



TASMANIAN
CATHOLIC
education commission

POLICY (STRATEGIC) ACCREDITATION

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Employees in Catholic Education
Recruitment, Selection and Appointment
Qualities for Leadership Positions in Catholic Schools
Conditions of Appointment & Employment for Systemic Principals
The Religious Education Coordinator
Catholic Education: Leadership Framework

ACCREDITATION POLICY

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RATIONALE

The distinctive character of the Catholic School is that it is a community animated by the spirit of the Gospel. This Gospel spirit must permeate all aspects of life within the Catholic School community enabling all to experience the presence of Christ in real and tangible ways. It follows therefore that for the Catholic School to achieve this distinctive character, the quality and commitment of the staff within the school to achieving this goal is paramount (*Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, par 38, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, pars 25, 26). In response to this imperative, the Catholic Education community is called to put into place appropriate, supportive and yet rigorous pathways for the preparation and ongoing professional learning of teachers, especially in Religious Education. The Catholic Education community also has a responsibility for the professional and spiritual formation of those who will lead our schools into the future.

The identity and success of Catholic education is linked inseparably to the witness of life given by the teaching staff. Therefore, the Bishops recommended that, "those responsible for hiring teachers and administrators in our Catholic schools take into account the faith-life of those they are hiring". School staff who truly live their faith will be agents of a new evangelisation in creating a positive climate for the Christian faith to grow and in spiritually nourishing the students entrusted to their care. They will be especially effective when they are active practising Catholics, committed to their parish community and loyal to the Church and her teaching.

John Paul II: Ecclesia in Oceania, 2001

The Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission (TCEC) Accreditation Policy was first developed in 1984, and reviewed in 1994, 2001 and 2005. In 2005, the TCEC launched a revised Accreditation Policy. The new policy sought to emphasise both Accreditation for Religious Education and Accreditation for Leadership and articulated more flexible means by which teachers could attain Accreditation. The policy also introduced the concept of 'currency', whereby teachers are expected and encouraged to gain and to maintain their Accreditation over time by ongoing professional development. The revised policy also highlighted the importance of spiritual formation as well as academic development in the fields of Religious Education and Leadership.

The purpose of this Accreditation Policy is to allow school and college communities (in partnership with the TCEO and other Catholic organisations and agencies):

1. to respond fully to the Archbishop's invitation and mandate to teach religious education and to exercise leadership in a Catholic school on his behalf,
2. to respond to the changing needs and culture of Catholic schools in the 21st century,
3. to recognise, promote and affirm appropriate forms of professional learning relevant to religious education teaching and leadership in a Catholic school,
4. to promote the attainment of academic knowledge and skills in the areas of religious education and Catholic school leadership,
5. to provide opportunities for participants to become familiar with and to be immersed in the culture of Catholic education,
6. to nurture the formation, faith development and ongoing professional growth of all employees, and
7. to use accreditation status under this policy as one of the criteria to assist with selection of staff for teaching or leadership positions in Catholic schools.

Pope John Paul II's words during his visit to Australia in 1986 encapsulate the intent in the above where the ongoing formation of school staffs allows:

"... the teacher in the Catholic school to accept the challenge 'that no matter what subject you teach it is your responsibility to introduce your students to the mystery of Christ and the living tradition of the Church.'"

DEFINITIONS

Audit a course Participate professionally and fully in the activities of a course without the additional requirement of completing a reflective task or assignment.

Currency The regular maintenance of Accreditation status through ongoing learning.

Full Accreditation The attainment of the necessary number of Accreditation points to satisfy the requirements of a specific strand of Accreditation and to formally receive the Archbishop's mandate to work in a Catholic School; teach Religious Education; exercise Leadership in a Catholic School.

Provisional Accreditation The conditional provision of the Archbishop's mandate to work in a Catholic School; teach Religious Education; exercise Leadership in Catholic School subject to making to a commitment to work towards the relevant level of full Accreditation over a specified period.

POLICY

Through this policy the TCEC plans for:

1. All staff of Catholic schools and of the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office (TCEO), as appropriate to their positions, to undertake suitable and approved courses or local (school or TCEO) professional learning to enable them to gain and maintain the necessary knowledge and understandings of, and commitment to, the Church's teachings in regard to the Catholic school.

2. Middle and senior management personnel in Catholic schools and in the TCEO to undertake suitable and approved leadership courses which include appropriate theological and spiritual components to enable them to gain and maintain the necessary formal qualifications, knowledge and understandings appropriate to their roles as leaders in Catholic education.
3. Principals, school communities and the TCEO to provide appropriate resources, opportunities and encouragement for the ongoing formation of their staff as articulated immediately above.

PRINCIPLES

1. The maintenance and refinement of the Accreditation system is crucial in allowing the Archbishop to mandate all employees, teachers and leaders to act on his behalf.
2. All employees undertaking a ministry in Catholic Education should be appropriately accredited to work in a Catholic school.
3. All teachers of Religious Education should be either provisionally or fully accredited to teach Religious Education.
4. All employees who assume designated leadership positions should be either provisionally or fully accredited for leadership at the appropriate levels as designated by the relevant Enterprise Agreement.
5. ***Provisional Accreditation*** would normally be granted to suitable applicants who:
 - a. are newly appointed to a new position or role within the Catholic Education system, especially as teachers of Religious Education or designated Leaders, or
 - b. are currently teaching Religious Education or a designated leadership position and who have begun working towards Accreditation in either Religious Education or Leadership, and
 - c. commit themselves to achieving Full Accreditation over a four year period.

6. **Full Accreditation** should:
- a. enable all employees (teaching, administrative and support staff) to acquire an appropriate understanding of the ethos and culture of a Catholic school,
 - b. enable all teachers of religious education to acquire an appropriate qualification and level of formation in order for them to teach in this discipline,
 - c. enable all leadership personnel in Catholic schools to gain a thorough understanding of the unique and transformative nature of leadership in a Catholic school context, and
 - d. enable all senior leaders to develop the capacity and depth of knowledge and understanding to articulate the Catholic ethos, to teach religious education, and to lead within a Catholic context.
7. Accreditation programs should reflect the changing needs and aspirations of both participants and the Catholic education system within which they serve and as such be aligned with the prevailing strategic direction and priorities of the sector. The needs of participants and the sector should periodically be discerned and reassessed.
8. The Accreditation program will strongly reflect policy guidelines articulated by the TCEC (on behalf of the Archbishop) and operate with clear management procedures under the direction of the TCEO. These management procedures need to be feasible, realistic and sustainable.
9. Over time Accreditation should be aligned with and support other professional growth and development strategies (e.g. role descriptions, performance appraisal, goal setting, portfolios and professional learning). However, it should be recognised that not all forms of professional learning are relevant or appropriate for Accreditation purposes.
10. The criteria for different categories of Accreditation are discerned and clearly communicated. Criteria should be formulated to ensure a particular category is balanced and reflective of its primary intent.

11. The time span of individual courses / modules should realistically reflect / match the length of a school day (e.g. 6 hours of course time = 7 hours attendance time = 1 day).
12. The design and delivery of accredited courses should be flexible, relevant and attuned to the needs of adult learners.
13. Options should be provided so that participants may elect to either audit a course or to attend the course and complete a relevant assignment or reflective task.
14. There should be an awareness of equity issues regarding the accessibility, timing, location and duration of Accreditation courses.
15. The rigour and quality of Accreditation programs must be monitored and maintained.
16. The process for Accreditation needs to be clearly communicated to all stakeholders.
17. Accreditation should be viewed as an ongoing formative process, such that mechanisms should exist to ensure that currency of Accreditation is maintained.
18. During a transition period with respect to Provisional Accreditation, no current staff member should be inappropriately disadvantaged. Hence, for employees of the Archdiocese of Hobart who commenced employment prior to 31st January 2008, the following transitional provisions will apply to those who have already accepted the Archbishop's mandate to teach Religious Education upon the following basis:
 - a. An application may be made for Accreditation recognition within Strand 2.2 (Accreditation to teach RE through pre-service training or extended service).
 - b. Accreditation recognition will be acknowledged on the basis of the equivalent of two Accreditation points for each year of service teaching Religious Education, up to a maximum of 15 years of service (i.e. full Accreditation status).
 - c. Full Accreditation in Strand 2.2 confers the Archbishop's mandate to teach Religious Education, however as no Accreditation points have been gained in a

postgraduate context, this strand of Accreditation is **not** applicable for the associated award related requirements that require the attainment of 30 Accreditation points through course work after the commencement of employment in the Catholic system.

- d. If subsequently employees complete the postgraduate requirements recognised for Strand 2.1, an application may be made for reclassification for Award purposes.

REQUIREMENTS

1. There will be two major categories of Accreditation: ***Provisional Accreditation*** and ***Full Accreditation***. All employees working, teaching or leading in a Catholic School must be either provisionally or fully accredited.
2. All current employees, who are not fully accredited, on the recommendation of their Principal, will be Provisionally Accredited with the expectation they will continue to working towards Full Accreditation.
3. Provisionally Accredited employees will have four years within which to gain Full Accreditation, unless otherwise extended by application to the Accreditation Manager.
4. Provisional Accreditation (Religious Education) would generally be granted to new teachers of Religious Education on the basis of a Principal's recommendation, subject to the following provisions:
 - a. An undertaking of applicants, to engage in an appropriate formation and induction programs offered by the TCEO during their first year in the role,
 - b. The details surrounding the contractual nature of the arrangement be fully documented, and
 - c. In association with the application, an Accreditation professional learning pathway will be developed and documented (e.g. enrolment in the Graduate Certificate of RE).

5. Provisional Accreditation (Leadership) would generally be granted to teachers of assuming new Leadership contracts on the basis of a Principal's recommendation, subject to the following provisions:
 - a. An undertaking of applicants, to engage in an appropriate leadership formation program offered by the TCEO,
 - b. The details surrounding the contractual nature of the arrangement be fully documented, and
 - c. In association with the application, an Accreditation professional learning pathway will be developed (e.g. enrolment in the Masters of Education Leadership program, enrolment in the Certificate of Leadership program or other approved tertiary programs).
6. There will be three (3) **strands** of Accreditation in this policy.
7. The **allocation of Accreditation points** occurs when participants either audit (i.e. attend) a course or audit a course and complete the prescribed assignment or reflective task. As a general principle, additional points will be awarded if a relevant assignment or reflective task is satisfactorily completed. Accreditation points for Strand 3 courses would be discerned relative to the nature and scope of the course (e.g. as deemed by the Accreditation Council (see Appendix 1) a prescribed assessment task may have a heavier points weighting).
8. Having attained Accreditation within a particular strand, **currency** of Accreditation needs to be maintained by ongoing professional formation and development. Participants maintain their currency of Accreditation by gaining:
 - a. 3 points over 3 years for STRAND 1
 - b. 6 points over 3 years for STRAND 2
 - c. 12 points over 3 years for STRAND 3

9. Maintenance of currency at a related or higher strand fulfils currency expectations for related strands on lower levels. It is generally expected that participants could maintain currency by participation in local school / college based programs.

1.0 STRAND 1

1.1 Accreditation to work in Catholic school

- 1.1.1 Strand 1 Accreditation applies to all staff commencing work in a Catholic school.
- 1.1.2 Accreditation may be obtained by audit and / or audit and task.
- 1.1.3 Accreditation to work in Catholic schools requires six (6) points and the maintenance of currency at the rate of three (3) points over a three (3) year period.

2.0 STRAND 2

(Depending upon their professional background and needs, participants may elect to complete one or more STRAND 2 Accreditation pathways)

2.1 Accreditation to teach Religious Education in Catholic schools (POST GRADUATE – acquired after completing a standard undergraduate program not involving formation in Religious Education)

- 2.1.1 Strand 2.1 applies to all teachers who acquire the relevant Accreditation points over and above a standard undergraduate teacher-training program that has no substantive RE component.
- 2.1.2 Accreditation may be obtained by audit and / or audit and task.
- 2.1.3 Accreditation to teach religious education in Catholic schools requires thirty (30) points and the maintenance of currency at the rate of six (6) points over a three (3) year period.

2.1.4 The distribution of Religious Education points should reflect a balance across the five domains of the Religious Education Framework

2.1.5 Participation in Strand 2.1 Accreditation courses maintains currency in Strand 1.

**2.2 Accreditation to teach Religious Education in Catholic schools
(PRE-SERVICE – about to enter their first year of teaching or EXTENDED SERVICE)**

2.2.1 Strand 2.2 applies to:

- teachers about to enter their first year of teaching and who have completed appropriate levels of religious education training as part of their undergraduate program, or
- teachers who have taught Religious Education in a Catholic School in a regular and sustained manner for an extended time period at the commencement of the 2008 school year and have demonstrated the capacity to teach Religious Education in line with the principles of the Archdiocesan curriculum.

2.2.2 Accreditation to teach religious education in Catholic schools Strand 2.2 requires the completion of:

- a. a relevant undergraduate courses deemed equivalent to the attainment of thirty (30) points and maintenance of currency at the rate of six (6) points over a three (3) year period; or
- b. up to 15 years of experience teaching Religious Education as at 1st January 2008 (2 points for each year) and maintenance of currency at the rate of six (6) points over a three (3) year period.

2.2.3 In Strand 2.2, as no accreditation points have been gained in a postgraduate context, this strand is **not** applicable for the associated award related requirements that require the attainment of 30 Accreditation points (i.e. Strands 2.1, 2.3, 2.4) through course work after the commencement of employment in the Catholic system.

2.3 Accreditation for leadership in a Catholic school / TCEO (directly related to the broad understanding of LEADERSHIP)

2.3.1 Strand 2.3 applies to leadership positions associated with leadership at a middle management level, especially in the context of curriculum, pastoral, administrative and TCEO personnel.

2.3.2 Accreditation may be obtained by audit and / or audit task.

2.3.3 Accreditation for leadership in a Catholic School/TCEO requires thirty (30) points and the maintenance of currency at the rate of six (6) points over a three (3) year period.

2.3.4 The distribution of leadership points should reflect a balance across the five domains of the Catholic Education Leadership Framework.

2.3.5 Participation in Strand 2.3 Accreditation courses maintains currency in Strand 1.

2.4 Accreditation for leadership in a Catholic school office / TCEO (directly related to FINANCIAL or OFFICE ADMINISTRATION)

2.4.1 Strand 2.4 applies to senior administrative leadership from Bursars, senior school office personnel, senior support staff, and TCEO management staff who may assume explicit leadership positions within the school or TCEO.

2.4.2 Accreditation may be obtained by audit and / or audit and task.

- 2.4.3 Accreditation for leadership in a Catholic school office / TCEO requires thirty (30) points and the maintenance of currency at the rate of six (6) points over a three (3) year period.
- 2.4.4 The distribution of leadership points should reflect a balance across the five domains of the Catholic Education Leadership Framework.
- 2.4.5 Participation in Strand 2.4 Accreditation courses maintains currency in Strand 1.

3.0 STRAND 3

3.1 Accreditation for Senior Leadership in a Catholic school/system

- 3.1.1 Strand 3 applies to senior leadership personnel: Principals, Deputy Principals, Assistant Principals (Religious Education or Learning and Teaching), TCEO Heads of Service, TCEO Regional Directors and other senior leadership positions that may be established within the context of a school community from time to time.
- 3.1.2 To be eligible for Strand 3, applicants must have completed at least two sub-components of Strand 2.
- 3.1.3 Accreditation may be obtained by audit and/or audit and task.
- 3.1.4 Accreditation for senior leadership in a Catholic school/system requires thirty (30) points and the maintenance of currency at the rate of twelve (12) points over a three (3) year period.
- 3.1.5 The distribution of senior leadership points should reflect a balance across the five domains of the Catholic Education Leadership Framework.
- 3.1.6 Participation in Strand 3 Accreditation courses maintains currency in Strands 1 and 2.

REFERENCES

The Catholic School (1977)

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (1998)

Ecclesia in Oceania (2001)

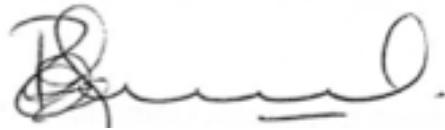
Good News for Living (2005)

FORMS

Nil

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Administrative Guidelines



SIGNED:

TCEC Chairperson

DATE:

1.11.2005

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