



Professional Development Assistance Policy

1. Purpose

The Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes (the **Diocese**) is committed to fostering a skilled, knowledgeable, and faith-filled workforce that supports its pastoral, educational, and administrative mission. This Professional Development Assistance Policy outlines the principles, eligibility, and processes for providing financial and non-financial assistance to employees undertaking approved professional development activities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all eligible employees of the Diocese, including clergy, religious, and lay employees, whether employed on a full-time or part-time basis. Casual employees may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

3. Policy Statement

The Diocese encourages ongoing professional development that:

- Enhances employee capability and performance
- Supports succession planning and workforce sustainability
- Aligns with the mission, values, and strategic priorities of the Diocese
- Improves service delivery to parishes, schools, agencies, and the wider community

Professional development assistance is provided at the discretion of the Diocese and is subject to budget availability and operational requirements.

4. Eligible Professional Development Activities

Assistance may be provided for activities including, but not limited to:

- Accredited courses, qualifications, or units of competency
- Short courses, workshops, and seminars
- Conferences and professional forums
- Faith formation and theological studies
- Leadership and management development programs
- Compliance or role-specific training

5. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for assistance, employees must:

- Be currently employed by the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes
- Have successfully completed any required probationary period
- Demonstrate that the proposed PD is relevant to their current role or future role within the Diocese
- Meet satisfactory performance expectations



6. Types of Assistance

Subject to approval, assistance may include:

- Payment or reimbursement of course or registration fees
- Provision of paid or unpaid study leave
- Travel and accommodation costs (where applicable)
- Access to Diocesan facilities or resources

The level of assistance will be determined based on relevance, cost, duration, and available funding.

7. Application Process

1. Employees must seek approval for Professional Development Assistance prior to commencing the activity.
2. Applications must include:
 - Details of the PD activity
 - Relevance to the employee's role and Diocesan objectives
 - Costs and requested assistance
3. Applications must be endorsed by the employee's supervisor/manager.
4. Final approval will be provided by the delegated authority in accordance with Diocesan governance arrangements.

8. Conditions of Assistance

- Assistance is approved for the specific PD activity only.
- Employees may be required to provide evidence of completion.
- Where substantial financial assistance is provided, employees may be required to enter into a service commitment or repayment agreement.
- Failure to complete the approved PD without reasonable cause may result in repayment of assistance.

9. Employee Obligations

Employees receiving assistance are expected to:

- Actively participate in and complete the approved PD
- Apply learning outcomes to their role
- Share knowledge or skills gained where appropriate
- Comply with all Diocesan policies and procedures