

## Procedures

These procedures are to be read in conjunction with the *DOBCEL Sponsorship: Higher Education Policy*.

### Funding

- Each year, specific sponsorship funds will be allocated for staff pursuing academic qualifications prioritising religious education, theology, Catholic educational leadership, and other determined priorities.
- Sponsorship is funded for primary teachers through CECV Grants Allocation Committee-Primary (GACP). Once sponsorship applications have been approved through the DOBCEL Office of Management, CECV will distribute funds to eligible schools.
- Successful applications for sponsorship for members of DOBCEL Management are also funded from GACP but distributed directly through the Management office.
- Sponsorship is funded for secondary teachers through a Professional Development levy paid by each secondary college in the diocese.
- On application from schools, DOBCEL sends a letter to each school indicating that they will receive the sponsorship grant and listing the sponsored staff.

### Costing

- Sponsorship funding is based on the cost of university fees per unit and will usually be provided on the basis of one-third from DOBCEL, one-third from the school and one-third from the applicant. (with the exception of accreditation to Teach RE or Lead in a Catholic School). The Executive Director CEB has the discretion to vary this arrangement in specific situations.
- Primary teachers undertaking studies to meet the requirements of the *CECV Accreditation to Teach and to Teach Religious Education or Lead in Catholic Schools in Victoria Policy* will be funded two-thirds from the DOBCEL Office of Management and one-third from the school.
- Secondary applicants pursuing academic study in religious education or theology will be funded entirely through the Secondary Religious Education Professional Development fund, which each secondary college contributes to.
- 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.

### Applications for Religious Education Accreditation studies

- Applications for RE studies are approved for the duration of the two-year course. However, in year two, we require applicants to confirm in writing that they will be continuing in the second year of study. To confirm re-enrolment in the second year of study, the applicant can resubmit their original application; however, the applicant must cite enrolling in the second year of study clearly on the application.

- Courses recommended by DOBCEL as meeting the requirements for diocesan RE accreditation sponsored studies will be listed in Term Four via the DOBCEL website and the 'All Staff weekly newsletter'.
- Applications for sponsorship will be advertised in Term Four via the DOBCEL website and the 'All Staff weekly newsletter'.
- All applicants must have their principal's endorsement to be considered for sponsorship, as the school is acknowledging part payment of the applicant's study costs. For DOBCEL office applicants, the Team Leader's endorsement is required.
- Applicants are responsible for enrolling in the respective course of study.
- The cost of each unit of study undertaken must be cited in the application; otherwise, the minimum sponsorship allocation may be provided.
- As part of their application, applicants need to articulate in up to five hundred words the impact this study will have on:
  - The role the applicant performs
  - Perceived outcomes for students/staff in their school
  - And any other impacts on Catholic education in the applicant's context

*(For RE accreditation studies, this is only required on the original application; it is not required to be updated on the year two applications.)*
- Applicants must be employed in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Ballarat or the DOBCEL Office for a percentage of employment of at least 0.5FTE for the duration of the year in which funding is awarded.
- Applicants will not have access to any other DOBCEL funding source for the study being undertaken.
- If staff members transfer from one school or office to another within the year that funding is awarded, the sponsorship will need to be renegotiated.
- The quantum of payment is determined by the cost of university fees and the sponsorship is awarded for this purpose and made payable upon evidence of payment or the request for payment, which must be presented to the principal/school bursar or DOBCEL Management (whichever applies) before funding can be released.
- In negotiation with your principal and limited by the original amount of funding awarded to the individual, other applications of the awarded funds may be considered.
- If the successful applicant is finding it difficult to pay the totality of fees when enrolling, they are to request support from the school/DOBCEL, which can then negotiate a repayment plan if required.
- At the end of the academic semester, sponsorship recipients are required to provide to their principal/DOBCEL Team Leader proof of successful completion of study for that semester. The principal/DOBCEL Team Leader will, in turn, notify DOBCEL Management. Failure to do this may result in a cessation of sponsorship payments.
- Further sponsorship will not be considered without satisfactory completion of previous units.
- Sponsorship funding is granted for one year only and may not be deferred.
- New applications for funding must be made for each year of the course. (for RE, applicants are to confirm 2<sup>nd</sup> year study via resubmission of the original application with updated dates/costs.)
- If a scholarship recipient withdraws from a unit or units of study, DOBCEL Management, the principal and the Business Manager of the school must be notified and where applicable, the appropriate university/business unit.
- The allocation of sponsorship will vary in any given year in accordance with priorities. The Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat has the discretion to vary this arrangement in specific situations.

## Applications for Theology, Catholic educational leadership or other studies

- Courses recommended by DOBCEL as meeting the requirements for diocesan sponsorship will be listed in Term Four via the DOBCEL website and the 'All Staff weekly newsletter'.
- Applications for sponsorship will be advertised in Term Four via the DOBCEL website and the 'All Staff weekly newsletter'.
- All applicants must have their principal's endorsement to be considered for sponsorship, as the school is acknowledging part payment of the applicant's study costs. For DOBCEL office applicants, the Team Leader's endorsement is required.
- Applicants are responsible for enrolling in the respective course of study.
- The cost of each unit of study undertaken must be cited in the application; otherwise, the minimum sponsorship allocation may be provided.
- As part of their application, applicants need to articulate in up to five hundred words the impact this study will have on:
  - The role the applicant performs
  - Outcomes for students/staff in their school
  - And any other impacts on Catholic education in the applicant's context
- Applicants must be employed in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Ballarat or the DOBCEL Office of Management for the duration of the year in which funding is awarded for a percentage of employment of at least 0.5FTE
- Applicants will not have access to any other DOBCEL funding source for the study being undertaken
- If staff members transfer from one school or office to another within the year that funding is awarded, the sponsorship will need to be re-negotiated
- The quantum of payment is determined by the cost of university fees and the sponsorship is awarded for this purpose and made payable upon evidence of payment or the request for payment, which must be presented to the principal/school bursar or DOBCEL Management (whichever applies) before funding can be released.
- In negotiation with your principal and limited by the original amount of funding awarded to the individual, other applications of the awarded funds may be considered.
- If the successful applicant is finding it difficult to pay the totality of fees when enrolling, they are to request support from the school/DOBCEL, which can then negotiate a repayment plan if required.
- At the end of the academic semester, sponsorship recipients are required to provide to their principal/DOBCEL Team Leader proof of successful completion of study for that semester. The principal/DOBCEL Team Leader will, in turn, notify DOBCEL Management. Failure to do this may result in a cessation of sponsorship payments.
- Further sponsorship will not be considered without satisfactory completion of previous units.
- Sponsorship funding is granted for one year only and may not be deferred.
- New applications for funding must be made for each year of the course. (for RE, applicants are to confirm 2<sup>nd</sup> year study via resubmission of the original application with updated dates/costs.)
- If a scholarship recipient withdraws from a unit or units of study, DOBCEL Management, the principal and the Business Manager of the school must be notified and where applicable, the appropriate university/business unit.
- The allocation of sponsorship will vary in any given year in accordance with priorities. The Executive Director of Catholic Education Ballarat has the discretion to vary this arrangement in specific situations.

## Process for approval and prioritising of applications

- A DOBCEL appointed panel will oversee sponsorship applications.
- The panel will process and recommend to the DOBCEL Executive Director suitable applicants to be considered for sponsorship.

## Courses that meet the following requirements will be considered for diocesan sponsorship

### Religious Education and Theology

- Studies pursued to meet the requirements of the CECV Policy Accreditation to Teach and to Teach Religious Education or Lead in Catholic Schools in Victoria. A current list of recommended courses can be found on the DOBCEL website. For primary, accreditation study will be fully funded by two-thirds from DOBCEL Office of Management and one-third by the school. For secondary, accreditation study will be funded through a Professional Development levy paid by each secondary college in the diocese.
- Other studies in religious education, theology, spirituality and Catholic Identity will be considered, particularly at the Masters level.

### Catholic Educational Leadership

- Applicants will normally be required to be accredited in line with the CECV policy. The Executive Director CEB may grant exemptions in specific circumstances.
- DOBCEL Management will publish courses that have been approved for sponsorship for Catholic educational leadership annually.

## Unused/Additional Funding

- In a given year, if part of the funding available for sponsorship is not distributed or additional funding is available, the Executive Director CEB has the discretion to use these funds for sponsorship for other higher education courses. The amount for allocation and requirements to be met will be determined by the Executive Director CEB.

## Mutual commitment

The support for higher education study provided in this procedure is a mutual commitment between DOBCEL, the school (where applicable) and the employee.

### By entering into a sponsorship agreement, the applicant is agreeing that they will –

- 1) Sign up for the selected study course that has been agreed to for sponsorship
- 2) Attend sponsored study course classes - Regular attendance in classes is essential for academic success. It is the applicant's responsibility to understand the class schedule and requirements and ensure attendance at these classes and other academic activities required for the successful completion of the sponsored study.

In the event of absence due to illness or other extenuating circumstances, it is the applicant's responsibility to promptly inform the instructor/lecturer and make up any missed work. It is expected that the Principal/employer will be kept informed.

- 3) Meet academic requirements - To successfully complete a sponsored study course, the applicant must meet the academic requirements and pass any assessments or exams as outlined in the course syllabus. If the applicant fails to meet the course requirements and does not pass, they may be

responsible for paying the full fees associated with that course (unless extenuating circumstances apply).

In the event the applicant decides to not continue with a sponsored study course, it is their responsibility to ensure they withdraw from the course prior to the course census date, or they may be responsible for paying the full fees associated with that course (unless extenuating circumstances apply).

4) Extenuating circumstances – in the case of an applicant failing to attend classes and subsequently not passing the sponsored study, DOBCEL and the relevant school (if applicable) will take into consideration any extenuating circumstances that may have prevented the applicant from attending the classes or completing coursework.

#### **Leaving employment with DOBCEL -**

Should an employee leave employment within the Diocese of Ballarat within 12 months of being granted reimbursement of fees, they shall agree to repay all or part of the reimbursements made by CEB according to the following scale:

- Up to the first 3 months 100%
- >3 months – up to 6 months 75%
- >6 months – up to 9 months 50%
- >9 months – up to 12 months 25%.

### **Supporting documents**

Diocesan Education Vision and Mission Statements

*Partnering: A Step Further* - Strategic Directions 2020-2024

Characteristics of a Highly Effective Catholic School (CHECS)

DOBCEL Performance Development and Review Policy and Procedures

Diocesan Leadership Framework

*Awakenings* – Diocese of Ballarat Religious Education Curriculum

Accreditation to Teach and to Teach Religious Education or Lead in Catholic Schools in Victoria Policy (CECV)

### **Appendix**

Application Template