

Unique partnership offers new pathway for professional counselling in Australia



On Wednesday 19 June, the University of Divinity Council created two new awards: Advanced Diploma in Counselling and Bachelor of Counselling. From 2020 these awards will be offered through Stirling Theological College, University of Divinity (UD) in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth. They build on the established and growing relationship with the Australian Institute of Family Counselling (aifc) that has enabled the offering of the University's Master of Counselling through Stirling Theological College (Stirling). Senior representatives of the Christian Counsellors Association of Australia (CCAA) and the Australian Counselling Association (ACA) participated in the design of the awards.

From next year, aspiring counselling professionals will be able to follow an educational pathway with aifc and Stirling/University of Divinity from Diploma right up to Doctoral level, with programs that are academically rigorous while developing professional competence. All levels of the aifc/Stirling/UD pathway are eligible for FEE-HELP for Australian citizens. The University of Divinity is currently rated highest of all Australia Universities by QILT¹ for student satisfaction and post-graduation full-time employment². Significantly, aifc (RTO Provider code 88037) takes a comprehensive and balanced approach to counselling training that integrates psychology, theology and spirituality.

The new counselling awards pathway created by aifc and Stirling/University of Divinity is as follows:

Year 1	(AQF level 5)	CHC51015 Diploma of Counselling (aifc)
Year 2	(AQF level 6)	Advanced Diploma in Counselling (Stirling/UD)
Year 3	(AQF level 7)	Bachelor of Counselling (Stirling/UD)
Year 4	(AQF level 8)	10134NAT Graduate Diploma of Counselling and Integrated Psychotherapy (Spiritual) (aifc)
Year 5	(AQF level 9)	Master of Counselling (Stirling/UD)
HDR	(AQF level 10)	Doctor of Philosophy (Stirling/UD)

University of Divinity Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gabrielle McMullen AM, welcomed the development, stating: "The University of Divinity promotes the highest standards of scholarship in theology, philosophy, ministry and professional counselling. Through its endeavours, the University aims to address issues of the contemporary world and, now in partnership with aifc, we are very pleased to invite counselling students to consider our new integrated pathway to professional counselling".

Commenting on the partnership, aifc Chief Executive officer Nicholas Marks, said:

"We are very excited to make this announcement with our key partners Stirling Theological College and the University of Divinity. The fruit of this partnership for students is from next year they will greatly benefit from a best of both worlds offering that provides a unique pathway via Vocational Training and Higher Education. A pathway that meets industry needs, services the community and offers students the quality training, equipping and academic rigour to become qualified Christian Counsellors."

¹ <https://www.qilt.edu.au/about-this-site/student-experience>

² <https://www.qilt.edu.au/about-this-site/graduate-employment>

Stirling College Principal, Dr Andrew Menzies, highlighted the partnership with aifc:

“Stirling, a long-standing college of the University of Divinity, has been greatly enriched through its relationship with aifc which has enabled the offering of our popular Master of Counselling. Building on that partnership, the Advanced Diploma in Counselling and Bachelor of Counselling have been added to the ecumenical environment of the University of Divinity with its high standards of world class research and scholarship and we look forward with great anticipation to the first intake of students in 2020”.

For more information

Australian Institute of Family Counselling: aifc.com.au
Stirling Theological College: stirling.edu.au
University of Divinity: divinity.edu.au

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