deputies received 11 brothers who expressed their desire to prepare for the ministry. Two withdrew from the program; one has completed his studies and passed his classis exams; one student will complete his studies DV in May 2024; another five are enrolled at CRTS, three third years and two first years starting in September 2024. We have also started a journey with two students from Soshanguve who have begun studying languages.

We are very grateful for all the parties involved in theological training. We have mentors for every student, and the SA Pastoral Training Programme was presented by Rev Hannes Breytenbach and Rev Jopie van der Linden, who also played major roles as mentors and lecturers.

Two professors from CRTS have visited us and gave lectures to students, preached in some congregations and presented various public lectures in some of our churches. This has been a very enriching experience and has enhanced our relationship with the Canadian sister-churches.

A key component of our theological training is our relationship with CRTS where our students study for their MDiv. We are very grateful that our students can study at this institution and truly believe it is a gift of God to our churches. The academic and spiritual forming they receive is of a very high quality. Our students are performing well with great results and positive testimony from CRTS. We had the privilege to listen in on two of the Wednesday preaching sessions during which one of our second year students presented a sermon and we could hardly believe the depth and maturity of the student at such an early stage. We thank Prof Jason van Vliet and all the lecturing and other staff at CRTS for the way our students have become part of the institution. We are grateful for the Canadian Foreign Students Bursary Fund which supports our students in Canada. We are also grateful for the financial support Deputies Theological Training and Deputies Art 19 Needy Students have received from our sister churches in Australia. Without their support we would not be able to sustain the training of our students.

The theological training trajectory for the FRCSA has been established and is functioning well. We envisage that we will continue with this trajectory for the next 5 to 10 years unless a quality alternative can be found in SA. We have engaged with the RCSA in terms of their new theological training project the GTA (Gereformeerde Teologiese Akademie), but it is still early days in its development. A more detailed report of our discussions with the GTA is attached to this report (Addendum A).

We praise the Lord for the way He has blessed theological training in the FRCSA and we trust that the students will become ministers in our churches and will be well received. May the Lord use them to build his church in South Africa and His kingdom world-wide until He returns on the clouds.

This report is divided into three sections:

- Synod 2021 instructions and results
- Deputies' approach towards the Theological Study Programme 2024-27
- Proposed instructions Synod 2024

## Part One: Synod 2021 instructions and results

### 1 Synod 2021 instructions and results

The numbering in this section follows the numbering in the Instructions in the Acts of Synod Belhar 2021. Instructions appear in italic typing.

- 1 *To set an APS of 25 as the admission requirement for the FRCSA theological studies programme, and to test applicants' aptitude, competency and intellectual skills where applicable.*

The APS of 25 was based on available information from universities' requirements in 2021. In 2023 it appeared that the University of Pretoria (UP), our university of preference in Gauteng, had increased its APS for BA Degrees to 28.

- 1.1 UP's increase of its APS prevented two brothers from Soshanguve, Christopher Hlongwane and Sibusiso Sithole, who requested admission to the theological programme in 2022 with an APS of 26, to enrol at UP. Ultimately the brothers were advised to enrol at NWU, which requires an APS of 21. The brothers have registered for enrolment in 2025.
- 1.2 Universities now select applications based on the highest APS, not on first-come-first-serve. For example, if the maximum students to be admitted to first year BA Languages in a faculty is 5000, the 5000 applicants with the highest APS are admitted. The rest of the applicants are refused admission, irrespective whether their APS satisfies university requirements. It is clear that university admission has become highly competitive. We take note that this is a trend at the public universities because of the demand and possible further increases are envisaged.
- 1.3 Psychometric tests have proved valuable and indicate the potential of applicants to the study programme. Where applicants were border cases, these tests helped Deputies to be aware of the need for additional support and continuous mentorship. Applicants were informed accordingly.

- 2 *To inform prospective students for theological studies to apply before the end of April for access to the theological study programme of the FRCSA through admission procedures set by DTT.*

Prospective students were warned to apply before the end of April. Registrations at all universities start 1 April for the next year and fill up within a month. For the future an earlier date will be determined.

- 3 *In cases where DTT and mentor(s) conclude that the applicant for theological studies has the potential to successfully complete the programme but lacks basic competencies, to enable the student to follow a supportive programme that is determined by the DTT.*

The two brothers from Soshanguve enrolled at MTC for a BTh first year, as a bridging course/supportive programme, to ease them into the language studies at NWU.

- 4 *In special circumstances, to consider adaptations of this trajectory to fit the particular needs of a student.*

- 4.1 For Christopher Hlongwane and Sibusiso Sithole the following alternatives were investigated:
  - Rewriting of matric to obtain a higher APS. This option was deemed to be unproductive.
  - Enrolling at John Wycliffe Theological College. This option was dropped as a qualification from John Wycliffe would not necessarily provide admission to CRTS.

- Enrolment for a BA (Ancient Languages) at NWU was selected as the best option. However, it would require a mentor located in Potchefstroom. This matter is being addressed.

#### 4.2 For student Rofhiwa Ramphabana the following trajectory was selected:

After obtaining his BTh at MTC, br Rofhiwa followed video-based training at MDiv level presented by our mentors. This was followed by a one-year on-line enrolment at CRTS for selected courses, followed by one semester in-class training at CRTS, Hamilton (2022-23). Br Rofhiwa was successfully examined by Classis North in August 2022, and declared eligible for a call by the churches. At present he is contracted by Pretoria-Maranata to work on a temporary basis in the mission congregation F4, mentored by Rev George Mnisi.

#### 4.3 For candidate Kidane Habtemariam:

Br Habtemariam ministered the Reformed Presbyterian Church, which joined the FRC Pretoria as a ward in 2023. At that time br Habtemariam studied in his final year MDiv at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (on-line). After becoming a member of FRC Pretoria, br Habtemariam was successfully examined by Classis North for preaching consent. A supplementary study package was developed under supervision of consistory FRC Pretoria, including approval of admission of br Habtemariam to selected on-line courses at CRTS.

#### 4.4 Two applications for re-admission to the theological training programme.

Two former students who had not completed their studies, approached Classis-North for an examination towards the ministry. Classis referred them to Deputies Theological Training. After a discussion with the two brothers and background information gathering, Deputies advised the Classis that they could not be re-admitted to the training programme at this stage.

- 5 *In collaboration with CRTS: 5.1 To investigate and implement models of on-line or distance education as offered by CRTS for students who are legitimately prevented from travelling to CRTS. DTT will support students who follow on-line or hybrid models of tuition through mentors to ensure that such students are not disadvantaged by the on-line or hybrid model. 5.2 To continue to strive towards establishing an educational hub in South Africa where students can receive adequate supervision in the local community, using a hybrid model.*

### 5.1 Distance education

5.1.1 CRTS started on-line tuition during Covid 19 and recently developed a distance education model. Deputies were represented on the working committee for this purpose. CRTS accepted the following guideline: in-class tuition as much as possible, on-line as much as is needed. Decisions on on-line tuition are taken by CRTS on a one-by-one case, in consultation with Deputies Theological Training, and reviewed annually. It is generally agreed that in-class tuition is by far preferable to on-line, as the spiritual formation, peer development and participation in (out-of-class) group discussions is more effective.

5.1.2 During Covid 19 student Jakob Mars was prevented to travel to Hamilton for his first year MDiv. He continued his studies on-line, mentored by Rev Brintjes and doing his internship

in 2022 with Rev Van Alten. Family Mars travelled to Hamilton in 2022 and aims to return in September 2024. He will do a one year internship with Rev Bruintjes after his return.

- 5.1.3 Student Arjan van der Meer studied in-class at Hamilton in 2021-2, after which CRTS approved on-line studies from South Africa from March 2022. He and his wife aim to travel to Hamilton DV September 2024 for in-class tuition of the rest of his studies.
- 5.1.4 Canadian government study visa requirements are stringent and take up to four months for approval if the applicant only has a South African passport. Deputies were professionally supported by REKAI agency in Canada, and to date all applications were approved. We express our sincere gratitude towards REKAI and the anonymous Canadian donor who funded the support.

## 5.2 South African training hub

- 5.2.1 Deputies have considered the possibility of a local training hub. Based on the experience with the video-based training in 2016-20, deputies at this stage are hesitant to recommend that a South African educational hub be established. Such a hub would require at least one full-time lecturer (earlier called anchor theologian), and the churches would find it difficult to fund it. Furthermore, in future situations may arise where no students apply.
- 5.2.2 Also, the community dynamic at CRTS has a significant positive impact on the formation of the students, which would be largely lost when one or a few students would study locally.
- 5.2.3 DTT's experience with the on-line students over the past years shows that on-line – if necessary due to personal circumstances – would be preferable over a local hub.
- 5.2.4 Deputies are aware of the initiatives in the FRCA to possibly establish a local hub, but the Australian federation is three times our size, and financially well-off. It is recommended that the possible need for a hub be assessed in future if the situation in our federation changes.

## 6 *To investigate, within the parameters set by previous Synods, new developments in theological education in South Africa which may benefit the FRCSA in the medium to long-term, such as the 'Gereformeerde Teologiese Akademie' (Reformed Theological Academy).*

- 6.1 Deputies remained informed as much as possible about developments in theological education in South Africa. In most cases theological education institutions offer a four-year BTh or BDiv degree, followed by a two-to-three years MDiv degree programme. Deputies remain convinced that their current trajectory, based on a three-year BA languages followed by a four-year MDiv at CRTS remains the better option. Deputies are also not confident that three Reformed institutions (Mukhanyo Theological College, John Wycliff Theological College and George Whitefield Theological College) maintain the standards that previous FRCSA synods have adopted. This applies to both academic and spiritual formation standards. Therefore we cannot rely solely on these institutions.
- 6.2 Deputies are member of the MTC Board, as they believe that MTC can fill a gap in theological training, particularly in African churches. However, participation in the Board and at AGMs has not happened, and we may reconsider our membership, as MTC does not fit in the theological program.

6.3 Deputies remain informed as much as possible about developments at the Reformed Theological Academy (GTA, Gereformeerde Teologiese Akademie), previously the Theological School at the Northwest University. This institution, which is in the process of being established, provides training for the ministry within the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA).

6.4 With regard to the Gereformeerde Teologiese Akademie the Deputies report as follows (See Addendum A for a fuller report):

- Deputies Theological Training met with delegates from RCSA Curators and Prof Britz on 25 November 2021 and 2 June 2022, and with Prof Britz on 5 February 2024 for mutual consultation on the GTA.
- Deputies are thankful to the Lord that He has brought the RCSA to the point to terminate their dependence on a state university. Our prayer is that this will benefit the Reformed nature of its theological training.
- DTT consulted relevant publications on the GTA, although little information appears in the public domain.
- The longstanding agreement between the RCSA and the NWU will terminate on 31 December 2026. The General Synod of the RCSA 2023 accepted the establishment of the Gereformeerde Teologiese Akademie (Synod Acts 2023: <https://gksa.org.za/sinode-2023/> See Curators report to Synod).
- The GTA is in the process of registering as a Private Higher Education Institution with the Department of Higher Education and Training. The Memorandum of Incorporation was finalized in 2023. The GTA is also in the final stages to submit a Higher Certificate in Reformed Theology to the Council of Higher Education for accreditation.
- Prof Dolf Britz has been appointed principal. The GTA is utilizing the theological library and building in Potchefstroom, which are the property of the Admin Bureau of the RCSA. The GTA has concluded an agreement to share the facilities of AROS in Pretoria, if needed.
- The RCSA Curators have appointed a Board of Directors, currently consisting of RCSA curators.
- The GTA educational structure is based on the traditional four components: Biblical, Confessional (Dogmatics), Ecclesiological and Ministerial subjects.
- The degree-structure will ultimately consist of a Higher Certificate in Reformed Theology, a BTh (4 years) and a Post-Graduate Diploma.
- An agreement has been reached with the Reformational Study Centre to provide library services in the form of access to the study collection *in situ* and on-line, including prescribed books.
- A discussion on the GTA has emerged in the RCSA, with different views on its development.
- The GTA organisational model includes an Advisory Committee to which the FRCSA Deputies Theological Training were invited, but this has not yet started functioning.

7 *To re-investigate the appropriateness of BTh studies as a trajectory towards the ministry.* CRTS prefers that applicant students for MDiv have a BA ancient languages, rather than a BTh or BDiv. The seminary believes that a BA provides a better basis, often due to higher levels of

attention to languages. The BA also provides an opportunity to take subjects such as, philosophy, ancient culture and English. Deputies concur with the CRTS position. Obviously standards in the BA degree vary among institutions. Deputies take this into consideration when they advise applicants. Students with a BTh or BDiv at an approved institution will not be rejected by CRTS, but may struggle during their Freshman Year. One of our students who did a BTh was requested to update his Greek III through BibleMesh before enrolling at CRTS.

## 8 *To continue an appropriate mentorship program during the period 2021-2024.*

Deputies offered the following mentorships as part of their programme

### 8.1 *Undergraduate level:*

- Each student was allocated a mentor, usually their local pastor, or a pastor in the neighbouring congregation. The mentors were responsible for the spiritual formation of the student, and to support students who had concerns or problems at their institution of training. A spiritual formation plan was updated for the FRCSA context.
- In addition, Rev Breytenbach offered monthly discussion sessions based on Reformed literature, i.e. the book *Growing in the Gospel*, by Prof Jason van Vliet, CRTS, and John Calvin's *Institutes*. The mentorship enabled students to interact and to focus on Reformed theology.
- In cooperation with CRTS, mentors Breytenbach and Van der Linden offered a 3-week course on subjects relevant to the South African church context, such as African worldview and FRCSA church polity. This course is compulsory, and was offered during the recess of CRTS when the students were in South Africa (May-Aug 2023). Mentors proposed that the South African course be taught between students' completion of their BA and their departure to CRTS.

### 8.2 *MDiv level:* CRTS offered the following mentorships and internships:

- Students at CRTS were mentored by one of their professors. Mentorship consists of meetings during which the mentor and mentee exchange experiences and pray together.
- CRTS has a set Pastoral Training Programme, that consists of internships in South Africa or Canada during recess. The recess after the first year (Freshman Year) consists of three weeks orientation towards the ministry. The internship after the second year consists of nine weeks during which the students 'shadow' a minister, and participate/observe during council meetings, home visits, etc. Students also make sermons which they present in one of the churches. To obtain a preaching licensure, students were examined by classis in South Africa or Canada. The recess after the third year consists of a mission internship.
- Students who studied on-line in South Africa also followed the internships in South Africa. CRTS appointed Rev van Alten for the 9-week internship of Jakob Mars in 2022 and the 9-week internship of Arjan van der Meer in 2024.

## 9 *To initiate the organisation of annual pastors' conferences.*

9.1 During Covid 19 period (2021) no pastors' conference was organised.

9.2 During 2022 no pastors' conference was organised.



9.3 The 2023 pastors' conference was held in Cape Town. The theme was: *Music and Song in the Church: Perspectives from the Bible, Church History and Culture.*

10 *To collaborate closely with Deputies Needy Students (CO Art 19) in order to determine the level of financial support for theological students. Deputies Art 19 will consist of an independent deputy/ies and the treasurer from Deputies Theological Training.*

10.1 In principle the separation of the two Deputyships is necessary for clean management and protection of separate mandates. In practice the separation is rather artificial, and if strictly adhered to, time-consuming. Students would submit applications for funding to Deputies Art 19, who then request DTT to advise on eligibility and amounts of funding. DTT then discuss merits and alternatives, as well as consequences, and submit recommendations to Deputies Art 19. If questions arise, Deputies Art 19 would have to request further advice from DTT. The two Deputyships used the following compromise with regard to cooperation:

- DTT receive applications for funding from students. These applications are discussed at the next DTT meeting. Deputies Art 19 attend the meeting and thus remain informed on students' progress when DTT discuss the students. Under the agenda item Finances/Art 19, the student's application is discussed, and a decision is taken by Deputies Art 19. If no decision can be taken at the meeting, Deputies Art 19 meet separately in a follow-up meeting.
- Where an application is urgent, a similar process is followed through email or a Teams meeting.

10.2 Synod 2021 appointed the Treasurer of DTT also as a Deputy Art 19 to ensure efficient cooperation. The Treasurer keeps separate financial accounts and books for both Deputyships.

11 *To promote theological training among all FRCSA churches.*

11.1 *In South Africa:* Deputies promoted theological training among FRCSA churches as follows:

- Annual information session in July 2022 and 2023. These sessions were offered in Pretoria and Cape Town, while all church councils and missionaries were informed, and requested to inform potential students. During the session the full theological training programme was presented and discussed. Visiting lecturers from CRTS were involved, providing background to the CRTS programme. Informal discussions were held with all present. All sessions were well-attended (av. 10 persons). During the session the brochure of Deputies Theological Training was distributed (see Addendum C).
- The training programme was presented at a meeting with missionaries in Gauteng in 2023.
- Deputies still want to improve communication with the churches by visiting the congregations individually.
- *Guest lecturers' public lectures 2022 and 2023.* Guest lecturers from CRTS presented public lectures in Pretoria, Johannesburg and Cape Town. These lectures enabled church members to engage with the professors, and taste something of the teaching at the CRTS. Both Prof Smith (Old-Testament Studies, 2022) and Prof Den Hollander (New Testament Studies, 2023) presented four lectures each. The lectures were broadcasted

through the relevant congregation's YouTube channel. Two of the lectures were published in *Kompas* afterwards.

11.2 *Outside South Africa*: Deputies maintain regular contact with Deputies Churches Abroad of the FRCA and with CRTS. Two articles on our students appeared in *Una Sancta* in 2023, the FRCA family magazine. Deputies submitted annual reports to deputies of sister churches who provided funding.

12 *To levy the churches as follows: For 2021: R200 000 ☐ For 2022: R200 000 ☐ For 2023: R200 000 ☐ For 2024: R200 000*

12.1 Churches in the FRCSA were levied according to the assessments by Synod 2021. It is with great gratitude to the Lord and the congregations that these levies were paid. (See financial statements)

12.2 As was discussed in previous synod reports the budgets for theological training and Art 19 significantly exceeded the available funding from the churches, mainly due to:

- shortages in Rev Breytenbach's pension provision; and
- the costs of students in South Africa and overseas.

12.3 As in previous years the funding from overseas sister churches resolved shortages.

12.4 Like the CRTS, Deputies sent out a Letter of Free Will Giving to the churches, which delivered extra funds.

12.5 Due to funding from the FRCA, the debt to Deputies Art. 11 to a total of R720,000 has been paid off.

13 *To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held approximately halfway between Synod 2021 and the next Synod.*

- An Interim report was submitted to the Indaba and discussed. The report largely followed the format of the synod report.
- Deputies viewed the one-day Indaba as limiting in its contribution to their work due to a lack of preparation and insufficient attendance by deputyships and consistories. All deputies are urged to prepare thoroughly for such Indabas and contribute critically to the work of the other deputyships.

## 2 Financial Statements 2021-23

Deputies report with great thankfulness to the Lord that He provided abundantly for the work of the Deputies, the students, mentors and training programmes in South Africa and at CRTS. It is with awe that we see time and again that the Lord provides even before we fully realise our needs. Even more important than the resources, the Lord gave us several young men who are at various stages in the training programme. The Lord blessed these men with the ability to learn, and the spiritual growth that is needed for the preparation for the ministry.

The financial need for DTT have become relatively small and the majority of the funds required is covered by Art 19 and can be seen in their statements and budget.

The funding is received by DTT and with regard to students it is managed as required by Art 19. This transfer started in 2023 and is reflected in the 2024-7 budgets.

We did have an extraordinary contribution from FRCA in 2023 because they had an abundant year and caught up with previous years contributions.

To get a more realistic view of the finances for theological training the combined budgets between the two deputyships should be viewed together and not in isolation.

It is critical to read our budget in conjunction with our student matrix 2019 to 2029 in Addendum B.

The following is a summary of income and expenditures of the Deputies for the 2021-24 period. Full statements are attached as Addendum D

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Income</b>	1 048 494	542 622	1 895 584
Expenditures	664 773	195 517	150 501
Travel		40 107	34 662
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>383 721</b>	<b>347 105</b>	<b>1 745 083</b>

### 3 Meetings

Deputies Theological Training met on the following dates:

27/5/2021, 15/7/2021, 26/8/2021, 28/10/2021

27/1/2022, 14/4/2022, 9/6/2022, 11/8/2022, 3/11/2022

19/1/2023, 2/3/2023, 11/5/2023, 20/9/2023, 8/11/2023

12/2/2024, 2/5/2024

### 4 Reports on theological studies

*Academic reports:* all students submitted reports on their examination results after each semester.

*Mentorship reports:* mentors reported at least twice a year.

*Visiting lecturers:* lecturers submitted their report to CRTS and provided a copy to Deputies.

*Special reports:* the administrator provided reports to Deputies on all special meetings, e.g. with applicants, with CRTS and with RTA.

### 5 Matrix projections 2019 to 2029

The attached matrix projections for student applications and enrolment as projected for the period DV 2019-2029 can be summarised as follows (detailed matrix in Annexure B):

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>Undergraduate</b>	6	5	6	2	2	2	3	4	5	3	3
<b>MDiv CRTS</b>	0	1	1	5	4	6	5	5	2	5	4

The purpose of these projections is to enable Deputies to plan in terms of human resources and finances for the next years. The Lord has blessed us tremendously in the provision of (potential)

students. At the same time it must be realised that not every student who enrolls ultimately completes the full programme. A student may decide to take a different direction in life, or deputies may advise a student to withdraw from the programme. We ask the churches to pray for the young brothers who consider theological studies, and especially during their studies.

## Part Two: Deputies' approach towards Theological Study Programme 2024-27

### 6 General view of Deputies' approach towards the Theological Study Programme 2024-27

Deputies are deeply thankful to the Lord for His guidance over the past years. Over time the theological training programme has consolidated into a trajectory for students that makes provision for a unifying development of students from different socio-economic contexts, yet also making provision for specific contextual challenges. Both provisions aim to ultimately achieve an outcome of the training, as adopted in the Profile of Minister of the Word (accepted at Synod 2006) and in the Spiritual Formation Plan.

#### 6.1 *General approach towards theological training*

Deputies remain committed to provide the best possible theological training programme to the South African churches, as Christ's church deserves the best ministers that can be delivered through the training programme. Deputies strongly believe that the Lord provides us with everything the churches need for the preparation of young men for the ministry, and that the training must reflect these gifts.

Deputies believe that theological students should achieve academic excellence in all subjects that are part of the programme. For this reason the programme is consolidated as follows:

- a. *Undergraduate phase*: a B Degree with courses Hebrew I-III, Greek I-III, and Latin I, at a reputable tertiary education institution. CRTS is considering a proposal that Latin I becomes compulsory. Students are also encouraged to take English, Ancient Cultural Studies and Philosophy. Applicants should consult the Deputies Theological Training for the selection of the institution and the course.
- b. *MDiv phase*: students enrol at CRTS for the four-year MDiv programme in which as much as possible face-to-face or classroom tuition is followed, while on-line tuition is used when necessary.
- c. Deputies consider CRTS as the institution of preference for the MDiv programme for at least the following reasons:
  - It is the only seminary within our sister-churches federations,
  - Quality of the tuition, both theologically and academically.
  - Academic and spiritual formation of students within a very special community of professors, support staff, mentors, students and churches.
  - Training of all students at the same institution promotes unity in the churches, as ministers share a similar foundation.

- b. In case the FRCSA has no vacancies, and a call from our churches is not possible for students who have completed their studies, the training at CRTS opens up the possibility of a call by any of our sister-churches worldwide.
- c. The MDiv programme at CRTS does not make provision for issues that are typical South African, such as
  - SA church history and history of the Free Reformed Churches
  - SA church polity and church federation
  - Church planting in SA and typical SA mission issues
  - Being a church in the SA context (African culture, and also our relations to other church federations and believers)

The study programme makes provision for teaching on these subjects by the academic mentors. Depending on the availability of students, these courses will in future be offered during the seven months between the students' graduation and their departure for CRTS.

## 6.2 *Admission requirements*

Deputies believe that admission to undergraduate studies within the programme should remain based on the following four grounds:

- Applicants have a National Senior Certificate with an APS that fulfils the requirements of the University that has been identified as a preferred institution. Deputies realise that universities may change their minimum APS, and that universities increasingly assess applications in terms of highest APS comes first. Prospective applicants are therefore advised to aim for at least an APS of 30 in their National Senior Certificate. Deputies strongly recommend that brothers who apply after their matriculation and who do not have the required APS, rewrite their matric to obtain an adequate APS.
- A recommendation and testimony by the applicant's consistory and pastor or missionary, providing information on a christian lifestyle, participation in church life and a healthy personal relationship with Christ.
- A meeting with Deputies to determine the applicant's motivation and views on the ministry.
- A positive result from a psychometric test, as arranged by Deputies.

## 6.3 *Re-admission applications*

Not all students complete their studies as their interests may have shifted to other disciplines. It is also possible that Deputies must advise a student to stop his studies due to problems with learning ability or personal life. Such students may apply for re-admission at a later stage. In such a case Deputies will have discussions with the applicant and gather testimonies from pastors or individuals in the federation who know the applicants. Based on this information and meetings with the brother Deputies will decide whether to approve readmission.

## 6.4 *Contextual factors that impact on the study trajectory*

Challenges due to contextual factors in applicants and students' life situation were discussed at previous synods. Deputies were mandated to address such cases as they emerge to

ensure that promising students are not unnecessarily disadvantaged. At the same time Deputies cannot make concessions with regard to academic standards and spiritual growth. Deputies deal with issues around contextual factors on a case-by-case basis. Such factors can be family situation, educational background and financial situation of the student. Deputies address contextual factors through meetings with the applicant and his pastor.

#### 6.5 *Study trajectory variations*

Applicants for the study programme are sometimes brothers who have achieved a B degree in other subjects than theology. In line with CRTS policy, such applicants can limit their undergraduate studies to languages Hebrew and Greek up to level III and Latin I. Such courses are offered on-line through the BibleMesh programme, which is accepted by CRTS.

Students are encouraged to enrol for the Webinars in Greek and Hebrew that are offered by Rev Dean Anderson of our Australian sister churches, from their second year BA studies. Students who did so found the webinars enriching and preparing them well for CRTS. However, such participation is not compulsory. If necessary, Deputies can arrange for additional classes in Ancient Languages through a locally contracted lecturer.

Partly due to Covid 19 CRTS makes provision for on-line MDiv studies. The principle that is applied is “as much in-class study as possible and as much on-line studies as necessary”. Each application for on-line studies will be assessed individually by CRTS and Deputies. CRTS is also currently developing an on-line MDiv degree programme. Deputies want to express their view that in-class training remains the preferred option, as the student will benefit from the engagement with the CRTS community and better ongoing mentorship. Deputies are convinced that students who live in Canada during their MDiv studies, are exposed to a different ecclesial context, which helps in developing a wider perspective on the office of a minister than would be possible in South Africa.

#### 6.6 **Deputies would like to submit a request for advice from synod on applicants who have only recently joined the FRCSA**

All applicants to the training programme need a testimony from the consistory of their congregation. It is clear that congregations and consistories must know the applicant well in order to provide a reliable testimony about his faith, his dedication to the Lord, his participation in church life and his ability to fit the Profile of a Minister of the Word.

Applicants who have recently converted to the true Reformed faith or joined the FRCSA recently, may be eager to be trained for the ministry and apply for admission to the training programme. Experience teaches us that these applicants could experience serious problems when they serve in the ministry, due to their lack of intimate knowledge and experience of the typical ecclesial nature of the FRCSA. He may also be unaware of aspects of the Reformed theology that are considered important in the FRCSA. The churches must be protected against situations where their minister has received a good training elsewhere but lacks a solid formative foundation within the FRCSA or its sister-churches.

Article 9 of the Church Order of the FRCSA stipulates that ministers of the Word from other federations will only be admitted “with great circumspection and only after they have been

subjected to a severe trial period". The Church Order of our Canadian sister-churches states in Article 7 that someone "...who has recently come to the confession of the Reformed religion shall not be declared eligible for a call within the churches unless he has been well tested for a reasonable period of time ...". It is clear that the Church Order intends to protect the well-being of the churches through true ministry.

*Deputies want to ask advice to what extent the "great circumspection and severe trial period" would apply to a new applicant to their programme? Would it be responsible to allow someone to the programme without any trial period? Would the training be sufficient to provide the formative foundation of the FRCSA? Deputies would appreciate guidelines about principles and practice, e.g. number of years of membership of the FRCSA.*

## **7 Mentorship and Pastoral Training Program**

### **7.1 Mentorships**

Deputies found over the years that the mentoring of undergraduate students is indispensable for the academic and spiritual growth of the students, and therefore made the process compulsory. Each undergraduate student receives a mentor, usually a nearby pastor. The mentor and mentee meet regularly, and discuss the student's growth, personal issues and study issues.

When possible, students in South Africa should meet once a month for a discussion of a theological matter, usually from a publication. This type of academic mentorship was in the past offered by Rev Breytenbach and Rev Van der Linden.

CRTS appoints one of its professors as a mentor for each student. The mentor and mentee meet often for a personal discussion, prayer and bonding.

### **7.2 Pastoral Training Program**

All students in the MDiv program must complete the Pastoral Training Program (PTP). The program offers opportunities for practical experiences, or field education, that orient and equip students in core responsibilities of the ministry such as preaching, teaching, leading worship, and pastoral visitation.

The PTP has four components:

- a. Orientation Internship (2 weeks, after the first year of studies)
- b. Catechism Teaching Practicum (during the second year)
- c. Mission Internship (2 weeks, after the second or third year)
- d. Preaching & Pastoral Internship (10-12 weeks, after the second or third year)

South African students may in consultation with CRTS choose whether they want to do (part of) their PTP in Canada or South Africa. In the latter case, CRTS appoints a South African minister to offer the PTP.

## **8 Registration as Non-Profit-Company**

By law all educational institutions in South Africa have to register as a Non-Profit Company (NPC). The Deputies Theological Training and their programme are now registered as "Teologiese Skool van

die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke". A Memorandum of Incorporation was registered in 2022 , and appears as Addendum F to this report.

We have applied to have the NPC registered as a Public Benefit Organization (PBO) which will enable us to issue sec 18A tax certificates for donations.

## 9 Funding from sister-churches

The Theological Training Programme, including Deputies Art 19 Needy Students, have been funded by sister-churches abroad since the 1990s. Initially the Gereformeerde Kerken Vrijgemaakt (Reformed Churches Liberated) fully funded the study costs of young men from the mission churches. Deputies paid out a monthly stipend for tuition costs (at MTC), accommodation, transport, etc. This funding was last used for the completion of candidate Rofhiwa Ramphabana's studies in 2022.

Our Australian sister-churches have funded Deputies Needy Churches of the FRCSA since the 1990s, particularly for the congregation of Bethal. When Rev Breytenbach accepted a call to Pretoria in 2016 with special tasks in theological training and mission work, the FRCA funds could be used for his costs and additional expenditures, such as his pension fund. Funding by the Australian sister-churches as reported in the Deputies' financial statements, accounted for approximately R900,000 per year. Most of the funding was used for the costs of the training in South Africa, and part of the costs for travel costs to CRTS.

The Canadian sister-churches have been funding part of the MDiv studies through the Foreign Students Bursary Fund. In 2016 the CRTS/FSBF and the Deputies entered into a Memorandum of Understanding, in which it was agreed that the FSBF would pay for the accommodation and living costs of South African MDiv students in Canada, while the Deputies would pay for travel costs, visa, medical insurance, tuition fees and book costs. This MoU was updated in 2024, and strengthened the collaboration between CRTS and the Deputies (Addendum G). Synod Guelph 2022 of the CanRC approved a request from CRTS to be able to raise funds more widely in the Canadian congregations through a Free Will Giving letter. Deputies Theological Training disseminated a similar letter in the FRCSA congregations.

At Synod Belhar 2021 Mission Deputies SA raised the issue of possible funding of mission work in South Africa by the Canadian sister-churches. While the latter fund Khothatsong, Canadian government regulations would make it difficult to extend funding to mission work. At the 2021 synod the possibility was raised whether the FSBF could extend their funding to include all costs of sending FRCSA students to CRTS, so that this would free Australian funding Deputies receive, for use in the mission field. The possibility of an increase in FSBF funding was discussed with CRTS, but this option could not be realised as it would create an unwanted precedence for other foreign students at CRTS.

In view of the need for more funding for Mission Deputies SA, Deputies Theological Training submitted a proposal to the Australian deputies, for the latter's approval to Deputies Theological Training to forward unused Australian funds to MDSA.

From the above initiatives it is clear that there is a need for more coordination between various FRCSA deputyships and their budgets. It is proposed that at least the Deputies Theological Training,



Deputies Needy Students, Deputies Needy Churches and Mission Deputies South Africa strive for better coordination and annual assessment of budgets and funding received, in order to optimise the funding from our sister-churches.

## **10 Guest lecturers and visitors**

Deputies regard the guest lecturer visits as highly valuable for the following reasons:

- Undergraduate students attend lectures that are similar to the ones at CRTS, providing a stimulus for their studies and personal growth.
- Visiting lecturers offer public lectures to members of the congregations and visitors. These lectures are generally well-attended and stimulate personal Bible study and spiritual growth of members.
- Members who attend the lectures get a feeling of the Reformed solid teaching at CRTS, which may promote the interest of young brothers for theological studies.
- The sister-church relationship is strengthened.

The renewed MoU with CRTS provides for a visiting professor every 3 years. Deputies will consider inviting other ministers from our sister-churches in Canada and Australia during the other two years.

Deputies would like to propose that the churches consider an exchange programme in which ministers of the Word from our sister-churches exchange with FRCSA ministers for a set period, e.g. three months. Such exchanges may increase the sister-church relationships.

## **11 Appointment of Deputies Theological Training 2024-27**

Deputies propose that the following brothers and sisters be appointed as Deputies for Theological Training for the next term: Martin de Wit, Rev Carl van Wyk, Rev George Mnisi, Martha Hamming, Gerda van Dijk,

Ronald Meeske, Gerard Hagg, Pieter Boon will step down.

Regarding the many administrative tasks, deputies propose to reappoint the administrator / secretary. During the last years these tasks were done by br & sr Gerard & Cora Hagg together. Deputies are very thankful for their many hours of service. For the sake of continuity, it is proposed to reappoint them. This appointment will ensure that the various aspects of training are managed timeously and adhering to the set requirements, such as collecting information for the selection of training institutions, enrolment of students, administration of the training programme in South Africa, travel of MDiv students to and from CRTS, keeping minutes and records and managing communication with churches in South Africa and abroad, and communication between Deputies Theological Training and other Deputies.

## **12 Budget 2024-27**

The following budgets for 2024-27 are submitted to Synod, with full budgets in the Addendum E.

	2024	2025	2026	2027
<b>Income</b>	202 000	202 000	202 000	202 000
<b>Expenditures</b>	157 958	176 670	184 260	192 191
<b>Surplus</b>	44 042	25 330	17 740	9 809

Expenditures will cover administration, visiting lecturers and pastors' conference

## Part Three: Instructions Synod 2024

### 13 Instructions Synod 2024

*13.1 To set an APS according to the requirements of the tertiary education institution that is selected by Deputies as the preferred institution in each locality, and to test applicants' aptitude, competency and intellectual skills.*

*Grounds:*

- Deputies accept that applicants should have the learning capability that is required not only for a B Degree, but with an indication of the applicant's ability to successfully complete an MDiv study programme.
- Gauteng students should preferably enrol at the University of Pretoria (UP): UP is recognised as maintaining international standards; Gauteng students can stay close to a congregation within the federation, students can more easily be mentored, it saves costs. UP has currently set an APS of 28, which could increase over the next years..
- University of Stellenbosch (US) and North West University (NWU) have lower APS. Cape students can enrol at US. NWU is not a preferred option for the B degree, since enrolment at NWU requires extra costs for accommodation and students cannot easily be mentored.
- Having students at different institutions may impair the promotion of unity between students.
- At this stage the potential of the Gereformeerde Teologiese Akademie for undergraduate studies is uncertain.
- Potential students must be informed that an APS of 31 has become normal among applicants at universities, and having a lower APS will make it almost impossible to obtain admission. According to the director of the Thusano Bursary Fund, students with an APS lower than 31, are seldomly able to complete an M-degree.
- Psychometric tests have been found indispensable for the assessment of applicants to the programme.

*13.2 To inform prospective students for theological studies to apply for admission to the theological study programme of the FRCSA before the end of January of the year preceding the first study year, and through admission procedures set by Deputies Theological Training.*

*Grounds:*

- Registration at universities starts on 1 April of the preceding year. Generally universities have limited space in the Humanities Faculty. Registration should take place within the first week after the application period of relevant universities has opened.
- Deputies want to meet and assess applicants timely in order to advise on the choice of an institution, and on the necessary enrolment procedures.

*13.3 In cases where DTT and mentor(s) conclude that the applicant for theological studies has the potential to successfully complete the programme but lacks basic competencies, to enable the student to follow a supportive programme that is determined by the DTT.*

*Grounds:*

- Applicants from a disadvantaged educational background may not satisfy the set standards for enrolment at a specific university. Yet, the Lord may encourage learners to aim for training for the ministry. Such learners should be guided in such a way that it becomes clear whether they have the ability to successfully complete the training programme both academically and spiritually.
- Congregations should inform young brothers about the possibility of a supportive programme so that aspiring applicants are not discouraged from the outset.
- The decision on a supportive programme should be taken after the applicant has been psychometrically tested and interviewed by Deputies. Deputies will regularly assess the learner's progress and advise the student accordingly.

*13.4 In special circumstances, to consider adaptations of this trajectory to fit the particular needs of a student.*

*Recommendation:*

- The adopted trajectory is the normal route that a student who applies for admission to the programme, will follow. Such applications are usually submitted after the applicant has completed his school education. The trajectory should not be viewed as a 'one size fits all' solution to theological training that has to serve the FRCSA in its multi-cultural and complex socio-economic contexts.
- However, DTT should make sure that the outcome standard of the different programmes should be as equal as possible. Adaptations should therefore aim at enabling students to attain the highest levels.
- Deputies should consider an adapted trajectory in cases such as:
  - Students who have completed at least a B Degree should be allowed to enrol at BibleMesh for Greek I-III and Hebrew I-III. This is in line with requirements from CRTS.
  - Applicants who are near completion of an MDiv at an institution that is not supported by the FRCSA or its sister-churches abroad, and who request advice for supplementary training, must be guided as follows:
    - ✓ Deputies request the applicant to submit records of the study programme, curriculum and theological content of his previous studies.

- ✓ Deputies determine how far the MDiv programme that the applicant followed, covered the Profile and Outcomes for theological training, set by FRCSA Synod 2006. Deputies do a 'gap analysis' between the existing theological level as well as the theological position of the applicant, and the theological levels and positions that are required by the FRCSA Profile of a Minister of the Word and the Spiritual Formation Plan.
  - ✓ Deputies conduct an in-depth discussion with the applicant in order to determine his motivation to join the theological training programme of the FRCSA, and his theological position and beliefs. Deputies may advise the applicant not to continue with his application.
  - ✓ The applicant is psychometrically tested.
- Based on the 'gap analysis' Deputies present a supplementary training package that has to be successfully completed by the applicant.
  - In both the 'gap analysis' and the design of the supplementary training package, Deputies will involve theologians from amongst others the FRCSA and CRTS, as well as the pastor and the elder of the applicant.
  - In cases where a brother who has not completed his MDiv studies or has completed it at an institution not supported by the churches, applies to classis for an examination, and classis subsequently refers the brother to Deputies Theological Training, the same route will be followed.
  - Deputies and mentors will continuously assess progress of the student, if an adapted trajectory has been decided on, and advise accordingly.

*Grounds:*

- Brothers from the churches may decide on enrolling in the theological training programme at different stages in their lives. In each case Deputies must assess the potential of the applicant to complete the full programme.
- Applicants and students from different theological training institutions or programmes must be carefully considered as Deputies and the consistories have the duty to protect the churches against ministers with inadequate training or non-Reformed views.
- Deputies will do the assessment of students/applicants from different theological backgrounds in cooperation with pastors, elders and other deputies involved, as well as CRTS.
- Students on adapted trajectories are continuously assessed by DTT to ensure that they have a satisfactory learning ability and grow spiritually in the Reformed theology and tradition. In all cases the mentor is informed about the programme adaptation.

*13.5 In collaboration with CRTS to implement on-line or distance education as offered by CRTS for students who are legitimately prevented from travelling to CRTS. DTT must support students who follow on-line or hybrid models of tuition through mentors to ensure that such students are not disadvantaged by the on-line or hybrid model.*

*Grounds:*

- CRTS started on-line tuition during Covid 19 and developed a distance education model. The seminary is also developing an on-line training programme for students who cannot

travel from their country. CRTS accepted the following guideline for the use of on-line tuition: in-class tuition as much as possible, on-line as much as is needed.

- Experience over the years has shown that the context and circumstances of South African students may change, and that on-line tuition may be required. The responsibility for such decisions are with CRTS in consultation with Deputies Theological Training.
- It is generally agreed that in-class tuition is far preferable to on-line, as the spiritual formation, peer development and participation in group discussions is more effective in an in-class situation. Furthermore, it is beneficial to South African students to be out of our country for some time and experience the ecclesiastical and socio-cultural contexts in Canada.
- Decisions on on-line tuition are taken on individual basis, in consultation with Deputies Theological Training and mentors, and reviewed annually.

*13.6 To continue to investigate the potential of establishing an educational hub in South Africa where students can receive adequate supervision in the local community, using a hybrid model. These investigations should be done in consultation with CRTS.*

*Grounds:*

In the short-to-medium term the FRCSA federation is too small to establish a hub, and it does not have the funds to appoint a lecturer. There is also uncertainty about future student numbers. Yet, times may come that a local educational hub becomes necessary, and Deputies should be prepared for such a situation.

*13.7 To investigate, within the parameters set by previous Synods, new developments in theological education in South Africa which may benefit the FRCSA in the medium to long-term, such as the 'Gereformeerde Teologiese Akademie' (Reformed Theological Academy).*

*Grounds:*

- Undergraduate studies should take place at institutions that are known for maintaining international academic standards.
- Studying at these institutions will keep avenues open for students to change their career development, in case they cannot or do not want to continue their theological studies. One example is obtaining a post-graduate diploma in education, which will enable students to opt for a career in school teaching.
- A number of institutions offer BTh, and sometimes MDiv degrees independently or facilitating overseas seminaries. Deputies are still convinced that these institutions do not fulfil the needs of a solid Reformed theological education. The GTA has assessed a number of theological colleges in South Africa and came to a similar conclusion.
- Deputies are aware of risks at certain institutions, with regard to liberal theological views of lecturers. For that reason students should be carefully mentored by a (Free) Reformed theologian/minister.
- Deputies realise that the future character of the GTA will have a significant impact on the RCSA and therefore DTT should remain informed about the GTA's development and participate in the forums that aim at the improvement of the GTA.

- Deputies call upon the FRCSA churches to pray that the Lord bless the developments with regard to the GTA, to ensure that RCSA theological students are trained in accordance with Scripture, the Confessions and the highest possible standards, both academic and spiritual..

*13.8 To assess the appropriateness of BTh studies as an undergraduate programme on a case-to-case basis*

*Grounds:*

- BTh programmes generally offer less attention to the Biblical languages than BA programmes. A BA degree consists of concentrated studies that optimise the student's language skills.
- Deputies remain convinced that the current programme consisting of a BA Languages degree followed by four year MDiv at CRTS is providing more opportunity for the development of students' language skills, while also providing for thorough theological studies. However, BTh studies cannot be completely refuted, as students may have no option for BA languages.

*13.9 To continue an appropriate mentorship program during the period 2024-27.*

*Considerations:*

- Mentorships in South Africa should continue. Local ministers should remain available for this role. It is recommended that the monthly book discussions continue.
- Mentorships and internships under the MDiv programme remain the full responsibility of CRTS, who may appoint a South African mentor for on-line students. Deputies will be consulted if an internship takes place in South Africa.

*Grounds:*

- Undergraduate students need continuous spiritual and academic support to ensure that they grow in theology and spirituality towards the ministry.
- Students remain vulnerable at most South African educational institutions, as amongst others liberal views are also voiced in the language training.
- Deputies accept the mentorships and internships that are part of the CRTS MDiv programme. Past arrangements functioned highly satisfactorily.

*13.10 To initiate the organisation of annual pastors' conferences.*

*Grounds:*

- The annual pastors' conference is a much-needed opportunity for pastors and students to engage around theological and ecclesial subjects. These conferences can be viewed as part of life-long learning in the ministry.
- The geographical and cultural distances between congregations tend to increase isolation and undermines the theological and ecclesial unity that is necessary for the federation.

*13.11 To collaborate closely with Deputies Needy Students (CO Art 19) in order to determine the level of financial support for theological students. Deputies Art 19 will consist of an independent deputy/ies and the treasurer from Deputies Theological Training.*

*Grounds:*

- In principle the separation of the two Deputyships is necessary for clean management and protection of separate mandates.
- Deputies Theological Training deal with the management and organisation of training in the churches. Deputies Needy Students deal with applications for funding support.
- In practice the separation is rather artificial, and if strictly adhered to, time-consuming. The collaboration between the two Deputyships should be realised through regular communication and joined meetings.
- On the agenda of the joined meetings the financial matters of both deputyships should be mentioned and discussed separately. Minutes of the meetings should reflect the separate discussions and the outcomes.
- Synod 2021 appointed the Treasurer of DTT also as a Deputy Art 19 to ensure efficient cooperation. The proposed process worked out effectively.
- The Treasurer keeps separate financial accounts and books for both Deputyships.

*13.12 To promote theological training among all FRCSA churches.*

*Considerations:*

Deputies must promote theological training among all FRCSA churches in the following ways:

- Promote theological training among all churches, and not only for selected individuals.
- Churches must be informed on developments in the training, they must be requested to pray for the training and the students, and they must contribute to the realisation of the training programme through the synod assessments.
- Consistories should identify brothers whom they think should consider theological studies and encourage them to contact Deputies. This can happen through attendance of the annual information session or on an individual basis.
- Through annual information sessions to which young brothers and their parents from all congregations are invited.
- The dissemination of the brochure “Theological Training in the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa/Teologiese Opleiding in the Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika”.
- Deputies should organise guest public lectures to which all interested people are invited. Guest lecturers from sister-churches can present public lectures in the churches. These lectures enable church members to engage with, amongst others, the professors, and taste something of the teaching at the CRTS. The lectures should be broadcasted through the relevant congregations’ internet channel. Summaries of the lectures should be published in relevant publications.

- Deputies will maintain regular contact with Deputies Churches Abroad of the FRCA and the CanRC, and with CRTS. Deputies submit annual reports to deputies of sister churches who provide funding. In addition, Deputies will submit articles on our theological training and students to magazines of the sister-churches.

*Grounds:*

- The principle is that theological training in the FRCSA is for the churches, by the churches and under supervision of the churches. Deputies must serve the Lord to build His church according to Scripture and the Forms of Unity. For that reason Deputies must inform the churches about all aspects of theological training.
- Guest lectures are important means of disseminating knowledge about theological training, and prevent the isolation of theological studies and students from the churches. Guest lectures are also important to build the faith of members of the church, as usually matters that deal with Christian life are presented and discussed in-depth.
- Deputies should show their appreciation and thankfulness to the sister-churches for their support in prayer and finances. Churches should be encouraged to pray for the sister-churches. In this way the unity of Christ's church world-wide is promoted to his honour.

*13.13 To levy the churches as follows: For 2025: R200 000 For 2026: R200 000 For 2027: R200 000 For 2028: R200 000.*

*Grounds:*

- Real costs of theological training
- Proposed budget for 2024-27
- In view of financial support by sister-churches abroad

*13.14 To complete the registration of theological training as an NPC, including registration as an Public Benefit Organisation Art 18A institution*

*Grounds:*

- The South African government has made the registration of all educational providers as an NPC compulsory.
- Registration as an Art 18A institution allows donors to deduct a percentage of their donation from their annual tax.

*13.15 To submit an interim report for discussion during an Indaba to be held approximately halfway between Synod 2024 and the next Synod.*

*Grounds:*

- The three-year timespan between synods may cover significant developments in the churches. To ensure that all Deputies and churches are informed about these developments, halfway the three-year period an Indaba will be held, at which Deputies present an interim report on their activities.



## Addendum A: The Gereformeerde Teologiese Akademie (GTA, Reformed Theological Academy)

### Background

Synod 2021 Belhar of the FRCSA mandated its Deputies Theological Training as follows (Art. 45 of Acts):

To investigate, within the parameters set by previous Synods, new developments in theological education in South Africa which may benefit the FRCSA in the medium to long-term, such as the 'Gereformeerde Teologiese Akademie' (Reformed Theological Academy).

Deputies Theological Training of the FRCSA met with delegates from RCSA curators and Prof Britz on 25 November 2021 and 2 June 2022, and with Prof Britz on 5 February 2024 for mutual consultation. Relevant publications were consulted, although little information appears in the public domain. Even the RCSA General Synod 2023 Acts provide summary information.

The longstanding agreement between the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA) and the NWU will terminate on 31 December 2026. The General Synod 2023 accepted the establishment of the Gereformeerde Teologiese Akademie (Synod Acts 2023: <https://gksa.org.za/sinode-2023/> See Curators report to Synod).

The Academy is in the process to register as a Private Higher Education Institution with the Department of Higher Education and Training. It is also in the final stages to submit a Higher Certificate in Reformed Theology to the Council of Higher Education for accreditation. Both processes will be completed in the next four months. The GTA will protect the principle that the training of ministers of the Word will be conducted by the office. The offering of the GTA is not limited to the RCSA.

Prof Dolf Britz has been appointed principal. He is responsible for the day to day management of the Institution, as well as the accreditation and registration processes. The GTA is utilizing the theological library and building in Potchefstroom, which are the property of the Admin Bureau of the RCSA. The GTA has established an agreement to share the facilities of AROS. All academic activities are supported by the Reformational Study Centre's library.

### Post-2023 synod developments

1. The Memorandum of Incorporation was finalized in 2023.
2. Curators have appointed a Board of Directors, currently consisting of curators. In future non-theologian directors may be appointed to ensure legal and business capacity on the Board. All Directors are required - to sign the Formularies of Unity.
3. The first submission for accreditation of a programme is the Higher Certificate in Reformed Theology, which focuses on ministers of the Word.
4. The final year students enroll with the GTA for a non-accredited Certificate.

5. It is envisaged that the BDiv will be accredited in 2025 and the post-graduate Diploma in 2026
6. Prof Britz was appointed as Principal of GTA.
7. Lecturers must subscribe to the 3 Ecumenical Confessions and the 3 Reformed Confessions and accept the Code of conduct. They must also be bound to a local church and be qualified at a Doctoral degree level. According to the synod assessments, the GTA can afford three full-time lecturers currently.
8. The GTA educational structure is based on the traditional four components: Biblical, Confessional (Dogmatics), Ecclesiological and ministerial subjects.
9. The degree-structure will ultimately consist of a Higher Certificate in Reformed Theology, a BTh (4 years) and a Post-Graduate Diploma. The GTA emphasizes that international standards will be applied throughout the qualifications.
10. Two campuses are envisaged: in Pretoria and Potchefstroom.
11. An agreement has been reached with the Reformational Study Centre to provide library services in the form of a study collection *in situ* and online, including access to prescribed books.
12. Dr Gerard Meijer, former chair of curators, has recently been appointed as part-time lecturer Church Polity.
13. Currently the GTA teaches 12 final year students.

#### **Observations:**

1. Notice is taken of pro and contra views on the GTA, which have emerged in the RCSA.
2. Currently the NWU has 12 RCSA called employees in theology of whom 8 are paid for 50% by the churches.
3. The GTA organizational model includes an Advisory Committee, but this has not yet started functioning.
4. In 2024 only 3 RCSA candidate students registered for the BDiv, within the NWU Faculty of Theology.
5. Since RCSA synod 2018 very little has been published on the GTA in the public domain.
6. From articles in die Kerkblad it appears that some disagreement about the registration of GTA exists.

#### **Views of Deputies Theological Training:**

- Deputies thank the Lord the establishment of the GTA as an educational institution that is governed by the churches for the churches, and which teaches according to the Ecumenical Creeds and the three Formularies of Unity.
- Deputies believe that the development of the GTA can positively contribute to the reformational movement within the RCSA, but this depends on: the content of the training as truly reformational, the appointment of lecturers and the curators appointing them.
- Deputies have expressed their interest in further consultations on theological training for the RCSA, and will support the GTA initiative within the limits of their own mandates and capacity.

- Deputies realise that the full implementation of educational planning and accreditation of the GTA will most likely take some years, and they will remain informed about developments.
- Deputies advise the GTA team and curators to publish much more widely in the church press about the GTA to ensure that the churches remain informed on developments. The latter would include the underlying debates and tensions between various viewpoints on the GTA.

## Addendum B: Matrix of students

Matrix of FCRC Students 2019 to 2029																																	
Ten Year study plan		Current Year 2019		Year 1 2020			Year 2 2021			Year 3 2022			Year 4 2023			Year 5 2024			Year 6 2025			Year 7 2026			Year 8 2027			Year 9 2028			Year 10 2029		
Mentors	Students Determine specific Traject	Studies			PTP	Studies			PTP	Studies			PTP	Studies			PTP	Studies			PTP	Studies			PTP	Studies			PTP	Studies			PTP
		2019	2020	2021		2022	2023	2024		2025	2026	2027		2028	2029																		
Rev Pieter Boon & Piet Magabul	1 <i>Rofhiwa Ramphabana (determine Traject with</i>	BibleMesh	SA Mdiv to Dec	Assitant Pastor	SA Mdiv to Aug	CRTS Sept to Dec	Completed	Examined by	Classis																								
Rev Johan Bruintjes	2 <i>Jakob Mars</i>	BibleMesh	BibleMesh		BibleMesh Aug	CRTS 1 Sept	CRTS 2 Sept		CRTS 3																								
Rev Erik van Alten	3 <i>Jonatan Boon</i>	UP Year 1	UP Year 2		UP Year 3	CRTS 1 Sept	CRTS 1 Sept		CRTS 2																								
Rev Pieter Boon	4 <i>Arjan v d Meer</i>	Bdiv Year 2	Bdiv Year 3		Bdiv Year 4	CRTS 1 Sept	CRTS 1 Sept		CRTS 2																								
Rev Johan Bruintjes	5 <i>Marco van Reussen</i>	USB Year 1	USB Year 2		USB Year 3	CRTS 1 Sept	CRTS 1 Sept		CRTS 2																								
Rev Erik van Alten	6 <i>Arco Klapwijk</i>	Grade 12			APK Year 1	APK 2	APK 2		APK 3																								
Rev Johan Bruintjes	7 <i>Albert Bijker</i>	Unisa	Unisa		Unisa	Unisa Bible/Mesh			BibleMesh																								
<i>Possible students to join the program</i>																																	
Rev Dirk Mauritz Boersma(TBC)	7 <i>Christopher Hlongwane</i>																																
Rev Dirk Mauritz Boersma(TBC)	8 <i>Sibusiso Sihole</i>																																
<i>Projected new students to join the program</i>																																	
	<i>AnOther 1</i>																																
	<i>AnOther 2</i>																																
	<i>AnOther 3</i>																																
	<i>AnOther 4</i>																																
	<i>AnOther 5</i>																																
<i>Projected Student Numbers</i>																																	
	<i>Trajectory A Example</i>				Languages Year 1		Languages Year 2		Languages Year 3		CRTS 1		CRTS 2		CRTS 3		CRTS 4		CRTS 4 end July		Complete												
	<i>Trajectory B Example</i>				Languages Year 1		Languages Year 2		Languages Year 3		MDiv 1 SA		MDiv 2 SA		MDiv 3 SA		MDiv 4 SA Dec		CRTS Sept		CRTS 4 end May		Complete										
	Number of Students SA	7	7		7		7		6		8		8		9		7		7		5		5		4		2		2		2		
	Number of Students CRTS	0	1		2		4		4		6		5		5		2		5		4		2		2		2		2		2		
	Number of Students PTP	0	7		7		6		6		6		7		4		4		2		3		3		2		2		2		2		
	Number of Students 6 Months Program before CRTS																																
	Number of students Trajectory A	4	7		7		7		6		8		7		7		4		2		3		3		2		2		2		2		
	Number of students Trajectory B																																
	Students Completed to do Classis Exam										1																						
	Reverents received a Call																																

## Addendum C: Brochure on Theological Training

***Do you consider studying theology in order to become a minister of the Word? Did others recommend you to consider such studies?***



**Theological Training in the  
Free Reformed Churches in South Africa**

*"It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service ..." (Ephesians 4: 11, 12)*

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**This brochure provides you with basic information on theological training in the FRCSA in cooperation with the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary**

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### **Jesus Christ calls brothers to proclaim His Word**

Our Lord Jesus Christ in his grace uses the ministry of the Word so that the body of Christ may be built up. For that purpose He wants His church to encourage brothers to be trained and prepared as shepherds who gather and strengthen his flock through the proclamation of his Word and pastoral care.

### **Deputies Theological Training are responsible for delivery of theological training**

Synods of the FRCSA have mandated Deputies Theological Training for curriculum development, implementation and quality assurance in theological training.

Our theological training programme consists of BA Degree studies in South Africa followed by the MDiv that is offered by the **Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (CRTS)** of our sister-churches in Canada. In addition, **visiting guest lecturers** are used for specific parts of the curriculum. **Mentors** provide guidance and practical training in the FRCSA churches.

### **Admission requirements and application process**

Prospective students apply for admission to the programme as follows:

1. Submission of their National Senior Certificate with an APS according to the requirement of the local university where the student will study for his BA degree. Gr 11 learners can provide their latest results.
2. Submission of a completed enrolment form "Notice of Intention for Theological Studies", including a motivation letter from the applicant.
3. Submission of a recommendation letter from the applicant's consistory which confirms that the applicant has the right aptitude and Christian life.
4. Deputies Theological Training have a discussion with the prospective student on his motivation and prospects.
5. Deputies Theological Training arrange for psychometric aptitude, personality and learning ability tests to estimate whether the student will be able to complete the studies. If Deputies Theological Training are satisfied, they will recommend, in consultation with the mentors, a study programme and educational institution that fits the student's circumstances. Learners before Gr 12 will receive advice and support.

6. Student enrolls with the selected institution for the BA Degree phase of his studies, with assistance of the Administrator.

**NB: Applicants must submit their application before 15 January of the year preceding their first study year.**

### **Selection of Study Programme**

Students must follow the following study programme. (See [www.vgk.org.za/sinode](http://www.vgk.org.za/sinode), Acts Synod FRCSA 2017, Article 52, for complete text):

Three years BA (with Hebrew III, Greek III and Latin 1 compulsory, English recommended) at an accredited tertiary education institution (university) close to a FRCSA congregation. If the prospective student already has a B Degree he can follow an approved on-line language course for the same languages. The BA study is followed by a four year MDiv course at the CRTS in Hamilton, Canada. The CRTS programme includes FRCSA-specific courses offered in South Africa, and a practical training program (PTP) during the summer holidays, under responsibility of CRTS and Deputies and with local pastors as mentors.

A Toefl language competency test in English must be passed for admission to CRTS.

### **Funding opportunities for students**

The responsibility for funding of the studies begins with the student and his parents. If additional funding is required, Deputies Needy Students can be approached. Students are recommended to apply for a National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) bursary for their BA studies.

### **Contact details for additional information**

Chairman Deputies Theological Training: Br R Meeske, tel. 083 627 6713; email: [Ronald@uxi.edu.co.za](mailto:Ronald@uxi.edu.co.za);  
Deputies Art 19 Needy Students: Ernst van Vondel, tel. 082 458 3148; email: [evvondel@powergrp.co.za](mailto:evvondel@powergrp.co.za)  
Enquiries and information on programmes, academic institutions and requirements: Br G Hagg, tel. 0825606209; email: [ghagg99@gmail.com](mailto:ghagg99@gmail.com)  
Administrator: Mrs C Hagg, tel 0832716338; email: [corahagg@yahoo.com](mailto:corahagg@yahoo.com).

## Addendum D: Financial Statements 2020-23

### Theological Training

#### Income and expenses for the period 01.01.2023 until 31.12.2023

		2023	Budget - 2023	2022	2021	2020
<b>Income</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>1 895 584</b>	<b>1 102 000</b>	<b>542 622</b>	<b>1 048 494</b>	<b>1 433 793</b>
Income from Churches		200 917	200 000	197 259	197 258	670 264
Income from Australia		1 909 733	900 000	321 819	744 797	752 103
Income from Australia transferred to Art 19		-300 000				
Donation		23 000	-	5 000	100 000	-
Interest earned		61 934	2 000	18 544	6 439	5 624
Rental income - Bethal		-	-	-	-	5 802
<b>Expenses</b>		<b>150 501</b>	<b>364 249</b>	<b>195 517</b>	<b>664 773</b>	<b>1 975 782</b>
<b>Lecturers cost</b>		<b>71 346</b>	<b>183 657</b>	<b>121 840</b>	<b>659 328</b>	<b>1 590 143</b>
Ds vd Linden		71 346	183 657	121 840	146 208	144 828
Ds Breytenbach	1	-	-	-	513 120	1 445 314
Ds Breytenbach - Retirement contributions	2	-	-	-	-	300 000
Rental - Ds Breytenbach's housing fund		-	-	-	-	70 249
<b>Travel</b>		<b>34 662</b>	<b>48 328</b>	<b>40 107</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Guest Lecturers	3	34 662	39 592	35 339	-	-
Curators	4	-	8 736	4 768	-	-
Pastors conference		30 129	36 575	-	-	-
Lectures cost		1 174	31 350	506	-	6 437
Administration cost		-	62 700	144	-	-
Assessments	5	8 568	-	31 567	3 780	-
Video/Sound equipment	6	-	-	-	-	7 200
Bank Charges	7	4 621	1 639	1 353	1 665	1 753
<b>Surplus / (shortage)</b>		<b>1 745 083</b>	<b>737 751</b>	<b>347 105</b>	<b>383 721</b>	<b>-541 989</b>
<b>Bank Balances as at 1 January</b>		<b>502 751</b>	<b>502 751</b>	<b>155 646</b>	<b>-228 075</b>	<b>-346 087</b>
01.01. Opening Balance Bank Account		59 106	59 106	-332 868	-233 150	-350 538
01.01. Opening Balance Investment		443 645	443 645	488 513	5 075	4 451
<b>Bank Balances as at 31 December</b>		<b>1 527 834</b>	<b>1 238 502</b>	<b>502 751</b>	<b>155 646</b>	<b>-228 075</b>
31.12. Closing Balance Bank Account		1 523 140	794 857	59 106	-332 868	-233 150
31.12. Closing Balance Investment		4 694	443 645	443 645	488 513	5 075

#### Notes:

- The cost towards Ds Breytenbach increased significantly since 2019 as Mission Deputies decreased their share of the cost towards Ds Breytenbach from 40% as agreed in the Agreement of Cooperation (7 October 2016) to 20% in 2019 and 0% in 2020. Ds Breytenbach went with pension at the end of June 2021. The contributions have been included in the budget for cashflow purposes. The payments made to date have been deducted from the balance in the balance sheet.
- Once off retirement contributions to ensure Ds Breytenbach retirement funds is on the required level as per "emeriteringskommissie".
- Flights and accommodation for Prof J Smith visit during July 2022.
- Flights and accommodation for Jakob Mars and his family from Cape Town to Johannesburg for his internship with ds van Alten
- Increase due to Talent assessment for Jonatan Boon done in the Netherlands. Also includes psychometric test for A Bijker.
- Fees charged by Sytze Visser for his work on the lecturers recordings - ended in August 2020.
- Increase in bank charges due to international payments to CRTS.

## Addendum E: 2024-27 Budget

### Theological Training

#### Budget - 2023 to 2026

		In South African Rands			
		Budget - 2024	Budget - 2025	Budget - 2026	Budget - 2027
		202 000	202 000	202 000	202 000
<b>Income</b>					
Synod allocation	1	200 000	200 000	200 000	200 000
Income from the FRCA	2	900 000	900 000	900 000	900 000
Income from the FRCA to Art 19		-900 000	-900 000	-900 000	-900 000
Interest earned		2 000	2 000	2 000	2 000
		<b>157 958</b>	<b>176 670</b>	<b>184 260</b>	<b>192 191</b>
<b>Expenses</b>					
Mentorship		-	-	-	-
Assessments	3	-	8 000	8 000	8 000
Administration cost		65 522	72 074	75 317	78 706
<b>Travel</b>		50 503	52 776	55 151	57 632
Guest Lecturers	4	41 374	43 236	45 181	47 214
Deputies Theological Training		9 129	9 540	9 969	10 418
Pastors conference		38 221	39 941	41 738	43 616
Lectures cost	5	2 000	2 090	2 184	2 282
Bank Charges		1 712	1 789	1 870	1 954
		<b>44 042</b>	<b>25 330</b>	<b>17 740</b>	<b>9 809</b>
<b>Surplus / (shortage)</b>					
		<b>1 827 834</b>	<b>1 871 876</b>	<b>1 897 207</b>	<b>1 914 947</b>
<b>Opening Bank Balances</b>					
Opening Balance Bank Account		1 823 140	1 865 182	1 888 513	1 904 253
Opening Balance Investment		4 694	6 694	8 694	10 694
		<b>1 871 876</b>	<b>1 897 207</b>	<b>1 914 947</b>	<b>1 924 756</b>
<b>Closing Bank Balances</b>					
Closing Balance Bank Account		1 865 182	1 888 513	1 904 253	1 912 062
Closing Balance Investment		6 694	8 694	10 694	12 694

#### Notes:

- Contributions as approved by Synod.
- Income (target) from our sister churches in Australia are contributions for both DTT and Art 19.
- Cost towards psychometric tests before students commence with their studies to ensure compatability.
- Guest lecturers usually from CRTS, but also elsewhere. From 2024 onwards, these would only occur once every +/-2 years as requested by CRTS.
- Cost for organising lectures for students in July and November.
- The synod is advised to view the two deputyships Financial Statements and Budgets in the combined Income Statement and Budgets.

## **Addendum F: Memorandum of Incorporation: Teologiese Skool van die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke NPC**

This Mol is separately attached.



## **Addendum G: Memorandum of Understanding between the CRTS and Deputies Theological Training of the FRCSA**

This MoU is separately attached