

The Mission, Objectives, Values and Vision of the Australian College of Theology

Mission

The Australian College of Theology (ACT), as a cooperative partnership of the Anglican Church of Australia and Christian theological colleges, each with its own church and agency stakeholders, will

- (1) exercise leadership in providing programs of demonstrable quality in Christian theological education, and other disciplines related to Christian ministry, including undergraduate degrees and masters coursework and research degrees up to doctoral awards,
- (2) assist affiliated colleges to deliver those programs and to maintain and improve institutional academic quality,
- (3) support each affiliated college in the task of equipping students for the practice of Christian ministry,
- (4) facilitate each college's realisation of the full potential of its formational, educative and scholarly endeavour, and
- (5) foster a culture of research and scholarship across the ACT network.

Objectives

The College has the following objects:

- (1) maintain, review, monitor and improve stated quality assurance procedures as stipulated in course submissions and the ACT's quality management system,
- (2) monitor each college's attention to quality improvement, provision of resources (especially library and IT) that support scholarly and research endeavour, and continued compliance with ACT institutional approval criteria, and monitor student and graduate satisfaction,
- (3) ensure that there are continued efficiencies built into the operation of the College in compliance with state and federal educational bodies, and that the ACT secretariat, ACT boards and committees are held accountable for this,
- (4) support the network-wide brief of the Departmental Heads to foster collegiality and new research among the faculty of affiliated colleges, convene professional development workshops (especially on an inter-collegial basis), and promote a sense of partnership and cooperation in theological education and education for ministry on academic boards and committees, and
- (5) maintain and build on the resources required by colleges approved to deliver research degrees and monitor the quality of supervision necessary to mentor the next generation of Christian scholars, and provide financial support for faculty study leave, participation in conferences and publishable research.

Values

- (1) Christian—in common with our founding denomination, the Anglican Church of Australia, the College affirms the Christian faith as professed by the Church of Christ from its beginnings and in particular set forth in the historic creeds, namely the Nicene, Athanasian and the Apostles' creeds, and upholds the authority of the Old and New Testaments as being the ultimate rule and standard of faith given by inspiration of God and containing all things necessary for salvation.
- (2) Cooperative—the College is an intentional fellowship of confessionally diverse Christian colleges united in the common cause of maintaining quality in theological education.

(3) Supportive—the College exists to enhance the work of affiliated colleges, providing through its academic boards, committees, conferences, and departments a context in which the more established colleges and the leading academics can provide mentoring and guidance to those less experienced.

(4) Economical—the College offers economies of scale by means of its commitment to maintaining the accreditation of its suite of awards, provision and maintenance of a centralised data base, the convening of its Ethics Committee, reporting of statistical data to DEST, and its status as a HEP for the receipt of FEE-HELP assistance for students enrolled in its awards.

(5) Academically free—the College is committed to open, independent intellectual enquiry by faculty and students in line with its educational philosophy, to the development and maintenance of a culture of sustained and published research, and to engagement in teaching and research informed by modern scholarly developments in academic and pastoral theology.

(6) Ministry oriented—whether for the ministerial professions or for more casual and informal settings, the College seeks primarily to prepare men and women to serve the church and to disseminate the fruit of scholarly endeavour to the church and the wider community.

(7) Quality assured—the College is committed to promoting academic policies, institutional approval criteria, systems and procedures that are in line with the best tertiary practice and to ensuring that all affiliated colleges enjoy a parity of esteem within the network in accordance with their level of award approval.

(8) Responsive—the College is committed to seeking and acting upon feedback from churches, mission and pastoral care agencies, schools and others employing graduates of the College's courses with respect to the suitability of the academic and formational equipping for ministry provided by the courses of the College and involvement in the life of colleges.

Vision

(1) The College's courses, academic policies, and quality processes will be regarded by its institutional peers, by ordaining and ministerial accrediting bodies, churches, mission and pastoral care agencies and other employers of graduates and by the public as comparable with best practice in the self-accrediting tertiary sphere.

(2) The College's quality management system will be widely perceived as maintaining quality of the College's awards and inculcating a culture of commitment to improving quality within each affiliated college regardless of its level of award approval.

(3) Through its affiliated colleges, the ACT will attract increasing numbers of students seeking both to be prepared for professional as well as informal ministries and members of the general public desiring to be educated in the intellectual tradition of the church.

(4) The College will provide support for sustained research by the faculty of affiliated colleges approved to deliver the coursework and research degrees of the College, and will be known as a provider in which there is quality supervision and a high concentration of library and technical resources supporting critical engagement with scholarship.

(5) The ACT will add value to the operations of its affiliated colleges through (a) efficiencies with respect to its provision of a web-based data base, (b) the managing of the processes leading to the accreditation of new and existing awards, (c) compliance with the audits conducted by AUQA and state agencies, and (d) the reporting of statistical data to DEST via the HEIMS regime.

(6) The College will be in a position to secure self-accrediting status and modified university title in accordance with the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes (July 2006).