

STUDENT HANDBOOK 2018



**SOUTH AFRICAN THEOLOGICAL**  
**S E M I N A R Y**  
Bible-based - Christ-centred - Spirit-led

## Student Handbook: Undergraduate School

This handbook contains essential information for students in the undergraduate school. The undergraduate school offers the following qualifications:

- Bachelor of Theology
- Higher Certificate in Christian Life
- Higher Certificate in Christian Counselling

This handbook is designed to assist you as a student, by providing all the necessary information regarding the seminary. It is organised around answers to common questions that students ask. Please consult the handbook before phoning the seminary with a question, since there is a good chance your question is answered in the handbook.

### Contacting SATS

**Who should I contact for help?** You can contact the seminary between 8.30 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday to Friday. The contact details for our Helpdesk are as follows:

Email: [study@sats.edu.za](mailto:study@sats.edu.za)

Phone: +27 11 0224440

The answer to most questions that you might have can be found on our two main websites:

SATS: [www.sats.edu.za](http://www.sats.edu.za)

MySats: [my.sats.edu.za](http://my.sats.edu.za)

Please note that your name, surname, student number and the course code should reflect in all correspondence.

### Mode of Instruction

We offer our distance learning courses in e-learning format only.

**What is e-Learning?** MySats is a website that integrates all your academic information. By logging onto MySats, you are able to access your curriculum and your course materials, interact with the facilitator and other students, submit your assignments and keep track of their status, and receive feedback on your assignments. MySats also provides you with direct access to library resources and other vital documents (e.g. the student handbook, the guide for writing assignments). When the second phase of MySats has been completed, you will be able to pay for your courses and access them directly without having to contact the Admin department.

Students residing in South Africa may purchase some of their workbooks in print format. However, all assessments must be uploaded to the MySats site regardless of the format of the workbook. The price of the printed workbook includes the courier delivery fee.

**How do I register on MySats?** An Administrator will email your Username and Password. Log on to the MySats website and fill in your email address; you will be sent an email asking you to click on a link confirming that your email address is correct. After you have confirmed your email address, you may access your courses by clicking “My Courses” on the top of the page.

**How do I use MySats?** Detailed instructions on using MySats may be found in the site *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)*. You can access the FAQ from any page on MySats by clicking the help link under the user menu where your name appears (top right hand side of the page). In addition to the FAQ, we regularly post video tutorials on how to complete the most common tasks. If you are new to this kind of learning, we highly recommend that you view this [MySats Tutorial Video](#). Finally, if there is a question to which you cannot find an answer, you may click the button at the top of the page to get help from our support staff.

## Assignments

### General Questions about Assignments

**What kinds of assignments are there?** SATS courses make use of several different **kinds of assessment tasks**, including essay assignments, multiple-choice assignments, forum discussions, multiple-choice tests, and written examinations. For example, the multiple-choice assignments are used to test your knowledge and understanding of the course content. The essay assignments test academic skills such as your ability to organise material, sustain a logical argument, engage with various views, apply concepts to your life and ministry, and so on. Reports, journals, letters, articles, book reviews, and so on are variations of essay assignments. Forum discussion assignments test your ability to communicate your knowledge and explore ways of practically implementing them with fellow classmates.

**What norms or standards will be used to assess my assignments?** Our assessment standards are based on two primary sources. First, chapters 1-6 of the book *Academic Writing and Theological Research*, by Kevin Smith (2008), is *the* guideline for assignment-writing at SATS. Every student has access to a copy of the book, and all our assessors are instructed to base their assessment on the norms it presents. Second, markers work from the document called ‘**Assignment Assessment Criteria**’— which you can download from the ‘[Information Kiosk](#)’.

### Submitting My Assignments

**How may I submit my assignments?** On the MySats Home Page, you will find detailed information regarding uploading your assignments under ‘[Information Kiosk](#)’, ‘[FAQs](#)’.

**Please note: we do not accept emailed assignments!** If you email your assignments, they will not be marked. We also do not receive assignments by fax or by post. If you send them to the seminary in these formats, they will not be logged as received and will not be graded. As a result, **you will fail the assignment and probably also the course.**

**Where can I find my deadlines?** You can view the submission dates on your course page on the MySats site. You may also see all your due dates for each course by [viewing your calendar](#), available from the user menu on the top right of the page.

**What happens if I submit after the deadline?** Late submissions will be accepted up to 5 days past due date but will incur a penalty of 10 per cent for each day that they are late. This means that 10 per cent is deducted from the assigned mark for each day that the assignment is late. After 5 days, an assignment will not be marked.

**Can I get an extension on the deadline?** Only in exceptional circumstances! As a rule, we do not entertain requests for extensions unless it is due to serious personal illness or injury (confirmed by a medical doctor's certificate) or the bereavement of a first-level relative member (i.e. parent, child, or spouse). All requests for extensions must be investigated and approved by one of the Registrars.

**In what formats may I submit my assignment?** For detailed instructions on supported file types, [please see the FAQ](#). Be careful that you submit your assignment in a supported format to avoid late penalties. Apple Mac users are especially advised to save any documents created in Pages to PDF to preserve formatting. **.pages files are not supported.**

**Is there a naming convention for assignments?** Yes. Please save your assignment according to the following norm: **ErdeyZ THE1121 Assignment3**, i.e. Surname followed without a space by your first initial, then the course code, and the assignment number.

**What if I cannot access the MySats site to submit my assignment?** If the problem is due to a general failure on the MySats system, all students will be granted an extension. However, we cannot take responsibility for technological problems on your side. It is your responsibility to ensure that you submit your assignment successfully by the due date. **We advise, therefore, that you submit all assignments at least one day before the due date, so that if you have a technical problem you have time to make alternative arrangements.**

**What is Turnitin?** Turnitin is an online system for processing students' work (assignments, essays, theses), with tools for identifying plagiarism and for assessment (marking with feedback). For more information, please refer to the [FAQ entries dealing with Turnitin](#).

**What is Plagiarism?** Dr Kevin Smith covers plagiarism comprehensively in his book *Academic Writing and Theological Research*. This is the textbook for the compulsory first course, THE1120 Introduction to Theology.

**How will I know that the assignment has uploaded successfully?** Successfully uploaded assignments will reflect on the assignment summary screen. If your assignment includes a Turnitin component, you will also receive an email confirmation along with a paper ID. Note that many assignments also require you to click a submit button after you have uploaded the document, otherwise your document will remain in draft mode and your course tutor will not be notified. The state of your assignment will be reflected in the submission status section as either "No Attempt", "Draft (not submitted)", or "Submitted for grading". **Take care that your submission status reflects as "Submitted for grading" before the due date or you could lose marks for a late assignment.**

## Receiving My Graded Assignments

**How long will I wait for my results?** Multiple-choice assignments are graded by computer. For essay-type assignments, we strive to release the results within 2-3 weeks after the due date but, when there are a large number of students in the course, the grading may take a little longer. For major assignments that fall due at the end of a course, the turn-around time may extend to six weeks after the due date.

**How do I get my graded assignment back?** You will receive all your feedback via MySats. Click on the relevant assignment, e.g. Assignment 1. For assignments graded in Turnitin, click on the blue pen under 'File Submissions' ([see here for screenshots](#)). Ensure that GradeMark is enabled (click the GradeMark button to enable/disable it). You should see at least two types of feedback: inline comments and general comments. Inline comments are indicated by blue 'bubbles' within your text; point your mouse cursor at them to read them. General comments are overall remarks that appear in the sidebar on the right. Additionally, you will be awarded a mark (grade), and there may also be a rubric assessment which you can access by clicking the rubric button near the lower right corner. As always, you may consult the FAQ on viewing and [downloading your feedback](#) for more detailed information.

**What is the pass mark for assignments?** The pass mark for assignments is 50 per cent (unless otherwise stated). This is true for both multiple-choice and essay type assignments.

**May I resubmit if I fail an assignment?** No. The grade that you receive for a submitted assignment counts towards your overall course grade. You do not have an opportunity to resubmit the assignment so as to improve your grade.

**How do I query the status of an ungraded assignment?** In the case of MySats submissions, if an assignment has not been graded three weeks after the due date, you should **query its status with the course facilitator**. If he (or she) does not respond to your query within two days, please query it with Grace <grace@sats.edu.za> if you are an individual student. If you are a partnership student, ask your partnership administrator to query it with Hugh <hugh@sats.edu.za>. (Grace will not respond directly to partnership students.) *Please do not contact the seminary directly until you have attempted to contact the facilitator.*

**What forms must I include with my assignments?** Every essay assignment must include a cover sheet. You will find the [Assignment cover page with declaration template](#) on the MySats Home Page under 'Information Kiosk', 'Student Guides'.

## Examinations

**How will I know if my course has an examination?** When you go to your course homepage on MySats, you will be able to see if there is an examination.

**What form will the examination take?** The instructions on MySats will tell you all that you need to know about the nature of the exam. SATS makes use of both open-book and close-book exams. Open-book exams do not require an invigilator; you are free to consult any and all study materials during

the examination. Closed-book exams require an invigilator; you may not consult any study materials during the exam except those that are specifically listed. .

**Do I require an invigilator?** The examination instructions will clearly stipulate whether or not an invigilator is required. Essentially, open-book exams do not require invigilation, while close-book exams do. If an invigilator is required, the person must be at least 21 years old and may not be a close relative.

**When must I write the exam?** You need to consult the deadline for the test on MySats. In most instances, the exam will be open a few weeks before the deadline, so you can write it at your convenience.

**Can I write the exam before I get my assignment marks back?** Yes. The exams are not based on the assignments, but on the entire course content.

**What is the pass mark for exams?** Unless otherwise indicated, the pass mark is 50 per cent. Multiple-choice style tests are graded *negatively*. This means that a wrong answer scores a negative mark. This is necessary in order to prevent students who do not know the answer from making 'free guesses'.

**What if I fail the exam?** The instructions for the exam on MySats will tell you how many attempts you are permitted. If you are allowed only one attempt, whatever grade you score for the failed attempt will count towards your final grade. If you are allowed two attempts, the higher of your two attempts will count towards your course grade. If you score below 40 per cent for the exam, you fail the course. If you score between 40 and 50 per cent for the exam, your percentage counts towards your overall grade; if your average is 50 or above, you pass the course.

**What do I do if I lose connectivity in the middle of my on-line exam?** Try to reconnect to the exam. If you cannot reconnect, please contact the course facilitator for assistance.

## Appeals

**What should I do if I am not happy with an assessment result?** If you are dissatisfied with the grade an assessor has given you, you should first query it with him (or her) by asking for clarification as to the reasons for the grade assigned. If his response does not satisfy you, you may query it further with the Registrar <jane@sats.edu.za> and she will refer the matter to the Head of Undergraduate School.

**May I request a reassessment by a different assessor?** Yes. If consultation with the assessor and the Head of the Undergraduate School does not resolve the problem, you may request a reassessment. The disputed paper will be evaluated by a second assessor, who is a senior academic at SATS. A fee of R370 is levied for the remark. If the second assessor essentially agrees with the first assessor, your original mark will stand and you will forfeit the R370. If the second assessor finds in your favour, the R370 will be refunded and your grade amended accordingly.

## Cheating

**What constitutes 'cheating' on my SATS work?** Broadly understood, cheating includes anything you do which results in you submitting work to the seminary that is not truly your own work. This would include, but is not limited to, the following kinds of offences:

- Plagiarising in any form whatsoever (you are responsible to familiarise yourself with what constitutes plagiarism; see Kevin Smith, *Academic Writing and Theological Research*, chapter 5 for a full treatment)
- Copying from another student's assignment or test
- Allowing another person to do all or much of the work on your assignment
- Failing to abide by the conditions for writing a test
- Allowing another student access to your assignments

**What is the penalty for cheating?** We follow a standard disciplinary procedure. Each case is carefully investigated, and the penalties range from a 10 per cent deduction on the assignment to expulsion from the study programme, depending on the nature of the case.

## Timetable 2018

**Where can I find the 2018 timetable?** You will find the [2018 Timetable](#) on the MySats Home page under 'Information Kiosk'.

**How does the term system work?** We offer our undergraduate courses within a term-based timetable.

- The academic year begins on 1 February, and is divided into four terms: Term 1, 1 February to 30 April; Term 2, 1 May to 31 July; Term 3, 1 August to 31 October; and Term 4, 1 November to 31 January.
- Courses that are offered in Term 1 are repeated in Term 3, and courses that are offered in Term 2 are repeated in Term 4.
- If you register early for a course, you will be able to access it about 4 weeks before its official starting date (e.g. if you register for THE1121 Christian Foundations in Term 3, starting 1 August, you will be able to access your study materials from around 1 July). This means you can arrange your studies to give you four months to complete a course.

## Payments

**How much must I pay?** You need to consult the [Pricelist](#) which you can download from the MySats Home page under 'Information Kiosk'. If you cannot download it, you can contact the Helpdesk to have a Pricelist emailed to you.

**Does SATS offer a payment plan?** SATS does not offer a payment plan. Courses must be paid for up front.

**How do payments work?** Once we receive proof of your payment, as long as the term is open, your courses will be activated on the MySats site or the material will be couriered to you (if you have requested printed material). For students outside South Africa, no courier service is offered.

**How can I pay?** Payments can be effected in two ways:

1. **Directly into our bank account.** Simply make the relevant payment and complete the **Course Order Form** which you will find on the MySats Home Page under 'Information Kiosk'. Send your completed Course Order Form and confirmation of your payment to Grace at email <grace@sats.edu.za>.

If you make the payment electronically, please use your name and **computer-generated reference number** or **student number** as a beneficiary reference.

Our bank details are as follows:

Account Name:	SA Theological Seminary
Bank:	First National Bank
Account No:	51321182366
Branch:	Fourways Mall
Branch Code:	251655

2. **Via our online payment option:** Go to [www.sats.edu.za/course-payment/](http://www.sats.edu.za/course-payment/)

The system accepts all major credits cards. When you order courses online, please remember to indicate your **student number** and the codes of the courses you are ordering (e.g. BIB1121; THE1122). Unless you do so, we cannot process your order.

Send your completed Course Order Form and the confirmation of your payment to Grace by email <grace@sats.edu.za>.

**What if I live outside of South Africa?** Foreign students can make payment in the same two ways as described above. Please use the **SWIFT Banking Details** above for direct payments. Overseas students can also pay via PayPal. If you pay by PayPal, please make sure that you add bank charges to your payment. For assistance, please contact Victor Kunda <victor@sats.edu.za>.

Bank Address:	FNB Division of First Rand Bank Ltd Shop rs0032 Fourways View Cnr Cedar and Witkoppen Rds Fourways Johannesburg South Africa
Swift Address:	FIRNZAJJ
Routing #	none

## Financial Aid

**Does SATS offer bursaries or scholarships?** Subject to funds being available, we offer reduced fees to deserving candidates. As a private tertiary institution, we receive no subsidies from the government. For more information, send an email to <bursaries@sats.edu.za>.

## Termination of Enrolment

**How do I terminate my enrolment at SATS?** If it becomes necessary to terminate your studies before you have completed your programme, kindly inform the Registrar <jane@sats.edu.za>.

**Can I get a refund?** No. We do not offer any refunds. If you drop out of the programme (or a course) without being able to complete it, you forfeit any monies you have paid towards that programme (or course).

**When might SATS terminate my enrolment?** The seminary reserves the right to terminate your enrolment on the grounds, inter alia, of your non-payment of fees, dormancy of at least 12 months, unbecoming conduct (see the section on 'Cheating') or making defamatory remarks about the seminary or its staff.

## My Curriculum

**Can I change my curriculum?** Yes. When you apply for a Higher Certificate in Christian Life or a Bachelor of Theology, we shall send you a recommended curriculum. The recommended curriculum includes both compulsory and elective courses. You may exchange elective courses for other courses at the same academic level (see below). When you first receive your curriculum, you can change it free of charge by contacting Sharon <sharon@sats.edu.za>. Subsequently, an administrative fee of R105 is levied for changing a curriculum.

**What are the rules governing credits at each level?** In the Higher Certificate programmes, there are no rules, in that you simply complete a minimum of 120 credits. In the BTh, however, you must have *at least* 120 third-year credits. You may be wondering, 'How do I know the academic level of a SATS course?' Easy. The first **number** of the course code is the academic year (level) of the course. For instance, THE1121 is a first-year course, but THE3121 is a third-year course.

**Can I switch programmes (e.g. HCCL to BTh, or BTh to HCCL)?** In other words, if you have enrolled for a BTh, can you downgrade your enrolment to a Higher Certificate in Christian Life (HCCL)? Or if you enrolled for a HCCL, can you upgrade to a BTh? No, you may not change your programme.

### **Please note the following:**

1. Students who graduate with the HCCL, and later decide to register for the BTh, may only transfer 60 credits from the HCCL into the BTh. They must earn 300 credits to complete the BTh.

2. Students who register for the Higher Certificate in Christian Counselling (HCCC), and later decide to pursue the BTh, may transfer a maximum of 60 credits from the HCCC towards their BTh.

## Ordering Courses

**How many courses must I take per year?** We require you to take **at least four courses per year in order** to finish the BTh in a reasonable time (7½ years, if you were awarded no credits for Recognition of Prior Learning or Credit Accumulation Transfer); if you can manage five courses, you will earn a BTh in 6 years. If you are studying full time, you should do ten courses per year.

**How do I order new courses?** Simply make the relevant payment and complete the Course Order Form. Send your completed Course Order Form and the confirmation of your payment to Grace by email <grace@sats.edu.za>. If you make the payment electronically, please use your name and **student number** as a beneficiary reference.

**What happens after I pay?** Once we receive your payment and the indication of which courses you have ordered, we will activate the courses on your student profile. You should be able to access your study materials from the MySats site within 2-3 days (as long as the term is open). If you purchase printed materials, we will courier the study materials to you. (The printing service is only offered to students who reside in South Africa.)

**Who can assist me with course orders?** You can contact the administrator responsible for new orders, Chris Ndlovu <chris@sats.edu.za>, for assistance.

**Can I change my course order?** You can change or cancel your order up to 5 days after the start of a new term, thereafter no changes will be allowed.

## Library

**Does Sats lend library books to students?** If by “books” you mean physical copies, then no. Our students are scattered across more than 80 countries, so it is not possible for us to do that. You are welcome to come to the seminary and use the library on site. You can access the full catalogue on your MySats page.

**Can I access the Seminary’s e-book/journal collection?** Yes. Our subscription to e-journals and e-books can be accessed remotely via MySats through the EBSCOhost Portal. On your MySats homepage, select ‘Research Tools’ and then “Journals and EBooks” and finally login to EBSCOhost. This will provide you with direct access to all our EBSCOhost holdings, including 177 000 multi-discipline eBooks, ATLA Religion Database with ATLA Serials, The Religion and Philosophy Collection and Academic Search Premier. The link on MySats includes some information about each journal collection and instructions for accessing the journals (URL, username, and password).

We are proud of these incredible resources which God has provided for us and we invite you to use them as much as possible. For any library related queries, please contact our librarian, Tawanda Maenzanise <library@sats.edu.za>.

## Accreditation and Recognition

**Is SATS accredited?** Yes, fully! To operate legally in South Africa, a private institution has to be registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and accredited by the Council on Higher Education (CHE). SATS is fully registered with the DHET and all our programmes are fully accredited by the CHE. This means that our degrees have met the exact same academic requirements as equivalent degrees from public universities, such as UNISA or the University of Stellenbosch.

**Will my degree be accepted by my church?** Most denominations will accept a SATS qualification for ordination purposes, but some denominations require the ordination candidates to hold qualifications from their preferred provider. Therefore, you need to check with your church or denominational office whether your SATS degree will be acceptable.

**Will my degree be acceptable overseas?** South African degrees are well respected overseas, and since SATS has the highest level of accreditation in South Africa, most foreign institutions will admit our graduates to further studies. However, each institution is sovereign with respect to which applicants it admits, so no institution—local or international—is obliged to admit a SATS graduate (or, for that matter, a graduate from any other institution).

## Credits for Prior Learning

**Can I earn credits for previous studies and life experience?** You may apply for exemption from courses if you can demonstrate that you have met the course outcomes. You need to provide us with details of what you have done, so that we can evaluate your prior learning in the light of our courses and advise you as to your study options. We may need to undertake an assessment of your knowledge and skills (e.g. an exam, assignment, or interview) to determine whether your prior learning justifies exemption. When you apply to SATS, we conduct a provisional assessment of your prior learning. If you have done additional work during your tenure as a SATS student, you may apply to have a new assessment of your prior learning. The fee for a second assessment of prior learning is R250 plus the cost of any RPL credits awarded.

## Graduation

**Does SATS have a formal graduation?** Yes. Graduation takes place once a year, in April. If you are unable to attend your graduation ceremony, special arrangements can be made with the Registrar to graduate *in absentia*. The cost for couriering your certificate is R140 locally and \$40 overseas. There is a basic cost for the graduation which includes the hiring of the gown, hood, and cap. The seminary orders the graduation attire for you so that when you arrive for the ceremony, everything will be ready. Expect to pay approximately R400 for these items. Photographs will be for your own account.

**When does SATS award certificates?** Twice each year: April and October. The deadlines for the submission of your work are 31 January for the April awards, and 31 July for the October awards. If you make your final submissions later than those dates, we cannot commit to process your graduation at the next presentation of certificates.

**In which languages may I submit work?** Our official languages are **English** and **French**. This means that all assignments, tests, and theses must be submitted in English or French. We do, however, understand that many of our students are not first-language English or French speakers. Therefore, unless your poor English or French makes it difficult to understand what you are saying or you could easily have corrected the spelling and grammar mistakes by using your word processor, our assessors will not penalise you for imperfect English or French usage.

For more information regarding the accreditation of our qualifications in French, please contact Patrick Mutombo <patrick@sats.edu.za>.