

MASTER OF THEOLOGY

RATIONALE FOR THE COURSE

- (a) The Master of Theology course has been designed for study and research to be undertaken normally in one field of specialisation within the Department of Bible and Language or Christian Thought or Ministry and Practice.
- (b) The Master of Theology (MTh) degree requires candidates satisfactorily to complete a substantial piece of research focusing on a specialised topic within a unit field. A minority of candidates are approved to undertake a coursework component amounting to 25% of the total course load as a preliminary to entering the research phase of the degree.
- (c) The MTh course is for candidates who have demonstrated the capacity for research at this level either in their Bachelors Honours program, or at coursework masters level in the MA (Theol/Min) or under certain conditions the MA (ChrStud), or in the Master of Divinity course.
- (d) From its inauguration the MTh has been used as a research degree for theology graduates who are already engaged in the ministerial profession as aspiring teachers in theological colleges in Australia and overseas. The course articulates to the College's ThD.

DURATION OF THE COURSE

The normal period of candidature of the MTh is two years (four semesters) full time or part-time (eight semesters). Under exceptional circumstances, the Research & Research Studies Committee may vary the period of candidature.

LEVEL OF THE COURSE

- (a) The level of the course is equivalent to a research masters degree offered at an Australian university or theological college.
- (b) Characteristics of the Master of Theology include:
 - the demonstration of research skills and advanced knowledge in a specialised area of the discipline of theology, by which is meant a topic from one of the unit fields of the Departments of Bible and Languages (LA, OT, NT), the Department of Christian Thought (TH, CH, PE) including Integrative Studies (IN), and Ministry and Practice (EM, PC, DM);
 - the demonstration of a high order of skill analysis, critical evaluation and/or the professional application in a piece of extended research that exhibits comprehension and evaluation of new information, concepts and evidence encountered

both in primary sources and also the secondary literature arising out of scholarly reflection in a specialised area of one or more of the major disciplines in theology such as Biblical Studies, Theology, Church History, Ethics, or Ministry and Practice;

- the demonstration of a high order of skill in analysis and critical evaluation transferred from undergraduate study and showing evidence of the ability to think independently.
- (c) The educational standard of the MTh is that of a research masters degree awarded by universities and theological providers in Australia.
 - (d) Learning Outcomes for Coursework Units Offered at 700 Level.

Coursework Masters (700 level) Units—

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate superior knowledge and skills in their analysis of texts and ideas, and to arrive at independent judgments appropriate to early postgraduate level in their select area of study. Candidates are expected to demonstrate a developing capacity for further postgraduate research.

Pass

- demonstrates pronounced ability in engaging primary sources and understands their setting and historical context
- evidences a sound grasp of features of the discipline as they intersect with a select area of study
- shows an ability to evaluate critically a range of scholarly viewpoints with empathy

Credit

- demonstrates pronounced ability in the analysis of primary sources and understands their setting and historical context
- evidences a confident grasp of the features of the discipline as they intersect with a select area of study
- exhibits an ability to evaluate and assess empathetically a range of scholarly viewpoints that suggests the emergence of independent thinking and research skills required at postgraduate level

Distinction

- demonstrates superior ability in the analysis and critique of primary sources and ideas and understands their setting and historical context
- evidences a confident grasp of the features of the discipline as they intersect with a select area of study
- exhibits superior ability in assessing and reporting on a range of scholarly viewpoints empathetically that exhibits the emergence of independent thinking and research skills required at postgraduate level

High Distinction

- demonstrates superior knowledge and skills in the analysis and critique of primary sources and ideas and understands their setting and historical context
- evidences a confident grasp of the features of the discipline as they intersect with a select area of study
- exhibits genuinely independent scholarly judgments appropriate to early postgraduate level in a select area of study

Theses at 700 Level

The thesis of 40,000–50,000 words (or 28,000–35,000 words if a coursework phase has been undertaken) including footnotes, which should also contain a synopsis of about 300 words, must not incorporate any material previously submitted by the candidate for any other degree or similar award.

The thesis must contribute to theological learning. Where no new material is presented, the thesis must give evidence of correcting or supplementing earlier work or of presenting the material in fresh perspective. The thesis may be a critical survey of existing knowledge or an original contribution to its subject. In either case, it must give evidence of some originality and independence of thought. The literary style must be acceptable.

The candidate must demonstrate that he or she is aware of and understands the primary and scholarly literature directly relevant to the topic as well as related areas of significance, is able to make considered judgments, and can report sympathetically points of view different from those of the candidate. Where the primary documents on which the thesis is focussed are in a language other than English, such as biblical and modern languages, the candidate may be required to show evidence that he or she is able to read and analyse them.

COURSE OBJECTIVES**(a) Occupational Functions**

- scholars in preparation for research at doctoral level,
- teachers in Theological and Bible Colleges engaged in the teaching of undergraduate theological courses and at coursework masters level.

(b) Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes Acquired by Graduates

- advanced critical or synthesising ability,
- comprehensive and penetrating assessment of scholarly literature in the candidate's chosen field of study and research,
- the sustaining of extended and sophisticated argument,
- the emergence of a creative or original contribution such that potential for doctoral level research is demonstrated.

(c) Learning and Teaching Strategies

- in some circumstances provision could be made for the candidate to take an assessable guided program of coursework study in the designated field of research designed by the supervisor as a preliminary and foundational to the particular demands of the thesis topic and the scholarship to be assessed or documents to be examined (such as further biblical language study, Latin, German),
- the thesis as the evidence of the sustaining of extended and sophisticated argument such that the potential for further postgraduate research is perceived to be emerging.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- (i) Graduates of the four year BTh (or BMin) Honours I, IIA or IIB may become candidates for the MTh.
- (ii) ACT Master of Divinity graduates with a GPA of 2.8 overall and a Distinction grade in the 8 cp project may become candidates for the MTh degree as long as the sponsoring college is satisfied that the applicant has the potential to write an extended piece of research at masters level.
- (iii) ACT Master of Arts (Theology) graduates may be granted candidature in the MTh on condition that they achieved a GPA of 2.0 overall and Credit grade in the 16 cp project (which is equivalent to an Honours thesis). Under certain circumstances entry to the MTh may be allowed MA (Min) graduates.
- (iv) Students who achieve a GPA of 2.8 over the course of the first two units in the MA Theology (or MA Min) degree in addition to a Distinction grade in the 16 cp project may upgrade to the MTh with the approval of the Research & Research Studies Committee.
- (v) Master of Arts (Christian Studies) graduates who have an Honours or research degree in a non-theological discipline may seek to become candidates on condition that the MTh thesis integrates the study of theology with their non-theological discipline.

Master of Arts (Christian Studies) graduates are able to articulate to the MTh. This 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 Research & Research Studies Committee. The bridging program would take the form of the Bachelors Honours year or its equivalent.

However, a Master of Arts (Christian Studies) 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 consonant with the candidate's speciality at undergraduate honours level can articulate directly to the MTh program.

Such a student 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.

- (vi) All applicants with non-ACT qualifications must submit original or certified copies of transcripts or certificates of all tertiary study completed in theology or ministry.
- (vii) Applications should be made to the Research & Research Studies Committee on the required ACT form through an ACT college approved to offer the MTh degree.
- (viii) Students in the course will be supervised at an affiliated college of the ACT approved to prepare candidates for the MTh degree. Granting of candidature and approval of supervisor(s), who must be research active, are responsibilities of the Research & Research Studies Committee.
- (ix) Evidence of current research activity of the supervisor (and the associate supervisor if appointed).
- (x) All applicants seeking entry to the MTh must have completed biblical and other language requirements that lay the foundation for research in their topic. For those candidates seeking to undertake research in Bible and Languages this requirement will normally be satisfied if the language skills for entry to the BTh Honours course (i.e., at least 8 cps in either Biblical Hebrew (LA003A and LA003B) or New Testament Greek (LA004A and LA004B) and at least 8 cps of biblical language exegesis in their initial theology degree have been completed.

Under certain circumstances the Research & Research Studies Committee may accept an enrolment in the MTh from MA (Min) graduates. Those seeking to undertake research in a field of the Department of Ministry and Practice will need to demonstrate to the Committee that the biblical language requirements expected of MTh candidates pursuing research in Bible and Languages and Christian Thought are not required.

Special Additional Qualifications

- (i) 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 Master of Theology, a score of at least 7.5 in reading and writing, 7.0 in listening and 6.5 in speaking is required.
- (ii) A sponsoring college may require MDiv graduates who satisfy the academic requirements for entry to

the MTh to complete a 16 cp project to be marked externally to the sponsoring college.

- (iii) Students who achieve a GPA of 2.8 over the course of the first two units in the MA(Th) degree in addition to a Distinction grade in the project of 16 cps may upgrade to the MTh with the approval of the Committee.

Mature Age Entry

There is no mature age entry provision on the understanding that applicants are already theology graduates.

Provisional Candidature

- (i) Candidates are regarded as provisionally enrolled in the degree if coursework is required to be completed before the thesis is attempted. Successful completion of coursework confirms candidature already granted by the Research & Research Studies Committee.
- (ii) Students applying as MTh candidates who do not have an ACT degree or its equivalent may be granted provisional candidature upon:
 - *Either* admission to and satisfactory completion of the BTh Honours year;
 - *Or* satisfactory completion of the MA (Theol) or (MA [Min]) with Distinction grade in the project.
- (iii) Evidence of current research activity of the supervisor (and the associate supervisor if appointed).

OFF-SHORE CANDIDATES

MTh applicants who meet the normal ACT admission criteria for the particular award and who in addition to these criteria display a strong chance of completion as indicated by either:

- Personal knowledge of them by supervisors within the sponsoring institution, or ...
- A record of publication in refereed publications, or previous academic research theses, or ...
- Sponsorship by a reputable denomination or mission sending agency known to the sponsoring institution, or a ...
- Sponsorship by a theological training trust fund (e.g. Langham Partnership, International Teams etc.)

Upon the supply of:

- Commendation from two reputable Academic Referees
- And written declaration from their denominational, or mission directors or other current employer, that such bodies understand the time commitment involved and approve of the candidate's application,

And who possess the following access to resources or facilities such as:

- Electronic journals, 'Skype' or other, internet links with supervisor and the sponsoring college library. And preferably ...
- Accredited theological institution (accredited by ATEA or ATESEA), or
- Adjunct supervision in their country of origin

Will be admitted as postgraduate candidates in the MTh award in either part or full time status on the understanding that ...

- They engage in a minimum of an initial 4 week induction period involving the particular college's normal formal induction process and any special induction deemed necessary for the particular candidate. The maximum period of course would be determined by their visa limits.
- Candidates taking the MTh by coursework and thesis only be required to be resident for two weeks per year in their research phase, while candidates taking the MTh by minor project and thesis be required to be resident for two weeks per year in all years of their candidature provided research methods training is taken prior to commencement of their thesis research. All thesis only candidates are resident at the sponsoring college for a minimum of two weeks each year (10 working days) from then on in any combination of number of days, as negotiated with their sponsoring college's research director on academic grounds.

[Allowance will be given that in their final year a student may apply to forgo their residential opportunity if in the opinion of their supervisor and their college's postgraduate coordinator, significant progress in research is being made without the need for further face-to-face contact.]

- During such residency periods they must engage in the academic life of their sponsoring institution through such means as presentation of postgraduate seminar papers, attendance at available conferences, audit courses and confer with their supervisor.
- Their primary supervisor can be supplied from the full time faculty of the ACT sponsoring college for the sake of ensuring continuity.
- The candidate would supply evidence of progress according to normal ACT annual review processes and standards along with a statement by their sponsoring college's postgraduate coordinator that they are meeting the residential minimums.
- These minimums have been chosen as they would be simple to both record and administrate and would match the typical annual leave patterns of persons in their local context.
- The sponsoring institution would supply the ACT with evidence of their arrival and departure dates along with their Annual Review of Progress forms.

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.

(b) Provision for study for credit during enrolment in the course

One or more masters level units deemed equivalent to 8 cps may be taken at an institution not affiliated with the ACT. If not a university, 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.

(c) Articulation for Graduates to Higher ACT Awards

- (i) To the Doctor of Ministry:
Graduates who hold the MTh degree may be granted advanced standing for the preliminary essay required of DMin applicants and for the Research Methods unit.
- (ii) To the Doctor of Theology:
The Research & Research Studies Committee may grant provisional entry to MTh students following the presentation for appraisal by an examiner external to the student's college of a sustained piece of writing (15,000 words or more) that must be judged by the Committee to display evidence of research capability at doctoral level. The paper presented may be incorporated into the final thesis.

COURSE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

- (a) General Requirements

- (i) Applicants must submit to the Research & Research Studies Committee an essay of approximately 2,000 words describing the proposed research, together with a short bibliography. If the proposed research topic is approved, the Committee will appoint a research-active supervisor. Sponsoring colleges are free to submit thesis proposals with the initial application or to withhold them until any coursework has been satisfactorily completed. In either case, candidature is provisional until the coursework has been successfully completed.
 - (ii) All candidates must have a sponsoring college approved to prepare candidates for the MTh degree.
 - (iii) Candidature is granted by the Research & Research Studies Committee.
- (b) There are three different ways of completing this award:
- (i) 40,000–50,000 word thesis (worth 64 cps),
 - (ii) coursework of two 8 cp individual study 700 level units each comprising two internally marked 4,000 word essays, the second of which is externally moderated, followed by a 35,000 word thesis (worth 48 cps),
 - (iii) two research papers of 8,000 words each (8 cps each), followed by a 28,000–35,000 word thesis (worth 48 cps).

Candidates advised or opting to take the second or the third alternatives will be required to complete the following coursework phase before embarking on the thesis:

(c) Units in the Curriculum

- (i) Unless Research Methods has already been completed, this unit must be taken by all candidates before the thesis is attempted.
- (ii) The components of the guided individual study program and the research papers are designated as 700 level units. The former are designated as independent study units in the relevant field. The latter would be designated as individual research papers in the relevant field. The requirement to complete two 8 cp individual study units could be satisfied if the candidate completed two 700 level MA (Theology) units with or without examinations.
- (iii) The two research papers are designated **793–**794. The thesis coding is **798 for part-time candidates and **799 for full-time candidates.

COURSE SEQUENCE

Normally, candidates will complete the degree by writing a thesis only. Candidates who choose to or are required to complete some coursework units (16 cps) must complete this before commencing their research.

COURSEWORK

- (i) If coursework is approved units must be taken from those offered at 700 level. A complete list of units in each field of study is included in the description of the MA (Theology) and MA (Ministry) degrees in this Handbook.
- (ii) Candidates choosing to take coursework may be given approval to write one or at most two 8,000 word minor projects under supervision as a means of researching the secondary literature prior to embarking on the major research associated with the thesis.
- (iii) If coursework is attempted some units require the completion of a related unit taken at undergraduate degree level. Generally, however, there are no prerequisites at 700 level.
- (iv) Units requiring Greek or Hebrew exegesis require satisfactory completion of the relevant 8 cp Hebrew or Greek language unit (LA003 and LA004 respectively).
- (v) If coursework is included in the MTh candidate's program of study this must be completed before commencing the research.

Typically units require two 4,000 word essays each worth 50%.

(b) Assessment demands

8 cp units offered at 700 level require the completion of 8,000 words or equivalent. Each unit requires at least two different pieces of assessment. The major assessment, worth 50% of the final grade, may be marked by an examiner internal to the candidate's college. The total score achieved must reach at least 50% for a passing grade to be recorded.

MODES OF STUDY

Most candidates seek approval to complete the degree solely by research, in full- or part-time mode. However, a coursework program of 16 cps comprising two 8 cp 700 level units can be undertaken. These units are also taken by all MA candidates. In these circumstances the following regulations apply to MTh candidates.

- (a) The normal mode of study is in attendance mode on the campuses of affiliated colleges of the ACT. Lectures are held over a 13 week teaching semester. Candidates may study in full- or part-time attendance for each unit of study.
- (b) Units can be offered in intensive mode. A report on the teaching and assessment of each intensive unit is submitted to the Coursework Committee.
- (c) Units can be delivered in distance mode in accordance with the ACT's Flexible Education Criteria.

COURSE WORKLOAD

- (a) Credit Point System

Any units taken in the coursework phase of the MTh (if taken) are weighted at 8 cp. No more than 16 cps of coursework can be taken in the MTh degree.

(b) Contact Teaching Hours and Workload

- (i) Should an MTh candidate take coursework units in attendance mode, each 8 cp unit normally requires about 275 demand hours over the semester. This is comprised of 26 hours of face-to-face contact, 120 hours devoted to general non-assessable reading, and a further 120 hours devoted to assessment tasks such as essays and class presentations.
- (ii) The AQF guidelines for masters degrees prescribe “a high order of skill analysis, critical evaluation and/or professional application through the planning and execution of a piece of scholarship or research”. The MTh thesis is usually the sole piece of work undertaken in the degree. If any candidate undertakes coursework the essays or projects completed must show that these skills are being developed in preparation for the writing of the thesis.

ASSUMED KNOWLEDGE

Each candidate enrolled in the Master of Theology will be expected to have already shown promise in conducting research in their designated area of study and in articulating the results of that research at early postgraduate level, such promise to have been demonstrated in the Honours thesis or in the 16 cp coursework masters project or in the 8 cp Master of Divinity project.

ETHICS CLEARANCE

The ACT office convenes an Ethics Committee which has particular responsibility for the endorsement of human subject research proposals. Any MTh candidate who proposed to use human subject research as part of their methodology must seek clearance from the Ethics Committee before proceeding. Details on submission dates and application forms can be found on the ACT website at http://www.actheology.edu.au/students_ethics.php

SUPERVISION

- (i) Once the thesis proposal has been accepted candidature must be confirmed by the Research & Research Studies Committee by the end of the first year.
- (ii) Annual reports completed by each research candidate and his/her supervisor are submitted to the ACT's student administrator through the affiliated college's postgraduate coordinator by 11 December after the report has been submitted to the candidate's college by 11 November. The report provides a check on the progress of the research undertaken by the candidate and on the quality and frequency of meetings between the

supervisor and candidate. Perceived difficulties and problems are communicated to the supervisor and the candidate. In more serious cases, problems surfacing during the time of candidature are brought to the attention of the Research & Research Studies Committee.

- (iii) Lack of progress may lead to cancellation of candidature.

APPOINTMENT OF SUPERVISORS

- Supervisors of the thesis component of the ACT's MTh degree are nominated by sponsoring colleges to the Research & Research Studies Committee for approval. The supervisor of an ACT MTh candidate is in a very real way the agent of the College in ensuring that the standards of its Masters research degree are maintained and that the candidate is making steady progress throughout the term of his/her candidature. The supervisor should be aware of the level of academic performance and expertise expected in the degree, and be fully cognisant of the College's requirements for the presentation of the finished thesis including the prescribed word length. It is essential that the work being done on the thesis is critically reviewed on a continuing pre-determined basis.
- The ACT sets the supervision fee in the form of a unit fee for each semester in which the candidate is enrolled.
- No supervisor should accept the invitation of the Research & Research Studies Committee to supervise a candidate unless confident of his/her ability to act as a supervisor of the proposed topic and assured that he/she is not required to supervise so many other candidates that effectiveness will be impaired if the invitation is accepted.
- Supervisors will normally be drawn from the ranks of academics in approved postgraduate colleges, and will normally possess academic qualifications at least equivalent to the MTh degree and preferably at doctoral level.
- Approved colleges obtain the approval of the Research & Research Studies Committee for the appointment of a co-supervisor. The co-supervisor may complement the role of the principal supervisor, and may provide expertise in a particular area in which he/she is competent. Such expertise may be outside the tertiary context. The co-supervisor may also act as supervisor when the supervisor is unable to perform his/her function. In such a case, however, if the co-supervisor is not situated within the tertiary context, the Committee, in consultation with the candidate's sponsoring college, will ensure that the responsibilities of supervision are maintained by appointing an appropriately qualified, albeit temporary, replacement of the principal supervisor. Unless prevented by the demands of approved study leave

or unforeseen circumstances the principal supervisor remains responsible for directing the research of the candidate and for ensuring that the candidate meets all administrative and academic requirements.

- Arrangements for supervision should be agreed to by the candidate, the supervisor, the candidate's sponsoring college, and the Committee.

When a supervisor becomes unavailable, e.g., because of approved leave of absence or sabbatical, it is the responsibility of the sponsoring college to locate a suitable replacement, the new arrangement to be approved by the Research & Research Studies Committee. If need be the sponsoring college should be prepared to facilitate the candidate's transfer to another affiliated college.

DUTIES OF SUPERVISORS

- The supervisor will be responsible for ensuring that the candidate is aware of the ACT's expectations of academic competencies required to be demonstrated in the thesis (see the statement of Learning Outcomes for MTh theses above) as well as the regulations concerning the time of candidature and the word length of the thesis.
- The supervisor is responsible for monitoring compliance with the candidate's signed intention to abide by the stipulations outlined in the ACT's academic misconduct policy.
- A report to the Dean must be submitted by 11 December of each year by the candidate, the supervisor, and the Dean of Postgraduate Studies of the college sponsoring the candidate.
- Supervisors have an obligation to inform the candidate of the details of his/her own research and professional leave, and any retirement plans relevant for the period of candidature.
- Supervisors should be sufficiently aware of any special needs of the candidate so as to be able to report in an informed manner the progress being made. Lack of progress may lead to cancellation of candidature.
- Frequency of meetings should be negotiated in accordance with the nature of candidate's research program. At least three annual face-to-face meetings are recommended. Frequency of contact is particularly critical in the early stages of candidature but should be maintained throughout.
- Throughout the period of supervision, supervisors should provide constructive, critical, and (where requested) written assessments of the candidate's work to the candidate within one month of the submission of the work. In particular serious attention should be paid to academic method and content. Matters relating to English usage, presentation, and argumentation should also be addressed at all stages of the research. A supervisor may recommend that the candidate take a unit in a field of knowledge, in the discipline of research methodology, or the technique of writing a thesis if the candidate evidences serious deficiencies in any of these areas.
- It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure when advising submission of the thesis that it is free from major errors of presentation and that the thesis is of the standard required for examination, and to certify to that effect in writing. A thesis which does not possess such a certificate will not normally be acceptable to the Research & Research Studies Committee. Supervisors must also be fully conversant with the procedures by which the thesis will be examined.
- A supervisor may advise against submission of the thesis when the final version has been prepared if further work seems necessary, but cannot forbid the candidate to submit the thesis to the Research & Research Studies Committee. The supervisor is entitled to submit a report detailing criticisms of the thesis to the Committee. This report will not be communicated to the examiners before the examination process is completed. The Committee will determine whether the thesis will be submitted for examination. In such circumstances the candidate must remove all references to the supervisor in the thesis.
- A co-supervisor should maintain close contact with the candidate and the supervisor, and be involved at all stages of the candidate's research plan.

DUTIES OF CANDIDATES

- Candidates have the responsibility to be well-informed about and to conform to the regulations governing the degree and its academic standards.
- Candidates must be aware of the prescribed word limit for MTh theses. The word count includes footnotes, and excursions, but excludes the bibliography and any appendices. An excursion contributes to and supports the argument. An appendix contains information which verifies the argument of the thesis, such as a translation of a key text, extensive tables, or a questionnaire.
- The candidate should expect to submit to the supervisor coherent accounts of the research to date.
- The candidate should communicate with and submit material to his/her supervisor in accord with a mutually agreed schedule. Personal contact is preferable to merely submitting work by mail, especially if candidate and supervisor are situated in the same state of Australia. At least three annual face-to-face meetings are recommended. If

a supervisor considers a candidate's progress to be unsatisfactory, he/she shall communicate this opinion to the sponsoring college, which has a responsibility to alert the Research & Research Studies Committee. On recommendation from the sponsoring college the Committee may decide to terminate candidature or may warn the candidate that his/her status is under review. The candidate shall be invited to comment on the recommendation before it is implemented.

- The candidate is well-advised to keep a diary of meetings with his/her supervisor.
- Candidates should not hesitate to seek clarification if unsure about the expectations of the supervisor.
- Candidates should accept responsibility for maintaining negotiated regular communication with the supervisor and the progress of research agreed upon. If impediments arise, these should be immediately discussed with the supervisor.
- When submitting the dissertation for examination, the candidate must lodge with the supervisor a copy of the dissertation in the form in which it has been submitted.
- Admission to MTh candidature does not guarantee eventual graduation.

DUTIES OF THE ACT (AND AFFILIATED COLLEGES)

- Candidates have the right to be well-informed about the College's examination procedures, supervision fees, academic expectations, the research profile of the supervisor, the presentation requirements of the College, and any facilities and services to which they are entitled.
- The enrolling college will ensure that the supervision fee is paid to the supervisor.
- Problems arising from supervision and disputes which cannot be satisfactorily resolved with the sponsoring college should be referred to the Dean and the Research & Research Studies Committee for mediation.
- This Handbook provides information on academic expectations and presentation requirements and may be purchased from the College office.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

An abstract in electronic form will be submitted by the supervisor to the ACT's Postgraduate Student Administrator at least three months prior to the anticipated submission of the thesis together with—

- a list of 5–6 examiners nominated by the supervisor,
- their contact details (phone [if in Australia or NZ], email, mailing address) and

- a concise statement of the appropriateness of each to examine the thesis.

Two examiners—both external to the sponsoring college, and at least one external to the ACT—are appointed by the Higher Degree Research Examination Panel.

The Higher Degree Research Examination Panel, a standing panel of the Research and Research Studies committee, determines the order in which examiners are to be approached.

Membership of Higher Degree Research Examination Panel is the three Departmental Representatives of the Research and Research Studies Committee and the Executive Officer of the Research and Research Studies Committee. The Higher Degree Research Examination Panel has power to coopt.

The abstract along with examiner's guidelines and schedule of payments will be forwarded to potential examiners when inviting them to examine the work.

When the thesis is ready for examination two soft bound copies and a 'read only' electronic copy of the thesis are to be submitted to the Postgraduate Student Administrator.

Certification

The following signed certifications should accompany each copy of the submitted thesis. The certificate signed by the candidate should also be placed in the final bound copies of the thesis.

Candidate

I certify that the substance of this dissertation of words has not previously been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree. I also certify that any assistance received in conducting the research embodied in the dissertation, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in the text or notes.

Supervisor

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

Examiners will be asked to report on the thesis in one of the following terms:

1. That the degree be awarded.
2. That the degree be awarded *provided that* **minor** corrections and/or additions as specified in my report are carried out the satisfaction of the Board.

3. That the degree be awarded *provided that* **major** corrections and/or additions as specified in my report are carried out the satisfaction of the Board.
4. That the candidate be asked to rewrite and resubmit the thesis for examination taking into account recommendations in my report.
5. That the candidate not be awarded the degree.

Examiners' reports will first be submitted to the Principal Supervisor who will then submit a response to the Higher Degree Research Examination Panel. The Principal Supervisor's response should include, where relevant, suggested amendments and revisions.

The Higher Degree Research Examination Panel will consider whether any qualifications of the supervisor's response should be made, and forward the examiners' reports and the Principal Supervisor's response with its recommendation to the Research and Research Studies Committee.

In instances of doubt or conflict among examiners, the Research & Research Studies Committee may seek the views of an additional examiner.

After considering the examiners' reports, the Committee will make a recommendation to the Academic Board. Before reaching a final decision, the Board may send the reports of each examiner to the other examiners and invite their comments.

The Research & Research Studies Committee may require the candidate to undergo an oral examination.

Where a thesis or project is to be re-written and re-submitted:

- All submissions for re-examination must be accompanied by a list of the corrections and amendments completed by the candidate.
- Normally the same examiners will be asked to re-examine the thesis. Examiners will be asked if they are prepared to re-examine the thesis if that is their recommendation.
- During the period of re-writing and re-submission the candidate must re-enrol with the ACT while undertaking revisions for a period not less than six months prior to re-submission and must be enrolled at the time of re-submission.
- The Research and Research Studies Committee will set a time limit of not more than 12 months for the candidate to make corrections or to revise the thesis for re-submission for re-examination.
- In cases where a re-examination is recommended, the Higher Degree Research Examination Panel may also recommend that examiners reports may be circulated to the other examiners.
- Only one resubmission for re-examination will be allowed.

The Higher Degree Research Examination Panel has the power to approve the final version of the thesis and to recommend the awarding of the degree to Research and Research Studies Committee.

No more than six months will be the expected time for **major** corrections and emendations.

No more than three months will be the expected time for **minor** corrections and emendations.

An electronic version of the corrected thesis which clearly identifies all changes must be submitted to Higher Degree Research Examination Panel for confirmation that the required corrections have been made **before** the final hardbound copy of the thesis is produced.

Submission of the final hardbound copies of the thesis to the ACT and sponsoring college must be accompanied by a 'read only' electronic version of the thesis from which the hardbound copies were printed.

Appeals

If a candidate is not awarded the degree of Master of Theology he/she may wish to appeal. Students are referred to the *Policy on Student Appeals under Research Degree Rules* listed on the ACT website.

