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1 Welcome

Thank you for beginning your study with ACOM. Our hope and prayer is that through this training you will be equipped for a lifetime of service.

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.

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. We 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. Alongside our academic staff we have a range of ministry practitioners, spiritual companions, supervisors and spiritual formation directors who are dedicated to developing your full potential in Christ.

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.

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.

As an ACOM student (whether part-time, full-time, undergraduate or postgraduate) you will find that you will have contact with the National Administration Office in Sydney throughout your studies – especially through enquiries to the National Help Desk (ph. 1800 672 692 OR (02) 8719 2606; email: info@acom.edu.au).

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.

Finally, we wish you well in your course of studies. Your graduation from ACOM will represent a milestone in your becoming a better equipped disciple of Jesus.

The ACOM Team
2 About Australian College of Ministries

ACOM is a learning community focused on transformation. To transform society we first need to be personally transformed. To be a light in the world we first need to be personally set on fire with God’s Spirit.

Now in its 70th year of service, ACOM tailors your course to help you meet your calling in life. Our focus on transformational learning is holistic: we know that it is necessary to develop the head, heart and hands to be an effective light in the world. While we are conservative in our approach to Scripture we are missional in heart.

As our model of training focuses on flexible delivery there is no central campus. Your place of ministry is your campus. As a student you can stay in your home and your local church, and count your hours in ministry toward your course work.

Our college is committed to serving disciples of Jesus who are serious about kingdom living. We are especially equipped to help develop Christian leaders for a rapidly changing world.

Our strengths are:

- **Spiritual formation is integral to all we do.** We don’t merely teach a class on formation, we facilitate face-to-face holistic learning experiences around the country that are deeply forming.

- **Our curriculum is intentionally mission-focused rather than the usual suite of traditional theology subjects.** This approach equips students to be relevant and effective as they represent God’s kingdom in any situation God places them.

- **Our method of delivery is designed to maximise learning-in-action.** While you can study with ACOM from anywhere in the world our approach to distance learning uses cutting edge learning practices that view students as practising professionals.

- **We help students discover how to study the Bible for themselves.** We equip students to learn how to learn and make application to the complex changing world we live in.

- **Our facilitations are led by “pracademics” not ivory tower academics focusing solely on theory.** Rather they are practitioner/academics who are highly qualified but also active in personal discipleship and mission.

- **We personalise the support we provide students.** Each student is appointed their own learning support manager who is available to assist with their enquiries and student needs.

- **Our academic standards are excellent.** We know that surviving and thriving in any ministry requires the mind of a scholar and the heart of a missionary. Our assessments require students to be stretched in heart, mind and soul.

- **We build a genuine community of learners.** Students and faculty connect in multiple ways, regardless of location, to support and stimulate a mutual learning experience.

- **ACOM graduates are job ready.** This is because they have been learning on-the-job. Their place of ministry and mission has been their campus. With our instruction-action-reflection approach what they learn today they use the next day as theory meets practice.

In a rapidly changing world ACOM continues to pursue its vision to resource Christians to be effective kingdom agents wherever they are serving.
# 2.1 ACOM’s History

The Australian College of Ministries (ACOM) is an international provider of life-changing, ministry training experiences. Originally birthed over seventy years ago (1941) as the Churches of Christ in NSW Theological College (Woolwich, Sydney) ACOM has produced thousands of graduates serving as ministers, evangelists, lay leaders, welfare workers, teachers, missionaries and church planters. The college merged with Kenmore Christian College (Queensland) in 1999 to form The Australian College of Ministries.

Originally a campus-based residential college, ACOM now specialises in flexible delivery. It is a hybrid of distance learning experience mixed with targeted face-to-face student support through Formation Groups and Subject Facilitations. ACOM has developed a national and international reputation for excellence and innovation. ACOM has 24 staff (ministry support, academic and leadership development), 17 formation leaders, and 23 subject facilitators across Australia.

ACOM has formed partnerships of mutual assistance in ministry development and training with like-minded training organisations such as Youth Vision, ACCESS Ministries, Arrow Leadership, The Vineyard Movement and The Alliance College. Other Vocational Education partners include organisations such as Youth Dimension, Youth for Christ, Australian Lutheran College, Kingsley College and Nazarene Theological College.

The sponsorship of Churches of Christ in NSW is an empowering gift that enables ACOM to pursue its mission and partner with other fresh hope initiatives such as: The Tops Conference Centre, CareWorks NSW, Southpoint, and Living Care. Churches of Christ has a historic commitment to unity amongst all believers which has ensured ACOM is an authentic and integrated cross-denominational gathering of students, staff, church, and ministry partnerships.

# 2.2 ACOM’s Mission

At the Australian College of Ministries we develop healthy, effective leaders who can positively impact their own corner of the world.

At ACOM we emphasise a missional focus, flexible learning, deep spiritual formation, work-based learning, and academic excellence.

For over 15 years we have pioneered the innovative *instruction-action-reflection* approach to preparing effective leaders for a rapidly changing world.

Our courses are tailored for God’s people wherever they work, minister and live - in the church, workplace and community. Our desire is to equip you to be changed – so you can change your corner of the world.
2.3 ACOM’s Governance

2.3.1 Sydney College of Divinity

The Australian College of Ministries (ACOM) is Member Institution of the Sydney College of Divinity (SCD). SCD is a tertiary education institution providing high quality, accredited awards in ministry and theology and related areas through the teaching colleges that are its Member Institutions.

The Sydney College of Divinity is registered as a Higher Education Provider. Its degrees and awards are accredited by the NSW Department of Education & Communities (NSW DEC), with a number of awards also registered in Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. The SCD is approved as a Higher Education Provider under the Higher Education Support Act 2003. It is also a CRICOS provider in New South Wales (CRICOS Code: 02948J), Queensland (CRICOS Code: 02904K) and Western Australia (CRICOS Code: 03284C).

ACOM has been a foundational member of the Sydney College of Divinity since 1983. Through SCD we are able to offer a complete suite of higher education awards ranging from the Diploma of Christian Studies, Bachelor of Ministry, Bachelor of Ministry (Honours), Bachelor of Theology and Bachelor of Theology (Honours). At the Postgraduate level awards include the Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and Master of Arts, Master of Divinity, Master of Theology, Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Theology and the Doctor of Ministry.

2.3.2 College Board

ACOM Ltd is a company limited by guarantee. ACOM is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of directors appointed by the Conference of Churches of Christ in New South Wales. The Board sets the policies under which ACOM operates to provide its training throughout Australia and the world.

2.3.3 Academic Board

In keeping with emerging standards of accountability and transparency in the Higher and Vocational Education sectors in Australia, ACOM has an Academic Board to oversee all aspects of its academic functioning. This ensures that ACOM’s benchmarks, standards and procedures equal or exceed those of the Higher and Vocational Education sectors more broadly. The Academic Board is comprised of senior academics from inside and outside ACOM.
3 Studying with ACOM

ACOM has a rich history of leading the way in innovative ministry training. In the early 90s ACOM shifted its focus from campus based learning to flexible delivery – using an instruction-action-reflection approach.

At ACOM we recognise your place of ministry or work is a living laboratory offering an opportunity for in-depth on-the-job learning. We blend theory and practice in a missional learning adventure tailored to develop your intellectual knowledge, practical skills, and spiritual awareness.

Our face-to-face facilitations provide an opportunity for students to make sense of Biblical and theological content in the context of their personal spiritual life and ministry. These engaging learning experiences, facilitated by a leader in the field, are designed to help students become sharper theologically, deeper spiritually and stronger professionally.

Our research projects emphasise your ministry situation. We blend action, reflection, and theory to produce deep learning that is academically rigorous and practice oriented.

Personal Spiritual formation is a foundational experience at ACOM. We don’t run classes on formation; we help each student explore their own personal journey of self-awareness, social development, spiritual understanding, and faith surrender. This process is a transformational journey – going deep to be released for personal mission.

At ACOM we don’t just want smart graduates – we want graduates who are:

- **Job ready** (skilled to take on new challenges)
- **Mission oriented** (getting their hands dirty in mission and ministry)
- **Spiritually well-formed** (being deeply faithful and spiritually minded)

3.1 ACOM’s responsibilities in Flexible Learning

ACOM’s responsibility is to provide a learning environment, which is:

1. **ACCESSIBLE**: Information relating to units, 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 unit 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.
3.2 Student Responsibilities in Flexible Learning

Students engaged in ACOM’s flexible learning programs must 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 the devotional 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.

3.3 Contacting ACOM’s Staff

Contact details for all staff can be found on the ACOM website:

http://acom.edu.au/our-team

To contact the National office please call 1800 672 692 (mobiles only) or email info@acom.edu.au

3.4 Learning Support Managers

ACOM Learning Support Managers (LSMs) act as an on-the-ground leader and point of contact for ACOM students. They are the face of ACOM and work to provide effective learning opportunities and pastoral care for students. Each student is allocated an LSM, usually based on where a student is living, to support and guide them in their journey though ACOM. Contact your LSM for information and questions regarding your unit selection, course plans, facilitations, spiritual formation retreats, student ministry supervisors and other student support matters.

3.5 Course Structure

ACOM’s courses have three key components: information, practical ministry and spiritual formation. These components are explained below.

3.5.1 Information

Self-Paced Study Materials

ACOM’s curriculum is designed to provide students with the knowledge they need to succeed in ministry and mission. Most units will be delivered via Moodle, our online learning site, which will provide the content for each unit as well as interaction with the unit co-ordinator and other students (some units may require an additional textbook to be purchased by the student, which is not covered by FEE-HELP).
Unit coordinators oversee most aspects of units on an ongoing basis. They are the ideal people to ask questions about sessions, assignment topics and overall issues regarding the unit matter. Their contact information can be found on Moodle.

At times you will have a different Marker from the Unit Coordinator. In this situation, they will be clearly identified in Moodle and will be the preferred person to talk to about assessment questions or issues, rather than the Unit Coordinator.

**Guided Facilitations**

Students can attend a facilitation (normally a three-day guided study and discussion session) for scheduled units in each state. Facilitations provide excellent opportunities to interact with fellow students, and to investigate how unit materials integrate with daily life, faith and ministry. 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 unit with the contexts and practice of ministry and mission.


Facilitators are chosen for their familiarity with the unit material, their experience in applying that familiarity to real life and ministry contexts, and their ability to encourage healthy discussion with students. These characteristics enable facilitators to maximise students’ learning experiences in a relaxed and enjoyable environment. Facilitators do not ‘lecture’ but rather assist students to reflect theologically on their learning, life and ministry.

Students can complete an additional assessment, called an Integration Assignment, if they are unable to attend a facilitation or if a facilitation is not offered.

**3.5.2 Practical Ministry**

**Ministry/Workplace/Community Placements**

Not everything can be learned through academic study. Emerging leaders also need the opportunity to learn from experience and reflection in real-life situations. Students select a ministry, workplace or community placement where they can exercise an intentional ministry or other mission activity, choosing a Student Ministry Supervisor* to assist them. Students’ hours spent in ministry and reflecting with their supervisor contribute to the requirements of most units for which they register.

A placement can be any location where students are engaged in intentional ministry or mission. Typically a local church or other setting allows students to release their gifts, and that will provide extensive opportunities to serve.

*Student Ministry Supervisor*

A Student Ministry Supervisor (SMS) is someone in, or connected with, the student’s placement who will support the student’s learning in the placement experience. One hour per unit is allocated to reflecting with the supervisor. The student’s SMS must be able to regularly observe the student in their placement role.

Ministry/Workplace/Community Placements are only required for Undergraduate students.
3.5.3 Spiritual Formation

Spiritual Formation (previously named Personal Formation) is a required element of ACOM’s undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

Formation Groups

For Spiritual Formation, students meet for 30 hours each year in a small group of 5 to 8 people. Students negotiate within their group as to how these hours are divided into various formation group meetings. Led by a ‘Formation Director’, formation groups build trust relationships in a confidential environment where students support and encourage each other on their individual faith and life journeys. Formation groups focus on three outcomes as outlined in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiritual Formation</th>
<th>Increased spiritual awareness leading to an enhanced relationship with God.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character Formation</td>
<td>Improved self-awareness and emotional health, an increased capacity to connect with others, and a strengthened ability and disposition to be ‘real’ in the presence of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry Formation</td>
<td>Enhanced understanding of God-given gifts and passions, and effective self-care strategies, which together form a foundation for sustainable, safe and effective ministry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formation groups form at the Formation Retreat (held at the beginning of each year, details can be found on the ACOM website- [http://acom.edu.au/higher-education-retreat-information](http://acom.edu.au/higher-education-retreat-information)) and are then closed for the rest of the year. These retreats are usually 3-day experiences where students and faculty meet and interact to form an ongoing learning community. Retreat costs are included in the unit fees for Spiritual Formation, and students are automatically registered for the retreat when they register in the unit.

The time at Retreat will mostly be spent in a formation group, getting to know fellow group members by telling personal stories. Students find this story telling both a challenging and a deeply rewarding time. Except in exceptional circumstances, students must attend every formation group meeting to pass their Spiritual Formation unit.

At the end of the year, each student enrolled in Spiritual Formation has an interview with his/her Formation Director to evaluate progress and to provide support. This interview covers the student’s progress during the year, growth in Spiritual Formation, and feedback to ACOM on any relevant matters.

Mentors

While formation groups provide essential support and opportunities for personal growth, there are some aspects of Spiritual formation that are better addressed on a one-to-one basis. As part of their Spiritual formation experience, students choose a ‘spiritual companion’ referred to as a mentor to meet with face-to-face throughout the year, who assists the student to reach a range of specific self-set personal growth goals. The mentor helps provide a holistic growth experience that covers all of life, not just the student’s course or faith-journey. This involves an intentional relationship of trust, covenanted for one year at a time. Students meet with their mentor for a total of 10 hours in 7 face-to-face meetings throughout the year, which generally last for 1.5 hours. The student’s Formation Director orients and supervises the mentor, assisting them to provide students with the best experience possible.
3.6 Delivery

3.6.1 Trimesters

There are no weekly classes at ACOM. Instead, each ACOM unit is delivered either by our online learning site, Moodle, or in a distance education package that contains all the necessary coursework. Each unit runs over a 12-week period, with assessment tasks to complete at home.

There are 3 trimesters each year, with a two week break between trimesters. Students can choose how many units they wish to complete in each trimester, however permission is required from the ACOM Dean of Learning and Teaching if a student intends to study more than three (3) units in any one trimester. Students may also choose whether they will attend a facilitation, if one is offered, for the unit they are studying.

Key dates can be found on the ACOM website:

http://acom.edu.au/higher-education-key-dates

3.6.2 Unit Registration

Registrations for each trimester open 10 weeks before the start of the trimester and close 4 weeks before the start of the trimester. ACOM's Ministry Services Team will send out an email to all students to advise that registrations are open.

Late fees apply to registrations received after the closing date (registration deadline). Please refer to 8.4 Fees and Charges for further information on fees, and the ACOM website for registration deadlines: http://acom.edu.au/higher-education-key-dates

Students must register for units and facilitations using the Online Unit Registration Form on the ACOM website: http://acom.edu.au/unit-registration-form

You will receive email confirmation of your registration from ACOM’s Ministry Services Team prior to the start of the trimester.

Students registering for units after the start of the trimester must have approval from their Learning Support Manager and the Ministry Services Manager. Registrations will not be accepted on or after the census date.

Unit descriptions, unit schedules and facilitation schedules can be found in the current student section of the ACOM website:


For advice on unit selection and your course plan, please contact your Learning Support Manager.

Students can pay for units upfront (credit card, direct deposit or cheque) or by deferring the payment with FEE-HELP (for eligible students). Upfront payments must be made prior to the start of the trimester, unless the student has arranged a payment plan with ACOM’s Ministry Services Manager. Please refer to chapter 8: Financial for further information on fee payment and FEE-HELP.
3.6.3 Withdrawals and Census Dates

Students who wish to withdraw from a unit or facilitation must use the Online Unit Change Form: http://acom.edu.au/unit-change-form. Verbal notification is insufficient to effect a withdrawal.

Fees apply to withdrawals made after the registration deadline for the trimester, including withdrawals from facilitations. If a student changes his/her unit registration from one unit to another (i.e., swaps units in which they are registered) after the unit registration deadline, they will be liable for both the unit withdrawal fee from their “old” unit and the relevant late registration fee for their “new” unit. Please refer to 8.4.2 Table 3 - Non-tuition Fees and Charges for further information.

The Census Date is the cut-off date for withdrawals from units and partial refund of fees. The Census Date is the 4th Monday of each trimester (except for year-long units). Students who withdraw AFTER the census date will be charged the full cost of the Unit AND will receive a failure grade on their Academic Transcript for the unit. In practice, this means that students will not have ANY unit fees returned to them after the census date and will be liable for any outstanding unit fees not paid at the time of the census date.

Census dates for the current year can be found on the ACOM website: http://acom.edu.au/higher-education-key-dates

A student may apply to withdraw without academic penalty and/or financial penalty after the census date. Application must be made to the Dean of Learning and Teaching in writing and evidence must be provided. Such application may be made on the following grounds:

a) Medical grounds
b) Compassionate grounds
c) Extreme hardship

3.6.4 Attending Facilitations

Unit information, Dates and locations of facilitations can be found on the ACOM website: http://www.acom.edu.au/unit-and-facilitation-schedules

All students registered in a facilitation will receive an email from their Learning Support Manager the week before the facilitation with additional details.

Fees apply to withdrawals from facilitations made after the registration deadline. Students who have registered for a facilitation and do not attend will also incur a withdrawal fee. Please refer to 8.4.2 Table 3 - Non-tuition Fees and Charges for further information on fees. Additional work may be required if a student is unable to attend part of the facilitation.

If a facilitation is cancelled, students will have the option of withdrawing from the unit and registering in a different unit without incurring any fees.

3.6.5 Accessing Coursework: Moodle

When a student registers for their first unit, they receive a web-site address and password to log into Moodle, ACOM’s online learning platform. Here students will be able to access their course material and assessment details, submit assessments, contribute to group forums and contact the unit co-ordinator. Units will be made available on the first day of the trimester.

Coursework for units that are not yet available online will be posted to the student in the week prior to the start of the trimester. Students will still use Moodle to access the Unit Introductory Booklet and to submit assessments.
3.6.6 Accessing Results: eMinerva

Students can access their academic and financial records using eMinerva, SCD’s Student Data Management Database: http://scd.eminervacommunity.com/.

To access the eMinerva database, a student requires the email address that ACOM has on record and their eMinerva student number. This student number is purely numeric and can be found in the ACOM acceptance letter.

Please note, though, that the financial records of students on eMinerva will often appear incorrect, saying that money is outstanding. There is a regular delay in FEE-HELP payments appearing in eMinerva, so it may appear that a payment is outstanding when it is simply scheduled for FEE-HELP payment.

3.7 Hardware and Software Requirements

Internet and Email Access
Our primary means of communicating with students is via email and website, so broadband internet (e.g. ADSL, cable, wireless) access is required for all ACOM students.

ACOM will not be responsible for any emails that are not seen by a student due to the emails being automatically placed in a student’s email account’s “Junk” or “Spam” email folder.

Assignments
For all students Microsoft Office 2003 (or newer) is required in order to complete assignments. All assignments must be submitted in Word format, as many of our markers use track changes and review comments boxes to add comments to marked assignments. While there are compatible office programs available (e.g. Open Office), students will have fewer issues if they use Microsoft Office. There are student and/or home versions of Microsoft Office that are reasonably priced. MAC users can use Pages for Word processing, but must save the file in WORD format for submission.

Accessing Units
The following are recommended browsers and settings that will help improve your experience using Moodle and ensure access to the activities and tools in your Moodle courses.

Browser versions that work best with Moodle
Moodle runs best on the following browser versions or higher:

- Recent Google Chrome
- Recent Mozilla Firefox
- Safari 6
- Internet Explorer 9 (IE 10 required for drag and drop of files from outside the browser into Moodle).

IE8 and Safari 5 are no longer fully supported. They should still work but they are not tested regularly and there might be some problems. Like most of the world’s Web sites and browser producers, we encourage you to keep your browsers current to improve security and functionality while saving us valuable time. IE6 and IE7 are not recommended for Moodle 2.7 at all. You will encounter difficulties trying to use those old browsers in today’s Internet.

You may find it helpful to have more than one browser installed on your computer. If you run into problems using Moodle, moving to another browser may resolve your issues.
**Required browser settings**

To ensure you are able to access various types of content and features within Moodle, select the following browser settings:

- Enable Cookies
- Enable Javascript
- Do not block pop-up windows

View the procedure for enabling these browser settings from the following links:

- Chrome help: http://www.google.com/support/chrome/?hl=en
- Safari: go to Safari > Preferences. All three settings are easily located on the Security tab.

Note: If you would like these settings to apply only to Moodle, you can choose to add acm.mrooms.net as an exception in the relevant browser settings page.

**Recommended browser add-ons**

For some specific content-type, add-ons may need to be installed if your browser is not already configured:

**A PDF Reader** should be installed on your computer, and a PDF browser plugin will let you view PDFs in a browser window without opening a separate program. You can download Adobe Acrobat Reader at http://get.adobe.com/reader/. The download includes the browser plugin. To install this plugin, just follow the prompts.

**Apple Quicktime** provides easy access to multiple audio and video formats. Macintosh computers come with Quicktime already installed. Windows users should also install Quicktime. You can download Quicktime at http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/.

**The Adobe Flash Player** plugin for your browser will allow you to access Flash video and rich interactive media. You can download Adobe Flash Player at http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/
3.8 ACOM Digital Library (EBSCO)

In addition to the targeted academic resources supplied for each unit, ACOM provides extensive library facilities to its students.

Students are able to access 20,000 ebooks and over 350,000 journal articles remotely through the ACOM electronic library. These resources allow students to access current scholarship conveniently from any location. The EBSCO search engine allows students to comprehensively explore the library.

The following collections make up the ACOM library:

- Religion & Philosophy Collection,
- ATLA Religion Database (ATLA RDB) with ATLASerial, (ATLAS),
- eBook Collection,
- eBook Religion Collection; and
- eBook Business Collection.

Students may also access the physical libraries of other SCD member institutions.

3.9 Student Identification Cards

ID cards are provided free of charge at the request of the student. Requests should be sent to info@acom.edu.au with a high-resolution head and shoulders photograph. Please note that as ACOM is a distance education provider, students are not eligible for transport concession.
4 Undergraduate Study

Undergraduate programs are a dynamic learning experience designed to develop students as disciples, ministers, missionaries and leaders. The program is holistic – developing students intellectually, emotionally, socially and spiritually. Student learning is based in their place of ministry and consequently graduates are well rounded and job ready.

For admission requirements for all undergraduate courses, see 9.1 Admission Requirements Undergraduate.

4.1 Undergraduate Awards

Main undergraduate awards:
- Bachelor of Ministry (BMin)
- Bachelor of Theology (BTh)
- Bachelor of Theology Honours (BTh (Hons))
- Bachelor of Ministry Honours (BMin (Hons))

Shorter awards:
- Diploma of Christian Studies (DipChSt)
- Associate Degree of Christian Thought and Practice (AssDegChThPr)

Students enrolled in the Diploma of Theology (DipTh) should contact their Learning Support Manager or the Registrar for information on the award and steps to complete.

4.1.1 Bachelor of Ministry (BMin)

The Bachelor of Ministry is a practical, grassroots ministry degree aimed at equipping students for real-life missional contexts. In this degree, students will gain a strong biblical and theological foundation while focusing on the practice of ministry. The Bachelor of Ministry is tailored for God’s people who are seeking to develop ministry skills that work in both church and community.

ACOM’s spiritual formation process is interwoven throughout this degree, and aims to enhance the overall personal and spiritual development of students, challenging students to delve deeply into their relationship with God. Students will also develop critical thinking skills that will allow them to foster a culture of reflection in pastoral situations though a biblical and theological framework.

The Bachelor of Ministry is a 24 unit, three year full-time or nine year part-time qualification. Specialisations in a number of disciplines are available. Students who complete this degree continue their educational pathway with either the Master of Arts or the Master of Theology.

Course unit requirements for these awards can be found on the following pages. Descriptions of Core and Elective units can be found on the ACOM website: http://acom.edu.au/bmin-unit-descriptions

4.1.2 Bachelor of Theology (BTh)

In the Bachelor of Theology, students will develop a strong biblical and theological foundation and be equipped for long-term mission and ministry. The degree is tailored for God’s people wherever they work, minister and live in the church, workplace and community. Our desire is to equip students to understand and effect change so that they can change their corner of the world.

Students will explore biblical and theological issues and develop critical thinking skills that will enable them to foster a culture of reflection in pastoral situations through sound biblical and theological frameworks. The study of biblical languages allows students to engage the biblical text at a new and profound level.
ACOM’s spiritual formation process is also interwoven throughout the Bachelor of Theology, aiming to enhance the overall personal and spiritual development of students, challenging them to delve deeply into their relationship with God.

The Bachelor of Theology is a 24 unit, three year full-time or nine year part-time qualification. Specialisations in a number of disciplines are available. Students who complete this degree may continue their educational pathway with either the Master of Arts or the Master of Theology.

Course unit requirements for these awards can be found on the following pages. Descriptions of Core and Elective units can be found on the ACOM website: http://acom.edu.au/bth-unit-descriptions

4.1.3 Bachelor of Theology (Honours) (BTh (Hons)) or Bachelor of Ministry (Honours) (B Min (Hons))

The BTh (Hons) and BMin (Hons) are research awards designed to give a beginning researcher significant learning experiences as pathways to doctoral study. Admission is open to students with a BTh or BMin respectively.

The awards require 72 credit points, which must include:

- An 8500-series Research Methodology Unit (9 cr pts)
- An 8500-series Honours Seminar Unit (9 cr pts)
- A further two units (18 credit points in total) in the area of specialisation from 9600-series units
- A thesis of 20,000 words for 36 credit points in the area of specialisation

4.1.4 Diploma of Christian Studies (DipChSt)

The Diploma of Christian Studies introduces students to some of the basics of bible, theology and ministry practice. It is a great place to start building a future in mission and ministry. Through this diploma, students study a broad range of introductory units, and translate foundational academic concepts into practical application.

This diploma has eight units, all at the bachelor level. It is a one year full-time or three year part-time qualification. Students who complete this degree are able to continue their studies with either the Bachelor of Theology or Bachelor of Ministry.

Course unit requirements for this award can be found on the following pages. Unit descriptions can be found on the ACOM website: http://acom.edu.au/bmin-unit-descriptions

4.1.5 Associate Degree of Christian Thought and Practice (AssocDegChThPr)

This Associate Degree has sixteen units, all at the bachelor level. It is a two year full-time or six year part-time qualification. Students who complete this degree are able to continue their studies with either the Bachelor of Theology or Bachelor of Ministry.

Course unit requirements for this award can be found on the following pages. Unit descriptions can be found on the ACOM website: http://acom.edu.au/bmin-unit-descriptions
What students need to do to complete a Bachelor of Ministry

### Biblical Studies
- 7100 SERIES: B7120 + B7130
- 7200 SERIES: B7203 + B7273
- 7300 SERIES: T7333

### Theology
- T7101
- T7217 + T7231

### Humanities in the Christian Tradition
- H7100

### Christian Life & Ministry
- P7101 + S7101 + S7102 + M7109
- S7201
- S7301

### Electives

### Regulations
- All units are 9 credit points unless otherwise noted.
- Units may be selected from the 7000 range.
- Students must complete 216 credit points (24 units of 9 credit points), including at least 1 Major and 1 Sub-Major in Christian Life and Ministry and sub-majors in Biblical Studies and Theology.
- A major in a subdiscipline requires 54 credit points from the subdiscipline, with not more than 18 credit points from 7100 series units and at least 9 credit points from 7300 series units.
- A major in a discipline requires 54 credit points from the discipline, with at least 27 credit points in one subdiscipline, with not more than 18 credit points from 7100 series units and at least 9 credit points from 7300 series units.
- Churches of Christ students must also study H7365 The Restoration Movement as one of the 9 electives.
- Humanities in the Christian Tradition includes Humanities (A) and Church History (H) units. Christian Life and Ministry includes Christian Spirituality (S), Worship & Liturgy (L), Mission (M), Pastoral Counselling (C), Pastoral Theology (P) and Christian Ethics (E) units.
- An optional Biblical Studies Major requires 6 B units PLUS “Biblical Languages” enrolled in either before or concurrent with B7200 or B7300 units.
What students need to do to complete a Bachelor of Theology

**Biblical Studies**
- **UNIT LEVEL 7100 SERIES**: B7120 + B7130

**Theology**
- **UNIT LEVEL 7200 SERIES**: B7203 + B7237 + B7241
- **7300 SERIES**: T7320 + T7333 + T7399

**Humanities in the Christian Tradition**
- **UNIT LEVEL 7100 SERIES**: H7100 + A7130

**Christian Life & Ministry**
- **UNIT LEVEL 7200 SERIES**: S7101 + M7109
- **7300 SERIES**: S7201 + S7301

**Electives**

**Regulations**
- All units are 9 credit points unless otherwise noted.
- Units may be selected from the 7000 range.
- Students must complete 216 credit points (24 units of 9 credit points), including at least 2 Majors and 1 Sub-Major. The units above will provide Discipline Majors in Bible and Theology and a Discipline Sub-Major in Christian Life and Ministry. Other majors may be achieved also.
- A major in a subdiscipline requires 54 credit points from the subdiscipline, with not more than 18 credit points from 7100 series units and at least 9 credit points from 7300 series units.
- A major in a discipline requires 54 credit points from the discipline, with at least 27 credit points in one subdiscipline, with not more than 18 credit points from 7100 series units and at least 9 credit points from 7300 series units.
- A submajor requires 36 credit points from units assigned to the major including no more than 18 credit points from 7100 series units and with at least one 7200 series unit.
- Humanities in the Christian Tradition includes Humanities (A) and Church History (H) units. Christian Life and Ministry includes Christian Spirituality (S), Worship & Liturgy (L), Mission (M), Pastoral Counselling (C), Pastoral Theology (P) and Christian Ethics (E) units.
- Churches of Christ students must also study H7365 The Restoration Movement as one of the 6 electives.
- A Biblical Languages unit must be studied either before or concurrent with B7200 or B7300 units.
What students need to do to complete an **Diploma of Christian Studies**

**Biblical Studies**
- UNIT LEVEL 7100 SERIES: B7120 or B7130

**Theology**
- UNIT LEVEL 7200 SERIES: T7101

**Humanities in the Christian Tradition**
- UNIT LEVEL 7300 SERIES: S7101 + M7109

**Christian Life & Ministry**
- UNIT LEVEL ANY LEVEL

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**ELECTIVES**
- ANY LEVEL
- ANY LEVEL
- ANY LEVEL
- ANY LEVEL

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**REGULATIONS**

- All units are 9 credit points unless otherwise noted.
- Units may be selected from the 7000 range.
- Students must earn a sub-major in either Christian Thought or Christian Practice. A Christian Thought sub-major will include at least 4 units from the sub-disciplines of Biblical Studies, Theology and Church History (B, T & H units). A Christian Practice sub-major will include at least 4 units from the sub-disciplines of Spirituality, Counselling, Liturgy, Ethics, Mission and Pastoral Theology (S, C, L, E, M & P units).
- Humanities in the Christian Tradition includes Humanities (A) and Church History (H) units. Christian Life and Ministry includes Christian Spirituality (S), Worship & Liturgy (L), Mission (M), Pastoral Counselling (C), Pastoral Theology (P) and Christian Ethics (E) units.
What students need to do to complete an **Associate Degree in Christian Thought and Practice**

**Biblical Studies**
- UNIT LEVEL
  - 7100 SERIES: B7120 + B7130

**Theology**
- 7200 SERIES: T7101
- 7300 SERIES: T7231

**Christian Life & Ministry**
- 7100 SERIES: S7101 + M7109
- 7200 SERIES: S7201

**Electives**

**Regulations**
- All units are 9 credit points unless otherwise noted.
- Units may be selected from the 7000 range.
- Students must achieve at least one major (54 credit points) in either Christian Thought (Bible, History and Theology) or Christian Practice (Spirituality, Counselling, Liturgy, Ethics, Mission and Pastoral Theology). This will be achieved by completing 2 electives in Christian thought or 3 units in Christian practice, plus the core units above.
- A major is made up of 54 credit points with not more than 18 credit points from 7100 series units.
- Christian Life and Ministry includes Christian Spirituality (S), Worship & Liturgy (L), Mission (M), Pastoral Counselling (C), Pastoral Theology (P) and Christian Ethics (E) units.
4.1.6 Core Unit Names

Below are the names of units listed in the Steps to Complete diagrams for the Bachelor of Ministry, Bachelor of Theology, Diploma of Christian Studies and Associate Degree of Christian Thought and Practice.

The full list of core and elective unit names and descriptions can be found on the ACOM website:

BTh: http://acom.edu.au/bth-unit-descriptions
BMin: http://acom.edu.au/bmin-unit-descriptions

A7130- Introduction to Biblical Languages
B7120- Introduction to the Old Testament
B7130- Introduction to the New Testament
B7203- Hermeneutics
B7214- Studies in the Pentateuch
B7231- Prophetic Literature
B7273- The Four Gospels
B7364- Pauline Literature
H7100- Introduction to Christian History
M7109- Introduction to Discipleship
P7101- Introduction to Pastoral Care
S7101- Spiritual Formation 1
S7102- Introduction to Christian Spirituality
S7201- Spiritual Formation 2
S7301- Spiritual Formation 3
T7101- Introduction to Theology
T7217- The Church
T7231- The Person and Work of Christ
T7320- Theology for Ministry
T7333- The Trinity
T7399- Capstone Unit in Theology

Please note: Some ACOM unit names differ from the official SCD unit name. Where this is the case, the official SCD unit name will appear on transcripts/ records of study and in eMinerva.

Some ACOM units are offered using what is called a “Generic Issues in...” unit code. On rare occasions, two units will share the same unit code. In this situation, students may only ever do one of the units that use that unit code in each discipline. The affected unit codes are 7395 and 7396. For example, a student could do M7395, B7395 and M7396, but not T7395 and T7395.
4.2 Sydney College of Divinity Requirements for Undergraduate studies

All ACOM Higher Education students are also students of the Sydney College of Divinity (SCD), the tertiary institution whose awards we teach. As well as complying with ACOM regulations, students must also comply with all SCD rules.

Students need to ensure that the units they choose will enable them to fulfil the requirements of their course as listed in the Steps to Complete diagrams. ACOM will not be held responsible for students choosing units incorrectly or otherwise failing to fulfil the requirements of their course.

4.2.1 SCD Unit Coding System

Each unit has a code number consisting of 1 letter, followed by 4 digits, followed by one letter. 

**First letter:** indicates the SCD Unit Sub-discipline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Sub-discipline</th>
<th>Letter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biblical Studies</td>
<td>Biblical Studies</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Life and Ministry</td>
<td>Christian Spirituality</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worship and Liturgy</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pastoral Counselling</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pastoral Theology</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Ethics</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>Church History</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theology</td>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theology</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**First digit:** indicates the AQF Level of the unit.

Units studied at bachelor level all use the number 7. Units studied at honours level use Postgraduate unit codes.

**Second digit:** indicates the unit level at which the unit is taught

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Digit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundational</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Third and fourth digits:** identifies the specific unit

**Final letter:** indicates the SCD Member Institution teaching the unit - ACOM has been designated the letter ‘C’. Please note: The letter ‘C’ will only appear on official SCD documents.
4.2.2 Time Limitations

The following are the maximum periods of time to complete any course of study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Maximum Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diploma of Christian studies</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree of Christian Thought and practice</td>
<td>6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Ministry</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Theology</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A leave of absence for up to one year may be applied for by writing to the Dean of Learning and Teaching. Students should maintain continuous enrolment by registering for units in at least 2 trimesters per calendar year. Students who do not register in units for a period of two years or more will need to re-apply for admission if they wish to continue with their course.

4.2.3 Estimated Workloads

The below workload guidelines are based on 9 credit point units:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workload</th>
<th>Units per Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>6-9 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¾ time</td>
<td>5-6 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ time</td>
<td>3-4 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ time</td>
<td>1-2 units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** a student wishing to study more than 9 units in any one year must receive the written approval of their Learning Support Manager to do so. Normally, only students with very good academic records will be allowed to study more than nine units in any one year.

To be classified as ‘full-time’ by Centrelink, students must be registered in 75% of a full-time load each trimester. In practice this means students must be studying 2 units each trimester to be eligible for benefits.

4.2.4 Demand Hours

Each 9 credit point unit requires 143 demand hours of study. The demand hours outlined in the following table represent the notional number of hours needed to meet all the requirements of the unit, including reading, researching and writing assignments and essays, and supervised fieldwork.
| Online study sessions, required interactive activities and reading | 40 hours |
| Assignments (including major essays and field assignments) | 52 hours | 4000 words (or equivalent) |
| Integration Assignment | 20 hours | 2000 words* |
| Supervised Fieldwork | 30 hours |
| Meeting with Supervisor | 1 hour |
| Unit Total | 143 hours |

*Or credit for 3 days face-to-face facilitation attendance.

### 4.3 Tuition Costs

Please refer to chapter 8: Financial for information on tuition costs. Students should note that these tuition costs do NOT include travel and accommodation costs for facilitations, textbooks or related costs.

### 4.4 Undergraduate Unit Descriptions

Descriptions of all Undergraduate units can be found on the ACOM website:


Please note: Some ACOM unit names differ from the official SCD unit names. Where this is the case, the official SCD unit name will appear on transcripts/records of study and in eMinerva.

Students studying at Undergraduate level are able to use their elective units to register in research units with ACOM. Further information about the research units available to undergraduate students and the registration process can be found in chapter 7 Research Units.
5 Postgraduate Study (PG)

Postgraduate courses are designed for professional development and continuing education beyond the undergraduate theological level. The units are focused on effective leadership, wide practical applications, and contextualised ministry and mission.

For admission requirements for all postgraduate courses, see 9.1.2 Admission Requirements Postgraduate.

5.1 Postgraduate Awards

Main postgraduate awards:

• Master of Divinity (MDiv)
• Master of Theology (MTh)

Other awards:

• Master of Arts (MA)
• Graduate Diploma in Arts (GradDipArts)
• Graduate Certificate of Arts (GradCertArts)

5.1.1 Master of Divinity (MDiv)

The Master of Divinity is ACOM’s newest postgraduate degree in the field of Divinity and is aimed at students who have already completed an undergraduate degree in a discipline other than bible or theology, and are seeking to be endorsed as a minister of religion.

Over the course of the 24 unit program, students will be challenged to explore biblical and theological issues at a deep level and develop critical thinking skills that will set them up for effective full-time pastoral ministry.

This degree allows students to engage with independent research in areas of specific interest and to participate in ACOM’s spiritual formation process. The study of biblical languages also allows students to engage the biblical text at a new and profound level.

This is a three year full-time or nine year part-time qualification. Specialisations in a number of disciplines are available. Students who complete this degree continue their educational pathway with the Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Ministry.

Course unit requirements for this award can be found on the following pages. Descriptions of Core and Elective units can be found on the ACOM website: http://acom.edu.au/ma-unit-descriptions

5.1.2 Master of Theology (MTh)

This degree builds on previous theological study. Students engaged in this degree can now focus on a particular area of interest and develop a significant research project. Throughout this program, students will be exposed to various methodological tools. These tools allow students to reflect critically on the manner in which various disciplines intersect with each other. Research skills that have been established will be advanced to new levels. The purpose of the academic rigour of this degree is to provide fresh biblical and theological insight for ministry. The student will also continue the formation process.

This is a 1.5 year full-time or 4.5 year part-time qualification. Specialisations in a number of disciplines are available. Students who complete this degree continue their educational pathway with the Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Ministry.

Course unit requirements for this award can be found on the following pages. Descriptions of Core and Elective units can be found on the ACOM website: http://acom.edu.au/mth-unit-descriptions
5.1.3 Master of Arts (MA)

The Master of Arts is a high quality professional development program for students wanting to update their leadership capacities, missional orientation and ability to relate to emerging postmodern cultures.

The flexible nature of this degree allows students to sample a range of topics within the theological and leadership sphere or to focus on a particular area of study. The exact degree requirements depend on previous study and the entry pathway. This degree can be pursued as the continuation of theological studies or the harnessing of a number of independent qualifications.

Depending on the pathway, this is an eight to twelve unit, one-year to 1.5 year full-time or three year to 4.5 year part-time degree. Specialisations in a number of disciplines are available. Students who complete this degree continue their educational pathway in numerous directions, depending on previous study. These pathways include the Master of Divinity, Master of Theology (with appropriate specialisations), Doctor of Ministry and the Doctor of Philosophy.

Students with a non-ministry undergraduate degree wanting to do the MA will need to first enrol in the 4 unit Graduate Certificate, before completing the final 8 units in the MA itself.

Course unit requirements for this award can be found on the following pages. Descriptions of Core and Elective units can be found on the ACOM website: http://acom.edu.au/ma-unit-descriptions

5.1.4 Graduate Certificate in Arts (Grad CertArts)

The Graduate Certificate allows students to focus on a specific area of postgraduate study or sample a number of topics that interest them. Students who select this qualification are adding to existing educational qualifications or are using this as an entry point into studies after numerous years of professional activity. Many students engaging in cohort study choose a graduate certificate as an ideal way to specialise.

This is a four unit, half-year full-time or 1.5 year part-time qualification. Concentrations in a number of disciplines are available, for example:

- Bible
- Theology
- Christian life and ministry
- Counselling
- Spirituality
- Mission
- Leadership

Students who complete this award can continue their educational pathway through a number of options, including the Master of Arts, the Graduate Diploma of Arts, the Master of Divinity or (with the correct requirements) the Master of Theology.

Unit Descriptions can be found on the ACOM website: http://acom.edu.au/ma-unit-descriptions
5.1.5 Graduate Diploma of Arts (GradDipArts)

The Graduate Diploma in Arts is an ideal qualification for students who are building on previous study, but without the commitment of undertaking a master’s degree. Students can focus on new areas of specialisation, sample a range of new subject areas or build on previous study. Due to the flexible nature of this qualification, students can select numerous exciting pathways for study.

This is an eight unit, one year full-time or three year part-time qualification. Specialisations in a number of disciplines are available. Students who complete this award often continue their educational pathway with the Master of Arts, the Master of Divinity or (with the correct requirements) the Master of Theology.

Unit Descriptions can be found on the ACOM website: http://acom.edu.au/ma-unit-descriptions
What students need to do to complete a Master of Divinity

Completion of these 16 Units,
+ Pathway A or B ...

REGULATIONS

- At least two units at 9600 level must be used to create a six-unit specialisation in any of Christian Life and Ministry, Theology or Biblical Studies. Christian Life and Ministry includes any units in Spirituality (S), Counselling (C), Worship and Liturgy (L), Christian Ethics (E), Mission (M) and Pastoral Theology (P). Specialisations require six units, including at least four 9600 level units. Research Projects may be used to satisfy the specialisation requirements.

- Students must have at least eight 9600 level units in total. Therefore, at least two electives must be 9600 level.

- Any student wishing to earn a Biblical Studies specialisation must also complete at least 2 units in Biblical languages which are in addition to the 6 units required for the specialisation.

- Any student wishing to pursue Doctoral Studies should enrol in X9692 Research Project (18 credit points) instead of X9691 Research Project (9 credit points) and the externally reviewed X9690 Research Essay (18 credit points).

- Specialisations require 6 units in that discipline, including at least 4 units at 9600 level.

- Sub-specialisations require 4 units in that discipline, including at least 2 units at 9600 level.

- Any student wanting a CL&M specialisation will need at least 3 x 9600 units in SCEMP in addition to the core units above.
**What students need to do to complete a Master of Theology**

**Core**

UNIT LEVEL
- 8500 SERIES: X8500 + S8501
- 9600 SERIES: X9692 (18cp) or X9696 (18cp)

**Electives**

- NO MORE THAN THREE 8500 LEVEL ELECTIVES
- EIGHT ELECTIVES IN TOTAL

**REGULATIONS**

Students considering higher study may enrol in X9690 instead of X9696 – a 36cp Research Essay. All units are 9 credit points (cp) unless otherwise noted, and may be selected from the 8500 and 9600 range.

Students must complete 108 cp, including 18 in core units, a minimum of 18cp in research and up to 72cp in electives. A maximum of 90 credit points can be taken in any one sub-discipline.

No more than 3 electives may be taken from 8500 units (ie a maximum five 8500 units, with 3 electives plus SF4 and Research Methodology)

A maximum of 54 credit points may be studied in Research and Independent Guided Study units, with no more than 18cp in Independent Guided Studies or Research Projects or 36 credit points for a Research Essay.

Students must do either a specialisation of 54 cp in one sub-discipline or discipline or 27cp in 2 sub-disciplines or disciplines. These can be B, T, S, C, L, M, P or H units.

Pre-requisites to note
Research Methodology – must be done before the Research Essay or Project, and is done in the same discipline as the research. RM has a pre-requisite of 36cp in ANY area.

**Research Essay (either 18 or 36cp)** – requires 54cp, including 36cp in the area of study and Research Methodology in X

Recommended order of study for Research Project Students
- S8501C Formation in Christian Leadership (SF4)
- 3 electives in any discipline
- X8500X Research Methodology
- X9692C Research Project (18cp)
- 5 electives in any discipline, at any time

Recommended order of study for Research Essay students
- S8501C Formation in Christian Leadership (SF4)
- 3 electives in the discipline of the research
- 1 elective in any discipline
- X8500X Research Methodology
- X9690C Research Essay (36cp) – 23,000-25,000 words
What students need to do to complete a Master of Arts

REGULATIONS

- All units are 9 credit points unless otherwise noted.
- Units may be selected from the 8500 and 9600 range.
- Students may earn an optional “specialisation” by studying 54 credit points in any discipline or sub-discipline, including at least 18 credit points at 9600 level.
- A maximum of 36 credit points may be studied in Research and Independent Guided Study units, with no more than 18cp in any one unit type.
5.1.6 Core Unit Names

Below are the names of units listed in the Steps to Complete diagrams for the Master of Arts and Master of Theology. The full list of core and elective unit names and descriptions can be found on the ACOM website:

MTh: http://acom.edu.au/mth-unit-descriptions

B8520C Introduction to the Old Testament
B8530C Introduction to the New Testament
B9603C Interpretation of the Bible
B9610C The Pentateuch: Israel's Beginnings: The books of Genesis and Exodus
T8501C Introduction to Theology
T8517C The Church
T9631 The Person and Work of Christ
T9633 The Trinity
M8509C Introduction to Discipleship
P8501C Introduction to Pastoral Care
S8501C Spiritual Formation 4
S9601C Spiritual Formation 5
H8501C Introduction to the Study of Christian History
H8563C The Restoration Movement
X8500- Research Methodology
X9691- Research Project
X9692- Research Project (18cp)
X9693- Independent Guided Study
X9694- Independent Guided Study (18cp)
X9696- Research Essay (18cp)
X9699- Capstone Unit

Please note: Some ACOM unit names differ from the official SCD unit name. Where this is the case, the official SCD unit name will appear on transcripts/ records of study and in eMinerva.
Some ACOM units are offered using what is called a “Generic Issues in...” unit code. On rare occasions, two units will share the same unit code. In this situation, students may only ever do one of the units that use that unit code in each discipline. The affected unit codes are 8595 and 9695. For example, a student could do M8595, B8595 and M9695, but not T8595 and T8595.

5.2 Sydney College of Divinity Requirements for Postgraduate Study

All ACOM Higher Education students are also students of the Sydney College of Divinity (SCD), the tertiary institution whose awards we teach. As well as complying with ACOM regulations, students must also comply with all SCD rules. Students need to ensure that the units they choose will enable them to fulfil the requirements of their course as listed in the Steps to Complete diagrams. ACOM will not be held responsible for students choosing units incorrectly or otherwise failing to fulfil the requirements of their course.

5.2.1 SCD Unit Coding System

Each unit has a code number consisting of 1 letter, followed by 4 digits, followed by one letter. **First letter**: indicates the SCD Unit Sub-discipline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Sub-discipline</th>
<th>Letter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biblical Studies</td>
<td>Biblical Studies</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Life and Ministry</td>
<td>Christian Spirituality</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worship and Liturgy</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pastoral Counselling</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pastoral Theology</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Ethics</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>Church History</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theology</td>
<td>Theology</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**First two digits**: indicate the course and level of the unit.

All postgraduate units should be either 8500 or the more advanced 9600 level. Students may study either level, but MTh students are restricted to a maximum of six 8500 level units (plus one unit of Research Methodology if required).

**Third and fourth digits**: identifies the specific unit

The letter (C) indicates the SCD Member Institution teaching the unit- ACOM has been designated the letter ‘C’. Please note: The letter ‘C’ will only appear on official SCD documents.
5.2.2 Time Limitations

The following are the maximum periods of time to complete any course of study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Certificate in Arts</td>
<td>1.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Diploma of Arts</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Arts (8 units)</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Arts (12 units)</td>
<td>4.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Theology</td>
<td>4.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Divinity</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A leave of absence for up to one year may be applied for by writing to the Dean of Learning and Teaching. Students should maintain continuous enrolment by registering for units in at least 2 trimesters per calendar year. Students who do not register in units for a period of two years or more will need to re-apply for admission if they wish to continue with their course.

5.2.3 Estimated Workloads

The below workload guidelines are based on 9 credit point units:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Workload per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>6-9 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¾ time</td>
<td>5-6 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ time</td>
<td>3-4 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ time</td>
<td>1-2 units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: a student wishing to study more than 9 units in any one year must receive the written approval of their Learning Support Manager to do so. Normally, only students with very good academic records will be allowed to study more than nine units in any one year.

To be classified as ‘full-time’ by Centrelink, students must be registered in 75% of a full-time load each trimester. In practice this means students must be studying 2 units each trimester to be eligible for benefits.
5.2.4 Demand Hours

Each 9 credit point unit requires 143 demand hours of study. The demand hours outlined in the following table represent the notional number of hours a student will require to meet all the requirements of the unit, including reading, researching and writing assignments and essays.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online study sessions, required interactive activities and reading</th>
<th>80 hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignments (including major essays and field assignments)</td>
<td>43 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration Assignment</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit Total</td>
<td>143 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Or credit for 3 days face-to-face facilitation attendance.

5.3 Tuition Costs

Please refer to Chapter 8: Financial for information on tuition costs. Students should note that these tuition costs do NOT include travel and accommodation costs for facilitations, textbooks or related costs.

5.4 Postgraduate Unit Descriptions

Descriptions of all Postgraduate units can be found on the ACOM website:


Master of Arts http://acom.edu.au/ma-unit-descriptions

Master of Theology http://acom.edu.au/mth-unit-descriptions

Please note: Some ACOM unit names differ from the official SCD unit names. Where this is the case, the official SCD unit name will appear on transcripts/ records of study and in eMinerva.

Students studying at postgraduate level are able to use their elective units to register in research units with ACOM. Further information about the research units available to postgraduate students and the registration process can be found in chapter 7 Research Units.
6 Doctoral Study

Doctoral courses are research degrees at the highest level of academia.

For the SCD Conventions for writing a thesis, please refer to the Regulations for MPhil, DMin, PhD and ThD document which can be found on the SCD website.

6.1 Doctoral Awards

- Doctor of Ministry (DMin)
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

6.1.1 Doctor of Ministry (DMin)

The Doctor of Ministry meets the specifications for a Doctoral Degree (Professional) set by the Australian Qualifications Framework. It provides men and women with the opportunity to pursue advanced study in Christian Life and Ministry by research at the highest academic level in the context of professional practice, with supporting specialist coursework. It is designed for those who seek to expand their own understanding and develop new knowledge in such an area for professional reasons and, additionally, as relevant to the individual, for academic, vocational and/or personal reasons.

The Doctor of Ministry is undertaken by a combination of specialist coursework (20%) and research and thesis (80%).

Research candidates operate under the supervision of the Sydney College of Divinity research committee.

Admission

The Sydney College of Divinity may admit to candidature in the DMin those persons who have attained:

(a) A Bachelor (Hons) degree or equivalent with results at Class II from the Sydney College of Divinity or an equivalent institution; or

(b) A Graduate Diploma with a GPA of 2.8+ and one 18 cpt research unit at High Credit level from the Sydney College of Divinity or an equivalent institution; or

(c) Qualifications deemed by the College to be equivalent to or higher than those above;

AND have at least four years’ full-time or equivalent part-time certified experience in ministry.

In all cases, prior studies should include sufficient preparation to undertake the proposed coursework and research related to Christian Life and Ministry

Time Limitations

The DMin program is 3-4 years full-time or 7-8 years as a part-time student.

Completion

Completion of the Doctor of Ministry requires completion of the following:

Coursework elements:

- Advanced Seminar in Pastoral Ministry (RP895)
- Advanced Seminar in Pastoral and Practical Methodology (RP896)

Research elements:

- A thesis of maximum 60,000 words including footnotes but excluding bibliography and appendices
- Compulsory participation in the DMin Orientation Workshop, the Research Degree Workshop, and regular evening research seminars.

More Information

More information is available from the Dean of Learning and Teaching
6.1.2 Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

The Doctor of Philosophy meets the specifications for a Doctoral Degree (Research) set by the Australian Qualifications Framework. It provides men and women with the opportunity to pursue advanced study in a theologically related area by research at the highest academic level. It is designed for those who seek to further their study in such an area, including interdisciplinary study, for academic, vocational, professional and/or personal reasons. It also offers research training and experience that would support an academic or professional career involving research.

The Doctor of Philosophy is undertaken by research and thesis alone. It provides the opportunity for candidates to embark on a significant, extended piece of research, which investigates a theologically related topic in a systematic, creative and comprehensive manner that is not available in coursework programs. The research will contribute to knowledge in an original way.

Research candidates operate under the supervision of the Sydney College of Divinity research committee.

Admission

The Sydney College of Divinity may admit to candidature in the PhD those persons who have attained:

  (a) A Bachelor (Hons) degree or equivalent with results at Class II, Division 1, from the Sydney College of Divinity or an equivalent institution; or

  (b) A Graduate Diploma with a GPA of 3+ and one 18 cpt research unit at Distinction level from the Sydney College of Divinity or an equivalent institution; or

  (c) Qualifications deemed by the College to be equivalent to or higher than those above.

In all cases, prior studies should include sufficient preparation to undertake the proposed research in a theologically related area.

Time Limitations

The PhD program is 4 years full-time or 12 years as a part-time student.

Completion

All PhD candidates proceed to the award by thesis alone.

The thesis is to be 80,000-100,000 words in length, including footnotes and bibliography.

Candidates must also participate in the Research Degree Workshop and regular evening Research Seminars.

More Information

More information is available from the Dean of Learning and Teaching.
7 Research Units

ACOM has a long history of providing innovative, transformational learning experiences. Research is one learning vehicle designed to integrate theory and practice, producing well-formed thought leaders who will provide solutions to the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Learning how to do useful research helps students discover how to identify a problem that needs a solution, ask effective questions, challenge assumptions, collect data, and establish clear conclusions. These are essential skills for leaders who must adapt quickly to a complex and changing community context. This process is linked to rigorous scholarship and deep personal spiritual formation.

ACOM students are provided the flexibility to customise their own learning journey through the inclusion of research units. The focus of research at ACOM is designed to:

- Be useful for life and ministry,
- Provide thought leadership for innovation and deep theological understanding, and
- Point people towards action in kingdom mission.

ACOM students conduct research within the context of their ministry passion: grounded in your local work, ministry or community situation. In doing so you will bring about change in three areas:

- You will make a unique contribution to the body of knowledge,
- Your research process will be a catalyst for change in your local ministry/work context, and
- Your own personal growth and development is enhanced.

This is about knowing, doing and being. It is an adventurous journey engaging the heart, mind and soul.

These research units are useful where a student:

1. Wants to focus on an area of special interest;
2. Seeks additional units within a sub-discipline to qualify for a Specialisation, Major, or Sub-Major;
3. Wants to link recognised academic learning with a practical field project (whether volunteering or employed); and
4. Seeks to meet special criteria for further study in a higher research qualification.
   (for example – Doctoral studies)
7.1 Units

There is a selection of research or practicum course units available at both Undergraduate and Postgraduate level.

The units offered are:

Undergraduate

X7391C - Research Project (9 cps)
X7392 - Research Project (18 cps)
X7393 - Independent Guided Study (9 cps)
X7394 - Independent Guided Study (18 cps)
X7398 - Action Research Project (18 cps)
X7399 - Capstone Unit (9 cps)

Bachelor of Theology (Honours)

X8598 - Honours Thesis (45 cps)

Postgraduate (Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Master of Arts and Master of Theology)

X9691 - Research Project (9 cps)
X9692 - Research Project (18 cps)
X9693 - Independent Guided Study (9 cps)
X9694 - Independent Guided Study (18 cps)
X9698 - Action Research Project (18 cps)
X9699 - Capstone Unit (9 cps)
X8500 – Research Methodology (9 cps)
X9696 - Research Essay (18 cps)
X9690C - Research Essay (36cp) – note – MTh only

Please note: All 18 credit point units are taken over two trimesters.

MA - While a MA student may undertake a maximum of 18 credit points of Independent Guided Study or 18 credit points in Research Projects or an 18 credit point Research Essay, the Sydney College of Divinity permits no more than 36 credit points to be taken from research units combined in any single degree. (Not including Research Methodology)

MTh – While a MTh student may undertake a maximum of 18 credit points of Independent Guided Study or 18 credit points in Research Projects or 36 credit points as a Research Essay, the Sydney College of Divinity permits no more than 54 credit points to be taken from research units combined in any single degree. (Not including Research Methodology)

The “Research Essay” and “Honours Thesis” are examined externally through the Sydney College of Divinity, by two examiners other than the supervisor, one of whom normally is external to ACOM. They are suitable pathways for students seeking admission to the Master of Philosophy, Doctor of Ministry, Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Theology.
7.2  Unit Descriptions

There are different tailored projects that a student can undertake, depending on the degree in which they are enrolled. They are:

7.2.1  Independent Guided Study

In these units the student independently pursues a topic of interest that has been approved by ACOM. A maximum of 18 credit points may be obtained in this way.

Independent Guided Study units are advanced level units and can be taken in a range of disciplines. It affords the student an opportunity to develop independent research and study skills. Before an Independent Guided Study can be undertaken, it is recommended that a student must have completed at least 27 credit points previously.

In Undergraduate courses the requirements and nominal demand hours for a 9 credit point Independent Guided Study are:

- 40 hours of ministry, workplace or community placement (which in some instances may require the submission of a placement journal).
- 62 hours of reading and assignment preparation (equivalent to 775 pages of reading).
- A 1500 word reflective paper on the field placement.
- A 2500 word academic assignment.

In Postgraduate courses the requirements and nominal demand hours for a 9 credit point Independent Guided Study are:

- 102 hours of reading and assignment preparation (equivalent to 1000 pages of reading).
- 5000 words of assessment.

Reading and assignment topics are negotiated between the student and their Supervisor appointed by ACOM.

7.2.2  Research Project

Students considered capable of doing so may complete up to 18 credit points of Independent Research, taken either as one or two 9 credit point Research Projects units or one 18 credit point Research Project unit. A Research Project is marked internally.

These units build on the theological background, capacity and interests of a student enabling the pursuit of broad research, often of a survey nature, into an area or topic within a discipline or across disciplines. This research cannot usually be done within the constraints of individual coursework units or the focused study of a particular topic.

Postgraduate students must complete “Research Methodology” before enrolling in the Research Project.

Undergraduate research projects are 4000/8000 words and postgraduate research projects are 5000/10000 words.

7.2.3  Research Essay

This unit enables students who have generally excelled in their coursework to research and write in an area of specialisation and to demonstrate an ability to pursue further research at the Masters, BTh Honours and Doctoral levels. Applicants for Sydney College of Divinity research degree programs are required to have completed this unit at Distinction level or demonstrate equivalence in achievement. A Research Essay is marked externally.

This can be done for 18 credit points or, in the M Th, 36 credit points.

X9696 – 18 credit points, available for Postgraduate students only, requires submission of a 10-12,000-word paper, taken over a two trimester period.

X9690 – 36 credit points, available for Master of Theology students only, requires submission of a 23-25,000-word paper, taken over a three trimester period.
The essay proposal requires the approval of the Sydney College of Divinity Research Committee, with a proposal you submit through your supervisor and ACOM’s Head of Department – Research.

### 7.2.4 Research Methodology

Research Methodology is a coursework unit which teaches the student or research candidate skills and frameworks for proposing, designing and undertaking a research project. The assessment includes a research proposal for a future research project or research essay. This unit is a pre-requisite for the Research Project and Research Essay.

### 7.2.5 Capstone Unit

Towards the end of a degree, a Capstone unit is an opportunity for students to prepare and write a paper that explores a particular ministry issue or theological theme by drawing on the breadth and depth of all the student has studied in their degree; biblical, theological and missiological subjects. The result will not be an essay or project paper that solely draws on one theological sub-discipline, but seeks to integrate different disciplines together with the student’s experience of ministry, personal growth and professional development. 9 credit point Capstone units are 4000 words at undergraduate level or 5000 words at postgraduate level.

### 7.2.6 Action Research Project

Action Research is about using qualitative research methods (interviews, focus groups and/or participant-observation) and working with a group to identify presenting ministry issues and developing appropriate ministry responses. The result is thus not just what the student thinks are good ideas, but solutions developed in conversation with the group, church or mission organisation. 9 credit point Action Research Projects are 4000 words at undergraduate level or 5000 words at postgraduate.

### 7.2.7 Honours Thesis

An Honours Thesis provides students the opportunity to pursue a research project to deepen theological knowledge and investigate a chosen topic, and develop experience in research methods and design and pursue a small-scale research project. It provides students the opportunity to embark on a significant piece of research in a comprehensive and systematic manner that is not possible in course work. This program provides a suitable pathway for students wanting to pursue further research at Masters or Doctoral level (dependent on attaining a suitable grade level, usually at least Distinction for Masters or High Distinction for possible direct entry into some Doctoral programs). An honours thesis topic proposal must be submitted to the SCD Research Committee through your supervisor and the ACOM Head of Department - Research. The thesis is 20,000 words in length, and is graded by two examiners, both usually external to ACOM. This thesis can only be done by students who are enrolled in the Bachelor of Ministry (Hons) or Bachelor of Theology (Hons).

### 7.3 Registering for Units/Getting Started

If you are interested in registering for a research unit, the first step is to speak to your Learning Support Manager. Your LSM will get you started and connect you to ACOM’s Head of Department – Research. You will then be assigned a supervisor who will guide you in the next steps to get started. Both your Learning Support Manager and your Supervisor will liaise with you to help you through the research process and any administrative requirements along the way.

As with any unit, students must register online for research units. However, before that formal registration, students should discuss these plans with their LSM and develop an outline for what the research will look like. In the case of the Research Essay and Research Project, these units should only be enrolled in after the completion of Research Methodology and the development of a proposal for research. In practice, students may do much of the research work such as topic negotiation, readings and planning outlines before actual enrolment in the unit.
7.4 Ethical Considerations

When ACOM approves your research or practicum proposal, consideration will be given to the ethical implications of the research method you are using. All research involving living human subjects must be carried out in such a way that protects the welfare and rights of the participants in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans.

This includes:

- Information collected directly from or through a person (e.g. via interviews, questionnaires, observations of an individual, focus groups)
- Accessing secondary sources or non-public materials (e.g. interviews about an individual, personnel records, student records)
- Identifiable private information about a living individual (e.g. private papers).

Approval is required by the Sydney College of Divinity Ethics Review Committee (SCDERC) for the use of the following research tools:

- Questionnaires and surveys (paper or online)
- Qualitative methodologies (tapes or notes from focus groups, interviews etc.)
- Behavioural observation (whether known or unknown to participants)
- Accessing data you, or another individual, have already collected for another purpose (e.g. from a database or archives etc.)
- Psychological experiments
- Psychiatric or clinical psychological studies
- Other qualitative methods.

Your ACOM Supervisor will guide you through any ethics approval process. The forms for research students (and staff who are undertaking research) to submit are on the SCD website at this location:

http://scd.edu.au/research/information-for-research-candidates/research-student-forms/

For coursework applications and smaller projects, the supervisor needs to familiar both with that clearance form for research students and with the SCD Guidelines, and writes to the SCD Ethics Review Committee chair with a modified submission and certifying they are familiar with the Guidelines and have sufficient research experience to apply them - or alternatively, that a senior supervisor with appropriate research experience will have oversight of the assignment.

The application should be accompanied by the unit outline and any relevant additional material that would enable the Committee to understand what students are doing for their research and paper. (Individual students do not need to and should not communicate with the Committee directly.)

7.5 Presentation Requirements

Presentation requirements for assignments can be found on the student support section of the website.

http://acom.edu.au/student-support
8 Financial

8.1 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 mean at least ¾ 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 units) for each and every trimester of study. Students should note that units 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. Spiritual Formation units are divided across the number of trimesters appropriate for each of these units – they do NOT count as one full unit 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.

8.2 FEE-HELP

FEE-HELP is a Government financial loan scheme that assists eligible fee paying students to pay their fees. All ACOM enrolled students who are Australian citizens (or on a Permanent Humanitarian Visa) have access to government FEE-HELP loans for both undergraduate and postgraduate study.


To access FEE-HELP, a student completes a “Request for FEE-HELP Assistance” form (available from the ACOM National Office) and submits this form to ACOM before the trimester begins. ACOM then submits, through the SCD Office, 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.

8.3 Tuition Assurance Scheme (TAS)

The Sydney College of Divinity (ABN: 39 002 653 036) 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 is as follows:

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.

The alternative suitable courses of the Australian College of Theology (ACT) in which students would be placed if necessary are detailed below:

*Alternative Courses (Tuition Assurance Scheme)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sydney College of Divinity</th>
<th>Australian College of Theology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diploma of Theology</td>
<td>Diploma of Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Theology</td>
<td>Bachelor of Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Ministry</td>
<td>Bachelor of Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Certificate in Arts</td>
<td>Graduate Diploma of Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Diploma of Arts</td>
<td>Graduate Diploma of Bible and Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Diploma of Arts</td>
<td>Graduate Diploma of Christian Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Diploma of Arts</td>
<td>Graduate Diploma of Religion and Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
<td>Master of Arts in Christian Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Theology</td>
<td>Master of Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Divinity</td>
<td>Master of Divinity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.4 Fees and Charges

8.4.1 Tuition Fees

Undergraduate Fees

Please note that FEE-HELP is not available for audit units.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Audit</th>
<th>9 credit Point</th>
<th>18 Credit Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard Unit</td>
<td>$450</td>
<td>$1890</td>
<td>$3780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensioner Standard Unit</td>
<td>$450</td>
<td>$1690</td>
<td>$3380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(must pay upfront)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Formation Units</td>
<td>$695</td>
<td>$2390</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Units</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2090</td>
<td>$4180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Postgraduate Fees

Please note that FEE-HELP is not available for audit units.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Audit</th>
<th>9 credit Point</th>
<th>18 Credit Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard Unit</td>
<td>$450</td>
<td>$2190</td>
<td>$4380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensioner Standard Unit</td>
<td>$450</td>
<td>$1990</td>
<td>$3980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(must pay upfront)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Formation Units</td>
<td>$695</td>
<td>$2690</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Units</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2390</td>
<td>$4780</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.4.2 Table 3 - Non-tuition Fees and Charges

Please note that FEE-HELP is not available for non-tuition fees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fee/Charge</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late Unit Registration Fee (after Registration Deadline i.e., 3 weeks before the start of each Trimester)</td>
<td>$25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Unit Registration Fee (on or after start of Trimester)</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit Withdrawal Fee (after Registration Deadline, before Census Date)</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit Withdrawal Fee (After Census Date)</td>
<td>Full cost of unit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.5 Facilitation Expenses

Students should allow for an additional cost for living and travelling expenses when attending facilitations away from their local region.

8.6 Payment of Fees to ACOM

Students will pay fees directly to ACOM either upfront (credit card, direct deposit or cheque) or through FEE-HELP (for eligible students). Upfront payments must be made prior to the start of the trimester, unless the student has arranged a payment plan with ACOM’s Ministry Services Manager.

8.6.1 Due Dates

Students paying upfront must pay the tuition fee for each unit prior to the start of each trimester (unless the student has arranged a payment plan with ACOM’s Ministry Services Manager). For trimester dates for the current year refer to http://acom.edu.au/higher-education-key-dates.

8.6.2 Withholding of Unit Material

Students will not be given access to unit material until payment of all relevant fees and charges has been arranged. These fees and charges include any outstanding Late Registration and/or Withdrawal Fees.

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

8.6.3 Withdrawals and Refunds

1. Administrative dates including Census Dates and Deadlines for Changes to Enrolments will be published on ACOM’s website.
2. Students do not incur a financial liability for a unit until after the Census Date/Deadline for Changes, however a withdrawal fee may still apply. This applies to all eligible students whether they pay their tuition fees upfront or seek loan scheme assistance.
3. Students are to advise ACOM in writing by the published Census Date/Deadline for Changes that they intend to withdraw from a subject or course.
4. Students should follow the withdrawal procedures outlined in the relevant student handbook.
5. In the event of a student withdrawing on or prior to the published Census Date/Deadline for Changes:
   a. 100% of tuition fees paid will be refunded (less any applicable withdrawal fees);
b. the student will not incur a VET FEE-HELP debt (but will be invoiced for any applicable withdrawal fees).

6. In the event of a student withdrawing after the published Census Date/Deadline for Changes:
   a. no refund is applicable;
   b. the student will incur a VET FEE-HELP debt.

7. Should a student become seriously ill or suffer exceptional circumstances of a compassionate nature (such as death or severe illness in the immediate family) after the Census Date/Deadline for Changes and can no longer continue their studies, ACOM may refund the balance of the unused fees.
   a. This fee refund is wholly at the discretion of ACOM.
   b. The application must be in writing and appropriate evidence, such as a medical certificate will be required.
   c. A student may make an application within 12 months of the withdrawal date for a unit or, if the student has not withdrawn, within 12 months of the end of the period in which the unit was to be undertaken.
   d. The 12 month period may be extended on the grounds that it was not possible to apply within the 12 months period.

8. If a refund is approved, ACOM will either a) arrange for a reversal of the VET FEEHELP debt or b) pay by cheque or transfer to the person, partner or network entity who paid the fees. Payment will be made within four weeks.

9. Where ACOM determines that exceptional circumstances do not apply in a student’s case, the student has the right to apply for a review of that decision. ACOM will apply a student review procedure for reconsidering such decisions.

10. If the student wishes to request a review of the decision, this must be made within 28 days of receipt of the original decision. The request must include:
   a. The date of the original decision
   b. The reasons for applying for the review
   c. Any additional relevant evidence

11. In reviewing a decision, ACOM will:
   a. appoint a review officer who is not the same officer who made the original decision and who occupies a position that is senior to that occupied by the original decision-maker;
   b. reconsider the decision with the reviewer’s available options being to confirm the original decision, vary the decision, or set the decision aside and substitute a new decision.

   After the decision has been reconsidered, ACOM will:
   a. notify the person, in writing, of the reviewer’s decision and the reviewer’s reasons for making the decision (either confirming the decision, varying the decision, or setting the decision aside and substituting a new decision);
   b. advise the person of their right to appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) for a review of the reviewer’s decision if the applicant is unsatisfied with the outcome

12. This Policy and Procedure does not remove the right to take further action under Australia’s consumer protection laws. ACOM’s dispute resolution processes, Student/Client Complaints Policy and Procedure do not restrict the students’ right to pursue other legal remedies.
9 Academic Regulations

9.1 Admissions

9.1.1 Admission Policy

All applicants wishing to study with ACOM must be “enrolled students” and, therefore, need to complete the full application process for admission as a student in the College. An “enrolled student” may be full-time or part-time.

Applicants admitted to an ACOM course must meet the standard academic entry requirements of the relevant academic award or be accepted according to one of the published alternative entry options.

Admission to any Sydney College of Divinity (SCD) course is conditional upon the student’s acceptance by SCD.

Applications for admission to any ACOM program will be supported by appropriate documentary evidence of qualification for entry.

Applicants who have completed all their previous study in a language other than English will be required to demonstrate an appropriate level of English proficiency.

9.1.2 Admission Requirements

Undergraduate Courses

Admission may be granted to an undergraduate course on one or more of the following bases:

1. Successful prior completion of an accredited Certificate IV, Degree or Diploma recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework (or equivalent).

2. Attainment of a satisfactory standard for the Higher School Certificate (or its equivalent), such as to gain entry to a university. For all undergraduate awards (excluding the Diploma of Christian Studies) the ATAR must be 65 or greater; or in QLD the OP score must be 16 or lower. ATAR/OP score is not required for the Diploma of Christian Studies.

3. Mature Age entry: To qualify for mature age entry, the applicant needs to have reached the age of 21 years by the commencement date of the course.

4. Special Entry: To qualify under this category, the applicant must be able to produce evidence that substantiates their ability to complete a tertiary course.

Applicants who do not meet the above criteria should contact the Registrar to discuss alternative admission options.

Applicants who have completed all their previous study in a language other than English will be required to achieve an IELTS test (or equivalent) score of 6.5 or greater, with no score less than 6.0 in each band.

Postgraduate Courses

Master of Arts (MA). The admission requirement for the Master of Arts is a three-year bachelor award or equivalent in any discipline. Applicants whose undergraduate award is not in ministry or Theology will need to enrol first into the 4-unit Graduate Certificate before doing their final 8 units in the MA.

Applicants who do not meet the above criteria for the MA may apply for Professional Entry based on previous relevant work experience. This entry requires the applicant to possess a minimum of 5 years’ relevant work experience in a full-time senior ministry leadership role.

Master of Theology (MTh). The admission requirement for the Master of Theology is a three-year Bachelor of Ministry or Theology or a Master of Arts with a specialisation in any discipline. The latter applicants will need to undertake their MTh in that same discipline of specialisation.

Applicants for any postgraduate course who have completed all their previous study in a language other than English will be required to achieve an IELTS test (or equivalent) score of 7.0 or greater overall and in all bands of the test.
9.1.3 Provisional and Full Admission

Since admission to an SCD course is conditional upon the student’s acceptance by SCD, applicants must complete and submit a full admission application to ACOM for entry into advertised courses. On the basis of information supplied on the admission form, ACOM may grant provisional acceptance, which will then be changed at a later date to full acceptance once confirmed by SCD.

**Undergraduate students** provisionally admitted under Mature Age or Special Entry will be required to complete a “Qualifying Period” before being confirmed as a full admission. The “Qualifying Period” can be undertaken either full-time or part-time and will consist of the successful completion of 1/3 of the units that make up the award within 3 years. After the successful completion of 1/3 of the units that make up the award, the provisional status will be lifted, and full admission will be confirmed, with full credit for the units successfully completed.

**Postgraduate students** provisionally admitted under Professional Entry will be required to complete one 8500 (entry) level postgraduate unit at a credit grade or above to be confirmed as a full admission, upon the approval of the Dean of Learning and Teaching or the Registrar, with full credit given for the unit successfully completed.

9.1.4 Documentation

**Undergraduate Courses**
For successful admission into an ACOM undergraduate course, a full admission application must be completed by submitting the following documents:

- SCD application for admission form;
- Certified copy of birth certificate or passport;
- Certified Copies of transcripts and certificates of previous study;
- 1 page personal testimony;
- Church reference form;
- 2 personal reference forms;
- Fee-Help form (if applicable);

**Postgraduate Courses**
For successful admission into an ACOM postgraduate course, a full admission application must be completed by submitting the following documents:

- SCD application for admission form:
- Certified copy of birth certificate or passport:
- Certified copies of transcripts and certificates of previous study:
- 1-page personal testimony:
- Fee-Help form (if applicable):

If applying for professional entry, please note that two (2) professional reference letters will be required affirming that the applicant has had 5 or more years’ previous work experience in a full-time senior ministry leadership role.

Applicants are advised to send **certified photocopies** of all requested documentation with their application as ACOM will NOT take responsibility for any original documents sent in with their application. Please note that to qualify as a certified copy the following statement must be written on the document: “This is a true and correct copy of the original sighted on DATE by NAME” followed by Signature and title of the individual.

Individuals who are acceptable document witnesses are: Justice of the Peace, Pastor, Police Officer, Lawyer, Post Office Manager, Doctor, Registered Nurse, Pharmacist, Principal, or Bank Manager.
9.2 Credit from Previous or Concurrent Study

9.2.1 Transfer Credit Policy
As a Member Institution of Sydney College of Divinity, and in accordance with SCD Transfer Credit Policy, ACOM gives full recognition of studies that are comparable in content, outcomes and levels of study to units within ACOM delivered awards, successfully completed at other accredited tertiary institutions. The limits of such credit in any particular award are determined by the SCD Academic Board.

9.2.2 Transfer Credit Procedures
Undergraduate courses
Cross-credit may be granted for up to 2/3 of an undergraduate award for completed units at or above vocational Certificate IV level previously studied at accredited institutions.

Postgraduate courses
Cross-credit may be granted for up to 1/2 of a postgraduate award for completed units at Graduate Certificate level and above previously studied at accredited institutions. Units must be equivalent to current postgraduate units to be considered for cross-credit.

9.2.3 Documentation
Students applying for credit must submit full documentation. This will include:
1. certified copies of original transcripts;
2. evidence of the course structure, i.e., number of credit points (or units) allotted to each unit studied, and the total number of points required for the award.

Students are advised to apply to the Registrar for credit as soon as possible after being admitted into ACOM. Cross-credit applications will be processed by the Registrar and approved by SCD through the Student Administration Committee (or equivalent body), which meets monthly between February and November.

Students may also apply for credit under the principle of Recognition of Prior Learning (Fees may be applicable). To apply for Recognition of Prior Learning please contact the Registrar.

9.2.4 Advanced Standing
Advanced standing enables a student to begin courses at an advanced level without having to undertake the first level units in those courses. Advanced standing does not reduce the total number of units required for an award. To apply for advanced standing please contact the Registrar.
9.3 Re-enrolment

9.3.1 Re-enrolment Because of Incompletion
A student will be allowed to re-register in a unit that they have failed due to incompletion once only. Students must complete all requirements of the unit, but will be allowed to resubmit previously completed work for re-assessment as appropriate. Normal unit fees apply.

9.3.2 Re-enrolment Because of Poor Standard
When a student fails a unit because of poor standard, or failure to meet minimum standards, the unit must be re-taken in its entirety if the student chooses to attempt the unit a second time. Normal unit fees apply.

9.3.3 Failing a Unit Twice
A student who has failed a unit twice for any reason, is not eligible to enrol in that unit a third time.

9.4 Extensions and Late Submission

9.4.1 Extensions Policy
It is a requirement of a student’s course that all assignments be completed by the due dates set by ACOM and published on Moodle and in the Unit Introduction Book. However, at times, extenuating circumstances will arise that warrant the granting of extension to the scheduled due date. To accommodate such cases, ACOM implements a clear set of guidelines for the fair consideration of requests for extensions, which balances compassion for legitimate requests with equitable treatment of all students.

9.4.2 Extensions Procedures
All applications for extension must be made using the ‘Request for Extension’ form on the ACOM website with attendant evidence emailed to info@acom.edu.au before the due date. Requests for extension will not be accepted on or after the due date.

An extension of up to 21 days (including weekends and holidays) from an assignment’s due date (longer may be considered in extraordinary circumstances) may be granted on the following grounds:

(a) medical illness (certified by a Medical Certificate);
(b) extreme hardship (refers to major adverse life events that could not have reasonably been anticipated, avoided or guarded against by the student, and caused substantial disruption to the student’s capacity for effective study and/or the completion of required work);
(c) compassionate grounds (will be based on a significant pastoral concern that is not considered part of a pattern of behaviour on the part of the student).

Circumstances that will NOT normally be considered as acceptable grounds for an extension are:

(a) demands of employment;
(b) minor family problems such as domestic tension with or between parents, spouses, and other people closely involved with the student;
(c) the demands of academic work;
(d) financial difficulties;
(e) the demands of travel, sport, social commitments or other activities.

Students should allow three working days from submission of an extension request for a response from ACOM.
9.4.3 Late Submission Policy

Assignments without an approved extension may be submitted up to 10 days after the due date of the assignment but will attract an automatic penalty deduction of 5% of the marks available for the item of assessment for every day past the ORIGINAL due date. Assignments submitted more than 10 days after the due date without an approved extension will NOT be accepted and will NOT be marked.

Where an extension is granted, assignments may be submitted up to 10 days after the due date of the extension but will attract an automatic penalty deduction of 5% of the marks available for the item of assessment for every day past the EXTENSION due date. Assignments submitted more than 10 days after the extension due date will NOT be accepted and will NOT be marked.

9.5 Assessment

9.5.1 Completion of All Assessment Requirements

1. ACOM Students are required to attempt and submit ALL assigned work in every unit 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).

2. Students not submitting ALL assigned work for a unit will receive a fail grade for the unit, regardless of whether or not their cumulative marks on other (submitted) pieces of assigned work for the unit are numerically sufficient to obtain a pass grade or above.

3. It is not necessary to pass all assigned tasks unless specified – however the cumulative mark of all pieces of work must be numerically sufficient to obtain a pass grade or above.

9.5.2 Incomplete or Inadequate Work

Under certain circumstances, a student submitting all pieces of assigned work, and achieving a total unit mark of greater that 50%, may still be awarded a fail grade under the provisions of this policy if, in the opinion of the Dean of Learning and Teaching, one or more pieces of submitted work are demonstrably inadequate or incomplete.

Such inadequate or incomplete work may include, but is not limited to:

1. 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.

2. Essays or other written work that clearly does not address the set topic in any substantive, comprehensive, coherent or systematic fashion.

3. Essays or other written work with major sections, sub-topics, or other required material missing.

4. Essays or other written work without a bibliography, or with only a minimal bibliography, where a bibliography was a required part of the assignment.

5. Compilations or portfolios of field, formation or ministry work with one or more major elements missing.

6. Absence of any administrative material or documentation (e.g., assignment title pages, reading logs, facilitation attendance sheets) that would allow the Unit Coordinator, Facilitator, Marker or other official to determine that the student has met the set requirements of the unit.

7. Failing to meet the minimum standards and criteria for assessment for higher education essays and other written assignments.

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 also that all submitted work must be of a certain minimum standard. Students may not pass a unit without reasonable attempts at all pieces of assessment AND any other required work being demonstrated by designated minimum standards being met.
9.6 Assignment Writing and Submission

All assignments submitted to ACOM must conform to the guidelines below, unless the assignment instructions specifically allow a variation. The Student Support section of the ACOM website has numerous guides to assist students in writing assignments: http://www.acom.edu.au/student-support

9.6.1 Assignment Writing

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 markers will fail assignments that do not meet these requirements.

In order to gain a PASS grade or above, written assignments submitted to ACOM for assessment must AT LEAST:

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.

Be presented using the following guidelines

File type
All assignments must be submitted electronically in either Word “.doc or .docx” format or if using a Mac “.pages” format.

Line Spacing
Assignments must be either 1.5 or double-spaced.

Margins
Assignments must have at least a 2.5 cm margin on all edges.

Font
Assignments must be written in Times New Roman with 12-point font.

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.

Be within required word limits
Aim carefully to write the required number of words. We encourage you to you write no more than 10% more or 10% less than the required number of words. As using concise language is important, it is generally considered worse to write an excessively long essay than one too short. Please also note that footnotes and Bibliographies are not to be included in word counts.

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.

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.

Be free from slang, colloquialisms and conversational language
• Isolated examples of slang, colloquialisms or conversational language will not usually result in failure. Consistent use of slang and colloquialisms will result in failure.
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.
- “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”.
- “The methodology used to reach this conclusion is really bad.”
  Neither “really” or “bad” are properly defined. Instead of “really bad” use, for example, “highly inappropriate”, or “obviously unjustified”.
- “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”.
- 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.

Use gender inclusive language
Students are required to use gender inclusive language in all academic papers and verbal presentations. This is recognised practice across tertiary education. It also reflects the inclusive nature of the gospel (Galatians 3:28) and is good practice and preparation for ministry and worship leading.

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

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.

Be characterised by tertiary level thought and/or depth of analysis
Assignments should evidence a level of clarity, logicality, and persuasiveness consistent with tertiary (Higher Education) 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.

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...”

Interact with a range of sources
Generally, students are expected to cite a range of resources (books, journal articles etc.) appropriate to the task given. It is important to note that is not sufficient to simply quote/reference such authors. Students are expected to critique the arguments of various authors, and to assess whether the contributions 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).

Be free from plagiarism
Examples of plagiarism will result in automatic failure. 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.

**Use Turabian or other acceptable referencing system correctly**
See the Referencing Fact Sheet on the ACOM website for further information: [http://www.acom.edu.au/writing-skills](http://www.acom.edu.au/writing-skills)

As long as these are used clearly, consistently, appropriately and accurately it is ACCEPTABLE but not mandatory to:
- Use headings and subheadings.
- Use numbering and lettering.
- Use footnotes.
- Include a table of contents or other tables, figures, diagrams, and/or appendices.

### 9.6.2 Submitting Assignments

1. Unless otherwise instructed, all assessments must be submitted via Moodle.
2. Assessments must not (unless instructed) be submitted directly to a:
   a) Unit Coordinator, Facilitator, Marker or any other academic staff person;
   b) Learning Support Manager, Registrar or any other administrative staff person.
3. All assessments must be submitted with a cover sheet. A cover sheet template is available on Moodle. If the cover sheet is not included on an assignment it will not be accepted.
4. All assignment files must be saved in the following format: name, unit code, assessment type. E.g. ‘Joe Bloggs T7101 Field Assignment’ or ‘Joe Bloggs T7101 Introduction to Theology Field Assignment’.

Assessments not submitted in accordance with Points 1 to 4 will be deemed to be **Incorrectly Submitted**. An Incorrectly Submitted Assignment will not attract any marks and will be allocated a fail grade.

If a student, having realised that they have incorrectly submitted an assessment, then resubmits the assessment in the correct form (i.e., in accordance with points 1-4 above), the resubmitted assessment will be processed normally, but will accrue any penalties associated with late submission.

### 9.6.3 Plagiarism

1. All assessments involving plagiarism will be failed.
2. No assessment involving plagiarism will be eligible for resubmission.
3. If the student involved can provide evidence in writing to the satisfaction of the Dean of Learning and Teaching that the plagiarism was unintentional, then a failing grade will be awarded to the assessment in accordance with the overall quality of the assessment – taking into account the seriousness of the plagiarism.
4. If no such evidence is forthcoming, the plagiarism will be deemed to be intentional and the assessment involved will receive a grade of zero.
5. Cases of repeated plagiarism are treated very seriously and may result in the suspension or removal of the student from their course of study.
9.7 Grading

9.7.1 Grading Criteria

A candidate’s grade for a unit is determined upon assessment of performance in required course work and/or examinations. In deciding the grade, due weight is given to the level at which the unit is offered.

The grade of a candidate is recorded as follows:

**Pass (P) 50-64%**
Work that satisfactorily attains the required outcomes(s) with adequate knowledge, understanding, analysis, and presentation.

**Credit (C) 65-74%**
Work that soundly attains the required outcomes(s) showing a good level of knowledge, understanding, analysis, presentation and some evidence of critical interpretation.

**Distinction (D) 75-84%**
Excellent work that substantially attains the required outcomes(s) showing a high level of knowledge, understanding, analysis, critical interpretation, presentation and some originality.

**High Distinction (H) 85-100%**
Outstanding work that comprehensively attains the required outcome(s) showing superior knowledge, understanding, analysis, critical interpretation, presentation and originality.

**Fail (N) 0-49%**
Work that fails to attain the required outcome(s), lacking in basic knowledge, understanding, analysis, and presentation.

**Satisfactory (S)**
The grade will be awarded in a topic that is assessed only on a pass or fail basis, where a satisfactory level of performance and participation has been achieved.
9.7.2 Marking Guide

The following is a list of criteria that each marker takes into account when marking ALL higher education written work submitted to ACOM for assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fail (&lt;50%)</th>
<th>Pass (50-64%)</th>
<th>Credit (65-74%)</th>
<th>Distinction (75-84%)</th>
<th>High Distinction (85-100%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Description</strong></td>
<td>Work that fails to attain the required outcome(s), lacking in basic knowledge, understanding, analysis, and presentation</td>
<td>Work that satisfactorily attains the required outcomes(s) with adequate knowledge, understanding, analysis, and presentation</td>
<td>Work that soundly attains the required outcomes(s) showing a good level of knowledge, understanding, analysis, presentation and some evidence of critical interpretation</td>
<td>Excellent work that substantially attains the required outcome(s) showing a high level of knowledge, understanding, analysis, critical interpretation, presentation and some originality</td>
<td>Outstanding work that comprehensively attains the required outcome(s) showing superior knowledge, understanding, analysis, critical interpretation, presentation and originality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources</strong></td>
<td>Inadequate evidence of having used any resources</td>
<td>Evidence of having used some resources</td>
<td>Evidence of a sound understanding of appropriate resources</td>
<td>Evidence of relevant use of resources beyond expectations</td>
<td>Evidence of wide, relevant, and independently gained resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge of Topic</strong></td>
<td>Inadequate factual and conceptual knowledge</td>
<td>Demonstrated satisfactory factual and conceptual knowledge to serve as a basis for further study</td>
<td>Demonstrated extensive factual and conceptual knowledge</td>
<td>Demonstrated substantial factual and conceptual knowledge incorporating highly distinctive insight into deeper and more subtle aspects of the topic</td>
<td>Demonstrated outstanding factual and conceptual knowledge incorporating highly distinctive insight into deeper and more subtle aspects of the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articulation of Argument</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrated inability to construct coherent argument</td>
<td>Ability to construct sound argument based on evidence</td>
<td>Ability to construct well-reasoned and coherent argument based on discriminating use of evidence</td>
<td>Evidence of imagination, originality, and independent thought</td>
<td>Sustained evidence of imagination, originality, and independent thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analytical and Reflective Skills</strong></td>
<td>Insufficient evidence of analytical and reflective skills</td>
<td>Evidence of analytical and reflective skills</td>
<td>Evidence of developed analytical and reflective skills</td>
<td>Evidence of well-developed analytical and reflective skills</td>
<td>Evidence of highly developed analytical and reflective skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application</strong></td>
<td>Insufficient evidence of any application</td>
<td>Evidence of some application</td>
<td>Ability to apply some of the concepts to specific situations.</td>
<td>Ability to apply concepts to challenging problems</td>
<td>Ability to apply to non-routine or very challenging problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expression and Presentation appropriate to the Discipline</strong></td>
<td>Inadequate skills in expression, presentation, and documentation</td>
<td>Adequate skills in expression, presentation, and documentation</td>
<td>Good skills in expression, presentation, and documentation</td>
<td>Well-developed skills in expression, presentation, and documentation appropriate to wider audiences</td>
<td>Highly developed skills in expression, presentation, and documentation appropriate to wider audiences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.7.3 Scaling of Grades

To ensure inter-unit and inter-institutional equity, a student’s final grade for any unit may be scaled (upwards or downwards) by ACOM and/or 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 SCD. A student’s final grade will appear on their Academic Transcript. Scaling occurs AFTER a graded assignment has been returned to a student.

9.7.4 Academic Results

Student academic results will be posted online in the secure eMinerva database. See 3.6.6 Accessing Results: eMinerva for instructions for use.

9.8 Failure, Resubmission and Progression

9.8.1 Failed Assignments

A student is able to resubmit any assessment (other than forum posts) that received a failing grade.

1. Students have two weeks to complete the resubmission from the date the failed assessment was received.
2. The re-submitted assessment must be submitted in Moodle with tracked changes (or a similar method to demonstrate change) that reflect the issues raised by the marker or any other corrections required. The student must email the marker to advise they have resubmitted the assessment.
3. The maximum grade achievable for the resubmitted assignment is 50%.
4. No student may resubmit any assessment that involves academic misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, cheating, copying, etc.)
5. In cases where the resubmitted work, or re-sat examination, attracts fewer marks than the original work or examination the original grade will stand: i.e., students cannot lose marks through resubmission or re-sitting. However, assessments or examinations that Fail twice will NOT be eligible for ANY further reassessment of any kind.
9.8.2 Appeals

Appeals Policy

A student may appeal, without prejudice, against the result given in any item of assessment when that student believes that some error in grading has been made or when there are concerns about the grade awarded. Any such appeal will be conducted under the terms of the Sydney College of Divinity (SCD) Appeals Policy and will be managed by the Dean of Learning and Teaching (or equivalent officer) in consultation with both student and marker concerned.

Appeals Procedures

In the first instance the student shall raise this matter with the marker concerned.

After this informal dialogue, if the student still believes there are grounds to appeal, the student may formally appeal in writing to the ACOM Dean of Learning and Teaching. Such an appeal must be lodged within two weeks of receiving the original mark and should detail, with appropriate supporting evidence, the reasons why the mark should be reconsidered. Students should note that simply disliking a unit, a lecturer/facilitator, or an assessment topic will NOT be considered adequate grounds for an appeal.

The Dean of Learning and Teaching will consider the student’s written reasons and make a determination as to the validity of those reasons, consulting with the assessment marker and/or other ACOM staff as appropriate.

If the Dean of Learning and Teaching upholds the appeal, the relevant assessment item will be sent to a second marker for re-marking. In the event of a variation in marks awarded by the two markers, the higher mark will stand.

If the Dean of Learning and Teaching does not uphold the appeal, the student will be informed in writing as to why the appeal was not upheld. In general, the Dean of Learning and Teaching will not grant an appeal where, in the opinion of the Dean of Learning and Teaching, the reasons provided by the student:

(a) are unrelated to the substance of the assessment and its completion by the student;
(b) involve vexatious or otherwise unsubstantiated claims against the integrity of the marker; or
(c) involve claims of ignorance on behalf of the student where documentation regarding the structure and substance of the assessment has been clearly provided.

A student who remains dissatisfied by the outcome may make a further written appeal to the ACOM Academic Board, who will review the process and relate their decision in writing to the student. In non-SCD programs, the decision of the ACOM Academic Board will be final.

Where a student enrolled in an SCD program believes that the review procedures in ACOM have not been followed with regard to an appeal against a failed final grade, the student may appeal to the SCD Academic Board, under the following conditions:

(a) this is the only ground on which an appeal can be made to the SCD Academic Board;
(b) the appeal must be submitted in writing to the SCD Dean within ten working days of receipt of the determinative outcome of the appeal from ACOM;
(c) the student must provide the SCD Dean with documented evidence that the regulations on Review and Appeals have not been complied with by ACOM;
(d) the SCD Academic Board will deal with the appeal at its discretion;
(e) the decision of the SCD Academic Board will be final.
### 9.8.3 Minimum Progression

ACOM requires that all classifications of students (undergraduate, postgraduate, full-time, part-time, etc.) maintain a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 1.0 at all times. In practice, this means that 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).

Students with a GPA of 1.0 or greater are considered to be of Good Academic Standing. Students with a GPA 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 GPA of less than one.

### Calculating Students’ GPAs

A GPA is based on all tertiary level (i.e., undergraduate level or above) units attempted whilst studying at ACOM, but does NOT apply to units studied at other institutions for which previous credit is granted.

1. For purposes of calculating a student’s GPA, 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 N = 0.

2. Grade points are allocated on the basis of 9 Credit Point (CP) units with pro rata adjustments made for units of greater or less weighing e.g., a “Credit” earned in an 18 CP unit would attract 4 grade points (i.e., 2 x 2 grade points).

3. The total number of grade points earned is then divided by the total number of units attempted by the student, giving the GPA. The “total number of units attempted” includes ALL units in which a student has been effectively enrolled whether or not the student completes the required work for a given unit and regardless of the reason for any fail grade recorded on a student’s academic transcript.

4. Units from which a student withdraws before the appropriate census date, or units assigned a temporary “Incomplete” grade will not be counted for the purposes of calculating a student’s GPA.
Probation, Suspension and Exclusion

Students with a GPA of less than 1.0 (normally, but not necessarily, excluding cases of single failure) will be:

a) Notified that they are not currently of good academic standing; and
b) Placed on Academic Probation for a period of 12 months, within which time they are required to lift their GPA to 1.0 or above;
c) Required to undertake (if not previously undertaken), and successfully complete, A7101/A8501 Critical Thinking and Writing in their Probation year.

If, at the end of the academic probation period, a student’s GPA is 1.0 or greater, the student will be declared to be of good academic standing and may resume their studies as normal.

If, at the end of the academic probation period, a student’s GPA is still less than 1.0 the student will be asked to show cause in writing 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 units, facilitations, or other academic activities.

At the end of an academic suspension period, the student will be allowed to resume registering for units under a Second Academic Probationary Period of 12 months, during which time they will again be required to lift their GPA to at least 1.0.

Students not lifting their GPA to at least 1.0 at the end of a second academic probationary period will be asked to show cause in writing why they should not be excluded from further studies. Students excluded from further studies will:

a) Be withdrawn from the course in which they are currently enrolled, and
b) Not be allowed to enrol in any ACOM unit or course for a period of five (5) years.

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 show cause in writing why they should not be excluded from further studies.

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.
Summary of Provisions of ACOM’s Minimum Progression Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GPA ( \geq 1.0 )</td>
<td>Good Academic Standing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA (&lt; 1.0 )</td>
<td>Academic Probation (12 Months) Successfully Complete Tertiary Bridging Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA (&lt; 1.0 ) at end of Academic Probation</td>
<td>Academic Suspension followed by a second Academic Probation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA (&lt; 1.0 ) at end of a Second Probation (whether the Second Probation immediately follows Academic Suspension or is incurred on a separate occasion)</td>
<td>Student is required to show cause why they should not be Excluded from Further Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students incurs a third Academic Probation</td>
<td>Student is required to show cause why they should not be Excluded from Further Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.9 Graduation

In order to graduate, students must fulfil ALL unit requirements (including any unassessed work or related documentation) by the end of trimester 3 in the year prior to their intended graduation.

An Intent to Graduate form must be submitted to ACOM by the end of Trimester 2 in the year prior. This form can be found on the ACOM website: [http://acom.edu.au/intent-to-graduate-form](http://acom.edu.au/intent-to-graduate-form)

9.10 Academic Misconduct

9.10.1 Definitions

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

(a) *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.

(b) *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.

(c) *Fraud*

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

(d) *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.

(e) 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.

(f) 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.

9.10.2 Reporting and Managing Academic Misconduct

(a) Reporting an Incident of Academic Misconduct
A complaint may be made against any person enrolled as a student of ACOM whether proceeding to an award or not. Any person who has direct knowledge of academic misconduct may make a complaint in writing to the Dean of Learning and Teaching. Where appropriate, the Dean of Learning and Teaching will refer the complaint to the ACOM Academic Board, who will set up an Academic Misconduct Committee to investigate. If the Dean of Learning and Teaching is the complainant, or otherwise involved with the complaint, the procedures will be carried out by the College Principal.

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

Complaints against persons formerly enrolled with ACOM should be made under the provisions of the SCD Misconduct Procedures, which can be found on their website: http://scd.edu.au/about/policy-procedures/7-0-student-matters/

(b) Managing an Incident of Academic Misconduct
The Academic Board shall, as required, appoint an Academic Misconduct Committee of three persons who will determine a complaint referred to it by the Dean of Learning and Teaching. 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 Institutions of the SCD may be appointed to the Academic Misconduct Committee.

The 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.

Having considered the evidence before it, the Academic Misconduct Committee shall make its findings on the balance of probabilities, and shall report its findings in writing to the complainant, the person against whom the allegation is laid, and the Dean of Learning and Teaching, who will be responsible for implementing the decision of the Committee. The Dean of Learning and Teaching will report the outcome of any academic misconduct complaint to the ACOM Academic Board and the SCD Academic Board.

Records of the making and resolution of a complaint about academic misconduct shall 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 shall be placed on the person’s file. A person’s academic transcript shall not contain any reference to academic misconduct as the reason for a course result or other record. In general, information about established complaints shall be kept confidential. The Dean of Learning and Teaching is authorised to inform other educational institutions of an established complaint of academic misconduct if the Dean of Learning and Teaching considers it appropriate to do so.
9.10.3 Penalties for Academic Misconduct

Depending on the severity of the misconduct and the previous record of the student involved, an Academic Misconduct Committee may:

(a) Dismiss a complaint.
(b) Find a complaint established and impose no penalty.
(c) Find a complaint established and admonish the person.
(d) 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 trimester.
(e) 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.
(f) 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 trimesters.
(g) 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.
(h) Find a complaint established and impose a combination of the above penalties.

A person who is suspended may not enrol in another Member Institution of the SCD while the suspension is in force without the express permission of the Academic Board of the SCD.

9.10.4 Appeals

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 the 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 (see http://scd.edu.au/about/policy-procedures/7-0-student-matters/ )
9.11 Student Grievances

9.11.1 Student Grievance Policy

ACOM has a responsibility under legislation to ensure that students are not subjected to discrimination, harassment, vilification, victimization, or other forms of unfairness. The ACOM Student Grievance Policy provides a mechanism for addressing grievances, without prejudice, arising out of any kind of situation or process which adversely affects the student.

The College appoints both a Grievance Officer and a Student Advocacy Officer from amongst their staff, with defined and differentiated roles in the management of student grievances. The services of the Grievance Officer and the Student Advocacy Officer are provided free of charge to the student.

9.11.2 Student Grievance Procedures

The Grievance Officer is the first contact for a student who seeks advice and information concerning the grievance process and this officer will facilitate and document the process and make referrals as necessary. If a grievance is not resolved through discussion facilitated by the Grievance Officer (in consultation with the Principal if necessary), a student enrolled in a Sydney College of Divinity program may pursue the matter further through the agency of the SCD Grievance Handler.

The Student Advocacy Officer will provide personal assistance and support for the student throughout the grievance process. The Student Advocacy Officer ensures that the student has full information about the process and appropriate advice as needed throughout the process. The Student Advocacy Officer refrains from discussing details with anyone but the student unless the student requests otherwise, and is tasked solely with supporting the student to achieve a just and proper outcome.

As a Member Institution of SCD, ACOM follows SCD’s Grievance Policy and Procedures, full details of which can be found on the SCD website: http://scd.edu.au/about/policy-procedures/7-0-student-matters/

9.12 Saving Clause

Notwithstanding the provisions of any policy in this handbook, the Dean of Learning and Teaching may vary or waive the provisions of any policy if, and with the concurrence of the Academic Board, it is the opinion of the Academic Board 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.