

# COURSE HANDBOOK



ALPHACRUCIS COLLEGE

## GRADUATE DIPLOMA OF COUNSELLING

### OVERVIEW

EQUIPING CHRISTIAN LEADERS FOR THEIR UNIQUE CALLING		
An introduction to counselling theories and practice, the Graduate Diploma offers a pathway to the Master of Counselling.	Program Director	Associate Professor Rebecca Loundar
	Level	AQF Level 8
	Qualification	Graduate Diploma
	Subjects	8
	IELTS	6.5
	CRICOS Code	Nil
	Accreditation	090513 Counselling
	Course Length	1 year full-time; up to 4 years part-time

AC is committed to providing academic pathways for students and the purpose of this AQF Level 8 graduate diploma program is to provide an introductory body of knowledge in the discipline area of counselling for students who have not met the requirements for direct entry into the Master of Counselling. The Graduate Diploma of Counselling is designed to produce graduates who embody integrity, professional knowledge and social skills, making a positive contribution to society.

The course draws on Alphacrucis College's expertise in social science and record of educating successful community service practitioners across a range of contexts. The course introduces students to a broad range of counselling technical and theoretical concepts from a Christian worldview. Graduates will be equipped with writing and research skills to prepare them for further study and will be able to demonstrate an ability to apply a body of knowledge across a range of contexts. Graduates will also have developed skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, and communication at a postgraduate level.

Graduates of the Graduate Diploma of Counselling may find employment in a range of professional and educational contexts, not-for-profit and mission-focused organisations, chaplaincy positions, community service-orientated positions, and positions that require research skills and critical thinking. Students seeking professional registration as Counsellors are encouraged to apply for the Master of Counselling as graduates of this Graduate Diploma of Counselling are not eligible to seek recognition by PACFA as registered Counsellors.

This course also allows flexibility for students who may wish to start with a shorter postgraduate course before committing to a Masters program or for students who need to exit the Masters 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**

Use and maintain knowledge about a discipline or field, in terms of theoretical, conceptual and methodological elements, striving continually and independently to secure further knowledge and where appropriate, defined professional skills.

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### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Specification	AQF Level 8	AC Learning outcomes
<b>Knowledge</b>	Graduates at this level will have advanced theoretical and technical knowledge in one or more disciplines or areas of practice.	Demonstrated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• integrated understanding of key issues, theoretical concepts and practices within counselling context;</li><li>• knowledge of various approaches used in counselling within the Christian worldview framework.</li></ul>
<b>Skills</b>	Graduates at this level will have advanced cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyse critically, evaluate and transform information to complete a range of activities</li><li>• analyse, generate and transmit solutions to complex problems</li><li>• transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to others</li></ul>	Demonstrated ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• critically apply knowledge developed for use in counselling;</li><li>• use critical, evidence-based and innovative thinking skills to analyse and synthesise ideas and theories from other disciplines related to counselling;</li><li>• effectively communicate ideas and proposed solutions to peers and general audiences;</li><li>• identify and critically evaluate new developments and scholarship in counselling.</li></ul>
<b>Application of knowledge and skills</b>	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, well-developed judgement and adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner or learner.	Demonstrated ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• articulate appropriate solutions to emerging counselling challenges;</li><li>• evaluate broad conceptual frameworks in counselling;</li><li>• critically and independently apply the knowledge and skills required as an informed counselling practitioner.</li></ul>

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### COURSE STRUCTURE

The course structure is based on two semesters (each of 13 weeks duration).

- 80 credit points of core subjects

To qualify for award of Graduate Diploma of Counselling 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
<b>CORE SUBJECTS</b>	SSC400 Foundations in Social Science Research Methods THE401 Christian Worldview SSC410 Psychology of Emotion and Wellbeing SSC412 Counselling Practice I SSC514 Counselling Practice II SSC516 Mental Health SSC510 Human Lifespan Development SSC517 Applied Counselling Theories	8 x 10
<b>SPECIALISATIONS</b>	Nil	
<b>ELECTIVE SUBJECTS</b>	Nil	
<b>RULES OF PROGRESSION</b>		
<b>OTHER PROTOCOLS OF THE COURSE</b>	Must have the appropriate police checks and/or approvals for working with children before they may undertake professional placement subjects.	
<b>PRE-REQUISITES FOR SPECIFIC SUBJECTS</b>	Pre-requisites are noted on the subject outline. Students must have completed the pre-requisite to enrol in the subject.	

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

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### Graduate Pathways

Graduates of the Graduate Diploma of Counselling may progress into AC's Master of Counselling. Students interested in this pathway are encouraged to notify the Program Director in the pre-admission interview.

### Career Opportunities

Graduates of the Graduate Diploma of Counselling may find employment in a range of professional and educational contexts, not-for-profit and mission-focused organisations, chaplaincy positions, community service-orientated positions, and positions that require research skills and critical thinking.

### Professional Recognition

Graduates of this course are not eligible to seek recognition by PACFA as registered Counsellors. Students seeking professional registration as Counsellors are encouraged to apply for the Master of Counselling.

### 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.

There are no work-integrated learning components in this course.

*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

This course requires the completion of an AQF Level 7 or above higher education qualification (or overseas equivalent) in any discipline. Applicants whose highest academic study is their recent secondary education are not eligible for direct admission into this course.

#### Applicants with Vocational Education and Training Study

This course requires the completion of an AQF Level 7 or above higher education qualification (or overseas equivalent) in any discipline. Applicants whose highest academic study is a VET qualification are not eligible for direct 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 7 bachelor degree (or higher) in any discipline.

#### Applicants with Work and Life Experience

This course requires the completion of an AQF Level 7 or above higher education qualification (or overseas equivalent) in any discipline. Applicants with no academic qualifications are not eligible for direct admission 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](#)

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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 6.5 (with no score below 6.0 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

All applicants must submit a Statement of Intention as part of their application for admission into this course. This should include the email and phone contact details for at least one professional referee.

The Program Director or delegated representative may conduct a pre-admission interview for applicants as part of their application for admission into this course.

All students are required to complete the new Working with Children Check online before they will be allowed to participate in professional practice subjects. Students will be classified as a 'volunteer'.

### 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;
- learning or language difficulties;
- physical disability;
- serious family illness or excessive family responsibility;
- 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](#).*

Special or alternative admission applicants may be required to provide a personal statement outlining their interest, motivation and reasons for selecting the course including details of educational and any employment background.



## 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](mailto:studentsupport@ac.edu.au)

Phone: (02) 8893 9005

<https://www.ac.edu.au/student-services/>

*\*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.

This course is expected to commence in 2021.

Applicant background	Full Year Intake: 2021	
	Number of students	Percentage of all students
<b>(A) Past higher education study</b> (includes a bridging or enabling course)	N/A	N/A
<b>(B) Past vocational education and training (VET) study</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>(C) Work and life experience</b> (Admitted on the basis of previous achievement other than the above)	N/A	N/A
<b>(D) Recent secondary education:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Admitted solely on the basis of ATAR (regardless of whether this includes the impact of adjustment factors such as equity or subject bonus points)</li> <li>Admitted where both ATAR and additional criteria were considered (e.g. portfolio, audition, extra test, early offer conditional on minimum ATAR)</li> <li>Admitted on the basis of other criteria only and ATAR was <b>not</b> a factor (e.g. special consideration, audition alone, schools recommendation scheme with no minimum ATAR requirement)</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A
	N/A	N/A
	N/A	N/A
<b>International students</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>All students</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>

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](https://www.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.