

Why does the National Institute have a Third-Party Agreement with Alphacrucis University College?

The National Institute for Christian Education, like its governing body, Christian Education National, is a Christian inter-denominational organisation. Whilst founded on reformed theology and reformational philosophy, the National Institute does not belong to any particular denomination. Throughout our history we have partnered with many institutions in the cause of Christian higher education. These institutions include the Institute of Christian Studies in Canada, Scott University in Kenya, Wesley Institute, now Excelsia College, Southern Cross College which became Alphacrucis College (AC - now University College), and the Macquarie Christian Studies Institute (MCSI).

In the beginning of the National Institute's journey of providing government accredited postgraduate courses, we partnered with the Institute of Christian Tertiary Education (ICTE) in forming the College of Christian Higher Education (CCHHE). ICTE changed its name to Southland College and then eventually became the education faculty of Morling College.

This move coincided with the accrediting authority deeming that the partnership under the CCHHE was unacceptable. Without the resources to pursue accreditation in our own right or to transform CCHHE into a principal, governing body, the decision was taken to formally enter into an agreement with Morling College as a third-party agent to secure accreditation access.

In many ways the relationship continued as it was under the CCHHE model, and we continued to enjoy fellowship, mutual respect, and synergy with the folk at Morling. However, despite all the goodwill in the world, the arrangement set us up as a competitor with our partner who was also our principal. We also struggled with not having direct access to the accrediting authority as we had under the CCHHE arrangement.

It was at this time that the National Institute was approached, through contacts we had made during our time with MCSI, to consider being the postgraduate teacher education provider for Alphacrucis College. The due diligence was carried out and it was decided that AC was a good fit for the National Institute for the following reasons:

- The college had real substance and momentum towards acquiring university status. AC is now a University College with self-accrediting status.
- We would not be competing within the institution in the provision of postgraduate teacher education.
- We would be affirmed in maintaining our own theological and philosophical distinctives in course content and faculty appointment.
- We would be part of a rare entity in Australia—an evangelical Christian University. Although founded and maintained as a Pentecostal institution, AC welcomes the support and influence of other traditions. Many senior faculty members would call themselves reformed theologically. And being Pentecostal and Reformed/Reformational are not mutually exclusive to which many of our faculty, students, and luminaries such as James K.A. Smith would attest.

- There was the potential for us to be involved in the undergraduate teacher education program.
- There was the potential for us to be involved in supervision of doctoral theses.

Similar models appear to be Regent College and Trinity Western University in Vancouver. Broad based evangelical institutions with reformed and reformational faculty such as J. I. Packer and Harro Van Brummelen at Regent and Trinity Western respectively.

It is our prayer that we can help strengthen the good work already accomplished by the founders of Alphacucis University College and that the National Institute will be enhanced by our partnership and experience sustained growth as we continue to provide postgraduate teacher education from a reformational perspective.