

## Vocational Graduate Certificate in Counselling and Family Therapy (Christian) Questions and Answers

**Note:** This Q&A sheet should be read in conjunction with AIFC 2010 brochure and Vocational Graduate Certificate enrolment form. Both are available at [www.aifc.com.au](http://www.aifc.com.au).

**Is the VGC an accredited course?** The Vocational Graduate Certificate in Counselling and Family Therapy (Christian) (VGC) has been accredited by a government accreditation authority for a five year period from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2014. This is verified on the Australian Government's official website: National Training Information service (NTIS) at: [www.ntis.gov.au](http://www.ntis.gov.au).

**What are the details?** The Vocational Graduate Certificate is a three year course. Students may elect to exit:

1. After completion of the Certificate IV in Christian Counselling (year 1),
2. After completion of the Diploma of Counselling and Family Therapy (Christian) {this still involves a full year of work, after the Certificate IV, but there are no theory units for terms 3 and 4} (year 2), or
3. After completion of the Advanced Diploma of Counselling and Family Therapy (Christian) which is an additional one year after the Certificate IV (year 2).

**Can I enrol for the VGC?** Yes, if you have a current AIFC Advanced Diploma, which is a pre-requisite for entry to the Vocational Graduate Certificate. Year 2 students, who progress directly to the VGC February intake, do not have to pay the application fee, if they apply by the "Early Bird" cut off date.

**What is the VGC's academic standing?** The Vocational Graduate Certificate is the Vocational Educational Training (VET) sector's equivalent of the Higher Education Sector's (university) graduate certificate. The Vocational Graduate Certificate is positioned above the bachelor degree within the Australian Qualification Framework. This can be verified in the *Australian Quality Framework (AQF): Implementation Handbook*, pages 1 and 55-59, a copy of which is available at <http://www.aqf.edu.au>.

**Is the VGC qualification recognised by the counselling profession?** Yes. The VGC provides access through member associations of the *Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA)* see:

<http://www.pacfa.org.au/resources/cid/4/parent/0/t/resources/l/layout>

This includes the Christian Counsellors Association of Australia (CCAA) see [www.ccaa.net.au](http://www.ccaa.net.au). Associate membership of CCAA meets the requirements for the Advanced Diploma and the VGC.



**As a counsellor, will my clients have access to Medicare rebates?** No, counsellors and psychotherapists are not recognised for Medicare rebate purposes. The major industry associations, ACA and PACFA, are lobbying Government with the intention of having counsellors included. As an essential step in this process ACA and PACFA have established the *Australian Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists Pty Ltd (ARCAP)*, an independent entity, to set up and manage a National Register of counsellors.

**What are the assessment requirements?** VGC students are assessed on their assignment work which includes journaling, reports and evidence portfolio/s. Just as for years 1 and 2, there are no examinations.

**Is there a requirement to attend seminars?** No, the VGC has no compulsory attendance requirements.

**Is VGC Government approved for Austudy/Abstudy?** Yes. However students of the VGC will only be eligible for Austudy/Abstudy if they complete the whole of the VGC in one year. The recognised full-time workload for this will be 15.55 hours per week. There will be thirty six (36) weeks, nine (9) weeks per term, of full time study and forty four (44) weeks total, including term breaks. Austudy/Abstudy is not available to courses that are not full time. Students who are eligible might be able to get a study supplement to their pension. Students need to contact CentreLink to get information and to determine their eligibility. The AIFC Provider code number for Austudy/Abstudy is **1P019** and the course code is **80896ACT**. CentreLink needs to be informed that all students are enrolled through the National Office in Canberra.

**What do I need to do to enrol in the VGC?** The extract from the Enrolment form answers this:

*“Those wishing to apply for enrolment for the Vocational Graduate Certificate in Counselling and Family Therapy need to observe the following procedure:*

- Read the AIFC Prospectus or website and note:
  - *The non-refundable application fee and the fee refund policy.*
  - *Requirements for application and enrolment in the Prospectus.*
- Ensure that you have current membership of a counselling association which allows you to counsel,
- Ensure that you have current professional indemnity and public liability insurance covers for counselling,
- Obtain **four (4)** passport-sized photographs and send with your application.
- Complete the *Application for Enrolment* form fully, including the check-list, sign and date.
- Secure all attachments (photographs, application fee, etc) to your form and post it to the National Office in Canberra
- Your Application will be processed as soon as possible and you will be notified of the result.
- \* **The AIFC Advanced Diploma of Counselling and Family Therapy is pre-requisite** for entry to the Vocational Graduate Certificate course. Former students who wish to return to the course to complete their studies or upgrade from Diploma to Advanced Diploma level will need to submit an application to re-enrol and also, if more than three years has elapsed since last studying with AIFC, apply for recognition of prior learning. Visit [www.aifc.com.au](http://www.aifc.com.au) or contact the National Office for the relevant forms.”

\* The application can be submitted prior to receipt of proof and for current year 2 students, prior to completing the Advanced Diploma. A conditional acceptance will be issued if you are accepted.

**What are the VGC term dates?** The terms for the VGC in 2011 will be:

- Term 1: 7<sup>th</sup> February to 8<sup>th</sup> April
- Term 2: 26<sup>th</sup> April to 24<sup>th</sup> June
- Term 3: 18<sup>th</sup> July to 16<sup>th</sup> September
- Term 4: 3<sup>rd</sup> October to 2<sup>nd</sup> December

**What does the third year of the course entail?** The following five units, one of which (Unit 890A) requires a total of 200 hours of counselling and 50 hours of counselling supervision.

Term	AIFC unit	Credit points & Duration	
1-4	801A Extend Counselling Capability through Professional Development	2	90 hours
	802A Develop and Maintain Referral and Support Networks	2	90 hours
	803A Enhance Counselling Proficiency through Clinical Supervision	2	90 hours
	804A Integrate Counselling Enhancements into the Counselling and Family Therapy Models	2	90 hours
	890A Enhanced Counselling and Family Therapy Practicum	4	200 hours

**How many years do I have to complete the VGC year?** Three (3) years: Students may, if approved by the VGC Director and the Registrar, defer studies by withdrawing from the course and return at a future date, to continue from the term that they have satisfactorily completed. When returning an application for re-enrolment must be submitted and the relevant application fee paid. Fees applicable for the year of re-enrolment will apply. Unless returning within two years of commencement an application for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will be required.

Students who complete units 801A, 802A, 803A, 804A and a minimum of forty (40) hours of counselling and ten (10) hours of supervision, **in the year of enrolment**, may, with the **approval of the Registrar, upon the recommendation of the VGC Director**, extend the remaining one hundred and sixty (160) hours of counselling and forty (40) hours of supervision over a maximum of another two (2) years without any additional course fees payable to AIFC.

Those who don't meet the course requirements and have not received approval to defer studies by withdrawing, for the year of enrolment, will have to apply to re-enrol, repeat the year and pay for it again.

**Please also note the item on Austudy/Abstudy.**