

Australian College of Ministries

Higher Education Handbook 2010

Edited By:
Stephen Parker
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READ THIS HANDBOOK CAREFULLY

This Higher Education Handbook is to be read in conjunction with either the “**Undergraduate Handbook**” or the “**Postgraduate Handbook**” depending upon your level of study. The two are complementary and BOTH must be read carefully.

Students are advised that, **in order to meet our quality and compliance responsibilities** in Higher Education, a number of new Policies and Procedures have been introduced by ACOM since 2008. These Policies and Procedures are detailed fully in this Handbook. Further details can also be found in either the **Undergraduate Handbook** or **Postgraduate Handbook**.

Students are advised to read these Handbooks very carefully. **ACOM will NOT take responsibility** for any financial, academic or other penalty incurred by a student as a result of the student not reading or not understanding any part of these Handbooks. In particular, students should read **Section 3 (Financial Regulations)** and **Section 4 (Academic Regulations)** of this Handbook VERY carefully.

Students who require clarification of any aspect of this Handbook should contact the ACOM National Administration Office (ph. 1800 672 692 – email: info@acom.edu.au) immediately. The major (not all) policy changes for are outlined in Table 1 below with the relevant Section of the Handbook relating to these changes also indicated.

Table 1
Major Policy Changes for 2010

Policy Area	New Policy Summary	Section #
Critical Thinking and Writing	Critical Thinking and Writing is now a core subject and students are strongly encouraged to study this subject in either their first or second Trimester of study. Students who fail a fully completed subject will be required to study Critical Thinking and Writing (if not previously studied) in the next available Trimester.	4.10.2
Word Limits	Assignments must now be within 10% of the word limits.	Style Manual for Writing Essays & Assignments
Late Assignments	Assignments submitted up to 10 working days late will attract an automatic deduction of 1 mark per day.	4.7
Remark Requests	Requests for a remark must be applied for within two weeks of receiving the marked assignment.	4.9.3
Extension Policy	The Extension Policy has changed.	4.7
Minimum Standards	Minimum Standards for Higher Education Essays and Other Written Assignments are now provided.	4.4

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WELCOME

... from the Principal (Stephen Hinks)

As both the Principal of ACOM and a fellow student, I welcome you to ACOM.

ACOM is a community of life-long learners, with a central belief that, if we stop learning, we cease to grow. Thank you for your commitment to learning and growing through ACOM.

For those studying with ACOM for the first time, we extend a special welcome. ACOM's model of study requires you to be a self-starter with strong self-discipline and time-management skills. However, we are also committed to supporting you in your studies. If there is any area of student life in which we may assist you, please do not hesitate to contact our helpdesk or the regional team in your State.

Our passion is to see the Kingdom of God come on earth. ACOM exists to equip those who love God and want to see the gospel proclaimed and lived throughout the world. By studying with ACOM, you are enabling us to partner with you in the gospel mission. I hope you find a deep sense of purpose and connectedness in studying with us.

As a national provider, we are in a unique position to resource you for your mission and ministry. We have a team of academic staff who are leaders in their fields, plus a range of ministry practitioners, mentors, supervisors and spiritual formation directors who are dedicated to developing your full potential in Christ. Our student support services and administration procedures are greatly appreciated by our students, and our free National Help Desk 1800 672 692 (info@acom.edu.au) is freely available for any and all enquiries by students.

We are always listening to wisdom that feeds our continuous quality improvement processes. In particular, we value student feedback on any aspect of our courses and organisation.

Finally, let me wish you well in your course of studies. Your graduation from ACOM will represent a milestone in you becoming a better equipped and more faithful and fruitful disciple of Jesus. To that end, we partner with you, so let's enjoy the journey together!

... from the National Administrators (Merise Newland, Val Lochel & Angie Pittar)

As an ACOM student (whether part-time, full-time, undergraduate or postgraduate) you will find that you will have much contact with the National Administration Office in Brisbane throughout your studies – especially through enquiries to the **National Help Desk** (ph. 1800 672 692; email: info@acom.edu.au), submission of assignments (marker@acom.edu.au), receiving of marked assignments, etc.

We are here to help you in whatever way we can. We aim to process any enquiry (email or phone) within 24 hours of receiving it –either giving you a direct answer, or referring you to the appropriate person for an answer. Please don't hesitate to contact us at any time.

All the best with your study at ACOM – we look forward to meeting you, working with you and helping wherever possible.

Section 1: About ACOM

1.1 Who We Are

ACOM is:

1. a Christian leadership and discipleship college dedicated to preparing Christians for sustained and effective ministry and mission in 21st century churches, communities and workplaces;
2. a multi-sectoral educational organisation offering access to high-quality, fully-accredited Vocational and Higher Education courses and qualifications;
3. a flexible education provider offering an accessible combination of distance, on-line and face-to-face learning opportunities;
4. a centre of Christian scholarship and research with an internationally recognised track-record of applied multi-disciplinary studies directly relevant to ministry and mission in contemporary sociocultural contexts;
5. a transdenominational organisation with a diverse student body emanating from a wide variety of Christian backgrounds and experiences; and
6. a community of life-long learners where students and staff are engaged in the ongoing and intentional development of their knowledge, skills, abilities and character.

1.2 Who We Aren't

ACOM is not:

1. a traditional theological college offering campus-based training for the church of yesterday;
2. focussed on academic study to the exclusion of developing important skills in ministry and mission, and developing sustained personal character;
3. closed in our theological outlook, yet we maintain and value a strong and inclusive evangelical heritage.

1.3 ACOM's Theology of Mission

ACOM's missional theology underpins its missional curriculum. ACOM's missional theology is founded on its understanding of four interacting and intersecting missions: (a) God's mission; (b) the church's mission *in response to* God's mission; (c) ACOM's mission *in support of* the church's mission; and (d) the missional leader's mission to *re-engage the church with* its mission.

God's Mission

God's mission is to reconcile the world to Himself in Christ, through the redemptive work of Christ, thus restoring the world to its intended place and condition under Christ.

The Church's Mission

The mission of the church as the Body of Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is to participate in God's mission of reconciliation in Christ by proclaiming the message of reconciliation, and practising the ministry of reconciliation, in the world. (NB: The mission, ministry and message of reconciliation include reconciliation between God and people, between people and people, and between people and the natural world.)

ACOM's Mission

ACOM's mission, as a part of the Body of Christ, is to support the church's mission by:

1. nurturing, developing, and equipping a diversity of missional leaders,
2. who will think and act missionally in post-Christian ministry settings,
3. thus releasing a transformed and transforming church into the world, and
4. effectively growing God's kingdom in 21st century Australia and beyond.

In short, ACOM's intent is to support the church's mission by providing the church with effective missional leaders. These missional leaders will be missional because they will:

1. understand the mission of the church not only as participation *in* the mission of God, but also an intentional response *to* the mission of God, i.e., the church is sent into world by Christ, who Himself was sent into the world by God in order to fulfil God's missional purposes for the church and the world;
2. understand the nature of the post-Christian world in which the Western church is located, and will assist the church to do the same;
3. engage the world in culturally sensitive yet missionally effective ways, and will assist the church to do the same;
4. have redefined, and be continuing to redefine, their personal identities in missional terms and, through this ongoing personal redefinition, will assist the church to redefine its ecclesiastical identity in missional terms also.

When the church's understanding of God's purpose *for* the world, informed by its understanding *of* the world, leading to its engagement *with* the world, and energised by its identity *in* the world, are all centred on mission, the church itself, like its leaders, will be missional, i.e., the church will maintain *extensive, intensive* and *effective* missiological links with the world leading to reconciliation at all levels (God-people, people-people, and people-environment).

The Missional Leader's Mission

In task-oriented terms, the mission of the missional leader is to re-engage the church with its mission by reminding the church of its mission, re-educating the church about its mission, and re-equipping the church for its mission. The church needs to be:

1. *reminded of* its mission because it is currently suffering from "missional amnesia" as a result of decades of disengagement from public life and the key issues of public life.
2. *re-educated about* its mission because the church's current models and methods of "being missional" and "doing mission" are largely ineffective in contemporary Western sociocultural contexts, despite the fact that many churches still hold closely to these models and methods.
3. *re-equipped for* mission because its missional skills, which are built on its models and methods of mission, are largely ineffective and, in many cases, counterproductive, i.e., they often turn people "off" church, as much as turning people "on" to church.

When the church is re-engaged *with* its mission, it will also be revitalised *through* its mission, because mission is not only the task of the church, but is also the spiritual, psychological and relational lifeblood of the church. The church's malaise in the Western world is largely attributable to its disengagement from mission. Once re-engaged with mission, the church will be revitalised by mission.

1.4 ACOM's Model of Theological Education

Missional models of theological education can be distinguished from both traditional, college-based models of theological education and more contemporary church-based models of theological education.

College-based models of theological education train aspiring church leaders in the college for ministry in the church. These models have been partly successful, but have been criticised for producing leaders with inadequate levels of practical ministry experience and skills. Church-based models of theological education train aspiring leaders in the church for ministry in the church. These models produce better practitioners, but have been criticised for lacking "intellectual rigor" and adequate theological grounding.

Both college-based and church-based models of theological education are, however, inadequate from a missional perspective. This inadequacy arises because:

1. *both* models focus on preparing aspiring leaders for ministry in the church. In other words, the focus of both models is on the church, rather than on the interface between the church and the world (explained further below).
2. *neither* model focuses adequately on character development and personal spiritual formation (together which form “emotionally mature spirituality”) as integral to ministry preparation. This inadequacy arises despite the ascendance of post-Christian missional/ministry contexts where the social and cultural legitimacy of Christianity, and, hence the personal and vocational identity of the Christian minister, are more or less constantly under threat.

As a result of the inordinate focus on the church, and the inadequate focus on the character development and personal-spiritual formation of the aspiring church leader, both college- and church-based models of theological education have been largely ineffective in producing leaders who will help the church fulfil the Great Commission in 21st Century post-Christian contexts. This ineffectiveness also derives from the fact that, in post-Christian sociocultural contexts, the understandings, attitudes and skills required to work in the church are not the same as those required to work in the communities, societies and cultures within which the church is (albeit, often in isolation and suffering from “missional amnesia”) embedded.

Missional models of theological education, in contrast, prepare aspiring leaders for a personally, relationally, vocationally and socioculturally challenging “mission” (which includes, but transcends, church “ministry”) at the interface of the church with the world. In other words, missional models of theological education are not focused on the church, or on ministry in the church *per se*. Nor are they focused on the community *per se*. Rather, they are focused on the character resources and spiritual qualities of the aspiring church leader, on the locations (both physical-geographical and socio-cultural) where the church under the direction of its leaders meets the world, and on the “Kingdom-oriented” ways in which the church initiates and/or responds to this meeting.

Moreover, because the meeting of the church with the world necessarily involves at least a “meeting” (and probably a “clash”) of cultures (Christian with post-Christian), adequately and appropriately preparing aspiring leaders for this meeting demands intellectual understanding, affective sensitivity, and practical applicability in leadership preparation. In other words, aspiring leaders will not meet the world effectively, nor lead churches to meet the world effectively, unless and until they are educated in such a way as to be: (a) cognisant of the socio-cultural differences between the church and the world, (b) emotionally sensitive to these differences, and (c) practically attuned to, and equipped to implement, the strategies and approaches necessary to transcend these differences, so that the church can effectively communicate with the world in ways that results in the extension of the Kingdom of God in the world.

Developing the understandings, sensitivities and applications referred to above implies a great deal of cognitive, emotional and behavioural effort. Thus, we suggest that missional models of theological education are, by their very nature, intellectually, emotionally and practically rigorous.

1.5 ACOM’s Goal: Developing Missional Leaders

Missional leaders are those leaders who:

1. *are* missional, and as a result
2. *think* missionally, and as a result
3. *act* missionally.

Being missional means self-identifying personal existence and action so closely with the mission of God that personal existence and action and God’s mission are effectively inseparable. [“For me (i.e., “as far as I am concerned”) to live (i.e., to continue to “exist” or “be”) is (i.e., “is the same thing as”, “is co-terminal with”)

Christ (who is the mission of God incarnate)....”] Hence, missional leaders do not “do” mission with/in their ongoing existence. Rather the substance of their ongoing existence is mission and missional (i.e., is Christ and is Christ-like).

Thinking missionally means perceiving and evaluating *everything* through missional eyes, i.e., “mission” becomes the conceptual framework/paradigm not only for theology, but also for philosophy, psychology, sociology, biology and each and every other “-ology”. In this way, mission becomes the organising framework/paradigm for the missional leader’s entire thought-life at any level (theoretical, structural, or practical) and concerning any topic, issue or circumstance.

Acting missionally means doing that which is consistent with promoting the gospel. Somewhat more narrowly, leading missionally refers to any act of leadership that is designed to (and, presumably, actually does) promote the gospel. Thus, almost any (ethical, moral, legal, etc.) behaviour could be defined as “missional”, depending on its intent and effect in missional terms.

Put slightly differently, missional leaders are leaders whose existence, thought and behaviour are defined by (i.e., “cannot be understood in any other terms than”) mission. In this way, “mission” – in the sense of being sent into the world - becomes the central organising motif for individual being, thinking and doing, and also for being, thinking and doing as a community. Hence, a “missional” church is one whose ongoing existence, shared understandings, and corporate actions are intimately and inextricably identified with God’s mission in Christ.

1.6 ACOM’s Accreditation

Accreditation for ACOM courses is provided through the Sydney College of Divinity. SCD accreditation is granted by the New South Wales Higher Education Department, and is recognised Australia-wide and throughout the world as university level, tertiary training. ACOM was a founding member of the SCD over 20 years ago (as the Churches of Christ in NSW Theological College).

The SCD accredited undergraduate awards offered by ACOM include the Diploma of Theology and the Bachelor of Theology. ACOM is registered to teach and facilitate these awards in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia.

1.7 ACOM’s Governance

1.7.1 College Board

ACOM Ltd is a company limited by guarantee. ACOM is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of three each from Conferences of Churches of Christ in New South Wales and Queensland. Additionally, the Chief Officer of each Conference is an ex-officio director of the ACOM Board. The Board sets the policies under which ACOM operates to provide its training throughout Australia and the world

1.7.2 Board of Studies

In keeping with emerging standards of accountability and transparency in the Higher and Vocational Education sectors in Australia, ACOM has appointed a Board of Studies (BoS) to oversee all aspects of its academic functioning, ensuring that ACOM’s benchmarks, standards and procedures equal or exceed those of the Higher and Vocational Education sectors more broadly. The BoS is comprised of senior academics from inside and outside ACOM. The Board has an external Chair.

1.8 ACOM Locations and Contacts

NSW and ACT

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Western Australia

Email: pbarney@acom.edu.au

Regional Coordinator	Peter Barney	pbarney@acom.edu.au
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1.9 National Help Desk Services

The National Help Desk is ACOM's major resource for student enquiries across the nation. The National Help Desk is available on a FREE 1800 number (1800 672 692) and also by e-mail (info@acom.edu.au) and fax (07 3411 0576). The National Help Desk can assist you with information about:

1. enrolment, progression and graduation;
2. subject registrations;
3. assessment requirements;
4. forms and documentation;
5. results;
6. submission of assignments;
7. fees, including payment of fees;
8. FEE-HELP.

1.10 ACOM Networks

1.10.1 Churches of Christ

The Churches of Christ is a 200-year-old movement of unity amongst all Christian churches, based upon the authority of the Bible, the centrality of Jesus Christ to salvation and faith, and the power of the Holy Spirit for Christian life and for mission. See www.churchesofchrist.org.au for more information. We remain committed to our foundation in the Churches of Christ and, as an expression of this, embrace Christians, churches and Christian organisations from all Christian traditions.

1.10.2 Partner Organisations

In Higher Education, ACOM partners with many organisations for various purposes. For subject provision we partner with:

1. FORGE,
2. TEAR,
3. Youth Vision, and
4. Biblical Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

We partner with Fuller Theological Seminary, California for their Doctor of Ministry students. For all of our undergraduate and postgraduate courses, we are part of the Sydney College of Divinity, whose courses we teach. For research and scholarship we partner with respected academics at:

1. Edith Cowan University;
2. Nanayang Technological University, Singapore,
3. the University of Idaho,
4. the University of Massachusetts,
5. the University of Texas,
6. the University of Western Sydney,
7. Sydney University, and
8. Oxford University.

Section 2: Studying with ACOM

ACOM is a Christian ministry training College which makes use of flexible learning. Flexible learning includes the use of a variety of delivery modes for the purposes of ministry training, i.e. distance education, on-line learning, face-to-face delivery, etc. In ACOM's flexible learning programs, both ACOM and its students have a clear set of responsibilities.

2.1 ACOM's Responsibilities in Flexible Learning

ACOM's responsibility is to provide a learning environment which is:

1. **ACCESSIBLE:** Information relating to subjects, courses, enrolment, progression, graduation and other important aspects of a student's study is readily accessible and easily understood.
2. **CLEAR:** Instructions relating to expected subject outcomes, assessment requirements, the submission of essays and other required documentation are clearly stated.
3. **COMPREHENSIVE:** Lectures, lecture notes and readers provide detailed and extensive coverage of all required areas of study.
4. **RELEVANT:** ACOM's learning experiences and material directly address pertinent personal and professional issues.
5. **INFORMED:** Teaching staff have received specific training and professional development in flexible delivery education, and provide best practice teaching delivery in this mode.
6. **RESPONSIVE:** Students receive performance feedback on their work within an agreed timeframe.
7. **SUPPORTIVE:** The process of learning is experienced as student-centred and supportive of the student's aspirations for learning and positive achievement.
8. **PERSONAL:** Communication with administrators and facilitators is user-friendly, relevant, personal and transparent, so as to leave the student feeling positively engaged in the process of learning.
9. **EQUIVALENT:** ACOM's flexible learning supports standards, benchmarks, assessments, outcomes and awards that are consistent with traditional modes of educational delivery.
10. **COMPARABLE:** ACOM displays standards of teaching, delivery, assessment and quality control that are comparable to other relevant tertiary institutions.

2.2 Student Responsibilities in Flexible Learning

Students engaged in ACOM's flexible learning programs need to demonstrate a set of attitudes and competencies which will enable them to be successful in their studies and their ministries. These include:

1. **MOTIVATION:** Students display a love of learning that extends beyond their formal studies, overflowing into a commitment to lifelong learning.
2. **RESPONSIBILITY:** Students effectively manage their time and learning processes, ensuring that their assessment tasks are completed and submitted on time, and at a quality sufficient to satisfy their needs and expectations.
3. **OPENNESS:** A willingness to go beyond devotionism to a deeper level of thought about faith and ministry, including consuming a "diet" of good reading which stimulates renewed thinking, enhanced personal formation, and creative ministry practice.
4. **THOUGHTFULNESS:** Students are willing to develop the capacity to think critically, i.e., developing the ability to make informed judgments based on the analysis of information and the exercise of logic.
5. **INTEGRATION:** Students see themselves as active learners who develop a habit of disciplined learning while they serve in their ministry contexts.

2.3 Minimum Hardware and Software Requirements

2.3.1 Minimum Hardware Requirements

Students can use IBM compatible, MAC or Linux based computers, though IBM compatible computers tend to have less compatibility issues. There are no minimum hardware requirements, as long as your computer is

capable of running the programs listed below. As a suggestion, a decent computer that is less than 4 years old along with a large, clear screen will make studying easier and more enjoyable.

2.3.2 Minimum Software Requirements

All Students

For all students Microsoft Office 2003 (or newer) is required in order to complete assignments, as they are submitted in Word format, and many of our markers use track changes to add comments to marked assignments. While there are compatible office programs available (eg Open Office), students will have less issues if they use Microsoft Office. There are student and/or home versions of Microsoft Office which are reasonably priced.

Online Subjects

For students studying online subjects, Internet Explorer 6 or newer is required. For Mac and Linux users, Safari (version 3 and later) and Firefox (version 2 and later) also work, however there are some features that work best with Internet Explorer. Also Adobe Acrobat Viewer 7 or newer (or a similar program) is required to view PDF files for online subjects.

Internet Access

Our primary means of communicating with students is via email and our website, so internet access is advised for all ACOM students. For students studying online subjects, broadband internet (eg ADSL, cable, wireless) is recommended. It is possible to study online subjects using dial up internet, however there are many large files to download, and interactive items that will not work well with dial up internet access

2.4 Delivery

2.4.1 Trimesters

There are no weekly classes at ACOM. Instead, each ACOM subject is delivered in a distance education package which contains all the necessary information on the subject, and provides exercises and readings to be completed in the first 12 weeks. Each subject runs over a 14-week period, with assessment tasks to complete at home.

There are 3 trimesters each year, with a one week break between trimesters one and two and between trimesters two and three. You can choose how many subjects you wish to complete in each trimester (but permission is required from the ACOM Registrar if you intend to study more than three (3) subjects in any one trimester). You may also choose whether you will attend a Facilitation for each subject or not.

The trimesters for 2010 are:

1st trimester	1 st February to 7 th May, 2010
2nd trimester	17 th May to 20 th August, 2010
3rd trimester	30 th August to 3 rd December, 2010

2.4.2 Registration Deadlines

ACOM has a Registration Deadline for subjects. This deadline falls four weeks before the start of each trimester. (see Section 4.3.1 of this Handbook). However, we encourage students to enrol in their subjects for all three trimesters at the start of each year. Students who miss the Registration Deadline will still be able to register in subjects but will be charged a late (\$25.00) or extra late (\$50.00) registration fee for doing so. The Registration Deadlines for 2010 will be:

1st trimester	04 th January, 2010
2nd trimester	19 th April, 2010
3rd trimester	2 nd August, 2010

2.4.3 Census Dates

The Census Date is the cut-off date for withdrawals from subjects and partial refund of fees. The Census Dates, listed below, are the 4th Monday of each trimester:

1 st trimester	Monday, 22 nd February, 2010
2 nd trimester	Monday, 7 th June, 2010
3 rd trimester	Monday, 20 th September, 2010

Students **must notify ACOM in writing** (e-mail or online is acceptable) if they wish to withdraw from a subject. Verbal notification is insufficient to affect a subject withdrawal.

2.4.4 Attending Facilitations

Whilst not required for all subjects, all students are strongly encouraged to attend as many Facilitations as possible, as students often learn more when a shared learning experience supplements their self-paced study. The primary purpose of a Facilitation is to integrate the theory and content of a subject with the contexts and practice of ministry and mission. Hence, those students who choose to attend a Facilitation will have **21 demand hours of "Integration Studies" credited** towards their 162 demand hours for each course. These 21 hours will be credited against other designated integration studies. Students should refer to the Introductory Book for each subject in which they are registered for exact details of the credit arrangements applicable to each subject.

2.5 Library Facilities

In addition to the targeted academic resources supplied in student's subject packages, ACOM also provides extensive library facilities to its students. These facilities are listed in Table 2.

Additionally, students can also access the library facilities of any of SCD's other Member Institutes. If students wish to borrow from these libraries they must first complete a library application form available from our National Helpdesk.

Table 2 - Student Library Facilities

Region	Details
National	All ACOM students can gain on-line access to a wide variety of journal articles and other information resources through a partnership arrangement ACOM maintains with Wesley Institute. Students are strongly encouraged to contact ACOM's help desk for an application to use these resources.
ACOM NSW/ACT	The ACOM NSW/ACT library is co-located with the Gordon Moyes Library (previously called the Wesley Institute Library) at 5 Mary Street, Drummoyne. ACOM students have full borrowing rights to the total collection of both libraries. ACOM students need to register with the combined library to receive a student number and code that permits borrowing. An application form is available from ACOM's National Help Desk. The Gordon Moyes Library catalogue is also available on-line. Go to: www.wi.edu.au and click on the "Gordon Moyes Library Catalogue" link towards the bottom of the page. Once you are into the search screen, click on the "SEARCH" button for best results.
ACOM Qld	ACOM Qld students have access to the Nazarene College library located at 40 Woodlands Drive, Thornlands, and students are welcome to browse the library and borrow books.

ACOM WA	<p>ACOM WA students can access library facilities at other colleges in Perth. Most libraries will allow students to use their facilities free of charge, but there are usually annual membership fees for borrowing rights. Check with the Libraries regarding their fees. The libraries include:</p> <p>Baptist Theological College (20 Hayman Road, Bentley – ph. 08 9361 9962)</p> <p>Bible College of WA (40 Hale Road, Wattle Park – ph. 08 9453 9189)</p> <p>Harvest West Bible College (79A Robinson Avenue, Belmont – ph. 08 9479 3443)</p> <p>Perth Bible College (Unit 3/436 Lord Street, Mt Lawley – ph. 08 9328 2500)</p> <p>Trinity Theological College (632-634 Newcastle Street, Leederville – ph. 08 9228 9067)</p> <p>Bethany Christian Fellowship (cnr Warton Road & Bronzewing Street, Huntingdale – ph. 08 9490 3021)</p>
ACOM Tas	<p>For ACOM Tas students, there are theological libraries at:</p> <p>Tabor College in Hobart (45 Melville St Hobart - ph. 03 6231 5889)</p> <p>Worldview Centre of Intercultural Studies (41 Station Road, St Leonards, Launceston - ph. 03 6337 0444).</p>
ACOM Vic	<p>ACOM Vic students can access library facilities at:</p> <p>Kingsley College (21 South Street, Glenroy - ph. 03 9355 9000)</p> <p>Churches of Christ Theological College (44-60 Jacksons Road, Mulgrave - ph. 03 9790 1000)</p> <p>Ridley College (160 The Avenue, Parkville - ph. 03 9207 4800)</p>

2.6 Student Identification Cards

ACOM students who would like a Student Identification Card should:

1. Pay the appropriate fee (\$12 in 2009-2010) to your Regional Office or the National Helpdesk
2. Email a high-resolution head and shoulders, passport style, photograph of yourself to studentcards@acom.edu.au

2.7 elearning

From 2009, ACOM has introduced subjects that are available online.

How it works.

When a student first enrolls in elearning, they are given a web-site address and password to log themselves in. In each trimester where a student does a unit through elearning, that subject will be made available to the student online through that web-site address and password. All content that was previously delivered in paper Introductory and Study Books is provided in web-pages. Assignment resources and other relevant articles that were previously provided as readers, are now be provided in PDF documents available online.

Elearning units still have facilitation attached to them, when scheduled, which are still very highly recommended for students to attend.

Benefits of elearning

ACOM is moving to online delivery of ministry training through elearning because we believe that it greatly enhances the students' experience of and the quality of the training course. These benefits include:

1. Students are able to easily interact with other students in the same course through integrated and easy to navigate group chats, discussion boards and direct student contact.
2. Students are able to more easily interact with the course materials with each unit being written to encourage students to interact online with the content.
3. Study materials are distributed to students much more reliably and quickly to anywhere in the world.
4. Students with poor eyesight are able to easily increase the size of the text needing to be read.
5. Online processes allow students to track their progress through a unit, get feedback on subject area knowledge and access all course forms needed online.
6. Key lines from the course material can be copied and pasted elsewhere for students' own resources or for assignment preparation.
7. Far fewer natural resources are consumed in the students' study process.

Please refer to the Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook for more details regarding studying with ACOM

Section 3: Financial Regulations

3.1 Austudy

Under Commonwealth Government guidelines, Austudy is available for full-time theological students who are working towards accredited awards. "Full-time" is defined by the Government to involve at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of a maximum load. Enquiries about eligibility and applications for Austudy should be directed to the closest Centrelink Office. Please note that:

1. Centrelink requires a full-time load (i.e., at least 18 credit points or two full subjects) for **each** and **every** trimester of study. Students should note that subjects **cannot be averaged** across the course of a year to constitute a full-time load.
2. It is the student's responsibility to keep Centrelink informed of any program changes or changes of address during each year. If a student's study load falls below full-time in ANY trimester, then Centrelink may require repayment of any Austudy received.
3. ACOM administration is required to complete regular reports for Centrelink on student progress and full-time/part-time status.
4. Personal Formation units are divided across the number of trimesters appropriate for each of these subjects – they do NOT count as one full subject in a trimester for the purposes of Centrelink calculations.
5. Students studying at Master of Arts level are not eligible for Austudy, however Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma students may be eligible.

3.2 FEE-HELP

FEE-HELP is a Government financial loan scheme for students attending private colleges. All ACOM enrolled students who are Australian citizens (or on Permanent Humanitarian Visas) have access to government FEE-HELP loans for both undergraduate and postgraduate study. The total loan amount available is up to \$83,313 (in 2009) and can be utilised over the lifetime of the student at all levels of accredited higher education training. Undergraduate loans (only) incur a one-off flat fee of 20% on the loan amount. The debt then increases each financial year in line with the CPI increases, but does not accrue any interest beyond CPI increases no matter how long the loan takes to be repaid. The loan can be used for a single subject or a number of subjects, or for a complete award or a number of awards – according to student's choice. The repayment of the loan commences once a student's taxable income exceeds \$43,151 (2009/2010 tax year).

To access FEE-HELP, a student completes a "Request for FEE-HELP Assistance" form (available from your ACOM regional office) and submits this form to ACOM before the trimester begins. ACOM then submits the required information on each student seeking FEE-HELP to enable the Government to issue a Commonwealth Higher Education Student Support Number (CHESSN) to each student. This number will stay with the student for the rest of his/her life.

Students who have previously applied for FEE-HELP at ACOM (or another institution) may still access FEE-HELP for new courses in which they are enrolled/enrolling at ACOM. Students reapplying for FEE-HELP are required to complete a new FEE-HELP application form, and to advise ACOM of their previous CHESSN.

ACOM's specific FEE-HELP procedures are listed in Appendix 1.

3.3 Tuition Assurance Scheme (TAS)

The Sydney College of Divinity (ABN: 39 002 653 036) is the accrediting body for ACOM and provides the authorisation for ACOM to offer and enrol students into a variety of different undergraduate and postgraduate awards. The SCD is a body corporate and is registered on the Australian Qualifications Framework in the States of New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania. Before a body corporate or its students can receive grants or other assistance under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*, the body corporate must meet the requirements specified in the Higher Education Provider Guidelines. Amongst other things, the SCD must publish to all enrolling students a "statement of course assurance", explaining the

course assurance requirements and the method by which the requirements have been met in the course concerned. The SCD's Course Assurance arrangements are listed in Appendix 2.

The alternative suitable courses of the ACT in which students would be placed if necessary are detailed in Table 3.

Table 3
Alternative Courses (Tuition Assurance Scheme)

Sydney College of Divinity	Australian College of Theology
Diploma of Theology	Diploma of Theology
Advanced Diploma of Theology	Advanced Diploma of Theology
Bachelor of Theology	Bachelor of Theology
Graduate Certificate in Arts	Graduate Diploma of Theology
Graduate Diploma of Arts	Graduate Diploma of Bible and Ministry
Graduate Diploma of Arts	Graduate Diploma of Christian Studies
Graduate Diploma of Arts	Graduate Diploma of Theology
Graduate Diploma of Arts	Graduate Diploma of Ministry
Master of Arts	Master of Arts in Christian Studies

3.4 Eligible Spouse Rates

Spouses of ACOM students who wish to study or audit ACOM subjects are eligible for reduced tuition costs if the ACOM student:

1. is an existing student who has successfully completed at least 3 subjects in the last 3 trimesters;
2. is an existing student who has not completed at least 3 subjects in the last 3 trimesters, but is formally Registered (not just intending to register) to complete at least 3 subjects in 3 consecutive trimesters of study (including the subject(s) being studied in the current trimester);
3. is a new student who is formally Registered (not just intending to register) to complete at least 3 subjects in their first 3 trimesters of study.

Reduced tuition costs are NOT available for Specialty Subjects, or when FEE-HELP is being used.

3.5 Spousal Attendance at Facilitations

Spouses of ACOM students may attend Facilitations for a reduced price (currently \$100). However, they must attend Facilitations with the students, and spouses will not be provided with any course materials.

3.6 Facilitation Expenses

Students should allow for an additional cost for living and travelling expenses when attending Facilitations away from their local region. When being billeted, it is expected that students will leave \$10/night for their hosts.

3.7 Fees and Charges for 2010

Student should read Table 4 carefully.

Table 4 - 2010 Fees and Charges

Fee/Charge	Amount	See Handbook Section
Late Subject Registration Fee (after Registration Deadline i.e., 3 weeks before the start of each Trimester)	\$25.00	4.3.1
Extra-Late Subject Registration Fee (on or after start of Trimester)	\$50.00	4.3.1
Subject Withdrawal Fee (before Census Date)	\$150.00	4.3.2
Subject Withdrawal Fee (After Census Date)	Full-Cost of Subject	4.3.2
Withdrawal from Facilitation after registration date	\$50	4.3.10
Transfer of Subject Registration (after Registration Deadline but before start of Trimester)	\$175.00	4.3.3
Transfer of Subject Registration (from start of Trimester to Census Date)	\$200.00	4.3.3.
Issue of Transcript other than at Graduation	\$25.00	Referred to here only
Issue of Testamur other than at Graduation	\$110	As above

3.8 Payment of Fees to ACOM

3.8.1 Due Dates

Students must pay the tuition fee for each subject **prior to the start of each trimester**. For 2010 the Trimester starting dates are:

1 st trimester	Monday, 1 st February , 2010
2 nd trimester	Monday, 17 th May, 2010
3 rd trimester	Monday, 30 th August, 2010

3.8.2 Withholding of Subject Packages

Subject packages will **not** be sent to students if payment of **all relevant fees and charges** (or, in the case of tuition fees, advice that FEE-HELP is being used) has not been arranged. These fees and charges include any outstanding Late/Extra-Late Registration and/or Withdrawal Fees.

Students are advised that NO payment contracts will be established i.e., all fees must be either paid 'up-front' or dealt with via FEE-HELP. Moreover, it is the student's responsibility to advise the National Administrator (ph. 1800 672 692 – email: info@acom.edu.au) of any change in payment arrangements.

In addition to the above, **no time extensions** will be given to students to complete work if a student receives their Subject Package late due to late payment of fees.

Please refer to the Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook for more Financial Regulations

Section 4: Academic Regulations

Students are advised that a number of new Policies and Procedures have been introduced by ACOM from the 2009 Academic Year and beyond. Students are advised to **read this Section (i.e., Section 4) of the Handbook very carefully**. ACOM will not take responsibility for any financial, academic or other penalty incurred by a student as a result of the student not reading or not understanding any part of this (or any other) Section of the Handbook. Students who require clarification of any aspect of this Section of the Handbook should contact the ACOM National Administration Office (ph. 1800 672 692 – email: info@acom.edu.au) immediately.

4.1 Subject Registration and Subject Withdrawal Policy

4.1.1 Registration Procedures and Penalties

The following procedures apply to all subject registrations.

1. A **Registration Deadline** for each Trimester will be set **four weeks** before the start of the Trimester. However, where possible students should enrol for all trimesters at the start of the year. (See 2.4.2)
2. All students should register in their chosen subjects by this date. Students **must register in writing** (email is acceptable) for each subject they wish to study. A verbal request alone for subject registration is insufficient to affect a subject registration. All registrations must include the following information:
 - i. The trimester of enrolment
 - ii. Subject code and title
 - iii. Either an upfront payment of fees, or request to pay fees through FEE-HELP (see 5 below)
 - iv. Whether the enrolment is with a Facilitation or external (see 12 below)
3. Any subject registration is a commitment to do the course of study as stated. Refunds will not be allowed unless allowed under section 4.1.2
4. A student may change their subject registration details **in writing** before the Registration Deadline without penalty.
5. Students will not receive their student packages unless they have paid course fees or committed to paying through FEE-HELP.
6. Students who do not register by the Registration Deadline may still register in subjects up to (but not including) the first day of the relevant Trimester.
7. Students registering *between* the Registration Deadline and first day of the Trimester (NOT including the first day of the Trimester) will be charged a **Late Registration Fee of \$25.00**.
8. Students who do not register before the first day of the Trimester **MAY** (at the discretion of the relevant Regional Director and with the concurrence of the National Administrator) still be allowed to register in a subject up to (but NOT including) the Census Date for that Trimester.
9. Students registering *between* the start of the Trimester and the Census Date (NOT including the Census Date) will be charged an **Extra-Late Registration Fee of \$50.00**.
10. **No student** will be allowed to register in any subject on or after the Census Date for the relevant Trimester.
11. Late Registrations and Extra-Late Registrations will be identified on the Registration Form.

12. Students must also advise whether their subject registration is external or with a Facilitation. Withdrawing from Facilitations after the registration deadline, but before the census date (the 4th Monday of trimester) attracts a \$50 charge. Facilitation withdrawal after census date attracts a \$100 charge.

New Students

Notwithstanding the provisions above, a new (incoming) student will not be charged a late or extra-late registration fee in their first trimester of study.

4.1.2 Withdrawal Procedures and Penalties

Important Note: **All notifications of withdrawal must be made in writing** (email is acceptable). Verbal notification alone is NOT sufficient to affect a subject or Facilitation withdrawal.

Students may withdraw from subjects under the following conditions:

1. A student may withdraw from a subject before the Registration Deadline for that subject without penalty.
2. Students may withdraw from a subject *between* the Registration Deadline and the Census Date (NOT including the Census Date). NB: *The Census Date is normally the fourth Monday of trimester. Students should consult Section 2.4.2 of this handbook or ring the National Help Desk (1800 672 692) for the exact date.*
3. Students withdrawing from a subject *between* the Registration Deadline and the Census date (NOT including the Census Date) will be charged a **\$150.00 Subject Withdrawal Fee**. NB: *FEE-HELP does not cover the Subject Withdrawal Fee and returning a subject package does not mean that Subject Withdrawal Fee will not be charged.*
4. Students who withdraw ON or AFTER the Census Date will be charged the **full cost of the Subject AND** will receive a **Failure Grade** on their Academic Transcript for the subject. In practice, this Clause means that students will not have ANY subject fees returned to them after the Census Date and will be liable for any outstanding subject fees not paid at the time of the Census Date.
5. Students withdrawing from Facilitations after the registration deadline will be charged a \$50 fee if they change to external enrolment, or \$100 if after census date.

4.1.3 Transferring Subjects

If a student changes their subject registration from one subject to another (i.e., swaps subjects in which they are registered) after the Subject Registration Deadline, they will be liable for *both* the Subject Withdrawal Fee from their "old" subject *and* the relevant Late or Extra-Late Registration Fee for their "new" subject.

4.2 Management of Subjects

4.2.1 Insufficient Facilitation Enrolments

Facilitations may be cancelled if insufficient students enrol for a Facilitation, or if a suitable Facilitator is not available.

4.2.2 Retired Subjects

1. ACOM consistently revises and updates its subjects and courses.
2. As a result of this ongoing revising and updating process, ACOM regularly retires (i.e., discontinues) "old" subjects and courses. In practice, retirement of ACOM subjects and courses means that ACOM subjects are NOT available indefinitely.

3. Students wishing to register in a retired subject (usually due to a previous failure or incompleteness in the subject), will typically not be able to do so. In such cases, students will, alternatively, be able to register, at the full cost of the subject, in: (a) the subject which replaces a retired subject; or (b) the current subject most closely aligned to the retired subject.
4. The provisions of this policy are subject to the provisions of ACOM's Minimum Progression Policy. In practice, this means that students wishing to register in any ACOM subject are subject to the provisions of the Minimum Progression Policy at all times and in all circumstances.

4.3 Assessment (Minimum Standards)

4.3.1 Completion of All Assessment Requirements

1. ACOM Students are required to attempt and submit ALL assigned work in every subject in which they are enrolled. Assigned work includes both assessed work (including, but not limited to, Essays, Examinations, and Field Assignments) and unassessed work (including, but not limited to, Reading Logs, Reflective Journals, and Logs of Field, Formation, and Ministry work).

Important Note: Students not studying Personal Formation (PF) in 2010, but studying at least one other subject during 2010, are still required to submit the Placement and Mentoring Covenant supplied to them in the Student Ministry Supervisor's Handbook for students not enrolled in PF.

2. Student not submitting ALL assigned work for a subject will receive a Fail Grade for the subject, **regardless of whether or not their cumulative marks on other (submitted) pieces of assigned work for the subject are numerically sufficient to obtain a Pass Grade or above.**
3. In practice, the effect of this Policy is that no student can pass any subject unless they submit all pieces of work assigned in that subject. Any omissions of assigned work will result in a Fail Grade being awarded.

4.3.2 Incomplete or Inadequate Work (Minimum Standards)

1. In certain circumstances, a student submitting all pieces of assigned work, and achieving a total subject mark of greater than 50%, may still be awarded a Fail Grade under the provisions of this Policy if, in the opinion of the respective Content Provider, Facilitator, Marker, Formation Director or other designated ACOM Official, one or more pieces of submitted work are demonstrably inadequate or incomplete. Such inadequate or incomplete work may include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Essays or other written work containing 60% or less of the assigned word limit, e.g., a 550 (or less) word assignment submitted in response to an essay topic with a 1,000 word limit.
 - ii. Essays or other written work that clearly do not address the set topic in any substantive, comprehensive, coherent or systematic fashion.
 - iii. Essays or other written work with major sections, sub-topics, or other required material missing.
 - iv. Essays or other written work without a bibliography, or with only a minimal bibliography, where a bibliography was a required part of the assignment.
 - v. Compilations or portfolios of Field, Formation or Ministry work with one or more major elements missing.
 - vi. Absence of any administrative material or documentation (e.g., assignment title pages, reading logs, Facilitation attendance sheets) that would allow the Content Provider, Facilitator, Marker or other Official to determine that the student has met the set requirements of the subject.
 - vii. Failing to meet the Minimum Standards for Higher Education Essays and Other Written Assignments (as specified in section 4.4 of this handbook).

Usually inadequate or incomplete pieces of work will be assigned a mark of less than 35% of the available marks.

In practice, this Policy specifies that not only must students submit all work, but that all submitted work must also be of a certain minimum standard. Students may not pass a subject without reasonable attempts at all pieces of assessment AND any other required work being demonstrated by designated minimum standards being met.

4.3.3 Resubmission of Missing, Incomplete, or Inadequate Work

1. In the case of a student not submitting work, or submitting demonstrably inadequate or incomplete work, students MAY be allowed to submit or resubmit work in order to satisfy the requirements of the subject concerned but:
 - i. only where a request for late submission or resubmission is made *in writing* to the appropriate Regional Director or the National Administrator, and
 - ii. only in exceptional or extreme circumstances.

4.4 Minimum Standards for Higher Education Essays and Other Written Assignments

The following is a guide to the minimum standards expected of ALL higher education written work submitted to ACOM for assessment. Students should be aware that makers **will fail assignments** that do not meet these minimum requirements.

- A. In order to gain a PASS grade or above, written assignments submitted to ACOM for assessment must AT LEAST:
1. **Be presented as formal assignments.**
Rough notes, draft copies and unfinished work are always unacceptable and will result in automatic failure. A cover page is mandatory.
 2. **Be written in formal English.**
Essays MUST use grammatically and syntactically correct sentences, and all conventions of the English language (e.g., correct spelling, correct and consistent use capitals, full stops, commas, inverted commas, question marks, quotation marks, etc.) must be followed consistently. Isolated errors will not usually result in failure. Consistent errors will result in failure.
 3. **Be arranged in coherent paragraphs.**
Essays must not, for example, be arranged in one block or in single sentences. Bullet points are unacceptable in any assignment, including field assignments. However, proper (i.e., consistent and careful) use of numbering or lettering within, or between paragraphs, is acceptable.
 4. **Begin with an introduction and finish with a conclusion.**
Introductions should describe how the student plans to answer the question. Conclusions should ONLY include issues dealt with in the main body of the essay.
 5. **Be free from slang, colloquialisms and conversational language.**
Isolated examples of slang, colloquialisms or conversational language (see Section C below for examples) will not usually result in failure. Consistent use of slang and colloquialisms will result in failure.
 6. **Avoid use of the first person (e.g., 'I', 'we').**
Academic essays should generally be written in the third-person. Use of the first-person MAY be justified in some circumstance e.g., where the question/topic asks for personal responses to, or reflections on, certain issues or material. **If in doubt, the third-person should always be used.**

7. Address the question or topic.

Assignments not addressing the questions/topic WILL be failed regardless of the overall quality of the essay.

8. Address the question or topic in the manner specified.

Where the assignment question/topic clearly specifies a particular manner of addressing the topic, assignments not addressing the topic in that manner may be failed EVEN IF the overall question/topic is addressed in other ways.

9. Be characterised by tertiary level thought and/or depth of analysis.

Assignments should evidence a level of clarity, logicity, and persuasiveness consistent with tertiary studies. Assignments that could have been written by a reasonably intelligent and reasonably well informed high-school student have not reached the minimum criterion for this standard.

10. Support key statements with evidence.

'Evidence' includes citations of written academic work (e.g., books, journals, reputable and verifiable internet resources) and direct evidence gathered by students (e.g., through an interview or survey), but DOES NOT include anecdotal evidence or 'motherhood' statements such as "everybody knows that...".

11. Interact with a range of sources.

Generally, students are expected to cite at least 8-12 appropriate books or journal articles for a major essay. However, it is not sufficient to simply quote/reference such authors. Students are expected to critique the arguments of various authors, and to assess whether the contribution of other authors are valuable, insightful, applicable, etc. A balanced essay will include views/sources with which the student disagrees.

Important Note: Depending on the nature of the specific question, Field Assignments do not necessarily require formal citations of the work of other writers. However, as with any assignment, if you do use the ideas or words of another person in a Field Assignment, you MUST quote and reference these ideas or words appropriately or be guilty of plagiarism (see below).

12. Be free from plagiarism.

Examples of plagiarism will result in automatic failure. Plagiarism includes any occasion where you use the exact words (or near exact words – just changing a few inconsequential words doesn't count as a 'real' change to a quotation) or ideas of another person without quotation marks (as required) and referencing. (See the relevant sections of the ACOM Undergraduate and Postgraduate Handbooks for ACOM's Plagiarism Policy.)

13. Use an accurate and consistent referencing system.

ANY major referencing system (e.g., American Psychological Association, Turabian, Harvard, etc.) is acceptable but MUST be used accurately and consistently. Isolated errors will not usually result in failure. Consistent errors will result in failure.

B. Global Assignment Standards and Matching Minimum Standards

The following Table shows how the Minimum Standards detailed above match with ACOM's Global Assignment Standards (from the ACOM Undergraduate and Postgraduate Handbooks).

Global Assignment Standards	Matching Minimum Standards
Standard 1: Overall Quality of Written Work	Failure to meet any of the Minimum Standards below may provide cause to FAIL an assignment regardless of the overall quality of the assignment in other areas.
Standard 2: Content (35%)	7. Address the question or topic 8. Address the question or topic in the manner specified 9. Be characterised by tertiary level thought and/or depth of analysis
Standard 3: Organisation and Clarity (30%)	3. Be arranged in coherent paragraphs 4. Begin with an introduction and finish with a conclusion. 10. Support key statements with evidence
Standard 4: Conventions (Spelling, Grammar, In-text References) (15%)	2. Be written in formal English 5. Be free from slang, colloquialisms and conversational language 6. Avoid the use of the first person 12. Be free from plagiarism
Standard 5: Presentation (10%)	1. Be presented as a formal assignment
Standard 6: Referencing and Sources (10%)	10. Interact with a range of sources 13. Use an accurate referencing system

C. As long as these are used clearly, consistently, appropriately and accurately it is ACCEPTABLE but not mandatory to:

1. Use headings and subheadings.
2. Use numbering and lettering.
3. Use footnotes.
4. Include:
 - (a) a table of contents or other tables,
 - (b) figures,
 - (c) diagrams, and/or
 - (d) appendices.

D. Examples of Slang, Colloquialisms and Conversational Tones to Avoid

1. A very short list of some slang words (and some suggested formal alternatives in brackets) include: "Cool" ("popular"), "crappy" ("poor quality"), "I reckon" ("It is my opinion that..."), "hang around" ("wait"), "boss" ("employer"), etc.
2. "Well, the best way to...."
Using "well" to begin a sentence is colloquial (and redundant). Simply start the sentence with "The....." . Instead of using "best" use, for example, "most appropriate", or "most widely accepted".
3. "The methodology used to reach this conclusion is really bad."
Neither "really" nor "bad" are properly defined. Instead of "really bad" use, for example, "highly inappropriate", or "obviously unjustified".
4. 'You will agree that.....'
Never address the reader directly in an essay, and never speculate about the reader's beliefs or opinion(s). Instead say, for example, "There is strong evidence that...", or "This conclusion seems inevitable".

4.5 Re-enrolment Because of Incompletion

A student will only be allowed to re-register in a subject which they have failed due to Incompletion:

1. once and once only, unless exceptional or extreme circumstances apply;
2. if they make a written request to the Registrar outlining the reasons why they should be allowed to re-register in the subject; and
3. if the Registrar deems the student's written reasons to be adequate for re-registration, and
4. if the subject is still offered in the current curriculum.

Students allowed to register in a subject previously failed due to incompletion must complete all requirements of the subject, but will be allowed to resubmit previously completed work for re-assessment as appropriate. Students pay a reduced fee for re-registration in subjects failed due to incompletion. FEE-HELP is available for re-registration.

Re-enrolment Because of Poor Standard

When a student fails a subject because of poor standard, or failure to meet minimum standards (see Section 4.3), the subject must be re-taken (if at all) in its entirety. The subject can only be re-taken if it is offered in the current curriculum. Students pay a reduced fee when re-registering for a subject which has been failed due to poor standard, or failure to meet minimum standards. FEE-HELP is available for re-enrolment.

Failing a Subject Twice

A student who has failed a subject twice for any reason, is not eligible to enrol in that subject a third time.

4.6 Assignments

4.6.1 Number of Assignments

The number of pieces of assessed work (per 9 credit point subject) will normally be two.

4.6.2 Nominal Demand Hours

Assessment will normally be made on work representing 60 demand hours.

4.6.3 Declaration on Unassessed Work

For Undergraduate students only, a Declaration on Unassessed Work needs to be completed for each subject. An undergraduate student will not pass a subject if a Declaration on Unassessed Work is not submitted (see Section 4.5).

4.6.4 Requirements

The assessment requirements for each subject are set out in the *Introductory Book*. This book is sent to students as part of the subject package before the beginning of the trimester.

4.6.5 Guidelines for Assignments

Clear guidelines for assignment formatting and overall style are provided in the "Style Manual for Writing Essays and Assignments", 2009 edition. ALL students must read this manual, and ensure that assignment submission conforms to these guidelines. This manual, and the related "A Good Guide To Effective Assignment Writing" are available from the National Helpdesk.

4.6.6 Submitting Assignments

This Section covers ACOM Policy regarding **all** assignments submitted in all ACOM subjects.

1. All Assignments MUST be submitted to marker@acom.edu.au at the **ACOM National Administration Office**.
2. All assignment emails MUST include in the "subject line" of your email

- a. the subject code for that assignment email
 - b. Your name
 - c. The type of assignment that it is e.g., field, main, study questions
 - d. E.g., "Joe Bloggs TH189C Field assignment"
3. All assignments must be saved in the same format as the subject line above, i.e., name first, then subject code for the assignment that you are submitting, then assignment type e.g., "Joe Bloggs TH189C Field.doc" or even "Joe Bloggs TH189C Intro to Theology Field ass.doc" if you prefer)
 4. Assignments must not UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES be submitted direct to a:
 - (a) Content Provider, Lecturer, Unit Coordinator, Facilitator, Marker or any other academic staff person;
 - (b) Regional Director, Regional Administrator of any other administrative staff person.
 5. All assignments MUST be submitted with a Cover Sheet. If the following information is not in the cover sheet, the assignment will NOT BE ACCEPTED:
 - i. What percentage of overall marks this assignment represents e.g., 40%, 60%
 - ii. The FULL essay question
 - iii. The essay word limit and the actual number of words
 - iv. The assignment due date
 - v. Unit code and title
 - vi. Trimester and year enrolled
 - vii. Student's name and email address

Do NOT add logos or graphics to a cover sheet or assignment as such additions can often drastically increase the file size making the assignments harder to process.

6. When submitting an assignment by email, students are **strongly advised** to attach an email receipt to their assignment email so that receipt of the assignment can be acknowledged by ACOM. ACOM will NOT be held responsible for any assignment "lost" by email. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all assignments sent by email are received by ACOM.
7. Assignments may NOT be submitted in hard-copy (printed) unless prior application is made to the National Administrator or assessable items are not able to be sent via email. In both cases:
 - (a) ACOM will not be held responsible for any loss or delay of assignments sent by Australia Post or by any other means;
 - (b) printed assignments will ordinarily take longer to process and mark because printed assignments either have to: (i) be converted to electronic form before being sent to markers, or (ii) be sent to, and returned from, markers via ordinary post.
8. Whether submitted by email or in hard-copy, the Assignment Cover Sheet MUST be included in the main body of the assignment. Cover sheets submitted as separate email attachments, or as printed documents unattached to their matching assignments will NOT be accepted.
9. When submitting assignments by email, the assignment (with its attached Cover Sheet) must be attached to the email as a separate document and NOT included in the text of the e-mail.
10. When submitting assignments by email, only ONE attached assignment per email is acceptable. Multiple assignments attached to one email will NOT be accepted even if each individual assignment is in the correct format.
11. When submitting assignments by email, the assignment MUST be in **Word** format NOT as a:
 - (a) Portable Document File (i.e., .pdf);
 - (b) Publisher (i.e., .pub file)

- (c) HTML Document (e.g., a web-page or other web-document); or
 - (d) any other graphic-type image (e.g., JPEG or GIF files).
12. Assignments not submitted in accordance with Points 1 to 10 of this Policy will be deemed to be **Incorrectly Submitted**. An Incorrectly Submitted Assignment will:
- (a) NOT be allocated to a marker for marking, and so
 - (b) will NOT attract ANY marks, and so
 - (c) will be allocated a Fail grade when the marks for the Subject in question are recorded.
13. Notwithstanding Point 11 of this Policy, a student MAY, at the discretion of the National Administrator, be granted ONE warning in any 12 month period for a violation of this Policy without attracting the Penalties outlined in Point 11. No student, however, will receive more than ONE warning in a 12 month period for a violation of this Policy.
14. In practice, the effect of this Policy is that, **after ONE warning, any incorrectly submitted assignment will be allocated a failing grade**, unless the student can demonstrate in writing to the satisfaction of the National Administrator that mitigating circumstances applied such that the student was reasonably unable to submit an assignment (after a warning has been issued) in the correct form.
15. Notwithstanding Points 1-13 above, if a student, having realised that they have Incorrectly Submitted an assignment, then resubmits the assignment in the Correct form (i.e., in accordance with Points 1-10 above), the resubmitted assignment will be processed normally, but will accrue any penalties associated with Late Submission (see ACOM's Late Assignment Policy UG-009) if these penalties apply.
16. The effect of Point 15 of this Policy is to allow students to resubmit Incorrectly Submitted assignments before the due date of the assignment without penalty OR after the due date of the assignment but NOT without penalty.
17. ACOM recommends that Students **not use "Hotmail"** as their email provider for submitting OR receiving assignments as students have "lost" assignments in the past when submitting via Hotmail. Assignments successfully submitted using a Hotmail email account will be accepted. However, ACOM will NOT be responsible for any loss of assignments submitted from, or returned to, a Hotmail address.

NB: ACOM will also not be responsible for any emails sent to any email address that are not seen by the student due to the emails being automatically placed in a student's email account's "Junk" or "Spam" email folder.

Return of Assignments

18. Wherever possible, assignments will be returned to students **within 8 weeks** of the Due Date for the assignment. Students should note that assignment marks will often be adjusted AFTER the student has received notification of their mark (see 4.9.3), and:
- (a) assignments submitted before the Due Date will not necessarily be returned any earlier than 8 weeks after the Due Date; and
 - (b) assignment submitted after the Due Date, with or without an Approved Extension (see Late Assignments Policy), **may take more than 8 weeks** to be returned from the date of late submission depending on marker availability.
Assignments **permitted** to be submitted in hard-copy **may take more than 8 weeks** to be returned (see Point 6 of this Policy).

4.7 Extensions

1. All assignments (including, but not limited to, Essays, Field Assignments, Declarations on Unassessed Work, practical work, etc.) must be received at the National Administration office on or before the date specified.

Assignments without Approved Extension

2. Assignments without an approved extension may be submitted up to 10 working days beyond the due date of the assignment, but will attract an automatic penalty deduction of 1% of the total mark available for the course unit for each working day the assignment is late (i.e. 1 mark per day).
3. Assignments submitted without an approved extension beyond 10 working days after the due date will NOT be accepted and will NOT be marked.
4. An extension of an assignments due date may be granted on the following grounds:
 - a) Medical illness (certified by Medical Certificate)
 - b) Extreme Hardship
 - c) Compassionate grounds
5. In such cases an extension of up to 28 days may be granted without penalty but only if requested prior to the assignment due date. The student should submit an "Application for Extension" including supporting documentation for authorising and signing by the Regional Director prior to the due date. The student will then be informed of the result of the request.
6. In extreme cases, extensions beyond 28 days may be granted. Such extensions must be applied for in writing, including supporting documentation, setting out the extreme circumstances. The Regional Director, and (if necessary) the Academic Dean, will consider such an unusual extension and notify the student of the outcome in writing.
7. If the unit assessment includes an examination and an extension is granted arrangements will be made for an alternative examination to be given to the student within the extension period.
8. Content Providers, Lecturers, Markers, Unit Coordinators, Facilitators or other personnel are NOT empowered to grant or approve extensions.

4.8 Marking

4.8.1 Marking Criteria

The minimum standards outlined in 4.4 will guide the marking of assignments in all subjects. Students are advised to read these standards.

4.8.2 Plagiarism

See Section 5.1 of this Handbook for a definition of Plagiarism. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 5.1 of this Handbook:

1. All assignments involving plagiarism will be failed.
2. No assignment involving plagiarism will be eligible for resubmission (see also section 4.9.1 of this Handbook).
3. If the student involved can provide evidence in writing to the satisfaction of the Registrar that the plagiarism was unintentional, then a Failing mark will be awarded to the assignment in accordance with the overall quality of the assignment – taking into account the seriousness of the plagiarism.
4. If no such evidence is forthcoming, the plagiarism will be deemed to be intentional.
5. In cases of intentional plagiarism the assignment involved will receive a mark of zero.
6. Cases of repeated plagiarism are treated very seriously and may result in the suspension or removal of the student from their course of study.

4.8.3 Scaling of Marks

To ensure inter-subject and inter-institutional equity, a student's final grade for any subject may be scaled (upwards or downwards) by ACOM and/or the SCD. Thus, a student's final grade is NOT necessarily a simple addition of marks gained for each assessment item.

Scaling of grades is based on the moderation of results overseen by the SCD. A student's final grade will appear on their Academic Transcript. Scaling occurs AFTER a marked assignment has been returned to a student. Previously scaling occurred BEFORE students received their initial results so mark adjustments were not noticed by students.

4.8.4 Academic Results

Student academic results will be posted online on the secure eMinerva website.

4.8.5 Procedures for Accessing Results (eMinerva)

To access academic and financial records, please go to: <http://scd.eminervacommunity.com/> To access the eMinerva system, a student requires their email address which they have previously provided to ACOM, plus their eMinerva student number, which is found on your initial ACOM acceptance letter and is available from the National Helpdesk. Once into the system, students are able to confirm their personal details, review their financial accounts and view their academic records. Although ACOM returns all assignments to students, it is on the eMinerva web-site that students view their final official grades.

4.9 Failure, Resubmission and Progression

4.9.1 Failed Assignments

Limitations

1. No student may resubmit ANY assignment that involves Academic Misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, cheating, copying, etc.).
2. Students may only resubmit assignments that have been granted a Fail grade and only then with the concurrence of the Academic Dean.

Procedures

3. Students failing a piece of assigned work or an examination will be notified by e-mail or phone of their Failure.
4. Failing students may be assigned a Resubmission or Re-Sit Date that will normally be *no later than 3 weeks* from the initial notification of Failure.
5. Except in Exceptional or Extreme Circumstances:
 - i. Resubmitted work received after the Resubmission Date will NOT be reassessed.
 - ii. Students missing a re-set examination will NOT be eligible for any further re-set examination in the given subject.In both cases (i) and (ii) the original grade will be allocated to the student.
6. An assignment or exam that was initially awarded a Fail grade will NOT receive more than 64% (i.e., the highest mark in the Pass range) upon resubmission.
7. In cases where the resubmitted work or re-sat examination attracts *less* marks than the original work or examination – this *original grade* will stand i.e., students cannot lose marks through resubmission or re-sitting. However, assignments or examinations that Fail twice will NOT be eligible for ANY further reassessment of any kind.

4.9.2 Failure of a complete subject

If a student completes all the work required for a subject, and yet still fails then they must enrol in the subject Critical Thinking and Writing (if not previously studied) in the next available Trimester.

4.9.3 Appeals

1. In cases where a student feels their mark on a given assignment does not adequately reflect the quality of their work on that assignment, they have two weeks in which to appeal their mark by detailing **in writing** to the ACOM Academic Dean, with appropriate supporting evidence, the reasons why the mark should be reconsidered. Students should note that simply disliking a subject, a lecturer/facilitator, or an assignment topic will NOT be considered adequate grounds for an appeal.
2. An appeal will not be considered if it is received more than two weeks after the marked assignment was returned to the student.
3. The Academic Dean will consider the student's written reasons and make a determination as to the validity of those reasons, consulting with the assignment marker and/or other ACOM staff as appropriate.
4. If the Academic Dean does not uphold the appeal, the student will be informed in writing as to why the appeal was not upheld. In general, the Academic Dean will not grant an appeal where, in the opinion of the Academic Dean, the reasons provided by the student:
 - i. are unrelated to the substance of the assignment and its completion by the student;
 - ii. involve vexatious or otherwise unsubstantiated claims against the integrity of the marker; or
 - iii. involve claims of ignorance on behalf of the student where documentation regarding the structure and substance of the assignment has been clearly provided.
5. The relevant assignment will then be sent to a second marker for marking. The mark received by this second marker will stand (i.e. an appeal can result in a lower mark being granted).
6. The Academic Dean's decision in any matter regarding appeals is final.

4.9.4 Minimum Progression

1. ACOM requires that all classifications of students (undergraduate, postgraduate, full-time, part-time, etc.) maintain a minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 1.0 at all times. In practice, this means that (with some minimal exceptions, see Clause 8 of this policy) students will have to maintain *at least* a "Pass" average across their course of their studies. Thus, any Failing grades will normally need to be matched by a Credit grade (or higher) in order to maintain the overall "Pass" average (or higher).

Calculating Students' CGPAs

2. Cumulative GPA is based on all tertiary level (i.e., undergraduate level or above) subjects attempted whilst studying at ACOM, but does NOT apply to subjects studied at other Institutions for which Previous Credit is granted.
3. For purposes of calculating a student's CGPA, Grades of High Distinction (HD), Distinction (D), Credit (C), Pass (P), or Fail (F) are assigned a specific number of "grade points" i.e., HD = 4, D = 3, C = 2, P = 1 and F = 0.
4. Grade points are allocated on the basis of 9 Credit Point (CP) subjects with *pro rata* adjustments made for subjects of greater or less weighing e.g., a "Credit" earned in an 18 CP subject would attract 4 grade points (i.e., 2 x 2 grade points).
5. The total number of grade points earned is then divided by the *total number of subjects attempted by the student*. The "total number of subjects attempted" includes ALL subjects in which a student has been

effectively enrolled *whether or not* the student completes the required work for a given subject and regardless of the reason for any Failure recorded on a student's academic transcript.

6. Notwithstanding Clause 5 of this policy, subjects from which a student withdraws *before* the appropriate Census Date, or subjects assigned a *temporary* "Incomplete" grade will *not* be counted for the purposes of calculating a student's CGPA.
7. The result of the procedure above returns a student's CGPA. This CGPA is calculated at the end of each Trimester by the Registrar.

Good Academic Standing

8. Students with CGPA of 1.0 or greater are considered to be of Good Academic Standing. Students with a CGPA of less than 1.0 *may* also be considered to be of good academic standing in cases where a SINGLE Failing grade has resulted in a CGPA of less than one.

Probation, Suspension and Exclusion

9. Students with a CGPA of less than 1.0 (normally, but not necessarily, excluding cases of single Failure) will be:
 - i. notified that they are not currently of good academic standing; and
 - ii. placed on Academic Probation for a period of 12 months, within which time they are required to lift their CGPA to 1.0 or above;
 - iii. *required* to undertake (if not previously undertaken), and successfully complete, AL120C/AL420C Critical Thinking and Writing in their Probation year.
10. If, at the end of the Academic Probation period, a student's CGPA is 1.0 or greater, the student will be declared to be of Good Academic Standing and may resume their studies as normal.
11. If, at the end of the Academic Probation period, a student's CGPA is still less than 1.0 the student will be asked to *in writing* show cause why they should not be placed on Academic Suspension. Academic Suspension will normally last for a minimum period of 12 months. Students on Academic Suspension remain enrolled in their respective course, but are not allowed to register for any subjects, Facilitations, or other academic activities.
12. At the end of an Academic Suspension period, the student will be allowed to resume registering for subjects under a Second Academic Probationary Period of 12 months, during which time they will again be required to lift their CGPA to *at least* 1.0.
13. Students not lifting their CGPA to at least 1.0 at the end of a Second Academic Probationary Period will be asked to *in writing* show cause why they should not be Excluded from Further Studies. Students Excluded from Further Studies will:
 - (a) be disenrolled from the course in which they are currently enrolled, and
 - (b) not be allowed to enroll in any ACOM subject or course for a period of five (5) years.
14. Notwithstanding other provisions of this Policy, students may only be placed on *Academic Probation twice* during any undergraduate or postgraduate degree or diploma course. Students qualifying for Probation on a *third* occasion will be asked to *in writing* show cause why they should not be Excluded from Further Studies under the same terms as expressed in Clause 13 of this Policy.
15. Notwithstanding other provisions of this Policy, students may only serve *one Academic Suspension* during any undergraduate or postgraduate degree or diploma course. Students qualifying for a second Academic Suspension will be asked to show cause why they should not be Excluded from Further Studies under the same terms and conditions as stated in Clause 13 of this Policy.

The provisions of ACOM's Minimum Progression Policy are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5
Summary of Provisions of ACOM's Minimum Progression Policy

CGPA	Status
CGPA > 1.0	Good Academic Standing
CGPA < 1.0	Academic Probation (12 Months) Successfully Complete Tertiary Bridging Subject
CGPA < 1.0 at end of Academic Probation	Academic Suspension followed by a second Academic Probation
CGPA < 1.0 at end of a Second Probation (whether the Second Probation immediately follows Academic Suspension or is incurred on a separate occasion)	Student is required to show cause why they should not be Excluded from Further Studies
Students incurs a third Academic Probation	Student is required to show cause why they should not be Excluded from Further Studies

4.10 Graduation

1. In order to graduate, students must fulfil ALL subject requirements (including any unassessed work or related documentation) by the end of the trimester BEFORE their intended graduation.
2. In practice, this policy means that students may NOT, under any circumstances, register in any ACOM subject in the trimester in which they intend to graduate if this subject contributes to the fulfilment of any unmet subject requirements.
3. This policy also means that students who have not fulfilled ALL subject requirements by the end all of the trimester before their intended graduation will NOT be allowed to graduate under ANY circumstances.
4. Clause 3 of this policy also means that assignment extensions beyond the end of the trimester before intended graduation will not be granted.

4.11 Feedback on Draft Assignments

1. Students are welcome to submit drafts of assignments to their Unit Coordinators.
2. Markers are only expected to provide basic comment on content related issues i.e., how well an assignment answers the essay question. Markers are not expected to provide comment on stylistic issues such as punctuation, grammar and individual referencing issues.
3. Markers will generally take two weeks to respond to draft submissions. Students should take this response time into account when submitting their draft responses.

4.12 Saving Clause

Notwithstanding the provisions of any Policy in this Handbook, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies (DUGS) may vary or waive the provisions of any Policy if, and with the concurrence of the Director of Academic Development (DAD), it is the opinion of the DUGS that the normal exercise of these Policies would cause unconscionable difficulties for the student(s) concerned, or damage the reputation and/or operational integrity of ACOM.

Please refer to the Undergraduate or Postgraduate Handbook for more Academic Regulations

Section 5: Student Regulations

5.1 Academic Misconduct

The following Policy and Procedures apply to student misconduct within ACOM.

1. What is academic misconduct?

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

i. **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own. It includes the unacknowledged word-for-word use or paraphrasing of another person's work, and the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas.

ii. **Cheating**

Cheating is the provision or receipt of information during tests or examinations; or providing or using unauthorised assistance at the computer terminal, or on fieldwork. Cheating would not usually include consultation with others or discussion amongst students about the preparation of assignments unless that was specifically forbidden. It includes unauthorised collusion.

iii. **Fraud**

Academic fraud is the falsification and fabrication of, or dishonesty in, reporting research results.

iv. **Improper Behaviour**

Improper behaviour is that which interferes with students or staff in the pursuit of their academic endeavours. It includes disruptive behaviour in class or institutional facilities such as libraries.

v. **Misrepresentation**

Misrepresentation is the giving of false or misleading information in academic matters. It includes falsely claiming credit for past study; falsely stating that thesis material has not been used in another thesis.

vi. **Unethical Behaviour**

Unethical behaviour is that which breaches accepted ethical standards. It includes failing to observe the terms of an ethical approval to conduct research, misuse of confidential information obtained in field education.

2. Who may make a complaint?

Any person who has direct knowledge of academic misconduct may make a complaint.

3. Against whom may a complaint be made?

- i. A complaint of academic misconduct may be made under these procedures against any person enrolled as an undergraduate student of ACOM whether proceeding to an award or not.
- ii. Complaints against persons formerly enrolled as undergraduate or postgraduate students or now enrolled as postgraduate students of the SCD, or who have received an award from the SCD, will be made under the provisions of the SCD Misconduct Procedures.

4. To whom shall a complaint be made?

A person who wishes to make a complaint of academic misconduct shall make it in writing to the Registrar.

5. What must a complaint contain?

A complaint must identify the person against whom it is made. It must identify the nature of the misconduct complained of. It must provide appropriate evidence of the alleged misconduct, including the names of witnesses where appropriate.

6. What happens when a complaint is received?

- i. On receiving a complaint, the Registrar shall acknowledge its receipt within seven days. The Registrar shall then examine the complaint to establish whether a *prima facie* case is established. In making such a determination, the Registrar shall consider whether the behaviour complained about would, if established, constitute academic misconduct under this policy. The Registrar shall consider whether the evidence provided is sufficient to support the allegation.
- ii. If the Registrar decides that a *prima facie* case has not been established, the Registrar shall inform the complainant that no further action is proposed.
- iii. If the Registrar decides that a *prima facie* case has been established, the Registrar shall refer the complaint to an Academic Misconduct Committee. The Registrar shall notify the person complained against, giving details of the alleged misconduct and that the matter has been referred to an Academic Misconduct Committee.
- iv. If the Registrar is the complainant, or otherwise involved with the complaint, the procedures will be carried out by the College Principal.

7. What is an Academic Misconduct Committee?

The Academic Committee shall, as required, appoint an Academic Misconduct Committee of three persons who will determine a complaint referred to it by the Registrar. A person who teaches or supervises the person complained of shall not be a member of that Academic Misconduct Committee. Members of the faculty of other Member Institutes of the SCD may be appointed to an Academic Misconduct Committee.

8. What is the procedure of an Academic Misconduct Committee?

An Academic Misconduct Committee may inform itself about the alleged misconduct in any way it thinks fit. It must give the person against whom the misconduct is alleged sufficient notice of its deliberations and allow the person to present a defence in writing and in person. The person may be accompanied to any hearing by a friend.

7. How will an Academic Misconduct Committee arrive at its findings?

Having considered the evidence before it, an Academic Misconduct Committee shall make its findings on the balance of probabilities. Where the complaint is a grave one, or likely to be attended by serious consequences if established, the decision-maker should be more clearly convinced of the misconduct than would be required in less serious kinds of cases.

8. What findings may an Academic Misconduct Committee make?

An Academic Misconduct Committee may:

- i. Dismiss a complaint.
- ii. Find a complaint established and impose no penalty.
- iii. Find a complaint established and admonish the person.
- iv. Find a complaint established and order that the person forfeit marks in an assignment, fail a course unit or all the units in which the person is enrolled in a semester.
- v. Find a complaint established and suspend the person from enrolling for a course unit or units, or an award in ACOM for a period not exceeding four trimesters.
- vi. Find a complaint established and recommend to the Academic Board of the SCD that the person be suspended from enrolling in the SCD for a period not exceeding four semesters.
- vii. Find a complaint established and recommend to the Academic Board of the SCD that the person be excluded from enrolment in the SCD for a period not less than two years.
- viii. Find a complaint established and impose a combination of the above penalties.

A person who is suspended may not enrol in anything from which the person is suspended while the suspension is in force without the express permission of the ACOM Board. At the expiration of the suspension, the person may re-enrol without further permission. A person who is suspended may not enrol in another Member Institute of the SCD while the suspension is in force without the express permission of the Academic Board of the SCD.

9. A person who is excluded may not enrol in the SCD while the exclusion is in force. At the expiration of the period of exclusion, the person may not re-enrol without the express permission of the Academic Board.

10. An Academic Misconduct Committee shall report its findings to the person complained of and to the Registrar. The Registrar will be responsible for implementing the decision of the Committee. The Registrar will report the outcome of any academic misconduct complaint to the ACOM Board and to the Academic Board of the SCD.

11. How can a person appeal?

A person against whom a complaint of misconduct has been established under these procedures may appeal to the Academic Board of the SCD within 30 days of receiving the decision of an Academic Misconduct Committee. If a person lodges an appeal, the implementation of any penalty will be stopped until the appeal is resolved. The appeal will be heard under the provisions of the SCD Academic Misconduct Procedures.

12. How are records to be kept?

Records of the making and resolution of a complaint about academic misconduct will be kept in a separate file for each complaint. When a complaint is established, a note recording the nature of the complaint and any penalty imposed will be placed on the person's file. A person's academic transcript will not contain any reference to academic misconduct as the reason for a course result or other record.

13. When can established complaints be made public?

In general, information about established complaints will be kept confidential. The Registrar is authorised to inform other educational institutions of an established complaint of academic misconduct if the Registrar considers it appropriate to do so.

5.2 Student Grievances

As a Member Institute of the SCD, ACOM follows the SCD's Grievance Policy and Procedures as set out in Appendix 3. Students wishing to lodge a Grievance should consult the Policy and Procedures in Appendix 3.

Appendix 1: FEE-HELP Procedures

FEE-HELP procedures will be conducted in compliance with the **Higher Education Support Act 2003 and its Guidelines**. The Sydney College of Divinity is responsible for the administration of FEE-HELP on behalf of its Member Institutes (including ACOM). To meet the Government administration requirements for FEE-HELP, the SCD and ACOM operate with the following policies and procedures:

Determining Eligibility

It shall be the responsibility of the appropriate committee of the College to determine the academic eligibility of a student to be admitted to a course within the College; and to determine the eligibility of a student so admitted to access FEE-HELP. The appropriate committee of the College is understood to mean the Student Administration Committee for undergraduate students.

Re-Crediting FEE-HELP Balance

Re-crediting of a FEE-HELP balance shall conform to the requirements of the Act and its guidelines. At enrolment, students shall be given a copy of the procedures for the re-crediting of a FEE-HELP balance. Under the Act, the SCD will re-credit a student's FEE-HELP balance equal to the amount of FEE-HELP assistance that the student received for the unit of study if the student:

1. was enrolled in a unit after the census date;
2. subsequently did not complete the requirements of the unit; and
3. satisfies the special circumstances requirement, which is that the circumstances:
 - (i) are beyond the student's control; and
 - (ii) did not make their full impact on the student until on or after the census date for the unit of study in question; and
 - (iii) make it impractical for the student to complete the requirements for the unit in the period during which the person undertook, or was to undertake, the unit.

The procedure for re-crediting of a FEE-HELP balance is as follows:

1. when a student withdraws from a unit, the SCD shall give notice to the student in writing stating that the date at which the withdrawal has taken effect; and
2. the student shall make application in writing to the Director of Administration of the SCD within 12 months from the day specified in the notice as the day of withdrawal. The SCD may waive the 12 months' period on the grounds that it would not be, or was not, possible for the application to be made before the end of the 12 months' period.
3. the Director of Administration of the SCD will refer the application to the appropriate Committee of the SCD which shall make the determination on re-crediting as soon as practicable;
4. the Director of Administration of the SCD shall advise the student of the outcome of the application; stating the reasons for the decision.

It shall be the responsibility of the committees referred to above to attend to any re-crediting of a student's FEE-HELP balance. In re-crediting a student's FEE-HELP balance, due consideration must be given to the special circumstances provision.

Review of a Decision

The student may request a review of a decision made in relation to FEE-HELP balance.

The request is to be submitted to the Registrar of the College and:

1. must be made in writing;
2. must be lodged within 28 days of receiving notice of the original decision, unless the reviewer allows a longer period; and
3. must specify the reasons for making the request.

The review shall be carried out under the following conditions:

The College shall acknowledge receipt of an application for review of the refusal to re-credit the FEE-HELP balance in writing and inform the applicant that:

1. if the reviewer has not advised the applicant of a decision within 45 days of having received the application for review, the reviewer is taken to have confirmed the original decision;
2. the applicant has the right to apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for a review of the decision; and provide the contact details of the closest Administrative Appeals Tribunal Registry, and the approximate costs of lodging an appeal with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.
3. The Review Officer will give written notice of the decision, setting out the reasons for the decision.
4. The applicant shall be advised in the notice of the right to apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for a review of the decision; and be provided with the contact details of the closest Administrative Appeals Tribunal Registry, and the approximate costs of lodging an appeal with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Appendix 2: Course Assurance Statement

The SCD advises that, in the event that it is unable to continue to provide any of the courses listed in the schedule below, the Australian College of Theology (ACT) will allow students enrolled in that course of study to enrol in the similar course or courses of study listed in the schedule below and to receive full credit for the units of study successfully completed as part of the course of study with the SCD.

In such an instance, the Australian College of Theology will:

1. provide incoming students with a place in the designated Alternative Course;
2. provide incoming students with "block credit" for all completed units;
3. recognise all the grades awarded at the previous institution;
4. upon completion of the outstanding units of study, allow all students to receive the award of the programme into which they have been transferred (even in cases where the students have undertaken less than 50% of their degree at the Australian College of Theology).

At the same time, the SCD will:

1. refund to students the money that they have paid for incomplete units in which they are currently enrolled or transfer (with the student's agreement) such fees to the Australian College of Theology;
2. convert any "incomplete" grades that are the result of student error to "fail";
3. refund students the tuition fees in any unit of study in which their grade remains "incomplete" where that "incomplete" grade is the result of institutional error.

Students are further advised that, in the event that the course assurance arrangements are required:

1. the Australian College of Theology might have a different student contribution or tuition fee for the course of study, so that the amount required to be paid might vary;
2. there is no obligation to enrol in the course in which an offer of enrolment has been made under the course assurance arrangement, but, if the offer is taken up with the Australian College of Theology, then there will be a full credit transfer for the units of study already completed. Should a student decide to enrol with a different provider other than the Australian College of Theology, there would be no obligation on that provider to offer full credit transfer for the units of study completed.

Appendix 3: Grievance Policy and Procedures

STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

- 1 Purpose and Scope
- 2 Responsibilities
- 3 Grievance Procedure
 - 3.1 Before an Issue Becomes a Formal Grievance
 - 3.2 What is a Grievance?
 - 3.3 Principles in Grievance Handling
 - 3.4 The Process
 - 3.4.1 Lodgement of Grievance at the Member Institution
 - 3.4.2 Lodgement of Grievance at Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity
 - 3.5 Guidelines for Handling a Grievance
 - 3.6 Special Cases within the Grievance Regulations
 - 3.6.1 Grievances regarding assessment
 - 3.6.2 Postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding supervision, student progress and candidature
 - 3.6.3 Postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding admission to candidature, extension of candidature, the outcome of thesis examinations

CONTACTS

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS RAISING A GRIEVANCE

GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION FLOWCHARTS

- Student Grievance Resolution Flowchart for a Grievance Lodged at Member Institution
- Student Grievance Resolution Flowchart for a Grievance Lodged at the Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity

STUDENT GRIEVANCE NOTIFICATION FORM

STUDENT GRIEVANCE RESPONSE FORM

STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES OF THE SYDNEY COLLEGE OF DIVINITY

1 Purpose and Scope

The Sydney College of Divinity is committed to living out its vision and values in establishing and maintaining a harmonious and supportive environment conducive to study and personal development. The Sydney College of Divinity has a responsibility under legislation to ensure students are not subjected to discrimination, harassment, vilification or victimisation. We recognise that students may sometimes feel they have experienced disadvantage or distress, and will ensure that grievances are responded to promptly, with minimum stress and maximum protection for all concerned.

This grievance policy and set of procedures apply to all currently enrolled students or persons seeking to enrol in Sydney College of Divinity approved courses of study at Sydney College of Divinity Member Institutions, regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the student's place of residence or the mode in which they study. It provides a mechanism for addressing grievances arising out of any kind of situation or process affecting the student, both academic and non-academic. Fairness demands that these and other concerns be responded to promptly and handled in a consistent and transparent manner. Note that some grievances require modifications to the general grievance process in that they involve decisions of Committees of the Academic Board. These are:

- grievances regarding assessment;
- postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding supervision, student progress and candidature; and
- postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding admission to candidature, extension of candidature, the outcome of thesis examinations

The modifications to the general process are set out below.

This policy details the way in which student grievances, academic and non-academic, are processed. The *Guidelines for Students Raising a Grievance* is a shorter text aimed at giving students an overview of the information needed to lodge a grievance. The 'Student Grievance Policy and Procedures of the Sydney College of Divinity' document is communicated to all students, and to both academic and support staff. Besides this *Handbook*, it is also to be found

- on the Sydney College of Divinity website www.scd.edu.au;
- on each Member Institution website;
- in each Member Institution *Handbook*.

Staff training in the procedures takes place in the Member Institutions at the induction of new staff, while there is an annual review of procedures at a staff meeting. This training is overseen by the Principal of the Member Institution.

These procedures do not replace any other responsibilities which may arise under other Higher Education Provider Policies or under statute law.

2 Responsibilities

The Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity

Staff at the level of Director and above of the Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity

The External Grievance Officer

Staff of the Member Institutions of Sydney College of Divinity's Member Institutions including:

- The Principal
- Senior Staff
- Department Heads
- Registrar
- Dean of Students
- Academic Dean
- Students

3 Grievance Procedure

3.1 Before an Issue Becomes a Formal Grievance

We encourage students, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties directly with the person(s) concerned. Within each Member Institution the Dean of Students and the Student Counsellors are available to assist students at this level.

3.2 What is a Grievance?

A grievance is a statement of concern reported to a person in authority at Sydney College of Divinity that requires action or response from the Sydney College of Divinity. A grievance can be about any kind of situation or process affecting the student, academic and non-academic, and can be against a person or people at the SCD and its Member Institutions.

A grievance is not part of the regular student feedback the Sydney College of Divinity encourages in its continuing commitment to quality improvement, but rather a formal complaint requesting action or response. Generally the Sydney College of Divinity will not act on anonymous complaints. However, staff must refer all complaints, anonymous or otherwise, about abuse of children or young people to the Dean.

3.3 Principles in Grievance Handling

Staff handling grievances should do everything in their power to ensure the following principles are upheld:

Confidentiality – All parties have an obligation to maintain confidentiality of both process and records. Generally fairness requires that the respondent knows who has lodged the grievance.

Impartiality/Procedural Fairness – Grievance handlers must implement the policies and procedures of the Sydney College of Divinity, and employ principles of openness, honesty and fair dealing throughout their communications, investigations, reporting and record keeping. Both the student complainant and the respondent (person against whom the grievance is made) must receive appropriate information, support and assistance in resolving the grievance.

Freedom from Unfair Repercussions or Victimisation – Fear of victimisation prevents many students from lodging a grievance. The Sydney College of Divinity will take all necessary steps to ensure that victimisation does not occur. Any staff member who victimises a student may be subject to disciplinary action.

Sensitivity – All grievances must be dealt sensitively, and with care for all involved.

Timeliness – Grievances must be dealt with quickly, since undue delay in responding to a grievance may provide ground for further complaint. The aim must be to achieve resolution of a complaint within four weeks of the complaint being lodged. It is important that the complainant and the respondent are kept informed about the progress of the complaint at regular intervals, and advised if resolution of the matter is likely to extend beyond four weeks.

3.4 The Process

Under normal circumstances, it would be expected that a student or person enrolling at a particular Member Institution would lodge their grievance within that Member Institution.

For reasons of perceived victimisation or otherwise within that Member Institution, the student may choose to lodge the grievance direct with the Sydney College of Divinity. Accordingly, there are two processes specified in this Policy. The place of lodgement of the grievance will determine which of the two processes will be followed. In either process, the complainant or respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against in any of the three stages of the procedure.

The student remains enrolled in her or his program whilst the grievance process is ongoing.

3.4.1 Lodgement of Grievance at the Member Institution

Students or people seeking to enrol in any accredited course of Sydney College of Divinity have three stages at which a complaint may be addressed. Each stage is free of charge to the complainant..

- Stage 1 Students may approach any member of staff of their Member Institution with a grievance. The staff member approached advises the student regarding:
- the grievance procedure, referring them to the *Guidelines For Students Raising a Grievance*;
 - the person with whom the grievance should be raised;
 - the student's right to be accompanied and assisted by a friend throughout the process;
 - the expected time frame for resolution, normally no more than four weeks.
- Unless the staff member and the student agree that the grievance should be handled by another person, the staff member approached becomes the grievance handler.
- On receiving a grievance, the grievance handler shall:
- advise any respondent(s) of their right to be accompanied and assisted by a third party, if so desired.
 - acknowledge its receipt within seven days;
 - facilitate resolution in a timely manner, which would normally be no more than four weeks;
 - where other parties are involved, monitor the process to ensure a mutually acceptable resolution is reached without undue delay;

- give the student comprehensive written advice about the outcome;
 - complete the *Grievance Response Form* with the student;
 - forward records to the Registrar's Office for confidential storage for at least five years: parties to the complaint will be allowed supervised access to these records.
- Stage 2 If a grievance remains unresolved by the process outlined above, the grievance handler should refer it to the Principal for investigation. The Principal may appoint a Grievance Committee of three members of senior staff of the Member Institution, none of whom has been involved in the handling of the grievance. The Grievance Committee will deal with the complaint within a reasonable time, normally within four weeks of receiving the complaint from the Principal.
- Stage 3 If not satisfied with the decision of the Grievance Committee or the time taken to deal with the grievance, the complainant may request that the matter be referred to the Sydney College of Divinity for external resolution. The Dean of Sydney College of Divinity may appoint a Grievance Committee of three members, none of whom will be from the Member Institution involved and at least one of whom will be external to the Sydney College of Divinity. The complaint will be addressed within four weeks. If not satisfied with the decision of the Grievance Committee or the time taken to deal with the grievance, the complainant may request that the matter be referred beyond the SCD for external resolution. The Dean has appointed an External Grievance Officer, who may co-opt up to two other persons, also external to the College, to deal with the grievance.. The External Grievance Officer will forward any recommendations to the Dean within four weeks. The External Grievance Officer will forward any recommendations to the Dean within four weeks. The Dean will implement the recommendations within four weeks, and report at the next meeting the Council and Academic Board.

3.4.2 Lodgement of Grievance at Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity

- Stage 1 Students may approach staff at the level of Director or above in the Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity with a grievance. That staff member becomes the grievance handler, and advises the student regarding:
- the grievance procedure, referring them to the *Guidelines For Students Raising a Grievance*;
 - the person with whom the grievance should be raised;
 - the student's and respondent's right to each be accompanied and assisted by a friend throughout the process if desired;
 - the expected time frame for resolution, normally no more than four weeks.
- On receiving a grievance, the grievance handler shall:
- acknowledge its receipt within seven days;
 - facilitate resolution in a timely manner, which would normally be no more than four weeks;
 - where other parties are involved, monitor the process to ensure a mutually acceptable resolution is reached without undue delay;
 - give the student comprehensive written advice about the outcome;
 - complete the *Grievance Response Form* with the student;
 - forward records to the Registrar's Office for confidential storage for at least five years. Parties to the complaint will be allowed supervised access to these records.
- Stage 2 If the grievance remains unresolved by the process outlined above, the grievance handler should refer it to the Dean of Sydney College of Divinity for investigation. The Dean may appoint a Grievance Committee of three senior persons drawn from throughout the Sydney College of Divinity Member Institutions, none of whom will come from the Member Institution involved. The Grievance Committee will deal with the complaint within a reasonable time, normally within four weeks.
- Stage 3 If not satisfied with the decision of the Grievance Committee or the time taken to deal with the grievance, the complainant may request that the matter be referred beyond the SCD for external resolution. The Dean has appointed an External Grievance Officer, who may co-opt up to two other persons, also external to the College, to deal with the grievance.. The External Grievance Officer will forward any recommendations to the Dean within four weeks. The External Grievance Officer will forward any recommendations to the Dean within four weeks. The Dean will implement the recommendations within four weeks, and report at the next meeting the Council and Academic Board.

At all stages of the process, reasons and a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the procedures must be given if so requested by the complainant and/or respondent.

3.5 Guidelines For Handling a Grievance

If staff members are consulted by a student with a grievance they should:

- Ensure that there is a quiet place to meet and have enough time to listen sensitively. They should try to let the student present issues without prejudging or commenting. If the student is distressed, referral to a relevant person such as the Dean of Students or a Student Counsellor may be appropriate.
- Advise the student that he/she may be accompanied and assisted by a friend throughout the grievance process.
- If the grievance does not relate to the grievance handler's area of responsibility, advise the student where the grievance might preferably be directed. If the grievance is lodged at an appropriate level of authority, refer the student to the right person. For example, within the Member Institution, a Dean may refer a grievance in the first instance to the student's Head of Department.
- Ask the student what avenues he/she has already explored towards resolution. Clarify whether the student is requesting any action, and what that action might be. If appropriate, encourage the student to raise the matter directly with the person or persons concerned, providing support and assistance if necessary.
- If resolution cannot be achieved at this level ask the student to submit the grievance in writing, using the *Student Grievance Notification Form* in the *Guidelines for Students Raising a Grievance*.
- If the grievance relates to alleged unlawful behaviour, refer it to the Principal if the grievance has been lodged within the Member Institution, or to the Dean of Sydney College of Divinity if the grievance has been lodged within the Sydney College of Divinity.
- If the grievance handler can facilitate a resolution of the grievance without investigation, undertake the appropriate resolution process. The grievance handler and the student should complete the *Grievance Response Form*. The grievance handler will then forward a record of the proceedings to the Registrar for confidential storage.
- If the student wishes to seek further resolution, the grievance handler should try to facilitate effective communication between all parties involved while undertaking investigation of the allegations.
- If the grievance remains unresolved in a timely manner within a Member Institution, the grievance handler should refer it to the Principal for investigation. The Principal may appoint a Grievance Committee of three senior members of staff of that Member Institution, none of whom have been involved in the handling of the grievance. Tell the student what you are doing and how long you expect a resolution to take.

On the other hand, if the original grievance had been lodged with the Sydney College of Divinity, and it remains unresolved in a timely manner, the grievance handler should refer it to the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity. The Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity may appoint a Grievance Committee consisting of three senior members drawn from throughout the Sydney College of Divinity Member Institutions, none of whom will come from the Member Institution involved.

- Take all possible steps to ensure that no victimisation occurs as a result of the grievance being raised.
- Steps in the investigation process should include:
 - clarifying and documenting details of the complaint;
 - interviewing witnesses and asking for an account of incidents where appropriate;
 - interviewing the respondent, outlining specific allegations made, and giving them the opportunity to make a full response;
 - considering the relevant evidence;
 - making judgments on such issues as probability, reasonableness, appropriateness;
 - making referrals as appropriate;
 - carefully documenting the process and all decisions made or actions taken.
- Possible outcomes might be:
 - the student, having received advice and support, addresses the matter directly with the respondent;
 - the student receives an apology, or the issue that was the basis of the complaint is modified;
 - a mutually acceptable resolution is reached through mediation, whether internally within the Member Institution or within Sydney College of Divinity.
- Be sure to monitor the outcome and give the student comprehensive written advice. It is not always possible to achieve a satisfactory outcome from the student's perspective, but the response should make it clear that all aspects of the complaint have been investigated and responded to.
- Inform the student of avenues of appeal available to review the grievance handling. This will depend upon where the initial grievance was lodged.

If the initial grievance was lodged with the Member Institution, advise the student as follows:

1. For general grievances relating to the Member Institution's practices:

INTERNAL

- Grievance Committee appointed by Principal

EXTERNAL

- Grievance Committee appointed by the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity
- The External Grievance Officer, external to the SCD and Member Institutions, appointed by the Dean

2. For grievances related to unlawful behaviour:

EXTERNAL

- Principal to refer to appropriate organisation for advice and action

3. For grievances related to the abuse of children or young people:

EXTERNAL

- Principal to refer to appropriate organisation for advice and action.

Forward full documentation to the Registrar for confidential storage for a minimum of five years, during which time parties to the complaint have appropriate access to these records.

If the initial grievance was lodged with the Sydney College of Divinity, advise the student as follows:

1. For general grievances relating to the a Member Institution's or Sydney College of Divinity's practices;

INTERNAL

Grievance Committee appointed by the Dean

EXTERNAL

The External Grievance Officer, external to SCD and Member Institutions, appointed by the Dean

2. For grievances related to unlawful behaviour

EXTERNAL

Dean to refer to Principal of Member Institution involved

3. For grievances related to the abuse of children or young people

EXTERNAL

Dean to refer to Principal of Member Institution involved

Forward full documentation to the Registrar for confidential storage for a minimum of five years, during which time parties to the complaint have appropriate access to these records.

Grievance Handling Checklist

- When talking to the student staff should :
 - Set up a quiet meeting place.
 - Assess the level of stress, and recommend additional support if necessary e.g. Student Counsellor.
 - Explain your role, the Policy and Procedures.
 - Explain the concepts of natural justice and confidentiality.
 - Listen as the student explains the issues.
 - Ask for supporting evidence.
 - Ask what the student thinks will fix the problem.
 - Give the student advice about the range of options that might be available, e.g. the student handles it, you handle it, you refer it on.
 - Explain what will happen next. If you are not sure, make another appointment to see the student.
 - Tell the student who you need to talk to.
 - Remind the student about the need for confidentiality, and that he/she should not talk to others while you are looking into the matter.
 - Take notes about the important details of the meeting.

- Check that you are the appropriate person to deal with the matter. Discuss with your Principal, Registrar or Dean, as appropriate if in doubt. If you are not the right person, refer the student to the appropriate person as soon as possible.
- When talking to the Respondent staff should:
 - Prepare for this interview.
 - Explain the purpose of the meeting and how the grievance procedure works.
 - Tell the respondent the details of the grievance, and explain why his/her actions may be seen as inappropriate.
 - Reassure the respondent that you will act impartially, that you have not prejudged, and that you are looking for a resolution.
 - Listen to the respondent's side of the story, and check you have understood.
 - Ask what the respondent thinks will fix the problem.
 - Remind the respondent about the need for confidentiality, and that he/she must not victimise or hassle the complainant or others involved.
 - Provide information on support available.
 - Explain what you will do next and when you will next contact the respondent.
 - Note down the important details of the meeting.
- Gather any additional information, and seek advice you need.
- Decide how the complaint could be resolved, e.g. conciliation, management decision, referral.
- Inform the complainant and respondent separately giving clear reasons for your decision and discussing your expectations about standards of professional behaviour now required.
- Inform the complainant and respondent of the avenues of appeal available.
- Monitor the situation to ensure there is no repeat of the problem.
- Complete the paperwork and forward to the Registrar's office for confidential storage.

The following also form part of the Policy and Procedures:

- Student Grievance Resolution Flowchart for a Grievance Lodged at Member Institution
- Student Grievance Resolution Flowchart for a Grievance Lodged at the Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity
- Student Grievance Notification Form
- Student Grievance Response Form

3.6 Special Cases within the Grievance Regulations

Some grievances require modifications to the general grievance process in that they involve decisions of Committees of the Academic Board. These are:

- grievances regarding assessment;
- postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding supervision, student progress and candidature; and
- postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding admission to candidature, extension of candidature, the outcome of thesis examinations

The modifications to the general process are set out below.

If a complainant is not satisfied with the final decision under these special cases or the time taken to deal with the grievance, the complainant may request that the matter be referred beyond the SCD for external resolution. The Dean has appointed an External Grievance Officer, who may co-opt up to two other persons, also external to the College, to deal with the grievance. The External Grievance Officer will forward any recommendations to the Dean within four weeks. The Dean will implement upon the recommendations within four weeks, and report at the next meeting the Council and Academic Board.

3.6.1 Grievances regarding assessment

In the first instance a student may appeal to the lecturer concerned against the result given in any item of assessment when:

- (a) the student believes that some error in grading has been made;
- (b) there are concerns about the grade awarded.

After this informal dialogue, if the student still believes there are grounds for appeal, the student may formally appeal to the board of studies of his/her Member Institution.

Where a student believes that the review procedures in the Member Institute have not been followed with regard to an appeal against a failed final grade, the student may appeal to the Academic Board of the College. This is the only ground on which an appeal can be made to the Academic Board.

The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity within ten working days of receipt of the determinative outcome of the appeal to the Member Institution.

The student must provide the Dean with documented evidence that the regulations on Review and Appeals have not been complied with by the Member Institution.

The student remains enrolled whilst the grievance process is ongoing.

3.6.2 Postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding supervision, student progress and candidature

This set of regulations applies to matters arising during candidature in a research award and prior to the submission of a thesis and may include:

- unsatisfactory supervision;
- disputes relating to student progress;
- academic issues relating to candidature.

The College encourages all parties to the grievance to resolve issues informally and provides a process for informal resolution or pre-grievance procedures. For disputes involving supervision, candidates are expected to make reasonable attempts to resolve the grievance by discussion with the supervisor(s) before entering into formal grievance procedures. If the matter cannot be thus resolved, the candidate should contact the Dean who will attempt to negotiate a resolution with the parties involved.

The formal grievance process shall be as follows:

1. The candidate making the grievance complaint shall file a written Grievance Report with the office of the Dean which shall contain:
 - a. a statement of the alleged grievance;
 - b. an account of the steps taken to resolve the grievance;
 - c. the names and positions of any people previously consulted;
 - d. copies of all documentation related to the grievance.
2. The Dean Shall
 - a. Gather any additional material required including a report from the respondent;
 - b. Make a further attempt to reach a negotiated settlement;
 - c. Refer the grievance to the Grievance Resolution Panel;
2. The Grievance Resolution Panel shall consist of:
 - a. The Dean of the College;
 - b. The chairperson of the Academic Board or nominee;
 - c. A member of the Research Committee;
3. The Grievance Resolution Panel shall meet with all parties under the following rules:
 - a. the panel and all parties shall have received documentation in advance of the meeting;
 - b. the candidate and respondent may be accompanied by an adviser who may offer advice but not act as advocate or spokesperson before the panel;
 - c. the procedures for resolution will be agreed upon by the panel after the panel has established that a grievance exists;
 - d. the panel will provide for both candidate and respondent to address the panel or receive a written statement in lieu of a personal appearance;
 - e. the panel shall determine the action necessary to resolve the grievance;
 - f. all proceedings shall be minuted;
 - g. if a resolution is reached, all parties will sign the agreement;
 - h. all persons directly involved will receive a copy of the agreement;
4. The College shall retain a copy on file.

The student remains enrolled whilst the grievance process is ongoing.

3.6.3 Postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding admission to candidature, extension of candidature

Appeals may be made by postgraduate research candidates against decisions of the Research Committee which fall within the following academic and procedural areas::

- Admission to candidature;
- Extension of candidature;
- Outcome of thesis examinations requiring correction and/or revision but where a final result has not been determined by the Academic Board.

A candidate wishing to lodge an appeal against a decision of the Research Committee should lodge such an appeal through the Dean, within one month of the date of the letter notifying the decision.

The student remains enrolled whilst the grievance process is ongoing.

The appeal will be brought before the Research Committee which may appoint an Appeals Sub-Committee. Appeals regarding the results of these examinations will be considered in the first instance by the Research Committee.

The Academic Board of the College may be asked to review the appeal if an applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal in area of thesis examination.

CONTACTS

Grievance Officer at any of the Member Institutions

For contact details of the Grievance Officer at any of the Member Institutions contact:

Dr Les Gainer
 The SCD Director (Administration)
 Office of the Dean
 Sydney College of Divinity
 Email: lesg@scd.edu.au

<i>Location</i> Suite G5, Focus Building 64 Talavera Rd Macquarie Park NSW 2113	<i>Postal address</i> PO Box 1882 Macquarie Centre NSW 2113	Phone 02 9889 1969 Fax 02 9889 2281
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Grievance Officers in the Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity

The contact details for the Office of the Dean are:

Interim Dean	Dr Diane Speed dean@scd.edu.au
Director (Administration)	Dr Les Gainer BSc PhD lesg@scd.edu.au
Director (Finance & Compliance)	Mr David Cheetham BA CPA davidc@scd.edu.au
Director (Research)	Assoc. Prof. Gerard Moore BA BTh STL STD gmoore@scd.edu.au

<i>Location</i> Suite G5, Focus Building 64 Talavera Rd Macquarie Park NSW 2113	<i>Postal address</i> PO Box 1882 Macquarie Centre NSW 2113	Phone 02 9889 1969 Fax 02 9889 2281
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EXTERNAL GRIEVANCE OFFICER

The external Grievance Officer is Rev Dr Mark Harding: MHarding@actheology.edu.au

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS RAISING A GRIEVANCE

The following information is a summary of the procedures to be followed should you wish to lodge a grievance, whether academic or non-academic. A copy of the full policy and procedures, entitled 'Student Grievance Policy and Procedures of the Sydney College of Divinity' can be accessed in the following ways:

- The Sydney College of Divinity web site www.scd.edu.au
- The Sydney College of Divinity *Handbook* – available both in hard copy and on the website
- Your Member Institution's website
- Your Member Institution *Handbook*

The Sydney College of Divinity is committed to living out its vision and values in establishing and maintaining a harmonious and supportive environment conducive to study and personal development. The Sydney College of Divinity has a responsibility under legislation to ensure students are not subjected to discrimination, harassment, vilification or victimisation. We recognise that students may sometimes feel they have experienced disadvantage or distress, and will ensure that grievances are responded to promptly, with minimum stress and maximum protection for all concerned

This grievance policy and set of procedures apply to all currently enrolled students or persons seeking to enrol in Sydney College of Divinity approved courses of study at Sydney College of Divinity Member Institutions, regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the student's place of residence or the mode in which they study. It provides a mechanism for addressing grievances arising out of any kind of situation or process affecting the student, both academic and non-academic. Fairness demands that these and other concerns be responded to promptly and handled in a consistent and transparent manner. Note that some grievances require modifications to the general grievance process in that they involve decisions of Committees of the Academic Board. These are:

- grievances regarding assessment;
- postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding supervision, student progress and candidature; and
- postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding admission to candidature, extension of candidature, the outcome of thesis examinations

This document provides guidelines for students or persons seeking to enrol, wishing to raise a grievance.

Each step of the process is free of charge. The student remains enrolled whilst the grievance process is ongoing.

Step 1 Discuss your grievance informally with the person concerned if you can, or alternatively with the person's superior. Staff within the Member Institution or SCD are available to advise or can assist you if needed.

Step 2 If you can't resolve the grievance directly, you would normally proceed to lodge your grievance formally within the Member Institution in which you are enrolled or attempting to enrol, following the procedures that follow in step 3. However, if for any reason you feel uncomfortable about lodging that grievance within the Member Institution, you can opt to lodge the grievance direct with the Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity. In that case, ignore step 3 and proceed to the Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity Option below.

Step 3 At your Member Institution, approach your Department Head or Dean of students. They will ask you to complete the *Student Grievance Notification Form* (available at your Member Institution's Administration Office), and make an appointment to see you. Please note that the Member Institution cannot handle anonymous grievances except those related to child abuse. You can bring a friend to this meeting to assist you. Both you and your support person will be asked not to discuss this matter with anyone else while the grievance handler is looking into it for you.

Resolution may require the appointment of a Grievance Review Committee, and may involve external review. Your grievance handler will keep you informed during the process, and will give you comprehensive written information about the outcome and the reasons for the decisions made and/or actions taken. You have the right to access the full documentation throughout the five years of its confidential storage, after it has been lodged with the Registrar.

OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF THE SYDNEY COLLEGE OF DIVINITY OPTION

Under normal circumstances, it would be expected that a student or person enrolling at a particular Member Institution would lodge their grievance within that Member Institution. However, you may choose to lodge your grievance direct with the SCD. The following would then apply.

Lodge your completed *Grievance Notification Form* at the Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity, and make an appointment to see a grievance handler within the Office of the Dean. Please note that the Sydney College of Divinity cannot handle anonymous grievances except those related to child abuse. You can bring a friend to this meeting to help you. Both you

and your support person will be asked not to discuss the matter with anyone else while the grievance handler is looking into it for you.

Resolution may require the appointment of a Sydney College of Divinity Grievance Committee, and may involve external review.

Your grievance handler will keep you informed during the process, and will give you comprehensive written information about the outcome and the reasons for the decisions made and/or actions taken. You have the right to access the full documentation throughout the five years of its storage, after it has been lodged with the Registrar.

Victimisation – We understand you may be afraid of being victimised as a result of raising a grievance. The Sydney College of Divinity and your Member Institution will not tolerate victimisation, and will take disciplinary action if it is proven to have occurred.

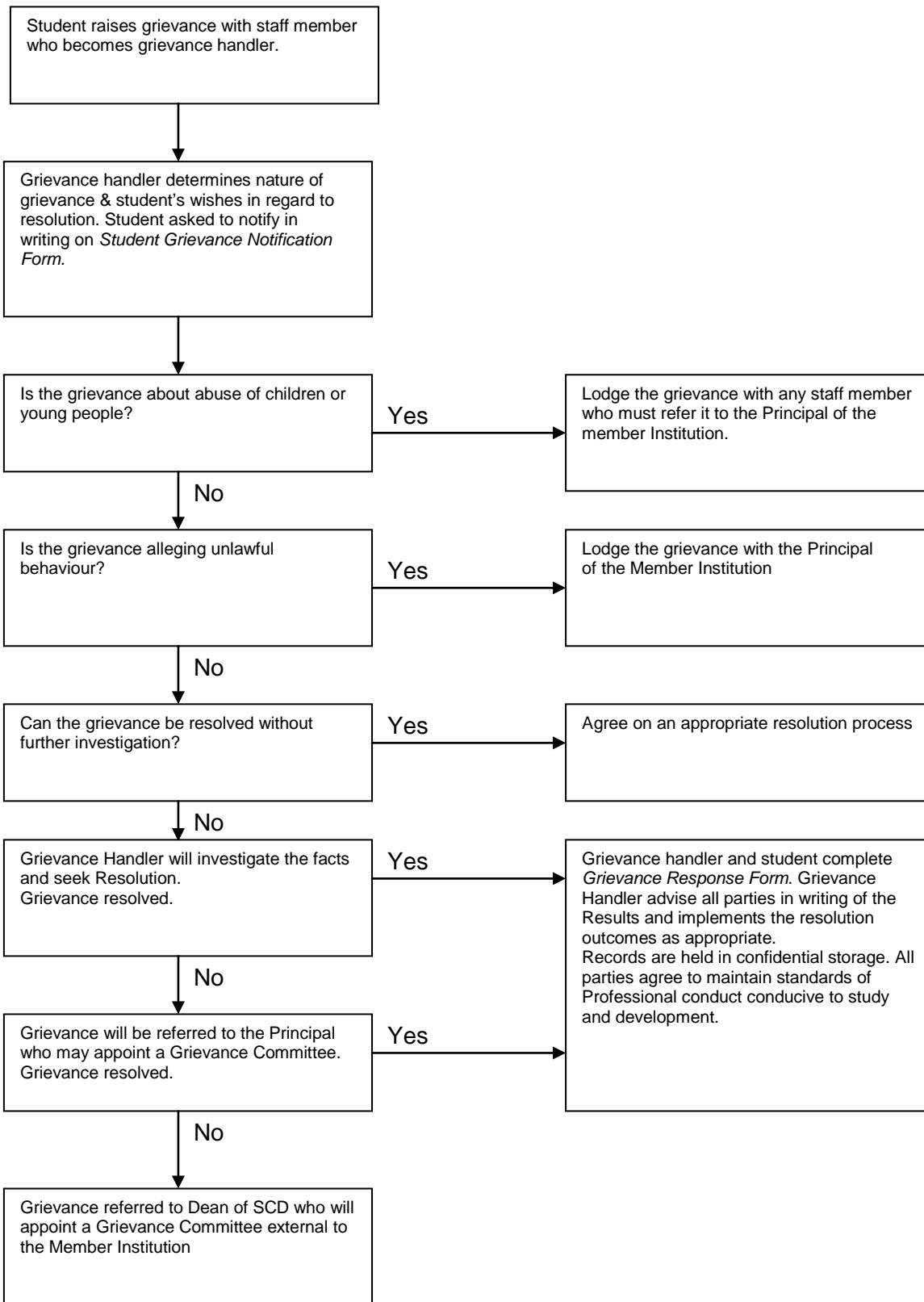
Outcomes – The following might be possible outcomes:

- You gain a better understanding of the situation and so you are no longer concerned.
- You reach a mutually acceptable resolution through mediation.
- You receive an apology and/or the problem is addressed.
- Where the facts surrounding your grievance cannot be substantiated, no action will be taken.

Where the issues are serious, the Member Institution (or the Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity if you lodged your grievance there) will take action under its disciplinary processes or under the relevant legislation. In extreme cases the grievance could result in the dismissal of staff or expulsion of students.

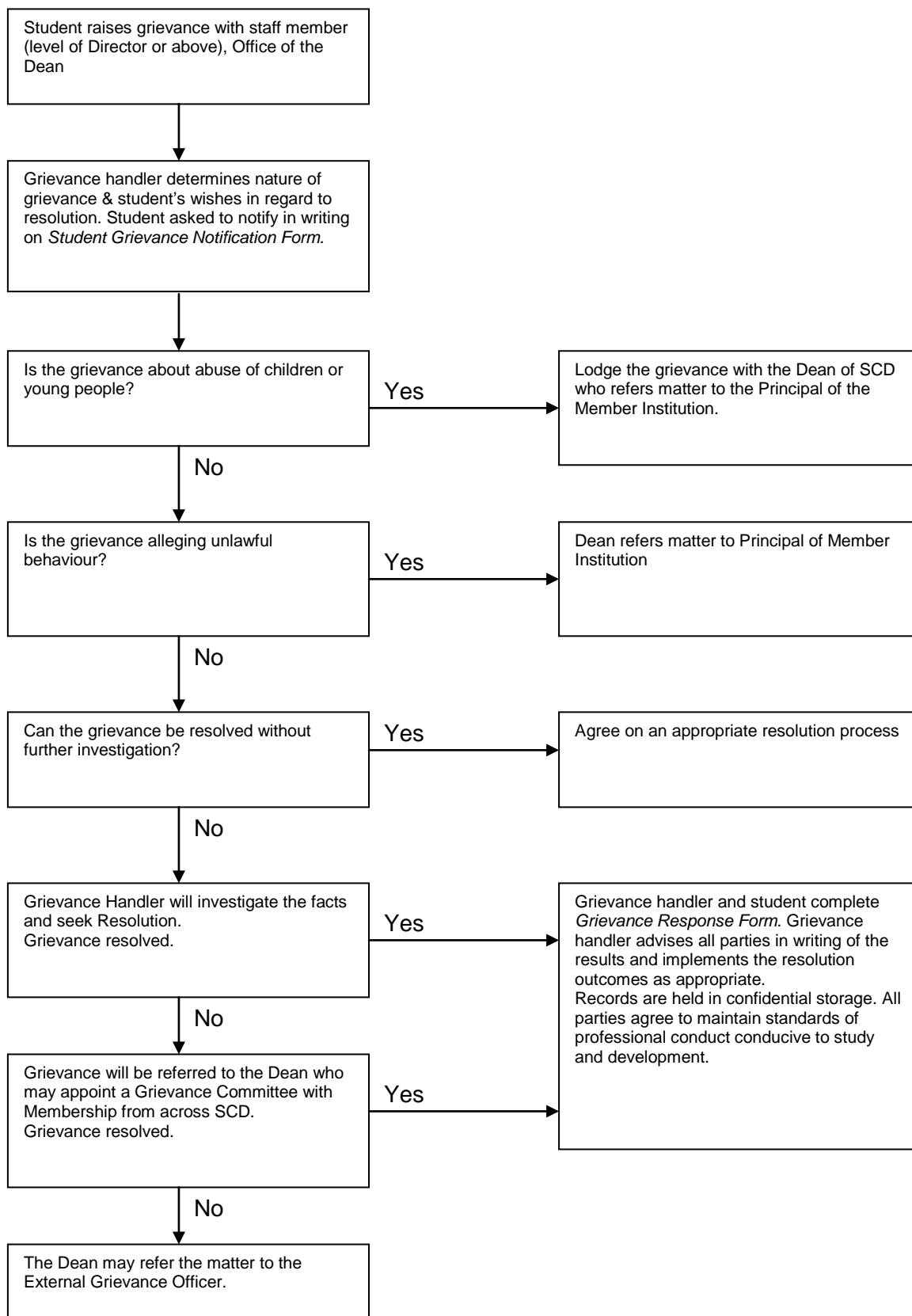
GRIEVANCE LODGED AT MEMBER INSTITUTION

Student Grievance Resolution Flowchart



GRIEVANCE LODGED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN

Student Grievance Resolution Flowchart



STUDENT GRIEVANCE RESPONSE FORM

RESPONSE FROM:

CONTACT DETAILS:

What steps have been taken to resolve the grievance at this stage?

What were the results of the actions?

GRIEVANCE HANDLER: _____

DATE: ___/___/___

3. PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

Has the grievance been resolved?

YES Please complete the section below.

NO Refer matter to the next person as per Grievance Flowchart.

I confirm that the grievance outlined above has been resolved to my satisfaction and that no further action is required.

STUDENT:

(name) _____

DATE: ___/___/___

(signature) _____

GRIEVANCE
HANDLER:

(name) _____

DATE: ___/___/___

(title) _____

(signature) _____

Appendix 4: ACOM's History

The Churches of Christ in NSW Theological College was founded in 1941 at Woolwich, New South Wales. Kenmore Christian College was founded in 1964 in Kenmore, Queensland. These training colleges, based in the Churches of Christ, merged to form The Australian College of Ministries (ACOM) in 1999. Throughout their long histories, both founding colleges changed to meet emerging challenges in ministry training, while always maintaining a deep commitment to their solid biblical and theological foundations. For example, in the 1980s, it became obvious that effectiveness in ministry, mission and church leadership required more than academic competency and Bible knowledge. Hence, greater emphasis was placed on key ministry skills and practical competencies. In the 1990s, character development was added to both colleges' programs as the colleges recognised that many Christian leaders (despite their intelligence, skills and competencies) were nonetheless buckling under the pressure of ministry through the impact ministry was having on them and their families.

Changes also occurred in the circumstances of students, the way churches chose their leaders, and the kind of people seeking to be Christian leaders. In particular, the financial and relational costs of leaving work, church and home to move to college became prohibitive for many. Increasingly, students chose to be trained after they were called to ministry, with on-the-job, just-in-time training, rather than complete four years of full-time training in anticipation of a call to ministry. Similarly, Churches began to increasingly recruit untrained people who they knew well, and wanted them to receive excellent training linked to their ministries. As a result, the two colleges' delivery methods became more flexible and accessible during the 90s.

In the new century, the merged ACOM moved towards becoming a fully accessible distance learning provider, with targeted face-to-face student support available through Formation Groups and Subject Facilitations. There have also been major shifts in the standard, flexibility, specialisation and scope of training sought by students. As a result ACOM has become a highly professional and diversified provider of higher education, and developing a national and international reputation for excellence and innovation.

In response to the changes in ministry environment and a clear vision for investing in all followers of Jesus, as well as leaders, ACOM launched its Vocational Education Arm in 2003. The initial vision was to equip disciples and leaders in local churches and other Christian Organisations using a range of qualifications specifically designed for this purpose. This began ACOM's new journey as a dual sector provider and has led to an incredible expansion in ACOM's student numbers and its scope of influence, as well as a broadening of the original vision into other areas including church planting, training and assessment, youth work, and schools chaplaincy.

ACOM has expanded its operations to all Australian States; created productive partnerships with like-minded training organisations such as Youth Vision, TEAR, Youth Dimension, WEC, Alliance College, Church Army, Careforce, several larger independent congregations and other denominational groupings. ACOM has also recently introduced e-learning as a key component of its training model.

ACOM is owned by the Churches of Christ conferences in New South Wales and Queensland. The Churches of Christ historic commitment to unity amongst all believers has ensured that ACOM is a genuinely cross-denominational gathering of students, staff, Church and para-Church partnerships.

Appendix 5: List of ACOM Staff

National Staff

Principal	Stephen Hinks, B.A., Dip.Ed., B.D.(Hons), Dip.Theol., Th.L., Dip.R.Ed.
Director of Teaching and Learning & International Regional Director	Randy Edwards, B.A., M.Div., M.A.R.
Director of Systems & Higher Education	Prof. Martin Dowson, Dip.Teach., B.A., M.A., Ph.D., B.Th., M.A.P.A., M.A.S.S.O
Director of Strategy & Vocational Education	Jason Potter, Dip.Min., B.Th.
Vocational Education Curriculum Coordinator	Dr John Rietveld, Cert.IV A&WPT, BA, BD, MTh, PhD
Director of Formation	Sue Whiteley, M.A.
Academic Dean, Registrar	Stephen Parker, B. Econ., B.Th., M.A.
Finance Manager	Jonathan Browning
Manager (IT and elearning)	Daniel Bingham B.Comm.
Executive Assistant	Zsa-Zsa Monardo
National Administrator	Merise Newland
Assistant National Administrator	Val Lochel
Assistant to the Academic Dean	Angie Pittar B. Sc.
LocalNet (Vocational Ed) Administrator	Kristyn Gainer
Vocational Education Quality Training Manager	Gaynor Elder

ACOM Qld - Queensland

Regional Director	Stephen Parker, B. Econ., B.Th., M.A.
Regional Administrator	Merise Newland & Val Lochel

ACOM NSW & ACT

Regional Director	Greg Bellingham, B.Th.
Administrative Assistant	Christine Cochrane

ACOM WA

Regional Coordinator	Peter Barney
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ACOM Tas - Tasmania

Regional Director	Sandy Hart, B.Th., B.Ed., M.Div., M.Ed., D.B.S.
Regional Administrator	Danny Misdorn

ACOM Vic - Victoria

Regional Director	Neale Meredith, B.Th., M.A.
Regional Administrator	Nicole Reeves
LocalNet Co-ordinator	Dr John Rietveld, Cert.IV A&WPT, BA, BD, MTh, PhD

ACOM SA – South Australia

Regional Coordinator	Sonya Bertram
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Content Providers/Facilitators/Lecturers

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 Neale Meredith, B.Th., M.A.
 Sue Whiteley, M.A.
 Stephen Parker, B. Econ., B.Th., M.A.

Part Time and Sessional

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Michael Bullard, B.Theol., M.A., Grad.Dip.Min., Cert.IV in A&WT	Tim McMEnamin, TBC
Bronwyn Checkley, B.App.Sc.	Hugh Morrison, BA (Hons), BTh, PhD
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Mark Dainton, M.A. (Th)	Bruce Pederson, B.Ed.
Dr Allan Demond, B.A. (Hons), M.Div.(Hons), M.Th., Ph.D.	Dr Carol Preston, B.A.(Hons), Ph.D.
Jason Elsmore, B.Th	Dr John Rees, B.Th., M.A., M.Th.(Hons), Ph.D.
Dr Keith Farmer, B.Comm., B.A.(Hons), D.Min., M.A.P.S.	Stephen Said, B. Miss.Stud.
Ian Forest Jones, TBC	Dr. Stephen Smith, PhD.
Prof. John Franke, BA, MA, DPhil	David Stanford, B.Sc (Ed), Grad.Dip Pastoral Care
Don George, Dip. Min, Dip. Miss., B.A.	Bret Stephenson, B.A., PhD
Dr. Tim Hanna, Dip.Min., B.Theol., D.Min	Allan Thomas, B.Th., Grad Dip Min, M.Min
Rev. Dr John Hannaford, Dip.Training, B.A.M., Th.L.(Hons), G.C.M., M.Phil., Ph.D.	Rev'd Dr Jennifer Turner, B.A.(Hons), Dip.Teach., B.D.
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