

Accreditation to Teach Religion in a Catholic School

Position Statement



Introduction

This position statement presents the collaboratively discerned views of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and Catholic School Authorities regarding accreditation to teach Religion in a Catholic school.

The Code of Canon Law of the Catholic Church states that “the local ordinary is to be concerned that those who are designated teachers of religious instruction in schools ... are outstanding in correct doctrine, the witness of a Christian life, and teaching skill” (804 #2).

The position statement applies to all teachers of Religion across primary and secondary years, including those with interim accreditation, permanent part-time teachers, and teachers on job share arrangements.

QCEC is committed to supporting Catholic School Authorities in their work in employing teachers of Religion, who demonstrate respect for the history, beliefs, values and mission of the Catholic Church.

Each Catholic School Authority is encouraged to use this position statement to frame employment policies and procedures which are socially just, equitable, inclusive and educationally sound, to suit its particular context.

This position statement should be read in conjunction with the position statement “Accreditation to teach in a Catholic school”.

Definition

This position statement applies to the teaching of any Religion subject including Study of Religion, Religion and Ethics, Religious Education at any year level, or the equivalent as named.

Accreditation is a process undertaken by Catholic School Authorities that recognises competency to teach Religion in a Catholic school. It is a professional requirement that requires knowledge derived from formal qualifications which include the equivalent of four (4) semester units from any one or more of: Religion Studies, Christian Leadership, Theology, Scripture, Religious Education, Liturgy and Spirituality and the skills to plan, teach and assess student progress and achievement in Religion; evaluate the impact of the Religious Education teaching program on student progress and achievement; and facilitate student involvement in the faith life of the school.

A semester unit is usually ten (10) credit points where each credit point represents about ten (10) hours of learning activity.

Accreditation to teach Religion in a Catholic school is usually renewable every five years. In order to continue teaching Religion in a Catholic school, the teacher is required to meet the Catholic School Authority’s guidelines for renewal of this accreditation. Such guidelines require the teacher to provide evidence, acceptable to the Catholic School Authority, of completion of relevant

professional learning activities that support and enhance the knowledge and skills deemed necessary to teach Religion effectively. These activities are to total at least ten (10) hours per annum which may include the five (5) hours undertaken as the requirement for accreditation to teach in a Catholic school.

Rationale

Teachers of Religion require qualifications and competence in the areas of Religious Education theory and practice, theology and scripture so they can facilitate learning and assist students to grow in knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith tradition in the context of an ecumenical and multi-faith world.

The attainment of accreditation allows Catholic School Authorities to:

- respond to their Bishop's invitation and mandate to teach Religious Education and to exercise leadership in a Catholic school on his behalf;
- respond to the changing needs and culture of Catholic schools;
- recognise, promote and affirm appropriate forms of professional learning relevant to Religious Education teaching;
- promote the attainment of academic knowledge and skill in the area of Religious Education;
- nurture the formation, faith development and ongoing professional growth of all employees;
- use accreditation under this position statement as one of the criteria to assist with selection of staff for teaching Religion;
- use accreditation status under this position statement as one of the criteria to inform selection of leadership positions of Catholic schools.

Position Statement

Teachers of Religion in Catholic schools in Queensland are accredited for their knowledge, skill and professional commitment to the Vision and Mission of the Catholic school, to teach Religion.

Implications

- Each Catholic School Authority will develop and maintain a policy on the accreditation requirements for teaching Religion.
- Each Catholic School Authority ensures that Religion teachers have access to opportunities which enable them to fulfil the minimum requirements as set out in their policy statement.
- Accreditation policies and procedures may vary across Catholic School Authorities in recognition of specific needs and conditions.
- The determination of accreditation in one Catholic School Authority may not be sufficient for accreditation in other Catholic School Authorities.
- It is the responsibility of the individual teacher to fulfil the Catholic School Authority's requirements for the teaching of Religion. It is the school's leadership responsibility to monitor and support accreditation to teach Religion requirements for teachers of Religion. However, it is also the responsibility of the individual teacher to maintain accurate records to support the accreditation process.
- These requirements will be reflected in selection criteria, position descriptions and contracts.
- Teachers could be accredited to teach Religion in a Catholic school at point of employment and required to maintain accreditation through participation in annual professional learning activities that support their understanding of the Church's mission in the world, the identity and educational mission of the Catholic school within the mission of the Church, and their contribution as teachers to that mission.
- Catholic School Authorities may negotiate with applicants who do not meet these requirements to ascertain ways they can fulfil the requirements in an appropriate manner and timeframe. In

general, teachers beginning in a Catholic school can receive interim accreditation for a maximum of five years until they can satisfy the Catholic School Authority's requirements for accreditation to teach Religion.

References

- *Code of Canon Law of the Catholic Church*, book 3, can 804, 1983.

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