

CONFERRAL POLICY

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Approved by	Academic Board
Approval date	10 March 2023
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Review date	10 March 2025
Superseded documents	None
Related documents	<i>Academic Governance Policy</i>

1. PURPOSE

To establish the process of conferral of academic awards of the ACT, within the constraints of the Academic Governance Policy.

2. DEFINITIONS

ACT is the *Australian College of Theology Limited*.

AHEGS *Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement*, a document given to students with their academic transcript and testamur on graduation. The AHEGS provides information on the course of study undertaken, details of the student's academic achievements, information on the ACT as the higher education provider and details of the Australian higher education system.

Conferral refers to a degree or award being awarded. The terms graduation or conferral of an award are synonymous.

Surrender of documentation is when students are required to present or send specified physical documents to their primary sponsoring affiliated college for destruction.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students who are currently enrolled in an ACT award, and also to all applicants with prior study with the ACT.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

The Australian College of Theology is required by the *Australian Qualifications Framework* (Second Edition, January 2013) to have in place a conferral policy documenting the surrender of documentation. The policy also takes into account the place of the Chair of the Academic Board in conferring an academic award on behalf of the Academic Board, and also formalises the process for the analysis of graduates and the publication of the list of ACT graduates. This policy is in accordance with the *Academic Governance Policy* which delegates the Academic Board with the responsibility of conferring academic awards of the ACT, other than the honorary degree of Doctor of Theology (honoris causa).

5. PRINCIPLES

5.1 Conferral of awards

- 5.1.1 Upon successfully completing all requirements of a course of study which leads to an award, under the authority of the Board of Directors, the Academic Board of the ACT will confer the qualification. A student may not choose to delay the conferral of their qualification in order to complete further units subsequent to completing the requirements of the award.
- 5.1.2 Tuition fees for all units of study must be paid as part of the requirements of a course of study. If there is an outstanding debt relating to the tuition fees of a student's course, the award will not be conferred as not all requirements of a course have been completed.

5.2 Chair of Academic Board conferring awards on behalf of the Academic Board

- 5.2.1 In accordance with the Academic Governance Policy (A6[b]), the Chair of the Academic Board is authorised to confer any academic award of the ACT on behalf of the Academic Board.
- 5.2.2 In order to minimise the number of awards conferred by the Chair of the Academic Board, the Chair of the Academic Board will be requested to confer academic awards only when deemed necessary by the Dean or his/her representative.
- 5.2.3 Where the Dean or his/her representative requests that the Chair of the Academic Board confer an academic award, the reasons for the conferral of the award will be stated.
- 5.2.4 In accordance with the Academic Governance Policy (A7), in cases where the Chair of the Academic Board confers awards, these are to be reported for noting at the next meeting of the Academic Board.

5.3 Exit qualifications

- 5.3.1 Students enrolled in a course who wish to discontinue their studies and who have completed the requirements of another qualification (such as a nested award) may apply for early exit by requesting their units be transferred to another course. For example, a Bachelor of Theology student who wishes to discontinue studies may request an early exit by transferring units to the Diploma of Theology. If the student has met the course requirements of the new course, section 5.1 applies and the award will be conferred.
- 5.3.2 In relation to situations where students enrolled in a course who do not wish to discontinue their studies but wish to be conferred with another qualification (such as a nested award), the normal procedure is that the student would be issued a letter from the ACT confirming that the student remains enrolled in their primary course, and has met the requirements of a particular nested qualification which would be conferred if the student chose to discontinue their studies.

- 5.3.3 Students enrolled in a course who do not wish to discontinue their studies but wish to be conferred with another qualification (such as a nested award) are not permitted to apply for early exit while remaining enrolled in their primary course. Under exceptional circumstances (such as a student requiring conferral of a qualification for urgent visa situations), the ACT Registrar or Deputy Registrar may approve the transfer for the purpose of conferring a nested award.

5.4 Combined qualifications

- 5.4.1 In accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework, graduates of a combined qualification will receive a single transcript, AHEGS and testamur upon conferral. Generally, a combined qualification will require a lower total volume of learning than the equivalent of completing two individual awards, even when including credit transfer between those two individual awards.
- 5.4.2 Graduates of a single award who wish to transfer to another award while retaining their first qualification are limited by the Prior Learning Policy and Credit Transfer Rules regarding the proportion of the new course eligible to be received as advanced standing. For example, a Bachelor of Theology graduate who wishes to retain that qualification and then enrol in the Bachelor of Ministry is limited to receiving up to one third of the Bachelor Ministry as advanced standing.
- 5.4.3 Graduates of a single award who wish to transfer to another award and maximise the opportunity for credit transfer may choose to surrender their initial qualification in order to articulate to a higher course. For example, a Bachelor of Theology graduate who wishes to continue studying may choose to surrender the BTh and articulate to the combined Bachelor of Theology / Bachelor of Ministry. There would be no limit to the credit available into the higher course from the surrendered BTh.

5.5 The use of the ACT certifying seal / embossing tool

- 5.5.1 The certifying seal is the embossed logo of the Australian College of Theology, and is not limited to graduates. It is to be used when certifying student records or other relevant documents.
- 5.5.2 The certifying seal is to be embossed onto seals which are placed on each testamur. The testamur wording references the appearance of the seal of the Australian College of Theology. A testamur without the embossed seal is not certified or valid.
- 5.5.3 A certified transcript is one with an original signature from a senior staff member of the Australian College of Theology, and the certifying seal embossed over the signature.
- 5.5.4 If issued, an AHEGS should be certified in the same manner described for the transcript.
- 5.5.5 The certifying seal can be used for other purposes deemed necessary for certification if approved by a senior staff member of the Australian College of

Theology.

- 5.5.6 Unlike the Common Seal of the Australian College of Theology Limited, no register of use is required for the certifying seal.
- 5.5.7 Re-issued or additional certified documents for students are subject to the payment of fees to the ACT office, determined annually by the CEO and published in the ACT Handbooks.

5.6 ACT lists of graduates

- 5.6.1 The Australian College of Theology maintains a list of graduates. It is not a published document.
- 5.6.2 The ACT publishes lists of research degree graduates, as well as the abstracts of their theses.
- 5.6.3 The annual list of graduates will be established by the end of February each year, in order that ACT prizes may be awarded, and presented at affiliated college presentation ceremonies where appropriate.

5.7 Monitor the conferral of academic awards

At its first meeting of each year, the Chair of the Academic Board will present an analysis of graduates of the previous year. The Chair of the Academic Board will liaise with the ACT Office prior to this meeting in order to prepare his/her report to the Academic Board.

5.8 Surrender of documentation

- 5.8.1 There is no requirement for students to surrender graduation documents for destruction in cases where students wish to transfer to articulate to a higher award and seek to transfer credit from a conferred qualification into the higher award. An example of this is an Associate Degree of Theology graduate articulating to a Bachelor of Theology.
- 5.8.2 Graduates who wish to transfer to a different qualification other than articulating to a higher course will be required to surrender their graduation documents for destruction. An example of this is a Bachelor of Ministry graduate who wishes to be conferred with the Bachelor of Theology and receive higher credit into the BTh than is normally permitted from a BMin graduate.

5.9 Procedures

Conferral of awards

- 5.9.1 Each semester, the ACT Office and affiliated college Registrars will determine a list of students who will be eligible to graduate based on current enrolled units. If any student has an outstanding debt in relation to tuition fees, the ACT office is to be notified by the student's primary sponsoring affiliated college.
- 5.9.2 Upon the completion of units and release of results, the ACT Office will determine the eligibility of students to graduate. The names of graduands will

be sent to the Academic Board for conferral.

- 5.9.3 Upon conferral of the award, the ACT Office will update the student's course record to graduated and produce graduation documents.

Graduation documents

- 5.9.4 The conferral status of an award does not impact that individual's ability to take part in an affiliated college presentation ceremony.
- 5.9.5 After an award is conferred, the ACT Office will produce a transcript and AHEGS for each conferred qualification. These will be certified in the manner outlined in this document for certifying transcripts and AHEGS, and then mailed to the graduate at the address recorded in the ACT's student management system.
- 5.9.6 After an award is conferred, the ACT Office will produce a testamur for each conferred qualification. These will be certified in the manner in this document for the certification of testamurs. The testamur will be mailed to the graduates' primary sponsoring ACT affiliated college for the affiliated college Principal to co-sign. The testamur will then be presented to the graduate either at an affiliated college presentation ceremony. Alternatively, the graduate has the right to collect or request the postage of their testamur from their primary sponsoring affiliated college at any time after the award has been conferred by the ACT.
- 5.9.7 The testamur, transcript (record of results), and Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement state correctly:
- a) the name of the registered higher education provider issuing the documentation
 - b) the full name of the graduate
 - c) the date of issue
 - d) the name and office of the person authorised by the higher education provider to issue the documentation
 - e) if the qualification is recognised in the Australian Qualifications Framework, the testamur and/or the graduation statement is certified with either the logo of the Australian Qualifications Framework or the words, 'This qualification is recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework'. Documents for qualifications that do not align with a qualification that is recognised in the Australian Qualifications Framework are not described using the nomenclature of the Australian Qualifications Framework or implied to be a qualification recognised in the Australian Qualifications Framework or an equivalent qualification;
 - f) if any parts of the course of study or assessment leading to the qualification were conducted in a language other than English, except for the use of another language to develop proficiency in that

language;

- g) record of results also state the full name of all courses and units of study undertaken and when they were undertaken and completed; credit granted through recognition of prior learning; the weighting of units; the grades awarded for each unit of study undertaken; an explanation of the grading system used;
- h) AHEGS contain the information contained in a record of results, presented in a form that conforms with the requirements for an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement.

5.9.8 All graduation documents are only to be issued by Australian College of Theology; unambiguously issued by Australian College of Theology; readily distinguishable from other certification documents issued by ACT or its affiliated colleges; protected against fraudulent issue through the use of the college imprint seal and other relevant measures; traceable and authenticable through trackable unique document numbers; designed to prevent unauthorised reproduction through the use of the college imprint seal and other relevant measures, and replaceable by ACT through an authorised and verifiable process managed by the ACT Office.

The use of the ACT certifying seal / embossing tool

- 5.9.9 As determined by the Board of Directors, the authority to sign testamurs is placed with the Dean of the Australian College of Theology. This certification may be hand-written or electronically inserted to the document with appropriate fraud protection measures in place. If the Dean is unavailable, the Acting Dean / Interim Dean or Deputy Dean are authorised to sign testamurs.
- 5.9.10 Certified transcripts and AHEGS should be signed by the Registrar. This certification may be hand-written or electronically inserted to the document with appropriate fraud protection measures in place. Other approved parties are the ACT's Director of Academic Services, Dean, Acting Dean / Interim Dean, and Deputy Dean.
- 5.9.11 Although no register of use of the ACT's certifying seal is required, a record of testamurs is maintained, and AHEGS are saved when issued, in accordance with government requirements.

Fees for this service

- 5.9.12 There are to be no fees charged by the ACT or affiliated colleges for implementing the policy, other than re-issued or additional certified documentation for students. Each graduate will be issued with one set of certified documentation free of charge upon conferral.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility	Position
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Development of the policy	Registrar
Provision of advice in development of the policy	ACT Office, Chair of Academic Board
Distribution of the policy	Registrar
Implementation of/Advice concerning the policy	Registrar, affiliated college registrars
Monitoring of and compliance with the policy	Registrar
Evaluation and recommending amendment of the policy	Dean, EO of Academic Board, or Registrar

6 RELATED LEGISLATION

Australian Qualifications Framework (Second Edition, January 2013)

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021

7 REFERENCES

Guidelines for the Presentation of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (April 2013).

8 VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Changes made
1	Academic Board	2 August 2013	2 August 2013	-
2	Academic Board	29 July 2016	29 July 2016	Changes to surrender
3	Academic Board	8 March 2019	8 March 2019	Policy review, remove references to out-of-date procedures, simplify policy wording, re-arrange policy format, re-introduce requirements for surrendering of qualifications for irregular course transfers, clarify position on exit awards, state financial obligations of students prior to graduation, clarify ownership of graduation documents.
4	Academic Board	22 October 2021	22 October 2021	Policy review; update to signatories to certified documents
5	Academic Board	10 March 2023	10 March 2023	Policy review; add clarification on graduation documents in line with the expectations of HESF 1.5.4 to 1.5.9

Any hard copy of this electronic document may not be current as the ACT regularly reviews its policies. The latest version can be found online at <https://www.actheology.edu.au>