Policy

Accreditation to Teach and to Teach Religious Education or Lead in Catholic Schools in Victoria

GENERAL

Introduction

The Church's mission is to provide a holistic education which takes account of established and current insights in education and the Catholic faith tradition. 'Catholic schools' primary responsibility is one of witness.'[1] Sharing in the mission of the Church, the Catholic school bears witness to the hopes of the followers of Jesus Christ and is a sign to the broader society of its members' commitment to the formation of young people to the fullness of human life.

Leaders[2] and teachers in Catholic schools play an essential part in seeking to ensure that students experience a quality education, and are invited to encounter God and develop their knowledge and appreciation of the Catholic faith and tradition. 'For it is the lay teachers, and indeed all lay persons, believers or not, who will substantially determine whether or not a school realizes its aims and accomplishes its objectives.'[3]

The accreditation process aims to support leaders and teachers entering and continuing service in Catholic education to develop the knowledge and skills that will support authentic witness in and across all Victorian Catholic schools.

This policy extends previous accreditation policies of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV). It recognises the roles and responsibilities of principals, teachers and staff for the education and formation of all who work and learn in Catholic schools under the direction of the diocesan bishops and in cooperation with all responsible parties.

Guiding principles

This policy is underpinned by the following guiding principles:

- Similar to the expectation in other professions, leaders and teachers in Catholic schools are called upon to keep up to date in all matters related to Catholic education.
- Leaders and teachers in Catholic schools require human, intellectual, theological, spiritual and pastoral formation.
- To ensure currency, this formation needs to continue throughout the professional life of leaders and teachers.
- The responsibility for providing the ongoing human, intellectual, theological, spiritual and pastoral formation of leaders and teachers is shared between the individual, the school and others.
- Catholic professional standards guide and inform the requirements and conditions for the formation and implementation of this policy.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Implementation of this policy

Principals, leaders and teachers share the responsibility for the implementation of this policy under the direction of the diocesan bishops and in cooperation with the CECV, Catholic education offices, school governing bodies and authorities, diocesan heads of Religious Education and all involved in Catholic education.

Diocesan Catholic education offices

It is the responsibility of the Catholic education office in each diocese to:

- promote, approve and provide resources for appropriate forms of professional learning relevant to teaching and leading in a Catholic school, and to the human, intellectual, theological, spiritual and pastoral formation of staff (in cooperation with diocesan agencies, and religious orders and institutes)
- monitor the gaining and maintaining of accreditation requirements appropriate to all leaders and teachers
- ensure that Catholic professional standards inform all resources and professional learning for accreditation.

Principals and governing bodies of schools

It is the responsibility of principals and governing bodies of schools to:

- encourage and support all leaders and teachers to meet the requirements for gaining and maintaining accreditation as appropriate to their respective roles
- identify and promote professional learning and formation opportunities at the local level to assist teachers to gain Accreditation to Teach in a Catholic School or, where appropriate, Accreditation to Teach Religious Education or Lead in a Catholic School
- identify and provide opportunities for all leaders and teachers to maintain currency of their accreditation status through appropriate professional learning and formation, in keeping with contemporary professional practice
- undertake appropriate oversight of the accreditation records of staff and report on this periodically as required by diocesan offices
- ensure that Catholic professional standards inform all resources and professional learning for accreditation.

Leaders and teachers

It is the responsibility of all leaders and teachers in Catholic schools to:

- achieve the appropriate accreditation within five years of gaining employment in accordance with the requirements of this policy
- maintain currency of accreditation
- maintain their own records of ongoing professional learning and formation in order to demonstrate their fulfilment of the requirements of this policy.

Diocesan heads of Religious Education

It is the responsibility of diocesan heads of Religious Education to:

- ensure a consistent approach to approval of courses and programs for accreditation
- liaise and consult on applications for accreditation that sit at variance to the stated requirements outlined in this policy.

ACCREDITATION

Levels of accreditation

There are two levels of accreditation in recognition of the different roles that leaders and teachers undertake:

1. **Accreditation to Teach in a Catholic School** (gain and maintain)
2. **Accreditation to Teach Religious Education or Lead in a Catholic School** (gain and maintain).

All teachers are required to gain and maintain Accreditation to Teach in a Catholic School.

All teachers of Religious Education and leaders are required to gain and maintain Accreditation to Teach Religious Education or Lead in a Catholic School. (Meeting the study and currency requirements of Accreditation to Teach Religious Education or Lead in a Catholic School also satisfies the requirements of Accreditation to Teach in a Catholic School.)

Requirements for gaining and maintaining accreditation

Level	Gaining	Maintaining
	Accreditation is **gained** by undertaking:	Accreditation is **maintained** by undertaking:
1. Accreditation to Teach in a Catholic School	25 hours of professional learning balanced across the three categories,[4] within five years of being employed	25 hours of professional learning or formation balanced across the three categories,[4] in each five-year period following the initial gaining of Level 1 accreditation
2. Accreditation to Teach Religious Education or Lead in a Catholic School	formal, assessed study in Religious Education/Theology/Catholic Leadership within five years of being employed (courses are approved by agreement of the diocesan heads of Religious Education).[5] A qualification in Catholic Leadership (e.g. a master's degree) must include four units of Religious Education or Theology (or equivalent)	50 hours of professional learning or formation balanced across the three categories,[4] in each five-year period following the initial gaining of Level 2 accreditation

Accreditation categories

The following categories apply to gaining and maintaining Accreditation to Teach in a Catholic School, and maintaining Accreditation to Teach Religious Education or Lead in a Catholic School:

1. the aims and objectives of the Catholic school
2. Catholic curriculum,[6] Religious Education and faith development
3. Catholic identity, culture, tradition and theology (including prayer, liturgy, Scripture and Catholic social teaching).

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[1] Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Rome, 2013, n. 57.
[2] In this policy, 'leaders' refers to principals, deputy principals, and leaders of Religious Education and Catholic identity.
[3] Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Rome, 1982, n. 1.
[4] 'Balance' for Level 1 accreditation requires a minimum of five hours of professional learning in each category, and for Level 2 accreditation requires a minimum of 10 hours of professional learning in each category.
[5] While this provision concerns teachers new to Catholic education, current teachers may pursue Accreditation to Teach Religious Education or Lead in a Catholic School at any stage of their career.
[6] 'Catholic curriculum' refers to the Catholic context and teachings related to learning areas other than Religious Education (e.g. Catholic teaching on bioethics in relation to the Science curriculum).