

PROPOSAL FOR A THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE FRCA

The consistory of Rockingham is greatly appreciative that Synod Baldivis recognised the responsibility given to the FRCA in the church order art. 17 for maintaining an institution for the training for the ministry and that deputies for the training for the ministry were mandated to: “To investigate the feasibility of establishing an FRCA Theological Seminary, and report back to next Synod.” Rockingham consistory believes, however, that this mandate does not go far enough. We believe that the feasibility of maintaining a theological college has been demonstrated and that the FRCA, in accordance with C.O. art. 17 should proceed with establishing our College without further delay or indecision.

BACKGROUND

It was already 25 years ago (synod 1990 art.125) that the FRCA mandated deputies “to alert the churches to the requirements and the possibilities for Australian based theological training in the light of changing circumstances” and “to appoint deputies ... to investigate the possibility of finding a facility to house some books.” This finally led in 2000 to deputies being mandated “to investigate the long-term possibility of setting up theological training in Australia, including the possibility of starting a theological library.” In 2003 investigation of “theological training by extension (IT)” was added to the mandate. In 2009 ideas became more concrete when deputies were asked “to investigate the feasibility of offering a basis year of theology to the churches in Australia, for the purpose of establishing a Theological University in the future.” After much effort was put in the attempt to persuade the Seminary in Hamilton to help facilitate such a proposal, Synod Baldivis unfortunately had to conclude that Hamilton has effectively closed the door to such an idea.

RESPONSIBILITY

At this point it is important to remember what has motivated our synods for the past 25 years in preparing for our own theological education. It is the mandate provided in our own church order art. 17 which states:

The churches shall support or, if possible, maintain an institution for the training for the ministry. The task of the professors of theology is to expound the Holy Scriptures and to defend the sound doctrine against heresies and errors, so that the churches may be provided with ministers of the Word who are able to fulfil the duties of their office as they have been described above. The churches together are obliged to provide for the professors of theology and for their widows and orphans.

Given that our churches have, under God’s blessing, attained about the same size as the churches in Canada were when the seminary in Hamilton began, is it not time to focus on the possibility of starting a theological college here in Western Australia? According to our church order, if this is *possible*, it *ought* to be done.

BENEFITS

Apart from exercising our responsibility as a federation of churches in accordance with our church order, the provision of our own theological college would solve a number of problems that our churches face.

In recent years it has become clear that a number of people potentially interested in studying theology with a possible view to the ministry may hesitate and even cancel those plans due to the difficulty and expense of having to study for four years on the other side of the world. Various reasons play a role, but this difficulty ought not to be downplayed. For some it is the hardship of having to live away from friends and family for four years on the other side of the world. For others it can be a reticence to accept financial support from the churches partly because of the moral obligation that goes along with it. If things do not work out in their studies, the moral obligation to the churches can weigh heavily upon them. These sort of considerations play a particularly acute role for potential students who are older and already have families.

In addition the provision of theological training here in Western Australia would maximise the potential

student population and, under our Lord's blessing, enable the FRCA to branch out in ways that have hitherto not been possible. In the current situation candidates for the ministry finish up in Canada, where they as students have also had the opportunity to make themselves known by speaking an edifying word and engaging in practical work in local congregations. Australian churches always end up needing to call men from Canada (any call within Australia simply leaves another vacancy which ultimately can only be filled via a call from abroad, usually Canadian). A theological college in Western Australia would not only alleviate this problem, but also in time potentially create a surplus of candidates which would in turn encourage the churches here all the more to consider home mission opportunities for suitable graduates.

Finally, the existence of a theological college in Western Australia would provide potential for offering courses tailored to the wider church community and in particular provide a potential platform for sound office-bearer training.

FEASIBILITY

a) student population

In consultation with deputies it has been ascertained that more than 20 young Australian men are either considering or actively preparing themselves for the ministry at the present time.¹ This provides a firm basis for seriously considering providing our own theological education. These men would not all be ready for theological college at the same time obviously, but should provide, under the Lord's blessing, a small but steady student population for the coming years.

b) library

To date some books (apparently, however, 80% in Dutch) have been accumulated and approximately AUD 108,000 has been raised to put toward a theological library. It ought to be realised that in recent years the internet has vastly changed the way theological libraries work. Institutions no longer need to subscribe to expensive hard copies of theological journals. Academic journals can now be subscribed to by institutions *en bloc* and accessed online (ATLASerials database) at a cost of approximately USD 7,000 p.a..² In addition there are vast academic theological resources and books freely available online, including much Reformed material. Finally, if necessary, to satisfy accreditation requirements, access to other theological libraries in the area can be negotiated (such as Trinity College, VOSE Seminary or Murdoch University).

c) buildings

Initially it is envisaged that strictly speaking no separate buildings or grounds would be needed. The student population would be small enough that the facilities of one of the churches would easily accommodate such classes held during the week.

d) accreditation

While in principle the only necessary accreditation for students is provided by the *classes* when they are examined for the ministry, it can be profitable to seek some kind of accreditation which is also recognised by the government. Not only does this assist in protecting academic credibility, but it would enable those students with the potential and desire for advancement to continue post-graduate studies elsewhere. Let it be clearly stated that even should accreditation not be possible, there remains a clear mandate for the establishment of our own seminary.

While it would prove very difficult if not well-nigh impossible – given our limited means – to achieve independent accreditation from the Australian government, smaller seminaries are able to gain accreditation by affiliating themselves to a larger institution. Such affiliation also has the advantage that all the administration work for degree granting is done by the accrediting institution.³

Here in Australia there are three colleges which form collegiates of smaller seminaries. Of these three, the

1 Rev. Anderson is currently teaching five classes in Greek and two classes in Hebrew to 17 students, who by no means represent all those interested in training for the ministry. Students taking these classes have been able to gain exemption from equivalent courses at UWA.

2 The cost is negotiated and a reasonable price would depend upon some kind of association with an accrediting institution.

3 They also offer the (free) provision of a web-based student database.

most suitable for a Reformed theological college is the ACT (Australian College of Theology).⁴ The accrediting institution has a process of assessment (up to 6 months) for which a fee is paid (AUD 1,000). Essentially the assessment is concerned with potential student numbers, physical resources (rooms and library) and human resources (teachers, librarian, administration).⁵ Detailed course plans⁶ are submitted for approval and the accrediting institution also receives samples of graded work. The ACT do not concern themselves with the doctrinal position of an affiliated theological college. As they themselves state:

... affiliated colleges are free to require enrolling students to qualify according to any or all of the following criteria: they may be required to give an account of their Christian commitment, and/or to express their willingness to conduct themselves in accordance with the affiliated college's Christian ethos, and/or to affirm its statement of faith, and/or to show evidence of prior experience in Christian leadership.⁷

The annual cost of such affiliation is at present AUD 2,404 p.a. for offering an M.Div. as well as 9.5 % of tuition fees, which are currently set by the ACT at approximately AUD 15,000 p.a. for an M.Div. programme of three years.⁸ The ACT is approved under the Higher Education Support Act 2003 to offer tuition loans to students under the FEE-HELP scheme. This means that students are able to defer the payment of tuition fees to FEE-HELP if they do not wish to pay fees upfront. In addition, any affiliated institution can elect to subsidise these fees for its students.⁹ However a theological college elects to set its fees (which may not be higher than what the ACT sets), the ACT requires payment of 9.5 % of the sum which the ACT itself sets as fees.

e) professors

Full-time staff would not be needed until students actually registered for the programme. It would, however, be advisable that at least one appointment be made before any registration so that a curriculum for the first year could be put together. Assuming that accreditation is desirable and that an FRCA theological college would seek to uphold the same standards as its sister institution in Hamilton in offering a 4-year Master of Divinity, then we would need to abide by the ACT's rules and guidelines in terms of teaching staff. Among other things it is stipulated that ...

Two thirds of the college's academic program should be taught by full-time academic staff or contracted part-time staff employed at 0.4 for at least three years. No less than one third of the units in any one department should be taught by such staff. ...

Colleges (or a consortium of colleges) seeking to offer the ACT's three year degrees and Graduate Diplomas ought to have at least four full-time teachers or their equivalent in an appropriate range of disciplines.¹⁰

Given that the ACT's M.Div. programme is rated at three years and we would be offering a four year programme, it should be possible to achieve accreditation with 75 % fulfilment of the above guideline, in other words, the equivalent of three full-time teachers. Ideally these teachers should be one academic level above that of the degree they are teaching, that is, in our case level 10 (i.e. a doctor's degree). Provision is

4 Of the other two, one is charismatic, and the other really only a collegiate within the limited area of Melbourne (The Melbourne College of Divinity). Currently the ACT has two affiliated schools in the Perth area, Trinity College and VOSE seminary. In other states there are small Reformed (e.g. Reformed Theological College in Geelong, VIC) and Presbyterian (e.g. Sunshine Coast Theological Seminary in Buderim, QLD) seminaries affiliated to the ACT, which is in origin Anglican. Rockingham consistory engaged in preliminary discussions with the secretary of the board of the ACT and received appropriate documentation upon which the following is based. The consistory has also met with two representatives from the board (including the CEO) who went through this proposal with us offering advice and minor corrections.

5 This may sound more daunting than it is in practice. It is possible for very small seminaries indeed to be affiliated, e.g. Sunshine Coast Theological Seminary, which until 2016 operated with 2 lecturers and 2 students from 2 rooms in a church, and an annual budget of \$ 70,000).

6 These are known as UQAFs (Unit Quality Assurance Forms).

7 Quoted from the document "Information for Institutions seeking Affiliation", p.1.

8 This effectively means, if we offer a 4 year degree in concord with Hamilton, that we would only be paying the ACT for three out of every four years, or (calculated another way) 75% p.a. of what is charged by them for a full-time course. Accreditation is reviewed every five years.

9 Our sister institution in Hamilton, for example, currently only charges students CAD 2,300 p.a.

10 Quotations taken from *Institutional Approval Criteria 2015*, pp.7, 13.

made for teachers with an M.Th. teaching foundational courses or even M.Div., however in the latter case proof by way of publications or experience must be demonstrated for capability of teaching the course.

It would seem wise to begin with two full-time professors and two or three part-timers. If necessary, one full-time professor and more part-timers could suffice, providing that half of the part-timers were at least 0.4 fte. Teaching staff do not necessarily need to be on-site. Digital lecturing (e.g. via skype) is also an acceptable alternative and this would enable us to consider part-time lecturers from abroad (e.g. recently retired or active professors from Hamilton) or even within the bond (e.g. Dr. W. Bredenhof from Tasmania). Part-time lecturers could be flown in to the Perth area once a year for 2-3 weeks intensive lecturing.¹¹

As far as availability of teaching staff goes, we have three ministers in the federation at the moment with post-graduate degrees in theology, namely Dr. R.D. Anderson, Dr. W. Bredenhof and Dr. R. Bredenhof, at least one of whom has considerable teaching experience at university level. Synod may also consider the possibility of calling suitable men from Canada to Australia. Several freshman courses could quite easily be assigned to other cooperating ministers without advanced degrees.¹² It may be suggested that those churches with ministers with higher degrees, who are not appointed to full-time professorship (whether that be Mt. Nasura, Launceston or Rockingham) allow their ministers – at no charge – to teach courses part-time for the theological college, perhaps up to 0.2 fte.

In principle any local church could become the calling church for a theological professor. The calling church would be responsible for pastoral oversight. Financing and oversight of his work in the theological college would initially be the responsibility of deputies. Accreditation would require that an academic board, which should meet for review at least twice a year be established.¹³ It would also be advisable that a board of management be established for the running of the college.

f) phased academic programme

A theological college would not have to begin until students actually registered. We could envisage a four year programme equivalent to the current set-up of the seminary in Hamilton whereby after a separate freshman year, the following three years of theology rotate. On this basis, the proposed theological college would operate one class in the first year and in the successive years would only be conducting two classes simultaneously. This system represents a considerable saving of manpower and resources. If class times for the successive years are separated (e.g. morning vs afternoon or evening), then the manpower requirement, at least initially, is even less – although more would be required of the professors.

It is proposed that the theological college seek to grant the degree of Master of Divinity¹⁴ (see under 'accreditation', above) and retain the same rigorous requirement for Greek and Hebrew as our sister institution in Hamilton. The outline of requirements for the ACT degree of M.Div. is attached as an appendix. This degree requires that students have completed a non-theological under-graduate degree before commencement of studies (as is also the case in Hamilton). Given that the degree courses only require three full-time years of study, there is ample scope for a full year of supplementary (possibly non-accredited) courses catering specifically to the Free Reformed churches, such as church polity, etc. In fact the ACT has indicated to us that we may design our own courses and submit them to the ACT so that all the courses we offer can be appropriately credited. This would enable us to grant the students, upon successful completion of four years of study, both a Master of Divinity and a Graduate Diploma of Divinity.

g) finances

Far and away the most expensive part of undertaking a theological college is the cost of salaries. It may be possible, at least in the first few years, to provide administrative assistance via voluntary labour. Currently in excess of AUD 221,000 p.a. is paid to the seminary in Hamilton.¹⁵ Already in 2009 Synod Legana in ground 7 of art. 17 had stated:

11 Rev. Anderson has conducted to good effect courses in New Testament for a seminary in Queensland in this way.

12 Rev. Anderson holds a Doctor of Theology from Kampen in the area of New Testament, Rev. W. Bredenhof holds a Doctor of Missiology from Reformation International Theological Seminary and Rev. R. Bredenhof holds a doctorate in New Testament from St. Mary's University College in London (UK). A recent survey of ministers in the Perth area, conducted by the previous deputies for the theological training showed an impressive response by local ministers willing to teach various different courses.

13 *Institutional Approval Criteria 2015*, pp.13, 18.

14 Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level 9.

15 As at 2016 the levy is \$82 per communicant member.

7. In the event that the FRCA do (at some time in the future) develop their own theological training, the contribution towards Canada could be reduced to allow the FRCA to absorb the cost of our own training costs. This would coincide with our reduced use of Canada's Theological College.

These funds indeed ought to be diminished in successive years and diverted to the cost of supporting our own theological college. In addition synod has set aside AUD 7,500 for a visiting professor from Canada with his wife and AUD 4,000 for attending the meeting of the Board of Governors in Hamilton. It should also be obvious that the fiscal support of needy students would be considerably lessened if students were able to remain in Australia. Many, if not most, could probably remain living at home. In the same way the costs incurred for students receiving practical training would be lessened.

A proposed budget for five years to outline the kind of costs involved has been attached as an appendix. This supposes a hypothetical start in 2019. The levy to churches is budgeted at AUD 82 per communicant member and this money is divided between our own theological college and a gradually decreasing amount to Hamilton.

It is proposed that we make full use of the Australian government's FEE-HELP scheme, charging students \$15,040 in fees p.a. which they can defer until they enter the workforce. In the meantime the theological college would receive these fees from the government. Additionally, it is proposed that the churches set up a scholarship fund to replace the needy-students fund and provide FRCA students with a scholarship of \$12,540 p.a. to be paid out to them when they are required to refund the government. In effect, the students will be asked to pay \$ 2,500 p.a. of the fees themselves, roughly the equivalent of what they would have been paying if they had attended seminary in Hamilton.

Although not ideal, in order to facilitate the starting of a theological college, we would suggest that a church near the locale of the theological college could be asked to consider contributing 50 % of the salaries of two professors to be called in exchange for their agreement to contribute pastorally to that church. Such a situation would, naturally, be an interim arrangement while on the one hand the college is still very small and on the other hand finances need to be carefully managed.

h) cooperation and liaison with Hamilton

It would seem wise that during the interim period there be good liaison and cooperation with the seminary in Hamilton. There would be obvious mutual benefits in such cooperation. After all the two institutions would remain sister institutions, able to support each other in various ways. It may even be suggested that during this period Hamilton be requested to use part of the funds paid to them to provide skype lectures for certain courses.

NAME

It would seem advisable right at the outset to consider options for the naming of the institution. A name ought not to be too cumbersome and it ought not only to reflect the purpose of the institution to *insiders*, but also to *outsiders*.

In a name one can describe the brand, product and location. Additionally use can be made of a creative name.

- Description – College, Institute, Seminary
- Brand/Focus – Reformed, Bible, Theological
- Place (optional) – Australian, of Australia

Most training centres of other churches in Western Australia are Colleges: Tabor College, Perth Bible College, Trinity College, Presbyterian Bible College, Harvest West Bible College, etc. Only a few institutions use the word 'seminary' or 'institute', e.g. St Patricks Seminary, VOSE Seminary and Wesleyan Institute in Australia. In the Australasian context, the word 'seminary' is frequently associated with Roman Catholic institutions. For these reasons it would seem advisable to use the descriptive word 'college'.

With respect to brand/focus, the word 'Bible' often suggests an institution which caters to 'layman' courses.

What is proposed here is an institution which offers a Master's degree. For this reason 'theological' ought to be the preferred term.

In describing the kind of doctrine espoused, it is questionable whether the word 'Free' in 'Free Reformed' conveys any information to *outsiders*. While as *insiders* we immediately think of the liberation in 1944 in Holland, *outsiders* would more naturally think of a kind of Reformed which is more 'free', namely *liberal*. This is the opposite of what we would want to convey! In the interests of not being cumbersome, we should probably consider restricting the doctrinal description to 'Reformed'. Any name could always be accompanied by a subheading in official documentation or letterheads, such as: *serving the Free Reformed Churches of Australia*.

By way of comparison, our sister churches in Canada describe their college as follows:

1. Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (letterhead)
2. Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches (financial statements)
3. Hamilton Theological College (common Australian description)

Finally account must be taken of several names that are already in use in Australia and therefore out of the question. This provides us with the following list of suggestions:

1. ~~Reformed Theological College~~ (already taken)
2. ~~Reformed Theological Seminary~~ (already taken)
3. Reformed Theological College of Australia
4. Australian Reformed Theological College
5. Theognosia Reformed College

Of these suggestions, 'Reformed Theological College of Australia' has the drawback that it could easily be confused with the existing *Reformed Theological College* in Geelong. 'Theognosia Reformed College', while creative, is not immediately transparent in its meaning ('theognosia' means 'knowledge of God'). This leaves 'Australian Reformed Theological College' as a working name for the time being.

PROPOSAL

To mandate the deputies for theological training as follows:

- a That synod mandate deputies theological training to oversee the development of a theological college for the training of ministers for the FRCA and seek the liaison and contribution of the seminary in Hamilton.
- b That deputies seek out two names for suitable appointment of professors and present these to a session of synod to be reconvened at an agreed later date.
- c That deputies coordinate a calling church for the professors.
- d That deputies coordinate appropriate premises either with a cooperating church and/or together with fund-raising by businesses within the church.
- e That deputies work towards accreditation with the ACT by:
 1. Ensuring that accreditation would not compromise the confessional integrity of the college in any way, and give account for this.
 2. Appointing a team for putting together an application for accreditation to the ACT, including proposals for an academic board and a board of management.
- f That the support granted to the Theological Seminary in Hamilton be successively diminished beginning from the start date of a theological college (at the earliest 2019) over a period of two years and that Hamilton be duly informed so that they also have time to make adjustments.

- g That collections for the library fund once again be started and that the academic board, once in place, be mandated to begin utilising these funds for an adequate library.

Grounds

- Art. 17 CO mandates that we as churches, if possible, provide our own training of ministers.
- With thanks to our Lord, and humble reliance upon Him, this possibility now appears to present itself.
- An Australian theological college would encourage more students from our churches to study for the ministry.
- An Australian theological college would provide the FRCA with an institution able to cater to other forms of theological training, for example, of office-bearers.
- An Australian theological college would provide more direct contact with theological candidates and stimulate and encourage opportunities in home-mission.
- Although it is recognised that accreditation is not essential for an institution for the training for the ministry, there are clear benefits of accreditation. These include access to FEE-HELP, ability of students to go on to higher education, and an appropriate profile of responsibility towards the outside world.

Australian Reformed Theological College

Income	Budget 2019	Budget 2020	Budget 2021	Budget 2022	Budget 2023
Church Assessments (1)	221,400	228,042	234,883	241,930	249,188
Student Scholarship (2)	21,600	36,153	51,560	67,858	85,088
Local Church contribution (3)	110,000	110,000	110,000	110,000	55,000
Gifts and Collections (4)	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Tuitions (5)	40,833	68,055	95,277	122,499	122,499
Total Receipts	593,833	642,250	691,720	742,287	711,775
Expenses					
Support to CRTS Hamilton (6)	132,840	91,217	0	0	0
Salaries - full-time professors (7)	220,000	220,000	220,000	220,000	220,000
Contract - part-time professors (8)	5,000	25,000	132,000	132,000	132,000
Contract - 'skype' professors (9)	0	0	20,000	20,000	20,000
Salaries - finance & management (10)	0	0	0	0	0
Salaries - administration	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000
Superannuation	23,180	23,180	23,180	23,180	23,180
Travel for part-time professors (11)	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
Insurances & Fees	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
Affiliation ACT	2,404	2,404	2,404	2,404	2,404
On-line books ATLA	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000
Lease and Outgoings (12)	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Cleaning & Maintenance	2,400	3,600	4,800	4,800	4,800
Supplies & general	4,800	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Electricity, water, phone & internet	4,800	4,800	4,800	4,800	4,800
IT services, web advertising	4,800	4,800	4,800	4,800	4,800
Equipment upgrades	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
Professional development	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000
Other Expenses	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000
Graduates scholarships (13)	0	0	0	100,320	100,320
Capital Expenses					
Office - Classroom Fit-out (14)	0	0	0	0	0
Total Payments	593,224	574,001	610,984	711,304	711,304
Surplus/shortfall	609	68,249	80,736	30,983	471
Cashflow	609	68,858	149,594	180,577	181,048

Note: No inflation or CPI allowed for
Notes (1-14) on pages attached

General Notes

The Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (CRTS) Annual Theological Training Levy to the Canadian Churches is currently \$82 per communicant member, plus 18% of its running costs are funded from Gifts, Collections and Womens Savings Action.

Proposed Levies for Theological Training and Student Support from the Australian Churches are; Theological Training; Levy of \$82 per communicant member.

Student Tuition Support; Levy of \$8 per communicant member, increasing by \$5 per annum to \$28 per communicant member by 2023. *Presently the church, of which the student is a member, also financially supports their own member student(s) on application. This will no longer be required.*

This proposal assumes the 'Needy Student Fund' is revamped to 'Student Scholarship' which pays 83.34% of tuition fees of all students from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia Federation.

The Student Scholarship levy is paid to the Australian Reformed Theological College (ARTC) which will be paid to the students on graduation.

Notes to the Budget

1. **Church Assessments** are based on a Theological Training Levy of \$82 per communicant member, as per Synod decision, Baldivis 2015.

We have assumed a 3% per annum growth in communicant members.

2. **Student Scholarship**, instead of 'Needy Students Fund' (which we believe has a negative inference) is paid to ARTC. We propose to increase this annual levy over 5 years from \$8 to \$28 to enable subsidising 83.34% of tuition fees of students from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia Federation. Our tuition fees will then be aligned with Canada's tuition fees.

We have assumed:

3 students in Year 2019

5 students in Year 2020

7 students in Year 2021

9 students in Year 2022 (2 graduates)

9 students in Year 2023

3. **Local Church contribution** is income from a church in the locality of the college contributing 1 professor's salary in exchange for sharing the 2 professors as pastors. We have assumed this for the first 4 years, reducing thereafter.
4. **Gifts and Collections** is to cover the shortfall of the College running cost. Our shortfall percentile, excluding cost of Building Lease or Ownership, is similar to Canada, which is also funded from Gifts, Collections and Women's' Savings Action.
5. **Tuitions** are \$15'040 pa which eligible students can access from the Government's Fee-Help. Tuition fees are paid to ACT, of which \$13'611 is paid to ARTC. Once the course is complete, students from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia Federation will have 83.34% of their fees reimbursed from the Student Scholarship Fund.

Australian Reformed Theological College Budget Notes v6.0.doc

6. **Support to CRTS** is for Year 2019, 60% of the agreed \$82 levy is paid to CRTS, and in the Year 2020, 40% of the agreed \$82 levy is paid to CRTS.
7. **Salary Package – fulltime** is budgeted for the 2 full-time appointments as required. In the case of a small Seminary, with part-time assistance, it is expected that our 2 full-time professors will have sufficient time to attend to pastoral needs in a church where the College is situated.

We have assumed no provisions for retirement above the retirement pensions which are provided by our Government.

8. **Contract professors** – it is expected that we require 2 or 3 part-time professors. These professors are expected to be sourced from ministers serving in Australian sister churches, and that at least for the first 2 years of operation, their consistories would release them for 20% of their time at no cost to the College. In years 2021 and beyond, it is expected that the College would contribute to the churches providing that service from their minister(s).
9. **Skype professors** – we'd like to work with Canada and her professors and use Skype with good quality technology. We have assumed that Canada will provide this service for several subjects free-of-charge for the first 2 years of operation, while we are still providing a substantial levy. From 2021, we have allowed to pay for these services, however, it may be possible to have a reciprocal arrangement using Skype lectures between the Canadian and Australian Colleges, negating our cost.
10. **Finance & Management** – we have made no budget allowance for this for the first 5 years of operation. It is envisaged this can be done on a volunteer basis, directed by a board.
11. **Travel** – Airline travel for intensive 2-3 week courses from Professors from Tasmania or Canada. It is expected that we would find suitable lodging within church member homes.
12. **Building Lease & Outgoings** – we envisage this will be covered by regular donations from business and financially able individuals (See Note 4)
13. **Graduate scholarship** - to enable subsidising 83.34% of tuition fees for students from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia Federation. (from whom we have collected this levy)
14. **Classroom fit-out** – we have assumed this will be provided free of charge by business and trades.

Budget Income Alternatives

There are numerous variations on how to derive Income. Following are several options for consideration.

This Budget - Option 1

Income from 'Gifts & Collections' of \$200'000 pa, and, Income from 'Local Church contribution' of \$110'000 pa, the Theological Training Levy will be **\$82 pcm**.

Option 2

If we reduce our Income from 'Gifts & Collections' to \$100'000 pa, the Theological Training Levy would be approx. **\$110 pcm**.

Option 3

If we delete our Income from 'Local Church contribution' for sharing the 2 professors as pastors, *with the exception of the first 2 years*, the Theological Training Levy would be approx. **\$100 pcm.**

Option 4

If we delete our Income from both 'Gifts & Collections' and 'Local Church contribution' for sharing the 2 professors as pastors, *with the exception of a special start-up collection for \$250'000, and, the first 2 years of Local Church contribution of \$110'000 pa*, the Theological Training Levy would be approx. **\$160 pcm.**

We recommend careful consideration of reliance on 'fundraising activity' for running costs.

MASTER OF DIVINITY (AQF LEVEL 9 MASTER DEGREE [EXTENDED], COURSE CODE 172)**Course Rationale**

The Master of Divinity introduces graduate students to the sources and content of the Christian story and message at an advanced level, and provides training which combines articulation of this story and message with their application and practice in the contemporary world. The course will include the *essential* research principles and methods used in Divinity as preparation for higher degrees in Theology and Ministry.

The course will be based on the disciplines by which knowledge of God is developed and articulated in the fields of:

- Bible and Languages (LA, OT, NT, BB)
- Christian Thought (TH, CH, PE)

It will also include units in the disciplines by which knowledge of God is applied to guide Christian practice in the three areas of the field of Ministry and Practice:

- Evangelism and Missiology (EM)
- Pastoral and Church Focused Ministry (PC)
- Developmental Ministry (DM)

Through elective units students can:

- Develop advanced understanding in the Bible and Christian Thought
- Develop particular ministry skills in the three areas of the field of Ministry and Practice

Admission Requirements**Academic Qualifications**

The ACT will consider an applicant for admission to the Master of Divinity if the applicant:

- (i) has graduated with or qualified for [at least] a bachelor degree or equivalent qualification in a non-theological discipline from an Australian university or other approved higher education provider; or
- (ii) has successfully completed study deemed equivalent to (i).

In addition to the above requirements, affiliated colleges may wish to consider other factors such as maturity and motivation, and the likelihood of satisfactory completion of the academic requirements of the course.

Language Qualifications for Non-English Speaking Background Applicants (NESB)

Candidates who (a) have an assessable qualification that was undertaken solely in English in one of a set of prescribed countries OR (b) who have been resident in Australia with English being the language spoken at home and at work for ten (10) or more years are NOT required to provide proof of English Language proficiency for consideration for admission to an ACT course. All other applicants MUST provide proof of English Language proficiency for consideration for admission to an ACT course. Such proof will normally be by provision of the results of an IELTS test (Academic Version).

For admission to the Master of Divinity course, the minimum IELTS result required is 7.0 overall with a minimum of 7.0 in reading and writing, and 6.5 in listening and speaking

Mature Age Entry

There is no mature age entry provision on the understanding that applicants are already graduates.

Course Structure

96 credit points over 3 years F/T or P/T equivalent (up to 9 years) at 500-600 level:

- 8cps Language (LA003A and LA003B; OR LA004A and LA004B)
 - 8cps Old Testament core (OT501 and OT502)
 - 8cps New Testament core (NT501 and NT502)
 - 4cps Church History core (from CH501 – CH505)
 - 4cps additional Church History. Students who took CH505 must complete either CH502 or an advanced level CH unit.
 - 16 cps in Old Testament and New Testament exegesis (at least 8 cps in original language)
 - 16 cps in Christian Thought (CH, PE, TH), including at least 12 cps in Theology at 600 level
 - 8 cps in Ministry and Practice (EM, PC, DM)
 - 24 cps Elective units
- As part of the above units (in elective section or otherwise), all students must complete:
 - - **690 8 credit point project; *or*
 - - **790 16 credit point project; *or*
 - - a capstone experience unit (see below)

Capstone experience:

The aim of the MDiv is to guide graduate students in a systematic manner to the acquisition of the body of coherent knowledge that is the classical discipline of theology as a means not only of preparing men and women for the responsibility of communicating Christian knowledge, but also for advance degrees in theology and ministry. It is a requirement of the AQF Level 9 Masters (extended) that graduates complete a substantial research-based project, a professionally focused project or a capstone experience.

A student having completed at least 64cps of the Master of Divinity would be eligible to complete a Capstone Experience. A generic set of learning outcomes and assessments related to capstone experiences are applied to individual units. Lecturers assess the Capstone Experience on a pass/fail basis, and the assessment/s would be moderated by the unit field moderator to ensure the learning outcomes had been met. Units could be taught as normal classes undertaking their usual assessment, while some students in the class could nominate to undertake the unit as a Capstone Experience, demonstrating how the material from the unit was utilised to achieve the learning outcomes of the Capstone Experience. A unit taken as a Capstone Experience would be coded using the same unit codes with the addition of a post nominal *, e.g PC634* Leadership in Christian Ministry; EM618* Ministry in a Culturally Diverse Context. In this way students will meet the AQF requirement to 'plan and execute a substantial research-based project, capstone experience and/or professionally focused project'.

A student can attend a normal class within a particular unit and nominate to undertake the unit as a Capstone Experience. The student's assessment for 4 credit points will be 6000-7000 words and needs to demonstrate how the material from the unit was utilised to achieve the learning outcomes, deriving its substance by drawing on and integrating across the three departments and the sum of the student's learning to date.

Integration

A Capstone Experience is primarily about integration of the key features of a student's learning within the three departments (up to the nine fields of study) previously undertaken and in forming a bridge from college study to the professional world. A student demonstrates the capacity to apply him/herself to a particular department (say Ministry & Practice) and synthesise learning from the other two departments (Christian Thought and Bible & Languages).

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of a Capstone Experience students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate integration of the key features of learning from all three departments undertaken in their study
2. Critically examine learning from Old and New Testaments, theology, history and other electives undertaken in Christian Thought and Ministry & Practice
3. Synthesise the application of knowledge, learning and practice into their specific assessment/s
4. Demonstrate the capacity to reflect upon personal maturity and self-development
5. Synthesise college learning experiences with the professional world towards work readiness

Assessments

The Capstone Experience is on a pass/fail basis. A student needs to complete 6000-7000 words at 4cps. This can be from one major assessment or two to three individual pieces. The kind of assessments available include, but not exclusive to:

Research orientated

- *Project-based learning*
 - specific project content to a specific goal with recommendations
- *Problem-based learning*
 - a specific problem to be solved to stimulate and situate learning
- *Case study analysis*
 - participated centred learning emphasis on collaboration, cooperation, self-observation and reflection
- *Leadership education*
 - explicit leadership skills development based on learned behaviour and skills providing a balance approach to work and life and self-awareness

Reflection on Practice orientated

- *Service learning*
 - participate in an organised service activity meets community needs impacting student's personal, attitudinal, moral, social and cognitive outcomes
- *Work placements*
 - a field placement undertaken as part of the unit of study, supervisor should monitor student's progress and assessment of student learning
- *Internships*
 - directly linked to the student's future professional world and unit of study developing a strategic focus on

- structured work based learning
- *Simulations or virtual learning environments*
 - learning to engage with industry and professional practice in a stimulated setting
- *Immersion experiences*
 - participant centred short-term field-based approach such as travel study tour, community projects

Plus the normal assessments of essay writing, reflective writing, class presentations, critical analysis, theoretical paper, report, seminar paper.

Learning Outcomes

In the following domains, Graduates of the Master of Divinity will be able to:

Discipline Knowledge and Understanding

1. Demonstrate up-to-date *extended* knowledge and understanding of ‘Divinity’, including the spiritual and ethical implications
2. Discuss the *essential* research principles and methods used in Divinity

Inquiry and Analysis

3. Utilize, and reflect upon *prior knowledge and experience*, and use and reflect critically on, current knowledge, ideas and practice in Divinity in inquiry based learning

Problem Solving and Integration

4. Integrate and synthesize *extended* learning and knowledge from *a wide range of sources and contexts* in the investigation of problems and issues in Divinity scholarship and practice

Research

5. Plan and execute a research project or capstone experience by asking questions and identifying problems and using appropriate Divinity research principles and methods

Communication

6. Present *extended* Divinity knowledge, ideas and principles to, and engage with, specialist as well as non-specialist audiences using a variety of formats

Teamwork and Professional Practice

7. As leader and in groups, apply *extended* understanding of Divinity in formal ministry contexts and the wider community

Engagement With the World

8. Bring *enhanced* professional and vocational capacity to engagement with the challenges of contemporary Christianity, society and the wider world

Continuous Learning and Professional Development

9. Demonstrate *readiness for research* at a higher level in capacity for wide reading, analytical rigour and independent thinking

Occupational Functions of Graduates

- (i) teacher or ordained minister in a congregation with responsibility for preaching, teaching, and preparing people for church membership,
- (ii) pastor with responsibility for providing leadership in various ministry and pastoral care contexts,
- (iii) leader able to take part in wider debates in the church, the denomination, or society with respect to interpreting and mediating the Christian tradition in the modern world,
- (iv) leader preparing for higher degrees in theology and ministry,
- (v) teacher of diploma level units in the graduate’s specialisation in a theological or Bible college.

Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes Acquired by Graduates

- (i) ability to interpret and critically evaluate the biblical deposit, especially those books which have played a crucial role in the development of the Christian tradition, with a comprehensive knowledge of their original context and their major themes and ideas,
- (ii) comprehensive and critical understanding of and ability to exegete biblical texts in their original language(s),
- (iii) comprehensive and critical understanding of the major theological tenets of the Christian faith which underpin any coherent theological world view and philosophy of ministry,
- (iv) skills in at least one area of pastoral ministry,
- (v) comprehensive and critical understanding of the historical conditions under which theological worldviews have developed and are being shaped today,
- (vi) openness to the tradition of published scholarship and the diversity of viewpoints which characterise that scholarship in the various fields of the discipline of theology as essential to understanding and respecting the discipline and as an integral part of the preparation for communicating the Christian tradition and contributing to the on-going enterprise of the community of scholars in the articulation and actualisation of the Christian faith.

Rules
<ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Students must not enrol in more than 20 cps in any one semester.(ii) No more than 40 cps of foundational level units (500 level) can be counted in a student's course of study. Biblical language units (LA0**) are not counted as foundational level units for this requirement.(iii) 600 level units with specific conditions may be taken when the pre-requisite or co-requisite or required units have been successfully completed and/or any co-requisite unit is taken concurrently.(iv) 700 level units may be taken once 64 cps have been successfully completed. Students can claim credit for up to two 700 level units (16 cps) in the Master of Arts (Theology) or Master of Arts (Ministry) from successfully completed 700 level units in their Master of Divinity program.(v) 25% (24 cps) of the Master of Divinity course must be taken in distinct graduate level units at 500, 600 or 700 level. Colleges are expected to verify that this requirement is met for each MDiv graduate.
Delivery Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Course may be completed by on-campus study in full, by off-campus study in full or by any mixture of that as determined by each college approved to deliver units in off-campus mode.(ii) A maximum of 32 cps may be taken in intensive mode.(iii) A maximum of 12 cps may be taken in Type B elective units.(iv) A maximum of 16 cps may be studied in DSC mode, including no more than 8 cps in any one field of study.