

COURSE HANDBOOK



Alphacrucis University College

DIPLOMA OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

OVERVIEW

As a chaplain, you can make a difference in the lives of others. Chaplains help people work through life issues, assist in times of crisis and provide a safe place for people to share their story	Program Director	TBC
	AQF Level	AQF Level 5 (Higher Education)
	Qualification	Diploma
	Subjects	8
	IELTS	5.5
	Languages of Instruction	English
	CRICOS Code	094095K
	ASCED Code	091703
	Accreditation	Self-accreditation (<i>accredited in 2025</i>)
	Course Length	1 year full-time; up to 4 years part-time

The Diploma of Community Services provides an introductory body of knowledge and skills in the discipline area of community services. The program is designed to produce graduates who can apply integrated technical and theoretical community service concepts in a broad range of contexts from a Christian worldview, as well as embody integrity, professional knowledge and social skills, making a positive contribution to society.

The Diploma of Community Services introduces students at a foundation level to the sources and content of the discipline of community services and provides training which emphasises vocational application in community based work. Graduates will have cognitive and communication skills to identify and analyse a range of ideas and perspectives in community based contexts, specialist technical and creative skills to express those ideas, and will be able to demonstrate an ability to apply a body of knowledge in a range of contexts. Students will perform complex technical operations in real-life community work contexts with personal responsibility and autonomy, and will demonstrate an ability to plan, design, implement and evaluate approaches to chaplaincy problems and requirements.

AC is committed to providing academic pathways for students. The course of study allows flexibility for students who may wish to start with a short undergraduate course before committing to the Bachelor of Applied Social Science or for students who need to exit the Bachelor program earlier than intended, due to unforeseen personal or professional reasons.

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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.

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

Specification	AQF Level 5	AC Learning Outcomes	AC Graduate Attributes
Knowledge	Graduates of a Diploma will have: technical and theoretical knowledge and concepts, with depth in some areas within a field of work and learning;	Demonstrated: - general understanding of key issues, recent scholarship and practices within chosen discipline area of community services, consistent with a Christian worldview; - technical and theoretical understanding of research principles and methods, and knowledge of research approaches used in the discipline area of community services.	Christian Worldview Professional Knowledge
Skills	Graduates of a Diploma will have: - cognitive and communication skills to identify, analyse, synthesise and act on information from a range of sources; - cognitive, technical and communication skills to analyse, plan, design and evaluate approaches to unpredictable problems and/or management requirements; - specialist technical and creative skills to express ideas and perspectives; - communication skills to transfer knowledge and specialised skills to others and demonstrate understanding of knowledge;	Demonstrated ability to: - identify, analyse and synthesise theoretical knowledge in the discipline area of community services; - examine a complex problem or management requirements using appropriate methodologies and theories from the discipline area of community services; - analyse and synthesise ideas and theories from other disciplines related to the discipline area of community services; - communicate effectively and creatively ideas and perspectives to peers and general audiences in diverse contexts.	Leadership Integrity and Justice Personal and Social Skills Communication Critical and Creative Thinking

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

Specification	AQF Level 5	AC Learning Outcomes	AC Graduate Attributes
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Diploma will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with depth in some areas of specialisation, in known or changing contexts; • to transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical and/or creative skills in a range of situations; • with personal responsibility and autonomy in performing complex technical operations with responsibility for own outputs in relation to broad parameters for quantity and quality; • with initiative and judgement to organise the work of self and others and plan, coordinate and evaluate the work of teams within broad but generally well-defined parameters.	Demonstrated ability to: • articulate questions or issues and apply the knowledge and skills developed within the discipline area of community services to develop appropriate solutions; • work independently, responsibly and with the level expected in a broad range of professional and community services contexts; • collaborate in team projects to make a positive contribution toward social issues; • undertake self-reflection and evaluation of performance for the purpose of vocational development.	Christian Worldview Leadership Integrity and Justice Personal and Social Skills Communication Critical and Creative Thinking Professional Knowledge

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COURSE STRUCTURE (CURRENT)

This structure applies to students admitted into the Diploma of Community Services from Semester 1, 2026		
The course structure is based on two semesters (each of 13 weeks duration), with four subjects taught in each semester. It comprises: • 40 credit points of compulsory core subjects; and • 40 credit points of electives. To qualify for award of the degree of Diploma of Community Services a candidate shall accrue an aggregate of at least 80 credit points, including satisfactory completion of the core subjects noted below.		
CONTENT OF THE COURSE OF STUDY		CREDIT POINTS
CORE SUBJECTS	ACA001 Faith and Purpose SSC020 Foundations of Community Services SSC021 Foundational Communication Skills SSC022 Professional Placement – Community Services	4 x 10
ELECTIVES	SSC111 Case Management SSC010 Understanding Trauma SSC011 Understanding Addictions SSC012 Methods of Youth Work SSC013 Chaplaincy Ministry (dual MIN013) SSC015 Group Work SSC115 Community Development SSC116 Community Engagement	4 x 10
SPECIALISATION	There are no specialisations.	
RULES OF PROGRESSION	Students must complete at least 4 units, including the 3 core units (ACA001, SSC020, SSC021) prior to commencing the placement (SSC022)	
OTHER PROTOCOLS OF THE COURSE		
PRE-REQUISITES FOR SPECIFIC SUBJECTS	Pre-requisites are noted on the subject outline. Students must have completed the pre-requisite to enrol in the subject. Must have the appropriate police checks and/or approvals for working with children.	
BRIDGING/ NESTED COURSES	There are no nested courses within this course of study	

For further enrolment and course progression, please email chaplaincy.support@ac.edu.au.

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Graduate Pathways

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

Career Opportunities

Graduates of this course of study may find employment in a relevant occupational field, such as: community and professional organisations; mission-based or not-for-profit organisations or educational institutions that require skills in creative and innovative thinking.

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 this course, a candidate will complete at least 1 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.



ADMISSION CRITERIA

Academic Entry Requirements

Applicants with Recent Secondary Education

Applicants admitted on the basis of their *recent secondary education* must demonstrate the completion of NSW Higher School Certificate (or the completion of the interstate or overseas equivalent qualification and result) for admission into this course.

Applicants with Vocational Education and Training Study

Applicants whose highest level of study enrolment since leaving secondary education is a *Vocational Education and Training (VET)* course must demonstrate the completion of an AQF Level 4 Certificate IV or higher by an authorised institution or registered training organisation for admission into this course.

Applicants with Higher Education Study

Applicants whose highest level of study enrolment since leaving secondary education is a complete or partially complete *higher education* qualification must demonstrate the completion of an AQF Level 5 Higher Education Diploma (or higher) by an authorised institution for admission into this course.

Applicants with Work and Life Experience

If you are under the age of 21 at the time of commencement, you can apply to a prescribed program of non-award study on the basis of provisional entry, and complete the provisional entry qualifying period to become a full candidate of this course.

If you are over the age of 21 at the time of commencement, you can apply for admission into this course on the basis of provisional entry, and complete the provisional entry qualifying period to become a full candidate.

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

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

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 5.5 (with no score below 5.0 in any of the four skills areas). IELTS (or equivalent) 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.

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

Essential Requirements

Statement of Intention: A Statement of Intention (Minimum 200 words explaining why you would like to be considered for entry into this course. Please include mention of relevant practical experience such as ministry/community service that you have participated in).

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](#).

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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](#)), review their Academic Advice Sheet 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.

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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: 1300 228 355

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

**Not available at all campuses*

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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	Full Year Intake: 2023 (Chaplaincy)	
	Number of students	Percentage of all students
(A) Past higher education study (includes a bridging or enabling course)	N/A	N/A
(B) Past vocational education and training (VET) study	<5	N/P
(C) Work and life experience (Admitted on the basis of previous achievement other than the above)	<5	N/P
(D) Recent secondary education: • Admitted solely on the basis of ATAR (regardless of whether this includes the impact of adjustment factors such as equity or subject bonus points)	N/A	N/A
• Admitted where both ATAR and additional criteria were considered (e.g. portfolio, audition, extra test, early offer conditional on minimum ATAR)	N/A	N/A
• Admitted on the basis of other criteria only and ATAR was not a factor (e.g. special consideration, audition alone, schools recommendation scheme with no minimum ATAR requirement)	N/A	N/A
International students	N/A	N/A
All students	<5	N/P

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.



WHERE TO GET FURTHER INFORMATION

ac.edu.au

AC's [website](http://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.