

COUNCIL OF DEANS OF THEOLOGY
CONSTITUTION

Preamble

Theological studies are critically important to the life of the churches and to the wider society.

Theology plays a role in bringing the Christian message into dialogue with society, assisting in the proclamation of the gospel and preparing people for ministerial service in their Churches.

Through its policies and programs the Council of Deans of Theology seeks to promote quality teaching and learning, and research in theology.

1. Name

The name of the association shall be “The Council of Deans of Theology”. The initials CDT may be used as the short title for the association where abbreviation is appropriate.

2. Interpretations

In this constitution, unless the context otherwise requires:

“Council” means The Council of Deans of Theology.

“Deans of Theology” shall include those persons who hold the senior position of administrative responsibility for teaching, learning and research in theology in each member institution. Normally that person will be:

1. The CEO of the institution in the case of a theological consortium or dedicated theological college,
OR
2. The Dean or Head of School of Theology in the case of a university faculty or school of theology;
OR
3. In the case of a multi-faculty or Liberal Arts college including a theology department, the CEO is normally the required Representative of the Member, but the Member may submit an application to the Council to appoint another officer based on that officer’s special responsibility for the delivery and oversight of theological courses.

“Institution” means an Australian Higher Education Provider as defined by s. 16 of the Higher Education Support Act (2003). New Zealand members of the Council must be part of a State University or providers of degree courses in theology accredited by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

“State” includes territory.

“Theology” means the discipline of “Christian Studies” according to the Australian Standard Classification of Education 2001 (ASCED code 091703) and the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification 2008 (ANZSRC code 220401).

3. Purpose

The Council of Deans of Theology, as an association of deans and chief executive officers, aims to foster and facilitate cooperative effort and mutual understanding among member institutions and between them and the churches and the larger society they serve. More specifically, it strives:

- (a) To encourage and enhance quality learning and teaching, and research and research training within member institutions in a spirit of academic freedom;

- (b) To act as a representative body for the studies sector in relating to federal and state governments, to the churches, to higher education institutions, and to other relevant organisations or associations;
- (c) To develop and maintain standards in theological education across the sector by promoting and disseminating best practice in areas of quality assurance, governance and risk management;
- (d) To facilitate benchmarking in the areas of academic quality assurance, course and policy development, learning and teaching standards and outcomes;
- (e) To act as an external adviser in processes of course, policy and institutional review and development;
- (f) To engage in other activities as the Council deems necessary.

4. Membership and Meetings of the Council

Members of the Council shall be Higher Education Institutions as defined in s. 2 above, and which are in accord with the purposes of the Council as specified above, represented by one person nominated as Dean of Theology.

Membership will be forfeited if for any reason the institution ceases to be a HEP.

The Council will hold two meetings in each calendar year, and other meetings as required.

At the first meeting of 2009 and every second year thereafter, the members shall elect office bearers. Voting for office bearers shall be restricted to registered Deans of Theology. Voting may take place in person (including video- and teleconferencing), or by email, fax, or mail.

The quorum for voting in whatever mode shall be of one half plus one of the member institutions of the Council.

When any Dean of Theology ceases to hold that or an equivalent position he or she ceases to represent the institution on the Council and will no longer be listed on the Register of Deans of Theology. In such circumstances the member institution will be invited by the Chair to appoint a replacement Dean.

If the Dean cannot attend, a delegate may attend as an observer, but without the right to propose or vote on motions.

5. Office Bearers of the Council

The office bearers of the Council shall be:

- (1) Chair (2) Secretary and, if required, (3) a Treasurer.

Office bearers shall be elected from among the registered Deans of Theology.

The Secretary shall keep and maintain general records of the Council, including a Register of Deans, and shall maintain communication with member institutions through their representatives.

Nominations for office bearers shall be called at least one month prior to the commencement of the first meeting of 2009 and every second year thereafter. Nominations may be received up to the commencement of the meeting. The election of office bearers shall be scheduled for the end of the meeting.

Office bearers shall hold office for two years and until their successors are appointed. Incumbent office bearers of the Council are eligible for renomination and election.

If a vacancy occurs among office bearers, the Council shall elect from the Register of Deans a person to fill the vacancy until the next occurring election. Voting may take place in person (including video- and teleconferencing), or by email, fax, or mail. The quorum for voting shall be of one half plus one

of the member institutions of the Council. The Secretary will call for nominations and conduct the election. If the vacancy to be filled is that of Secretary, the Chair will call for nominations and conduct the election.

An office bearer whose registration as a Dean of Theology is cancelled will cease to hold office, thus creating a vacancy.

6. The Executive of the Council

There shall be an Executive responsible for the conduct of the affairs of the Council between meetings. The Executive shall have the power, subject to this constitution, to regulate its own proceedings.

The Executive shall act in conformity with the purposes and policies determined by the Council and shall carry on the activity of the Council between meetings.

The Executive shall comprise the office bearers and one additional member (optional) who shall be co-opted by the Executive from among the current membership of the Council if the office bearers so desire.

The Executive shall be responsible for making any submissions in the name of the Council to government enquiries and for representing the Council at meetings with state or federal education bodies and agencies. The Executive shall present a report to each meeting of the Council.

The Secretary shall keep and maintain general records of the Executive. A schedule of ordinary meetings of the Executive shall be issued no later than one month after the election of office bearers. Ordinary meetings of the Executive may be held by electronic means such as teleconferencing.

All office bearers are required to be present for any meetings of the Executive.

7. Services

To fulfil the stated purpose of the Council, the Executive shall also organise:

- (a) the meetings of the Council, including the agenda, and
- (b) shall provide other services such as newsletters, occasional seminars, position papers and symposia as may be deemed advisable.

8. Affiliations

By resolution the Council may affiliate with such other bodies (local, state, national or international) as may be desirable in order to further its purposes.

9. Finance

Each member institution shall bear the cost of attendance of its nominated representative at meetings of the Council and Executive.

The Council may decide to levy membership fees and to appoint a treasurer as an office bearer.

10. Transfer of Office

All books, records and assets of the Council, with the exception of Council affairs in the process of being finalised, shall be handed over to the incoming Secretary within a month of his/her election.

11. Voting Rights

(a) The Chair shall have both a deliberative vote and a casting vote at all meetings of the Council and the Executive. In general, it is expected that the Chair, when exercising the right of placing a casting vote, shall vote in favour of the status quo.

(b) Executive members shall have the right to one deliberative vote on each issue/election being decided at an Executive meeting.

12. Incorporation

The Council may resolve to become incorporated under any law of the Commonwealth or of a State of the Commonwealth relating to incorporation of unincorporated associations or of corporations, provided the objects of the corporation and the regulations for the management thereof are not inconsistent with the purposes of the Council.

13. Winding Up

In the event of changed circumstances in which continuation of the Council is no longer of interest or benefit to members, a two-thirds majority of votes taken at a meeting may recommend to member institutions the disbandment of the Council. Such recommendation shall be communicated to all member institutions and after the lapse of at least one month shall be considered at the next meeting of the Council. If disbandment is endorsed at this meeting the distribution of any monies and other assets shall be determined concurrently.

14. Amendments

Amendments to this constitution may be made only by a two-thirds majority of votes cast at the first meeting of the Council each calendar year. The text of proposed amendments must be presented in writing to the Secretary three months before the meeting so that they may be sent with recommendations from the Executive to all member institutions at least one month before such a meeting.

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