

COURSE HANDBOOK

OVERVIEW

BECOME A THOUGHT LEADER		
The PhD program builds on AC's growing research profile, to equip students to be independent researchers and make a substantial contribution toward advancement of knowledge and practice within their chosen field	Program Director	Professor Johannes Luetz
	Level	AQF Level 10 (Postgraduate)
	Qualification	Doctoral Degree (Higher Degree Research)
	Subjects	1 (240 credit points, PhD Thesis)
	IELTS	7.0
	Languages of Instruction	English
	CRICOS Code	089244M
	ASCED Code	091703
	Accreditation	Self-accreditation
	Course Length	3 years full-time; Up to 10 years part-time

Alphacrucis University College's Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program offers the opportunity for original research in the broad fields of Theology, Business, and Education. The program is designed to equip candidates as independent researchers who make a substantial contribution to advancing knowledge and practice in their chosen discipline.

Building on AC's rapidly growing research profile, our PhD program is supported by exceptional faculty and research mentors, many of whom are recognised as international leaders in their fields. By joining our research community, you will be supported to pursue innovative ideas and contribute to global conversations in scholarship, professional practice, and society.

We invite you to consider undertaking your PhD with us, in a learning environment shaped by academic excellence, collegial support, and Christian values.

Competitive research scholarships are available, awarded on the basis of the strength of the proposed research and/or demonstrated financial need. Each application is assessed carefully on its individual merits.

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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.

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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.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Specification	AQF Level 10 Doctors Degree (Research)	AC Learning outcomes	AC Graduate Attributes
Knowledge	Graduates of a Doctoral Degree will have: • a substantial body of knowledge at the frontier of a field of work or learning, including knowledge that constitutes an original contribution; • substantial knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to the field of work or learning.	Demonstrated: • critical, innovative and systematic understanding of a substantial and complex body of knowledge that makes an original contribution to a particular area in the field of specialisation such as Systematic Theology, Biblical Studies, History, Ministry, Business, Leadership, Communication, Education, Educational Leadership or Theological Education; • advanced and expert knowledge of scholarship and recent developments in the area under consideration; • sophisticated understanding of advanced research principles and methods, and substantial knowledge of specific research approaches used within the field of Theology, Business and/or Education.	Christian Worldview Critical and Creative Thinking Professional Knowledge

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

Specification	AQF Level 10 Doctors Degree (Research)	AC Learning outcomes	AC Graduate Attributes
Skills	Graduates of a Doctoral Degree will have: • cognitive skills to demonstrate expert understanding of theoretical knowledge and to reflect critically on that theory and practice • cognitive skills and use of intellectual independence to think critically, evaluate existing knowledge and ideas, undertake systematic investigation and reflect on theory and practice to generate original knowledge • expert technical and creative skills applicable to the field of work or learning • communication skills to explain and critique theoretical propositions, methodologies and conclusions • communication skills to present cogently a complex investigation of originality or original research for external examination against international standards and to communicate results to peers and the community • expert skills to design, implement, analyse, theorise and communicate research that makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge	Demonstrated ability to: • autonomously engage in critical reflection, analysis and synthesis of the body of theoretical knowledge related to a particular area within the field of Theology, Business and/or Education; • establish, incorporate and apply effective research methodologies to advance existing professional knowledge and/or practice; • design a research question that explores an original and complex issue and propose solutions; • communicate effectively the complexity of the original research and its findings to peers and the community; • provide creative responses to the contemporary challenges and new developments in research and scholarship within the field of Theology, Business and/or Education.	Christian Worldview Leadership Integrity and Justice Communication Personal and Social Skills Critical and Creative Thinking Professional Knowledge

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

	and/or professional practice		
Specification	AQF Level 10 Doctors Degree (Research)	AC Learning outcomes	AC Graduate Attributes
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Doctoral Degree will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with intellectual independence • with initiative and creativity in new situations and/or for further learning • with full responsibility and accountability for personal outputs • to plan and execute original research with the ongoing capacity to generate new knowledge, including in the context of professional practice	Demonstrated ability to: • apply the knowledge and skills developed within the selected research field to engage with new questions and find innovative and creative solutions; • work independently, responsibly and with the level of professionalism expected of an expert in the selected research field; • effectively design, implement and communicate a major thesis in the selected research field to contribute original knowledge and expertise to peers and the community; • develop an advanced level of integrative reflection which will inform and enhance professional practice.	Christian Worldview Leadership Integrity and Justice Communication Personal and Social Skills Critical and Creative Thinking Professional Knowledge

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COURSE STRUCTURE

The course consists of a minimum duration of 3 years (full-time equivalent), equivalent to 240 credit points. This comprises: 80,000 word research thesis in area of specialisation To qualify for award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy a candidate shall complete the minimum duration of 3 years (full-time equivalent).		
CONTENT OF THE COURSE OF STUDY		CREDIT POINTS
CORE SUBJECTS	RES803 PhD Research Thesis	240
RULES OF PROGRESSION	Refer to candidature policy and procedure	
OTHER PROTOCOLS OF THE COURSE	To be eligible to graduate, students must complete a minimum duration of 3 years (full-time equivalent)	
BRIDGING/NESTED COURSES	The Master of Philosophy is a nested course of the Doctor of Philosophy.	

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

Career Opportunities

Graduates of the PhD program are likely to find employment in the church, the business sector, the education sector, as well as in the community sector. Graduate employment opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- Lecturer
- Academic researcher
- Denominational leader
- Community/NFP/NGO worker
- Education administrator or teacher
- Business professional
- Overseas aid and development worker

ADMISSION CRITERIA

Academic Entry Requirements

Applicants with Recent Secondary Education

This course of study requires the completion of higher education study at an authorised institution. Recent secondary education graduates are not eligible for direct entry into this course.

Applicants with Vocational Education and Training Study

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

Applicants with Higher Education Study

Completion of an AQF Level 8 bachelors (honours 1 or 2a) degree in a relevant field, or equivalent

Demonstrated knowledge of research methodology equivalent to RES601 AND methodology in the area of specialisation

OR

Completion of an AQF Level 9 or above postgraduate qualification in a relevant field, or equivalent. This must include at least a 20 credit point research component and an overall GPA at least 2.8.

Graduates from a professional entry postgraduate award may be required to complete RES601 AND either BIB601, EDU601, THE601, HIS601, MIN601, BUS601, LEA601, COM601 or equivalent, with an overall GPA at least 2.8, as a bridging requirement.

Alternative Entry Pathway for Admission to the PhD

Applicants to the PhD must normally hold a prior research qualification, such as a Master's degree with a substantive thesis component of at least 12,000 words, or an Honours degree with a thesis. In exceptional circumstances, applicants without these qualifications may be admitted on the recommendation of the Graduate Research School Director, provided they can demonstrate equivalent research training through peer-reviewed publications, professional research outputs, or other verifiable evidence of research capacity. All applicants must demonstrate readiness for advanced independent research, normally evidenced through a research proposal and academic references.

- For further information about AC's Academic entry requirements, please see:
- [Higher Education Provisional Entry Policy](#)
- [Admissions Policy](#)

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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 7.0 (with no score below 7.0 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.

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

International Students must demonstrate knowledge of research methodology equivalent to RES601 and methodology in the area of specialisation.

In exceptional circumstances the Program Director may recommend that an applicant be admitted who does not have the qualifications specified. In this case, evidence must be supplied to verify that the applicant has equivalent qualifications based on academic and professional attainment and demonstration of an appropriate capacity for the research.

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 entry path has not been followed;
- socioeconomic reasons (such as low-family income or poor living conditions);
- learning or language difficulties;
- physical disability;
- 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](#)

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

If you are ready to apply, please complete the [HDR Application Form](#).

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.

STUDENT SERVICES

Student Support Team

AC's Student Support Team and Higher Degree Research Support Officer 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
- 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
- Extra-curricular and community services
- SRC – 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/student-support/>

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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	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	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.

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WHERE TO GET FURTHER INFORMATION

ac.edu.au

AC's [website](#) 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!

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.