

ACADEMIC POLICY MANUAL

Revised: 19 January 2018



African Christian College

ACADEMIC POLICY MANUAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. ADMISSIONS POLICIES	4
B. ENROLMENT POLICIES.....	6
C. GRADUATION POLICIES	7
D. TEACHING & LEARNING POLICIES	9
E. RESEARCH GUIDELINES.....	17
F. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY	19
G. PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN POLICY.....	22

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Since African Christian College (ACC) exists to glorify God by equipping students for excellent service in God's Kingdom, it is necessary to maintain an acceptable academic policy comparable to other higher educational colleges and universities in Swaziland and Southern Africa.

According to Board Policy 1.0, Ends, one of the primary outcomes for graduates of our institution is academic excellence. Academic excellence comes through the intentional efforts of staff, faculty, and students throughout the learning process. This includes appropriate planning and work at every stage – from admissions through graduation.

Additionally, academic excellence is guided by accreditation standards and the practice of academic honesty and integrity.

This serves as a collection of academic policies guiding the institutions academic excellence. Staff, faculty, and students have a responsibility of ensuring that the dictates of this policy are adhered to the letter.

A. ADMISSIONS POLICIES

1. **PURPOSE** -----

African Christian College seeks to be an academic institution with accredited programmes and demonstrating academic excellence. The Admissions Policies outline the criteria, procedures, and expectations for potential students to be judged for admission and enrolment at ACC.

2. **ADMISSION** -----

To be admitted, applicants must meet all academic qualifications and personal qualifications as documented, reviewed, and approved by the Admissions Committee.

2.1 The Admissions Committee consists of at least three people and is chaired by the Admissions Coordinator. The Academic Dean must be a member of the committee.

2.2 If the Admissions Committee recommends acceptance of a student who does not meet all qualifications, then all exceptions must be documented and a rationale for acceptance submitted to the President. The President may accept or reject the Admissions Committee's recommendation.

3. **ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS** -----

As a Christian accredited college, ACC academically qualifies applicants under two categories:

3.1. **Academically qualified** -- To be eligible to enrol an applicant must have passed a minimum of six (6) subjects, including English language, with a grade of C or better.

- Grades must be reflected on Kingdom of Swaziland Form V Certificates, International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE/Ordinary Level Certificate), or comparable certificates from applicant's country
- ACC does not accept any subject with a Grade D.

3.2. **Mature Entry** -- Consideration for entry may be given to applicants who meet the following criteria:

3.2.1. Over the age of 25 years

3.2.2. At least 5 passes (grade of E or better) on the IGCSE or equivalent

3.2.3. Write a paper or examination to test academic and English ability

4. **PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS** -----

In addition to the above listed academic qualifications a prospective student must:

4.1. Respect ACC's Statement of Faith

4.2. Must be an active member of a specific congregation for at least the past two years. Rare exceptions for new Christians or special circumstances may be considered.

- 4.3. Must file a recommendation letter from church leadership
- 4.4. If working or previously employed, a traceable reference letter should accompany the application.

5. TRANSFERRING CREDITS -----

- 5.1. Students coming from accredited institutions may transfer credits for comparable subjects.
- 5.2. In addition to certified copies, an applicant must have an official transcript sent directly to ACC from the academic institution
- 5.3. Transfer credits will be forfeited if a student decides to withdraw from ACC.
- 5.4. ACC reserves the right to accept or reject any transfers.

6. DOCUMENTATION -----

Copies of all documents accompanying the application must be certified by a Commissioner of Oaths.

B. ENROLMENT POLICIES

1. PURPOSE -----

The enrolment policies outline the criteria for student enrolment. The policies and procedures here outline adequate progress, conditions for withdrawal and dismissal, and academic expectations when enrolled in a subject course.

2. PREREQUISITES -----

- a. Any required or recommended prerequisites will be set for course subjects throughout the curriculum.
- b. To enrol in a course subject, students must have successfully meet all the prerequisites.

3. REPEATING SUBJECT COURSES -----

- a. A student can retake a subject course under the following conditions:
 - i. If the course can be accommodated in the student's schedule
 - ii. The student must pay full course fees before being admitted into class. Financial aid does not fund repeats of subject courses.
- b. An entire class will not be allowed to retake a subject course.

4. WITHDRAWAL -----

- a. Students can withdraw their enrolment by submitting a written application to the Academic Dean.
- b. Upon acceptance, the student can apply for readmission within five (5) years and credits from the previous studies will be honoured.

5. DEREGISTRATION -----

- a. Failure of three subject courses will lead to dismissal.
- b. Failing any one subject course within the student's major will lead to dismissal.
- c. ACC expects its students to live in accordance to God's teachings. Violation of policies, rules, and standards as prescribed in the student handbook can lead to dismissal even if the student is passing academically.
- d. Deregistered students forfeit financial aid for currently enrolled classes and are not entitled to a transcript until they are cleared by the finance department and have surrendered all ACC assets.
- e. A student who has been deregistered may apply for readmission, but the nature of the offense and evidence of repentance will determine the granting of readmission.

C. GRADUATION POLICIES

1. PURPOSE -----

This policy sets out to define the conditions for successful academic completion and graduation from African Christian College. In order to successfully graduate, students must meet academic completion requirements, Christian character expectations, and financial obligations to the college.

2. ACADEMIC COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION -----

- a. Successful completion of the Bachelor of Theology degree may be granted to students who pass thirty-eight (38) of the prescribed forty (40) subject courses.
- b. Successfully pass a Bible examination. A student may retake the Bible exam no more than three (3) times.
- c. The degree can be awarded with the following remarks based on the total average of student academic performance:

REMARK	PERCENTAGE
Distinction	80% - 100%
Merit	60% - 79%
Pass	50% - 59%
Fail	Below 50%

3. CHRISTIAN CHARACTER REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION -----

We value the Christian character of our graduates more than their academic ability. To be considered for graduate, a student must meet the following requirements in addition to academic performance and financial obligations:

- a. A student must respect ACC's statement of faith
- b. **Church Participation** -- A student must have been actively involved in the congregational life and worship of the church.
 - i. A student must submit a written letter from that congregation acknowledging the student's membership and activities.
 - ii. ACC may visit, call, or contact congregations to verify activity and address any areas of needed improvement.
 - iii. Any falsification of a purported church activity will lead to immediate dismissal.
- c. **Character Review** – Students will be evaluated at least annually by faculty and staff on behavioural and moral character as witnessed in the classroom, within the campus community, and outside of ACC.
 - i. Students will receive this feedback each year during grade review.

- ii. Failure to show reasonable improvement and appropriate character may result in the student being denied to graduate even if the student has not violated any policies or rules outlined in the Student Guide.

4. FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS FOR GRADUATION -----

- a. Student financial obligations (including loans unless otherwise agreed at the time of the loan) must be cleared before proceeding to the next academic year.
- b. A student will not graduate or receive transcripts or any other certificate from the college without paying off tuition and all other financial obligations to the college.
- c. Before graduating, every student must successfully complete the check-out process and receive approval from the check-out offices. The check-out process will ensure:
 - i. All tuition, fees, loans, and debts are paid in full
 - ii. All ACC assets (including keys & library books) have been returned
 - iii. All damages beyond normal wear have been settled

D. TEACHING & LEARNING POLICIES

1. PURPOSE -----

One of the primary outcomes of graduates of African Christian College is academic excellence (Board Policy 1.0, Ends). To engage in academic excellence, it is imperative that faculty and staff work to ensure student learning occurs in the most effective way possible within our limited resources. This policy helps guide this process.

2. COURSE DESIGN PRINCIPLES -----

- 2.1. **Responsibility.** The responsibility for the instructional design for each subject course is the assigned lecturer(s) for the course. Lecturers are encouraged to collaborate with other faculty members, partners, and instructional design specialists to design the best possible course for student learning.
- 2.2. **Student-centred Learning.** Student-centred learning shifts the focus of instruction from the lecturer to the student. It puts the needs of the student – past experiences and future hopes – in the centre and uses approaches for students to develop problem-solving skills, a habit for lifelong learning, and critical thinking. Lecturers are encouraged to move away from being the centre of the learning process toward placing student learning at the centre.
- 2.3. **Content.** Course subjects should be organised in such a way that the units, modules, or topics are easily identified, relevant, and relate to course objectives. The essential content is determined by the lecturer based on the educational objectives, scope, and learning objectives of the course.
- 2.4. **Coursework Expectations.** All courses have 40 hours of classroom time allotted – this is true for semester-long, module, and midmester courses. In designing instruction, lecturers should expect three hours of outside class time for each hour of classroom instruction. Combined, each course expects 160 hours of learning time.
- 2.5. **Authentic Learning Experiences.** Courses should seek authentic learning experiences whenever possible. Authentic learning experiences are teaching strategies that provide real-world situations for students to engage in work that matters and requires competency development. This increases motivation and learning.
- 2.6. **Christian Bias.** Faculty approach disciplines with a bias and worldview influenced by their commitment to the Bible and the Christian life as it is primarily understood by the Church of Christ. This informs our scholarly framework and is not inferior or simply an additive to our fields of scholarship.
- 2.7. **Theological diversity.** Though our institution is rooted in the Stone-Campbell Movement and the Churches of Christ, our institution is respectful of various theological approaches and beliefs. Agreement is not necessary, but respect must be practiced throughout the learning environment.
- 2.8. **African Approach.** Though course study is informed with international scholarship and information, our courses focus heavily on Africa, African culture, and application to African contexts. Use of African scholars and resources is encouraged throughout courses.

- 2.9. **Gender-inclusion.** Gender sensitivity and inclusive language is considered essential in a global and ecumenical theological institution. Therefore, bible translations using gender-inclusive language are preferred for the academic setting. And gender-inclusive language and sensitivity should be expected in all academic assignments.
- 2.10. **Language of Instruction.** All subjects are taught in English because of the diversity of our student body.
- 2.11. **Research.** Students should be engaged in research-based learning using relevant, academic, and timely content. Presentations of research and attribution of use follows the APA Citation Style on all assignments, unless otherwise directed by the lecturer.

3. INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN -----

- 3.1. **Curriculum.** The curriculum of the college is designed to provide the breadth and depth necessary for students to learn what is needed, regardless of major.
- 3.2. **Scope.** Each course is set within the curriculum and has a defined scope. ACC adopts official Subject Course Descriptions (available in the Prospectus) that outlines the specific scope of each course – identifying the major concepts necessary and its place within the broader curriculum.
- 3.3. **Educational Objectives.** Educational objectives are identified for all students in the overall curriculum. These objectives should guide instructional design and implementation of courses.
- 3.4. **Learning Objectives.** Clear and relevant learning objectives must be identified for each subject course.
 - 3.4.1. Learning objectives must relate to the essential content, scope, and educational objectives of ACC. Each outcome should be observable, measurable, and done by students (not done by the instructor).
 - 3.4.1.1. Learning objectives are best written with an action word, learning statement, and criterion for measurement.
 - 3.4.2. Spirituality and theological reflection should be part of each subject's learning objectives.
 - 3.4.3. Krathwohl and Bloom's taxonomies of learning objectives include:
 - 3.4.3.1. Cognitive taxonomy categories (in escalating levels of aptitude): remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate, and create
 - 3.4.3.2. Affective taxonomy categories (in escalating levels of aptitude): receiving, responding, valuing, organisation, characterisation by value
 - 3.4.3.3. Psychomotor taxonomy categories (in escalating levels of aptitude): observing, imitating, practicing, and adapting
- 3.5. **Teaching Strategies.** Lecturers should seek to identify and use the most effective yet cost-effective teaching strategies for students to accomplish the learning objectives for the course. Teaching strategies should also consider the instructional design value for student-centred learning. Using varied instructional methods such as digital media, discussion, projects, research, groups, and authentic experiences are encouraged.

- 3.5.1. **Partnerships.** Lecturers are encouraged to develop new or utilise existing partnerships for learning. Examples include having students write for the African Christians devotional series in a Bible course, recording a radio spot for World Christian Broadcasting, or working with an NGO for real-world experience.
- 3.6. **Assignments & Activities.** Course assignments and activities should be related to the learning objectives of the course. Clear expectations and directions should be prepared for all assignments and activities.
- 3.7. **Evaluation.** Appropriate methods and strategies for learning evaluation should be part of the course design from the beginning and is often a starting point before identifying teaching strategies. Evaluation is more specifically addressed below.

4. SYLLABUS REQUIREMENTS -----

- 4.1. Each subject course must have a detailed syllabus prepared by the lecturer and approved by the Academic Dean.
- 4.2. A syllabus must be filed with Registrar before the start of each course.
- 4.3. Each syllabus contains the minimum content:
 - 4.3.1. College logo
 - 4.3.2. Subject title and classification
 - 4.3.3. Lecturer's name, contact information, and time-table
 - 4.3.4. Course description linked to college mission, vision, curriculum, and prospectus.
 - 4.3.5. Course Objectives
 - 4.3.6. Required texts and reading schedule
 - 4.3.7. Course requirements including detailed information on participation, discussion, group work, reading, projects, tests, and examinations. Requirements should clearly give deadlines and process for submission.
 - 4.3.8. Course Evaluation methods including weight of assignments
 - 4.3.9. Grading rubric for major assignments
 - 4.3.10. Classroom policies of the lecturer
 - 4.3.11. College policies
 - 4.3.11.1. Statement of respect of theological diversity
 - 4.3.11.2. Statement of gender-inclusion
 - 4.3.11.3. Statement of Academic Integrity
 - 4.3.11.4. Attendance and submission policies
 - 4.3.12. Bibliography for further research or study

5. STUDENT ATTENDANCE -----

- 5.1. Students are expected to attend all classes. Therefore, attendance must be recorded.
- 5.2. Tardiness is not allowed.

- 5.2.1. Students will be politely requested to leave class if they are late.
- 5.2.2. This will count as an unexcused absence. There are no exceptions.
- 5.3. Students absent for more than ten percent (10%) of the classroom time, whether through excused or unexcused absence, will fail the course.
 - 5.3.1. Rare exceptions for special cases may be granted only by the Academic Dean.
- 5.4. When absent for illness or emergency, a student may request an excused absence from the Academic Dean. If excused, the Academic Dean will record and provide a written excuse receipt to the student.
 - 5.4.1. Any unexcused absence will result in a 3% reduction in the student's final grade.
 - 5.4.2. Students who miss tests or examinations on account of illness may be allowed to write supplementary tests, only if those absences are excused by the Academic Dean.

6. STUDENT SUPPORT -----

- 6.1. Not all students will move at the same pace or level in the learning process. Lecturers should prepare for assisting such students.
 - 6.1.1. **Writing Centre.** Lecturers should encourage students identified as needing additional assistance with written assignments and research to the ACC Writing Centre. In some cases, lecturers may wish to require a student to attend the Writing Centre.
 - 6.1.2. **Outside Assistance.** Lecturers are also encouraged to offer and plan tutoring sessions outside of the scheduled class time to assist those needing extra attention or help to master course content. Office hours should be clearly communicated to students for individualised support.
 - 6.1.3. **Advanced work.** Students identified as excelling or with potential for more learning may need advanced, modified, or additional work in a course. Lecturers should consider such alternatives in ways that will not harm their final grade.

7. STUDENT WORK SUBMISSION -----

- 7.1. **Methods.** The lecturer decides the form for accepting assignments. Hard or soft copies are acceptable.
 - 7.1.1. **Plagiarism Software.** Lecturers are strongly encouraged to utilise our plagiarism detection software for assignment submissions. Such software has proven valuable and effective in reducing plagiarism and enhancing student work.
- 7.2. **On-time.** Assignments must be submitted before the time and date due.
- 7.3. **Late assignments.** Late assignments should receive a penalty of five (5%) percentage points for each calendar day late. Late assignments will not be accepted after five (5) calendar days.
- 7.4. **Make-up Work.** Under very rare conditions are students allowed to rewrite research papers or major projects.
 - 7.4.1. A lecturer might allow a rewrite if there are mitigating circumstances, such as:

- 7.4.1.1. A death in the student's immediate family (as opposed to extended family) during the final stage of an assignment.
- 7.4.1.2. Sickness during the final stages of an assignment – a week before due.
- 7.4.2. If more than half of a class fails a test, the lecturer may allow students to rewrite a test. This cannot be repeated in the same subject course.

8. STUDENT EVALUATION -----

- 8.1. **Timeous Feedback.** Student feedback on assignments is essential to learning and student motivation. Lecturers must provide timeous feedback to students on all assignments and be willing to provide any necessary coaching, explanations, or additional information.
 - 8.1.1. Marks on major assignments should be given to students within three weeks of the assignment due date.
- 8.2. **Evaluation methods.** Lecturers use a variety of methods for measuring learning including the following three categories of evaluation (Gronlund & Waugh, 2009):
 - 8.2.1. Traditional evaluations are examinations or testing such as selection type items (multiple choice, true/false, matching) and construction type items (completion, short answer, restricted and extended essays).
 - 8.2.2. Product evaluations require students to demonstrate their achievement of understanding and skills by producing an artefact such as a research paper, proposal and budget for a project, audio recording, or blog post.
 - 8.2.3. Performance evaluations require students to demonstrate their achievement of understanding and skills by actually performing a task or set of tasks such as a presentation, preaching a sermon, creating art (story, painting, poem), operating a machine, or starting a business.
 - 8.2.4. Authentic evaluations stress the importance of focusing on the application of understandings and skills to real problems in 'real-world,' contextual settings such as simulations, microteaching, practicums, or providing counselling.
- 8.3. **Formative evaluation.** Formative evaluation is encouraged to monitor learning progress throughout the duration of a course. It helps identify areas where learning is and is not occurring and may or may not be marked as part of the grade. Formative evaluation can be conducted in a variety of ways, including:
 - Class discussion, observation, and feedback during learning period
 - Group discussion and sharing ideas and understanding
 - Quizzes and tests – including surprise quizzes or tests
 - Offering additional help and support outside the class to students
 - Graphic organisers
 - Self or peer assessments

8.4. **Summative evaluation.** Summative evaluation includes the various ways that student learning is evaluated at the end of a course or learning unit. It can be conducted in a variety of ways, including:

- Examinations and tests
- Research papers, projects, or presentations
- Group projects or presentations
- Performance evaluations
- Product evaluations

8.5. **Subject Course Grades.** For a three-credit hour subject course:

- 8.5.1. No more than four summative evaluation items.
- 8.5.2. No single result should equal the final grade.
- 8.5.3. No single item should be less than 10% of the final grade.
- 8.5.4. No single item should be more than 50% of the final grade.
- 8.5.5. No more than 50% of the final grade can be given for group work, unless there is a way to individualise grades for group contributions.
- 8.5.6. No more than 20% of the final grade can be from items that are peer-reviewed only.
- 8.5.7. Any evaluation item that must receive a passing mark (or other certain mark) should be marked in the subject syllabus.
- 8.5.8. All summative evaluation items must be peer-reviewed: endorsed by the lecturer, checked by a content expert, and approved by the Academic Dean.

8.6. **Grading Scale.** The following grading scale, consistent with Southern Africa institutions, should be used in student evaluation. Lecturers will only award distinction if a student presents superior work that deserves such recognition.

STANDARD	PERCENTAGE
Distinction	80% - 100%
Merit	60% - 79%
Pass	50% - 59%
Fail	Below 50%

8.7. **Grading Rubrics.** Grading rubrics or comprehensive marking guides are encouraged for assignments and required for all summative evaluations.

- 8.7.1. The standardised rubric can be adapted for specificity on an item, but modifications must clearly align with the standard rubric.
- 8.7.2. Grading rubrics or comprehensive marking guides must be peer-reviewed: endorsed by the lecturer, checked by a content expert, and approved by the Academic Dean.

8.7.3. Rubrics should be distributed to students before they begin work on an assignment.

8.8. **Testing Moderation.** Each lecturer will set and give tests or examinations and implement whatever policies (such as clearing of desks) deemed appropriate for the testing environment and academic integrity. Lecturers may use trusted others to moderate tests and examinations on their behalf.

9. GRADE APPEALS -----

- 9.1. The college must keep scripts and marked rubrics or grading sheets for 12 months in a secure location.
- 9.2. Students may see their scripts and rubrics upon request during the holding period.
- 9.3. A dissatisfied student should approach the lecturer to discuss concerns about a grade. Most matters should be settled at this stage.
- 9.4. If the two parties fail to agree, the student should submit a written appeal letter stating grounds for dispute of the grade to the Academic Dean within 10 days of receiving the final mark.
- 9.5. The Academic Dean will facilitate a meeting between the two parties to arrive at a conclusion.
- 9.6. The decision of the Academic Dean is final.

10. COURSE EVALUATIONS -----

- 10.1. At the end of each course, students will be given the opportunity to submit a written evaluation of the lecturer and course.
- 10.2. The same course evaluation form will be used for all subject courses.
- 10.3. Students complete the evaluations confidentially without identifiers (unless they choose to self-identify). The evaluation is completed in the absence of the lecturer and submitted to the administrative office where results are compiled.
- 10.4. Aggregated results of evaluations are provided to the Academic Dean and shared with the lecturer only after the final grades are submitted to the Registrar.
- 10.5. The Academic Dean shall identify and discuss any concerns with the lecturer for continued improvement.

11. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT -----

- 11.1. All faculty members are strongly encouraged to seek opportunities to increase their knowledge, skills, and abilities in their fields of specialisation as well as in improving their teaching, learning, and assessment skills and methods.
- 11.2. ACC will organise a professional development programme focused on teaching and learning annually.
 - 11.2.1. This programme may include in-person or online workshop or class; peer support groups; reading & discussion groups; or other appropriate means of professional development.

11.2.2. Each faculty member should actively participate in the programme.

11.3. Faculty members may identify other learning opportunities for growth in their teaching and learning skills. ACC will consider funding such opportunities when proposed by the faculty member. Preference is given for proposals given by the 1st of October for the coming year.

E. RESEARCH GUIDELINES

1. PURPOSE -----

African Christian College encourages its faculty to sharpen their academic skills and further knowledge through continually researching in areas of specialisation, paying attention to how research will impact Africa.

2. FINANCING RESEARCH -----

- 2.1. **Budget.** ACC seeks to budget 1% of its previous financial year's recurrent expenses toward funding academic research and public service activities.
- 2.2. **Unfunded.** Although ACC works to fund academic research activities, faculty members are strongly encouraged to pursue unfunded research work.
- 2.3. **External Sources.** Faculty members are encouraged to source external financial resources for funding academic research. Such external funds should be channelled and disbursed by the institution.

3. DEFINITIONS OF RESEARCHER -----

- 3.1. A full-time teaching member of the faculty, administrator, or full-time librarian holding a minimum of an earned graduate degree from an accredited university.
- 3.2. Should be employed for a minimum of one academic year.

4. RESEARCH PROPOSALS -----

- 4.1. All research proposals must have the following basic information:
 - 4.1.1. A clear abstract describing the proposed project
 - 4.1.2. Expected outcomes
 - 4.1.3. Financial budget
 - 4.1.4. Time frame
- 4.2. Research proposals will be submitted to the Academic Dean before the 1st of October each year to be considered for funding in the following year.
- 4.3. The Academic Dean will review all proposals against the parameters in 4.1
- 4.4. Recipients will be notified during the first month of the financial year about funding (unless externally funded).
- 4.5. Since research funds are limited, researchers may be limited to receive funding once every three years. Exceptions should be exceptional.

5. RESEARCH TIME -----

- 5.1. Research can request through the Academic Dean for a reduction of the teaching load to complete research.
- 5.2. The Academic Dean will be guided by:

- 5.2.1. The researcher's position and previous publications
- 5.2.2. The research proposal
- 5.2.3. Proposal funding
- 5.2.4. Location of documents to be retrieved
- 5.2.5. Period of employment with African Christian College
- 5.3. The Academic Dean will consult with the President before accepting the request

6. EVALUATION OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES -----

- 6.1. The researcher will furnish the Academic Dean with a progress report at least once every six months for the duration of the research, and a final report at its conclusion.
- 6.2. The researcher will produce genuine receipts to show all expenses. These should be attached to the progress reports.
- 6.3. If a researcher fails to finish the proposed research, ACC can request full financial reimbursement.

7. SHARING RESEARCH -----

- 7.1. Researchers are strongly encouraged to showcase their findings and academic fruits through:
 - 7.1.1. Publishing scholarly articles in peer-reviewed, academic journals
 - 7.1.2. Publishing in academic books
 - 7.1.3. Publishing non-academic books and articles for general audiences, particularly the church
 - 7.1.4. Presenting at academic and non-academic conferences and events

F. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

8. PURPOSE -----

As a Christian institution, we endeavour to create an environment free from cheating, lying, fraud, theft, immorality, and other dishonest behaviour. Any participation in these acts undermines the academic integrity of the college and dishonours God. This policy further outlines the issue of academic integrity at African Christian College.

9. IDENTIFYING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY -----

- 9.1. **Academic Integrity.** Integrity is the quality of being honest and morally upright. God highly values honesty in every aspect of a Christian's life. Academic integrity requires intellectual honesty on the part of everyone in the academic environment including students and faculty.
- 9.2. **Cheating.** Cheating in an academic setting is defined as copying or submitting another's work on any assignment or test or using notes or memory aiding devices on any assignment or test without the examiner's permission. Lying and cheating are not tolerated.
- 9.3. **Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is defined as using others' work without giving them proper credit. All use of other people's work – quotations from their work or summaries of their ideas or work – must always be acknowledged.
- 9.4. **Original work.** All work submitted must be original. Students must be able to show that it is their own work.
 - 9.4.1. **Group work.** Unless the lecturer has given explicit permission to work with others, all assignments are expected to be completed individually. Studying in pairs or groups is encouraged, but the completion of all assignments and tests are to be done on one's own. At times, a lecturer may assign group work on a project, paper, presentation, or other assignment – this is the only time that working with others to complete an academic assignment is appropriate and it is limited to the group members.
 - 9.4.2. **Spouses.** Though married individuals are 'one flesh,' in the academic setting they must complete their work independently. Working together among spouses is treated with the same severity as copying or submitting the work of anyone else.
- 9.5. **Accountability.** Christian leaders of integrity would not allow others to violate this code of honesty and academic integrity. When you know of a violation, it should be reported to a staff member immediately and failure to do so could lead non-reporters to being subject to the same consequences as the offender.

10. FACULTY ACADEMIC INTEGRITY -----

- 10.1. **Intellectual honesty.** Intellectual honesty is at the heart of the learning process and a lack thereof is considered a very serious violation of the character and professional standards of African Christian College. Faculty are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all aspects of academic life: when teaching, mentoring, or coaching

students; in academic, professional, or other public presentations or publications; and in any academic or professional programmes engaged.

10.2. Use of Intellectual Property. International and local copyright laws govern the use of intellectual property and integrity dictates abiding by such laws. Copyright restrictions vary and the Creative Commons attribution also provides other ways of using the intellectual property of others. Course materials, handouts, and digital copies are all subject to copyright protection.

10.2.1. Fair Use. Copyright law commonly provides for 'fair use' in educational settings. Fair use is determined by comparing use to the four criteria within copyright law.

10.2.2. Permissions. When use does not meet 'fair use', an alternative is to obtain written permission from copyright holders before use of the intellectual property.

10.2.3. Open Education. Open source (free of copyright) educational materials are growing in popularity and quality. Lecturers are encouraged to seek open education content for courses, as textbooks, and for learning activities.

10.2.4. Attributions. Appropriate attribution and citation is necessary as outlined by the level of copyright. This should be done on all printed (both printed and digital) and projected materials.

10.3. Marking and Evaluation. Lecturers must practice integrity in setting tests, marking assignments, and evaluating student performance.

10.3.1. Marks should not be added to 'favourites' and marks should not be added to a failing student to assist them to pass – a serious violation of academic integrity.

10.3.2. Grading rubrics often help reduce bias in evaluating student work.

10.3.3. Other systems, such as blind-marking, should be used in cases where the lecturer feels they are swayed by bias.

10.4. Discipline. Significant violations and failure to exhibit academic integrity in any academic setting is a serious offense and will be treated as such, including immediate dismissal from the college. Careless or minor failures are strongly discouraged and will result in disciplinary action.

11. EQUIPPING FOR ACADEMIC INTEGRITY -----

11.1. **Seminars.** A refresher seminar for faculty and students shall be conducted annually covering the basics of academic integrity, proper techniques for summaries, attributions, citations, and academic writing.

11.2. **Course instruction.** Academic writing courses emphasise academic integrity and proper techniques for attribution. Lecturers are also encouraged to address minor or careless errors within other courses to help students learn proper technique and identify areas of improvement.

11.3. **Anti-Plagiarism Software.** The use of anti-plagiarism software has helped institutions reduce violations of plagiarism. ACC will maintain a reputable anti-plagiarism software for lecturer use and lecturers are encouraged to use it for all written papers, especially major research papers or projects.

12. HANDLING STUDENT ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT -----

The following procedure is followed when a student is suspected or found in academic misconduct.

12.1. Plagiarism, whether it is accidental or intentional, will be penalised and may result in failure of a course.

12.2. **Categorising Violations.** Lecturers, in consultation with the Academic Dean, determine the severity of academic violations in class using two categories:

12.2.1. Minor errors of ignorance or carelessness resulting from either an incomplete grasp of ethical procedures or failure to follow proper procedures. These could include relying too heavily on a study group or tutor, failure to use quotation marks around a quote, or including a reference list but not citations.

12.2.1.1. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, lowering the student's grade in proportion to the error, failure or zero on the assignment.

12.2.2. Major misattributions or misrepresentation. In some cases, clear and compelling evidence exists that a student has extensively plagiarised or committed extended acts of academic dishonesty. Such deceptions are so self-evident that they cannot be attributed simply to carelessness, ignorance, or misunderstanding. These could include using a source without including a citation or on reference list, submitting another person's work as their own, giving/selling a paper or test questions, using unauthorised notes in an examination.

12.2.2.1. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, zero on the assignment (including a major assignment that may result in failure of the course), failure of the course, dismissal.

12.3. **Minor violations.** If misconduct is determined to be minor, lecturers assign appropriate sanctions.

12.3.1. These violations and sanctions must be documented and reported to the Academic Dean and recorded in the student's records.

12.4. **Major violations.** If misconduct is determined to be major, the lecturer assigns the appropriate sanctions after receiving approval of the Academic Dean.

12.4.1. Major violations and sanctions will be reported to the entire faculty.

12.4.2. Violations may only be reported to the Student Representative Council with the violator's permission, except in cases involving dismissal.

12.5. **Related Violations.** If there are other violations of dishonesty – including non-academic violations – the student may face additional sanctions and penalties.

G. PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN POLICY

1. PURPOSE -----

African Christian College seeks to develop courses and programmes of study that reflect our values, goals, and mission and that provide academic excellence for students to learn. This policy outlines the principles and procedures for programme development, design, and evaluation.

2. PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT VALUES -----

- 2.1. **Academic excellence.** A primary outcome for graduates is academic excellence and all academic programmes should place high value on excellence in every aspect.
- 2.2. **Coordinated and balanced.** When appropriate, programmes should be complementary to other ACC programmes, majors, and activities.
- 2.3. **Cost effective.** Programmes should be implementable at an affordable cost for the institution and the learner.
- 2.4. **Range of programmes.** A variety of academic disciplines, majors, degrees, certificates, and programme design are welcome and expected.
- 2.5. **Addresses demand.** Programmes should meet the needs of the learner. It should consider student backgrounds, provide for current motivation to learn, and aid in their future. Programmes should also meet demand of employers, industry, church, and community.
- 2.6. **Sustained performance and accountability.** High-quality programmes should be sustainable and held accountability through regular assessment.

3. PROGRAMME DESIGN PRINCIPLES -----

Each approved programme of study should meet the following principles.

- 3.1. **Aligned with ACC mission, ends, educational objectives.** All programmes must align with the mission and vision of the institution, the board Ends policy (Board Policy 1.0), and the institution's educational objectives.
- 3.2. **Clear aims and learning outcomes.** Programme design should align learning, teaching, and assessment strategies to produce effective learning.
- 3.3. **Aligned with accreditation standards.** Programme design must meet all standards of relevant accreditation bodies and the Swaziland Higher Educational Council.
- 3.4. **Aligned with credit frameworks.** Programme design must consider Swaziland Qualifications Framework to ensure that credits (nominal hours), qualifications, and expectations align with the appropriate level of the programme development.
- 3.5. **Comprehensive.** Programmes should be informed by research, scholarship, and professional practice to cover the essential knowledge, skills, and competencies

necessary for the programme level. It should promote progression where the demands of learner in intellectual challenge, skills, knowledge, conceptualisation, and learning autonomy increases as move through programme.

- 3.6. **Market demand.** Programmes must align with national, regional, continental, and industrial needs; learner needs; and the needs of the Christian communities we serve.
- 3.7. **Employability.** Programme design should consider graduate employability by developing the knowledge, skills, competencies, and practical experiences necessary for graduate employability.

4. DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE -----

- 4.1. **Responsibility.** Programme development can be instigated by any ACC staff member. Collaboration and collegiality is encouraged.
- 4.2. **Authorisation Request.** An authorisation request should be presented to the Academic Dean and the President for authorisation to develop and design a new programme. The request should include a broad overview of the programme including: (1) programme description, (2) intended clientele, (3) alignment with mission, (4) curriculum delivery method, and (5) resource needs. The Academic Dean, in consultation with the President, will offer or reject authorisation for continued work on a programme proposal.
- 4.3. **Programme Proposal.** A programme proposal must provide evidence for following the Programme Development Values and Programme Design Principles above. Proposals must include the following components:
 - 4.3.1. *Proposal Abstract.* Abbreviated overview of proposal in less than 250 words.
 - 4.3.2. *Programme description.* Overview of the proposed programme, its intended outcomes, clientele, academic level and credentials, delivery method, and fit with current programmes.
 - 4.3.3. *Mission & Ends alignment.* Evidence the programme aligns with ACC's mission and outcomes.
 - 4.3.4. *Clientele.* Address educational backgrounds of intended clientele, their demand, and their potential employability after completing the programme.
 - 4.3.5. *Market demand.* Address market demand and alignment with national, continental, industrial, or church needs.
 - 4.3.6. *Learning Aims & Objectives.* Clear learning outcomes must be identified with aligned teaching, learning, and assessment strategies.
 - 4.3.7. *Curriculum.* Presents a comprehensive curriculum informed by research, scholarship, and professional practice. Shows progression in learning.
 - 4.3.8. *Accreditation issues.* Provide evidence programme design meets standards for accreditation and other external, authorising bodies.
 - 4.3.9. *Credit frameworks.* Provide evidence that the programme design aligns with the requirements of the appropriate level of the Swaziland Qualifications Framework.

- 4.3.10. *Budget*. Provide cost-effective, comprehensive, and realistic budget including revenue and expense projections for the first three years. A budget narrative explaining planning assumptions may be necessary.
- 4.3.11. *Stakeholder Feedback*. Summary of input from stakeholders and how their recommendations and feedback were addressed.
- 4.4. **Gather Feedback**. Internal and external stakeholders should be engaged in evaluating the programme proposal and making recommendations for modification, adoption, or rejection. This may be conducted through survey, interviews, focus groups, or other formal method of gathering input and feedback. Successful programmes will need adequate support from stakeholders such as the following:
 - 4.4.1. *Faculty*. Current, retired, and past faculty and academic staff including adjunct, visiting faculty.
 - 4.4.2. *Expert opinion*. An expert in the content area and delivery method.
 - 4.4.3. *Current students and alumni*.
 - 4.4.4. *Employers*. Potential employers in the programme area.
 - 4.4.5. *Community representatives*. National, regional, continental, and/or church representatives.
 - 4.4.6. *Academic partners*.
- 4.5. **Modifications**. The programme proposal should consider the evaluation, recommendations, and feedback of stakeholders before being finalised. Any changes should also be compared with the values and principles for programme development and design.

5. APPROVAL PROCEDURE -----

- 5.1. **Academic Staff Approval**. Final proposals are presented to the Academic Dean who facilitates a meeting of the faculty and academic staff for formal evaluation. The faculty response must be to either (1) recommend for approval, (2) reject approval, or (3) specify areas of adjustment for reconsideration.
- 5.2. **Administration approval**. Upon recommendation of the academic staff, the proposal is presented to the President for approval. The President may (1) recommend for approval, (2) reject the proposal, or (3) specify areas for adjustment for reconsideration. Once submitted to the President, a written decision should be given within five working days.
- 5.3. **Board of Trustee approval**. Upon recommendation of the President, the Board of Trustees will evaluate and will have final authority on approval or denial of the programme proposal.
- 5.4. **Authorising body approvals**. Upon approval of the Board of Trustees and before implementation, the programme must be authorised and accepted by authorising bodies such as accreditation bodies and the Swaziland Higher Education Council.
- 5.5. **Modifications**. Any significant modifications to the programme design throughout the approval process should be communicated to those in earlier stages of the approval procedure. Significant issues or changes in recommendations based on modifications should be addressed through collegiality.

6. SUSTAINED PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY -----

- 6.1. Programme implementation must be held accountable for meeting agreed upon expectations during the proposal and approval process. It should be recognised that things rarely go exactly as planned and circumstances necessitate change or slow progress.
- 6.2. New programmes should be evaluated annually for the first three years by an evaluation team consisting of the Academic Dean, faculty member within the programme, a faculty member in another programme, a student, and an external representative (content expert, alumnus, employer, or community representative).
 - 6.2.1. Evaluation should compare the final, approved and authorised proposal with the actual practice of the programme. Successes, deficiencies, and changes should be noted and explained with recommendations of the evaluation team in addressing or accepting the deficiencies and changes.
 - 6.2.2. The team's written evaluation report must be submitted to the President, who will also submit the report to the Board of Trustees. The President or Board may take action based on the report.
 - 6.2.3. After three years, if programmes are not showing adequate progress or implementation, significant action must be taken to address the mitigating issues or discontinue the programme.
- 6.3. After the initial three years of a new programme, its assessment falls under the Quality Assurance Policy which utilises the Programme Development Values and Programme Design Principles for evaluation.