



**BDSAC**  
**Sponsorship: Higher Education Studies Policy.**  
**2016**

Drafted: September 2012  
Ratified: July 2013  
Reviewed: September 2016

**RATIONALE:**

Sponsorship is designed to promote higher education studies in Religious Education, Theology and Educational Leadership. It recognises that higher learning in these areas is an important element of contemporary Catholic leadership that will enhance the Catholic identity and the learning across our schools and system, ensure effective learning outcomes for students and support leadership succession.

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

The Ballarat Diocesan Schools Advisory Council (BDSAC), through the Catholic Education Office, recognises the importance of supporting teachers, aspiring leaders and current school leaders in pursuing higher studies in Religious Education, Theology, Catholic Identity, Wellbeing and Catholic Educational Leadership. BDSAC believes that support for higher studies, rather than an entitlement, is a responsibility shared by the stakeholders: the Diocese, schools and individuals within Catholic education.

**PRINCIPLES:**

- 1.0 Each year specific funding from the Catholic Education Office Ballarat (CEOB) will be assigned for sponsorship for staff pursuing academic qualifications in Religious Education, Theology and/or Educational Leadership.
- 2.0 Expressions of Interest for sponsorship will be advertised in Term 4 via the CEOB website.
- 3.0 Courses that are recommended by CEOB as meeting the requirements for diocesan sponsorship will be listed in Term 4 via the CEOB website.
- 4.0 Applicants are responsible for enrolling in the respective course of study.
- 5.0 Applications will be reviewed by a panel established for that purpose and a prioritised list of potential recipients established.
- 6.0 Applicants must be in employment in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Ballarat or in the Catholic Education Office Ballarat for the duration of the year in which funding is awarded.
- 7.0 If staff members transfer from one school, or office, to another within the year that funding is awarded, the sponsorship may be re-negotiated.

- 8.0 In negotiation with their Principal, Governing Authority (in the case of a Principal) or Staff Group Leader (in the case of Catholic Education Office staff) successful applicants may pursue the following options as to how they would like their funding to be allocated:
- A. As replacement funding for time release to a maximum of 8 days.
  - B. As reimbursement for travel and/or accommodation expenses - exact details and receipts must be kept and presented to the principal/school bursar or the CEOB (which ever applies) in order for such funding to be released.
  - C. To pay University Fees - evidence of payment, or the request for payment, must be presented to the principal/school bursar or the CEOB (which ever applies) before such funding can be released.
  - D. To pay Administration Fees - evidence of payment, or the request for payment, must be presented to the principal/school bursar or CEOB (which ever applies) before such funding can be released.
  - E. A combination of any of the above - limited by the original amount of funding awarded to the individual, and subject to the same conditions as stated above.
- 9.0 At the end of the academic year Sponsorship recipients are required to provide proof of successful completion of study (for the year) to their Principal, who will in turn notify CEOB. Failure to do this may result in a request for repayment of sponsorship.
- 10.0 Further sponsorship will not be considered without satisfactory completion of previous units.
- 11.0 New applications for funding must be made for each year of the course.
- 12.0 If a scholarship recipient withdraws from a unit or units of study, the CEOB and the principal and bursar of the school must be notified and sponsorship money returned to the Catholic Education Office, Ballarat.

### **Religious Education and Theology: Specific Requirements**

- 13.0 Courses that meet the following requirements will be considered for diocesan sponsorship:
- Studies pursued to meet the requirements of the CECV Accreditation [Policy 1.7] To Teach Religious Education in a Catholic School. A current list of recommended courses can be found on the CEOB website. Accreditation study will be fully funded.
  - Other studies in Religious Education, Theology, Spirituality and Catholic Identity, particularly at Masters level. In line with diocesan policy, Catholic Education Ballarat will fund one third of the cost, the school will fund one third of the cost and the participant will fund one third of the cost for these studies at Masters level.
- 14.0 The proposed course of study should be demonstrably relevant to the applicant's professional role in the school community as validated by the principal's endorsement.
- 15.0 The panel will process and recommend to the Director suitable applicants to be considered for sponsorship.

- 16.0 The allocation of sponsorship will vary in any given year in accordance with the demand. The Director of Catholic Education and the Director of Religious Education will have discretion to vary this arrangement in specific situations.
- 17.0 The cost of each unit of study undertaken must be provided in the application otherwise the minimum sponsorship allocation may be provided.
- 18.0 Sponsorship funding (that is the cost of university fee per unit) will usually be provided on the basis of one-third from the Catholic Education Office, one-third from the school and one-third from the applicant. The Director of Catholic Education will have discretion to vary this arrangement in specific situations.

### **Educational Leadership and Wellbeing**

- 19.0 Applicants will normally be required to have Accreditation to Teach Religious Education in a Catholic School (CECV 1.7). The Director may grant exemptions in specific circumstances.
- 20.0 Catholic Education will publish annually, those courses which have been approved for Sponsorship for Educational Leadership and Wellbeing. These will normally be courses offered by Catholic institutions and courses which are seen as priorities for Education in the Diocese.

### **Process for approval and prioritising of applications:**

- 21.0 A panel will be formed. Membership of the panel will consist of a representative of the Director of Catholic Education, a representative of the Director of Religious Education, a primary principal, a secondary principal, a primary teacher, a secondary teacher and Executive Officer from CEOB. The panel will process and recommend to the Director suitable applicants to be considered for sponsorship.
- 22.0 Sponsorship funding (that is the cost of university fee per unit) will usually be provided on the basis of one-third from the Catholic Education Office, one-third from the school and one-third from the applicant. The Director of Catholic Education will have discretion to vary this arrangement in specific situations.

### **Unused/Additional Funding**

- 23.0 In a given year, if part of the funding available for Religious Education and Educational Leadership is not distributed or additional funding is available, the Director has discretion to use these funds for sponsorship for other higher education courses. The level and requirements will be determined by the Director.

### **REFERENCES:**

Recommended courses for Diocesan Sponsorship 2017 (See website)