

COURSE HANDBOOK

GRADUATE DIPLOMA OF APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCE

OVERVIEW

The Graduate Diploma of Applied Social Science is a dynamic course that equips you in helping others in a professional and ethical manner	Program Director	Sharon Garro
	AQF Level	AQF Level 8 (Postgraduate)
	Qualification	Graduate Diploma
	Subjects	8
	IELTS	6.5
	Languages of Instruction	English
	CRICOS Code	093684G
	ASCED Code	090513
	Accreditation	Self-accredited (<i>last reviewed in 2025</i>)
	Course Length	1 year full-time; up to 3 years part-time

This dynamic course develops your understanding of a broad range of social issues, along with best practice support and communication skills, equipping you to help others in a professional and ethical manner. You will be trained by exceptional academics and leaders from the industry who will support and encourage you in your studies. With a focus on applied social science, there is flexibility to select subjects based on an desire to upskill in a particular area of interest, such working with those impacted with grief or trauma, those with mental health support needs or working with children and families.

This course provides an advanced body of knowledge and professional application for graduates in a variety of applied social science contexts. Graduates may find employment in churches, not-for-profit and mission-focused organisations, community service-orientated positions, and positions that require research skills and critical thinking.

COURSE HANDBOOK

AC GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

Christian Worldview

A knowledge of the Christian story, derived from the Scriptures and tradition of the church. An awareness of the implications of this story for self-identity in the context of local and global communities. This includes a commitment to engage with alternate worldviews, showing appreciation of the values and perspectives of others.

Leadership

The ability to provide effective Christian leadership to individuals, groups and organisations, demonstrated in the capacity to influence and enable others to accomplish worthwhile objectives which contribute to the human good and the kingdom of God. This includes seeking to emulate the example of Jesus Christ in serving and empowering others.

Integrity and Justice

The ability to apply a Christian worldview in the diverse situations and responsibilities of life, and to exercise faith, hope, love and generosity as prevailing attitudes. This includes the active promotion of the gospel, social justice, equality, mutual respect and an ecological ethos.

Communications

The ability to communicate effectively to a range of audiences, in appropriate contexts using high levels of verbal, written and technological skills. This includes visual and media literacy, numeracy, rhetoric and persuasion.

Personal and Social Skills

Demonstrate relational skills that incorporate the flexibility for both independent and collaborative situations. This includes personal and group organizational skills, conflict management and resolution, as well as the ability to value and respect the opinions of others.

Critical and Creative Thinking

A capacity for critical and reflective thinking that is explored not only individually but within a community context. This includes a capacity to be creative and to research, analyse and resolve problems in innovative and prophetic ways.

Professional Knowledge

Maintenance and use of knowledge about a discipline or field, involving theoretical, conceptual and methodological elements. This includes striving continually and independently to secure further knowledge and where appropriate, defined professional skills.

COURSE HANDBOOK

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Specification	Level 8: Graduate Diploma	AC Learning outcomes	AC Graduate Attributes
Knowledge	Graduates of a Graduate Diploma will have advanced knowledge within a systematic and coherent body of knowledge that may include the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills in a new or existing discipline or professional area	Demonstrate ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepen their knowledge of counselling theory and practice in order to operate as an independent professional within their chosen profession. • Demonstrate the capacity to manage the self-care, professional conduct and currency of both themselves and those under their leadership 	Christian Worldview Critical and Creative Thinking Professional Knowledge
Skills	Graduates of a Graduate Diploma will have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cognitive skills to review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge and identify and provide solutions to complex problems • cognitive skills to think critically and to generate and evaluate complex ideas • specialised technical and creative skills in a field of highly skilled and/or professional practice • communication skills to demonstrate an understanding of theoretical concepts 	Demonstrate ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge pertaining to the social sciences and counselling and their integration. • Be responsible and accountable for their own learning and practice • Think more critically, generate and creatively evaluate complex ideas. • Operate professionally at a more highly skilled level • Effectively communicate understanding and complex knowledge to a variety of audiences. • Plan, supervise and evaluate the work of others. 	Christian Worldview Leadership Integrity and Justice Communication Personal and Social Skills Critical and Creative Thinking Professional Knowledge

COURSE HANDBOOK

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Specification	Level 8: Graduate Diploma	AC Learning outcomes	AC Graduate Attributes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">communication skills to transfer complex knowledge and ideas to a variety of audiences		

COURSE HANDBOOK

GRADUATE DIPLOMA OF APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCE

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Specification	Level 8: Graduate Diploma	AC Learning outcomes	AC Graduate Attributes
Application of knowledge and skills	<p>Graduates of a Graduate Diploma will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to make high level, independent judgements in a range of technical or management functions in varied specialised contexts.• to initiate, plan, implement and evaluate broad functions within varied specialised technical and/or creative contexts• with responsibility and accountability for personal outputs and all aspects of the work or function of others within broad parameters	<p>Demonstrate a high level of autonomy and personal development in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-awareness and the ability to be self-evaluative• Self-care, professional conduct and the need to keep current in their field• Self-organisation and well-developed judgement and adaptability• Those attributes that prepare them for membership advancement in their chosen professional association• Interpersonal relationships with superiors and sub-ordinates	<p>Christian Worldview</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Integrity and Justice</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Personal and Social Skills</p> <p>Critical and Creative Thinking</p> <p>Professional Knowledge</p>

COURSE HANDBOOK

COURSE STRUCTURE (CURRENT)

This course structure applies from Semester 2, 2023 onwards.

The course structure is based on two semesters (each of 13 weeks duration, plus a study week), with four subjects taught in each semester. It comprises:

- 4 compulsory core subjects
- 4 elective subjects

To qualify for award of the degree of Graduate Diploma of Applied Social Science a candidate shall complete at least 80 credit points, including satisfactory completion of the core subjects noted below.

CONTENT OF THE COURSE OF STUDY		CREDIT POINTS
CORE SUBJECTS	ACA401 Faith and Purpose SSC400 Foundations in Social Science Research and Writing SSC410 Psychology of Emotion and Wellbeing SSC413 Interpersonal Communication Skills	4x10
ELECTIVES	4 subjects taken from any accredited Level 8 or 9 Social Science subject offered by AC and guided by the Program Director (except professional placement units, and SSC519 Professional Accountability).	4x10
OTHER PROTOCOLS OF THE COURSE	Students must complete at least 2 subjects (20 credit points) at 500 level or above. This course does not include professional placement.	
BRIDGING/ NESTED COURSES	There are no nested courses within the Graduate Diploma of Applied Social Science. Students who have not met the entry requirements for this program may choose to complete the Bachelor of Applied Social Science.	

For information on the teaching faculty, please visit our [website](#).

COURSE HANDBOOK

COURSE STRUCTURE (PREVIOUS)

This course structure applies to students admitted prior to Semester 2, 2023.		
<p>The course structure is based on two semesters (each of 12 weeks duration, plus a study week), with four subjects taught in each semester. It comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 compulsory core subjects• 4 elective subjects <p>To qualify for award of the degree of Graduate Diploma of Applied Social Science a candidate shall complete at least 80 credit points, including satisfactory completion of the core subjects noted below.</p>		
CONTENT OF THE COURSE OF STUDY		CREDIT POINTS
CORE SUBJECTS	SSC400 Foundations in Social Science Research and Writing THE401 Christian Worldview SSC500 Professional Practice SSC519 Professional Accountability or EXP550 Practicum B	4x10
ELECTIVES	4 subjects taken from any accredited Level 8 or 9 Social Science subject offered by AC and guided by the Program Director.	4x10
OTHER PROTOCOLS OF THE COURSE	Must have the appropriate police checks and/or approvals for working with children before they may undertake EXP subjects. Students must complete at least 2 subjects (20 credit points) at 500 level or above.	
BRIDGING/ NESTED COURSES	There are no nested courses within the Graduate Diploma of Applied Social Science. Students who have not met the entry requirements for this program may choose to complete the Bachelor of Applied Social Science.	

Graduate Pathways

Students who have successfully completed this course may progress into one of AC's Master level courses. Graduates are advised to contact the Future Students Team for information on eligibility requirements for further study.

COURSE HANDBOOK

Career Opportunities

Graduates may find employment in churches, not-for-profit and mission-focused organisations, community service-orientated positions, and positions that require research skills and critical thinking, as well as positions in counselling, pastoral care and community work.

Work-Integrated Learning

Work-Integrated Learning may be undertaken through various Professional Practice and Professional Experience subjects at AC. These subjects seek to create a direct linkage between the learning, skills and values engaged in lectures, and the reflection which occurs when these are applied in real-life settings. These work-based training subjects comprise of instruction, academic assessment and a placement in a workplace for each subject.

To qualify for the award of the Graduate Diploma of Applied Social Science, a candidate will complete at least one subject (10 credit points) of Professional Practice. Students are usually required to find their own workplace/ employer/ mentor to be approved by AC. In some cases, a new aspect within a student's current paid employment may be suitable as a work placement.

For further information related to Work-Integrated Learning please see the Professional Practice Handbook on Moodle or contact our [Student Support](#) team.

COURSE HANDBOOK

ADMISSION CRITERIA

Academic Entry Requirements

Applicants with Recent Secondary Education

This course of study requires the completion of a higher education qualification by an authorised institution. Applicants with recent high school education only are not eligible for direct entry into this course.

Applicants with Vocational Education and Training Study

This course of study requires the completion of a higher education qualification by an authorised institution. Applicants with a Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualification only are not eligible for direct entry into this course.

Applicants with Higher Education Study

Applicants whose highest level of study enrolment since leaving secondary education is a higher education qualification must demonstrate the completion of a Bachelor degree or higher (or equivalent) by an authorised institution for admission into this course.

Applicants with Work and Life Experience

This course of study requires the completion of a higher education qualification by an authorised institution. Applicants who have not completed formal higher education study are not eligible for direct entry into this course.

For further information about AC's provisional entry criteria, please see:

- [AC's Admissions Requirements](#)
- [Higher Education Provisional Entry Policy](#)
- [Admissions Policy](#)

COURSE HANDBOOK

Essential Requirements

Applicants are required to submit a personal statement addressing specified criteria as outlined on the Application form, including minimum two referees who can indicate the candidate's capacity and suitability for the course.

Applicants may be required to attend a pre-admission interview with the Program Director to determine suitability for the course and profession.

English Language Proficiency

Overseas students are required to demonstrate their English proficiency skills. Such students admitted into our programs must attain an overall IELTS (or equivalent) score of 6.5. IELTS (with of 6.5, with a score of not less than 6.0 in any of the four skill areas,) is not required for applicants who have undertaken five years of required higher education study (or equivalent) in English from an approved country or who have completed a Certificate IV or higher qualification awarded in English under the Australian Qualification Framework by an authorised institution or registered training organisation.

Applicants are encouraged to contact the [International Student Office](#) if they are unsure of the equivalence of their English language proficiency test scores.

Special Admissions Pathways

AC's [Admissions Policy](#) details the special admission pathways for our courses of study. The Special Admission Pathways are evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Program Director. A student's admission requirements may be reconsidered on educational disadvantage grounds, including but not limited to:

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, where the normal HSC entry path has not been followed;
- socioeconomic reasons (such as low-family income or poor living conditions);
- learning or language difficulties;
- disrupted schooling;
- physical disability;
- serious family illness or excessive family responsibility;
- geographical isolation of home and/or school;
- completion of a prescribed program of non-award study (four subjects or 40 credit points) with an overall GPA of 1.8 or better.

For a full list of educational disadvantage grounds, please see AC's [Admissions Policy](#).

COURSE HANDBOOK

DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

AC is committed to providing a learning environment that is free from discrimination on the basis of income, age, disability, social and ethnic background, location or gender. AC endeavours to increase opportunities for people of all backgrounds to participate in training programs, and implement programs that take into account the specific needs of participants. AC encourages students to inform AC of any disability, medical condition or learning need that may impact on your studies to arrange a study plan that best suits your needs.

HOW TO APPLY

Once you have chosen your course of study, you will need to apply direct to AC. Applications typically close 3 weeks before semester commences.

All AC application forms are completed online. There are different forms depending on the level of study you are applying for and the location of your course.

Further information on How to Apply and access to AC's Application Forms is available on our [website](#).

Credit transfers and recognised prior learning (RPL)

You may be entitled to credit for prior learning, whether formal or informal. Formal learning can include previous study in higher education, vocational education, or adult and community education. Informal learning can include on the job learning or various kinds of work and life experience. Credit can reduce the amount of study needed to complete a degree.

For further information about credit and recognition of prior learning please see AC's [Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#) or contact our [Student Support](#) team.

HOW TO ENROL

Once you have returned a signed copy of your Letter of Offer to accept your place at AC, you will be invited to enrol in your specific subjects in the next academic period. Students are advised to consult their timetable (can be found [here](#)), and contact the [Student Support Team](#) for tailored academic advice before completing the enrolment form.

Applications for credit transfers or recognised prior learning will be communicated to you once they have been processed.

COURSE HANDBOOK

STUDENT SERVICES

Student Support Team

AC's Student Support Team exists to ensure you get from Orientation Day to Graduation Day with a smile on your face!

Academic Support

- Tailored academic guidance
- Assessment variation to accommodate disabilities, medical conditions and/or learning needs
- Exam reader/writers
- One-on-one tutoring and small group workshops for face-to-face and distances students
- Physical libraries
- Access to online journal databases
- Access to eBook resources
- Resources are also provided online for self-development

Non-Academic Support

- Pastoral Care
- Chaplains
- Professional counselling
- Careers guidance
- On –campus childcare*
- Extra-curricular and community services
- SRC – The Student Representative Council
- Recreation areas

Student Life

All students can take part in:

- mission trips and community service projects
- weekly chapel services
- lunches and gatherings on campus
- opportunities to hear or present research
- masterclasses to take your skills and knowledge to the next level
- social events both on and away from campus
- exchange programs with other colleges and universities around the world

...and much, much more! To find out what is happening near you or to get specific details just contact the Student Support Team:

Email: studentsupport@ac.edu.au

Phone: (02) 8893 9005

<https://www.ac.edu.au/current-students/>

COURSE HANDBOOK

STUDENT PROFILE

The table below gives an indication of the likely peer cohort for new students at AC. It provides data on students that commenced study and passed the census date in the most relevant recent intake period for which data are available, including those admitted through all offer rounds and international students studying in Australia.

Applicant background	Reporting Year: 2024	
	Number of students	Percentage of all students
(A) Past higher education study (includes a bridging or enabling course)	<5	N/P
(B) Past vocational education and training (VET) study	N/A	N/A
(C) Work and life experience (Admitted on the basis of previous achievement other than the above)	N/A	N/A
(D) Recent secondary education:		
• Admitted solely on the basis of ATAR (<i>regardless of whether this includes the impact of adjustment factors such as equity or subject bonus points</i>)	N/A	N/A
• Admitted where both ATAR and additional criteria were considered (<i>e.g. portfolio, audition, extra test, early offer conditional on minimum ATAR</i>)	N/A	N/A
• Admitted on the basis of other criteria only and ATAR was not a factor (<i>e.g. special consideration, audition alone, schools recommendation scheme with no minimum ATAR requirement</i>)	N/A	N/A
International students	N/A	N/A
All students	<5	100%

Note: "<5" – the number of students is less than 5.

N/A – Students not accepted in this category.

N/P – Not published: the number is hidden to prevent calculation of numbers in cells with less than 5 students.

ATAR-based offers only	ATAR
Highest rank to receive an offer	N/A
Median rank to receive an offer	N/A
Lowest rank to receive an offer	N/A

Note: "<5" – the number of students is less than 5.

Note: This table relates to all students made an offer on the basis of ATAR alone or ATAR in combination with other factors. Students admitted into a course of study based on a Special Admission Pathway or otherwise not based on their ATAR are not included in this table.

COURSE HANDBOOK

WHERE TO GET FURTHER INFORMATION

ac.edu.au

AC's [website](https://ac.edu.au) is the best place to discover what's happening at AC and explore our courses, campuses and support services. If you are not yet an AC student, our [Future Students](#) team are here to help find the right course for you!

Moodle

Once you begin your studies at AC, you will use [Moodle](#) as your Learning Management System (LMS) to access all your subject content, the AC Academic Handbook, Study Skills and Textbook Information. New Students can also use Moodle to view our Induction Videos.

International Students

Nothing beats the experience of being part of our community and participating in our classroom discussions! Alternatively, for students who decide to study from their home country, AC brings education to you by offering many subjects and degrees by distance education allowing you to study from anywhere in the world. Flexible delivery means that you will have access to our e-Learning platform which provides resources, podcasts, online forums and tutor assistance that allows you to complete your studies from your home country.

Further information about International Students, including the application process, international recognition of AC courses of study and FAQ's, is available on our [website](#).

Alternatively, our [Future Students](#) team are available to answer any questions you may have about your requirements as an onshore or offshore International Students at AC.

QILT

Thinking about higher education institutions and study areas? Wish you could ask someone about their experience? The [QILT website](#) helps you compare official study experience and employment outcomes data from Australian higher education institutions.

TEQSA National Register

The purpose of the [TEQSA National Register](#) is to be the authoritative source of information on the status of registered higher education providers in Australia.

Complaints and Grievances

If you are unsatisfied with the outcome of your application, AC's [Complaint and Grievance Resolution Policy](#) outlines the procedure for resolving a complaint or grievance.