Diploma in Christian Primary Education (DCBO)
'Three in One'

Knowledge Base

Core Objectives

Assessment Framework

Besturenraad has become Verus. With the new name comes a new corporate identity. It is therefore that, from the moment on that Verus is introduced on May 21th 2014, 'Three in one' is published under the new name and with the new 'look and feel'.

Foreword

Christian education stands or falls by the way teachers provide structure and content in the classroom. That calls for not only the necessary training but also targeted reflection which fully supports teachers in studying for the DCBO (Diploma in Christian Primary Education). The Besturenraad undertakes various activities on behalf of all Christian schools to ensure the quality of the DCBO is maintained at a good level and that training institutes continue to create sound content. This content is, of course, tailor-made and leads happily to much diversity in practice.

A process of visitation and accreditation, facilitated by the Besturenraad, ensures mutual reflection and inspiration. The assessment framework and the description of the knowledge base and core objectives offer support – support that is not intended to remove the authority of the various content that the training is seen to give in practice.

I hope that this framework provides teachers with a solid and contemporary foundation to deliver, once more, good content to present-day Christian education.

Wim Kuiper, Chairman Besturenraad

Explanation about the purpose of this publication

This brochure consists of three separate documents with a shared cohesion. When the DCBO visitation cycle of 2006-2010 expired, it was time to revise the assessment framework. It was also time to develop both the core objectives and the religion/philosophy knowledge base in Protestant-Christian primary education, and that was done in 2011. Both are important building blocks for working with the new assessment framework.

The documents are also to be found on the Besturenraad's website. Since each of the three documents has its own objective, target group and group of authors, each document has its own introduction. The style and layout is also different, but cohesion as regards content has been sought. That cohesion consists of aligning the practical aspects of (education) training with the focus on the tradition established in the DCBO, also with regard to educational, pedagogical and theological accountabilities.

The knowledge base in this edition is a summary; the full version is available on the Besturenraad's website (www.besturenraad.nl/dcbo). Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the creation of this edition, whether as a participant of an ad hoc advisory group, a DCBO conference, the teacher training (PABO) network or as a member of the visitation committee and the DCBO committee and so on.

Elza Kuyk, Secretary to the DCBO

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Religion/Ideology Knowledge Base
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Editorial

Since 2008, a 'knowledge base' for each subject has been developed for teacher training in primary education. A knowledge base is the description of the minimum knowledge a teacher must have acquired by the end of his or her training in order to start work as an independent professional in primary education. In light of this, the DCBO Committee decided to create a knowledge base for the focus area Religion/Ideology (RI).

What legitimises a separate RI focus in Christian primary education and which concepts characterise it? And what does a teacher who instructs in the focus area at school need in terms of knowledge and skills? The answers to those questions, which have been provided by stakeholders in RI in Christian education, are now much less consistent than before. When it comes to the nature and content of this focus area, it doesn't take long to bring up its many different themes and aspects: life questions, meaning, relationships, personal development, humanity, reflection, the formation of a community of values, moral education, religious upbringing, Bible knowledge, knowledge of ideologies, religion, religion in society, social issues, ethics, didactics and so on.

In the Dutch edition of this document, the account of the knowledge base differs from the one we present here. This version has been compiled according to the model used to describe other subjects.

Woerden, August 2012

The Religion/Ideology Knowledge Base for Protestant-Christian Primary Education Working Group

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Introduction

Knowledge Base for Religion/Ideology in the Pedagogical Academy for Primary Education (PABO)

Importance of the subject

The focus area of Religion/Ideology (RI) is significant for the development of religious consciousness and the ideological development of pupils in Protestant-Christian and inter-denominational primary education. At the heart of RI is giving pupils sight of and insight into spiritual questions within an inspired context and presenting them with words, stories, images, symbols and rituals with which they learn to associate.

RI focuses not only on related areas such as History and Spiritual Movements but also on the transfer of cultural heritage, the adoption of cultural and moral values and standards, and the development of social commitment. In this way, RI contributes to the moulding of pupils' identities and lets them participate in the world in which they live.

RI has a specific perspective in this respect. RI is about the real lives of people in the light of transcendence. In a religious sense, we call this God.

A: Characteristics of RI

Narrative – People express their existence in stories. In RI, pupils not only create their own stories, but also listen to and study other stories. This presents a reality that does not coincide with their own stories. Most Christian schools want to give their pupils a meaningful interpretation of their lives and of reality using the tradition of Christian stories. Pupils get ample opportunity during the educational process to attribute their own significance to the reality these stories evoke.

Participatory – In RI, pupils are stimulated in terms of not only their cognitive skills but also their religious sensibility and critical mind. RI aims to involve pupils in and bind them to an inspired context, a reality that transcends them. The teacher helps pupils, in creative ways, to connect their life stories to what interests them and to learn for their future from the encouragement, guidance and criticism, as well as the familiar and unfamiliar, that they encounter.

Communicative – Educating pupils in religion is not only about participating in and learning to describe (religious) practices, but also communicating with each other about what pupils have learnt and experienced. This stimulates the creativity of the joint search for and experience of sense and meaning. Depending on the context, the teacher also gives pupils the opportunity to make multiple interpretations in their religious/ideological education.

Responsive – RI is not a subject that accepts a non-committal position; pupils have to provide answers. It poses questions such as: what's the meaning of this, what can I do with this and what should I do with this? RI connects students to the discovered meaning and significance of
(a) their own existence (in self-confidence and critical self-awareness),
(b) life with others (from a critical distance and in empathy and solidarity),
(c) the world (learning to contribute to its well-being yet keeping a critical distance), and
(d) the spiritual dimension of life (through contemplation or the expression of gratitude).

**B: Concepts: existence, transcendence and the world**

RI is, in essence, about thematising human life (*existence*) in the light of a reality that transcends human life (*transcendence*). That does not happen in the abstract but in the pupil's *world*, and pupils are provided with a sense of purpose, meaning and bonding.

There are three connected core concepts of RI in the knowledge base, namely:
1. Expressing existential experiences
2. Appreciating and experiencing transcendence
3. Understanding and being involved in the world in which we live and of which we are a part.

This knowledge base considers these concepts from the perspective of both the student teacher in training and the pupil in primary education.

If student teachers want to be able to teach pupils RI, they should have an active involvement in and curiosity for ideological questions and answers in the context of their own environment, society and Christian and maybe other religious/ideological traditions.
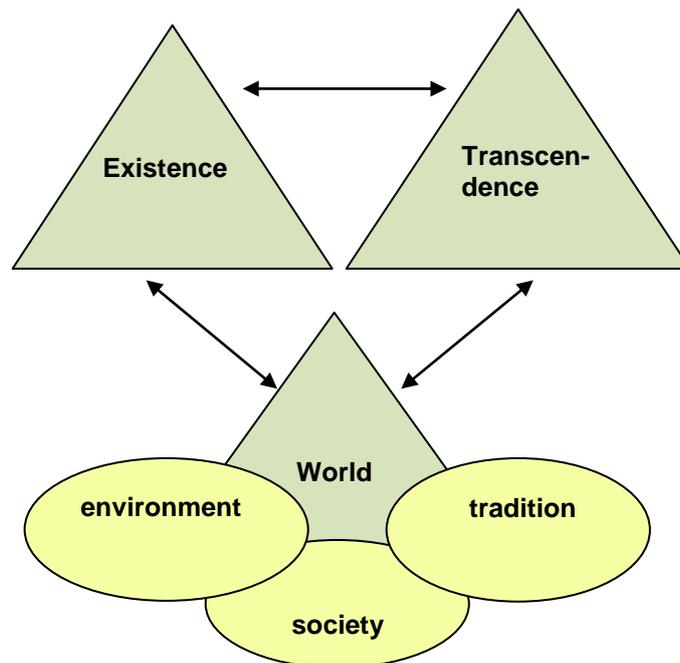
Human existence

Human existence is characterised by a duality of needing autonomy and self-expression and needing to bond with and be recognised by others. People experience life as a conflict between freedom and dependence, possibility and limitation, strength and vulnerability, good and evil, and blessing and adversity. RI sets out to identify and comprehend this conflict and, where possible, to endure and transcend it.

The thematisation and reflection of human existence is applied by raising and setting 'fundamental questions' - questions with which we are confronted but cannot find a simple answer to and that arise in situations where the unpredictability of life (contingency) makes itself felt. These are

situations where we lose control (connected with experiences of finiteness, uncontrollability and impotence) or are surprised (connected with experiences of fascination, joy and gratitude). It is not about brief experiences but about experiences that have a lasting significance for us and that we either resist or accept.

Student teachers develop a form of sensitivity for meaningful existential experiences so that they can respond adequately. It is important that students, as teachers, remain open to the answers of existential questions raised by the pupils or by themselves. These answers allow pupils to experience certainty and tolerate uncertainty, they shed light on meaning and they cater to their perspective. That happens frequently if pupils participate in meaningful activities. These activities allow the teacher to:

- awaken the pupils' interest in fundamental questions and reflect with the pupils on these questions (dimension of the head).
- offer pupils the opportunity to express their feelings of joy and grief, strengths and weaknesses, deficiencies and excesses and to share and bestow their confidence (dimension of the heart)
- help pupils to give sustainable, meaningful 'answers' to their daily lives (dimension of the hand).

Transcendence
In Protestant-Christian education, RI allows pupils to become involved in transcendence, a reality that rises above human beings and is independent of them. This reality offers human beings a home, a place of security, but at the same time cuts across the familiar and presents itself as different to and alien to everyday reality.

People encounter questions that give them a desire for answers that offer perspective and prospects. We respond in different ways to transcendence that presents itself in such a way. In Protestant-Christian education, this familiarisation with transcendence has its own characteristics:

- We respond *with feeling*: we bond affectively with transcendence (religiously speaking: we walk with God, are focused on our fellow man). Due to the transcendence, we experience our deficiencies, let go of the familiar, resist and surrender, experience dependency and acknowledge holiness. But, in that surrender, we also experience protection, find perspective, experience freedom and compassion for all that lives, feel connected to what transcends us and strengthen our (self-) confidence.

- We respond *with deeds*: we accept life and oppose that which threatens life, express ourselves creatively through living art, see perspective and live with expectation; we carry out acts of devotion; we put our lives to the service of others, fight for peace, freedom, justice and unity. In short: we commit to what is beneficial for humankind and the world.

Student teachers learn to keep an open mind about that which is provided by religious traditions especially and that which in reality presents itself as something surprisingly new. They also learn during their training to articulate their own view on life. In RI, the teacher not only gives pupils occasion to express a desire for transcendence but also makes transcendence present in stories and rituals and deeds. He or she does so in such as way that human existence is shown in a new light. The teacher directs the pupils' focus on what rises above them and pupils learn to open themselves up to what presents itself, what 'stimulates' them, what upholds their beliefs, what happens to them and what demands a response. In doing so, transcendence remains always a 'presence'.

Since RI also intends to contribute to the personal education of pupils regarding others, so that the justice is done to the pupil in his development and the rights of others are served, RI has in mind a concept of the good life (humanity, God and love thy neighbour ...).

Students will, among other things, be able to encounter and experience transcendence
• in their dealings with God/the divine/Christian tradition/the Bible
• in their search for individuality and inner peace
• in a number of 'critical' moments and rituals
• in meeting 'critical' others who, for them, are significant and guiding people
• in the sight of people that engage them
• in the world in which they live
• in the choices they make

The teacher helps pupils by indicating the source of these encounters and experiences.

The world
In the concept world, we can distinguish between the environment of the pupils, of society (of which pupils are a part) and of the traditions pupils come into contact with.

- Pupils live in a world that affects their ideological development. Relationships play a large role in the *world in which pupils live and have experiences*. These relationships and their interests form a part of their biographical story.
- Pupils are part of a *society* in which they encounter people who may not live within a religious framework. Society will influence greatly the way in which pupils undergo experiences regarding human existence and transcendence. Dominant characteristics of society are privatisation, globalisation, nationalisation, secularisation and economisation. RI places itself in the conflict between privatisation and the requirement for self-realisation and presented within an inspiring context.
- Pupils become familiar with aspects of the school's desired *ideological tradition* in an individual and subject-specific way. These aspects will sometimes be homogeneous, but often less clear-cut, now many people no longer derive their basic attitudes and beliefs from one tradition. This results in various views on life and behaviour, so the characteristic features of RI are to be given special consideration.
- Focus must be given to the place that tradition occupies. In Protestant-Christian schools, RI thematises Christian tradition using mainly attributes that belong to a religious tradition: sources (stories and persons), ideas (values and principles, life questions) and practices (manifestations).

Teachers should have knowledge of the children's environment, a view on the children's psychological/spiritual development, and insight into society and the dominant ideas within it. Teachers must also in their education be able to express the approach of the school to education and the education of pupils *and* pay due respect to the ideological tradition to which the school belongs.

They must be able to evaluate and clarify their environment, their relationships with society and the Christian tradition. They should have sufficient knowledge of Bible stories and their contextuality. They should recognise the dominant characteristics of society and have an understanding of the diversity of spiritual and political movements and forms of society. They should also have views about the relationship between Church and State. They should be able to consider the impact of

modern communication media on personality development and be able to analyse cultural, socio-economic, ideological, historical, geographic and global contexts.

Unique contribution Core concepts	Ideological development			Concepts
	Giving expression to existential experiences ▼	**Awareness & experience of transcendence** ▼	**Understanding of and involvement in the world** ▼	↓
	• Awareness of fundamental questions and enduring answers • Experiences of freedom and dependence, possibility and limitation, strength and vulnerability, good and evil, blessings and adversity	• Associating with God/Jesus/the Bible/the Christian tradition • Searching for a stillness of mind • Being amazed and confounded • Meeting 'critical' people and experiencing 'critical' moments • Learning to become enthused • Giving and depicting meaning • Participating in forms of gatherings and rituals • Making and justifying choices	• **Environment** Telling and developing (auto)biographical stories • **Society** - developing themselves personally and making choices - having social relationships - feeling responsible for others - associating with people that are different • **Christian tradition** Assigning meaning to the commonplace using Christian beliefs • **Other traditions** Identifying and appreciating similarities and differences between various Ideologies	• People share existential experiences. • RI focuses on past and present events and people presented as significant for humanity in the light of a biblical vision. • People assign, in turn, meaning to these events and people, reflect on them and philosophise, theologise and symbolise them. • RI is about connecting, bonding with what is greater than you. • People are faced with endorsing or rejecting this, in wonder and amazement, and responding with faith, hope and love. • RI is about personal development, and making choices in our personal, social, cultural and societal lives.
Central	**Content**	**Skills**		
	• Existential themes • Bible and other stories • Discussions • Rituals and celebrations • Actions	• Recounting • Assigning meaning • Conducting discussions • Orientating towards life questions and contrasting experiences • Encouraging responsible choices and obliging behaviour • Embracing celebrations		
Contexts	• Christian tradition • Inner life • Environment • Society • World perspective • Relationship with other faiths	• Using the Bible • Using symbols and rituals		

Planning learning material	• Thematic • Curricular	

C: View on ideological development and education

1. General

1.1 The student teacher can explain the specific contribution of RI to the development of the religious/ideological awareness of children on the basis of the three core concepts of RI (see 2.1).

1.2 The student teacher can explain how RI contributes to achieving the core goals of Protestant-Christian primary education.

2. Structure of the subject

2.1 The student teacher can explain the three core concepts of RI and their mutual relationship by giving examples:
- Core Concept 1. Expressing existential experiences
- Core Concept 2. Appreciating and experiencing transcendence
- Core Concept 3. Understanding and being involved in the world in which we live and take part.

2.2 The student teacher can articulate which didactical approaches belong to RI: narrative, communicative, participatory and responsive.

2.3 The student teacher can assign contextual thinking and religious meanings to stories. He or she can:
- indicate religious interpretations and actions (symbols/rites) as such
- place thoughts and opinions about mankind, the world and God in an historical and current perspective
- bear in mind that people's behaviour and ideas are determined by time, situation and background.

2.4 The student teacher can name attributes of the Christian tradition (sources, ideas and practices).

2.5 The student teacher can give meaning to the Christian tradition in the context of the children's environment and the society in which they live.

2.6 The student teacher can outline the structure of frequently used learning resources and connect these with learning trajectories and different didactical approaches.

3. The subject and the pupils

3.1 The student teacher can advance the religious/ideological development of children and attach importance to the school's tradition.

3.2 The student teacher can name common pre-conceived ideas of pupils in relation to religion.

3.3 The student teacher can realise the core goals of RI.

4. Cohesion with other subjects

4.1 The student teacher can explain how RI links to other domains, in particular in the field of 'Self Orientation & World Exploration' and the field of Arts. He or she can illustrate this with instructional examples.

4.2. The student teacher can indicate how the relationship with Spiritual Movements can be applied to various forms of Christian education.

D: Knowledge and skills of the teacher

1. General

1.1 The student teacher can describe common and innovative views on content and didactic approaches of RI and explain the intended learning and development gains in children. He/she can justify his/her point of view.

1.2 The student teacher can, within the framework of RI, carry out practice-based research into the forms of religious/ideological education, such as the significance of Bible stories, the role of celebration in school or the management of diversity.

2. Structure of the subject

2.1 The student teacher can organise RI learning material at school level to teach groups 1 to 8, taking into account the three core concepts of RI and the psychological insights of children's ideological development.

2.2 The student teacher can link educational material for RI with current events and with associated focus areas such as socio-emotional development, civic education, world orientation, cultural and artistic education and spiritual movements. He/she can give specific recognition in the annual programme to courses that link to RI, such as peace education or world animal day. He/she can design appropriate teaching material for this.

2.3. The student teacher treats source material responsibly, reveals those sources to pupils by placing them in their historical and literary context and, together with the pupils, give them meaning.

2.4 The student teacher can design a series of lessons which meet the objectives of RI within the framework of the school. He/she can also synchronise a subject with the school's environment and/or current events and focus on extracurricular activities.

2.5 The student teacher can put the views and expressions of children in the context of the children's current cultural-social environment and recognise the importance of imagery in this regard, including the use of media.

2.6 The student teacher has advanced knowledge of Christian traditions and basic knowledge of other spiritual movements: historical origin; content, historical context and the effect of sources/texts; core concepts, values and principles; life questions; celebrations and rituals, customs and symbols; prayer houses and centres of reflection.

For the specific content, refer to the sources listed in the references.

3. The subject and the pupils

3.1 The student teacher can achieve the core goals of RI (see appendix).

3.2 The student teacher can outline the religious/ideological and moral development of children.

3.3 The student teacher can connect development theories of psychologists such as Kohlberg, Fowler, Jablonski and Vygotsky with the ideological development of children; and the student teacher is familiar with the narrative identity theories of Egan, Parsons and Ricoeur.

4. Cohesion with other subjects

4.1 The student teacher can identify in current events how RI connects with other disciplines and can reason how he /she would make these events accessible to and understandable to pupils and clarify their involvement in these events.

4.2. The student teacher can connect, where appropriate, Spiritual Movements with RI and teach the pupil to appreciate the diversity of beliefs.

4.3 The student teacher can identify opportunities in the school's environment to make concepts from RI accessible to and understandable for children, using this environment. He/she can collaborate with (local) religious and secular institutes and organise activities for children.

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Core objectives of Religious/Ideological education (RI)
Developed for Protestant-Christian primary education

Preface

When the authority responsible for teacher training in primary education expressed its desire to jointly develop a knowledge base for each focus area in primary education, the DCBO Committee also decided to develop a knowledge base for the Pedagogical Academies for Primary Education that train teachers for the Diploma in Christian Primary Education. The core objectives were developed around the structure of the knowledge base and defined in consultation with teachers associated with this training.

The terminology of the core objectives was chosen so that the schools can 'translate' the core goals into their own terms. When drafting the core objectives, it was taken into account that, in Protestant-Christian schools, the style and content of religious/ideology education is presented in different ways. Whether the school socialises (inducts) pupils in the Protestant-Christian faith, provides (Christian-inspired) interreligious education, where encounters with various ideological movements are central, or takes the pupil's spiritual development as a basic concept and introduces traditions that foster this development, it will be able to use the core objectives as a handbook to design their own religious/ideological education.

Those responsible for developing these core objectives are members of the Religion/Ideology Knowledge Base in Protestant-Christian Primary Education Working Group. The core objectives can be downloaded from the Besturenraad's website.

Woerden, January 2012

Religion/Ideology Knowledge Base in Protestant-Christian Primary Education Working Group

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Introduction

In 1999, core objectives for religious education in Protestant-Christian primary schools were created for the first time. The introduction to those core objectives says: "Religious education finds its legitimacy and departure point in the specific beliefs of those who 'together make up the school' on the basis of common attitudes, beliefs, values and standards".

In profiling the focus area, the objectives stated that religious education in Protestant-Christian primary schools should be designed so that "pupils encounter the Christian tradition in their own environment in the form of, for example, Bible stories, celebrations, reflection on life questions and a call to live in a way that shows responsibility for the created world". They also highlight a few specific activities that belong to this focus area: participating in celebrations, learning religious/symbolic language and developing an ability to see the relevance of Christian traditions for society with openness and respect for other religions and convictions. The education objectives were finally condensed to twelve core objectives and grouped into four domains that identify the various focus areas of religious education: religious awareness and knowledge of the Christian tradition; life questions and use, ideological encounters and socio-ethical education.

For a number of Protestant-Christian schools, these core objectives will specify what they understand by religious education and what their objectives are. The intentional character of the focus area is typical for these schools: students learn to be receptive to a Christian view of life, which will guide all their actions.

A growing number of schools are looking for a broadening of religious education that is either less focused or not only focused on the introduction and induction of Christian traditions. Rather, they want to arouse curiosity for that which, in Christian and other traditions, is contained in stories and imagery and, above all, base their instruction on the existential experiences and needs of pupils. The focus for these schools is on pupils learning to put their life experiences into words by creating personal stories with the help of stories from religious and cultural traditions. For some schools, this means the teacher has to create opportunities for the pupils to enter the area of religion (using the imagination, using the language of imagery, conducting conversations, transporting oneself and making critical distinctions). Religious education then becomes ideological education.

We want to do justice to this development with the revised core objectives. Biblical stories remain important vehicles in most forms of Protestant-Christian education, not least because they invite God into the classroom and, in doing so, place life experiences within a comprehensive human reality and serve to explain those experiences.

The child comes across other familiar customs, practices, behaviour and traditions within his or her environment. He/she also encounters the diversity of beliefs, so the pupil is taught to manage that diversity in the subject of Spiritual Movements, a focus area also touched upon in RI. In some schools, both areas are integrated. A proprietary knowledge base has been created for Spiritual Movements, and includes the ideological education of children. The subject focuses particularly on the coexistence of people.

What characterises religious/ideological education in all its approaches is the scope for transcendence; it raises it as a subject and encourages students to talk about it with each other and with their teachers. It is also unique because, in contrast to social or moral education, it is based on existential questions and answers, which are characterised by fundamental questions (there are no

immediate answers available) and enduring meanings (searching for answers that stimulate us, sustain us and provide us with support and direction).

This focus area is permanently influenced by, on the one hand, openness for what transcends us and presents itself as sacred and, on the other hand, humanity as a destination for man. Therefore, the core objectives must be read within this framework, now interpreted as core objectives for religious/ideological education.

Notes to the core objectives
The four domains of the focus area derive from the educational process. They correspond to the four characteristics listed in the RI knowledge base for teachers: students listen to and tell stories, they learn to attached significance to these stories, they celebrate together and they make decisions about their opinions and actions.

The first domain makes a focal point of the *narrative characteristic*. By listening to Bible and other stories, pupils become receptive to that which presents itself as of significant for themselves, their fellow man and their own world. In doing so, they experience encouragement, guidance and criticism, as well as the familiar and unfamiliar aspects of these stories. By telling stories, they can express desires, hopes and fears.

The second domain can be explained by the word *hermeneutics*. In RI, teachers and pupils look for possible meanings of the stories and experiences, partly due to being open to what is holy and what is subservient to humanity. Pupils learn how to place the stories in their own context, and they learn to philosophise and theologise about then and bring them up to date. These stories give the learning process the characteristic of a joint journey of discovery. Pupils learn to articulate experiences of (un) certainty and dependency and feelings of connectedness, gratitude, freedom, autonomy and heteronomy.

The core characteristic of the third domain is *experiencing common moments*. Pupils participate in all kinds of activities that are typical of this focus area, such as listening to each other, and experiencing, celebrating and doing things together. However different the home lives of pupils may be, RI involves a form of sharing and joint experience.

The fourth domain focuses on the fact that this process is not optional: pupils must *provide answers*. It covers questions such as: and what is all this about, what can I do with it and what should I do with it? RI connects pupils to the discovered purpose and significance. It is about connecting with oneself (self-confidence and critical self-awareness), with others (critical distance and empathy and solidarity), with the world (contributing to its well-being from a critical distance), and with the spiritual dimension of life (through contemplation or the expression of gratitude)

Domain A – Listening to and telling stories

1. Pupils can express life experiences in the form of personal stories and share these with others.
2. Pupils learn how to articulate thoughts and feelings about sense and nonsense, love and hate, happiness and unhappiness, good and evil, truth and deceit, life and death, etc. and can express their thoughts about these issues in different ways.
3. Pupils learn how to listen to and ask questions about Bible stories and other stories in which existential and religious experiences are communicated.
4. Pupils learn to place stories in the context of the stories' origins.
5. Pupils are willing and able to respond to Bible stories and other stories of significance that make them sensitive to faith, hope and love and for questions of guilt and innocence, freedom and responsibility, right and wrong, loyalty and infidelity, hope and despair, faith and doubt.

Domain B – Giving meaning to stories and experiences

1. Pupils can reflect on the life stories of themselves, of fellow students and of the teacher.
2. Pupils can converse and theologise about stories which contain existential and religious experiences.
3. Pupils can place (religious) sources of faith in context.
4. Pupils learn to recognise the symbolic dimension of Biblical and other stories and understand that symbols function as a reference to what is transcendent.
5. Pupils become acquainted with significant people and events from the Bible, Christian and other traditions and their environment that may provide their direction in life.
6. Pupils can identify important rituals, feasts and anniversaries associated with Christian (and other) traditions and give meaning to them.
7. Pupils can appreciate and recognise religious forms of expression in art and culture.
8. Pupils can form their own thoughts about the role of religious views of people in society.

Domain C – Celebrating and encountering religious traditions

1. Pupils learn to appreciate the sharing and experiencing of common moments as part of school life.
2. Pupils can participate in celebrations originating from the school's (religious) tradition by listening, narrating, praying, being quiet, singing, playing, etc. This means they:
   - experience connectedness and community
   - can express feelings of sense and nonsense, joy and sorrow, faith, hope and love
   - feel stimulated
   - have regard for the soul, fellow man, the world, God
3. Pupils can explain religious rituals (around birth and death, initiations, commemorations) as symbolic acts that mark time and provide significance for 'their own stories'.
4. Pupils can give and derive meaning from encounters with significant others and give a role to the Sacred.

Domain D – Providing answers

1. Pupils can let their actions be determined by what is of value to them and to significant others.
2. Pupils learn to make choices and to justify these choices to themselves, fellow man, the world and God.
3. Pupils develop self-respect, treat fellow man with respect and do their best for others.

4. Pupils are guided in their actions by a feeling for and an awareness of truth and deceit, right and wrong, real and unreal, justice and injustice.

Assessment Framework and Visitation Protocol Cycle 2012 – 2017
Developed for courses with DCBO accreditation

DCBO: how do you prepare teachers for (Protestant) Christian primary education?

a. Introduction

The extraordinary thing about special education is the school's freedom of direction, creation and organisation. It is an open invitation to embody education in the (Protestant) Christian school assertively and markedly, based on a Christian view of life. Of course, this also applies, in a derived sense, to the courses that prepare teachers to teach in (Protestant) Christian primary schools.

The DCBO (*Diploma Christelijk Basis Onderwijs* of Diploma in Christian Primary Education) gives (Protestant) Christian primary schools an understanding and certainty of the competencies required by (new) teachers to embody the school's identity, including its religious education. The DCBO was established by the Besturenraad. The Besturenraad is the centre for Christian education and unites 540 Christian school boards. The preservation and promotion of Christian education is the primary responsibility for the Besturenraad, which it shares with the schools, supervisory boards, executive boards, management and teachers.

The Besturenraad wants to encourage primary schools to underline the importance of the DCBO by giving it much weight in their recruitment policy. This includes the possibility of appointing a teacher who does not have a DCBO diploma but could obtain it through in-service training.

The school with a vacancy knows an applicant that holds a DCBO can contribute to the embodiment of the Christian school's identity and that this teacher can ensure, in a professional manner, that religious education is and remains an important component of that identity.

b. So many training colleges, so many approaches and traditions

The DCBO gives teacher training colleges plenty of opportunity for individual interpretation. In the previous accreditation period, the concepts of a broad and narrow identity were often used. The precursor of the DCBO was the Diploma in Biblical Education, in which the focus was very much on providing religious education. With the introduction of the DCBO, we have sought an integrated approach to (Protestant) Christian education by focusing on multiple subjects and educational areas, some of which were not under previous discussion.

All teacher training (university) colleges have developed the DCBO as a broad identity. Content differs greatly, owing to the identity of the college as a whole, to the tradition of the college in the region or denomination it serves, and to the theological and educational direction of the college. We want to examine those elements more closely in this accreditation period. Therefore, the five key questions of the assessment framework invite the college to account for its implementation of the DCBO, using explicitly its plan of approach and its objectives to do that.

There is an underlying question that is often asked: is every approach used to implement the DCBO a good approach? In conversations, the usual answer is that not all approaches can be good approaches. At the same time, it's not easy to determine exactly what the criteria for implementing the DCBO should be. Ultimately, it depends on our view on (Protestant) Christian education, on pedagogical, ideological and didactic principles and on the view of the Christian tradition itself and the place it should have in primary education. Student teachers are themselves in a formative process regarding identity. What is needed is constant revision of the underlying questions and concepts in the networks of the Besturenraad (PABO network, lectors network), in peer meetings and DCBO conferences, and in contact with the work place.

Collegial consultation on the DCBO (or an aspect of identity) is one way of preparing for a DCBO visitation. This is not described in this assessment framework; indeed, it is mentioned with some reluctance because it is not our intention to make DCBO accreditation any stiffer. At the same time, it is a given that colleges prepare themselves in all sorts of ways for accreditation and that (inter) collegial consultation may be an appropriate form of preparation.

c. The importance of the DCBO in the field of (Protestant) Christian education

The DCBO forms part of the preliminary skills of the novice teacher, but learning continues in the classroom. A teacher gives the school's identity an individual character with his/her own group of pupils, working as part of a team and in a way that sits within the framework set by the school's board.

The content of the DCBO is linked strongly to the teacher training course: the specific content of the DCBO is in line with the teacher training course. In the workplace, it's usually the teacher training course that is crucial, followed by the requirement for specific, additional training qualifications such as the DCBO.

The DCBO has added value for the student teacher because it calls for specific skills and because it contributes to the formative character of the teacher training course. The DCBO also has added value for the receiving school (see Introduction).

The DCBO does not yet say how a future teacher relates personally to the (Protestant) Christian tradition and to the principles of a specific school. When appointing teachers, it is important schools pay separate attention to that issue. The DCBO represents the ability to reflect on these issues, the skill to stimulate individual choices and, above all, the skill to translate these into pedagogical and teaching methodologies in a responsible manner.

d. The DCBO as an accreditation system

It is important to demonstrate how, under the heading of DCBO within affiliated courses, future teachers are trained to contribute to the (Protestant) Christian identity across the whole of the school where they (are going to) work and to give its pupils religious education by using (religious) sources (the Bible), the Christian tradition and their own personal history. Therefore, the Besturenraad - in consultation with teacher training courses in primary education and with (Protestant) Christian primary schools – has established a nationwide assessment framework. Training, testing and certification take place in primary education courses of the colleges that have, through accreditation, the license to award the DCBO to students who possess the necessary skills.

The accreditation is linked to a system of quality assurance. The courses are visited once every six years by a Visitation Committee that looks specifically at the DCBO. The Committee notes the training programme of the college, speaks with relevant people/groups and forms a well-founded opinion about the extent to which the intentions of the course actually lead to results that pertain to the DCBO assessment framework.

The DCBO gives schools in (Protestant) Christian primary education an understanding and certainty of the competences of (new) teachers in embodying the school's identity, including religious education. The assessment framework supports that understanding and certainty. For the Besturenraad, it is an instrument to test the quality of the course with regard to the DCBO. The responsibility for and the testing of the student teacher lies with the college.

Courses that offer the DCBO receive and retain their accreditation on the basis of a favourable opinion by the Visitation Committee. Therefore, the assessment framework is the reference point for assessing an accreditation request and is the starting point for conversations, questions and conclusions made during the visitation.

In compliance with the procedures of NVAO (Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders), peers are involved in this visitation cycle. Those included as a member of the visitation teams are not only independent external experts but also colleagues and students (ad hoc, rotating).[1]

Principles
1. The preparation, design and implementation of the curriculum, in which the DCBO is clearly identified and realised according to the assessment framework, are the responsibility of the teacher training provider (college).
2. The assessment framework is formulated so that the teaching training provider has sufficient opportunities to decide its own content: the college's own training concept is stimulated.
3. The assessment framework connects in terms of content, design and process to the various documents on the teaching profession[2] that have been adopted nationwide. For the teacher training course, a number of key questions are included in the chapter 'Assessment Framework'. Important references are the new RI knowledge base, the core objectives and the DCBO competences.
4. The assessment framework and guidelines are placed in the context of the overall training programme as well as professional practices.

Self-analysis framework based on key questions

The Visitation Committee should, on the basis of the institute's self-analysis, be able to get a clear picture of how the training course implements the DCBO.

Self-analysis provides answers to the five key questions, and it can be supplemented with relevant appendices. It is important the course demonstrates how it incorporates the DCBO. The Visitation Committee notes the principles of the course and then sets questions such as: "How do we know this?" Can you demonstrate this?" Self-analysis can anticipate such questions.

It is also important that the course feels invited to present itself as a development-oriented course. Self-analysis describes the current situation, including the applicable development objectives that the course sets.

The key questions also invite the institute to express its ambitions. In most cases, the preparation and the quality of the self-analysis is a good predictor of the course's visitation. The Visitation Committee may ask for additional material. The DCBO accreditation is independent of the NVAO institute test. Obviously, DCBO accreditation is given only to institutes whose overall performance conforms to the basic quality demanded by NVAO.

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[1] The DCBO Committee has decided to pilot working with peers: the first visitations of 2012 will include peers. It will then be decided whether to extend this for the entire period.

[2] SBL skills requirements for teachers, Stichting Beroepskwaliteit Leraren and other educational staff, 2004; NVAO accreditation framework for existing higher education courses, Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie, 2010.

Assessment framework: Five key questions

The DCBO standard bases itself on the three questions[3] asked by the NVAO during a limited course assessment. However, the DCBO also requires a course to have a clear approach to training students for (Protestant) Christian education. Adequate quality assurance is also essential to the DCBO. Therefore, we have formulated the following questions for assessing the provision of the DCBO:

1. What is the course's strategy for preparing teachers for (Protestant) Christian primary education?
2. What are the learning outcomes associated with the DCBO?
3. How has the DCBO curriculum been designed?
4. How does the training course test the achievement of the DCBO's learning outcomes?
5. Does the course have adequate quality assurance regarding the DCBO's programme?

These five key questions are elaborated below, with a brief explanation of the indicators. The intention is that, by fully answering the questions (including the indicators), a full picture of the current situation with regard to the DCBO is given. However, the DCBO content provided by the course is central to the assessment. Consideration to post-course individual reflection and the degree of development-orientation are ingredients for further elaboration.

Training plan for (Protestant) Christian primary education

1: *The course has a plan to train teachers in primary education for (Protestant) Christian education and this plan is linked to the tradition of other courses provided by the college.*

Comments: The plan contains the course's opinion on the (Protestant) Christian tradition on which it is based, i.e. gives explicit reference to certain theological traditions and/or thinkers and the identity of the institute and the training it provides. It is important the plan is drawn up in collaboration with various partners (particularly educators, but also staff, students, alumni and possible others).

Indicators:
- The plan includes not only pedagogical components but also didactic, ideological, educational, organisational and societal components.[4]
- The plan is drawn up to show how the plan is relevant to the whole course.
- The plan states the partners involved in drawing up the plan and how they did that.

Expected learning outcomes

2: *The course uses the plan to formulate DCBO learning outcomes, which are specific as regards content and level.*

Comments: By formulating DCBO learning outcomes, the course makes the plan workable for the novice teacher, who knows exactly what he /she must achieve in (Protestant) Christian education. In

addition to the course plan, a reference to both the RI knowledge base and the core objectives for religious education is paramount.

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[3] What is the aim of the course? How does the course achieve this? Are the objectives met?

[4] Various classifications and combinations are possible, e.g. according to the model of Anneke de Wolff in "*Typisch Christelijk? Een onderzoek naar de identiteit van een christelijke school en haar vormgeving*" (Typical Christian? Research into the identity of a Christian school and its education"), Leiden, 2000. pp. 399-406.

NB: in the preceding visitation cycle (2006-2010), guidelines in the form of DCBO competences were used. These guidelines are also included in this assessment framework because they are useful in describing DCBO learning outcomes.[5]

Indicators:
- DCBO learning outcomes are derived from the formulated plan.
- The course makes it clear how DCBO learning outcomes are based on the RI knowledge base, developed for Protestant-Christian primary education.
- It is clear which partners devised and described the DCBO learning outcomes (formulated by the course itself) and how these partners did this.

Educational environment
3: *The programme, staff and course-specific facilities make it possible for student teachers to achieve the expected DCBO learning outcomes.*

Comments: The content and design of the programme enable student teachers to achieve the DCBO learning outcomes. The quality of staff, the involvement of personnel in the tradition and the course-specific facilities are essential for this. The programme, staff and facilities form a coherent educational environment for student teachers.

Indicators:
- The course clarifies how DCBO learning outcomes have been translated into its training curricula (full-time, part time and, where applicable, the dual and academic variant and in-service training).
- The course clarifies how student teachers will be enabled to achieve the DCBO learning outcomes in the course programme.
- The course clarifies how it contributes to the ideological development or the religious development of the student teachers by using (religious) sources, the tradition and the students' personal histories.
- The course clarifies how it trains student teachers for the specific environmental context.
- The course demonstrates how it guarantees that teachers are equipped to guide students in the education of their own faith or ideology.
- The self-analysis clarifies how the course's own facilities help achieve DCBO learning outcomes.

Testing and achieving learning outcomes
4: *The course has an adequate system of testing and shows that the expected DCBO learning outcomes have been achieved.*

Comments: The achieved level in respect of learning outcomes is evident from the interim and final tests and the way in which graduates function in the workplace.

Indicators:
- The course can provide the testing policy, assessment framework and several concrete test examples.
- The course has testing tools that do justice to both the development-oriented aspect of the learning and the sum of what has been learnt.
- The course ensures the objectivity of the testing by not or not only having student teachers tested by their direct tutors.
- The course describes and ensures the quality of the testing at the work placement.
- The course demonstrates and justifies the method of testing the personal development objectives of student teachers.

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[1] Refer to Appendix 5 for more information about DCBO competences and their status.

Results

5: *The course checks the extent to which the plan and the quality of the DCBO training is realised and evaluates this regularly with students, staff and representatives of the field of primary education.*

Comments: The course employs an appropriate system of quality assurance around the DCBO components by involving students, teachers and the field of primary education. The course checks the quantitative results. The course may use a more general system of quality assurance, but in doing so we expect to find data for the DCBO. In this key question, the subjects of the preceding four key questions come together. On the basis of this required description, the course can make it apparent how its own objectives regarding the DCBO are achieved.

Indicators:
- The course describes the plans it has for the longer term, in addition to their current plans, so its chosen path of development is made apparent.
- Self-analysis contains or refers to evaluations by students, staff and the field of primary education and the resulting interventions.
- The course demonstrates its development objectives for the DCBO, how these objectives are created and evaluated and how the objectives are subsequently adjusted.

Assessment

Answers to each of the key questions are judged as insufficient, sufficient, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).

As a general guideline regarding the quantitative weight of the DCBO, at least 80% of the work placement should take place at a school for (Protestant) Christian education, which should also be where the final stage in Protestant-Christian education is completed.

As regards total course load of the DCBO, we suggest at least 12 ECTS credits. The better the DCBO is integrated, the harder it is to determine this course load. Ideally, we would prefer to express ECTS credits in terms of learning outcomes rather than quantified study/lesson hours. However, because these learning outcomes are not set uniformly, a criterion for course load in ECTS credits is necessary.

Visitation protocol

A system of quality assurance is linked to the DCBO by paying official visits to the courses which offer the diploma. This protocol describes for all parties involved in the diploma how the visitation is carried out.

Objective
The visitation protocol sets out in advance the procedures, deadlines and other provisions of the visitation. As a result, both the Visitation Committee and the course provider know in advance how the visitation is going to be carried out and the steps each of those involved in the inspection will take.

Terminology
The visitation protocol places importance on a number of different documents. To avoid confusion between the various documents, the following designations are used:

Self-analysis	The documentation that institutes draw up prior to the visitation and which constitutes basic material for the Visitation Committee in preparing the visitation.
Visitation report	The report that the Visitation Committee produces following a course visitation. The visitation report is course specific and states the findings and conclusions of the Visitation Committee following the self-analysis and the course visitation. The visitation report is accompanied by an opinion on the accreditation.
Management response	The response of the institute's competent authority to the findings and conclusions of the visitation report. The response states the consequences the competent authority attaches to the findings and conclusions.
Committee	'The Committee' refers to the DCBO Committee. The Visitation Committee is always identified as such.

Visitation

Objective
The visitation has a number of objectives:
- The Institute accepts responsibility for the manner in which it implements the DCBO.
- The Visitation Committee, which comprises external experts and selected experts from other courses, and the course provider exchange views on developments and issues connected with the diploma. In doing so, they enforce and/or strengthen the quality of the DCBO, for both the course and the system as a whole.
- A judgement regarding (ongoing) accreditation is formed.

Assessment framework for the diploma as a basis for the visitation
The basis for the visitation is the assessment framework's five key questions. The assessment framework was drawn up with involvement of the field of primary education and accredited institutes

and, after consultation with the institutes, established by the Besturenraad. This entire publication constitutes the assessment framework for the Visitation Committee. On the basis of this, conclusions are drawn and recommendations made.

Visitation programme

Visitation takes place once every six years for each course. Prior to a visitation round, a visitation programme is established in consultation with the collective institutes. The visitation programme spreads the total number of visitations of a cycle evenly over the six years. Each institute receives written confirmation of the year in which the next visitation will take place.

In June, prior to the calendar year in which the visitation takes place, a schedule is drawn up in consultation with the institute concerned, with dates for the visitation and agreed deadlines for deadlines for preparation and reporting.

Institutes with multiple locations

The way in which the Visitation Committee handles institutes that offer the DCBO at various locations depends on the set up of the course programme. If the course programme is the same at each of the locations, then one visit takes place at the main location. The programme then equals the visitation of other courses, except that the selection of contact people (teachers, students, etc.) takes into account a good spread over the different locations.

If the course programme differs at each location, the visitation is arranged in such a way that the Visitation Committee can form a good impression of those different programmes. That means that the other locations are also visited. However, the focus of such visits is, in principle, limited to the components which deviate from the programme at the main location.

Scheduling

In June, the visitation schedule for the following calendar year is drawn up. The following deadlines are linked to the dates for visitation and included in the schedule:
- The institute shall make available the necessary (self-analysis) information to the Visitation Committee no later than two months before the date of the visitation.
- The Visitation Committee requests (if necessary) additional information no later than one month before the visitation visit.
- The institute and the Visitation Committee set the programme for the visit no later than one month before the visitation.
- The Secretary sends the draft visitation report to the members of the Visitation Committee no later than four weeks after the visitation.

Visitation Committee members respond within a week, after which a possible amendment to the draft report follows:
- The amended draft report, with the exception of the opinion chapter, is sent to the institute to check for factual inaccuracies no later than five weeks after the visitation.
- The institute responds no later than one week after receipt of the draft report. In the first subsequent meeting after the response of the institute, the Visitation Committee finalises the visitation report and submits it to the DCBO Committee.
- In their first subsequent meeting, the DCBO Committee makes an accreditation decision based on the visitation report and informs the institute in writing. The written decision is accompanied by the entire visitation report.

- The institute submits a management response no later than two months after receipt of the visitation report. This applies regardless of the decision; a management response is appreciated even in the case of a favourable decision regarding the accreditation.
- The institute can appeal to the DCBO Committee against its accreditation decision no later than four weeks after dispatch of the visitation report.
- The DCBO Committee makes a decision on the appeal no later than six weeks after the submission of the appeal.
- The report is published either as soon as the appeal procedure has finished or no later than one week after the DCBO Committee has made decision about the appeal.

Preparation for the visitation

To prepare for the visitation and arrange the contacts between the Visitation Committee and the institutes, each institute appoints a contact person. This person is either the institute's contact person or visitation co-ordinator. The institute makes available the necessary information to the Visitation Committee by means of the self-analysis and relevant attachments. The Visitation Committee decides, on the basis of the self-analysis, who they want to speak to and gives that information to the institute's contact person. The institute organises the visits' final programme.

Self-analysis

The Visitation Committee should, on the basis of the self-analysis, be able to get a clear picture of how the course implements the DCBO. The self-analysis (and any attachments) provides answers to the five key questions. At the request of the Visitation Committee, the institute provides each panel member with a copy of the self-analysis.

Accreditation

The visitation report is the basis for the decision on the institute's continued accreditation. The Visitation Committee uses the findings of the document study and the visitation to draw up an opinion on continuing accreditation, which is subsequently used by the DCBO Committee in its decision making. That opinion can take several forms, and these are specified in the paragraph on the visitation report.

Visitation Committee

Members of the Visitation Committee have thorough knowledge of and broad experience in the main components of the diploma.

The Visitation Committee comprises a number of experts who can be assisted in the visitations by one or more experts from associate courses. In addition, a student (the peer) may sit on each interview panel. See Note 1 on page 24.

The Secretary participates in each visitation. The following criteria are used as a guideline for the composition of the team (including the peers):
- a member with considerable experience in/knowledge of the field of Protestant-Christian primary education
- a member with considerable experience in/knowledge of the (teacher) training world
- a member with considerable knowledge of religious education and instruction in ideological identity in primary education.

One of the members is also the Chairman of the Visitation Committee. The Chairman is appointed to this role. No member may be actively involved with the course being inspected. A member that was

formerly involved in the course to be inspected may not belong to the team that visits that course. On the basis of the rules laid down by the Board of the Besturenraad for the DCBO, the members of the DCBO Committee cannot be a member of the Visitation Committee at the same time.

Term of Office
The term of office of Visitation Committee members, including the Secretary and the Chairman, is six years in principle. This relates to the length of the visitation cycle: all courses are visited once during the nomination period of six years. Seats on the Visitation Committee that become vacant are usually filled for the duration of the visitation round.

The members who are involved in the visitations as peers are pre-selected and participate in at least one but no more than two visitations in a cycle on an ad-co basis. The policy on the selection and deployment of peers is described elsewhere (in the working documents of the DCBO Committee). Peers are full members of the panel for the duration of a visitation and are voting members of the Visitation Committee (only) regarding the visitation in question.

Procedures of the Visitation Committee
The Secretary of the Visitation Committee receives the institute's self-analysis two months before the visitation. The Secretary verifies that the self-analysis is suitable for the purposes of the visitation team and then distributes it. The visitation team, which is responsible for the visitation, discusses and assesses the self-analysis and other relevant documentation and determines the duration of the visitation and with which groups it wants to speak to during the visit. The visitation team prepares for the discussions, using the information and comments received, and decides on the most important considerations of the course to be visited and the questions to be put to the different groups.

After the visitation, the Secretary draws up the visitation report. Members of the visitation team comment on the draft report and revise it where necessary. Once the institute has checked for inaccuracies, the Visitation Committee finalises the report in a meeting convened for that purpose and submits it to the DCBO Committee.

Visit
The visitation takes place on a single day. The Secretary informs the institute who the visitation team would like to speak to and consults with the institute about the precise structure and sequence of the visit. The institute's contact person organises the visit and ensures the relevant people are present for the discussions with the visitation team.

Basis of the visitation programme
The visitation team always speaks to the course managers, i.e. the Board of Governors or Directors and/or the Course Co-ordinator. The team can also speak to:
- teachers (of religion and other subjects relevant to the DCBO)
- students (from different academic years)
- graduates (teachers who have completed their training in the previous two years approx.)
- school representatives (work placement schools and schools where teachers are going to work)
- work placement co-ordinators

The length of the discussions is normally 30 to 45 minutes for each panel. Conversations with management take place at the beginning and end of discussion round. All discussions take place at the institute. Depending on the interrelationship between the various locations, it is determined, in consultation with the institute and prior to the visit, which location representatives are involved in the discussions with the visitation team. The visitation team can indicate in advance that time has been

set aside for internal consultations within the visitation team, once around the lunch break and once shortly before the last feedback to management. The visitation team then makes a provisional assessment, formulates the first findings and prepares for the last discussion. The visitation ends by giving the management a brief verbal impression of the visit. Panel members from previous panels are welcome to attend this last discussion.

Visitation report

The Visitation Committee draws up the visitation report. The deadlines and associated procedures are described elsewhere in this protocol. After the first reading and amendment of the report, the definitive draft, with the exception of the opinion chapter, is presented to the course management to check for factual errors. If necessary, the report is amended.

The report is formatted in the house style of the Besturenraad and presented to the institute only at the end of a full and favourable conclusion of the accreditation process. As long as further requirements and management responses are being processed, etc. we communicate only with working versions of the report.

Design and content of the report
A visitation report gives a clear picture of what the Visitation Committee has observed within the course and it provides a judgment on that course. A visitation report contains always the following elements:
- A concise description of the objectives, design and content of the course
- A systematic account (relating to the assessment framework) of the main findings
- Conclusions and recommendations

The visitation report is accompanied by the DCBO Committee's opinion on the accreditation: has the course been accredited for the next six years or should a consultation about the course and/or an adaptation to the course first take place?

The opinion of the Visitation Committee can take two forms:
- Yes: the accreditation has been extended
- No: the accreditation cannot be extended yet; clearly defined conditions must be met: accreditation is not yet granted.

The opinion is formed in a reasonable manner. The Committee may take into account the opinion of the Visitation Committee and is free to, on the basis of the report, depart from that opinion. In that case, the decision of the DCBO Committee must be clearly justified to the Visitation Committee. When the DCBO Committee discusses the report, the Chairman of the Visitation Committee is present.

The DCBO Committee sends the institute its decision on the accreditation, together with the visitation report. The institute gives a management response to the conclusions and recommendations in the visitation report, whether or not accreditation has been granted.

The report is given a definitive layout in the house style of the Besturenraad when a favourable decision on the accreditation has been made. In the event that accreditation is not yet granted, this is communicated to the institute and, if there is a reason to, the decision of the Committee is explained in a meeting. Requests for structural and/or content changes /improvements to the course are stated, as is the period within which they are to be assessed.

Conditional and unconditional accreditations existed in the previous cycle. This terminology has been abandoned: there is now 'accreditation' or 'no accreditation yet' because regulations state that a decision is to be made on accreditation after one or more rounds of management responses. This means the possibility that an accreditation will not be granted has not been eliminated. That can be the end result if a process is dragged out simply to extend accreditation and the improvements desired by the Committee fail to occur.

The Committee respects the requirement to set clear deadlines and communicate precisely and in writing the steps to be taken. In addition, accreditations that take longer due to prolonged procedures are ultimately dated from the moment the previous accreditation would have expired.

Appeals procedure
After receiving the decision and the report, the institute can submit an appeal to the DCBO Committee in the form of a well-argued objection. This is sent to the Secretary of the DCBO Committee no later than four weeks after receipt of the accreditation decision and visitation report. The DCBO Committee makes a decision on any possible (ongoing) accreditation no later than six weeks after receiving the objection.

Publication of the report
The report is published either immediately after closure of the appeals procedure or no later than one week after the decision of the DCBO Committee in response to the objection. Publication means the report can be requested from the Secretary of the DCBO Committee.

Appendix 1 Visitation schedule (teacher training for primary education)

Before the visitation
- The visitation is planned in June.
- The Secretary arranges the dates of the visitation with the institute.
- The institute designates the contact people for the visitation.
- The institute sends the Visitation Committee the self-analysis in quadruplicate at least two months before the visitation.
- The Committee announces the composition of the visitation team.
- The Secretary verifies the self-analysis meets the requirements and distributes the report.
- The visitation team discusses and assesses the self-analysis in a joint meeting and decides who it wants to speak to during the visitation and decides the duration of the visit.
- The Secretary informs the institute which people the visitation team want to speak to and may request additional information no later than one month before the visitation.
- The institute's contact person sends out the visitation programme.
- The visitation team may conduct preliminary discussions to agree which team member is responsible for which questions.

After the visitation
- The Secretary sends the draft visitation report to the visitation team no later than four weeks after the visitation.
- Members of the visitation team respond to the report no later than one week after receiving the draft visitation report. The Secretary then updates the report where necessary.
- The updated report, with the exception of the opinion chapter, is sent to the institute to check for factual inaccuracies.
- The institute responds no later than one week after receiving the draft visitation report.
- In their next meeting, the Visitation Committee finalises the report in a plenary session and sends it to the DCBO Committee.
- In their next meeting, the DCBO Committee decides on the accreditation and sends this decision to the institute, along with the entire visitation report.
- The institute provides a management response no later than two months after receiving the visitation report.
- The institute can appeal to the DCBO Committee against the Committee's decision no later than four weeks after dispatch of the visitation report.
- The DCBO Committee makes a decision in response to the objection no later than six weeks after the submission of the objection.
- The report is either published immediately after the closure of the appeals procedure or no later than one week after the decision of the DCBO Committee in response to objection. The report is available from the Secretary upon request.

Appendix 2 Visitation programme

- A visitation is conducted in one day. Members of the visitation team decide on the basis of its discussion and assessment of the institute's self-analysis who/which discussion panels they want to speak to and how long the visit should last.
- During the visit, the visitation team discusses with the contact people matters arising from the self-analysis. The institute and members of the visitation team exchange opinions on developments and issues connected to the diploma, partly with a view to contributing to the preservation and/or strengthening of the diploma's quality.
- If an institute offers the DCBO at more than one location, the visitation takes place at the main location. The selection of contact people ensures a good spread over the different locations. However, if the programme differs at each location, then other locations may also be visited during the day.
- A discussion always takes place with the course management.
- The visitation team can, depending on the number of interview panels and the duration of the visit, request that the final programme allocates time for the team to have lunch and/or internal consultations.
- If relevant materials are available, and were not submitted prior to the visit, the team would appreciate the opportunity to view them during the visitation. The visitation is always completed with a final meeting between the visitation team with the course management.

Appendix 3 Drafting the visitation report

Report format

1 Factual information on the institute:
   - Name
   - Type of institute, course structure
   - Number of students and number of students taking the DCBO.

2 Information about the self-analysis and additional information provided during the visitation. This chapter looks at the five key questions (see previous chapters in this brochure).

3 Decision on continued accreditation :
   - Conclusions on the basis of that mentioned in point 2, plus the main findings and any further requirements. In the case of the latter, a statement of formal and/or substantive condition(s) and term(s) within which this condition/these conditions should be met is issued.
   - The Visitation Committee draws up a draft decision which forms an opinion for the DCBO Committee to use when making its decision.

Appendix 4 Guidelines on DCBO competences

Status of the guidelines
In the preceding visitation cycle (2006-2010), guidelines were used that describe the competences a (novice) teacher has after attaining the DCBO. We call these guidelines DCBO competences. We include these guidelines in this assessment framework because they are useful in describing DCBO learning outcomes (see key question 2). Please note that the description of these guidelines was not updated when drafting this assessment framework.

In addition to these DCBO competences, the RI knowledge base is an important reference point for the DCBO (see elsewhere in this publication). The question of whether or not expected DCBO learning outcomes should be determined on a nationwide basis is often raised. However, that would not be easy because of the way we have set up the DCBO. Since courses employ various educational concepts and have theologically diverse credentials and, therefore, determine their own DCBO content, finding a common denominator (or even a defined minimum) is neither possible nor desirable. The diversity of course plans is acknowledged and justified.

The second key question is phrased in such a way that the course itself formulates the expected DCBO learning outcomes. The DCBO Committee has not tabled the demand for a substantive description endorsed by the DCBO. The new knowledge base and core objectives are the most up-to-date and most substantiated reference it has.

For practical reasons, DCBO competences are grouped in accordance with the design of the seven skills requirements of the SBL (*Stichting Beroepskwaliteit Leraren* or Association for the Professional Quality of Teachers). We divide them into dimensions of acting, skills requirements and relationship with knowledge of the (novice) teacher. The question is whether the entire learning philosophy behind the competences approach can be fully utilised by the DCBO. The ability to teach well is not only a matter of having the right competences. The image of competences as a check list is notorious; everyone knows it is only when competences are taken as a whole that a teacher is proficient.

A part of the SBL skills requirements is repeated in this chapter. The reason is that these competences are so fundamental to the DCBO programme that clarification is considered necessary. Additionally, DCBO competences relative to the SBL are specific. We make no distinction between ideological competences and competences in the field of religious education. The DCBO Committee assumes that the programme of each course is in line with the new RI knowledge base and the core objectives.

Competences do not pass judgment on the chosen theological view or theological credentials used to design the course in the context of the DCBO. Since there is a great variety of ways to provide (Protestant) Christian education, the requirements are set in such a way that teacher training courses and primary schools have sufficient opportunity to provide their own, more specific educational methods, based on the requirements formulated here. Courses are expected to focus on teaching to reflect on personal beliefs regarding the Christian faith.

Interpersonal competence (1)
The teacher can create an inviting living and working environment characterised by integration and collaboration, using his/her knowledge of group dynamics and the awareness that communication is extremely valuable.

Dimensions of acting
1. Communicating with the pupils
2. Giving feedback
3. Providing leadership

Skills requirements
- The teacher can encourage and guide students to discover, develop and demonstrate their own identity.
- The teacher can act as a role model for the students.
- The teacher can explain how significant the school's identity is regarding the pupils' development.

Relationship with knowledge
1. The teacher has knowledge and understanding of the role of values and standards in general, in society and in Christian ideology in particular, and of the developments that take place in that area.
2. The teacher has knowledge of the relevant aspects of other faiths/religions present in our society and can indicate how familiarity with other religions relates to the school's religious education.
3. The teacher has knowledge of the philosophical/religious development of pupils.

Pedagogical competence (2)
The teacher can, using his/her knowledge of the philosophical/religious development of pupils, create a safe learning environment for pupils.

Dimensions of acting
1. Promoting self-confidence
2. Encouraging exploration and investigation
3. Making and maintaining contact: establishing a relationship which gives the other person space, security and trust.

Skills requirements
- The teacher is willing and able to carry out the assignment that people and children search for paths that lead to a society in which consideration, justice, peace and the unity of the world are central.
- The teacher recognises the diverse character of society and can handle and/or respond to it.
- The teacher can, from his/her own Christian position, contribute to open communication between different ideological views.
- The teacher can achieve/organise forms of engagement that are related to the global-social dimension of religious education.
- The teacher can appreciate the uniqueness of each child.
- The teacher can encourage children be sensitive towards other children and recognise the importance of this.
- The teacher is capable of promoting engagement between children and between adults and children, recognising that this engagement belongs to the core of humanity and being human.

Relationship with knowledge
1. The teacher has knowledge and understanding of the role of values and standards in general, in society and in Christian ideology in particular, and of the developments that take place in that area.

2. The teacher has knowledge of the relevant aspects of other faiths/religions present in our society and can indicate how familiarity with other religions relates to the school's religious education.
3. The teacher has knowledge of the philosophical/religious development of the pupil.

Professional and didactic competence (3)

1. The teacher can, using his/her knowledge of religious education and the learning processes required, create a challenging learning environment for pupils in which they experience aspects of religious orientation.
2. The teacher contributes to shaping the school's identity in the way he/she develops and instructs other subjects and education areas.

Dimensions of acting
1. Selecting subjects
2. Using didactic methods
3. Dealing with differences
4. Evaluating

Skills requirements
- The teacher is familiar with a number of didactical working methods and media usage in religious education.
- The teacher can relate (Biblical) story lines and explain important core concepts.
- The teacher can take into account other views on ideology and religion.
- The teacher can find a place in the education programme for expressions of faith such as prayer, telling Bible stories, singing hymns and celebrating Christian festivals.
- The teacher can assess professional and didactic aspects of methods from an ideological angle.
- The teacher can design independently a series of religious education lessons and then teach them effectively.[6]

Relationship with knowledge[7]
1. The teacher has knowledge of the Bible and (the history of) Christianity and Christian festivals.
2. The teacher has knowledge of various children's Bibles and methods of religious education and hymns/spiritual songs.
3. The teacher has knowledge of a number of relevant methods and learning resources in other subjects and education areas and can assess and select them based on underlying values and standards.
4. The teacher has knowledge of the philosophical/religious development of pupils.
5. The teacher has knowledge of group dynamics.

Organisational competence (4)

The teacher can, based on various forms of pupils' structural needs, create with pupils a living and working environment that for them is sufficiently accessible, orderly and (learning) task-oriented. This competence gets no further explanation or interpretation as regards the DCBO. For more details, please refer to the SBL competences.

Competence in collaborating met colleagues and the environment (5 and 6)

The teacher can contribute to creating and developing the philosophical / pedagogical / didactic environment of the school, the quality of working relationships and the organisation of the Christian school.

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The teacher can help create and develop collaborative relationships with people and institutes (including religious communities) in the school's surroundings associated with the school's identity.

Dimensions of acting
1. Contributing personal objectives, opinions, feelings and qualities.
2. Providing input that focuses on co-operation and the interests of others in the group.
3. Providing input that focuses on the attainment of joint goals.
4. Providing input that focuses on the context of a group.

Skills requirements
- The teacher is aware of his/her own position and opinion regarding ideological views; their impact on education; the place that the Christian school occupies in society.
- The teacher can articulate and substantiate his/her own position and opinion.
- The teacher is willing and able to consult with colleagues on ways to develop an ideological identity for the school to assimilate.
- The teacher has his/her own work concept, in which his/her own Christian ideology plays a role.
- The teacher is willing and able to discuss his/her own work concept and to consider how this work concept relates to the school's policy and identity.
- The teacher can assess developments in society and in the (immediate) surroundings of the school associated the school's identity and can then incorporate these developments into the content of (Protestant) Christian education and/or his/her own pedagogical actions.
- The teacher can describe how the ideological identity develops and changes within the relationship of teacher/pupil and teacher/parents and can communicate this with pupils and parents.

Relationship with knowledge
1. The teacher has knowledge of ways to reflect the principles and identity of the Christian school in activities and working methods.
2. The teacher has knowledge of the position and significance of Christian primary education in the Dutch educational system and of the dynamics that characterise the position of Christian primary education in the past and present.

Competence in reflection and professional development (7)
The teacher can research and develop his/own own attitudes to and skills of the different aspects of professional practice, which relate to his/her own identity and the identity of the school.

Communicative dimensions
1. Reflect: look back, analyse, formulate and select alternatives with the objective of gaining self-knowledge and discovering his/her own strengths and weaknesses.

Skills requirements
- The teacher is willing and able to reflect on his/her own position and opinion regarding ideological views.

- The teacher is willing and able to discuss his/her personal work concept and to consider how that concept relates to the school's policy or identity.
- The teacher is willing and able to plan and work on his/her own professional development.
- The teacher can reflect on his/her own religious beliefs and can/is willing to talk to others about them.

Possible eighth competence
The Marnix Academy (Utrecht) has developed an eighth competence specifically for Religion/Ideology. That has been integrated into the seven standard competences above. For more information about this eighth competence, we refer you to the Marnix Academy.

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