

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

<b>Position Title</b>	Postdoctoral Research Fellow		
<b>Organisational Unit</b>	Faculty of Theology & Philosophy		
<b>Functional Unit</b>	Plunkett Centre for Ethics		
<b>Nominated Supervisor</b>	Director of the Plunkett Centre for Ethics		
<b>Career Pathway</b>	Research Focussed		
<b>Classification</b>	Academic Level B		
<b>CDF Level</b>	CDF1	<b>Position Number</b>	10612755
<b>Attendance Type</b>	Full Time	<b>Date reviewed</b>	12-MAR-2025

## ABOUT AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

**Mission Statement:** *Within the Catholic intellectual tradition and acting in Truth and Love, Australian Catholic University is committed to the pursuit of knowledge, the dignity of the human person and the common good.*

An ACU education builds on the Catholic understanding of faith and reason working together in pursuit of knowledge and promotion of human dignity and the common good.

An ACU education seeks to transform lives and communities. Students are challenged to look beyond the classroom, solve real-world problems, develop their own search for meaning and cultivate strong professional ethics. They are invited to stand up for people in need and causes that matter.

ACU is open to all. As is common with great Catholic institutions the world over, the university is inclusive and supportive of everyone, every day – regardless of their faith or tradition.

ACU is a young university making a serious impact. Ranked in the top two per cent of universities worldwide and in the top 10 Catholic universities, we're also a leader in employability with 94 per cent of our graduates employed. The university has seven campuses around Australia, a campus in Rome, Italy, and an online campus – ACU Online.

ACU has four faculties, and several research institutes and directorates. We believe our number one asset is our people. It's the character, enthusiasm and dedication of our staff that make this a university like no other. All our staff contribute to the achievement of our goals set out in ACU's Vision 2033 and aim to provide high-quality services with a strong focus on service excellence.

To be agents of change in the world, we all need to see life through the eyes of others. We believe that our role as a university is to inspire and equip people to make a difference – and that means cultivating their ability to act and think empathetically.

The structure to support this complex and national university consists of:

- Vice-Chancellor and President
- Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
- Chief Operating Officer

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise)
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)
- Vice President and Director (Mission and Identity)

## **ABOUT FACULTY OF THEOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY**

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The Faculty of Theology and Philosophy is the largest Faculty of its kind in Australia, comprised of two national schools - the School of Theology and the School of Philosophy - and the Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry

ACU has prioritised research intensification and has developed a strategy designed to achieve excellence in a number of areas of strategic priority, including theology and philosophy. The outcome has been a remarkable transformation in the research standing of the University. In the 2023 QS ranking in Theology, Divinity and Religious studies, for example, ACU was ranked first in Australia, and top 50 in the world. Our Philosophy program also continues to rank highly in Australian assessments: for example, at 'above world standard' in the most recent Excellence in Research for Australia rankings. A particular strength of the Faculty's research profile is its growing network of collaborations with international partners that leads to joint publication projects, research conferences and workshops (in Australia, on our Rome campus, and beyond), co-supervision of research students, and joint programs for research funding.

We offer high quality theology and philosophy programs of study for students at any stage of their life or career journey, with learning opportunities provided across multiple points of engagement, and across a variety of delivery modes. This includes Mission-aligned short courses, certificate and bachelor-level courses, postgraduate coursework programs, Higher-degree by research degrees, international study tours, and a wide range of professional learning and in-service opportunities. Our programs are designed in collaboration with industry, community, and church to equip students with the knowledge and skills required to succeed in an evolving, global and digital world.

## **ABOUT PLUNKETT CENTRE FOR ETHICS**

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The Mission of the Centre is to promote the values of compassion and fellowship, intellectual and professional excellence, and fairness and justice. Its primary focus is on the realisation of these values in the provision and allocation of health care. The Centre expresses this commitment through research, teaching and community engagement, as these are informed by the Catholic tradition.

The objectives of the Centre are as follows:

- To deepen and advance knowledge and understanding of the ethical standards relevant to human health and well-being, and in particular to clinical practice, medical research, business and management practices, and the allocation of healthcare resources.
- To offer courses in philosophical ethics and in the ethics of healthcare provision, medical research and healthcare resource allocation.
- To engage and where appropriate to collaborate with local, national and international bodies as they seek to respond to their intellectual and ethical needs.
- To foster collaboration on ethical matters between Australian Catholic University, St Vincent's Health Australia, Sydney, and Calvary Healthcare.

The functions of the Centre are as follows(a) conducting and promoting research.

- Providing research training and supervision.
- Developing and teaching courses.

- Conducting reviews of professional practice.
- Providing an ethics consultation service.
- Participating in public discussions.

The Centre is named after John Hubert Plunkett. Plunkett was the first Catholic Solicitor-General and the first Catholic Attorney-General of New South Wales. He was, at various times, a member of both the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly, a member of the first Senate of the University of Sydney and an early Vice-Chancellor of the University. He was the first Chairman of the Board of Education of New South Wales and a founding fellow of St. John's College at the University. He was also a great friend and benefactor of the Sisters of Charity in Australia.

Plunkett was born in Roscommon in Ireland in June, 1802. In 1830 he was appointed Solicitor-General in New South Wales. In 1836, he became Attorney-General, a remarkable achievement for an Irishman and Catholic. As chief law officer, Plunkett made an important contribution to the slow and difficult process by which the penal colony of New South Wales developed the institutions of a free society.

Plunkett was a leader in establishing civil rights in Australia. He drafted the Magistrate's Act, which abolished summary punishment, the administration of justice by private householders and the excessive use of the lash. He argued successfully for the abolition of convict assignment. He secured jury rights for emancipists. He extended the protection of the law to convicts and assigned servants. After securing the conviction of seven white men for the killing of an Aborigine at Myall Creek in 1838 (in a massacre in which the whole tribe was killed), he extended the protection of the law for the first time to Aborigines. But as a Catholic who knew what emancipation meant, Plunkett himself considered the Church Act of 1836, which disestablished the Church of England, his most important single achievement.

When the Sisters of Charity arrived in Sydney from Ireland in 1838, Plunkett organised a public appeal to establish their first hospital in Sydney and helped the Sisters to acquire the narrow strip of land along Victoria Street in Darlinghurst to which the first St. Vincent's Hospital, which had opened its doors in Potts Point, was relocated in 1870. Plunkett's two great recreations were the violin and Irish folk music. He died in May, 1869, and was buried in Sydney's Devonshire Street cemetery.

Thousands of Australians, of every religious belief and of none, have experienced the first-class health care that is inspired by the Sisters of Charity. Others have been educated by the Sisters. There are, thus, many Australians with reason to be grateful for the kind and practical help which John Hubert Plunkett gave to the women who founded the Sisters of Charity in Australia.

## **POSITION PURPOSE**

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The Postdoctoral Research Fellow will complete independent research as well as lead interdisciplinary research projects involving university academics and clinician researchers from the health sector. The successful candidate will assist the Plunkett Centre in conducting research in end-of-life care ethics as well as clinical ethics education. A strong understanding of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition is highly desirable.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

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### Introduction

A number of frameworks and standards express the University's expectations of the conduct, capability, participation and contribution of staff. These are listed below:

- ACU's [Vision 2033](#)
- [Catholic Identity and Mission](#)
- [Code of Conduct for all staff](#)
- [ACU Capability Development Framework](#)
- [Higher Education Standards Framework](#)
- [ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement 2022-2025](#)
- [ACU Staff Reconciliation Action Plan](#)

The following two frameworks are important in understanding the expectations of an academic position and the required qualifications and capability of a position holder:

- The [Academic Performance Matrices and Evidence Framework](#) which describes the performance standards in areas of academic activity.
- The [Capability Development Framework](#) which describes the core competencies needed in all ACU staff to achieve the University's strategy and supports its mission.

All academic staff are allocated workload comprising a range of academic duties/activities that fall within the following three broad areas of academic activity in line with the relevant Academic Career Pathway and Academic Level.

- Teaching
- Curriculum Development and Scholarship of Teaching
- Research
- Academic Leadership/Service

Responsibility	Broad Area of Academic Activity
Conduct research on bioethical issues relevant to the work of the Plunkett Centre. This may include, but need not be limited to, beginning and end of life care issues, conscientious objection, applied moral psychology in healthcare, aged care ethics, executive ethics and the philosophy of wellbeing.	Research
Assist the Director of the Plunkett Centre for Ethics with current research projects and reports requested by participating partners. This includes (but is not limited to), assisting clinical researchers in partner organisations to conduct high quality ethics research; producing reports for the sector on ethical issues in policy and practice; and conducting	Research

Responsibility	Broad Area of Academic Activity
research to inform ethics education modules offered by the Plunkett Centre.	
Work with the Plunkett Centres' stakeholders to identify research questions of greatest relevance to the Catholic health and aged care sector.	Research
Manage the preparation and formulation of publications, presentations and research reports arising from the research.	Research
Contribute to the translation of the research through the delivery of educational sessions to a variety of audiences including executives and health professionals.	Research
Coordinate communication, activities and meetings relevant to the Plunkett Centre's research. This may include coordinating regular meetings of research teams, taking minutes, ensuring action items are followed-up, organising workshops and seminars related to the research of the centre; etc.	Research
Disseminate results of research activities at local and international meetings.	Research

## SELECTION CRITERIA

<b>Qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualification - A doctoral degree in medicine, nursing, law, philosophy, or a related field.</li> <li>• Knowledge - Demonstrated understanding of ethical issues in end-of-life care, including palliative care ethics and the ethics of euthanasia.</li> <li>• Experience - A relevant, quality publication track record commensurate with the standards of an earlier career researcher.</li> <li>• Skill - Excellent written, oral and communication skills, with demonstrated capacity for relationship building.</li> <li>• Skill - Demonstrated capability in translating and communicating research to a variety of audiences, including executives and health professionals.</li> <li>• Skill - Well-developed teaching and facilitation skills, to effectively deliver key messages through stakeholder educational sessions.</li> </ul>
<b>Core Competencies:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate confidence and courage in achieving ACU's Mission, Vision and Values by connecting the purpose of one's work to ACU's Mission, Vision and Values.</li> <li>• Understand the business environment in which ACU operates and adopt a university-wide point of view to seize opportunities and improve commercial viability.</li> <li>• Keep stakeholder interest at the core of ACU business decisions and ACU service excellence as a top priority.</li> <li>• Work collaboratively internally and externally to ACU to capitalise on all available expertise in pursuit of excellence.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate with purpose. Gain the support of others for actions that benefit ACU. Negotiate for mutually beneficial outcomes that are aligned with the Mission, Vision and Values of the University.</li> </ul>
<b>Essential Attributes:</b>	Demonstrated commitment to cultural diversity and ethical practice principles and demonstrated knowledge of equal employment opportunity and workplace health and safety, appropriate to the level of the appointment.
<b>Working with children and vulnerable adults check</b>	This role does not require a Working with Children Check.

## REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

For further information about the structure of the University, refer to the Organisation Chart  
<https://www.acu.edu.au/about-acu/leadership-and-governance/leadership/organisational-structure>

