

Accreditation FAQs and Scenarios

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

When did the new accreditation policy come into effect?

The policy came into effect in January 2020. For more information, refer to:
www.macs.vic.edu.au/Work-in-our-schools/Accreditation.aspx.

Why is there a single CECV accreditation policy across all Victorian dioceses?

The single policy simplifies the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) approach to accreditation, enables all teachers and leaders to understand the principles that underpin accreditation in Catholic education in Victoria, and provides a consistent approach and recognition of accreditation across dioceses.

Why are there gaining and maintaining requirements in the new policy?

Teachers and educational leaders are expected to keep up to date with all aspects of their profession through ongoing professional learning. The policy ensures that teachers and leaders are supported to undertake professional learning which initially provides a solid basis for their work in Catholic schools, and then encourages a continuing development and maturity of understanding in ensuing years.

Why are leaders included in the policy?

Leaders are included in the policy because they are the key leaders of faith and Religious Education in their schools. In order to lead their school communities effectively, they need a substantial and developing understanding of the Catholic identity of their schools, as well as other areas articulated in the policy.

What is the definition of 'leaders' in the policy?

In the policy, *leaders* refers to principals, deputy principals, and leaders of Religious Education and Catholic identity.

What if I aspire to the positions of leadership referred to in the policy?

Aspirants to these leadership positions should pursue Accreditation to Teach Religious Education or Lead in a Catholic School as a prerequisite to applying for such positions.

I'm a fixed-term teacher. Do I need to be accredited?

Accreditation is not an expectation of employment for fixed-term teachers. However, fixed-term employees are welcome to participate in accreditation pathways. This would also support such teachers' applications for ongoing employment.

I'm an ongoing part-time teacher. Do I need to be accredited?

As an ongoing part-time employee, you are expected to meet the accreditation requirements in accordance with the policy.

I am nearing retirement. What do I need to do?

If you are planning to retire or are transitioning to retirement over the next two years (per clause 41 of the *Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2018*), you are not required to gain accreditation under the new policy. However, you are required to participate in professional learning and formation activities within your school.

I was exempt under the previous policy. What does the new policy mean for me?

All teachers and leaders, regardless of how they gained accreditation, are expected to maintain accreditation as described in the policy.

How do I record professional learning activities to demonstrate maintaining accreditation?

Teachers will view and record the relevant professional learning in the online Teacher Accreditation Platform (TAP). Attendance at approved professional learning in your school, with your diocesan education office or with external providers will be uploaded and automatically appear in your records on TAP.

How will I know if I have maintained my accreditation?

When TAP recognises that you have met the 25 or 50 hours required for your accreditation, the platform will extend your accreditation expiry date five years from the date your current accreditation expires.

What happens if I don't maintain my accreditation?

If you don't maintain your accreditation, your status will be listed as 'Accreditation Pending'. Note that accreditation is an essential requirement when applying for leadership positions and sponsored study.

How will my diocese support me to become accredited and to maintain my accreditation?

A variety of approved pathways and opportunities will be offered to ensure you are able to gain and maintain accreditation. These may include diocese-sponsored events, credentialed learning opportunities through tertiary institutions, school-based activities, and online study or modules.

Is financial assistance or course sponsorship available?

Each diocese has made provisions for teachers or leaders to apply for sponsorship in appropriate courses of study to gain Accreditation to Teach Religious Education or Lead in a Catholic School.

For those seeking to gain Accreditation to Teach in a Catholic School, or to maintain either level of accreditation, your diocesan education office will continue to explore cost-effective options for all teachers and leaders. Please contact your diocesan education office for specific questions regarding your own circumstances.

What's the role of my school in my accreditation?

Your school and diocesan education office will partner with you in gaining and maintaining accreditation. Your school will provide you with advice and guidance in relation to pathways to gain accreditation, and will assist you with questions regarding possible time, resources and support to maintain your accreditation.

For school-based professional learning activities, your school will seek approval for accreditation and upload appropriate records of your involvement, and your principal or Religious Education leader will attest that you have met the accreditation maintenance requirement by endorsing your attendance.

How does my school apply to have related professional learning approved for accreditation?

Your principal or other designated staff member responsible for input in TAP will apply to have relevant professional learning activities approved for accreditation through TAP.

What types of activities will be approved for accreditation?

The accreditation policy outlines the categories of content which are applicable for each level of accreditation. In general, activities which are related to theology or Religious Education and are evidently professional learning, as distinct from normal daily planning, will be approved for accreditation.

For example, a group of staff working to plan a specific topic on sacraments would be considered a normal part of staff planning and so not applicable. If the same staff identified the need for a greater depth of learning in order to implement the unit and ran a workshop on the topic as professional learning, this would be approved.

Can parent or family evenings for sacramental programs be counted towards teacher accreditation?

The key issue for these types of evenings or after-school sessions is the audience. An open program for parents will not extend staff knowledge and understanding to any great degree and so is not appropriate for accreditation purposes. This is particularly the case given that, in most circumstances, these evenings – facilitated by an outside provider, parish priest or Religious Education leader within the school – primarily include the school staff who are teaching the sacramental program.

Some schools have expanded the role of an outside facilitator by planning for them to come in after school for specialist professional learning with staff, and then facilitate an evening session with parents. In this case, the specialist professional learning would be an ideal accreditation activity.

Can other forms of community information evenings be counted towards accreditation?

Sometimes schools react to issues occurring in their community and/or wider society by providing an information evening related to Catholic teaching on a specific topic. Examples from schools recently include topics related to specific issues such as euthanasia legislation or refugee policy, or broader concerns such as Catholic teaching about the common good in a COVID-19 world. Given that these sessions are often led by experts in their field, they may well inform staff understanding in a range of ways and so be appropriate for accreditation purposes.

Decisions regarding such information sessions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Who do I contact if I have any questions about the policy?

Your principal, Religious Education leader or diocesan education office can answer questions related to the policy.

Example scenarios

I am a beginning teacher from a secular university or TAFE who needs to gain accreditation.

Sally is a graduate from La Trobe University without a Religious Education specialisation. She has been employed in an ongoing capacity as a Year 4 teacher at a Catholic school. From the second year, her pathway to accreditation could begin by undertaking a fully funded, diocese-approved two-year course supported by the Catholic education office. Sally should complete this study within five years of gaining employment.

I am a beginning teacher with an approved Religious Education specialisation gaining and maintaining accreditation.

Tom is a graduate from ACU employed in an ongoing capacity at a Catholic school as a first-year teacher. He successfully completed the Religious Education specialisation as part of his undergraduate studies. Tom will need to apply for Accreditation to Teach Religious Education or Lead in a Catholic School via TAP. His maintenance period will commence after his accreditation has been formalised.

I am a subject-specific teacher not teaching Religious Education seeking to gain accreditation.

Jenny is a Humanities teacher at a Catholic school, seeking to gain Accreditation to Teach in a Catholic School. In consultation with the Religious Education leader in the school, she could formulate a 25-hour professional learning plan incorporating approved professional learning days, online modules and a twilight retreat in line with the policy. Once completed, Jenny can apply for accreditation through TAP.

I am currently an accredited teacher and seeking to maintain my accreditation.

Ben is a teacher at a Catholic school who is currently accredited to teach Religious Education in a Catholic school and seeking to maintain this accreditation. Within five years, he will undertake a variety of approved professional learning opportunities to be selected from activities offered by his school, diocesan agencies and other external providers.

Ben will record his professional learning in his profile on TAP. Once he reaches the 50 approved hours, Ben will automatically have the maintenance of his Accreditation to Teach Religious Education or Lead in a Catholic School registered and will be advised of this through TAP.

I am a leader moving from a government or independent school to a leadership role in a Catholic school.

Mi Lee has been working in a Victorian government school and is now employed as deputy principal at a Catholic school. According to the policy, she will need to gain Accreditation to Teach Religious Education or Lead in a Catholic School. Her pathway to accreditation could begin by undertaking a fully funded, diocese-approved two-year course, or she could choose to pursue credentialed study at a master's level supported by sponsorship of the Catholic education office and school.

I am a member of the school leadership team or have a designated position of leadership.

Tatiana is on the leadership team at a Catholic school. She is currently accredited to teach in a Catholic school and would like to become a deputy principal or principal in the future. After talking to her principal and diocesan staff, Tatiana has decided to enrol in the diocese-approved pathway to gain accreditation to teach Religious Education or lead. She will complete the course in two years time.

I am a deputy principal of a Catholic school wishing to gain accreditation.

Peter has been appointed deputy principal at a Catholic school, having taught in Catholic schools for 20 years. He is seeking Accreditation to Teach Religious Education or Lead in a Catholic School by undertaking a Master of Educational Leadership. Peter has chosen ACU as a tertiary provider because its degree includes four units of Religious Education or Theology as required by the policy.

I am a principal of a Catholic school.

Sandra is the principal of a Catholic school. She currently holds Accreditation to Teach Religious Education or Lead in a Catholic School and is seeking to maintain this. Sandra is undertaking her Master of Leadership through ACU and has chosen to complete a unit of Theology or Religious Education to meet the requirements. When she completes her master's degree, in future five-year periods, Sandra may organise diocese-approved professional learning days in areas such as liturgy, scripture or Catholic social teaching which she participates in alongside her staff.

I am returning from family or other extended leave.

Anne is returning from an extended period of family leave. She was previously accredited to teach Religious Education, but her accreditation has lapsed due to being on leave for seven years. In order to meet the maintenance requirement, Anne will be expected to undertake 50 hours of professional learning within five years of resuming work.

I am returning from 12 months leave without pay.

Chi has been overseas for 12 months and is returning to work. He will be expected to complete 50 hours of professional learning (including any previously completed hours) within the original five-year maintenance period. If Chi had been away for more than 12 months, on return he would begin a new five-year maintenance period excluding any previously completed hours.