

# ACOM SPIRITUAL FORMATION GROUP COVENANT

(Applicable to Students and Formation Directors)



**Return to Spiritual Formation Program Coordinator**

Australian College of Ministries  
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Date: ..... / ..... / .....

Student: .....

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The central purpose of ACOM's Formation Groups is to build 'Christian communities' that offer support, care and challenge in the advancement of each student's spiritual formation. This advancement occurs as the group provides openness, safety and hospitality to each student despite their life circumstances and personal challenges - thus building Christian character and maturity in each student.

In order for each community to form and function, students must commit fully to the aims and process under which a Formation Group flourishes. This includes a commitment to:

- Attend every session
- Enthusiastic engagement with the process and content of Formation Groups
- Respect the policies listed in this Covenant
- Failure to attend a formation group meeting without exemption may result in a student FAILING their entire Spiritual Formation Unit. If a student is ill or cannot attend for a serious reason, where possible written (email) permission must be applied for in advance to the Spiritual Formation Program Coordinator and where applicable a Medical Certificate should also be supplied. Extra Work will be assigned.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY POLICY**

- All Students and Formation Directors will maintain a Covenant of Confidentiality, whereby information shared within the Formation Group, or with another person in the context of Group Activities, is not passed on to anyone. Students are free to disclose their own learning and the personal impact of the Formation Group on them – but the content of this disclosure is not to be repeated outside the group. This point represents a critical covenantal promise that promotes safety and depth of sharing in the group.
- Students who break the covenant are subject to reprimand, suspension or dismissal. Students should report any breaches of the Covenant immediately to their Formation Director or the Spiritual Formation Program Coordinator.
- Notwithstanding the above points, relevant academic, financial and personal information may be shared between Formation Directors, Mentors and Learning Support Managers as they prepare for Student Interviews and in instances concerning issues regarding Duty of Care. The student gives permission for this sharing to occur.
- The Student gives permission for the marked versions of their Retreat Reflection and other assessments to be forwarded and read by their Formation Director in order to give them a rounded view of the student's performance in the unit.
- The Student gives permission for ACOM to use photographs taken at ACOM events that may contain their image for use in ACOM literature, documentation, records and publicity.

## **DUTY OF CARE AND DISCLOSURE**

In some circumstances, keeping information confidential may result in harm to the student or others. At times, keeping of certain information confidential is also unlawful and/or immoral. Formation Directors, Mentors and Learning Support Managers assume Duty of Care and Disclosure by virtue of their personal work with students. Circumstances in which information supplied by students may be disclosed are outlined below. This list of circumstances is indicative rather than exhaustive.

- A Formation Director must disclose to the Spiritual Formation Program Coordinator at the earliest opportunity, any incident that seriously compromises the integrity of ACOM and/or its training. Any delay in reporting incidents of this kind will be interpreted as failure to disclose.
- If it appears that a crime has been committed, the Formation Director must inform the Student that it is a legal requirement to report such an offence. In the case where court orders are issued for disclosure, all ACOM personnel must abide by such orders.
- If it appears that a child is in danger, the Formation Director must take all reasonable steps (short of direct intervention) to ensure the safety and protection of the child. This includes reporting a matter to the Police or other authority.
- In the case of suspected or actual mental illness, or related behavior, involving a Student or Formation Director, any group member shall consult the Spiritual Formation Program Coordinator in order to secure appropriate advice and assistance.
- Disclosure to the Spiritual Formation Program Coordinator and any other appropriate authority (including the Police) must occur in cases of:
  - Abuse or harassment (sexual or otherwise) of a group member,
  - Abuse or harassment (sexual or otherwise) of another person by a group member,
  - Non-clinical depression and similarly serious psychological states of a group member,
  - Significant unresolved conflict in the life of a group member likely to lead to harm to the student and/or others.

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Formation Directors and students should not seek to provide care of a specific, therapeutic or professional nature to any person for any reason. Referral to appropriate professional care-givers should be made where such care is required, usually through disclosure to the Spiritual Formation Program Coordinator.

Disclosure may be made between the Formation Director, Mentor and Learning Support Manager for the purposes of coordinating support and care for a student. Where possible and appropriate, the Formation Director, Mentor or Learning Support Manager will normally seek to inform the Student that disclosure has taken, or is taking place.

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## **AGREEMENT**

- I agree to participate fully in a Formation Group by attending all group sessions and abide by all Confidentiality, Privacy, Duty of Care & Disclosure provisions noted above.

**The electronic copy of this document is to be agreed to by all Formation Directors and Students.**