



**AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY LIMITED**

**STUDENT POLICY HANDBOOK**

**2010**



## Preface

The ACT has developed policies to address issues common to all colleges and students, and to aid them in the learning, teaching and development of ACT units and courses. The following is a *summarised* version of the major ACT policies relating to students at affiliated ACT colleges. These do not replace the complete wording of policies, which should still be read in full. Full detailed versions can be downloaded from the ACT website ([www.actheology.edu.au](http://www.actheology.edu.au)) or by request from the ACT office.

All ACT students should be given full copies of the following policies upon enrolment in ACT courses:

- Academic Misconduct
- Variation of Enrolment
- Progression & Intervention

Research candidates should also be given the full version of the Confirmation of Candidature policy.

The policies have been divided up into the following sections:

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## Terminology:

The terms “registrar”, “academic Dean”, etc are used often throughout this booklet. Your college may have other terms for the staff member who performs these duties. If you are unsure who you need to speak to, talk to a faculty member at your college for advice.

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*All policies are current at the time of printing but are subject to change. Where a major change to a policy will impact a student’s ability to progress in their studies, or articulate to another award, the ACT will attempt to give advance notice, and, where applicable, put into place transition arrangements between the old and new regulations.*

SECTION A: GENERAL POLICIES:

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY**

In line with tertiary institutions throughout Australia, the Australian College of Theology regards academic misconduct as a serious matter. ACT approved colleges are responsible for rigorously pursuing the highest possible standards of academic honesty and integrity.

Academic misconduct may encompass the following actions:

- (i) taking unauthorised materials into an examination;
- (ii) submitting work for an assessment knowing it to be the work of another person;
- (iii) improperly obtaining knowledge of an examination paper and using that knowledge in the examination;
- (iv) arranging for another person to sit an examination in the place of the candidate;
- (v) failing to acknowledge the source of material in an assessment, including project or thesis, in any ACT program;
- (vi) submitting a false medical certificate.

You are expected to acknowledge the source of your ideas and expressions used in your written work. To provide adequate documentation is not only an indication of academic honesty but also a courtesy enabling the marker to consult sources with ease. Deliberate failure to provide documentation may constitute plagiarism, which is subject to a charge of academic misconduct.

Plagiarism might be defined as the wilful reproduction or paraphrasing of substantial unacknowledged written passages in a student's work, or pretending that a scholar's ideas are the student's own. You are required to acknowledge by use of footnotes the origin of extracts, quotes and paraphrases contained in your work. Quotation marks are to be inserted around quoted material.

Except in the case of ACT approved study and assessment schemes, you ought not to assist other students in the writing of individual assessments, such as providing written material to be copied. Material for assessment in one unit of study may not be submitted for assessment in any other unit of the award.

In the case of inadvertent academic dishonesty resulting from misunderstanding of academic conventions rather than deliberate deception, the marker shall deduct marks from the assessment and counsel the student concerning the academic conventions prevailing in the ACT.

Wilful academic misconduct may result in the following penalties:

- the awarding of a fail grade for the whole unit of which the assessment is a part,
- the awarding of 0% for the assessment or thesis or project with or without the opportunity to redeem the assignment,
- the student's exclusion from the award in which he or she is enrolled for a period not exceeding two years,
- exclusion from any award of the Australian College of Theology, or
- another outcome appropriate to the case but with an impact less serious than exclusion from enrolment in any award of the Australian College of Theology.

For coursework units the matter may be referred in writing to the Dean of the ACT and the academic boards for decision.

For domestic students enrolled in a coursework unit, any appeal against an outcome will be dealt with in accordance with the ACT's Dispute Resolution Policy for Domestic Students (section 3) which can be accessed on the ACT website and in the Handbooks of the College.

For international students enrolled in a coursework unit, any appeal against an outcome will be dealt with in accordance with the ACT's Dispute Resolution Policy for International Students (section 3) which can be accessed on the ACT website and in the Handbooks of the College.

For research candidates (MTh or ThD) or those enrolled in the research phase of the DMin degree, the consideration of an allegation of misconduct, as well as any appeal against an outcome, will be in accordance with the ACT's "Procedures for consideration of an allegation of academic misconduct by a higher degree research candidate".



## CRITERIA FOR AWARDING HONOURS GRADES

Honours will be determined from the Honours year alone.

Scores needed for the various Honours grades are listed below.

First Class Honours	(I)	=	85% or above
Upper Second Class Honours	(IIA)	=	75-84%
Lower Second Class Honours	(IIB)	=	65-74%
Third Class Honours	(III)	=	50-64%

Students who fail the thesis are ineligible for the award. For full details of the formula used see the full policy, available on the ACT website [www.actheology.edu.au](http://www.actheology.edu.au)



## DISPUTE RESOLUTION FOR DOMESTIC STUDENTS

Whenever possible, grievances will be handled at the affiliated college level and within the College. Formal procedures for the resolution of grievances will normally only be invoked when a matter cannot be resolved by informal means. However, should these internal processes not resolve the matter, provision is made for external independent grievance handling/dispute resolution by reference to the Council of Private Higher Education (COPHE).

An **'academic decision'** means a decision of a member of the academic staff of an affiliated college of the ACT that relates to marks for intra-semester assessment tasks and final grades for units.

Other academic and non-academic/administrative decisions include, but are not limited to, matters relating to fees, withdrawals, etc., and other decisions students may consider are interfering with the progress of their studies or with issuing of an award of the College.

Students concerned about an academic decision should initially discuss the concern informally with the relevant lecturer (for academic) or Registrar (for non-academic) at their affiliated college. In particular, following the release of results of intra-semester assessments (e.g. an essay), students may informally request that an assessment be reviewed by the lecturer of the unit of study. The lecturer/Registrar should deal with the issue promptly, giving a full explanation to the student of the reasons for the academic decision.

If the student's concerns cannot be resolved by the relevant staff member, and/or the student alleges failure to follow published procedures, the student may then choose to approach the Academic Dean of the affiliated college. The student may do this on an informal basis, or else make the complaint formal by putting the grievance in writing, specifying the nature of the complaint and the grounds for their appeal.

The Academic Dean should deal with the issue promptly, giving a full explanation to the student of the reasons for the academic decision.

If the student's concerns cannot be resolved by the Academic Dean of an affiliated college, and/or the student alleges a failure to follow published procedures, the student may formally approach the Dean of the ACT by putting the complaint in writing. Again the nature of the complaint and the grounds for appeal should be detailed.

If the complaint relates to the mark for an intra-semester assessment, the Dean may appoint an independent assessor who will remark the assessment script under dispute.

#### External Dispute Resolution

Students who remain dissatisfied with the outcome of any appeal, except those related to a mark for an intra-semester assessment, can make a final appeal free of charge to the Council of Private Higher Education (COPHE), c/- the Executive Officer, PO Box 4210, Castlecrag, NSW, 2068 (02 9417 0834). Such appeals should be in writing. The staff at affiliated colleges and the ACT are also able to make representation to COPHE regarding the matter. Students can include a nominee in this process if they so choose. Decisions of COPHE shall be final and binding on all parties.

Notwithstanding the above, in matters of dispute resolution, students may exercise their rights to other legal remedies and may contact the higher education authority in their state. Students can include a nominee to represent them in this process if they so choose.



## **NON DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE**

This policy has been designed by the Boards of the ACT in order that students at all levels, as well as teachers, examiners and supervisors, will avoid discriminating language. By discriminating language we mean speaking or writing in a way that discriminates against, vilifies or denigrates individuals on the basis of their gender, colour, ethnicity, age, disability, race, or religion.

The recommendations below concerning avoidance of male-oriented language in generic contexts (see section 5) are intended for use in language about people only.

Departures from the policy need to be justified by the student, especially if he or she is writing a thesis or a major project.

1. All people are created in the image of God and all are equally found wanting before the justice of God. This revealed truth should motivate us to respect all people since Christ identified with and died for all. Inspired by the gospel of Jesus Christ, St Paul sought to establish in the church a new vision of humankind in which the conventional social divisions between male and female, slave and free, and Jew and Greek were broken down and overcome (Gal 3:28). Linguistic discrimination, and its more acute forms of vilification and denigration, culpably undermine and compromise the apostolic vision and should therefore be

avoided by those who are committed to caring for all people, including Christians who are committed to showing unconditional love.

2. The issue of linguistic discrimination in our society is a serious one, which we do well to address, and to do all in our power to avoid and eradicate. Australia's commitment to eliminating discrimination can be measured, for example, by the number of federal acts that have been enacted—including the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* and the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act 1986*—to make it unlawful to discriminate against others on the basis of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, and gender.

3. Linguistic discrimination, as well as vilification and denigration, may occur by means of the language used to refer to or address others, and may take verbal or written form. Linguistic discrimination against people may occur in various ways, whether by ignoring their presence, excluding them, portraying them in the light of irrelevant characteristics or in an unbalanced way, or using language that is insulting, harassing, or based on a stereotype.

4. The means by which and the contexts in which this avoidance of linguistic discrimination should be achieved will vary according to the context of language and culture in which speaking and writing takes place. In working with already published works, such as the Bible, the issue of being faithful to the original intended meaning of a text will need to be addressed in the context of the need to avoid linguistic discrimination. The balance and tension between these two valid concerns (i.e. faithfulness to original meaning and avoiding linguistic discrimination) will vary between published works.

5. In relation to avoiding gender linguistic discrimination, it is recommended that women be made more visible in language by avoiding an older linguistic usage in which “male-specific” and “male-identified” terms were used in a generic sense. The use of the word “man” should also be avoided in idioms and phrases when the speaker or author clearly intends to refer to both men and women. The same applies to pronouns such as “he” and “she”, occupational nouns and job titles, and other titles and naming practices. Stereotyped images of women or men should also be avoided. It is recommended that a number of alternatives proposed in the *Australian Government Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printers* (6<sup>th</sup> edition; 2002) ought to be adopted as far as possible.

6. Language which is racist should be avoided, and especially with respect to people who are especially vulnerable in the Australian context, such as indigenous peoples.

7. Further, language which vilifies or denigrates certain ethnolinguistic groups on the basis of their language or ethnic background should be avoided as forms of linguistic discrimination.

8. Linguistic discrimination and denigration should be avoided also with respect to people with disabilities or for people of certain ages.



SECTION B: ENROLMENT POLICIES:

**CREDIT TRANSFER & RECOGNISED PRIOR LEARNING**

- (i) In ACT courses, prior learning is recognised and/or credit is granted from previous non-ACT study in particular units. Block credit and advanced standing are not applied except in the case of the Bachelor of Christian Studies where block credit forms part of the requirements for the awarding of the degree.
- (ii) Transfer of credit between ACT courses will be based on grades attained.
- (iii) No more than 33% of an ACT award can be granted in credit from an accredited non-ACT award of at least the same level.
- (iv) No credit can be granted from units or an award completed at undergraduate level towards a masters degree or embedded graduate diploma.
- (v) A unit successfully completed or for which credit has been granted in an ACT award cannot be attempted in another award of the ACT. However, if it can be demonstrated that the subject matter of a project or seminar is different from that completed in another award, permission to enrol may be given.
- (vi) No unit already passed or for which credit has been granted in an ACT award can be repeated in that award.
- (vii) Units for which credit is granted from non-ACT awards are designated “AEG”, ad eundem gradum (credit transferred from an equivalent award or institution).
- (viii) Where credit is granted from a non-ACT source towards one or more assessment pieces within a unit, those units are designated as “satisfactory”.
- (ix) There are no fees associated with credit applications either imposed by the affiliated colleges of the ACT or the ACT office.
- (x) The extent to which credit may be granted in an ACT award is dependent on the individual course rules.
- (xi) Applications must be submitted before the student enrolls in an ACT course, and will not normally be considered once the student has commenced study. The unit Supervised Experience-Based Learning (SEBL) is not normally eligible for Course Credit.
- (xii) If a student wishes to undertake non-ACT study during period of their ACT candidature, they must first receive permission from their enrolling ACT affiliated college and the Dean of the ACT for a credit application based on such study is to be considered.

Credit Transfer

Applications for credit transfer from incomplete non-ACT awards will not be considered if the units were completed more than ten years previously.

University students granted approval to count ACT units in their university degrees may enrol at ACT approved colleges and take up to 32 credit points of ACT units. If the approved credit must be at advanced level, such students may take ACT foundational level units at advanced level as long as approval has been given by the Dean on application from the approved college.

Exemptions for units may be granted in cases where there is no direct correlation between units studied and those for which the student is seeking credit, but where it is felt that the student would not benefit from repeating material similar in nature to that already completed elsewhere. The granting of exemptions does not reduce a student’s credit load for an award.

*SMBC Diplomas*

Credit may be granted at the rate of 50% of what ACT diploma graduates receive for entry to ACT undergraduate degrees.

*Moore College Bachelor of Divinity*

Graduates receive 16 cps (two units out of eight) advanced standing to the ACT's MA (Theol). Any credit sought from an incomplete Moore College BTh or BD will be granted towards the ACT undergraduate degrees only.

*Moore College Diploma in Bible & Mission*

Graduates will receive 32 cps in the ACT's undergraduate degrees.

*Overseas Degrees*

## North America

- An MDiv degree from an institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) is counted as equivalent to the ACT's BTh or BMin.
- Non-ATS MDiv graduates may receive up to one year's advanced standing in the ACT's three-year undergraduate program.
- ICI (Texas) University degree graduates receive no credit at degree level.

## Asia

- BD/MDiv degrees of colleges accredited by the Asian Theological Association (ATA) or the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA) are counted as equivalent to ACT undergraduate degrees. Graduates with a GPA of 3.3 or higher may gain entry to the research masters (MTh).
- BTh graduates are required to complete a bridging course of 24 cps at 300–400 level before entry to the ACT's MA Theology or Ministry. A Distinction average achieved after the first 12 cps will mean the waiving of the remaining requirement.

Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)

Applications for credit based on recognition of prior learning will be considered in accordance with the guidelines published in "National Principles and Operational Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)" (AQF, 2004).

*Definition*

RPL is an alternative pathway to an AQF qualification that is different to credit transfer. It is related to learning achieved outside the formal education and training system. It is distinguished from Credit Transfer in that it is the student who is assessed as opposed to the previous course or unit(s) of study.

*How RPL is assessed*

In order to recognise prior learning it is necessary to compare the informal or non-formal learning the individual has achieved against the learning outcomes or performance criteria of the course or qualification to which the student is seeking entry; and to determine if the prior learning fulfils some or any of them.

The processes used to assess RPL applications may take several forms, for example:

- Participation in exactly the same or modified versions of the assessment the student would be required to complete as part of the full course;
- Assessment based on a portfolio of evidence;
- Direct observation of demonstration of skill or competence;

- Reflective papers, journals or portfolios that relate past learning to the learning or competency outcomes of the current course or qualification;
- Provision of examples of the student's work drawn from the workplace, social, community or other setting in which the student applied their learning, skill or competence;
- Testimonials of learning, skill or competence;
- Combinations of any of the above.

The assessment of prior learning for recognition in an award should consider prior learning regardless of how, when and where it was acquired, provided that the learning is relevant to the learning or competency outcomes in a subject, unit, module, course or qualification.

#### *Applications for Granting of RPL*

Any student wishing to apply for assessment for the granting of RPL should prepare a Prior Learning Portfolio (PLP), which details his/her previous work experience, education and training details, and other interests and skills. Supporting documentation, such as references, course details about previous credentialed learning, reports, should be included with the application. Applicants may wish to identify ACT units against which the credit may be granted.

In the case where credit is sought based on RPL, the application should outline the link between the student's learning experiences and the learning outcomes of the unit(s) in which the student is seeking credit.

Students may be required to undertake some form of test or assessment to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes stated.

Overseas applicants for admission to an ACT course, who wish to be considered for credit, should lodge their PLP when they lodge their application for admission to an affiliated college.

#### *Prior Learning Portfolios*

In the case of credentialed learning, the PLP should contain:

- Certified copies of statement(s) of satisfactory completion of a course or units in a course offered by a professional body or enterprise, private educational institution, or by any other provider recognised by a university;
- Documentation stating the objectives, learning outcomes and content of the units in the course;
- For each unit successfully completed, details of any formal assessment of learning undertaken and, if relevant, grades obtained;
- Details of the contact hours of the units in a course

In the case of uncredentialed learning, applications should include:

- Details of prior learning experience(s) to support the claim for credit in units of the proposed ACT courses;
- A detailed curriculum vitae;
- Letters of support from appropriate persons/organisations who can verify these details.

*Recording of decisions to grant credit:*

Students who are granted credit will be informed in writing of the approval, and a copy of the letter is given to their enrolled college for placement in their file. The amount of credit given is also recorded on the student's electronic record in the system database.

With regard to overseas students, if credit granted shortens the student's course, this must be reflected in the offer letter (as this is the contract with the student) and will be indicated either on the eCoE issued for that student to commence the course, or reported on PRISMS. Such students are reminded that Course Credit can affect their visa status.

Specific Award Details

*Diploma of Theology/Diploma of Ministry:*

- (i) For Diploma candidates a maximum of 32 cps can be granted as credit from other accredited academic programs of the ACT. The further 32 cps needed to complete the Diploma may not include any units equivalent to units taken in the other program.
- (ii) ACT degree units may be credited to the diplomas as long as a grade of 40% or more has been achieved. Those transferring in total from the degrees to the diploma may be granted permission to take out the Diploma at other than pass level at the discretion of the Dean.
- (iii) For a completed pass certificate at Level IV or higher (for example, the Associate in Theology), 8 cps of undesignated credit may be given in elective units.

*Advanced Diploma of Theology/Advanced Diploma of Ministry*

- (i) A maximum of 64 cps may be credited from other completed accredited academic programs of the ACT. The further 32 cps needed to complete the Advanced Diploma may not include any units equivalent to units taken in the other program.
- (ii) ACT degree units may be credited to the diplomas as long as a grade of 40% or more has been achieved. Those transferring from degree study to a diploma award may be granted permission to take out the Advanced Diploma at other than pass level at the discretion of the Dean.
- (iii) For a completed pass certificate at Level IV or higher (for example, the Associate in Theology), 8 cps of undesignated credit may be given in elective units.

*Associate Degree*

- (i) No more than 8 cps may be granted to ACT undergraduate degrees from a complete or incomplete ACT or non-ACT one year Certificate IV in theology or ministry.
- (ii) In the case of a two year non-ACT VET diploma in ministry or theology, 16 cps may be granted.
- (iii) No more than 32 cps credit can be granted from completion of the ACT's three-year Advanced Diploma of Theology or Advanced Diploma of Ministry.
- (iv) No more than 24 cps credit can be granted from completion of the ACT's two-year Diploma of Theology or Diploma of Ministry
- (v) Students who are enrolled in an ACT diploma award may wish to obtain academic credit towards the AssocDegTheol in one or more of the following ways:
  - There are some units that have the same syllabi in the diplomas and the undergraduate degrees. Most of these are located in the Department of Ministry and Practice and are skills based. One or more of these units in a diploma or an advanced diploma (up to a maximum of 25% of the diploma award) may be counted for academic credit in the relevant degree.
  - Students with an incomplete diploma award may obtain academic credit in a degree at the rate of two degree units for every three diploma units which are completed with a Credit result or better. The exact units for which credit is received will be determined on a case by case basis.

- Unless counted in the above provision, students who obtain at least a credit grade in any of the six core foundational units in Old Testament, New Testament, and Church History (all at 200 level) gain academic credit to the corresponding undergraduate degree unit at 300 level.
- (vi) For students wishing to exit from the ACT's BTh or BMin awards after the completion of 62 cps the Associate Degree may be granted without students having to complete the compulsory project so long as both of the following have been met:
- (a) that the student has completed all other requirements for the AssocDegTheol; and
  - (b) that the student provides a letter of recommendation from their affiliated college.

*Bachelor of Christian Studies*

- (i) No more than 8 cps may be granted to ACT undergraduate degrees from a complete or incomplete ACT or non-ACT one year Certificate IV in theology or ministry.
- (ii) In the case of a two year non-ACT VET diploma in ministry or theology, 16 cps may be granted.
- (iii) No more than 32 cps credit will be granted three-year Advanced Diploma students or graduates who are eligible for ACT undergraduate degree credit.
- (iv) No more than 24 cps credit will be granted two-year Diploma students or graduates who are eligible for ACT undergraduate degree credit.

*Bachelor of Ministry/Bachelor of Theology*

- (i) No more than 8 cps may be granted to ACT undergraduate degrees from a complete or incomplete ACT or non-ACT one year Certificate IV in theology or ministry.
- (ii) In the case of a two year non-ACT VET diploma in ministry or theology, 16 cps may be granted.
- (iii) BCS students may be granted up to 64 cps of credit to the BMin/BTh provided that the BCS is surrendered. In the case where a student has completed extra units in the degree pool these also may be credited in addition to the normal 64 credit points.
- (iv) Unless students have successfully completed Greek (LA002, 004) and Hebrew (LA001, 003) for which degree credit will be automatically granted, a maximum of 64 cps is available for ACT Advanced Diploma graduates and 44 cps for ACT Diploma graduates towards the BMin/BTh. Graduates must have achieved a GPA of 2.0 in their award for the above credit to apply. The exact units for which credit is received will be determined on a case by case basis.
- (v) Graduates of the ACT's Advanced Diploma with a GPA of 1.75 – 2.0 may be granted credit for OT301 and OT302, NT301 and NT302, and CH301 and CH302.
- (vi) Students who are enrolled in an ACT diploma award may wish to obtain academic credit towards the BMin/BTh in one or more of the following ways:
  - There are some units that have the same syllabi in the diplomas and the undergraduate degrees. Most of these are located in the Department of Ministry and Practice and are skills based. One or more of these units in a diploma or an advanced diploma (up to a maximum of 25% of the diploma award) may be counted for academic credit in the relevant degree.
  - Students with an incomplete diploma award may obtain academic credit in a degree at the rate of two degree units for every three diploma units which are completed with a credit result or better. The exact units for which credit is received will be determined on a case by case basis.
  - Unless counted in the above provision, students who obtain at least a credit grade in any of the six core foundational units in Old Testament, New Testament, and Church History (all at 200 level) gain academic credit to the corresponding undergraduate degree unit at 300 level.

*Bachelor of Theology Honours/Bachelor of Ministry Honours*

- (i) Normally, advanced standing will not be given candidates in the Bachelors Honours programs. Nevertheless applications for Course Credit will be considered for the coursework phase.
- (ii) Students who already possess research qualifications at an equivalent level would be granted credit for Research Methods (RM095).

*Master of Divinity*

- (i) ACT Graduate Diploma of Bible and Ministry or Graduate Diploma of Christian Studies graduates could receive up to 32 cps advanced standing in the MDiv. Students transferring to the MDiv would need to surrender their diploma.
- (ii) No credit could be claimed for units completed at certificate or (advanced) diploma level.

*Master of Arts (Christian Studies)*

- (i) Students who have already developed a basis in theological reflection, biblical interpretation, and exegetical knowledge and skills, may receive advanced standing. This applies in particular to students who hold the Graduate Diploma in Christian Studies.
- (ii) Students who hold the ACT's Graduate Diploma in Christian Studies will be admitted to the degree with 50% advanced standing provided that the completed program includes units that are equivalent to the prescribed core units of the MACS.
- (iii) Students who hold either the ACT's BTh, BMin or MDiv degrees—or an approved equivalent theological degree awarded by a recognised and reputable provider—and a Graduate Diploma in a non-theological field may be granted admission to the degree, and may be granted advanced standing of up to 50% of the degree.

*Master of Arts (Theology)/Master of Arts (Ministry)*

- (i) Students with a completed ACT Honours degree may be granted up to 24 cps in the Master of Arts (Ministry)/ Master of Arts (Theology). No credit will be given for the coursework masters project (\*\*790).
- (ii) Students with a completed ACT MDiv degree will be given advanced standing for up to 16 cps in the MA from successfully completed 700 level units in their MDiv program.

*Doctor of Ministry*

- (i) Students with a completed ACT MTh degree or the Honours Degree of Bachelor of Ministry or Theology with Honours Class 1 or have completed the MA (Theol) or MA (Min) with a GPA of 2.0 and credit grade in the 16 cp project, or its equivalent at a recognised non ACT institution, are exempt from the essay requirement, but must supply the required reading logs and fulfil all other entry requirements.
- (ii) A prospective student without an ACT award would be required to demonstrate that his/her prior learning amounted to the equivalent of a three-year ACT degree.
- (iii) Exemptions may be granted in cases where a student has completed at the same level a substantial amount of the unit of study offered by the ACT.

**CROSS INSTITUTIONAL STUDIES**

Cross Institutional Applications are now available through the Australian College of Theology. Application forms are available from your primary sponsoring ACT college. All applicants need to ensure that once completed, the application form should be lodged well in advance of the various deadlines, as later applications will not be accepted.

**Definition of Cross Institution Student**

Students who are currently enrolled in an award at another Higher Education Provider and who provide documentary evidence that nominated units completed at the ACT will count towards that institution's award.

**Documentation needed**

For the purposes of Cross Institutional study, the ACT is the "host institution" and your current non-ACT college is the "home institution".

Original documents required include:

- A current official transcript of your current program of study available from your home institution. Certified copies are also acceptable.
- You will also need to provide the ACT with a letter of authority from your home institution, stating clearly that you have permission to undertake Cross Institutional study at the ACT in the units of study concerned. [Emails from administrators/lecturers are not acceptable forms of correspondence.]
- Cross Institution students will pay for any unit(s) undertaken at the ACT (i.e. request for FEE-HELP forms need to be completed for the ACT).

The above documents should be supplied to your primary sponsoring ACT college with your application.

**Withdrawal**

As an enrolled cross institution student you cannot add any units to your approved program

To withdraw from a cross institution unit you must complete a change of enrolment form at your primary sponsoring ACT college. Any withdrawal from a cross institution unit must be completed before the census date. Failure to do so will lead to both academic and financial penalties.

**Further information**

If you would like further information about Higher Education Fees please visit the following website—[www.goingtouni.gov.au](http://www.goingtouni.gov.au)

**PROGRESSION & INTERVENTION**

Each semester transcripts of all currently enrolled students will be examined to determine if any student is not performing as well as they should be. In order to progress without comment students are required to pass more than 50% of enrolled credit points each study period. Such students will be assessed as satisfactory and the student declared "in good standing" unless the student is currently on conditional enrolment.

If a student fails 50% or more of the enrolled credit points in a study period will be assessed as marginal. Such students are required to be counselled by their academic advisor though they are not prevented from progressing to the next period of study.

If such students again fail 50% or more of their units in the next consecutive study period they will be assessed as poor/unsatisfactory. For domestic students this means that their enrolment for the following two study periods (one year minimum) will be conditional upon satisfactorily passing more than 50% of their units in each study period. Such students should also accept academic counselling to help improve their studies. For international students, they will be notified that they will be reported to DIAC for unsatisfactory course progress. If

a student appeals this action and is successful they would be required to accept academic counselling and agree to be placed on conditional enrolment.

The progression of a student who has been placed on “conditional enrolment” and in the next consecutive study period again fails 50% or more of the enrolled credit points shall be assessed as unsatisfactory and the student excluded from the College for one (1) year. The progression of a student who has been placed on “conditional enrolment” and not in the next consecutive study period but some future study period again fails 50% or more of the enrolled credit points shall be assessed as poor and the student shall again be placed on conditional enrolment for the next year of study.

Failing the same unit more than once:

The progression of a student who fails an elective unit on two occasions shall be assessed as unsatisfactory for the unit and the student excluded from that unit. The progression of a student who fails a compulsory unit twice shall be assessed as poor and the student placed on “conditional enrolment” for the next year of study. The progression of a student fails a compulsory unit for a third time shall be assessed as unsatisfactory and the student shall be excluded from the course for one (1) year.

Failure to complete by the due date:

The progression of a student fails to complete the course by the expected completion date will be assessed as unsatisfactory and the student shall be ineligible to receive the current or an equivalent award [This clause does NOT apply to Diploma and Advanced Diploma students].

Appeals:

A student against whom load intervention or a sanction has been applied under this policy has the right of appeal against the application of that sanction. To appeal successfully, a student must demonstrate that special circumstances contributed to their poor/unsatisfactory academic performance. Grounds other than special circumstances will be considered when a student is appealing exclusion from the College for failure to complete a course by expected completion date. Students have twenty (20) working days to access the complaints and appeals process.

Monitoring of International Students:

The ACT is obliged to monitor the enrolment load of international students to ensure that at all times you are in a position to complete your course within the duration on your CoE, usually the normal duration of the course.

Before the commencement of study and each study period the college Registrar (or nominee) shall negotiate/confirm with you a program of study designed to complete your course within the period specified on the your CoE.

In the discussion with the college Registrar before the commencement of each study period, you may request a variation of the agreed program of study which may extend the period of study beyond the expected duration only on the grounds of:

- (a) special circumstances; or
- (b) approved deferment or suspension of study.

The Registrar shall record approval of such a request on your file, along with the reasons for the approval.

If, during a study period, you have reason to vary your enrolment by withdrawing from unit(s), the Registrar may approve the withdrawal(s) only on the grounds of special circumstances [NB. The special circumstances in this policy should be read in conjunction with those in the Variation of Enrolment policy]. The Registrar shall advise you that, without extra study during the balance of the course, your CoE will be impacted. The Registrar shall

record this approval on your file along with the reasons for the approval and advise the ACT Academic Administrator of this action.

At the beginning of your final study period, if it has been determined you are unable to complete by the end of the next study period, the Registrar may request of the ACT Academic Administrator the extension of your enrolment and the issue of a new CoE.



## VARIATION OF ENROLMENT

This policy applies to coursework students who are enrolled in an ACT course and who wish to vary their enrolment by adding, substituting or withdrawing from unit(s). Research students are subject to the rules related to their course.

### **Addition or Substitution of Units**

Students may add a unit for ACT credit to their program of study up until the Administrative Date of the unit, subject to approved unit enrolment conditions published by the affiliated college offering the unit.

### **Withdrawing from Units**

- Up until the Administrative Date associated with a unit, students may withdraw from the unit with no academic or financial penalty.
- After the Administrative Date and up until the Census Date associated with a unit, students may withdraw from the unit with no academic penalty or FEE-HELP debt being incurred. But a fee of \$300 is applied (except for SEBL, which is ¼ the fee).
- After the Census Date and up to the Withdrawal Date associated with a unit, students may withdraw from the unit with no academic penalty. However, all FEE-HELP and/or up-front payment liabilities remain.
- After the Census Date and after the Withdrawal Date associated with a unit, students who withdraw from a unit will incur an academic penalty of FW (Fail to Withdraw) Students who fail to submit any work but do not formally withdraw will incur an academic penalty of F (Fail). All FEE-HELP and/or up-front payment liabilities remain.

### **Compassionate Withdrawal**

If you withdraw after the Census Date and after the Withdrawal Date associated with a unit, but believe that your circumstances warrant special consideration, you can apply for a Compassionate Withdrawal.

The College will consider your request to determine if special circumstances apply to you that are:

1. beyond your control;
2. do not make their full impact on you until on, or after, the census date; and
3. make it impracticable for you to complete the requirements for the unit during the period in which you undertook, or was to undertake the unit.

The College will be satisfied that your circumstances are beyond your control if a situation occurs which a reasonable person would consider is not due to your action or inaction, either direct or indirect, and for which you are not responsible. The situation must be unusual, uncommon or abnormal.

The College will be satisfied that your circumstances did not make their full impact until on or after the census date for the unit of study if your circumstances occur:

- (a) before the census date, but worsen after that day; or

- (b) before the census date, but the full effect or magnitude does not become apparent until on or after that day; or
- (c) on or after the census date.

Special circumstances that would make it impracticable for you to complete the requirements for the unit of study would include:

- (a) medical circumstances; or
- (b) family circumstances; or
- (c) personal circumstances; or
- (d) employment related circumstances; or
- (e) course of study related circumstances.

Each application will be examined and determined on its merits. The College will consider your claims, together with independent supporting documentary evidence that substantiates these claims. Applications must be made in writing via your enrolling college within after your withdrawal day.



## **VERIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Research Candidates**

All applicants must submit certified copies of completed tertiary study and, if relevant, evidence of English language facility in accord with ACT regulations for entry to the research degrees of the College to their affiliated ACT college before candidature can be considered by the Academic Board. Copies of transcripts are submitted to the Board as a necessary part of the application.

### **Courses for Graduates**

At the time of enrolment each enrolling student must submit to the affiliated college original or certified copies of all completed study at tertiary level, and, if relevant, evidence of English language facility in accord with ACT regulations for entry to the graduate courses of the College. Copies of each are to be kept in the student's file.

### **All Other Students**

At the time of enrolment, each student seeking admission to the undergraduate degrees or diplomas of the College must submit original or certified copies of evidence of having satisfied the course entry requirements, and, if relevant, evidence of English language facility in accord with ACT regulations. This evidence must be sighted by the affiliated college registrar and a copy kept in the student's file.



SECTION C: DELIVERY MODE POLICIES:

**DIRECTED STUDY CONTRACT MODE**

Directed study contract mode, together with distance and intensive mode, is part of the flexible mode delivery option for teaching approved units of the ACT. DSC mode expands the opportunities for students to take elective units in which they have an interest but which might not be part of a college's regular teaching cycle.

The outline, goal and learning outcomes for a unit taught in this mode are identical to units taught in attendance mode.

Assessment tasks for units offered in DSC mode should ensure that the learning outcomes specified are the same as if the unit had been taught in attendance mode.

It is the responsibility of the affiliated college to demonstrate to the relevant unit moderator that the assessment tasks will adequately demonstrate the achievement of these learning outcomes.

Each unit offered in DSC should require approximately 160 demand hours for a 4 cp unit. That is, students should expect to set aside that amount of time in order to satisfactorily complete all the work required by the unit.

DSC mode differs from Distance mode insofar as the student in DSC mode will be required to meet with their lecturer for at least 6 hours during the semester at which the student will present tutorial papers.

At least one assessment task should require the student to demonstrate some understanding of the whole unit area and how various elements co-inhere. An example might be the a 1,000 word project to create a 13 week teaching plan for this unit that would include a comprehensive breakdown of topics and appropriate reading lists, or a 1,000 word glossary of key terms relevant to the unit area.

All units proposed to be taught in DSC mode must be individually approved by the relevant unit moderator.

Moderators need to approve the prepared reading list and the specific assessment tasks in order to satisfy themselves that the student could reasonably be expected to cover the breadth and the depth of the unit at a level consistent with classes taught in attendance mode. This should be clearly expressed so that the student knows what is required of them (hence the use of the term "contract").

In their reports to the Departmental Heads moderators are to comment explicitly on the performance of students studying in this mode.

- There is a 16 cp limit on the number of units that might be taken by any one student in DSC mode as part of the 32 cps maximum that can be taken in flexible mode in the BTh and MDiv.
- No more than 8 cps can be taken in DSC mode in any one field of study.
- All DSC mode units will be coded C ("contract") on the ACT database.
- Tuition and ACT fees for DSC mode (and all other units in flexible mode) will be the same as those levied for units studied in attendance mode.



## DISTANCE MODE

The following courses can be taken wholly in distance mode:

- Advanced Diploma of Ministry
- Advanced Diploma of Theology
- Associate Degree of Theology
- Bachelor of Ministry
- Bachelor of Christian Studies
- Diploma of Ministry
- Diploma of Theology
- Graduate Diploma of Divinity
- Graduate Diploma of Christian Studies

Up to one third (32cps) of the Bachelor of Theology and the Master of Divinity can be taken in distance mode. The remaining study must be done in attendance mode.

Distance units are being offered for the Master of Arts courses though at the time of printing only a limited number were available. Most MA units are offered in intensive mode.

Handbooks developed for distance education students should contain the following policies required under the Higher Education Support Act (2003) and by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) for Higher Education Provider status:

- Academic Grievance
- Non-academic Grievance
- Re-crediting FEE-HELP Balance
- Cross-institutional Enrolment



## FIELDWORK

### Aims:

- (a) To enable students to begin to develop a theology of ministry and to reflect on theological and biblical issues as candidates come to the tasks of ministry;
- (b) To equip students to being to integrate their various unit studies with actual ministry in different situations.
- (c) To expose students to the ways of ministry is conducted and modelled and give them opportunity to experience a variety of ministerial tasks;
- (d) To provide opportunities for students to perform ministry tasks under supervision;
- (e) To facilitate students' learning of skills pertinent to ministry;
- (f) To help students identify their own abilities in ministry, explore possible ministry vocations and further spiritual and personal growth.

### Content:

Fieldwork is a learning process that takes place through practical experience in a ministry setting. Placement will be carried out in a variety of settings, providing you with preparation for the specific kinds of ministry and vocation for which you believe you are being called. Ministerial candidates will do most of their fieldwork in a congregational setting. For some this will be in local churches as student observers, youth or children's leaders, associate pastors, and so on. For others it may mean fulfilling a chaplaincy role, cross cultural ministry, working in a community project, a parachurch organisation or mission agency.

Fieldwork experiences normally take place within the same timeframe as other curriculum requirements. The program should permit freedom in scheduling major time commitments so that you can coordinate fieldwork with academic responsibilities.

An example of how this could operate follows:

Year	Classwork	Fieldwork	Field Hours	Supervision
1	PC301 Ministry Formation EM324 Evangelism Principles	Church setting (observer/participant)  Partnership Mission	200  1 week	10 hours with supervisor  Group supervision sessions
2	PC444 Practical Ministry Field Education	Church setting (participant)  Reachout	250 hours  1 weekend	20 hours with supervisor  Group supervision sessions
3	PC402 Foundations for Pastoral Care EM427 Church Dynamics & Growth	Church setting (participant)  Additional placement (eg school chaplaincy)	250 hours  10 days	20 hours with supervisor  Group supervision sessions

#### **Assessment:**

Normally, assessment will take the following format:

- not less than 200 hours' experience (with supervision) in a local ministry setting; or
- a period of continuous residence (with supervision) of not less than six weeks' duration in a local church/parachurch/ministry organisation.

In either case,

- (a) Approximately 120 hours are to be spent in actual ministry;
- (b) Approximately 60 hours are to be spent in preparation, and writing up verbatims for supervisors;
- (c) Approximately 20 hours are to consist of reflection upon practical experience, at least 10 hours on an individual basis, with an approved supervisor.

Each unit should also entail approximately 12–14 class hours, at an introductory level only.

You are required to keep a reflective journal as a means of ongoing reflection on your experience. The reflections should consider the following: the development of your ministry competencies and skills along with observations of the issue and dynamics in congregational life and ministry and the culture and society in which you minister and its impact on ministry.

Fieldwork also entails attendance at seminars organised by the your enrolled college which assist in the reflection process.

#### **Placements:**

Where possible the ministry setting should be related to the your vocational intent. The ministry setting and your ministry is to be approved by the Director of Field Education at the

affiliated college through whom you are enrolled. The placement process will allow you to indicate your preferences regarding the type of placement as well as a specific placement.

Ministry involvement should not extend beyond an average of eight hours per week for full time students, including preparation time. This is to ensure that you do not take on too great a ministry burden. Part time students, especially those who are employed in a ministry situation, are allowed to have a greater time commitment. However, the Director of Field Education must approve the final placement details.

Fieldwork is not employment and the ACT does not expect that you will be paid for your ministry involvement.

### **Recognised Prior Learning (RPL):**

The normal ACT policy on RPL applies to fieldwork units. Such an application must demonstrate not only ministry experience, but adequate, active and competent supervision. This should be demonstrated by the provision of reports or similar documentation by a trainer as well as by yourself. Recognition will only be granted when you can demonstrate a reflective and supervised learning experience. Applications can be made for part or all of a fieldwork unit.

### **Supervisors:**

Normally, supervisors should:

- be a competent practitioner in the area of training, with appropriate qualifications, recognition and experience;
- have at least three years ministry experience in the area of speciality;
- be in a current ministry experience;
- have undertaken relevant training in ministry supervision, or be willing to undergo such training as provided by the ACT affiliated colleges;
- give evidence of competence in ministry skills and relational aspects of ministry;
- be prepared to make a full commitment to your fieldwork program.

Normally a fieldwork supervisor will supervise no more than two students at any given time.

A fieldwork supervisor is expected to:

- arrange regular meetings with you for reflection. These meetings should normally be held at least once every fortnight, and at least half should be individual meetings with you (the others can be held in a group setting)
- give you accurate and fair feedback during the placement;
- be reasonably available to you during the placement;
- respect your confidentiality at all times;
- where possible attend annual trainer updates;
- actively develop his or her own skill in ministry training and supervision.

### **Legal issues:**

All students undergoing fieldwork will be subject to a child protection police check, or be in the possession of one not more than three years old.

The affiliated college of the ACT will accept legal responsibility if you can show that the blame rests on the college for the incident. Such issues could cover, but not be limited to, omissions, lack of proper training, failure to provide support or sufficient and clear guidelines, etc.

Colleges are not required to provide malpractice insurance for students on fieldwork. Such matters are your responsibility. Where a placement is made at an organisation or other institution, you should check with the individual organisation as to whether accident or injury cover is provided and what, if any, insurance cover they may provide while you are on fieldwork.



## **INTENSIVE MODE**

### **Undergraduate Diplomas Undergraduate Degrees Master of Divinity**

24 cps of the three year awards (16 cps in the two year diplomas and the Bachelor of Christian Studies) may be taken in intensive mode. No core unit can be offered in intensive mode. All units will be coded “i” (“intensive”) on the ACT database.

The unit should incorporate the same attendance requirement as for teaching in the normal semester mode, i.e., 39 lecture hours per unit.

The unit should incorporate significant pre-attendance tasks, with accountability, as a condition of entry to the attendance segment of the unit. Lecturers should set about 500 pages of pre-reading for units offered in the undergraduate degrees, the Graduate Diplomas and in the Master of Divinity.

At registration for the attendance component you are required to sign a declaration that this reading has been completed. The writing of a critical review based on a significant work or works in the pre-reading list may be one of the assessment tasks to be submitted by the time of the commencement of the attendance phase of the unit.

The unit should incorporate at least one significant assessment procedure, which will not necessitate on-campus attendance, but will assure the quality and integrity of the unit.

Your performance in intensives is moderated in accordance with ACT moderation procedures.

### **Coursework Masters Doctor of Ministry**

50% of the MA coursework programs\* and all of the DMin coursework component may be taken in intensive mode. All units will be coded “i” (“intensive”) on the ACT database. [*\*Note: the ACT currently has submitted an application to be allowed to teach the whole of the MA in intensive mode. Please talk to your sponsoring college regarding this process.*]

The unit should incorporate the same attendance requirement as for teaching in the normal semester mode, i.e., 26 lecture hours per unit.

The college should provide you with the following information:

- Descriptions of all methods used (e.g. seminars, practicals, lectures, fieldwork, etc.).
- Details of work to be done by students outside the period during which face-to-face teaching takes place.
- Pre-reading requirements [these should be appropriate in quantity and quality to study at the master’s level (about 500 pages) or doctorate level (about 1,000 pages)].

At registration for the attendance component you are required to sign a declaration that this reading has been completed. The writing of a critical review based on a significant work or works in the pre-reading list may be one of the assessment tasks to be submitted by the time of the commencement of the attendance phase of the unit.

Your performance in intensives is moderated in accordance with ACT moderation procedures.



## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR LOTE COURSES:**

### *Diploma*

There are no specific English language requirements for students enrolling in ACT diplomas.

### *Degree*

Since students will need to access English language theological resources, an overall score of 5.0 over the four categories in the IELTS test is required.

### *Graduate*

For students enrolling in subjects offered at 500 and 600 level (Grad Dip CS, Grad Dip B&M, MDiv) an overall score of 5.0 is required with at least 6.0 in reading.

Your performance in LOTE courses is moderated in accordance with ACT moderation procedures.



SECTION D: FINANCIAL POLICIES:

## **FEE-HELP RECREDITING POLICY**

All approved colleges are required to publish this policy in their student handbooks and to provide a copy of the policy when you submit your enrolment form.

### Census Dates and FEE-HELP Debt

If a student who has requested FEE-HELP assistance withdraws from a unit of study *on or before* the census date for that unit of study, the student will not incur a FEE-HELP debt for that unit of study.

If a student who has requested FEE-HELP assistance withdraws from a unit of study *after* the census date for that unit of study the student will incur a FEE-HELP debt for that unit of study.

Census dates for semester length units are March 31 (semester one) and August 31 (semester two). The dates for intensive mode units are set individually and you should obtain the due dates from your college of enrolment.

### Re-crediting a Person's FEE-HELP Balance

You may apply after the census date to have your FEE-HELP balance re-credited if you have been unable to complete the requirements of a unit of study and you believe that this was due to special circumstances. Where a request to re-credit your FEE-HELP balance is granted, your FEE-HELP debit is removed and the amount of FEE-HELP paid to the ACT on your behalf will be refunded to the Government.

You can apply to the ACT to have your FEE-HELP balance re-credited if you withdraw from your studies after the census date and/or you have not completed the requirements for the unit of study. You must apply in writing, within 12 months of the withdrawal date, or if you have not withdrawn, within 12 months of the end of the period of study in which the unit of study was or was to be undertaken. The ACT can exercise the discretion to waive this requirement if it is satisfied that the application could not be made within the time limit.

The College's FEE-HELP Re-crediting Officer will consider your application within 28 days of receiving your written application. Emails will not normally be accepted in place of a formal application unless the ACT office believes that the student has no other option.

The College will re-credit your FEE-HELP balance if it is satisfied that special circumstances apply to you that are:

4. beyond your control;
5. do not make their full impact on you until on, or after, the census date; and
6. make it impracticable for you to complete the requirements for the unit during the period in which you undertook, or was to undertake the unit.

The College will be satisfied that your circumstances are beyond your control if a situation occurs which a reasonable person would consider is not due to your action or inaction, either direct or indirect, and for which you are not responsible. The situation must be unusual, uncommon or abnormal.

The College will be satisfied that your circumstances did not make their full impact until on or after the census date for the unit of study if your circumstances occur:

- (a) before the census date, but worsen after that day; or
- (b) before the census date, but the full effect or magnitude does not become apparent until on or after that day; or
- (c) on or after the census date.

Special circumstances would make it impracticable for you to complete the requirements for the unit of study would include:

- (a) medical circumstances; or
- (b) family circumstances; or
- (c) personal circumstances; or
- (d) employment related circumstances; or
- (e) course of study related circumstances.

Each application will be examined and determined on its merits. The FEE-HELP Re-crediting Officer will consider your claims, together with independent supporting documentary evidence that substantiates these claims.

The FEE-HELP Re-crediting Officer will notify you of the decision and the reasons for making the decision. The Officer will advise you of your rights for a review of the decision if you are unsatisfied with the outcome.

If the decision is made to re-credit the FEE-HELP balance, the College will notify DEEWR, and will repay to the Commonwealth any FEE-HELP assistance received from it on your behalf. DEEWR will inform the Australian Taxation Office that the debit has been removed.

#### Review of the Original Decision

Where you are not satisfied with the decision made by the FEE-HELP Re-crediting Officer, you may apply in writing for a review of the decision. The Review Officer, appointed by the Board of Directors, is the Dean of the College.

The time limit for applying for a review of the decision is 28 days from you receiving notice of the decision. You must state the reasons why you are applying for a review. The Review Officer will notify you of his or her decision and the reasons for making the decision.

The Reviewer Officer's available options are to:

- confirm the decision;
- vary the decision; or
- set the decision aside and substitute a new decision.

The Review Officer will advise you of your right to appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for a review of the Reviewer's decision if you are unsatisfied with the outcome and will provide you with the contact details and address of the nearest AAT registry.

The Review Officer must acknowledge receipt of your application for a review of a decision in writing and will inform you that, if the Reviewer has not advised you of a decision within 45 days of receiving the application for review, the Reviewer is taken to have confirmed the original decision.

Where you are not satisfied with the reviewed decision made by the review officer, you may apply to the AAT for a further review of the decision not to re-credit a person's FEE-HELP balance. You may supply additional information to the AAT that you did not previously supply to the ACT (including the ACT's Review Officer).

**Contact Persons**

The current FEE-HELP Re-crediting Officer is the Academic Administrator of the Australian College of Theology.

The contact details are—

The Australian College of Theology  
Suite 4, Level 6  
51 Druitt Street  
Sydney NSW 2000  
ph. 02 9262 7890  
fax: 02 9262 7290  
email: abates@actheology.edu.au

The Board of Directors of the College has appointed the Dean of the College as the Review Officer of decisions made by the Academic Administrator.

The contact details are—

The Australian College of Theology  
Suite 4, Level 6  
51 Druitt Street  
Sydney NSW 2000  
ph. 02 9262 7890  
fax: 02 9262 7290  
email: mharding@actheology.edu.au



*SECTION E: SPECIFIC POLICIES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:*

**DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

The College provides processes for handling grievances brought by prospective, enrolled and former overseas students regarding academic and non-academic matters.

General feedback and comment from students about administration, academic programs and services will not be treated by the ACT as a grievance unless action or a response is required under the policies or regulations of the ACT.

Whenever possible, grievances will be handled at the affiliated college level and within the College. However, should these internal processes not resolve the matter, provision is made for external independent grievance handling/dispute resolution.

Information contained in this policy statement must be given to students before an agreement is entered into or before any fees are paid, whichever occurs first, and within seven (7) days of starting an award course at an affiliated college of the ACT.

You may nominate an advocate to accompany, represent, and support them at any stage of the internal complaint and grievance processes, or external independent processes to resolve problems.

Appropriate records of the handling of a grievance or complaint will be kept and treated as confidential, with appropriate access available to involved parties.

If you choose to access the appeal process, the ACT will maintain your enrolment while the process is ongoing. If the appeal results in a decision that supports your claim, the ACT will immediately implement that decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and will advise you of the outcome.

**Appeals against Academic Decisions**

Concerns about an academic decision concerning curriculum/assessment in a unit of study or the final grade awarded in a unit of study should initially discuss the issue informally with the Registrar at your college of enrolment. This should be done within twenty five (25) working days of the release of results by the ACT. The Registrar should deal with the issue promptly, giving a full explanation to you of the reasons for the grade awarded.

If your concerns were not resolved by the Registrar, or because of a failure to follow procedures, you may then choose to approach the Academic Dean of the affiliated college. You may approach the Academic Dean on an informal basis, or else make the complaint formal by putting the grievance in writing, specifying the nature of the complaint and the grounds for your appeal. You should do either of these things within 15 working days of the outcome of discussions with the Registrar.

If you choose to approach the Academic Dean informally, this does not preclude later lodgement of the grievance formally in writing to the Academic Dean.

The Academic Dean should deal with informal complaint about the final grade for a unit promptly, giving a full explanation to you of the reasons for the academic decision.

While not limited to the following, you may normally appeal formally against the award of a grade only where:

1. the lecturer did not provide a unit outline as required; or
2. the assessment requirements as specified in the unit outline were varied in an unreasonable way; or
3. examiner's judgement was not objectively applied because of perceived prejudice against you; or
4. you are of the view that a clerical error has occurred in the computation of the grade; or
5. due regard has not been paid to the evidence of illness or misadventure if submitted by the specified date
6. you are of the view that you have been disadvantaged in some way due to the conduct of your final examination.

The Academic Dean must acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing within five (5) working days of receipt.

The Academic Dean must try to resolve the complaint within 15 working days of receiving the complaint. The Academic Dean may discuss the matter with both yourself and the relevant lecturer in attendance. The Academic Dean may arrange for the assessment script(s) completed in the unit to be marked by another lecturer in your college of enrolment.

If your concerns cannot be resolved by the Academic Dean of an affiliated college, or because of failure to follow procedures, you may formally approach the Dean of the ACT by putting the complaint in writing and lodging it within 15 working days of receipt of the written response by the Academic Dean. Again the nature of the complaint and the grounds for appeal should be detailed.

The Dean must acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint in writing within five (5) working days of receipt.

The Dean must try to resolve the complaint within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the complaint.

Following investigation of the matter, the Dean will advise you in writing of his or her decision:

- (a) setting out the reasons;
- (b) if the complaint relates to the mark on an intra-semester assessment, advising that his/her decision is final;
- (c) on other academic matters, advising that if you do not agree with the decision, then you have the right of formal appeal to an independent external agency; and
- (d) giving you a copy of this policy, if you do not already have a copy.

### **Appeals Regarding non-Academic/Administrative and Other Issues**

Non-academic/administrative issues are not limited to, but include, matters related to fees, withdrawals, etc., and other issues students may consider are interfering with the progress of their studies.

In the first instance, if you are concerned about a non-academic decision made or action taken by your affiliated college you should discuss your grievance with the International Liaison Officer/Registrar at your college of enrolment. The International Liaison Officer/Registrar will promptly notify you of any action taken or any decision made by them in relation to the grievance.

If, following the notification from the International Liaison Officer/Registrar, your grievance is not resolved to your satisfaction, you should seek advice from the International Liaison

Officer/Registrar who will advise you to whom you may next address your grievance. If the matter relates to the affiliated college, you may address the Principal; if the matter relates to ACT policy or regulations, you may address the ACT Academic Administrator. The International Liaison Officer/Registrar will give you a copy of this policy.

If your concerns relate to ACT policy or regulations and have not been resolved by the International Liaison Officer/Registrar of the affiliated college, or because of a failure to follow procedures, you may then choose to formally approach the Academic Administrator of the ACT. You should put the complaint in writing to the ACT Academic Administrator within 15 working days of the outcome of discussions with the International Liaison Officer/Registrar, specifying the nature of the complaint and the grounds for your appeal.

The ACT Academic Administrator must acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing within five (5) working days of receipt.

The ACT Academic Administrator must try to resolve the complaint within 15 working days of receiving the complaint.

Following investigation of the matter, the ACT Academic Administrator will advise you in writing of his or her decision:

- (a) setting out the reasons;
- (c) advising that if you do not agree with the decision, then you have the right of formal appeal to the Dean of the ACT; and
- (d) giving you a copy of this policy, if you do not already have a copy.

If your concerns cannot be resolved by the ACT Academic Administrator, or because of failure to follow procedures, you may formally approach the Dean of the ACT by putting the complaint in writing and lodging it within 15 working days of receipt of the written response by the ACT Academic Administrator. Again the nature of the complaint and the grounds for appeal should be detailed.

The Dean must acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint in writing within five (5) working days of receipt. The Dean must try to resolve the complaint within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the complaint.

Following investigation of the matter, the Dean will advise you in writing of his or her decision:

- (a) setting out the reasons;
- (b) advising that if you do not agree with the decision, then you have the right of formal appeal to an independent external agency; and
- (d) giving you a copy of this policy, if you do not already have a copy.

### **External Dispute Resolution**

Students who remain dissatisfied with the outcome of any appeal, except those related to a mark or grade, can make a final appeal free of charge to the Committee of the Council of Private Higher Education Incorporated (COPHE), c/- the Executive Officer, PO Box 4210, Castlecrag, NSW, 2068 (02 9417 0834). Such appeals should be in writing. The staff at affiliated colleges and the ACT are also able to make representation to the COPHE Committee regarding the matter. You can include a nominee in this process if you so choose. Decisions of the COPHE Committee shall be final and binding on all parties.

### **External Formal Concern**

Notwithstanding the above, in matters of dispute resolution, international students may exercise their rights to other legal remedies and may contact the Overseas Education Unit in their state. Contact details for the Overseas Education Unit in each state where the ACT is the registered provider are listed below. You can include a nominee to represent you in this process if you so choose.

If you are concerned about the College's actions on any matter at any time, you may raise concerns with respect to the ACT's registration as an education and course provider to overseas students with the Overseas Education Unit in the state in which your sponsoring college is located.

#### **In New South Wales—**

CRICOS Administration—Policy and Regulation Unit,  
Higher Education,  
Department of Education and Training,  
GPO Box 33  
Sydney NSW 2000  
Ph.: 02 9561 8656  
Fax: 02 9561 8681

#### **In Western Australia—**

Office of Non-Government and International Education,  
Department of Education Services  
PO Box 1766  
Osborne Park WA 6916  
Ph.: 08 9441 1962  
Fax: 08 9441 1901

#### **In Queensland—**

International Quality Unit  
Queensland Department of Education  
PO Box 15033  
Brisbane QLD 4002  
Ph.: 07 3225 2442  
Fax: 07 3006 4162

#### **In Victoria—**

The Victorian Registration and Quality Authority  
GPO Box 2317  
Melbourne VIC 3001  
Ph: 03 9651 3221  
Fax: 03 9651 3266

#### **In South Australia—**

Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology  
GPO Box 320  
Adelaide SA 5001  
Ph: (08) 8226 3182,  
Fax: (08) 8226 0429  
email: korobacz.vic@saugov.sa.gov.au

#### **In Tasmania—**

Tasmanian Qualifications Authority

PO Box 147  
Sandy Bay TAS 7006  
Ph: (03) 6233 7948  
Fax: (03) 6224 0175  
Email: reception@tqa.tas.gov.au

In each state the Director-General (or equivalent) has the power to suspend or cancel the provider's registration or a course if a breach of the requirements of registration provision is proved.

Contact details for the Overseas Education Unit in other States/Territories are available by searching on the Internet (<http://cricos.detya.gov.au/asp/CRICOSContacts.asp>) or from the Australian College of Theology.

### **Implications of withdrawing from or not accessing the complaints and appeals process**

Where the ACT has assessed the student as not complying with their student visa conditions, either through unsatisfactory attendance or unsatisfactory course progress, or for disciplinary reasons, the ACT will notify the student in writing of its intention to report the student to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). The written notice will inform the student that he or she is able to access the ACT's Dispute Resolution Policy for International Students and that the student has twenty (20) working days in which to do so.

Where a student has chosen not to access the complaints and appeals process outlined in this policy within the twenty (20) working day period, withdraws from the process, or the process is completed and results in a decision supporting the ACT, the ACT will notify the Secretary of the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) through PRISMS as soon as practicable.



## **REFUND POLICY AND AGREEMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

The Australian College of Theology (ACTh, the College) has developed this policy and agreement in accordance with Section 28(1) of the ESOS Act 2000 and the National Code 2007.

This policy and agreement, and the availability of the ACTh Dispute Resolution Policy for International Students, do not remove the right of the student to take further action under Australia's consumer protection laws (ESOS National Code, Standard 3.2.d). Moreover, the dispute resolution procedures of the ACTh do not circumscribe the student's right to pursue other legal remedies, such as action under Australia's consumer protection laws.

A copy of this policy must be given to all intending and enrolling overseas students before any course fees are paid. This policy and agreement is available on the ACTh website ([www.actheology.edu.au](http://www.actheology.edu.au)).

Affiliated colleges may levy a non-refundable Application Fee.

Tuition fees for ACTh courses are subject to annual review and the annual tuition fee for a calendar year of study may change on 1 January each year. Thus, tuition fees for units studied will be at the rate applicable at the time of study.

Overseas students are required to pay their tuition fees up-front in full for the first half-year of full-time study (16cps), unless other arrangements have been agreed to in writing by the

Registrar of the affiliated college at which the student proposes to enrol. The amount of the fees due at their enrolling college will take account of any subsidy provided by the college.

In the event that the information supplied by an applicant which was the basis for an offer of admission to a course is found to have been incorrect or insufficient for the offered course or to gain admission to another College course, the College shall withdraw the offer and reserves the right to withhold 10% of the tuition fees paid for the first half-year (or \$1000 whichever is the lesser amount) and to refund the balance.

Overseas students are obliged to make up-front payments of tuition and other fees normally no later than the first day in each study period of teaching of units in their course. Tuition fees will be charged according to the unit load for the next study period.

While the new *National Code* no longer requires overseas students to enrol in a full-time unit load each study period, they are required to complete the enrolled course within the time frame as stated on the student's Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) document. This means that if overseas students elect to take less than a full-time load in any study period, they need to keep in mind how they will organize their unit load in future study periods in order to complete the course on time.

### **Refunds if the student defaults**

A student may withdraw from a course any time after acceptance and from a unit at any time during the course of study. However, students and colleges need to be aware of the consequences of such an action in relation to the National Code 2007.

After enrolment students will be subject to the provisions of the Variation of Enrolment policy as it relates to withdrawing from units and courses and the consequences according to the time in a study period that the action occurs. The Variation of Enrolment policy is available on the College's website: [www.actheology.edu.au](http://www.actheology.edu.au).

### **Refunds if the provider defaults**

Refunds if the registered provider defaults cannot be covered by a written agreement between the provider and the student. Such situations are covered by the provisions of the ESOS Act 2000 and the ESOS Regulations 2001. Students are advised that the ACTh is a member of the Tuition Assurance Scheme of the Sydney College of Divinity.

As an alternative to making a payment required by this provision of the Act, the registered provider (or former registered provider) may arrange for another course, or part of a course, to be provided to the student at the provider's expense.

### **Other information concerning the refund of tuition fees**

The Registrar of the affiliated college at which a student is enrolled must pay the refund or respond to the request for a refund within four (4) weeks of receipt of the written claim from a student. Refunds will normally be made in the same currency as the fees were originally paid and will be made in the student's home country except in documented special circumstances.

As it is the student only who enters into the written agreement with the affiliated college, and no third party is normally involved, the refund will normally be paid to the student. If the student wishes the refund to be paid to someone else (eg. in the event that the tuition fees were paid by another person), the student must provide a letter of authority signed by the student and the receiving party, including account details of the receiving party, enabling the college to pay the other party. The letter should be attached to the request for refund.

In circumstances where a student is approved to study at another institution in Australia, any refund must be paid directly to the new institution accepting the student. Refunds in the form of transfer of fees to another institution will be made subject to the student presenting evidence of an offer of a place to study in that institution.

A notice of withdrawal due to special circumstances may be accepted as grounds for a total refund of fees, subject to the provision of acceptable documentary evidence in support of the application for a refund. Special circumstances include, but are not limited to::

7. inability to obtain a student visa
8. illness or disability
9. failure to meet English language requirements for admission
10. death of the student or a close family member (parent, sibling, spouse or child)
11. political, civil or natural event which prevents full payment of fees.

Dr Ken Wade  
Quality Manager

20 October 2010



SECTION F: SPECIFIC POLICIES FOR RESEARCH STUDENTS:

## CONFIRMATION OF CANDIDATURE

This policy relates to commencing candidates in ACT post-graduate research courses (Master of Theology and Doctor of Theology) during their first year of (equivalent) full-time study. The policy is designed to establish and describe the formal process by which candidature in the above courses will be confirmed. Confirmation of Candidature must be successfully achieved for enrolment in the second full-time year (or part-time equivalent) of the degree course.

### (A) Confirmation of Candidature

A1. Confirmation of Candidature is a formal and comprehensive process designed to encourage diligence early in the candidature, to review the progress and to plan of the candidature from commencement to completion. The process aims to endorse work already accomplished and to provide support for the development of your plan for successful completion of the degree. The process provides the opportunity for positive feedback to be given on progress and emphasizes on formative evaluation by way of identification of improvements that might be made.

A2. In order to confirm your candidature, commencing candidates in the MTh or ThD are required to satisfactorily complete the following tasks within the time frames specified:

- (a) a Research Plan,
- (b) a Research Paper on an aspect of your research topic, and
- (c) a Plan indicating possible avenues for publication.

It is expected that an MTh candidate who wishes to transfer to ThD candidature will only be approved to do so once your candidature has been confirmed.

A3. Confirmation of candidature is required for full-time candidates to progress to your second year of candidature and for part-time candidates to progress to your fourth semester of candidature.

A4. Failure to successfully confirm candidature may result in termination of candidature. In such cases the college research coordinator will make a recommendation to the Academic Board with a full explanation as to why the recommendation has been made. The Board will determine continuation or termination of candidature.

A5. Candidates whose candidature has been terminated may appeal under the ACT's Policy on Student Appeals under Research Degree Rules.

### (B) Research Plan

B1. Within the first six months of candidature (or part-time equivalent), candidates with their supervisor(s) must prepare a Research Plan identifying goals for achievement during the first twelve months of candidature and projecting a proposed timeline to completion.

B2. The goals for achievement during the first twelve months of candidature may include such items as:

- (a) attending relevant coursework units supportive of the proposed research
- (b) producing written reports—e.g. an annotated bibliography, a “map” of the thesis context
- (c) preparing a literature survey with discussion
- (d) drafting portions of the Research Paper

Usually up to four items is sufficient but more may be listed as appropriate.

B3. The timeline at this stage is a proposal subject to adjustment as the project progresses. Nevertheless this timeline should identify major and perhaps minor tasks and indicate expected points on the timeline for their completion. This timeline will be the basis for self-review of progress during the project and responses to items in the annual report.

B4. You shall arrange a meeting with your supervisor(s) to:

- (a) identify the items to be included on the Goals of Achievement form, their order and their likely time of completion during the first year of candidature; and,
  - (b) project a proposed timeline for completion of the thesis showing major and perhaps minor tasks and expected points on the timeline for completion.
- B5. Following the meeting with the supervisor(s) you shall complete the Agreement concerning the Goals for Achievement and arrange for sign-off by the supervisor(s).
- B6. You shall forward the completed, signed Goals of Achievement form and the proposed timeline to the ACT student administrator and provide a copy to the supervisor(s) and college research coordinator before six months of the candidature has elapsed (i.e. by 31 August for candidates commencing Semester 1; by 31 January for candidates commencing Semester 2).
- B7. Concerning the style of writing in the paper, there is capacity for individual initiative and variations among candidates. However the following elements must be included:
- (a) **Thesis Title**  
This should be clear, informative and unambiguous
  - (b) **Research Case**  
The section should demonstrate that you understand and are able to define the research theme/issues/questions in terms that indicate that the research will provide insights into your understanding/resolution.  
The Research Case should include an outline of:
    - (c) a description of the project as a whole
    - (d) a statement of the thesis, including propositions that the thesis will demonstrate, the main focus of the thesis, the inter-relationship among themes/questions/issues, the worthiness of the proposed research to address gaps or conflicts in present knowledge or understanding.
  - (c) **Intellectual Content**  
This section should contain:
    - (e) A detailed discussion of the conceptual and empirical aspects of the research.
    - (f) A comprehensive and critical literature review related to the problem situation
    - (g) An explanation of how the thesis is related to the literature or other research in the discipline.
    - (h) An account should be given of the theory(ies) that will be considered and the method(s) that will be employed in selecting, organising and analysing the material that will make-up the main body of the thesis.
    - (i) An indication of the likely sources of information, archival resources, field work, survey and other empirical data which will be necessary.
    - (j) A topical outline and the general content by areas or by chapter, with description and relationship of each to the others may be included.
    - (k) The expected contribution of the thesis to the advancement of knowledge in the relevant field of study.
  - (d) **Research Outcomes**  
This section should clearly demonstrate that you have identified a potentially solvable or resolvable research proposal and have a plan of action whereby this will be achieved within the required time frame. It may be in the form of a general statement and/or a list of more specific aims that will lead to accomplishing the general objective.
  - (e) **Research Method**  
This section should set out the logical steps to be followed in meeting the research objective(s). The method should include an expression of why it is important to the particular research field and how the method will generate and verify the conclusions expected to be reached in the thesis.

**(C) Research Paper**

C1. Within the first twelve months of full-time candidature (two semesters full-time) or two years of part-time candidature (four semesters part-time) you must prepare a Research Paper pertinent to your thesis topic and make a presentation based on this paper at a research colloquium in your college.

C2. The paper shall address

- (a) the research case,
- (b) the intellectual context of the planned study, including an analytical review of some pertinent literature,
- (c) the expected outcomes of the research, including any results of research to date, and
- (d) the research methods proposed to be used.

C3. The paper shall be the basis of a presentation made at a research colloquium in the college. You and your supervisor may agree to invite persons with appropriate expertise external to the college to attend the presentation. The presentation shall be a formative evaluation of the Research Paper, attracting diagnostic feedback to improve the content of the various sections of the paper. The presentation provides you an opportunity to crystallise your ideas and to receive feedback from several experienced researchers at an early stage of the work.

C5. Following the presentation you, in collaboration with your supervisor(s), shall update the paper based on advice provided at the research colloquium.

C6. Within one month of the presentation you shall provide the research coordinator with an updated version of the paper for consideration for confirmation of candidature.

**(D) Plan for Publication**

D1. The supervisor(s) and yourself shall consider opportunities and avenues for publication by you indicating conferences and journals in which a paper might be presented and academic monograph publishers (especially in the case of a ThD thesis).

D2. The plan shall be submitted to the research coordinator at the same time as the updated version of the Research Paper—i.e. within the first two semesters of full-time candidature or the first four semesters of part-time candidature.

**(E) Confirmation of Candidature Approval Process**

E1. Following your presentation at the research colloquium, the research coordinator shall arrange an Advisory Panel to review the final version of the research paper. This Panel shall comprise the research coordinator, the supervisor(s), and two persons with relevant expertise from within the college or outside it. The panel is responsible for ensuring that you have mastered the relevant literature, that the major research questions have been sharply defined, and that the research strategy is sound.

E2. The coordinator shall provide Panel members with a copy of the paper at least seven days before the meeting at which it will be considered. The Panel may meet in person or by teleconference (or equivalent) at a time and place notified by the coordinator at time of distribution of the paper. The research coordinator shall chair the meeting and arrange for recording of the agreed findings and outcome of the meeting. You shall be present at the meeting of the Panel.

E3. Following a review of the findings of the meeting, the supervisor shall submit to the coordinator a draft of the report to the Academic Board through the Post-Graduate Student Administrator concerning confirmation of candidature.

E4. There shall be three outcomes from the meeting of the Panel:

- (a) candidature is confirmed;
- (b) candidature is confirmed, subject to a response by you to listed advice from the panel satisfactory to the research coordinator and the supervisor(s) within one month of the date of advice of sign-off of the report;
- (c) candidature is not confirmed—you shall be directed to revise and resubmit the research paper according to explicit instructions on additional work, a timeline

and a process of review—you shall formally advise the research coordinator and the student administrator of your acceptance or not of the directions for revision and resubmission of the research paper.

The coordinator shall advise you and supervisor(s) of the Panel's outcome within five (5) working days of sign-off of the report and forward the report, along with the Plan for Publication, to the student administrator.

E5. A resubmitted research paper shall be reviewed following the steps E1 – E4 appropriately modified to account for this being a resubmitted paper. Should outcome E4(c) recur, without preparation of a second set of revision instructions, the coordinator shall recommend to the Academic Board that the candidature be terminated.



## **PROCEDURES REGARDING ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT BY HDR STUDENTS**

This policy provides a suggestion about how consideration may be given to an allegation of academic misconduct against a higher degree research candidate. These procedures will focus particularly on an allegation arising during the process of examination of a thesis.

### **Procedures in cases of alleged academic misconduct by a higher degree research candidate during the examination of a thesis**

#### **1. Initial inquiry into the alleged misconduct**

1.1 Where an examiner has reason to allege that the thesis of a candidate evidences academic misconduct, s/he will bring this issue to the attention of the Dean.

1.2 If the Dean believes the allegation warrants further investigation, the Dean shall request the examiner to provide as much documentation as possible supporting the allegation.

On receipt of the documentation, the Dean and the Chair of the Academic Board shall review the material with a view to determining if there are grounds for suspension of the examination process. If they determine there are insufficient grounds, the examination process will continue with this advice given to the examiner who raised the concern. If they determine there are sufficient grounds, they shall suspend the examination process and pass the material to the Thesis/Project Examinations Committee of the Academic Board for initial investigation. The Chair shall report the matter confidentially to the Board.

1.3 To determine whether or not the material provided evidences academic misconduct, the Examinations Committee shall review the material provided by the examiner and make any other investigations as deemed necessary but without direct contact with the candidate or supervisor(s).

If the Examinations Committee determines the material does not evidence academic misconduct, they shall so advise the Dean and the Chair of the Academic Board and provide a report supporting their determination.

If the Examinations Committee determines the material does evidence academic misconduct, they shall recommend to the Dean and the Chair of the Academic Board that the case proceed to formal inquiry. A report shall be provided supporting the recommendation.

1.4 If the Dean and the Chair accept the determination that the material does not evidence academic misconduct or reject the recommendation for a formal inquiry, they shall lift the suspension on the examination process and the Dean shall advise the examiner with the suggestion that the examination report might give clear directions towards rewriting of the relevant sections or revision and resubmission of the thesis for examination.

If the Dean and the Chair accept the recommendation for a formal inquiry, they shall advise the Academic Board and proceed to the formal inquiry.

## **2. Formal inquiry into the alleged misconduct**

2.1 Within 10 working days of the determination to proceed to the formal inquiry, the Dean shall write to the candidate, the supervisor(s) and the college Postgraduate Coordinator setting down the allegation of academic misconduct and appending relevant documentation. The Dean shall invite the candidate to provide a response in writing regarding this allegation within 15 working days of the date on his/her letter, and advise the candidate that s/he shall be invited to address a formal inquiry committee on the matter.

2.2 The Chair of the Academic Board shall establish a formal inquiry committee consisting of:

- (a) Chair of the Academic Board
- (b) two members of the Academic Board not related to the college in which the candidate is enrolled
- (c) a college staff member expert in the discipline area of the thesis not related to the college in which the candidate is enrolled

2.3 The Chair will write to the candidate providing details of the alleged misconduct and inviting the candidate to attend a meeting of the committee in person or via teleconferencing to provide evidence regarding the allegation. The letter to the candidate must include a copy of these procedures. The candidate may be assisted or represented at the inquiry by any staff member employed or student nominee studying in the College.

2.4 The formal inquiry may proceed whether or not the candidate responds (in 2.1) or attends.

2.5 Options available to the formal inquiry committee:

- (a) where the formal inquiry concludes that the action of the candidate does not constitute academic misconduct as defined above, no further action will be taken.
- (b) where the formal inquiry concludes that the action of the candidate lacked intent, but constituted academic misconduct, then examination process shall be terminated and the candidate may be permitted to undertake further research, if necessary, and resubmit the work or rewrite and resubmit the work, as considered appropriate for a new examination.
- (c) where the formal inquiry concludes that the action of the candidate evidences academic misconduct, the committee will determine an appropriate outcome and the Dean shall notify the candidate by registered mail within ten working days of the decision. A copy of these procedures and notification of the candidate's right to appeal must be included.

2.6 Outcomes may include:

- (a) Failure in the unit; or
- (b) Exclusion from the course for a period not exceeding two years; or
- (c) Another outcome appropriate to the case but with an impact less serious than exclusion from enrolment in any award of the Australian College of Theology; or
- (d) Exclusion from enrolment in any award of the Australian College of Theology.

## **3. Appeals against outcome of the formal inquiry**

3.1 The candidate has the right of appeal against the decision of the formal inquiry committee.

3.2 The candidate must make the appeal in writing to the Chair of Board of Directors within twenty (20) working days of the date on the written document from the ACT advising the decision that is the subject of the appeal. The candidate must set out fully

the grounds for appeal and provide documentary evidence in support of the appeal. Within five (5) working days of the receipt of the appeal, the Chair of the Board of Directors shall acknowledge receipt of the appeal.

- 3.3 The Hearing and the Outcome of the Appeal shall occur according to procedures set down in the Policy on Student Appeals under Research Degree Rules with the amendment that the Board of Directors Appeals Committee may have an additional member, if the candidate requests, being an observer, agreeable to both sides, drawn from a list of senior academics devised by the Primate or his representative.
- 3.4 The candidate may continue in the course pending the outcome of an appeal, or be granted suspension from the course. Should their appeal be denied, their enrolment may be amended or terminated, depending on the outcome determined.

#### **4. Recording of and access to information about academic misconduct**

- 4.1 The College will store data about academic misconduct and breaches of examination procedures in a central database. The data will be stored for a minimum period of 7 years from the date of the last incident recorded.
- 4.2 No data will be recorded where, following an informal inquiry involving the candidate, it is determined that no academic misconduct occurred.
- 4.3 The Dean, and the Chair and the Examinations Committee of the Academic Board will have access to any data stored in the database about a candidate, for consideration when determining whether the action of that candidate was academic misconduct, and if so in determining the appropriate outcome.
- 4.4 When it is determined academic misconduct occurred, the Dean will record the case in a central database, setting out:
- (a) details of the candidate, the program, the course (if applicable) and the research work;
  - (b) the type of academic misconduct;
  - (c) the factors taken into consideration;
  - (d) the evidence or other material on which the findings were based;
  - (e) the outcome and the reasons for its determination; and
  - (f) the candidate's agreement to the specified outcome.
- 4.5 Where, as a result of an initial inquiry, the Dean and the Chair of the Academic Board conclude that the action of the candidate does not evidence academic misconduct, the suspension on the examination process shall be lifted and any record of that investigation will be removed from the database.
- 4.8 Where, as a result of an initial inquiry, the Dean and the Chair conclude that the action of the candidate does evidence academic misconduct, the Dean will add a record to the database to indicate the case was referred to a formal inquiry committee and the factors taken into consideration in making that decision.
- 4.9 Where a formal inquiry committee is constituted, the committee, through the Chair, will have access to the data stored regarding the initial inquiry relating to that case, and to any other cases recorded against that candidate, in order to assist in their determination. The committee will add a record of their determination to the database, including:
- (a) the factors taken into consideration in determining an outcome;
  - (b) the evidence or other material on which the findings were based;
  - (c) the outcome and the reasons for its determination.
- 4.10 Where a candidate appeals the outcome of a formal inquiry, the Board of Directors Appeals Committee, through the Chair, will have access to the data stored regarding the initial inquiry and formal inquiry relating to that case, and to any other cases recorded against that candidate, in order to assist in their determination.
- 4.11 The candidate's transcript will record Exclusion or Expulsion.



## STUDENT APPEALS UNDER RESEARCH DEGREE RULES

This policy will establish the grounds on and procedures by which a research higher degree candidate may appeal against a decision:

- not to award a research degree, or
  - not to allow resubmission of a thesis for re-examination, or
  - to terminate candidature.
1. Higher degree research candidates against whom one of the above decisions has been made by the Board of Directors may appeal against this decision.
  2. Appeals based solely on the rejection of the academic assessment of work submitted for the award of the degree will not be permitted.
  3. The grounds for appeal against a decision not to award a research degree or not to allow resubmission of a thesis for re-examination are:
    - procedural irregularities in the conduct of an examination;
    - significant evidence of circumstances substantially affecting the student's performance of which the Academic Board was not aware.
  4. Where you lodge an appeal and the additional information supporting the appeal is of a highly sensitive or personal nature, you may submit those details in a sealed envelope clearly marked "confidential". The Board of Directors, the Appeal Review Panel, the Appeals Committee and involved staff of the ACT will treat the material with the utmost confidentiality.
  5. You must make the appeal in writing to the Chair of Board of Directors within twenty (20) working days of the date on the written document from the ACT advising the decision that is the subject of the appeal. You must set out fully the grounds for appeal and provide documentary evidence in support of the appeal. Within five (5) working days, the Chair of the Board of Directors shall acknowledge receipt of the appeal.
  6. Within ten (10) working days, an independent nominee of the Chair of Board of Directors and a Research Co-ordinator from an affiliated college other than yours (chosen by the Board of Directors) shall constitute an Appeal Review Panel to determine whether the appeal is against a decision covered by this policy and does accord with the grounds for appeal above, in which case the appeal will be heard.
  7. Should the Panel determine to the contrary, the Dean will advise you within five (5) working days of the determination with a full explanation of the determination.
  8. If the Appeal Review Panel determines the appeal should be heard, the appeal will be referred to the Board of Directors Appeals Committee within ten (10) working days of the determination. The committee shall be comprised of:
    - An independent Chair, being the nominee of the Chair of the Board of Directors;
    - Two Research Co-ordinators from affiliated colleges other than the one from which the appeal originated, chosen by the Board of Directors;
    - The Dean of the ACT or nominee
 A quorum for the Appeals Committee will be three members, two of whom must be academic.
  9. The Appeals Committee will consider documents relevant to the appeal including all material submitted by you, and call before it any person deemed relevant. The committee will not consider academic judgements made as part of the examination process. You will be invited to present a case. You may be assisted or represented at the inquiry by any staff member employed or student nominee studying in the College, or by someone with your pastoral oversight. The person assisting you may provide you with advice, but may not act as an advocate nor make direct comment to the meeting without permission of the Chair.
  10. At the completion of the hearing everyone present, with the exception of the members of the Committee, will be excused from the hearing to allow the Appeals Committee

to reach a decision on the appeal. Within five (5) working days of the meeting of the Appeals Committee, the Chair will communicate in writing the decision, with reasons, to the Chair of the Board of Directors.

11. Within five (5) working days of receiving the Committee's decision, the Chair of Board of Directors will notify you, through the Dean, of the outcome of the appeal and provide the reasons for the decision. The decision of the Appeals Committee is final and a confidential report will be provided to the next meeting of the Board of Directors.



## **TRANSFER FROM RESEARCH MASTERS TO RESEARCH DOCTORATE**

The following requirements apply to ACT candidates who are already enrolled in the MTh program and are desiring to transfer to the ThD program.

Candidates considering a transfer to the ThD program should be advised that expectations, requirements and characteristics of research in masters and doctoral programs are different. Transition, particularly at an advanced stage in the masters program, may be difficult. Problems may be encountered in developing the research project to a new conceptual level or integrating research from the masters and doctoral programs into a coherent thesis.

You and your supervisor(s) should consider carefully the factors set out in the requirements for the ThD as listed in the ACT Postgraduate Handbook as well as the information in this policy.

- A. A candidate in the MTh program who has completed coursework components, who applies to transfer to the ThD program, should be advised that no recognition will be available for coursework units completed as part of the MTh program.
- B. Applications for transfer will not be considered until you have been in the masters program for at least one (1) calendar year part time (or the full time equivalence) and has been confirmed as an MTh candidate.
- C. Before recommending a transfer, your supervisor(s) should give careful consideration to the your potential to conduct doctoral level research, including whether the proposed development of the masters research project is likely to yield a thesis at doctoral level. Conversion should take into account the differences between masters and ThD objectives.
- D. The supervisor's recommendation to the Academic Board in the case of a transfer should specifically address these points:
  - D1. quality of the your current work (including assurance that you are progressing with work at a standard and rate which will be likely to ensure that a thesis of the required standard is submitted within the time remaining for candidature);
  - D2. your potential to conduct research at the doctoral level; and
  - D3. potential of the masters research project for upgrading to doctoral level.
- E. You should submit for evaluation the following:
  - E1. substantial written work of at least 15,000 words which might take the form of a chapter of the thesis; and
  - E2. any other information you or your supervisor(s) considers relevant.

- F. The submission will be evaluated by one assessor chosen by the Dean or the Chair of the Academic Board (or their representative) who is qualified in the field, meets academic requirements for appointment as doctoral examiners and is not closely connected to you or your supervisor(s). The assessor is expected to be external to the ACT.
- G. The assessor will submit a report recommending whether the transfer should proceed in principle and what specific action is necessary to address outstanding issues.
- H. The Research and Research Studies Committee will make a decision on the basis of the assessor's report in conjunction with other information that may be relevant, such as your annual progress reports.
- I. If the assessor's recommendation is endorsed by the Board you will be invited to submit a ThD application and thesis proposal to the next available meeting of the Committee.
- J. If the application for transfer to the ThD is successful, the time enrolled in the research component, but not the time spent enrolled in any coursework units of study, of the MTh will be deducted from the time allowed for ThD candidature.
- K. International students should be aware that a change of course may have implications for your visa and that you should ensure you have submitted the correct information to DIAC. You will be issued with the amended documents by the ACT once the transfer has been confirmed.
- L. If the application for transfer is unsuccessful, you will be advised of the regulations for appeals under the ACT *Policy on student appeals under research degree rules*.

