POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title	Research Fellow or Senior Research Fellow (Religion and Theology)		
Faculty	Faculty of Theology and Philosophy		
Institute	Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry (IRCI)		
Nominated Supervisor	Director, IRCI	Campus/Location	St Patrick's, Melbourne
Academic Level	B or C	Academic Career Pathway	Research Only
CDF Achievement Level	1 All Staff	Work Area Position Code	TBC
Employment Type	Full-time, 5-year fixed term or continuing	Date reviewed	24 January 2019

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.*

At ACU we pride ourselves on offering a welcoming environment for everyone. At the same time, we are a university committed to standing for something clear. We stand up for people in need and causes that matter. ACU's Mission is central to the University, and informs every area – integrating the dignity of the human person, the common good, and ethical and social justice considerations into our core activities of student learning and teaching, research and service.

We are a publicly-funded university which has grown rapidly over the past few years. We're young, but we are making our mark: ranking among the top universities worldwide. We have got seven campuses around Australia, more than 200 partner universities on six continents, and a campus in Rome, Italy.

We know that our people make us a university like no other. It's your values, action and passion that makes the difference. Whatever role you may play in our organisation: it's what you do that defines who we are.

We value staff, offering excellent leave and employment conditions, and foster work environments where they have the ability grow and develop. We continue to invest in our facilities and workplaces, and actively involve staff in shaping the future direction of the organisation.

In order 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.

We hope that you might champion these values, and work with us to create a place of learning that is not only the envy of the world, but the making of it.

The structure to support this complex and national University consists of:
- Provost
- Chief Operating Officer & Deputy Vice-Chancellor
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Students, Learning and Teaching
- Vice President
- Pro Vice-Chancellor Assisting the Vice-Chancellor and President

Each portfolio consists of a number of Faculties, Research Institutes or Directorates. The Vice President drives both the Identity and the Mission of the University. In addition, five Associate Vice-Chancellors and Campus Deans focus on the University's local presence and development of the University at the local 'campus' level.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR RELIGION AND CRITICAL INQUIRY (IRCI)

The IRCI promotes collaborative research on religion and critical thought from multiple disciplinary perspectives, including philosophy, theology, history, and literature. It explores the inter-relationships between philosophy, religion, and their cultural contexts, and contributes to contemporary philosophical, theological, social, and political debates. In this way, the IRCI aims to advance understanding of our world and imagine ways to improve it.

Founded in 2014, the Institute is still in a growth phase but has three established research programs: Biblical and Early Christian Studies, Philosophy, and Religion and Theology. Each program includes full-time researchers and research students. 2019 will see the establishment of a new specialist team in Medieval and Early Modern Studies.

The IRCI has established research partnerships with leading institutions in Europe, the UK, and North America, and presents a series of research seminars each year at ACU's Rome Campus. It sits within the Faculty for Theology and Philosophy, the largest such Faculty in Australia, which offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses and higher research degrees across six campuses. In the recent ERA 2015 assessment, the University was ranked at above world standard (ERA score of 4) in Religion and Religious Studies and in Philosophy, placing it among the best universities in Australia in these fields.

ABOUT 'REDEEMING AUTONOMY: AGENCY, VULNERABILITY, AND RELATIONALITY'

The Research Fellow/Senior Research Fellow will contribute to the five-year project, *Redeeming Autonomy: Agency, Vulnerability, and Relationality.* The purpose of the project is to make a strategic intervention in the academic and cultural debate around the concept of 'autonomy'. 'Autonomy' is a central concept in current cultural, political, legal, and ethical debates. The concept evokes, for a more theological audience, connotations of self-creation, illusory self-control, unfettered freedom, and the oppression of aspects of the self, and of others. In turn, secular advocates of 'autonomy' can be willing to accept this as the theological/religious attitude towards autonomy, and, on this basis, to consider their hostility to religion to be vindicated. The result is that this key concept is entirely ceded to secular philosophy and culture, and, in truth, to a particular (Kantian) strand of this culture.

The *Redeeming Autonomy* project seeks to move past this *impasse,* by engaging with latent, neglected, and forgotten textures of the notion of autonomy, and to relate this to urgent concrete issues. Accordingly, the project has two principle dimensions, which it seeks to bring into a fruitful relationship: the conceptual and historical; and the contextual and applied. Applications are invited from candidates whose research addresses an aspect of one, or both, of these strands of the project.

The project is interested in diverse conceptual and historical roots of the concept of autonomy. The notion of 'rational self-government', which goes back into classical philosophy, need not be associated with exaggerated conceptions of control, individualism, or independence. In response to the originary Socratic question, 'how should one live?', one can find complex, enlarged, and rich conceptions of the rational (beyond the procedural and instrumental), the self (embodied, and enculturated, and open to transcendence), and of what constitutes 'government' (in vulnerable, multi-layered, and relational settings). A conception of autonomy as 'rational self-government' does not need to be innocent of, or in denial about, forms of vulnerability, sin, and oppression. Autonomy can be understood as a task, a problem, a process of integration, requiring support, healing, and redemption, as well as striving. A self-consciously theological and religious retrieval of the concept of autonomy can recognize, address, and illuminate this enriched conception of autonomy, construed as the difficult process of rational self-government, far removed from unpalatable possessive individualism, self-creation, and relativism.

The project will explore how an enriched conception of autonomy can illuminate the ways in which the concept of autonomy is wielded, manipulated, and/or properly valued when urgent, concrete, and salient practical issues are being considered. Over the course of seminars in Rome, the following issues will be reflected upon, in relation to the concept of autonomy: end-of-life, disability, transgender, trauma, sovereignty, migration, managerialism and risk, and money and economics.

The project is led by Professor Christopher Insole (Durham/ACU), with Dr David Kirchhoffer (ACU), Professor Kristin Heyer (Boston), Professor Jennifer Herdt (Yale), and Professor Yves de Maeseneer (KU Leuven). In addition, the project includes a number of other collaborators from Australia, Europe, the UK, and the USA.

POSITION PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the position is to produce high-quality research to contribute to and strengthen the University's research profile in religion and theology, especially by contributing to the 'Redeeming Autonomy' research project.

The successful candidate will pursue his or her own research within and beyond the project, leading to high-quality publications. Within the project, they will be expected to conduct research that relates to one, or both, of the key strands: the conceptual and historical, and the contextual and applied. Research proposals can engage with any period, topic, issue, or thinker, but the research must have as a central focus the concept of autonomy, with an openness to theological and religious resources when reflecting upon this concept, including Catholic social thought and practice. The Research Fellow or Senior Research Fellow will play a key role in organising annual seminars for the project in Rome, and in supporting the process of publishing the outputs from these seminars. Through individual and collaborative research and publications, and participating in Program and individual activities, the Research Fellow or Senior Research Fellow will help to enhance the national and international research profile of the Religion and Theology Program and the Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry. The Institute includes a strong and growing Philosophy program, and candidates may be motivated to contribute more generally to this research group.

POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

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 Strategic Plan 2015-2020
- Catholic Identity and Mission
- Learning For Life Framework 2014-2017
- ACU Teaching Criteria and Standards Framework
- Research Quality Standards
- Academic Performance Matrices and Evidence Framework
- ACU Capability Development Framework
- Minimum Standards for Academic Levels (MSALs)
- Higher Education Standards Framework
- ACU Service Delivery Model
- ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement including provisions in relation to Performance Excellence and Academic Career Pathways.

The following two frameworks in particular 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.

Key responsibilities

Broad area of academic activity	Key responsibilities specific to this position	Relevant Core Competencies ([Capability Development Framework](#))
Research	• Conduct high-quality research of an excellent international standard related to the theological focus of the 'Redeeming Autonomy: Agency, Vulnerability, and Relationality' project, by drawing upon one or more of a range of disciplines, including philosophy, theology, theological ethics, politics, social science and anthropology; • Produce peer-reviewed publications, including, where appropriate, jointly-authored publications; • Play a key role in organising annual seminars for the project in Rome, and in supporting the process of publishing the outputs from these seminars; • Support dissemination efforts beyond the publications that arise from the Program, through activities such as building and maintaining a web-presence, and the crafting of e-newletters; • Consult on and submit grant applications; • Supervise research students; • Contribute collaboratively to the intellectual and collegial life of the Religion and Theology Program and Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry, by initiating team projects, and by fostering and sustaining conversations across the different areas of the Institute as appropriate.	• Be responsible and accountable for achieving excellence. • Communicate with impact. • Collaborate effectively. • Adapt to and lead change.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Qualifications and other credentials

1.	A PhD related to philosophy, theology, religion, social science, politics and/or anthropology (including cognate disciplines).

Research

2.	A track record of excellent publications in highly regarded scholarly outlets relevant to the field.
3.	Ability to supervise research students.
4.	Ability to work effectively both individually and collegially as part of a collaborative research team.

Core Competencies

5.	Live ACU's Mission, Vision and Values: 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.

Other attributes

6.	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.
7.	Experience in undergraduate and/or postgraduate teaching is desirable.