# TRINITY
## THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

Preparing People for Effective Christian Service

## CERTIFICATE IN CHRISTIAN STUDIES (CCS)

Student Handbook

*Updated April 2024*

2024

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# WHAT IS THE CERTIFICATE IN CHRISTIAN STUDIES?

The Certificate in Christian Studies is designed to be easily accessible to people from all walks of life with a desire to dig deeper into God's Word. It comprises individual units which can contribute to a Certificate in Christian Studies, or the units can be undertaken on an "attendance only" basis where no assessment is required, and no Certificate attained. There is no difference in the enrolment process for attendance only or credit – the unit is credited to you if the assessment is completed and passed, and the attendance requirements met. The Certificate in Christian Studies (CCS) is not accredited with the Australian College of Theology (ACT).

# HOW ARE THE CERTIFICATE UNITS OFFERED?

CCS units are offered as Trinity at Night in the Perth Metro area, and Trinity in Town in country areas.

Trinity at Night is usually undertaken as short evening classes from 7:30pm-9:30pm on Tuesdays or Thursdays, over a 6-week period. Each year we offer 8 units through Trinity at Night – 2 units each Term.

Trinity in Town is usually a one-day intensive on a Saturday in country areas such as the Great Southern, South-West and North-West.

# WHAT UNITS CAN I TAKE?

There is a total of 19 units available in the CCS with different units running each term. The 2 core units are offered every year. You can enrol in any unit as it becomes available with the unit schedule available on our website https://ttc.wa.edu.au/certificate-studies/.

The following units are offered on a rotational basis (not all units will be available each year):

**Group A – Core Units**

A01     The Big Picture: Seeing the Bible as a Whole

A02     The Framework: Seeing Christian Truth as a Whole

**Group B – Bible and Christian thinking**

B01     Genesis

B02     1 & 2 Samuel

B03     Isaiah

B04     Psalms

B05     John

B06     Acts

B07     Romans

B08     Revelation

B09     Church History 1 (Early Church – Reformation)

B10     Church History 2 (Reformation – Modern Age)

B11     1 Corinthians

**Group C – Christian life and ministry**

C01     Living in God's Grace

C02     Dealing with Current Issues

C03     Youth Ministry

C05     Evangelism

C06     Teaching the Bible to Others

C07     The Gospel and Other Cultures

## WHICH UNITS SHOULD I TAKE TO GRADUATE WITH THE CERTIFICATE IN CHRISTIAN STUDIES?

To graduate with the Certificate in Christian Studies the following 8 units must be passed (i.e., you must meet the attendance requirement and successfully complete the assessment):

- The 2 core units from Group A.
- 3 units from Group B.
- 1 unit from Group C.
- 2 additional units from Group B or C.

The Advanced Certificate in Christian Studies is achieved by completing 4 additional units (i.e., a total of 12 units) after completion of the Certificate. The final unit compilation for the Advanced Certificate must include:

- The 2 core units from Group A.
- 4 units from Group B (including one Church History unit).
- 2 units from Group C.
- 4 additional units from Group B or C.

Enrolments are most easily undertaken via the website https://ttc.wa.edu.au/certificate-studies/ or contact the Certificate Studies Coordinator for alternatives.

## CAN ANYONE ENROL?

The CCS units are beneficial for those serving in churches such as Bible study and youth group leaders, Sunday school teachers, service leaders, deacons, and elders. It is also useful for anyone wanting to be better equipped to live the Christian life and dig deeper into God's Word.

Students need to have completed high school (year 12) or be at least 18 years of age to enrol. 16- and 17-year-olds may enrol if they are attending with a responsible adult.

To be able to pass the assessment for Credit it is recommended that students have completed at least year 10 at high school, or equivalent, and have English language proficiency to this level.

### *Withdrawing from a Unit*

Refunds are not usually given if you need to withdraw from a unit. In special circumstances, if you need to withdraw from a unit *before* the second week, it may be possible to transfer

your enrolment to an alternate unit. The alternate unit must be undertaken within 12 months of the withdrawal. Please contact the Certificate Studies Coordinator to apply.

# HOW DO I PASS MY UNITS FOR CREDIT?

## *(1) Meeting the Attendance Requirement*

You will get the most out of each unit by attending all the lectures.  Attending 5 out of the 6 lectures (or attending the full day of a one-day unit) is a requirement for achieving unit Credit. Please don't attend however if you are unwell. If ill health prevents you attending the required number of lectures, then you can meet the requirement by providing evidence of listening to the recordings e.g., photos/scans of notes taken.

## *(2) Passing the Assessments*

You must successfully complete the unit assessment which is usually a 1000-word essay due Monday week after the final lecture (check your unit handbook for details). To achieve this goal, it is important to start working on the essay during the unit (i.e., don't wait until after the unit has finished). This will also provide you with the opportunity to ask questions of the Teacher if needed.

Make sure you read the details regarding the assessment requirements and remember to:

- Answer the question – do not attempt to write all that you learned during the unit but check that your assignment answers the assessment question
- Adhere to the word limit – unless otherwise specified the word limit is 1000 plus or minus 10% (i.e., 900-1100 words)
- Present your assignment as instructed – you want the marker to be able to easily read and comment on what you have written
- You will receive a confirmation email that your assignment has been received – if you don't receive an email, check with the CCS Coordinator
- Check out the essay writing tips in the appendix – we highly recommend viewing the resources on plagiarism

# WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ASSESSMENTS?

## *Seeking an Extension for Assessments*

It is important that assessments are submitted by the due date. Occasionally there are special circumstances (e.g., family/personal issues, medical concerns) that could make it impracticable for you to complete the assessment on time and hence an extension may be requested.

Requests for extensions must be made to the Certificate Studies Coordinator in writing.

## *What if I don't pass the assessment?*

If you do not pass the assessment, you will receive a "Revise" grade and some comments from the marker outlining why the assessment was not passed. In most situations you will be given the opportunity to revise and resubmit the assessment if desired.

*Avoiding Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is the wilful reproduction or paraphrasing of substantial unacknowledged written passages in a student's work or pretending that a scholar's ideas are the student's own. To avoid plagiarism, you need to make sure that you acknowledge in the footnotes the sources of extracts, quotations and paraphrased material contained in your work or the source of ideas you are discussing. This includes material from books, journal articles, newspapers, websites, and anything else that you have consulted. Your assignment will be run through Turnitin, a program that checks for plagiarism and the use of AI technology (e.g. ChatGPT), so we *highly recommend* you view the resources relating to plagiarism in the Appendix.

## HOW LONG HAVE I GOT TO COMPLETE THE CERTIFICATE?

Since 2018 units must be completed within a 4-year period to achieve the CCS and within 6 years for the Advanced CCS. A one-year extension may be requested in exceptional circumstances by writing to the Certificate Studies Coordinator. Any units completed prior to 2018 may contribute to the Advanced CCS but it must be completed by the end of 2024.

## WHEN WILL I RECEIVE MY CERTIFICATE?

After the successful completion of all required units, students are recognised, and Certificates presented at the College's Commencement and Graduation Ceremony in February each year. Students will be invited to the first Graduation Ceremony after completion of the CCS or Advanced CCS. If you need to receive your Certificate earlier, it can be mailed out to you. Please liaise with the Certificate Studies Coordinator if required.

## WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

### Unit Handbooks

Unit handbooks are prepared by the teachers, and these will be provided to you at the first lecture, or as weekly notes. The handbooks are for the private use of students only and should not be copied or distributed in any format to any other person. Handbooks contain a unit overview, notes for each lecture, recommended additional reading and details regarding the assessment requirements.

### Venues

Trinity at Night units are held in the metropolitan area at Trinity Theological College in Leederville or at a host church venue. Trinity in Town units are held in country areas.

### Fees

The fee for each unit is $120 per person, or $220 for a married couple attending a unit together. A concession discount of $20 is available for full time students and concession card holders. Proof of your concession entitlement is to be provided to the Certificate Studies Coordinator. Fees are most easily paid via the online booking form or contact the Certificate Studies Coordinator for alternative payment options.

## Library

Some of the recommended books for each unit are made available at the class for students to borrow on a weekly basis. Please ensure these are returned each week to provide opportunities for all students to borrow books. All books must be returned at the final lecture unless otherwise negotiated with the Certificate Studies Coordinator. The Trinity Theological College library can also be joined for a fee. More information and online membership forms are available on our website. Library opening hours are Mon – Fri 8:30am to 4:30pm.

## Recording lectures

If you will be absent from a lecture, it can be recorded but you must advise the Certificate Studies Coordinator before commencement of the lecture for this to occur. A link to allow you to listen to the recording will be forwarded to you. Please note that recordings are for the personal use of students only and are not for distribution.

## Trinity Theological College general information

We are glad you have chosen to undertake Certificate studies with us, and we hope you will enjoy being part of our college community. As such we will send you our college newsletter (Trinity News) and let you know about our other events (e.g., Annual Lecture). If you do not wish to receive the e-newsletter, please advise the Certificate Studies Coordinator. If you are interested in pursuing accredited studies with us, we would be pleased to discuss this further. Please complete the Prospective Student Form (https://ttc.wa.edu.au/prospective-student-form/) or ask the Certificate Studies Coordinator for more information.

## Transport & Parking

Transport and parking information for Trinity at Night units held at Trinity House in Leederville can be found on our website (https://ttc.wa.edu.au/events/). For units held at other locations (usually churches) specific parking information will be provided in your enrolment letter if required.

**APPENDIX – ESSAY WRITING TIPS, PLAGIARISM & AI TECHNOLOGY**

**Essay Writing Tips**

If you have not written essays before (or for a long time), you may want to check out some online resources to assist in how to go about planning and writing an essay. Some brief tips are provided here to get you started. Also, while it is aimed at those undertaking accredited, degree-level studies, you are welcome to access the TTC Study Toolkit on our website for more information.

The most important thing to remember is to answer the question; so, start by analysing it:
- Make sure you understand what the question is asking (e.g., do you understand the terms used).
- Brainstorm (e.g., do a mind map) - what do you already know about the topic; what questions do you already have/ need to know more about.
- Discuss with others but don't share anything in writing (i.e., share your ideas verbally but collusion can happen accidentally or intentionally if you share written notes).

Research the answer to the question.
- Read the Bible!
- What are you learning in the lectures that will help answer the question?
- Read other books – Bible dictionary, commentaries (refer to the recommended reading list for ideas). If you do read other books, see the section below on *Referencing*.
- If you're not sure if you're on the right track, ask the Teacher.

Write your essay.
- Plan out your essay before you start writing. A normal essay will have three main sections:

**Introduction** – give a brief indication of why the topic matters, how you are going to deal with the topic, and a 1-2 sentence answer to the question (~100-150 words)

**Body** – set out why you think the answer you gave in the introduction is the case; write in paragraphs, with one big, supporting point per paragraph in a clear, concise, and ordered way (~700-800 words)

**Conclusion** – summarise your argument and draw your conclusions (~100- 150 words)

- Therefore, make sure that you can answer the question in 1-2 sentences, and you know your 2-3 big reasons *why* you think this is the answer—these reasons become the big points of the paragraphs.
- Think about how the points you wish to make will flow logically.
- Avoid the temptation to try to restate everything you heard in the lectures – this will not answer the specific question you have been asked (and will blow your word limit!).

- Unless otherwise stated the word limit is 1000 words plus or minus 10% (i.e., 900-1100 words).

**Additional tips**

*Clarity*
The aim is to write **clear** prose, which is both **accurate** and **understandable**.

Learning to be clear involves writing complete, grammatical sentences. Although MS Word will pick up some grammatical irregularities, you can use a more comprehensive online grammar & style checker (like www.prowritingaid.com or www.grammarly.com) to double check your work.

Learning to be accurate means that you fairly represent the views of others, should you choose to use them. Accuracy also means that you are aware of the strength of your answer: don't be afraid to use words like "probably" or "could," if that reflects the strength of your argument.

Learning to be understandable means that shorter words and sentences are preferable to long ones. **The use of unfamiliar words should be avoided**—if you are unsure of the meaning of a word, look it up, or use another known word. It may seem obvious, but many students forget that the aim of writing should be to communicate a message or argument to readers as effectively as possible.

*Paragraphs*
Your essay should be divided into paragraphs, with **one major point** in each paragraph. Usually, the first sentence of the paragraph states this major point, and the following sentences explain it and give evidence, as necessary.

*Citing Bible references*
Students often make the mistake of quoting or retelling large chunks of Bible text, which use up many words in a short (1000 word) essay. Use your own words to make your point, and then include a reference to the appropriate part/s of the Bible in either brackets or as a footnote.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is defined as the reproduction or paraphrasing of substantial unacknowledged written passages in a student's work or pretending that a scholar's ideas are the student's own. Plagiarism is a kind of cheating on an assignment and has become a common issue in university environments, especially since the rise of the internet. We want to help you avoid plagiarism not only because it is inappropriate to use another's words and ideas without acknowledgement, but because we want to know how you have understood what you have learnt and thought about. When someone in your church, or one of your friends or family asks you a tough question that is relevant to your unit, we want you to be able to answer confidently because you've already put it into your own words in the assignment.

To avoid plagiarism, you need to make sure that you acknowledge in the footnotes the sources of extracts, quotations and paraphrased material contained in your work or the source of ideas you are discussing. This includes material from books, journal articles, newspapers, websites, study Bible notes, and anything else that you have consulted. Your assignment will be run through plagiarism-checking software, so please ensure that if you don't understand the rules around plagiarism and acknowledging sources, you seek clarification.

There are some helpful resources that you can access online that provide a good explanation of plagiarism and the variety of ways students may accidentally or intentionally plagiarise others' work:
https://www.turnitin.com/static/plagiarism-spectrum/
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EF5eFeJMpIA
http://www.plagiarism.org/video/understanding-plagiarism-with-help-from-dr-seuss

We understand that many CCS students will have not studied since high school and may possess little understanding of plagiarism. If plagiarism is detected in your essay, it will be assessed, and the following actions may be taken:
- Minimal or accidental plagiarism, or essays that are not well-referenced – student will receive guidance on how to proceed with future essays (but essays will be marked and passed as appropriate).
- Serious, wilful plagiarism, most of the essay is the work of others – student will receive guidance and asked to resubmit their essay.

*Referencing:*
One way to avoid the risk of plagiarising accidentally is to set up a system for recording the ideas you have read about i.e., as you're taking notes from something you are reading jot down the reference and page number so you can go back to it. There is free software available that provides an easy way of managing references, but this is unlikely to be required at the Certificate level. If you are considering moving onto degree level studies, you may wish to use a program like Zotero.

**AI Technology**

It is inappropriate to utilise AI technology (such as ChatGPT) to research, plan or write your assignment. Take advantage of the books provided for loan during the unit or speak with the Teacher if you're unsure how to get started. Turnitin software checks for AI generated content.

Also, it is worth being aware that some tools that check grammar and writing style now employ AI to do so (like grammarly). It is good to use tools like these to identify areas that need to be rewritten, but you should rewrite such areas in your own words rather than using the suggestions of the tool.

**DISCLAIMER**

The details printed in this handbook were correct when printed on 29th April 2024. The College reserves the right to amend or update the information.