

DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY

RATIONALE FOR THE COURSE

- (a) Philosophical basis for the course and course design
- (i) The Doctor of Theology degree requires candidates satisfactorily to complete a major piece of research focusing on a specialised topic within a unit field, typically within the Departments of Bible and Languages (LA, OT, NT) and Christian Thought (TH, CH, PE). The degree is designed to equip men and women for the vocation of teaching and conducting research in theological and Bible colleges as well as universities.
- (ii) From its inauguration the ThD has been used as a research degree for graduates who are already engaged in the ministerial profession as aspiring teachers in universities and theological colleges in Australia and overseas.

DURATION OF THE COURSE

- (a) The normal period of candidature of the ThD is three years (six semesters) full time or part-time (twelve semesters).
- (b) Under exceptional circumstances, the Research & Research Studies Committee may vary the period of candidature.
- (c) For candidates who transfer from the Master of Theology to the Doctor of Theology 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. Once a candidate has transferred he or she shall not lodge their ThD thesis within (i) a minimum of 12 months full time equivalent from the date of transfer, and (ii) a minimum of 2 years full time equivalent from the original date of enrolment in the MTh.

LEVEL OF THE COURSE

- (a) The level of the course is equivalent to a research doctoral degree offered at an Australian university or theological college.
- (b) Characteristics of the Doctor of Theology include:
- the demonstration of original research and advanced knowledge in a specialised area of the discipline of theology that is examined externally against international standards;
 - the demonstration of a high order of skill analysis, critical evaluation and/or the professional application in an extended piece of research that exhibits a high level of originality and quality in the 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 of theology;

- the demonstration of a high order of skill in analysis and critical evaluation transferred from less extensive research at Honours and/or Masters level and showing evidence of the ability to think independently.

(c) Learning Outcomes for the ThD Thesis

The degree of Doctor of Theology is the highest award of the College. It is awarded on the basis of the satisfactory completion of a thesis, though it is also possible that the degree might be awarded on the basis of work(s) published during candidature. The thesis (or published work[s]) must constitute a distinct contribution to theological learning and must show evidence of original research and the exercise of independent critical analysis. Although a candidate works under a supervisor, the candidate is expected to demonstrate independence of thought.

The award of the degree may be taken to certify that a candidate has been trained in the techniques relevant to the field of research, and is capable, without supervision, of applying these techniques to other research projects, and has become sufficiently familiar with a significant area of discipline within which the candidate has worked to be able to assess critically the present state of knowledge in the subject and to conceive original possibilities for further investigation with an increasing independence.

- (i) The thesis must embody the results of independent scholarship and research. It may be either a critical and analytical study of existing material or, as is more usual, an original contribution to the subject. In either case it must show evidence of originality and independence of thought, posing a new insight into the topic or formulating an existing issue in a novel and useful way.
- (ii) The candidate must demonstrate that he or she is aware of, understands, and is able to read and analyse the literature—including primary source and scholarly material in languages other than English—that is directly relevant to the topic as well as related areas of significance, and is able to make considered judgments.
- (iii) The thesis must be a work of appropriate literary standard. While assessing what constitutes a “distinct contribution to theological learning” is no easy matter, one way of gauging whether a candidate’s work meets the criterion is to consider the extent to which the thesis is publishable. Criteria that will help decide whether a thesis is publishable are:

- there is emerging and/or growing interest in the subject area of the thesis such that the thesis, if published, would complement what has been published already, **or**, the thesis makes a radically new contribution to the subject area;
- the thesis is well-written, its ideas are accessible, and it would lend itself to easy conversion to published format;
- there are well-known, international scholars who could be advocates for the published version of the thesis.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

(a) Occupational Functions of Graduates

Teacher of units in coursework masters degrees, and supervisors of research theses in theological and Bible colleges, as well as other tertiary institutions.

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

- competence in engagement in original research as evidenced in the Bachelors Honours program (especially the thesis) or at research masters level,
- advanced critical or synthesising ability,
- comprehensive and penetrating assessment of scholarly literature in the candidate's chosen field of study and research as well as in related fields,
- writing that advances scholarly understanding in one or more of the departments of Bible and Languages, Christian Thought, and Ministry and Practice,
- the acquisition of language skills (e.g., in the languages of the Bible or of the Ancient Near East, Latin, German, French) relevant to the documents and scholarship which are the subject of research.

(c) Learning and Teaching Strategies

- the writing of a major, potentially publishable, thesis embodying the results of competently supervised scholarship and research which may be a critical study of existing material or an original contribution to the subject, and which must show evidence of originality and independence of thought, posing a new insight into the topic or formulating an existing issue in a novel and useful way,
- a searching and thorough investigation of the literature relevant to the topic as well as related areas of significance,
- encouragement on the part of supervisors for candidates to take classes in one or more modern or ancient languages deemed necessary for researching the literature and documents relevant to the thesis topic.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

(a) Educational Qualifications for Admission

(i) Candidates must either be a graduate of one of the following awards of the College:

- The four year Bachelor of Theology with First Class Honours;
- The four year Bachelor of Ministry with First Class Honours;
- Master of Theology;
- Master of Arts (Theology), or under certain circumstances Master of Arts (Ministry), graduates with a High Distinction in the 15,000 word research project and a 3.5 GPA overall.

or possess a qualification which, in the opinion of the Research & Research Studies Committee, is of equivalent status.

(ii) 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.

(iii) Applications should be made to the ACT's Research & Research Studies Committee on the required ACT form through an ACT college approved to offer the doctoral program.

(iv) Candidates will be supervised at an affiliated college of the ACT approved to prepare candidates for the ThD. Granting of candidature and approval of supervisor(s), who must be research active, are responsibilities of the Research & Research Studies Committee.

(v) Evidence of current research activity of the supervisor (and the associate supervisor if appointed).

(vi) MA (ChrStud) graduates may articulate to the ThD via the MTh.

(b) Special Additional Qualifications

Except in the case of those who have a tertiary qualification taught in English, international candidates whose first language is not English will be required to sit an IELTS test. Such candidates wishing to enrol in the ThD will be required to attain a score of 7.5 in reading and writing, 7.0 in listening and 6.5 in speaking.

(c) Mature Age Entry

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

(d) Provisional Candidature

The Research & Research Studies Committee may grant provisional entry to MTh candidates requiring the presentation for appraisal by an examiner external to the candidate's college of a sustained piece of writing (15,000 words or more representing one or two chapters of the MTh thesis) 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.

Please note the Transfer Policy from Research Master to Doctor of Theology posted on the ACT website.

OFF-SHORE CANDIDATES

ThD 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 ThD 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.
- They are resident at the sponsoring college for a minimum of two weeks each year (10

working days) from then on in any combination of numbers 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.

ARTICULATION ARRANGEMENTS***Principles***

- (i) Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) applications for admission to the course (or applications for transfer of credit for any coursework envisaged by the prospective candidate) will be dealt with initially by approved colleges and then by the Dean of the ACT before final approval is granted by the Research & Research Studies Committee. 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.

COURSE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

The only academic requirement is the completion within the time limits above of a thesis of at least 80,000 and no more than 100,000 words (including footnotes, and excursuses, but excluding the bibliography and any appendices) or its equivalent in terms of works published during the course of candidature.

ASSUMED KNOWLEDGE

Each candidate enrolled in the ThD is required to have demonstrated promise in conducting research in their designated area of study in the MTh or Honours thesis or in the 16 cp coursework masters project.

ETHICS CLEARANCE

The ACT office convenes an Ethics Committee which has particular responsibility for the endorsement of human subject research project proposals. The Committee is chiefly called upon by candidates enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program who are preparing their major project proposals but considers other proposals from candidates where applicable.

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 postgraduate administrator through the affiliated college's postgraduate coordinator by 11 December each year.
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

- The supervisor of an ACT ThD candidate is in a very real way the agent of the College in ensuring that the high standards of its doctoral program 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. It is essential that the work being done on the thesis is critically reviewed on a continuing pre-determined basis.

- Supervisors will normally be drawn from the ranks of academics in approved ACT colleges, and will normally possess academic qualifications at least equivalent to the ThD degree.
- 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.
- It is the responsibility of the Research & Research Studies Committee to locate and nominate appropriate supervisors. Where possible supervisors should be located in the same geographical region in which the candidate resides.
- The appointment of a co-supervisor by the Research & Research Studies Committee is recommended wherever possible. The co-supervisor will provide expertise in a particular area in which he/she is competent. Such expertise may be outside the tertiary context. The co-supervisor should also act as supervisor when the supervisor is unable to perform his/her function. However, 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. The supervision fee, paid in the form of ACT unit fees for each semester in which the candidate is enrolled, is divided between the supervisor and co-supervisor.
- Arrangements for supervision should be agreed to by the candidate, the supervisor, and the Research & Research Studies Committee.
- When a supervisor becomes unavailable the Committee will assist the candidate to locate a suitable replacement, or in transferring the candidate to another institution.

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 ThD theses) 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 each year by the candidate, the supervisor, and the Dean of Postgraduate Studies of the college sponsoring the candidate. The report must have been first submitted to the sponsoring 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.
- 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.
- 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. If the supervisor is on approved leave of absence, regular communication should be maintained between supervisor and candidate.
- 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. Matters relating to English usage, presentation, and argumentation should be addressed at all stages of the research. A supervisor might expect the candidate to 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 that when advising submission of the thesis that it is free from major errors of typing and presentation, 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 the regulations governing the degree in which they are enrolled and the academic standards of the degree for which they are enrolled.
- Candidates must be aware of the prescribed word limit for ThD theses. Theses must be at least 80,000 and no more than 100,000 words in length. The word count includes footnotes, and excursions, but excludes the bibliography and any appendices. An excursus 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 and a recommendation to the Dean for the consideration of the Research & Research Studies Committee. 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 thesis in the form in which it has been submitted.
- Admission to ThD 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 should be referred to the Dean and the Research & Research Studies Committee for mediation.
- This Handbook provides information about 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.

Three examiners—all external to the sponsoring college; at least one external to the ACT and, at least one from overseas—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 co-opt.

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 three soft bound copies and a 'read only' electronic copy of the thesis from which the soft copies were printed 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 to the satisfaction of the Board.
3. That the degree be awarded *provided that major* and/or additions as specified in my report are to the satisfaction to 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



DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY (*honoris causa*)

In 2002 the Council of the Australian College of Theology approved the following regulations governing the ThD *honoris causa*. These were supplemented by the governing body of the College in 2004 and 2006, and amended by the Board of Directors in 2008.

Applications will only be considered by the Board of Directors at their first meeting after June 30.

The Chair of the Honorary Degree Committee serves a three year renewable term, his or her appointment dating from the first meeting of the Directors after General Synod.

Regulations

1. Names of proposed recipients of the ThD (*honoris causa*) must be nominated and seconded by members of the College to the Board of Directors. The recipient must be a resident of NSW.
2. Save in exceptional cases, a proposal shall not be considered if the person proposed may, in the ordinary course of events, be expected to be a candidate for the award of the certificate by examination.
3. A person proposed for nomination should have made a notable contribution to the life and work of the Anglican Church of Australia, or have made a notable contribution to the wider church through his or her association as a scholar and educator within the Australian College of Theology. Nominees should already hold a doctoral degree from a recognised university, or be the author of a published work which is a substantial contribution to theological learning.
4. The application must be accompanied by evidence which supports the proposal.
5. Upon the receipt of a proposal, the Board of Directors shall determine at its first meeting after June 30 whether there is a prima facie case for convening the Honorary Degree Committee. The Committee will comprise the chair already appointed by the Directors together with at least two other eminent scholars or ecclesiastical representatives who are not active members of the faculty of any ACT affiliated college and qualified to assess the nomination, who will confer and submit a written report to the Board of Directors.

The Committee will take into account one or more of the following—

- (a) the nominee's contribution to theological learning as measured by a monograph or a body of published works of international standing and repute,
 - (b) the nominee's clearly acknowledged national and/or international contribution to knowledge or practice in the fields of theology or ministry.
6. On receipt of a positive recommendation from the Honorary Degree Committee the Board of Directors must decide by a vote of at least two-thirds of the votes cast in the affirmative for the awarding of the degree.
 7. The degree may be presented to the candidate by a member of the College at a place agreed by the candidate and the Dean, or presented by the principal of an affiliated institution with a close connection to the candidate, at its graduation ceremony.

