

BACHELOR OF CHRISTIAN STUDIES (BChrStuds)

Rationale and Aims of the Course

(a) *Aim and Perceived Need*

The degree aims to provide tertiary students with a coherent program of general theological study to enable them to apply a Christian perspective and commitment to their life in the world including their professional and vocational life.

(b) *Occupational Functions of Graduates*

- assuming that the graduate completes his or her university degree, he or she could reasonably expect to become a member of a non-theological profession with well-informed knowledge of the essential content of the Christian tradition,
- depending on the units taken in the course, a graduate might be expected to participate as a member of a church educational or pastoral ministry team under the leadership of a well-qualified practitioner.

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

- 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 characterise that scholarship in the various fields of the discipline of theology as essential to understanding and respecting the discipline,
- a developing ability to reflect on the relationship between the student's particular emphasis in his or her university course 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 biblical exegesis, the major theological doctrines, and the further study of church history, and if colleges so choose, to require the exegesis of biblical texts in the original language, in a way that demonstrates an ability to engage primary sources and an understanding of their setting and historical setting,
- requiring students wishing to prepare for particular pastoral care and other practical

ministry opportunities to demonstrate the skills needed to operate in those spheres,

- 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,
- completion of an integrative project relating study completed in the program of studies at university to the Christian faith,
- 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 and Assumed Knowledge:

(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 BChrStuds degree, an overall band score of 6.5 is required: with 6.5 in reading and writing and with no score under 6.0.

(c) *Mature Age Entry*

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

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.
- (iv) In the case Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) applications for admission to the course or applications for advanced standing from an overseas university will be dealt with initially by approved institutions and then by the Dean of the College in accordance with “National Principles and Operational Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)” (AQF, 2004).

(b) Admission with Advanced Standing: from completed awards

- (i) Graduates of the Associate Degree of Theology 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) 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) (Advanced) Diploma Graduates:
 - Unless students have successfully completed Greek (LA002, 004) and Hebrew (LA001, 003) 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 BChrStuds. 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.
- (iv) 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 BChrStuds 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 BChrStuds award.
- (ii) Students who are enrolled in a diploma award may wish to obtain academic credit towards the BChrStuds 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. The list of units is included on p. 157.
 - 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.

- (iii) Students yet to complete an ACT or 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.
- (iv) 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.

(d) Articulation for Graduates to Higher ACT Awards

BChrStuds graduates may be granted up to 64 cps of advanced standing to the BTh or BMin provided that the BChrStuds certificate is surrendered. If a student has completed extra units in the 300–400 pool of units of study these units may be credited for advanced standing in addition to the normal 64 credit points. The requirements for the three-year degree must be met.

Duration, Modes of Study, Course Structure and Curriculum:

(a) Duration of Course

- The BChrStuds is a three-year course, two years of which is completed at an approved college of the Australian College of Theology. This is the minimum time of candidature without advanced standing. The maximum time for candidature is nine years. Candidates may study full-time or part-time.
- All students in the BChrStuds 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) Course Structure and Progression

All students must complete 96 credit points (i.e., 24 semester units, 8 of which will be in the form of transfer credit from a university course), including a set of common units in New Testament and Old Testament and a minimum of units from the fields of Theology and Church History. These units comprise the “core”.

The core units, to be completed by BChrStuds students, comprise:

- Old Testament Introduction—8 cps (2 units), OT301, OT302
- New Testament Introduction—8 cps (2 units), NT301, NT302
- Church History—4 cps (1 unit), one of CH301, CH302, CH303, CH304 or CH305.
- Theology—4 cps (1 unit) from TH401–TH404

In addition, BChrStuds students require—

- At least 32 credit points of degree level study in a non-theological field of which at least 24 points must form a coherent area of study in a distinct non-theological area of study, e.g., business, psychology, physical sciences, comparative religions. This study would be part of an accredited non-theological degree at an Australian university (or overseas equivalent) and would preferably be done simultaneously with the study of the ACT units;
- At least 8 further credit points in OT and/or NT exegesis;
- At least 8 further credit points in Church History and/or Theology;
- 4 credit points of independent study that relates the student’s non-theological area of study to the Christian faith (IN490);
- 12 credit points in Type A electives;
- A maximum of 8 credit points in Type B electives (if offered).

No more than 32 cps of foundational level units can be counted in a student’s course of study. Biblical Hebrew (LA001, LA003A/B) and New Testament Greek (LA002, LA004A/B) are excluded from this requirement.

Regulations

Any prerequisites or co-requisites prescribed are listed at the beginning of each syllabus. However, note the following general regulations:

- Students must not enrol in more than 20 cps in any one semester,
- Greek or Hebrew exegesis requires satisfactory completion of the relevant 8 cp Hebrew or Greek language unit.
- The core units are OT301, OT302, NT301, NT302, and CH301-305.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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. The unit outlines 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.

Assessment

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

Word equivalence

Units offered at 300 level require the completion of 4,000-5,000 words or equivalent.

Units offered at 400 level require the completion of 5,000-6,000 words or equivalent.

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

IN490 Integrative Project

The project (IN490) is 5-6,000 words in length and worth 4cps.

- Before the topic of the project can be approved, the student is to prepare a proposal to be submitted to his or her sponsoring institution's course coordinator. The proposal should nominate a topic and include a statement of aim and method. The aim of the thesis must comply with the ethos of the degree. The student must also submit a bibliography of the primary and secondary monographs and articles in the area of his/her professional or vocational or life interest as well as the area of theology or biblical studies or ministerial study under investigation.
- Institutions are to ensure that adequate resources are available to the student in order that the research to be undertaken is supportable. In cases of inadequacies in the library holdings of the sponsoring institution, the course coordinator is to locate accessible local resources that will remedy the lack.
- Institutions are to ensure that the student is aware of the academic standard expected of the project.
- Sponsoring institutions are to ensure that students enrolling in the project are adequately supervised by an appropriately qualified member of the faculty once the proposal has been approved by the student's sponsoring institution. A co-supervisor

may be drawn from the ranks of adjunct faculty, especially those who might be invited to lecture aspects of subjects taught by the student's sponsoring institution.

- Any student undertaking human subject research as part of their project must gain approval from the institution's ethics committee before commencing their research.

Unit List:

The IN unit list:

- IN301 Worldview Survey: Christian & Philosophical Perspectives
- IN302 The Living World of the Bible
- IN412 Popular Culture Christian Perspectives
- IN413 Seeking the Good Society
- IN415 Everyday Ethics: Sex, Money & Friendship
- IN416 Jesus: Person, Politics, Ethics
(*Exclusion: NT301*)
- IN417 Christian Theology: An Overview
- IN418 Christian Spirituality: An Introduction
(*Exclusion: PC327, PC330, PC428*)
- IN419 Everyday Spirituality: Christian Perspectives
(*Exclusion: PC327, PC330, PC428*)
- IN425 Schooling: Christian Perspectives
- IN427 Teaching in Community
(*Exclusion: DM404*)
- IN428 Counselling Theory: Christian Perspectives
(*Exclusion: PC405*)
- IN430 Counselling Practice: Christian Perspectives
(*Exclusion: PC405*)
- IN431 Media & Journalism: Christian Perspectives
- IN432 Science and Christian Belief
(*Exclusion: PE427*)
- IN433 Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Worldview
- IN434 Economics and Theology: Complementary Perspectives
- IN435 Paul: Person, Politics & Ethics
- IN436 Justice and Social Change: Christian Perspectives
- IN437 World Religions: An Introduction.
(*Exclusion: EM421*)
- IN438 Spirituality and Work
- IN439 Christian Studies: Special Topic
- IN490 Integrative Project

The list of other units and their outlines appear at the end of the BTh course outline.

