**10 Basic Steps** 

**for Setting Up an Effective TEE Programme**

**using SEAN Courses**

# Overview

## 1. Identify potential students and their training needs

SEAN courses are most effective when our partners identify the training needs of the local church in their context. [(read more)](#_64ws2wi8c6kp)

## 2. Select a Competent Director

Perhaps the most important aspect of an effective programme is choosing the correct person to organise and direct it. [(read more)](#_ij4lhywes40x)

## 3. Establish Clear Administrative Structures

Once the right person has been chosen to lead the programme, it is important to set up clear administrative structures. [(read more)](#_ox7cypkow82q)

## 4. Establish Solid Financial Policies and Procedures

Any successful training programme needs to give attention to the issue of finance. This is particularly important if the programme crosses denominational or other boundaries where there working financial procedures are not in place. [(read more)](#_awgyagbf913d)

## 5. Establish guidelines for enrolment that focus on discipleship

NEVER make the entrance to the programme too easy. Remember you are training people to be God’s servants and this demands discipline and hard work. [(read more)](#_cxq9zy5eu92s)

## 6. Organise a Learner-Centred Programme of Study

When setting up a programme of study, it is easy to make the mistake of focusing on the content of the curriculum rather than the learning needs of the students. ([read more](#_6bvqt4piunqm))

## 7. Ensure that Student Learning is recognised

It is important that people receive adequate and appropriate recognition for their learning. ([read more](#_jy2a5o9w34bt))

## 8. Organise the programme to encourage discipline

One of the major advantages of TEE is its flexibility, which allows students to study without leaving their jobs, families and church. However this flexibility should not be abused. Experience shows that programmes flourish when students are encouraged to learn in a clear, well-structured manner. ([read more](#_208n32gez37k))

## 9. Select and Train Competent Tutors

**Note:** In some programmes Tutors are called “Group Leaders”.

Humanly speaking, good tutoring of study groups is the key to success; its lack is frequently the cause of failure in a TEE/SEAN programme. The whole approach of TEE tutorials is that they are based on open discussion and discovery-learning that involves each member of a Study Group, rather than being a one-way lecture by a teacher to a largely passive group of listeners. ([read more](#_cpapr33zp6xi))

## 10. Design effective publicity and administrative documents

To mount an effective programme you will find it necessary to design and print forms and documents to suit your local situation. ([read more](#_43q9fx3c4nb5))

# 1. Identify potential students and their training needs

SEAN courses are most effective when our partners identify the training needs of the local church in their context. It is helpful to identify:

a) the potential students

i. What type of people do we want to train (e.g. are they new Christians; those who already have experience in leadership but little formal training; young people)?

ii. What type of churches do they belong to?

iii. What is their educational background?

iv. What language are they most comfortable using?

b) their training needs

i. What training do such students/churches need?

ii. What do we want them to learn (not just in terms of ‘head knowledge’, but also changed attitudes and new/improved skills for ministry)?

iii. Where/how will the students use their learning in their lives and churches/denominations?

c) how the courses will meet these training needs

i. On the basis of the previous answers, what courses should we use?

ii. Which is the best way to use these courses in our circumstances?

iii. What impact should the courses have on the students and the Church?

iv. Can this impact be measured? If so, how can the success of the courses be evaluated?

v. What should the relationship be between the training programme and the Church?

d) human resources

i. Who should be involved in this planning process?

ii. Who should be the leaders to run the programme and how shall we choose them?

Once you have identified these four areas and answered each question, finish this step by summarising each section clearly and concisely.

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# 2. Select a Competent Director

Perhaps the most important aspect of an effective programme is choosing the correct person to organise and direct it. The Director is responsible for setting up and running the programme and so he/she will need a clear job description. The larger the programme the more efficient and well prepared this person must be.

Below we suggest some characteristics required in the Director. We also give a description of various aspects of the job. **Note:** Although the jobs that follow are the responsibility of the Director, in larger programmes most of them should be delegated to other competent officers.

**Person Specification**

The Director should:

*Qualifications/Background*

* show expertise and educational competence, fully informed about TEE[1] and SEAN;
* be a senior leader with credibility and the ability to influence others and the full backing of Church, Board or Denomination;

*Personal Attributes/Character*

* demonstrate perseverance as a hard and disciplined worker who won’t pull out half way through;
* be honest in managing money;
* be respected by all concerned (church leaders, colleagues, volunteers and students).

*Key Skills*

* show clear leadership and vision for the ministry and the ability to enable others to commit themselves to the vision;
* think and plan strategically, setting priorities and understanding strengths, weakness, opportunities, threats;
* be a notably efficient and well organised person, able to manage time and pressure;
* be able to manage people with the ability to give professional support and direction to others;
* be able to identify and access sufficient resources to do the job.

**Job Description**

The Director will be responsible to:

*Academic/Student Support*

1. set the curriculum specifying the courses to be studied and in which order;
2. set the academic year based on the national School and Church calendar;
3. set up enrollment and progression procedures;
4. select and train competent Tutors/Group Leaders;
5. organise workshops, special meetings and exams.

*Finance and Administration*

1. set up an administrative office which at least must have basic office equipment, including a good filing cabinet and space to store materials;
2. purchase and/or print all course materials and provide them well in advance for the study groups;
3. file all home study, attendance and exam records, issuing the corresponding certificates and accreditation;
4. manage the finances of the programme.

*Communication*

1. publicise the programme, and design and implement the enrollment process;
2. prepare statistics and reports on a regular basis for his board, council or denomination;
3. record interesting testimonies of the use of the programme, collect feedback and corrections and send them to SEAN International on a yearly basis, in order to help upgrade the courses.

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[1] Ideally the Director should be someone with first-hand experience of Theological Education by Extension but should certainly understand how it compares with other forms of education and understand its strengths and methodology.

# 3. Establish Clear Administrative Structures

Once the right person has been chosen to lead the programme, it is important to set up clear administrative structures. This is true whether the programme is small or large, whether it is organised for one local church or for a whole denomination. The following questions are given to help you in that process:

*Governance/Accountability Structures*

1. To whom will the Director be responsible?
2. How often and when should the Director report?
3. How will the TEE programme relate to the church or denomination?

*Management Structures*

1. What are the Director’s powers, prerogatives and responsibilities?
2. What other people will be involved in running the programme? How will they relate to the Director and to each other?

*Size and Scope of the Organisation*

1. Will your programme be in the context of a local church, a group of churches, a denomination, or will it seek to serve different denominations?
2. Will your programme focus on one country or will it be international?
3. Roughly how many students do you plan to enrol? Will this increase each year?
4. Where will the administrative office be located?
5. What resources are available have to do the job?
   * 1. What elements do you already have?
     2. What do you need to get? How will you get them?

Once links are clearly established between the partner church or churches and those who will run the programme:

* Write out job descriptions for each officer.
* Design an organigram that shows the lines of command, reporting and responsibility.
* Establish clear procedures . **Note:** The case studies in Appendix 5 may give you some ideas on this.

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# 4. Establish Solid Financial Policies and Procedures

Any successful training programme needs to give attention to the issue of finance. This is particularly important if the programme crosses denominational or other boundaries where there working financial procedures are not in place. It is worth deciding, at an early stage, such matters as:

*Expenses*

1. who pays for the initial printing of books;
2. who is responsible for staff salaries;
3. who meets incidental expenses;

*Income*

1. who sets the students fees;
2. who is responsible to raise other income needed for the programme;

*Financial Accountability*

1. who is responsible for keeping track of income and expenses;
2. who audits accounts and to whom are they then presented.

**Costing the Programme**

We recommend you make careful calculations and fund your programme by charging a reasonable enrolment fee at the beginning of each year or term, and then a course/term fee which, if needed, can be paid in monthly instalments. When costing the programme, there are many factors to take into account such as:

* staff salaries to cover those employed by the organization, including staff who may be needed for packing and posting books, dealing with correspondence and administration, or supervising tutorial groups;
* printing or purchase of SEAN courses and any other promotional or administrative materials. (If you are printing: you will need to preserve capital for further printing in the future, cover costs of storage and insurance of stock, the l0% publication fee to be paid to SEAN International, etc.);
* use and insurance of premises and stock;
* travel, post.

SEAN recommends the following vital financial principles:

1. **Never make the programme free.** This has been done several times and invariably the programme isn’t taken seriously. If students genuinely can’t pay for the course, arrange for churches or individuals to provide scholarships **but always insist the student at least pays a token amount.**
2. **Never link the fees charged to the student with the cost of the SEAN text book.** Emphasise the student is entering a programme, not just purchasing a study book.
3. **Always insist everything is paid before a student takes the term exam.** Remember, apart from teaching course content, the purpose of the programme is to develop principles of Christian living and ministry. One of these is paying debts!

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# 5. Establish guidelines for enrolment that focus on discipleship

Once leaders are excited by the possibilities of TEE/SEAN, it is easy for them to try to persuade those they can influence to enrol in the new programme. The danger is that students will join merely because “this missionary or that pastor persuaded me”, and they won’t have the long term commitment and dedication to training that they need to last the course, and to make the best of it. It is much better to be able to work towards a situation where potential students are keenly requesting enrollment, rather than being begged to join the course.

Here we have an important principle:

**NEVER make the entrance to the programme too easy.**

Remember you aren’t merely enrolling students, you are training people to be disciples and God’s servants. This demands discipline and hard work. Jesus was quite emphatic on this point: “And unless you are willing to take up your cross and come with me, you are not fit to be my disciples.” (Matt 10:38)

Once this right attitude is established, where the pressure is “from outside trying to get in”, rather than the reverse, important conditions can be laid down.

The usual requirements are:

* 80% minimum home study to be completed.
* 80% minimum punctual attendance at Group Meetings.
* 80% minimum pass mark in the Final Exam.
* all fees paid before taking the Final Exam.
* active involvement in local ministry assignments.

Here is another vital principle:

**Always insist that students pledge to fulfill the programme’s conditions.**

Make them sign a statement to this effect on an official enrollment form before they start the programme. You have a sample enrollment form in Appendix 6 to illustrate this point.

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# 6. Organise a Learner-Centred Programme of Study

When setting up a programme of study, it is easy to make the mistake of focusing on the content of the curriculum rather than the learning needs of the students. Remember that the basic and liberating concept of TEE is that the discipleship and ministry needs of the student, rather than academic requirements, should be the basis of the programme. In other words, the curriculum should be a means to equipping people to grow in their faith, knowledge of God and ministry skills and should be organised accordingly. Effective TEE programmes combine five essential elements:

**A. Well-designed, interactive, self-study materials**

This is where SEAN materials come in. The courses have been carefully designed using a method of instruction that has been developed specifically for self-study and effective learning, breaking learning units up into manageable sections that enable reflection, self-testing and application. This method has been used effectively for discipleship and ministry training in many parts of the world for more than 40 years.

**B. A well-planned Curriculum:**

Here you will need to have a clear idea of what knowledge, skills and attitudes you want to develop in your students. You will also have to have a clear idea of what the students already know before they enter the programme and what you want them to learn through the programme. Each of SEAN’s courses are designed with specific objectives in mind and you will need to decide what place each might play in the overall curriculum that you want your students to study.

In most places, SEAN courses are used on three specific levels:

**Pre-foundation courses:**

· *Abundant Life* (The A, B, C of Christian Life).

· *Abundant Light****[1]*** (A panoramic view of the whole Bible and its message)

· *Union with Christ* (A devotional study of Ephesians).

· *Bible Encounter Manual* (A dynamic group-study tool).

**Foundation courses:**

· *Life of Christ*[2] (an integrated programme in six 12 week terms).

· *Life and Letters of Paul* (three 12 week terms)

· *The Pentateuch* (two 12 week terms)

**Additional leadership training courses:**

Students can elect from these courses according to their ministry:

· *How to Preach* (12 week term)

· *How to Prepare and Lead Services* (12 week term)

· *How to be a Tutor* (12 weeks while tutoring Book 1 of the *Life of Christ*)

· *How to use the Bible Encounter Manual*

· *How to teach children in the Church*[3]

· *How to teach children Community Health*

· *How to set up mercy ministries****[4]***

· *Work for All* (12 week term)

· *Jeremiah, Prophet of Hope* – an advanced course (12 week term)

· *Hebrew, learn as you read* (12 week term)

· *Train & Multiply* (A complete Church Planting learn-on-the-job programme). [DMB1]

**Note:** Many programmes, don’t just use SEAN courses, they also integrate other materials.

**C. Facilitated Group Discussions**

Meeting together in a group to discuss learning is an essential part of effective TEE programmes throughout the world. This shouldn’t surprise us, since Jesus himself taught his disciples as a group and often trained them by asking them questions when they were together as a group. You will need to set up clear guidelines for how regularly your groups should meet. You will also need to give time to thinking who will be the most effective tutors/group leaders and how you will appoint them and train them. Often the best people to be group leaders are those who have studied the courses themselves, so you should always encourage your group leaders to look out for future leaders in their groups. Normally groups work best when they are local and accessible. Often they work well as part of the discipleship or ministry training programme of the local church. In fact, many churches have found that SEAN study groups can provide an excellent tool for discipleship and leadership training within the local congregation.

**D. Practical Ministry Assignments**

Because students are located in the immediate context of their daily life and Christian ministry, TEE is particularly effective in enabling the practical outworking of learning. SEAN has this aim throughout. It is worth establishing as a condition for joining the programme that a student agrees to be involved in some practical ministry in the church. This service, however simple, will help to ensure that nobody studies just for the sake of it or merely to gain prestige by displaying a diploma on the wall! Many programmes that are linked to SEAN develop practical ministry assignments that are assessed as part of the programme.

**E. Effective Assessment/Appropriate Qualifications**

Effective learning happens when the objectives of the programme are achieved. This means that assessment should be linked to the objectives of the programme. SEAN courses seek to assess people in 3 ways.

· *Self-testing throughout the course materials*. Students are expected to complete their workbooks and to test themselves in relation to what they have studied. The lessons are set up so that the students can check what they have learnt. This is why the completion of the workbook is so important.

· *Interaction in the study group*. Students learn as they express their ideas in a group and learn to listen to others. What they have learnt on their own can be affirmed or, if necessary, corrected as they discuss with others.

· *Final exams*. While exams are not the only way of testing people’s learning, a well-designed exam can affirm students in what they have studied.

Perhaps even more important is for students to have some idea of what the studies will lead on to, in terms of on-going practical ministry. For example, the recognition they will receive from the church, increased responsibilities to follow, further opportunities of study and advancement within the church’s leadership. This can provide both stimulus to intending students, and also avoid discouragement and disillusionment on the part of people who thought that doing such a course would mean their being (for example) ordained with a high salary and status! An appropriate certificate can be given at the end of a course or programme of study to affirm student learning and to show how this might be recognised by the church. The clearer the organisers of the programme are about this, the more chance there is of sending appropriate signals to the potential constituency, both students and the rest of the church.[5]

Finally, if one expects discipline and hard work from the students, obviously they are entitled to enter a serious programme. This means they must know exactly:

· what they will be studying,

· what benefits it will give them,

· how long it will take,

· what it will cost them in terms of finances and time, etc..

[1] Also known as *The Big Picture* or *Pure Gold*

[2] Also known as *A Compendium of Pastoral Theology*

[3] Also known as *Feed my Lambs*

[4] Also known as *Mercy, Mission, Me?*

[5] The SEAN Manuals give guidance on this and, in order to know what SEAN courses teach, be sure to read Appendix 2 where all this is set out.

[DMB1]Should this still be here?

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# 7. Ensure that Student Learning is recognised

It is important that people receive adequate and appropriate recognition for their learning. It is recommended that students be given frequent encouragement for all work successfully achieved. For TEE students, the most appropriate place for this recognition is in the local church. Situations vary from place to place. In some places certificates and ceremonies are vitally important to encourage students; in others a simple certificate is enough.

*Pre-Foundation Certificates*

In most programmes, students get a simple certificate for each of the pre-foundation courses just to prove they have finished them. Since these certificates are not usually pre-requisites for higher study, they do not earn credits towards any higher diploma.

*Foundation Certificates*

In many places, students who successfully finish the two year Life of Christ course[1] are awarded a “Certificate of Pastoral Theology”. This is often a pre-requisite to continue on to higher levels or to the SEAN leadership training courses. Some places give a small certificate at the end of each term, and then a larger official one at the end of the complete course.

A student who successfully finishes all six books of the Life of Christ course will have:

· completed over 200 hours of home-study, interacting with several thousand pages of text;

· taken part in 66 group discussions (120 hours) with a trained facilitator;

· participated in many practical ministry assignments;

· taken about 150 tests and written 6 exams.

The accumulative effect is quite remarkable not just because of the learning achieved, but more importantly because of what it enables people to do in the ministry of the church.

*Other Certificates*

Programmes often establish a “Diploma of Pastoral Theology” which is awarded to students who, over and above the Compendium, accrue credits for successfully finishing a specified number of “Leadership training courses”.

*External Validation/Accreditation*

In several parts of the world, the successful completion of SEAN courses is formally recognised by churches as part of their discipleship and leadership training. In certain places, even Seminaries and Bible Colleges recognise the learning of SEAN students towards further studies either in terms of prior learning or even as credit towards their own programmes. Good relationships have also been established with some of the theological accrediting agencies to recognise the programmes run by SEAN partners in different parts of the world. Each organisation will need to weigh up the benefits and costs of external validation.

[1] The Six Courses on the Life of Christ are also known as ‘The Compendium of Pastoral Theology’.

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# 8. Organise the programme to encourage discipline

One of the major advantages of TEE is its flexibility, which allows students to study without leaving their jobs, families and church. However this flexibility should not be abused. Experience shows that programmes flourish when students are encouraged to learn in a clear, well-structured manner. Programmes that start or stop at any time often grind to a halt. Therefore it is important to establish which elements within the programme are flexible and which are not. The following issues should be clearly thought through:

a. **Personal Study**

The place and time for the students’ home study is flexible to their situation and needs. However, the more they can be encouraged to study at a set desk, in a fixed room, at regular hours on predetermined days, the better. TEE relies on self discipline which should be encouraged at all times. **Note:** The SEAN booklet “How to Study[DMB1] ” is published to help students organise their studies.

b. **Group Study**

The day, place and time of the group meeting can be arranged to the best advantage of its members. However, once these three elements are fixed, it is vital that they aren’t changed at whim. To do so will only be to the detriment of the programme.

c. **Term Dates**

As regards the programme itself, it is important to organise each term including fixed dates for the first group meeting and Exam/workshop. Issues to consider in planning term dates include:

i. Terms should be planned to coincide with the regular school system of the country concerned. In this way, children and parents can have holidays at the same time.

ii. Harmonise dates with the church’s or denominational activities. The two case studies in Appendix 5 show how important this is.

iii. Allowing some built-in flexibility. Some find it useful to incorporate at least one “flexi-week” in each term to allow for adjustments and for groups to catch up before the Exam/workshop.

d. **The availability of learning resources**

When, fixing dates, it is also important to bear in mind the availability of supplies of study materials for each successive stage. Many programmes have lost momentum by running out of study material. A programme should never be halted for lack of study materials. To do so takes away from the seriousness of the programme, students will be discouraged and a key teaching point, of doing things well for the Lord, is lost.

[DMB1]Where is this and how can people access it?

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# 9. Select and Train Competent Tutors

**Note:** In some programmes Tutors are called “Group Leaders”.

Humanly speaking, good tutoring of study groups is the key to success; its lack is frequently the cause of failure in a TEE/SEAN programme. The whole approach of TEE tutorials is that they are based on open discussion and discovery-learning that involve each member of a Study Group, rather than being a one-way lecture by a teacher to a largely passive group of listeners.

So we have another key principle:

**“The making or breaking**

of your TEE/SEAN programme

will depend largely on your success

in choosing and training efficient Tutors.”

**Criteria for selecting Tutors:**

a) Needless to say, those selected as Tutors must be mature, committed church members whose Christian witness is well established, with a consistent life style, able to set a good example, and preferably with at least some experience in Christian leadership and ministry.

b) Tutors must be highly motivated and in favour of the programme so as to lead from the front.

c) Tutors must have recognized pastoral gifts to continually care for and encourage members of the tutorial group.

d) Tutors must have a clear track record in punctuality and responsibility in fulfilling entrusted work, as they must uphold the programme regulations by example.

e) Tutors must have the recognized ability of “chairmanship” to steer a discussion along useful channels, to keep to the point, to maintain a sense of direction, to avoid distractions, to calm heated moments, to encourage the timid and (tactfully) restrain the over-talkative, to maintain control without dominating, to sum up (or better still, help others to do so) at the end of each stage, etc..

f) Tutors must be honest and organized in all dealings with money. They must also insist and help the students to fulfill their obligations. Tutors should never give away grades to gain popularity.

g) Prior knowledge of theology may be a help, although some think it more of a hindrance in that it can inhibit discussion by the others, unless kept very much in the background.

Some other considerations:

Sadly, pastors and school teachers don’t always make good Tutors; they are so used to one-way communication that Group Meetings easily end up being sermons or lectures. Therefore, if they are to be involved, special attention must be given to helping them understand the difference between their usual methods and those of a good Tutor, who should act as a catalyst.

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# 10. Design effective publicity and administrative documents

To mount an effective programme you will find it necessary to design and print forms and documents to suit your local situation. For instance:

*Publicity Literature*

a. Promotional posters – with pictures and short quotations to get people interested.

b. Brochure – a brief document giving an overview of the programme and who to contact for further information.

c. Prospectus – a more detailed for those who are interested in hosting a group in their church or in studying themselves.

*Administration Documents*

d. Student enrollment forms

e. Study Group record sheets

f. Student record sheets

g. Awards (Certificates/Diplomas)

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**Conclusion**

For promotion purposes it is vital that all the previous steps have been accomplished and that you can answer any questions people may have about your programme.

In a wide-ranging programme, involving numbers of congregations, a major requirement will obviously be the need to keep key leaders informed and involved. The issue of what relation TEE should have with long-established Bible institutes and Seminaries can be a delicate one, in that much of what may be proposed under TEE could seem to be threatening to the established order of things. In some respects it is, as is Christianity itself!

However, the very fact of TEE being different may be an attraction in itself, as the more elderly and established often have an inevitable tendency to resist too much change, while the young will tend to respond favourably to anything that looks different.

**Appendix 3** is the result of serious research world-wide on why SEAN courses have been so successful in building up people and churches. You may find it useful in promoting your programme.

In preparing the ground for a new TEE programme you will need to anticipate some of the likely objections.

**Appendix 4** sets out clear answers to some of the usual first-impression objections.