



## FIELD EDUCATION POLICY

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<b>Approved by</b>	Academic Board
<b>Responsible Body</b>	Coursework Committee
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<b>Superseded documents</b>	Field Education Policy
<b>Related documents</b>	<a href="#">Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021</a> <a href="#">Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017)</a> <a href="#">TEQSA Guidance Note: Work Integrated Learning</a> <a href="#">TEQSA Guidance Note: Wellbeing and Safety</a>
<b>Student Lifecycle Stage/s</b>	All

### 1. PURPOSE

This Policy specifies (a) the aims and purposes of ‘field education’ and ‘in context’ units in ACT courses; and (b) the conditions and requirements of their delivery.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

**ACT** is the Australian College of Theology.

**Affiliated College** is an institution approved to offer an accredited higher education award of the ACT.

**AQF** is the Australian Qualifications Framework.

**Field education** is a learning process that takes place under the direction of a college coordinator/director through organized, supervised practical experience in ministry settings (normally away from the college campus).

**Field education coordinator/director** is the staff member of the students’ college of enrolment who oversees and is responsible for students’ field education.

**Fieldwork** is any off-campus activity for the purposes of teaching, research or other educational pursuits under the supervision of staff at an affiliated College.

**Fieldwork supervisor** is the person in the fieldwork setting appointed by the college field education coordinator/director to advise and observe students and report on their progress.

**Risk Assessment** identifies and documents hazards and associated risks that may occur in a ‘field work’ or ‘in context’ setting.

**Safe Practice** is the principles, perspectives and procedures that achieve respect and wellbeing for ‘the other’, particularly children.

**Study period** means the period in which a student is enrolled for study in an **ACT course**.

### **3. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all ACT units with 'field education' or 'in context' designation in the title, and any other units stipulating fieldwork or study tour as a component.

### **4. POLICY**

The ACT is committed to developing students' work-readiness and fostering the health, safety and welfare of those undertaking fieldwork activities. ACT Courses include units to prepare students for reflective practice in fieldwork and 'in context' settings by providing learning activities and experiences to develop informed perspectives on and practical skills for working in ministry situations, including safe and ethical practice.

### **5. PRINCIPLES – FIELD WORK**

#### **5.1 Overview**

5.1.1 Field education units seek to support some or all of the following:

- Facilitate the development in students of the Graduate Attributes of the ACT.
- Achieve the learning outcomes of ACT courses.
- Provide education and training in safe and ethical practice.
- Provide education and training in reflective practice.
- Expose students to the ways ministry is conducted and modelled and give them opportunity to experience a variety of ministerial tasks;
- Provide opportunities for students to perform ministry tasks under supervision;
- Facilitate students' learning of skills pertinent to ministry;
- Enable students to reflect theologically on ministry experience and develop skills for reflective practice;
- Help students identify their own abilities in ministry, explore possible ministry vocations and further spiritual and personal growth.

5.1.2 Regarding the general structure of a field education unit, typically about two thirds of the unit is field work, enabled and supported by a combination of approximately one third of:

- teaching;
- Preparation;
- Formal supervision;
- Reflection and assessment activities.

5.1.3 There is a limit of two field education units per course.

#### **5.2 Process**

##### **5.2.1 Risk Assessment**

- A documented Risk Assessment identifying and documenting any relevant hazards and/or associated risks, and any relevant mitigation processes is to be undertaken and approved by the College's Field Education Coordinator/Director, and distributed to all participants, prior to a 'field work' unit commencing.
- No participant should engage in fieldwork unless they have reviewed any relevant Risk Assessment.

### 5.2.2 **Scheduling**

- Field education experiences normally take place within the same timeframe as other course requirements.
- Arrangements for field education may be flexible but **are to** be compatible with students' other course requirements and be completed within the **study period where possible**.

### 5.2.3 **Field Education Coordinators/Directors – Responsibilities**

The responsibilities of the Field Education Coordinator/Director are:

- in conjunction with students, select and approve field work placements, ensuring that the placement has the capacity to deliver the expected experiences and achieve the unit learning outcomes;
- recruit and induct field work supervisors;
- reassign students and supervisors, as required;
- ensure that all students and field work supervisors possess current working with children checks, as required. and fulfil any other legislative requirements;
- ensure that the field work site has a WH&S policy and implements other risk management procedures prior to and during placements, and takes all reasonable steps to secure the safety and well-being of students;
- under the college's Critical Incident Policy, establish mechanisms to identify responsibilities for and manage critical incidents;
- ensure reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities;
- ensure that field work activity does not exceed the required volume of learning for field education units;
- monitor the progress of students and ensure that students have access to support during field work placements;
- manage grievances of students and supervisors according to the ACT; and
- keep completed records of these requirements at the Affiliated College.

### 5.2.4 **Work Supervisors – Responsibilities**

The academic standing of field work supervisors is subject to the field work supervisors meeting the standard of knowledge skills and qualification required for teaching and supervising field education units, and will work under the direction of a Affiliated College's Field Education Coordinator/Director.

Field Work supervisors will:

- have at least three years ministry or other relevant professional experience;
- have been inducted into the college's field education procedures by the Affiliated College's Field Education Coordinator/Director;
- be prepared to make a full commitment to the field work education of the student;
- when children are involved, possess a current working with children check.

A field work supervisor will:

- arrange regular meetings with the student for reflection, give the student fair and constructive feedback during the placement;
- be reasonably available to the student during the placement;

- report on the performance and progress of students to the Affiliated College’s field education coordinator/director;
- respect the confidentiality of the student at all times.

#### 5.2.5 **Field work placements**

- Field work placements may be arranged for a single student or for a group of students.
- Field work placements are to be directly related to the purpose and content of the field education unit in which students are enrolled.
- In selecting field work placements, students should be consulted for their preferences regarding the type of placement as well as specific placements.
- Student involvement in field work activities should not exceed the learning requirements of the field education unit.
- Field work placements are not employment, and the ACT does not expect that students will be paid for their involvement in field work activities.

#### 5.2.6 **Student Feedback**

The ACT will gather data on the quality of the supervision of the student field work experience through an independent student experience survey. The feedback will be provided to the College Field Education Coordinator/Director for the management and performance review of field work supervisors.

#### 5.2.7 **Legal matters**

- All students undergoing field work involving people under the age of 18 must have a current working with children check, which must be verified by the Affiliated College
- In the event of a critical incident, the student’s Affiliated College will accept legal responsibility if the Affiliated College is at fault for the incident.
- Affiliated Colleges are not required to provide malpractice insurance for students participating in field education, Such matters are the responsibility of the student.
- Where a field work placement is made at an organisation or other institution, it is the student’s responsibility to check with the individual organisation as to whether accident or injury cover is provided and what, if any, insurance cover they may have while undertaking field education.

## 6. PRINCIPLES – IN CONTEXT UNITS

### 6.1 **Overview**

6.1.1 ‘In context’ units generally comprise:

- Teaching;
- Preparation;
- Travel, meals and accommodation;
- Formal supervision;
- Reflection and assessment activities.

6.1.2 There is no limit to the number of ‘in context’ units which may be taken per course.

## 6.2 Process

### 6.2.1 Approval for 'in context' overseas study tours

- All 'in context' units require ACT approval before being advertised or offered to students.
- To seek approval for an 'in context' unit, Affiliated Colleges must submit a completed *Template for Study Tours* to the ACT Dean / CEO and the Director of Finance.
- The Template is to be submitted **by 15 September in the year preceding** the proposed Study Tour.

### 6.2.2 Additional requirements for 'in context' overseas study tours

All participants – staff, students, and any others – travelling overseas with an 'in context' unit must:

- Be over 18 years of age;
- Consult a medical doctor, registered in Australia, with experience in travel medicine. The consultation should take place at least six (6) months before departure wherever possible, to ensure adequate time for completion of required immunizations, if required, and the evaluation of protective measures against infectious diseases and other medical hazards that may be prevalent in the overseas location/s.
- Provide documentary proof of:
  - i. Current passport, with at least 6 months validity after the tour return date;
  - ii. Current visa/s for the country/ies listed for the tour;
  - iii. All requisite vaccinations for the country/ies listed for the tour;
  - iv. Travel insurance, including unlimited overseas medical and hospital cover, and repatriation to Australia.

6.2.3 Records of 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 are to be kept by the Study Tour leader and the Affiliated College.

## 7. RELATED LEGISLATION

[\*Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021\*](#)

## 8. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Changes made
1	Coursework Committee	04 October 2019	04 October 2019	
2	Academic Board	20 October 2023	20 October 2023	Updated to include 'in context' units, additional risk assessment and travel requirements

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