

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN 2011-2013

The February 2007 AUQA Audit Report of the Australian College of Theology recommended that the College develop a comprehensive consortium-wide research and scholarship management plan “that will establish priorities and targets for the development of an enhanced ACT research and scholarship profile” (Recommendation 3).

The 2008-2010 Plan was the result of wide-ranging consultation. A draft was circulated to the Research Awards Board (now the Research & Research Studies Committee) and to affiliated colleges in early May 2007 and was the subject of discussion at the Consortium Conference on 23 June. Suggestions and recommendations were incorporated into a revision that was tabled at the meeting of the Board of Delegates (now the Board of Directors) on 23 July and the Research Awards Board on 3 August 2007. Copies were then printed and made available to colleges. Progress reports were submitted to the Research & Research Studies Committee in 2008 and 2010.

As was the case with the 2008-2010 Plan, the six Research and Scholarship goals of the new Plan are derived from the Statement of Mission, Objectives, Values and Vision of the ACT (August 2006) and available at www.acttheology.edu.au. They are consistent with the College’s firm commitment to enhancing research and scholarship and fostering a culture of scholarship, research and academic enquiry across the network.

In the tables below, each goal is accompanied by a number of initiatives, a statement of the desired outcome and the year in which the outcome is to be reached, an assessment of the priority of the initiative, and the person (or entity) chiefly responsible for the carriage of the initiative.

At its meeting on 19 November 2010, the Academic Board gave its final endorsement of the Plan that now follows.

Mark Harding
Dean
6 December 2010

Goal 1

The College aspires to building courses, policies and quality processes that will be widely regarded as comparable with best practice in the self-accrediting tertiary sphere.

Initiative	Outcome	Priority	Responsibility	Date
1.1 The ACT will be proactive in informing HDR candidates of their responsibilities and of the requirements of the ACT.	Publication of an information handbook for all HDR candidates.	H	Associate Dean	2011
1.2 The ACT will be involved in benchmarking academic and administrative policies and processes with peer theological institutions in the private and public sphere.	The Dean continues to participate in the benchmarking activity of the Council of Deans.	H	Dean.	2011-
1.3 The ACT will be involved in benchmarking academic policies and processes with the public universities through the Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies.	The ACT continues to attend meetings; the Dean has been granted associate membership of DDoGS.	M	Associate Dean.	2011-
1.4 The ACT will be involved in benchmarking administration policies and processes with the public universities through the Australasian Research Training Administrators (ARTA).	The ACT maintains its membership of ARTA and participates in its meetings.	M	Postgraduate Student Administrator.	2011-
1.5 The ACT is active in benchmarking its academic and administrative policies with overseas partners.	The ACT continues to benchmark academic and administrative policies with at least two quality overseas partners—Laidlaw-Carey and MTSO.	H	Dean.	2011-

Goal 2

The College will monitor each affiliated college's attention to quality improvement, provision of resources (especially library and IT) that support scholarly and research endeavour.

Initiative	Outcome	Priority	Responsibility	Date
2.1 Research-approved colleges will be proactive about protecting HDR and DMin main and co-supervisors from overwork.	Colleges are ensuring that regular combined supervision, teaching and administration loads of employed main and co-supervisors do not exceed 1.0.	M	ACT research-approved colleges monitored by the ACT Quality Manager.	2011-
2.2 Research-approved colleges and ACT boards and committees will be proactive in providing access to library and technical resources supporting critical engagement with scholarship.	Significant improvements are reported in college annual reports that are consistent with the policy on minimum resources for HDR candidates.	H	ACT research-approved colleges monitored by the Associate Dean.	2011-
2.3 The R&RSC will monitor commitment to ACT policies on research training across research approved colleges.	1. Induction of supervisors and candidates continues to occur. 2. The Associate Dean reports on these matters to the R&RSC.	H	1. Quality Manager. 2. Associate Dean.	2011-
2.4 The Associate Dean will monitor use of fIRST by colleges.	Colleges are using fIRST.	M	Associate Dean.	2011-
2.5 The ACT will provide professional development workshops for supervisors.	Workshops are being provided.	M	Associate Dean.	2010-

Goal 3

The College will ensure that the learning and formational experience of students is of the highest possible quality, and will monitor candidate, graduate, stakeholder and employer satisfaction.

Initiative	Outcome	Priority	Responsibility	Date
3.1 The ACT will closely monitor progress of all HDR and DMin candidates.	1. Postgraduate coordinators are discussing annual progress reports with candidates, supervisors and coordinators before submitting them to the ACT PG Student Administrator. 2. Research Committee is monitoring progress of candidates at risk of not completing. If required, remedial action is being taken as soon as possible in the period of candidature.	M	College post-graduate coordinators, ACT Postgraduate Student Administrator, R&RSC.	2011-
3.2 The ACT office will publish attrition, age of candidature and time taken to complete rates with a view to the College addressing the causes of unsatisfactory trends.	Attrition rates, age of candidature and time taken to complete all show positive trends.	M	ACT Postgraduate Student Administrator.	end 2013
3.3 The ACT office will maintain involvement in the GCA surveys and in conducting surveys of HDR candidates.	There is an observable trend towards greater candidate satisfaction.	M	ACT Academic Administrator.	2011-
3.4 ACT research-approved colleges will adopt research-training initiatives designed to facilitate orientation to the research enterprise.	1. Ongoing research training initiatives are being provided. 2. Confirmation of candidature policy is helping to lower attrition rates especially for part-time candidates.	M	Research-approved colleges monitored by ACT Associate Dean.	2013
3.5 HDR candidates will be better equipped to contribute to the research enterprise.	1. At least 25% of HDR candidates are publishing during candidature based in data provided the ACT Research Report. 2. At least 75% of HDR candidates are attending scholarly conferences, at which a majority of candidates are active participants, during candidature based on data provided by candidates in their annual report.	H	Research-approved colleges monitored by ACT Associate Dean.	end 2013
3.6 All main ACT supervisors will have taken the induction and registration test, and will remain research-active over the three-year period of registration.	These initiatives are in place.	H	Associate Dean.	End 2013
3.7 The College will address the need to encourage the next generation of scholars and researchers.	There is a discernible increase in younger scholars becoming supervisors and adjunct supervisors.	H	Research-approved colleges.	end 2013
3.8 HDR graduates will be well-equipped for teaching careers.	There is a discernible increase in numbers of graduates finding teaching positions in tertiary institutions both in Australia and overseas.	H	Associate Dean to monitor.	2013
3.9 The ACT and its affiliated colleges are committed to employer	Survey is being used by colleges at least once in the five year	M	Dean.	2013

and stakeholder feedback.	accreditation period 2012-2016.			
---------------------------	---------------------------------	--	--	--

Goal 4

The College will provide support for sustained research by the academic staff of affiliated colleges approved to deliver the research degrees of the College.

Initiative	Outcome	Priority	Responsibility	Date
4.1 The Board of Directors will continue to support academic staff in their research.	ACT budgets continue to show evidence of support.	M	Board of Directors.	2013 (15K with CPI)
4.2 The Board of Directors will encourage the sharing of scholarship and research.	The ACT will continue to support the AACC and enhance its departmental meetings from 2010.	M	Dean.	2013
4.3 The ACT office will continue to encourage and facilitate opportunities for the publication of research.	After Content and Setting at least one more publishable ACT project appears in the period 2011-13.	L	Dean.	2013

Goal 5

The College will be committed to maintain a culture of sustained and published research, and an engagement in teaching and research informed by modern scholarly developments in academic and pastoral theology.

Initiative	Outcome	Priority	Responsibility	Date
5.1 The ACT will strengthen its commitment to research training across research approved colleges.	The ACT continues to make funds available for research training.	M	Board of Directors.	2010-
5.2 The Board of Directors will continue to make funds available to enhance improvements in pedagogy in affiliated colleges, especially with respect to linking assessment with learning outcomes.	Funds are being used to support such professional development.	H	Board of Directors.	2011-13
5.3 The College will take its responsibility seriously to ensure DMin candidates are well-informed about ethics protocols.	Increasing numbers of DMin candidates are successfully negotiating applications for ethics clearances at their first attempt.	H	Academic Administrator.	2013
5.4 The College will remain committed to fostering engagement between academic staff and HDR candidates with overseas scholars.	The Board of Directors continues to contribute funds to visiting overseas scholars with input to ACT colleges and HDR candidates.	L	Board of Directors.	end 2013
5.5 All research-approved colleges will have at least one centre of scholarly excellence.	Centres in place.	L	Research-approved colleges.	end 2013
5.6 There will be research clusters identified across the consortium.	Clusters in place.	L	Research-approved colleges, with support from the Associate Dean.	end 2013
5.7 The ACT server will contain electronic versions of all thesis and projects that have been submitted since 2009.	Server contains theses and projects.	L	Associate Dean.	End 2011

Goal 6

The College aims to be in a position to secure self-accrediting status and then, possibly, after further consultation, modified university title in accordance with the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes (July 2006).

Initiative	Outcome	Priority	Responsibility	Date
------------	---------	----------	----------------	------

6.1 Scholarship profile of research-approved colleges will be enhanced.	College annual reports show enhanced levels of scholarly activity.	M	Research-approved colleges as monitored by the Academic Administrator.	2011-
6.2 ACT HDR load will remain steady at 3% of total EFTSL.	HDR load of 3 maintained.	M	Research-approved colleges as monitored by the ACT AA.	2011-
6.3 Annual ACT research output among candidates and academic staff will remain steady at about 90 HERDC points.	Annual research output of 90 HERDC points sustained.	M	Colleges as monitored by the AA.	2011-
6.4 Now that self-accreditation has been achieved the ACT will endeavour to access external research training funds.	Access to funds sought.	H	Dean.	2011
6.5 Now that self-accreditation status has been achieved further consortium-wide consultation will take place on the wisdom of seeking modified university title.	Consultation held.	L	Dean.	2012

HERDC = Higher Education Research Data Collection.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO