

**BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY HONOURS
(BTh[Hons])**

&

**BACHELOR OF MINISTRY HONOURS
(BMin[Hons])**

Rationale and Aims of the Course:

(a) Aim and Perceived Need

The Bachelors Honours program is designed for students who have graduated with a three-year undergraduate degree in theology or ministry from the ACT (BTh, BMin) and who have demonstrated high academic potential as a means of preparing men and women for advanced research in theology and ministry.

(b) Occupational Functions of Graduates

- church leader preparing for postgraduate research (at masters or doctoral level) in a specialist field in the Departments of Bible and Language, Christian Thought, or Ministry and Practice,
- teacher of foundational undergraduate degree units in the graduate's area of specialisation.

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

- ability to conduct research in a specialised field of study completed at a high academic level in a student's first degree in theology, including ability to exegete biblical texts in their original language if the area of the thesis so demands,
- demonstration of wide reading, intellectual independence, critical thinking and analytic rigour at early postgraduate level such that the potential for further postgraduate research is emerging.

(d) Learning and Teaching Strategies

- the development of the ability to review, consolidate, extend and apply the knowledge and techniques learnt from undertaking units at foundational level and at advanced level in the undergraduate degree to the depth required at early postgraduate level,
- developing research skills by means of a research methods unit,
- testing a student's capability to conduct research and to mount an argument evidencing critical thinking, analytical rigour and showing independent thinking in a coursework program to be successfully completed before the thesis is attempted,
- the writing of a 15,000 word thesis, in which an extended argument is sustained by evidence, and in which there is a demonstration of reading across a variety of viewpoints which are empathically reported,
- the writing and successful examination of the thesis undertaken by students who have demonstrated a high level of achievement in the undergraduate degree as a necessary condition for articulating to the research masters and, in the case of a First Class result, to doctoral research.

Admission Requirements and Assumed Knowledge:

(a) Educational Qualifications for Admission

- (i) Normally open as a degree to persons who hold the Bachelor of Theology or Bachelor of Ministry with a GPA of at least 2.8 overall, and 2.8 in the designated field of study to be pursued in the Honours program.
- (ii) All students wishing to enrol in the BTh(Hons) program must have successfully completed at least 8 cps in either Biblical Hebrew (LA003) or New Testament Greek (LA004) and at least 8 cps of biblical language exegesis in their initial theology degree.
- (iii) All students wishing to enrol in the BMin(Hons) program must have successfully completed at least 4 cps of biblical languages in their initial degree in ministry.
- (iv) All exegesis units in the Honours program must be in the original language.

(b) 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 Honours degree, an overall band score of 6.5 is required: with 6.5 in reading and writing and with no score under 6.0 in any module.
- (ii) Non-ACT graduates with undergraduate degrees in theology from the ecumenical consortia achieved at an equivalent level as that required for ACT graduates in theology may need to complete certain preliminary studies before embarking on the Honours program. The completion of language requirements, including biblical language exegesis, is one example of a bridging program that will be required if the program of study and the units to be taken require biblical language expertise.
- (iii) The ACT has a bridging policy with respect to graduates from certain accredited independent private providers not affiliated with the ecumenical consortia. Generally such students would not be granted entry to the Bachelors Honours award. Such students would be encouraged to undertake bridging work in order to transfer to the coursework masters award of the ACT and from there to articulate to the postgraduate research awards through the MA.
- (iv) ACT Bachelor of Christian Studies graduates with a GPA of at least 2.8 will need to complete all requirements for the BTh (or BMin) with a GPA of at least 2.8 overall and satisfy the requirement of a GPA of at least 2.8 in a the designated field of study to be pursued in the Honours program. Biblical language requirements will also need to be met for graduates seeking to enrol in the BTh(Hons). On completing the above requirements the

BChrStuds degree would have to be surrendered.

(c) Mature Age Entry and Admission with Advanced Standing

- (i) There is no mature age entry provision.
- (ii) Admission with Advanced Standing
 - Normally advanced standing will not be given candidates in the Bachelors Honours program. Nevertheless applications for RPL will be considered for the coursework phase.
 - 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). 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).
 - Students who already possess research qualifications at an equivalent level will be granted advanced standing in Research Methods (RM095).
 - Applications for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) from incomplete non-ACT awards will not be considered if the units were completed more than ten years previously.

(d) Assumed Knowledge

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

Course Structure and Curriculum:

(a) Duration of Course and Modes of Delivery

- (i) The Honours degree is a one-year full-time course. This is the minimum time of candidature. The maximum time for candidature is two years part time. Candidates may study full-time or part-time.
- (ii) Candidates may take no more than three years after the completion of their initial degree in theology to complete the Honours year.
- (iii) The units of the coursework phase of the award are all delivered in attendance mode.

(b) Course Structure and Progression

Students for honours awards are required to complete the equivalent of four coursework units—16 credit points—comprising a minimum of 8 cps in 400/700 units in the student’s designated field and also including 4 cps in Research Methods.

The thesis of 15,000 words will be weighted as equivalent to 16 cps.

(c) Units in the Curriculum

- (i) The coursework will be drawn from 400 or 700 level units and assessed at graduate level. 400 level units taken by Honours students will be designated 400(H). All New Testament or Old Testament exegesis units will be biblical language units.
- (ii) The Research Methods unit (4 cps) will be assessed on a pass/fail basis.

Requirements for Progression and Graduation

- (i) Students enrolled in the undergraduate BTh or BMin may be given permission to take an Honours unit provided that the candidate has 64 credit points in the degree and a GPA of at least 2.0. If he/she does not proceed to the Honours year, the unit will be fully accredited in the undergraduate degree.
- (ii) Honours will be determined from the Honours year alone.
- (iii) Candidates who achieve a mark of 40–49% in the thesis *may* be allowed to resubmit after taking into account the examiner’s comments. The thesis will be submitted to the same examiner for a second result. A candidate may resubmit a thesis only once.

If a passing grade is recorded for a resubmitted thesis, Third Class Honours will be awarded regardless of the grade.

A re-submission fee will be required. This fee is not claimable on FEE-HELP.

Assessment

- (i) Each unit in the Bachelors Honours program requires at least two different assessments, one worth at least 40% of the total marks awarded in the unit. Examinations are not necessarily required.
- (ii) Units offered at 400H level require 6,000-7,000 words of writing. This requirement might be met, for example, by the writing of two 3,000-3,500 word essays, or by a written two hour exam (reckoning 1,500 words per exam hour) and a 3,000-4,000 word essay, or by a 1,000 word book review, short essay of 1,500-2,000 words, and a 3,500-4,000 major essay.

THESIS:

Prerequisites and Exclusions:

The 16 cp ++499 project is attempted at the end of a student’s course of study once all other requirements for the award have been satisfactorily completed. However, candidates seeking to fulfil bridging

requirements to a higher degree may attempt the project with approval of their sponsoring institution's course coordinator.

Assessment:

++499 theses are 15,000 words in length and worth 16cps.

While it need not be an original contribution to knowledge, the Bachelors Honours thesis must reflect a conceptual understanding of the area or topic discussed which is commensurate with Honours level study. In addition to the range of skills appropriate to superior advanced level candidates, the candidate must demonstrate evidence of reading across viewpoints and report them empathetically; take a point of view and sustain it with evidence; and exhibit analytical skill and ability to assess critically existing scholarly literature such as to suggest his or her emerging suitability for more extensive, original, and independent research at Masters and Doctoral level.

The thesis (including footnotes and excursions, but excluding the bibliography and any appendices), 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.

Units Taken at Bachelors Honours (400H) Level—

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 early 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 early 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

Procedures:

- Students embark on the thesis once the coursework component of the award, including Research Methods, has been completed.
- The topic of the thesis must be approved by the relevant field Moderator, using the required Assessment Procedures Form.
- Once the topic of the thesis is approved, the student is to prepare a fuller proposal to be submitted to his or her sponsoring institution's course coordinator. The proposal should nominate a topic and include a statement of aim and method. The aim of the thesis must comply with the ethos of the degree. The student must also submit a bibliography of the primary and secondary monographs and articles in the area of theology or biblical studies or ministerial study under investigation.
- Any student undertaking human subject research as part of their project must gain approval from the ACT's Ethics Committee before commencing their research. Applications forms can be obtained from their sponsoring college.
- 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 thesis.
- Sponsoring institutions are to ensure that students enrolling in the thesis 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.

Examination:

The thesis will be examined by a competent examiner outside of the student's sponsoring college. The coordinator, in consultation with the candidate, is expected to submit electronically an abstract and the names of three or four possible external examiners of the thesis to the Dean for his or her consideration approximately one month before submission of the final thesis. Potential examiners should not be approached by the candidate or coordinator before names are submitted. It is the ACT's responsibility to invite and appoint such examiners, though always in consultation with the student's sponsoring college.

When the thesis is ready for submission, one copy (spiral bound) must be sent to the ACT along with the following signed certification:

Candidate

The following project, of which I have kept a copy, is entirely the work of the undersigned and all sources of ideas and expressions are duly acknowledged in footnotes or endnotes. This project does not incorporate any material previously submitted by me for any other degree or similar award.

Supervisor

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

Criteria for determining the final honours level:

1. The final grade of honours will be calculated by taking into account both the grades for the coursework units and the thesis;
2. The grading system for the final honours level is set as follows:

First Class	85-100%
Upper Second Class	75-84%
Lower Second Class	65-74%
Third Class	50-64%

