

ASSOCIATE DEGREE OF THEOLOGY (AssocDegTh)

Rationale and Aims of the Course:

(a) *Aim and Perceived Need*

The two-year Associate Degree of Theology requires students satisfactorily to complete a course of study majoring in the foundational units in biblical studies, church history, and theology. These foundational studies inform the theoretical undergirding of further specialised study, which is normally undertaken in the third year of a three-year bachelor's degree in theology or ministry as an integral part of the normal academic preparation for those seeking to enter full-time Christian ministry. The Associate Degree of Theology will ground students in foundational theological disciplines and provide an opportunity for advanced level study of more specific unit areas within chosen fields of study in the form of a specialisation (or a "major").

(b) *Occupational Functions of Graduates*

- The graduate could reasonably expect to graduate with well-informed knowledge of the essential content of the Christian tradition,
- Depending on the specialisation completed, 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 three-year trained practitioner.

(c) *Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes Acquired by Graduates*

- ability to interpret the biblical deposit, especially those books which have played a crucial role in the development of the Christian tradition, with a knowledge of their original context and major themes and ideas,
- knowledge of the major theological tenets of the Christian faith which underpin any coherent theological world view,
- appreciation of the historical conditions under which theological worldviews have developed and are being shaped today,
- openness to the tradition of published scholarship and the diversity of viewpoints which characterises that scholarship in the various fields of the discipline of theology as essential to understanding and respecting the discipline,
- a sound grasp of the unit content of the student's specialisation,
- a developing ability to reflect on the relationship between the graduate's particular life interests and the Christian faith.

(d) *Learning and Teaching Strategies*

- mastering the underlying principles and concepts of the biblical deposit and church history, as presented in the core foundational units,
- once that foundation has been laid, engaging students in a specialised field of study,
- expecting students at each level and in each unit to engage with the major published scholars and the

major documents—contemporary, historical, and biblical—such that study is a dialogue between scholars, teachers, peers, the central texts of the Christian faith and the students' contemporary social context,

- whether in attendance or flexible mode, teaching takes place within the environment of a community of scholarship, such a context for learning being essential to the acquisition of theological knowledge since preparation for teaching and pastoral leadership demands communal reflection and dialogue about the knowledge being imparted together with its ministry implications,
- demanding teachers themselves to be well-informed in their field of expertise, having been tested at postgraduate research level, committed to a faith community, and embodying openness to ideas, respect for the wider Christian tradition, and the communal search for truth in a rapidly changing social environment,
- teaching strategies employed throughout the course include not only traditional lectures but also seminar presentations, input from specialist adjunct lecturers, and the use of audio, video and IT resources where available.

Admission Requirements:

(a) *Educational Qualifications for Admission*

- Open as a first degree to persons who have achieved an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score of no less than 77.10 or its equivalent.
- Consideration will also be given to other factors such as practical experience, maturity and motivation, and the likelihood of satisfactory completion of the academic requirements of the course.

(b) *Special Additional Qualifications*

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 Associate Degree, an overall band score of at least 6.5 is required with at least 6.5 in reading and writing and with no score under 6.0 on any band.

(c) *Mature Age Entry*

Provisional mature age entry is available for candidates over the age of 21.

(d) *Procedures for verifying applicant's credentials*

- All applicants must submit a copy of their Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score, or its equivalent if they are without a higher education tertiary qualification.
- All applicants must submit to the enrolling institution original or certified copies of all tertiary study completed.
- All overseas applicants whose first language is not English must submit to the enrolling institution the original copy of IELTS tests, and must specify the result on the ACT enrolment form.

Credit Transfer:**(a) Principles**

- (i) ACT policies with respect to articulation conform to the National Policy Guidelines set forth in AQF documents.
- (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) Admission with Advanced Standing: from completed awards

- (i) (Advanced) Diploma Graduates:
 - Unless students have successfully completed Greek (LA002, LA004) and Hebrew (LA001, LA003) for which degree credit will be automatically granted, a maximum of 32 credit points is available for advanced diploma graduates and 24 credit points for (two year) diploma graduates towards the AssocDegTh. Graduates must have achieved a GPA of 2.0 (Credit) in their award for the above credit to apply. The exact units for which credit is received will be determined on a case by case basis.
 - Graduates of the Advanced Diploma with a GPA of 1.75–2.0 may be granted credit for OT301 and OT302, NT301 and NT302, and CH301 and CH302.
- (ii) Students who have completed an ACT one year Certificate IV in theology or ministry may be granted up to 8 credit points towards an ACT undergraduate degree.
- (iii) Admission with Advanced Standing from Non-ACT awards:
 - Students who have completed a non-ACT one year Certificate IV in theology or ministry may be granted up to 8cps towards an ACT undergraduate degree.
 - Students who have completed a non-ACT two-year VET diploma in ministry or theology may be granted up to 16cps towards an ACT undergraduate degree.
 - Units Counting for Credit from VET Diplomas to the Undergraduate Degrees (up to a maximum of 8 or 16 credit points as stated above):
 - NT445 Bible in Context
 - EM411 Mission in the Urban Context
 - EM425 Applied Evangelism
 - EM426 Church Planting
 - EM440 Cross-Cultural Field Education
 - EM441 Evangelism Field Education
 - PC301 Ministry Formation
 - PC435 Principles of Leadership & Management
 - PC436 Clinical Pastoral Education
 - PC440 Communication Principles

PC443 Pastoral Care Field Education
 PC445 Christian Counselling Field Education
 PC446 Lay Ministries Field Education
 PC447 Diaconal Ministries Field Education
 PC449 Supervised Experience Based Learning
 DM301 Foundations of Christian Education
 DM440 Christian Education Field Education
 DM441 Youth Ministry Field Education
 DM442 Children's Ministry Field Education

- Graduates with a non-ACT undergraduate award undertaken at an approved institution, including units of theological study considered of equivalent standard, may be granted advanced standing up to a maximum of one-third of the AssocDegTh degree.

(c) Admission with Advanced Standing: from incomplete awards

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

- (i) Students yet to complete a non-ACT undergraduate award course undertaken at an approved institution, including units of theological study considered of equivalent standard, may be granted advanced standing up to a maximum of one-third of the AssocDegTh award.
- (ii) Students enrolled in a three year degree award of the ACT (MDiv, BTh or BMin) may choose to exit after satisfactory completion of 64 credit points of enrolled units in a minimum of two years full time study and receive the Associate Degree of Theology provided that the requirements for graduation in the Associate Degree have been met. Such graduates would be required to surrender the Associate Degree should they return to study and fulfil the requirements of a three-year bachelor's award or MDiv.
- (iii) Students who are enrolled in an ACT diploma award may wish to obtain academic credit towards the AssocDegTh in one or more of the following ways:
 - There are some units that have the same syllabi in the diplomas and the undergraduate degrees. Most of these are located in the Department of Ministry and Practice and are skills based. One or more of these units in a diploma or an advanced diploma (up to a maximum of 25% of the diploma award) may be counted for academic credit in the degree.
 - Where an affiliated college teaches a unit with degree students in the same classes as advanced diploma students, a student who has completed at least one semester of study and has demonstrated capacity to work at the higher level may, prior to the beginning of the semester in which he/she proposes taking a unit for degree credit and with the approval of the Dean of the ACT and the student's enrolling college, elect to be assessed at degree level, in which case he/she will take tutorials with the degree students and do the degree assessment tasks. A student who receives a pass or better at degree level may count that unit for credit in the relevant degree.

- Students with an incomplete diploma award may obtain academic credit in a degree at the rate of two degree units for every three diploma units which are completed with a credit result or better. The exact units for which credit is received will be determined on a case by case basis.
- Unless counted in the above provision, students who obtain at least a credit grade in any of the six core foundational units in Old Testament, New Testament, and Church History (all at 200 level) gain academic credit to the corresponding undergraduate degree unit at 300 level.

Notwithstanding the above, students must still satisfy all entrance requirements for the degree to which they are seeking credit. In seeking to graduate with an ACT undergraduate degree, diploma students must also comply with the academic requirements of the degree.

- (iv) Students who have satisfactorily completed at least one-year of full-time study (32 cps) in a non-theological discipline at an Australian University (or overseas or domestic equivalent) may not enrol with advanced standing in the Associate Degree. Such student would be expected to enrol in the Bachelor of Christian Studies for which up to 32 cps in advanced standing can be granted from study completed in a non-theological discipline.
- (v) Students yet to complete a non-ACT one year Certificate IV in theology or ministry may be granted up to 8 credit points towards an ACT undergraduate degree from designated units.
- (vi) Students yet to complete a non-ACT two year VET diploma in ministry or theology may be granted up to 16 credit points towards an ACT undergraduate degree.

Applications should be made on the prescribed ACT form available from affiliated colleges.

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

(d) Articulation for Graduates to Higher ACT Awards

- (i) Graduates of the Associate Degree may articulate to the three-year undergraduate awards of the ACT and receive 64 cps advanced standing on condition that the Associate Degree certificate is surrendered.
- (ii) Articulation to the postgraduate awards of the ACT requires graduates to complete a three-year degree in theology or ministry with relevant minimum biblical language requirements.
- (iii) University graduates who have completed the Associate Degree are not granted advanced standing in the Master of Divinity.

- (iv) University graduates who have completed the Associate Degree are granted 16 cps towards the Graduate Diploma of Christian Studies.

Duration, Modes of Study, Course Structure and Curriculum:

(a) Duration of Course

The Associate Degree is a two-year course. This is the minimum time of candidature without advanced standing. The maximum time for candidature is six years. Candidates may study full-time or part-time. All students in the Associate Degree must be enrolled at an approved institution of the College.

The maximum time of candidature may be lessened for students who are granted advanced standing. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis.

(b) Modes of Study

See #6 of the *Regulations* section of this Handbook.

(c) Description of Course Content

The units in the Associate Degree are all taken from the current curriculum for the three-year undergraduate awards of the ACT.

(d) Course Structure and Progression

The degree requires the successful completion of 64 cps from foundational and advanced level units as follows—

24 cps core—

Bible and Languages—16 cps comprising OT301, 302 and NT301, 302.

Christian Thought—8 cps comprising 4 cps from CH301–305 and 4 cps from TH401–404.

16 cps additional units in biblical exegesis and Christian Thought—

8 cps of biblical exegesis in Old Testament and New Testament, or LA003 or LA004, and

8 cps from units in theology (TH) and/or Church History (CH)

In addition to the above all students must complete the remaining 24 cps with a focus on one of three possible specialisations as follows—

EITHER

Biblical and Language Studies

4cps from any unit in the LA, OT or NT fields

4cps from LA490 or OT490 or NT490

16 cps of elective units from any field or fields

OR

Christian Studies

4 cps from any unit in the CH, TH or PE fields

4 cps from CH490 or TH490 or PE490

16 cps of elective units from any field or fields

OR

Ministry Studies

12 cps from any unit in the EM, PC or DM fields

4 cps from EM490, PC490 or DM490

8 cps of elective units from any field or fields

Unless exiting from the BTh or BMin, all students must take one project (4 cps) (**490) in a unit field of the department in which the specialisation has been undertaken. 8 cps in that unit field must have been already passed. Field work units would not normally be taken.

Regulations:

- Students must not enrol in more than 20 cps in any one semester.
- Greek or Hebrew exegesis, if taken, requires satisfactory completion of the relevant 8 cp Hebrew or Greek language unit (LA003A/B and LA004A/B respectively).
- Advanced (400) level units with specific conditions may only be taken when the pre-requisite or co-requisite or required units have been successfully completed and/or any co-requisite unit is taken concurrently.
- For the Associate Degree of Theology the core units are OT301, OT302, NT301, NT302, and CH301-305.
- Approved institutions are responsible for ensuring that any units of a practical nature that might be offered to students in the proposed course are taught and students supervised by competent practitioners who are either members of the full-time faculty or well-qualified adjunct lecturers.
- Credit for electives could be granted from degree level university studies in a designated field of study (and which were not equivalent in scope to units already taken in the Associate Degree). This study must be completed subsequently to enrolling in the Associate Degree.
- No more than two Type B electives could be taken, and could contribute to the specialisation. Type B electives are units proposed uniquely by an approved college, and are not listed in the ACT Handbook.
- No more than 28 cps of foundational level units could be counted in a student's course of study. Biblical Hebrew (LA003A/B) and New Testament Greek (LA004A/B) are excluded from this requirement.
- There will be a limit of 32 cps of credit transfer from units completed at ACT diploma level.

Transfer from BMin or BTh

For students wishing to exit from the ACT's BTh or BMin awards *after* the completion of 64 cps the Associate Degree may be granted without students having to complete the compulsory project so long as *both* of the following have been met:

- (a) that the student has completed all other requirements for the AssocDegTheol; and
- (b) that the student provides a letter of recommendation from their affiliated college.

Assessment:

All foundational level core units require a minimum 80 minutes written exam. The exam is worth a minimum of 50%.

Word equivalence

Units offered at 300 level require the completion of 4,000-5000 words or equivalent.

Units offered at 400 level require the completion of 5,000-6000 words or equivalent.

4 cp projects (**490) require the completion of 5000-6000 words or equivalent.

Each exam hour is reckoned as the equivalent of 1,500 words.

