DIOCESE OF TUCSON
MINISTRY CERTIFICATION PROCESS SUMMARY

The expectation for teachers and principals in Catholic schools can be summed up in the following excerpt from the National Directory for Catechesis:

The nobility of the task to which teachers are called demands that, in imitation of Christ the only Teacher, they reveal the Christian message not only by word but also by every gesture of their behavior. All teachers in Catholic schools share in the catechetical ministry. All members of the faculty, at least by their example, are an integral part of the process of religious education. A teacher’s lifestyle and character are as important as their professional credentials. Their witness to the meaning of mature faith and Christian living has a profound effect on the education and formation of their students.

The purpose of the Diocese of Tucson Ministry Certification Program is two-fold:

➢ Provide opportunities for ongoing faith formation
➢ Provide ministry education professional development

Religious formation of principals and teachers is essential to becoming models of spirituality and prayer. Catholictiy is a way of life. A personal faith life is essential for educators to model and integrate it across the curriculum. To support their school communities in this, principals schedule ministry certification classes and/or provide other opportunities throughout the school year for faculty and staff. If an individual wishes to take a class independently, principal approval is necessary prior to registration.

Approved options to achieve Ministry Certification that align with diocesan curriculum requirements are outlined in this document.
CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. **Level I – 44 hours required, based on 2-hour sessions per topic:**
   a. All teachers, regardless of subject matter taught, are required to achieve, and maintain at least Level I of the Diocesan Ministry Certification within three (3) years of their employment. *(Handbook of School Policies and Procedures, 2.2. PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS).*

2. **Level II – 78 hours required:**
   a. *Catholic high school theology teachers and campus ministers* should have at least the equivalent of a bachelor’s degree in religious studies, and/or Level II Diocesan Ministry Certification, *(Handbook of School Policies and Procedures, 2.2. PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS).*
   b. *Principals and full-time Assistant Principals* should achieve and maintain at least Level II of the Diocesan Ministry Certification within three (3) years of hiring. *(Handbook of School Policies and Procedures, 2.2. PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS).* Principals should also actively participate in all Level I offerings they provide for their faculty/staff.
   c. *Religious Brothers and Sisters* working in schools receive Level II certification.
   d. Individuals working toward Level II certification **do not** need to achieve Level I renewal.

3. **Advanced:** Advanced certification is awarded to individuals who have completed graduate level courses/degree plus ministry experience with majors in one of the following areas:
   - Religious Education, Theology/ Religious Studies, Scripture, Pastoral ministry **OR**
   - Completion of the Diocese of Tucson Common Formation Program (Lay Ecclesial Ministry)

4. **Other Diocese:** If an individual has earned ministry certification from another diocese, documentation will be reviewed and applied to a corresponding Diocese of Tucson leveled ministry certification.

RENEWAL

1. Ministry Certification is valid for three (3) years. The renewal process is **continual** if the individual is employed at one of our Catholic schools or until a decision is made to work toward a higher level of certification.

2. Ministry Renewal Certification must be obtained within three, (3) three years. This is achieved upon completion of **20 hours total** in any two certification categories, (e.g., Liturgy, Sacraments, Christian Morality, Social Mission of the Church, Methodology).

3. Level II courses are acceptable to complete a Level I renewal. In this case, Level II assignments would be waived. However, if a Level II certification is desired, all Level II assignments must be completed for approval of a Level II certificate.

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MINISTRY CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Level I or Level II Ministry Certification Process Record Form

1. Each teacher/principal is responsible for keeping a record of completed ministry certification courses.

2. Upon completion of either Level Ministry Certification, the record form with applicant and principal’s signature is sent to the Dept. of Catholic Schools for processing. A verification form must be completed and submitted along with the record form for approval to be considered.

Renewal in Ministry Certification, Level I, II, or Advanced Form

1. Each teacher/principal is responsible for keeping a record of ministry certification renewal courses completed.

2. Upon completion of 20 hours in at least two areas of catechesis listed on the form, the record form with applicant and principal’s signatures is sent to the Dept. of Catholic Schools for processing. A verification form must be completed and submitted along with the record form for approval to be considered.

SUBMITTING RECORDS AND VERIFICATION FORMS FOR APPROVAL

Completed Ministry Record forms and Verification forms can be uploaded via the following link:

Ministry Certification Approval Submission

Level I Record Form
Level II and Advanced Record Form
Renewal Record Form
Ministry Certification Verification Form

After documentation is received and reviewed, an email will be sent regarding the status of certification. For final approval, a certificate will be sent to the employee and principal.

RECORDKEEPING

All records for Ministry Certification and Renewal must be kept in the school office. Original copies are kept by each teacher.

Missing signatures or forms will not be approved. Please ensure that all documentation is completed prior to submission.

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THREE APPROVED WAYS TO ACHIEVE LEVEL I MINISTRY CERTIFICATION

1. **WORKSHOPS** provided by Jordan Ministry Team, Hispanic Ministry office, other diocesan presenters
   - Jordan Ministry Team: [Jordan Ministry Team](#)
   - Hispanic Ministry Office: [Hispanic Ministry :: Diocese of Tucson (diocesetucson.org)](#)

2. **ONLINE COURSES APPROVED BY DIOCESE**
   - Partnership with [University of Dayton Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF)](http://vlcff.udayton.edu) to allow online classes as credit toward diocesan certification, at a REDUCED COST of $50. Per class, with the opportunity of a $20.00 course reimbursement.
     - [VLCFF @ UD > Home (udayton.edu)](#)
   - **The University of Notre Dame online STEP**
     - [STEP Online Courses](http://step.notre dame.edu) | [Online Courses](http://step.notre dame.edu) | [McGrath Institute for Church Life](http://step.notre dame.edu) | [University of Notre Dame (nd.edu)](#)
     - *Courses have been approved to apply toward diocesan certification*

   - Partnership with [Franciscan University at Steubenville’s Online Catechetical Institute, Diocese of Tucson | Franciscan at Home](http://franciscan.online.edu)
     - *However, a parish and/or school must subscribe as an institution for $300 per year---which then allows anyone associated with that parish/school to take classes at no additional cost. All courses in the Catechist Track will be honored toward Level I Ministry Certification.*

3. **QUALIFIED PARISH/SCHOOL INSTRUCTOR** teaches Level I courses following the diocesan COURSE OBJECTIVES (instructors must possess Level II certification or an equivalency to teach theology courses); Any instructor selected to teach a religious education certification course and the course description must be approved prior to date of the event/class.

   The form can be accessed via the following link: [Level I Course Approval Form](#)
   The diocesan course objectives can be access via the following links:
   - [Level I Course Objectives](http://step.notre dame.edu)
   - [Level II Course Objectives](http://step.notre dame.edu)

   **Any programs outside of the approved list require approval from the Assistant Superintendent of the**
   **Department of Catholic Schools.**

Please direct all questions and ministry record forms to:

Angelina Schmidt, M.Ed.
Assistant Superintendent
Office of Catholic Schools
Diocese of Tucson
[aschmidt@diocesetucson.org](mailto:aschmidt@diocesetucson.org)

Rev. 7.29.21