

Academic Dean Part-time (0.8 FTE)
Pilgrim Theological College
Position Description

Commencing 2027
Tenure: 2 years

Academic Dean Role

The Academic Dean position is a 0.8 FTE role within Pilgrim Theological College, a College of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) and part of the University of Divinity.

The Academic Dean provides academic leadership across Pilgrim Theological College, with responsibility in relation to coursework students and programs for academic quality, learning and teaching, curriculum, attention to Indigenous perspectives and knowledges, and student academic support and student experience, within the overall direction of the College Academic Committee and the Synod Theological and Ministerial Education Committee.

The Academic Dean participates as a key leader within the Pilgrim community and supports staff and students. The Academic Dean is expected to participate in the worship and community life at Pilgrim.

The Academic Dean reports to the Head of College, and works in collaboration with the Registrar, eLearning Facilitator, Ministry Formation Coordinator, and other Pilgrim faculty and staff.

Pilgrim Theological College

Pilgrim is the Uniting Church theological college in the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, equipping people for ministry and service within and beyond the Church. Pilgrim offers theological education which combines high-quality scholarship with the diversity of Christian tradition. Pilgrim is open to people of all traditions and none, and offers ministry formation, personal and spiritual growth, lifelong learning, and research.

Pilgrim Theological College's purpose is to educate, form, and equip people to foster a just and compassionate world through creative and critical theological inquiry, practice, and research. It has a strategic focus on liberative and contextual theology, high-quality learning and teaching for a multicultural church, equipping the whole people of God, and nurturing life-giving community.

Pilgrim Theological College incorporates the academic program of awards and units accredited through the University of Divinity, ministry formation programs for those preparing for ordained and specified lay ministries, Uniting Learning lay ministry education units, and diverse initiatives to support discipleship and education from public lectures to discernment of call and lifelong learning.

University of Divinity

Pilgrim operates within the dynamic, ecumenical setting of the University of Divinity, of which it is a founding member. This ecumenical project is core to Pilgrim's identity and commitments. The University is internationally recognised for its high-quality research and education in theology, biblical studies, ancient world studies, history, and practical theology, and it has sustained its position as a national leader in positive student experience among Australian universities over many years.

Centre for Theology and Ministry

Pilgrim is based at the Centre for Theology and Ministry, where other key Synod ministries are also located within the Equipping Leadership for Mission unit. This includes the Dalton McCaughey Library, one of the southern hemisphere's leading theological libraries, which is a joint project of the Uniting Church, Society of Jesus, and Trinity College. Other ministries on site include the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress Victoria staff, the John Paver Clinical Pastoral Education centre, UCA Schools and Chaplaincy coordination, Synod ministries in areas of discipleship and advocacy, Marketing and Communications, Ministry Placements and Grants.

Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

The Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania is the Council of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) responsible for the general oversight, direction and administration of the Church's worship, witness and service in the region allotted to it. It exercises pastoral, executive, administrative and disciplinary responsibilities in relation to the presbyteries within its bounds. In particular, it promotes and encourages the work of the Church, assisting congregations and presbyteries within its bounds in their faithful participation in the mission of God.

Academic Dean – Key Responsibilities

1. Oversee academic quality assurance at Pilgrim Theological College, including in relation to University processes for accreditation of teaching staff, unit development and revision, assessment validation and moderation, and student feedback.
2. Manage the Academic Services team (Registrar and eLearning Facilitator).
3. Oversee the College curriculum, including ensuring the annual timetable includes offerings for diverse student cohorts, liaising with other Pilgrim staff in scheduling the annual program, and contributing to, and overseeing Pilgrim's compliance with, University systems in relation to curriculum development.
4. Ensure the further development of systems that reflect Indigenous knowledges, seeking or representing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander perspectives, scholarship, knowledge, and relationships and working with the University's commitments to Indigenous theologies.
5. Fulfil quality assurance responsibilities including chairing the College Academic Committee and participating in relevant University Committees and working groups, including the Learning and Teaching Committee.
6. Lead processes around course advice and progression, with the support of the Registrar, including in relation to admission, enrolment, and graduation, and work with the Ministry Formation Coordinator in advising on academic programs for candidates for ordained ministry.
7. Act as the primary Academic Integrity Officer of the College, including investigating suspected breaches, providing relevant staff training, and working with the Head of College and Safety Officer in relation to student complaints.
8. Lead College initiatives in relation to student academic support, including teaching units in academic skills (no more than one unit or micro-unit per year), implementing processes around Student Support Plans, coordinating annual orientation events, and managing mentoring groups for independent students.
9. Participate in administrative leadership in relation to the academic and formation responsibilities of the College, including relevant committee work, through consultation with the Head of College.

Academic Dean – Key Selection Criteria

Qualifications, experience, and skills

- **Qualifications:** A doctoral degree in a relevant discipline.
- **Learning and teaching:** Significant learning and teaching experience in a higher education setting, meeting the minimum requirements for being a teaching-active academic as defined by the University's Academic Staff Policy; awareness of adult learning principles for effective course design, and a strong working knowledge of supportive technology for both classroom and online teaching.

- **Curriculum design and quality assurance:** Curriculum development and review experience, including academic quality assurance and University policy; sound understanding of academic policies and regulatory requirements.
- **Leadership:** Strongly collaborative and collegiate approach to academic leadership; demonstrated strengths in managing staff; ability to lead continuous professional development and improvement; ability to work as a member of a team, including collaborating with faculty, staff and people in diverse ministries.
- **Inclusion:** Experience teaching a diverse student body, including support for Indigenous knowledges and intercultural learning; ability to relate well to students of varying ages and cultures.
- **Students at risk:** Demonstrated experience in identification of students whose academic performance is at risk and implementation of academic supports, preferably with experience in delivering academic skills education; an understanding of student recruitment, belonging, retention, progression and success.
- **Academic skills:** Experience in delivering academic skills education.
- **Pastoral sensitivity:** Capacity in pastoral sensitivity and maintaining appropriate confidentiality, for instance in managing complaints processes or academic integrity matters.
- **Communication:** Well-developed competency in communication, including familiarity with a range of approaches to adult learning in both online and face-to-face teaching modes.

Ethos and Commitments

- Commitment to culturally safe and respectful learning environments;
- Support fundamental principles of inclusion and fairness, including the contribution of diversity in culture (CALD), ability, age, gender (LGBTQI+) to communities, including faith-based gatherings and workplaces;
- Commitment to seeking reconciliation and justice for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia;
- Commitment to professional development networks to ensure ongoing learning and contribution of expertise to education, formation, and professional development;
- Active participant in a Christian community of faith;
- Commitment to work within the faith and ethos of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Other Requirements

Applicants will be required to have or obtain a Working with Children's Check, and their employment will be subject to satisfactory completion of a National Criminal History Check.

Flexibility is required in terms of working hours, with work on weekends and/or in evenings necessary from time to time. Annual leave may not be taken during the teaching weeks of a semester.

Applicants must be willing to work within the Synod's Workplace Values and Characteristics (see page 8), and they must support the Synod's strategic direction.

Key accountabilities and activities

Lead learning and teaching	Strengthen the College's academic quality, Indigenous capability, and inclusion practices Facilitate curriculum development and unit design, employ effective processes to maintain academic quality, manage academic risk, and oversee the provision of theological and ministry education with attention to: - the particular areas of study and the standards required by the Uniting Church National Assembly in relation to formation for ordained and other recognised ministries; - the development of the College's capacities in Indigenous theologies and knowledges through actively seeking Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander perspectives and scholarship; - Pilgrim's focus on liberative and contextual theologies, in keeping with its strategic plan. Develop and teach units to support Academic Skills for theological study at undergraduate and graduate levels. Provide course advice, identify and implement supports for learning, and oversee processes required as part of the student journey through University of Divinity awards. Exercise sound judgement in dealing with complex student and academic matters, knowing when to refer to specialist processes.
Support Ministry Formation Program	Liaise with the Ministry Formation Coordinator and members of Faculty in relation to student matters, including developing course programs for candidates for ordained ministry. Participate in the formation program and the community life of Pilgrim Theological College.
Lead administration and manage staff	Manage and work cooperatively with the College's Academic Services team, including the Registrar and eLearning Facilitator. Participate in the committee structures within Pilgrim Theological College. Participate, as appropriate, in the committee structures of the University of Divinity and associated centres. Participate, as appropriate, in the work of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.
Work in partnership	Collaborate in leadership and maintain good working relationships with faculty, staff, and other University of Divinity colleges, schools and offices. Build and sustain respectful relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities and networks to support Indigenous people and theologies.

	Develop and maintain effective relationships across the life of the Church and apply consideration to a theological and missional perspective when providing advice and services. Pro-actively negotiate and establish effective communication and workflow systems.
Communicate effectively	Confidently convey ideas and information in a clear and interesting way, understanding the target audience and objectives of any communication. Use feedback to refine communication and handle difficult and sensitive communications. Write briefs, emails and reports, using clear, concise and grammatically correct language. Edit written communications to ensure they contain the information necessary to achieve their purpose. Use multiple communication channels to tailor communication to relevant audiences.
Demonstrate teamwork	Openly share insights with others. Maintain effective and respectful relationships. Participate in team meetings and conversations with peers in a way that encourages collaboration, connection, and lighter and simpler systems. Remain open and flexible to new ideas and the sharing of resources, to ensure the wisest use of the Church's resources. Demonstrate enthusiasm for the strategic direction and the purpose and goals of the team and broader unit. Resolve any conflict that may arise through effective reconciliation methods. Participate in team development activities and exercises to enhance own leadership and foster a culture of teamwork across synod ministries and operations.
Manage self	Prepare own work plan annually with agreed measurable outcomes. Demonstrate a commitment to developing self, learning new skills and gaining new insights into own effectiveness. Actively participate in the annual Performance, Planning and Development Program (PPD).

Synod Vision

Following Christ, walking together as First and Second Peoples, seeking community, compassion and justice for all creation.

Synod Ministries and Operations Mission

To inspire, resource and enable presbyteries, congregations and agencies to live Faithful Futures' shared vision and goals.

Staff Values and Characteristics

Trust – a dependable partner - being a dependable partner that builds trust through: respectful, just and honest action; acting with integrity; ensuring the safety of all children and vulnerable people is paramount; aligning policy and practices; and delivering on commitments.

Collaboration – a shared responsibility - taking responsibility and collaborating through: working cooperatively with other Councils of the Church; knowledge sharing; inclusive decision making; and walking together as First and Second Peoples.

Growth – an expansive culture - embracing a culture of generosity and growth by: accepting new and challenging ideas and tasks; continuous improvement to practices, systems and processes; hearing all voices; contributions; welcoming diversity; and consultative leadership.

Sustainability – a healthy ecosystem - maintaining a vibrant environment by: the intentional use of resources; ensuring we have the right skills, development, gifts and talents where we and our work flourish.