

MASTER OF ARTS (CHRISTIAN STUDIES)*incorporating***THE GRADUATE DIPLOMA OF CHRISTIAN STUDIES (GRADDIPCHRSTUDS)****1. Rationale and Aims of the Course:****(a) Aim and Perceived Need**

- the course aims to equip graduates with the theological and other understandings and skills needed to apply a Christian perspective and commitment to their life in the world, including their professional and vocational life, and is designed to integrate theological reflection with the particular occupational and/or life interests of students,
- it is expected that graduates from the management, business, legal, education, health and aged-care professions will be among those particularly attracted to the degree.

(b) Occupational Functions of Graduates

- graduates of the course will normally continue in their chosen secular professions but will have the understandings and skills to integrate these with their Christian perspective and commitment,
- depending on the units taken in the course, a graduate might be expected to participate as a member of a church educational or pastoral ministry team under the leadership of a well-qualified practitioner.

(c) Skills, Knowledge and Attitudes Acquired by Graduates

- skills in biblical exegesis, the practice of hermeneutics or interpretation, and theological reflection in such a way as to bring their theological insights to bear upon the world they face and on their roles and occupations in it,
- ability to integrate and synthesize insights gained from the student's program of study with his or her vocational and/or life interests,
- ability to investigate by means of the project the particular interface of theological study and the world of work and/or life interest of the student;
- demonstrate knowledge and competence in their analysis of texts and ideas, undertake reading at greater depth and breadth than that expected of undergraduates, and show ability to read across viewpoints with understanding and to report these with empathy,
- display an ability to present well-structured and coherent arguments,
- demonstrate ability in all units undertaken to arrive at independent judgments and conclusions, and to engage in constructing their own theological world-view with attention to the deposit of faith and contemporary world-views,

- develop a critical appreciation of the historical context of Christian thought and practice and gain a critical appreciation of relevant cultural issues from a Christian perspective.

(d) Learning and Teaching Strategies

- lecturers and adjunct faculty will encourage independent thinking and a rigorous critique of accepted positions,
- students will be encouraged to report and assess views other than their own with empathy and understanding,
- all units will be taught and assessed in such a way as to encourage integration of theological and biblical studies with the student's life experiences in the world,
- in addition to prescribing long essays for each unit, students will be given the opportunity to write an extended project, a significant pointer of the potential of a student's ability to undertake further research at postgraduate level,
- the course requires the completion of at least one unit taken from those approved in the field of Integration Studies, which are intentionally designed to facilitate the student's developing skill in reflecting theologically on the content of the units undertaken in the degree in the context of their professional and/or life situation and to provide an academic framework for the shaping of vocational, personal, family and community life.

2. Admission Requirements and Assumed Knowledge:**(a) Admission Requirements**

- (i) The educational qualification for admission to the Master of Arts (Christian Studies) and Graduate Diploma of Christian Studies is an approved three-year non-theological undergraduate degree of a recognised university, or its equivalent. Prospective students will present full academic transcripts to their sponsoring institution. Graduates in a theological or a related discipline are ineligible to enrol in the GradDipChrStuds.
- (ii) Although the degree is not primarily intended for those engaged in full time professional ministry it is recognised that some students, having satisfied (i) above, and having completed either the Graduate Diploma of Christian Studies or the BTh or BMin or AssocDegTh or AdvDipTh may have a special interest in the degree. Many who complete theological degrees and diplomas do so with no intention of entering full time professional ministry.

(b) Other Admission Provisions**(i) Mature Age Admission**

There is no mature age entry provision. The MA(ChrStuds) is a degree for students with a completed three-year non-theological degree or its equivalent. While it is preferable for that study to have been completed within ten years of commencing the degree, the College does not wish to prescribe this.

If there is doubt or uncertainty about a student's level of qualifications, the Academic Board may require applicants to complete a bridging course prior to admission to the MA(ChrStuds).

- (ii) Normally, students will be expected to have professional or other equivalent adult life experience.
- (iii) Except for those candidates who have a tertiary qualification taught in English, international candidates whose first language is not English will be required to sit an IELTS test. For candidates wishing to enrol in the MA(ChrStuds) or GradDipChrStuds, an average of 7.0, with at least 7.0 for reading and writing, and 6.0 for listening and speaking is required.

(c) Assumed Knowledge and Skills

It is assumed that applicants will have the knowledge associated with one academic discipline to first degree level and the academic skills of evaluation and analysis of the content of learning and the secondary literature relevant to that content, acquired during the course of their previous studies.

3. Credit Transfer:**(a) Principles**

- (i) Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) applications for admission to the course or applications for transfer of credit will be dealt with initially by approved colleges and then by the Dean of the ACT before final approval is granted. 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).
- (ii) The ACT regards the qualifications awarded by the affiliated colleges of the Committee of Deans of Theological Consortia as equivalent to its own, assuming that prerequisites for entry to an ACT award are met.
- (iii) The ACT regards accredited degrees in theology and ministry awarded by registered providers in Australia as equivalent to its own degrees assuming that prerequisites for entry to an ACT award are met.

- (iv) The onus is on the applicant to make a detailed submission clearly detailing the case for deeming prior learning as the equivalent of the outcomes expected in the College award. If entrance to the MA(ChrStud) or GradDipChrStuds were sought the prospective student would be required to demonstrate that his/her prior learning amounted to the equivalent of a three-year degree.
- (v) Applications for transfer of credit, whether from ACTh or non-ACTh awards, will be adjudicated on the basis that the prior learning was at least the equivalent of the ACTh's Graduate Diploma or of units in that award. In other words, the prior learning for which credit is sought must have been completed at degree level three. If this is not demonstrated a bridging program will be devised to enable potential students to articulate to the MA(ChrStuds).

(b) Admission with Advanced Standing: from completed awards

- (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 of Christian Studies.
- (ii) Students who hold the ACT's GradDipChrStuds will be admitted to the MA(ChrStuds) with 50% advanced standing provided that the completed program includes units that are equivalent to the prescribed core units of the MA(ChrStuds).
- (iii) Students who hold either the ACT's BMin, BTh or MDiv or an approved equivalent theological degree awarded by an accredited Higher Education Provider (HEP), 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 MA(ChrStuds) degree.

(c) Admission with Advanced Standing: from incomplete awards

- (i) Applications for Advanced Standing from incomplete non-ACT awards will not be considered if the units were completed more than ten years previously.
- (ii) No credit can be claimed for units completed at certificate, (advanced) diploma or undergraduate degree level.
- (iii) Students yet to complete the MDiv/GradDipDiv who seek to transfer to the MA(ChrStuds)/GradDipChrStuds may have successfully completed units transferred subject to requirements of the MA(ChrStuds)/GradDipChrStuds.
- (iv) One Masters level unit (700) or units deemed equivalent to 8 cps may be taken at an institution not affiliated with the College. If not a university, preferably such an institution should be affiliated with the other ecumenical consortia (such as the Melbourne College of Divinity, Sydney College

of Divinity, the Adelaide College of Divinity, the Perth College of Divinity or the Brisbane College of Theology). Approval will be subject to demonstration that the unit will be assessed at masters level and taught by an appropriately qualified teacher.

(d) Articulation for Graduates to Higher ACT Awards

- (i) Students are able to articulate to the Master of Arts (Theology)/(Ministry) after a further year (full-time or part-time equivalent) of coursework study as long as students have 4 cps of biblical language. Units taken should fill out what is lacking in the student's theological education. Such a program might include taking out the Graduate Diploma of Theology or Graduate Diploma of Ministry or 32 cps in the Master of Divinity Degree.
- (ii) Articulation to the Master of Theology normally requires a bridging year of full-time study (or part-time equivalent) and the completion of biblical language requirements if deemed necessary by the Academic Board. The bridging program would take the form of the Bachelors Honours year or its equivalent.

However, an MA(ChrStud) graduate who has completed the degree with a 2.0 GPA overall and an 8,000 word project at distinction level in an area of study consistent with the candidate's speciality at undergraduate level can articulate directly to the MTh program. Such a candidate would not need to complete the bridging program on the grounds that expertise in the undergraduate degree program of the candidate, combined with his or her research interests in the proposed research masters program, warranted such articulation.

4. Course Structure and Curriculum

(a) Duration of the Course and Modes Offered

- (i) The minimum time of candidature will be two years full-time. The maximum time of candidature allowed will be six years, though extensions for adequate cause for another two years will be considered on application to the Dean.

The Graduate Diploma of Christian Studies can be taken out in a minimum time of one year full-time or a maximum time of four years.

- (ii) Attendance will normally be spread over a semester or compressed into a shorter span in intensive mode, with possibility of distance delivery for completing students, i.e., those enrolled in the final one or two units of the course.

Not more than 50% of the degree can be taken in intensive mode.

- (iii) Four units (16 cps) in the GradDipChrStuds phase of the degree is equivalent to a full-time load. Two units per semester (16 cps) in the masters phase of the degree is equivalent to a full time load.

(b) Course Structure

- (i) The MA(ChrStuds) will be awarded on the satisfactory completion of 64 cps taken from approved units offered at 500 and 600 level (Graduate Diploma phase) and 700 level (Masters phase) including units in the field of Integrative Studies.
- (ii) The structure of a student's program is as follows:

The Graduate Diploma phase requires satisfactory completion of 32 credit points.

- 16 of these shall be drawn from core foundational units offered at 500 level (OT501, OT502, NT501, NT502, CH501, 502, 505);
- A further 12 cps shall come from 600 level units including 8 cps in Theology (TH601-604) (with the possibility that units offered at TH700 level might be included);
- A 4 cp project (IN650). If this unit is deferred (see below) the Graduate Diploma cannot be awarded, and the 4 cps must be taken from units offered at 600 level.

To receive the MA(ChrStuds) a further 32 credit points of study at 700 level must be satisfactorily completed.

- At least eight credit points must be in units chosen from the field of Integrative Studies (IN); no more than two 4 cp IN700 units may be taken in the course of the award;
- The 8 cp project (IN791) must also be taken, relating the student's non-theological studies to their Christian faith;
- Students who elect not to take the 4 cp project in the GradDipChrStuds phase of this award may add the 4 cps to the 8 cp project and complete a 12 cp integrative project (12,000 words or equivalent) (IN792). If IN650 has been taken IN792 cannot be attempted.

A student who graduates with the MA(ChrStuds) would need to surrender the Grad Dip in Christian Studies if that had been awarded.

(c) Assessment

- (i) Units offered at 500 level require the completion of 5,000-6,000 words or equivalent. Units offered at 600 level require the completion of 6,000-7,000 words or equivalent. In units worth 8 cps students should write about 8,000 words.

In IN700 4 cp units students should write about 6,000 words, but are assessed in accordance with outcomes expected for 8 cp MA units.

- (ii) A variety of assessment methods will be employed. At least two assessment events are prescribed for each unit (except projects).

Students taking units at 500 or 600 level will be assessed and moderated in line with MDiv students.

700 level units worth 8 cps would require, for example, two 4,000 word essays (both worth 50% of the final mark) or one 4,000 word essay and a three-hour exam (each task worth 50% of the final mark). Integrative Studies 700 level units worth 4 cps would require, for example, two 3,000 word essays (both worth 50% of the final mark) or one 2,000 word essay and a three-hour exam. At times, tutorial papers also constitute part of the required assessment for a Masters level unit. All units (with the exception of projects) are subject to a moderation process.

- (iii) The 4 cp project (IN650) normally requires a long essay of 5,000 words.
The 8 cp project (IN791) normally requires a long essay of 8,000 words.
The 12 cp project (IN792) normally requires a long essay of 12,000 words.
These word limits include footnotes but not bibliographies or abstracts.

GUIDELINES FOR THE PROJECT (IN650, IN791/2)

(a) Prerequisites:

IN650 (4 cp) can only be attempted once 16 cps have been satisfactorily completed in the course.

IN791 or IN792 can only be attempted once 48 cps have been satisfactorily completed.

(b) Objectives:

The Project allows the opportunity to undertake sustained, in-depth research in the area of the integration of their professional and life interests with particular aspects of the Christian tradition.

Students will pursue in depth a topic of personal and/or vocational interest not studied elsewhere in the degree; to enable students to develop research skills at an advanced level, particularly if articulation to a research degree is anticipated; to enhance the integration of the students' professional and/or life interests with particular aspects of theological and biblical studies.

(c) Method of Assessment:

The project IN791 or IN792 should be marked by an external examiner appointed by the ACT. The 4 cp

project (IN650) should be marked internally and moderated by the appropriate field moderator.

(d) Guidelines and Process:

- The topic of the thesis must be approved by the relevant field Moderator, using the required Assessment Procedures Form.
- Once the topic of the thesis is approved, the student is to prepare a fuller proposal to be submitted to his or her sponsoring institution's course coordinator. The proposal should nominate a topic and include a statement of aim and method. The aim of the thesis must comply with the ethos of the degree. The student must also submit a bibliography of the primary and secondary monographs and articles in the area of his/her professional or vocational or life interest as well as the area of theology or biblical studies or ministerial study under investigation.
- Institutions are to ensure that adequate resources are available to the student in order that the research to be undertaken is supportable. In cases of inadequacies in the library holdings of the sponsoring institution, the course coordinator is to locate accessible local resources that will remedy the lack.
- Institutions are to ensure that the student is aware of the academic standard expected of the project.
- Sponsoring institutions are to ensure that students enrolling in the project are adequately supervised by an appropriately qualified member of the faculty once the proposal has been approved by the student's sponsoring institution. A co-supervisor may be drawn from the ranks of adjunct faculty, especially those who might be invited to lecture aspects of subjects taught by the student's sponsoring institution.
- Any student undertaking human subject research as part of their project must gain approval from the institution's ethics committee before commencing their research. Applications forms can be obtained from their sponsoring college.

(e) Examination:

The coordinator, in consultation with the candidate, is expected to submit the names of three or four possible external examiners of the project to the Dean for his or her consideration. Potential examiners should not be approached by the candidate or coordinator before names are submitted. It is the ACT's responsibility to invite and appoint such examiners, though always in consultation with the student's sponsoring college.

When the project is ready for submission, it must be sent to the ACT along with the following signed certification:

Candidate

The following project, of which I have kept a copy, is entirely the work of the undersigned and all sources of ideas and expressions are duly acknowledged in footnotes or endnotes. This project does not incorporate

any material previously submitted by me for any other degree or similar award.

Supervisor

I consider that this project is in a form suitable for examination and conforms to the requirements of the Australian College of Theology.

UNITS

The following units were approved at the time of printing. Please check with your college for timetable details and current offerings.

- IN650 Integrative Project – 4cp
- IN715 Literature and Theology
- IN719 Religions of the World
- IN749 Ministry in Culturally Diverse Teams
- IN752 Christian Spirituality
- IN753 Conflict Management Skills
- IN754 Apologetics for Postmodern Times
- IN755 Christians and Conflict
- IN757 Leadership Development in a Cross Cultural Context
- IN758 Cross Cultural Teaching & Learning
- IN759 Cultural Anthropology for Christian Ministry
- IN761 Trinitarian Thought: the God Worshipped in Community
- IN765 Biblical & Ministry Perspectives on Prayer
- IN767 Towards a Christian Theory of Education I
- IN770 Towards a Theology of Christian Counselling I
- IN771 Towards a Theory of Christian Counselling II
- IN772 Family Ministry
- IN773 Mentoring within Christian Community
- IN774 Church Systems & Congregational Health
- IN775 Using the Old Testament in Christian Ethics
- IN776 Theories of Ethics and their Implications for Christians in a Postmodern World
- IN778 Hermeneutics, Theology and the Book of Acts
- IN791 Integrative Project – 8cp
- IN792 Integrative Project – 12cp

IN715 Literature and Theology

This unit explores the significance of the Bible and Christian theology for literature in English to assist students to integrate theological reflection with their professional and vocational life and be able to apply a Christian perspective and commitment in their particular occupational and/or life interests.

IN719 Religions of the World

This unit will contribute to the ability of the students in their understanding of people living in their immediate/more distant context who have a different world view than their own; the development of skills in approaching people with different religious beliefs, without damaging permanent relationships; the development of skills in communicating the Christian gospel in culturally relevant terms (i.e. different culture than the student's own culture); and the student's general ability to be effective in a multi-cultural society such as is found in much of Australia.

IN749 Ministry in Culturally Diverse Teams

This unit aims to explore the role of culturally diverse teams in Christian ministry in churches, missions, and Christian agencies. Beginning with theological and missiological principles for ministry in community, the unit examines key issues and challenges involved in working in a team, and explores the impact of cultural diversity on how these issues and challenges are addressed. The unit will also provide candidates with practical tools for evaluating the appropriateness and effectiveness of methodologies and principles being used in such team ministry contexts.

IN752 Christian Spirituality

This unit aims to equip students with the necessary knowledge of Christian Spirituality and allow its truths to shape human response to the action of God, in Christ, in life and in the world. It seeks to give skills to participants so that they will be enabled to embody their faith in day to day living in contemporary society. It will provide a framework of Christian spirituality for the shaping of vocational, personal, family and community life.

IN753 Conflict Management Skills

Students will learn current theory relevant to interpersonal and intergroup conflict; be able to analyse their behaviour in conflicts in their organisations and interpersonal relationships and use this analysis for better managing their interactions with others; and increase their skills in planning for and dealing with interpersonal and intergroup conflict.

IN754 Apologetics for Postmodern Times

By the end of the unit the student should be able to understand and utilise key terms in apologetic discourse; demonstrate an understanding of the major issues and questions in apologetics; show a greater ability to think biblically, historically, philosophically and contextually; and articulate a rational and responsible defence of the Christian truth-claim for postmodern times.

IN755 Christian and Conflict

No aspect of societal interaction has a mortgage on conflict; it happily traverses all areas of human activity. For Christians seeking skills on how to bring a Christian perspective and commitment to their life, this course offers the ability to develop skills and apply distinctively Christian thinking and approaches to the difficult area of conflict. The unit aims to give students a deeper theological understanding of the nature of conflict and how to respond to it in a Christian and biblical way. This includes contrasting this approach against other secular approaches to conflict that are likely to be encountered in the workforce environment which tend to focus on 'solving the problem' without always addressing the important relational dimensions of the conflict.

IN757 Leadership Development in a Cross Cultural Context

This unit considers principles of leadership found in the Bible, in secular writings and in Christian writings. It then reviews relevant cross cultural issues and seeks to integrate the leadership principles and cross cultural issues so as to create a culturally appropriate leadership development for a specific cultural context.

IN758 Cross Cultural Teaching & Learning

The unit explores the various dimensions of the field of cross cultural learning and seeks to demonstrate the connections between these learning principles and the effective teaching of the Bible in cross cultural and multicultural situations. It thus provides integration between educational principles and Bible teaching ministry.

IN759 Cultural Anthropology for Christian Ministry

This unit considers aspects of cultural anthropology, including the concept of culture, social organisation and the dynamics of culture change. Connections will then be sought between that material and the practice of Christian ministry in a local church and cross culturally. It thus seeks to provide integration between two areas of study that are infrequently allowed to impact each other.

IN761 Trinitarian Thought: the God Worshipped in Community

Given the growing pluralistic nature of contemporary society it is decidedly advantageous for students to acquire a firm understanding of the depth, vigour and compass of the distinctive doctrine of the Christian faith. The prolonged discussion of the Trinity in recent times has brought to light areas of application particularly relevant to Christian engagement with the world.

IN765 Biblical & Ministry Perspectives on Prayer

This unit aims to guide students in their understanding of critical issues relating to the presentation of the phenomenon of prayer in the Bible; to help students examine a major issue with respect to prayer from a biblical perspective; and to reflect critically on the significance of prayer in Christian life and ministry.

IN767 Towards a Christian Theory of Education I: Persons and Groups

The unit will contribute a perspective on education drawn from the sub-discipline of Biblical Anthropology, and from precedents in biblical literature on upbringing, nurture and teaching. The expectation is that the layperson who is a professional teacher, or who, in fact, teaches within Christian programmes denominational or interdenominational, will be better able to bring a Christian approach to bear upon teaching and education whether within a secular or a Christian setting.

IN770 Towards a Theology of Christian Counselling I: Theological Critique

By the end of the unit, candidates should be competent to demonstrate acquaintance with the major approaches to counselling; to recognise and reflect upon theological – anthropological issues emerging from the practice of counselling; and to evaluate counselling models in terms of their adequacy from a Christian perspective and of their pastoral effectiveness.

IN771 Towards a Theology of Christian Counselling II: Integration in Theory and Practice

By the end of the unit, candidates should be competent to confront the theological-anthropological issues which emerged in the previous course on the theological monitoring of counselling approaches; to reflect on the four predominant modes of integration between theology and counselling, and also the anti-integration position and to move as far as practicable towards the construction of a comprehensive integrated approach to Christian Counselling.

IN772 Family Ministry

An exploration of the nature of family life. Historical developments and contemporary views on family in Australia will be evaluated. Biblical insights into the nature and function of family will be highlighted. The nature of family based ministry will then be considered, and effective ministry strategies that aspire to enrich family life will be developed.

IN773 Mentoring within Christian Community

The unit aims to help candidates to reflect on the place of mentoring within Christian community; relate the idea of mentoring to their personal lives, and their particular involvement in ministry; and to consider their continuance or commencement in either mentoring or being mentored, in the light of criteria discussed in the unit.

IN774 Church Systems & Congregational Health

Upon the successful completion of this unit, students should be able to choose leadership styles appropriate to the readiness and maturity of their group; evaluate and enhance the quality of relationships and task performance of their ministry/decision making teams; appreciate the internal tacit cultures within their church, knowing how to expose the value systems and underlying assumptions of their church and its habitual processes; diagnose the systemic and psycho-dynamic health producing or retarding aspects of their church family life; determine their own natural styles for addressing conflict and leadership and be aware of the potentials both for growth and dis-ease of conflictual church cultures; and determine the appropriate social-scientific, psycho-dynamic or anthropological lenses to interpret their situations and predicaments in ministry with groups.

IN775 Using the Old Testament in Christian Ethics

At the end of the unit, candidates should be able to discuss problems and issues in using the Old Testament as Christian Scripture, with particular reference to

Christian ethics; integrate key components of Christian ethical theory into the student's use of the Old Testament; develop an integrated approach to using the OT in Christian ethics which incorporates an understanding of the 'shape' of OT ethics, major themes in OT ethics, key OT texts which relate to issues in Christian ethics, and theoretical and hermeneutical issues related to bringing the OT to bear on Christian ethics; and apply key OT texts and themes to practical issues in Christian ethics, with a particular focus on their relevance to pastoral ministry.

IN776 Theories of Ethics and their Implications for Christians in a Postmodern World

The unit seeks to review the traditional theories of ethics and to establish and develop points of connection between those theories and Christian living in a postmodern context.

IN778 Hermeneutics, Theology, and the Book of Acts

This unit aims to help students evaluate historical and current approaches to determining the theology of Acts; demonstrate methodological awareness in deriving theology from the narrative of Acts; distinguish the main themes of Lukan theology; and correlate selected passages and twenty first century ministry issues within the framework of Lukan theology.

