



**Catholic  
Education**  
Diocese of Cairns

*Learning with Faith and Vision*

# Policy

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<b>Author:</b>	Based on QCEC Position Statement 2021 (AED Identity and Mission)

## Accreditation to teach Religion in a Catholic school

### Purpose

This policy outlines the requirements for accreditation to teach religion in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Cairns. It should be read in conjunction with the policy 'Accreditation to teach in a Catholic school'. It applies to all continuing primary and secondary teachers of Religion, continuing part time teachers, and continuing teachers on job share arrangements.

### Policy

Every registered continuing teacher responsible for teaching Religion in a Catholic school in Queensland requires accreditation to teach religion in a Catholic school in Queensland.

### Rationale

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)<sup>1</sup>.

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 Cairns Catholic Education Services to:

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

<sup>1</sup>Code of Canon Law of the Catholic Church, book 3, can. 804, 1983

## Consequences

Accreditation is a process undertaken by Cairns Catholic Education Services (CES) that recognizes competency to teach religion in a Catholic school. It is a professional requirement which will require 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 Curriculum on student progress and achievement; and facilitate student involvement in the faith life of the school. Refer to Appendix 1 for examples of courses that fulfil accreditation requirements.

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

Accreditation to teach Religion in a Catholic school is renewable every five years. In order to continue teaching religion in a Catholic school in the Diocese of Cairns, the teacher is required to meet CES' policy requirements for renewal of this accreditation. The policy requires the teacher to provide evidence, acceptable to CES, of completion of relevant professional learning activities that support and enhance the knowledge and skills deemed necessary to teach religion effectively. Over a five-year period, these activities are to total at least 50 hours, which may include the 25 hours undertaken as the requirement for accreditation to teach in a Catholic school.

It is the responsibility of the individual teacher to fulfil CES' policy requirements for the teaching of Religion.

CES will maintain a record of compliance with accreditation requirements and will follow up, as required, instances where the accreditation requirements have not been met or maintained.

Schools, supported by CES, will ensure that religion teachers have access to opportunities which enable them to fulfil the minimum requirements as set out in the policy statement, that is, participate in at least 10 hours of relevant professional learning each year. Relevant professional learning will include at least 5 hours of professional learning suitable for accreditation to teach Religion in a Catholic school, and the remainder of the 10 hours minimum of professional learning suitable for accreditation to teach in a Catholic school. Refer to Appendix 2 for sample professional learning topics.

These accreditation requirements will be reflected in CES and school recruitment, position descriptions and contracts.

Teachers beginning in a Catholic school may receive interim accreditation for a maximum of five years until they can satisfy the CES' requirements for accreditation.

Accreditation policies and procedures may vary across Catholic schooling authorities in recognition of specific needs and conditions. The determination of accreditation in one schooling authority may not be sufficient for accreditation in all other schooling authorities.

## Reflection

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

## See also (Related Policies and Guidelines)

Policy: Accreditation to teach in a Catholic school

For further information or clarification of Accreditation to Teach in a Catholic School or Teach Religion in a Catholic School please contact either the Director - Identity and Outreach or email [reaccreditation@cns.catholic.edu.au](mailto:reaccreditation@cns.catholic.edu.au).

## Appendix 1

### Suggested courses (list compiled 2021)

Below are examples of courses that might contribute to the four (4) semester units required to teach Religion in a Catholic school. Units for accreditation may be taken from within or across courses provided the Religious Education components have been completed. Courses are subject to change.

#### Australian Catholic University

Preservice Teacher Education and Religious Education (Undergraduate Courses)

- Bachelor of Education (Primary)

Religious Education (Postgraduate Courses)

- Graduate Certificate in Religious Education
- Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) / Graduate Certificate in Religious Education
- Master of Teaching (Secondary) / Graduate Certificate in Religious Education
- Graduate Diploma in Religious Education
- Master of Religious Education
- Postgraduate Certificate in Religious Education
- Graduate Certificate in Leadership and Catholic Culture

Theology and Philosophy (Undergraduate Courses)

- Bachelor of Theology
- Bachelor of Theology (Honours)
- Bachelor of Theology/Bachelor of Global Studies
- Bachelor of Theology/Bachelor of Laws
- Bachelor of Theology/Bachelor of Philosophy
- Certificate in Theology

Theology and Philosophy (Post Graduate Courses)

- Doctor of Practical Ministry
- Graduate Certificate in Catholic Studies
- Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies
- Graduate Diploma in Theological Studies
- Leadership and Catholic Culture
- Master of Professional Studies in Theology
- Master of Theological Studies

## Appendix 2

Typical professional learning themes for accreditation to teach Religion in a Catholic school could include:

- Relevant theological input
- Topics being taught in the teaching of the Religion program (including studies of other world Religions)
- Teaching methods in Religion
- Use of scripture in the teaching of Religion
- Experiences of Scripture (core and complementary) so as to invite students into exploration of sacred tools
- Hermeneutic Communicative Method experiences
- Pedagogical approaches to teaching Religious Education including: Recontextualisation; Reconceptualist; Dialogical; those that enhance Post-Critical belief
- Exploration of Catholic Social Teaching
- Professional learning on particular topics of the Prep-12 Religion Curriculum
- Exploration of theological perspectives and concepts

This list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.