

*Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise  
Agreement 2018*

**Professional Practice Time  
Implementation Guide for Schools**

**February 2019**

## 1. Overview

The *Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2018* (VCEMEA 2018) continues to provide for teachers to access 20 hours of release (pro rata for part-time teachers) from their school's scheduled class time to focus on improved delivery of high quality teaching and learning (**Professional Practice Time**). This was previously provided for in the 2018 school year under the 2017 Memorandum of Understanding (2017 MOU).

This Guideline provides information for principals about how Professional Practice Time can operate in schools under the VCEMEA 2018 and up until 28 June 2021.

## 2. VCEMEA 2018

In relation to Professional Practice Time, the VCEMEA 2018 provides the following:

### 60.9 Professional Practice Time

- (a) A full-time Teacher will be entitled to 20 hours of release (pro-rata for part-time Teachers) from scheduled class time over the school year for the purposes of additional time to focus on improved delivery of high quality teaching and learning. This time is equivalent to the four Professional Practice Days operating in the Victorian government sector.
- (b) Work done in that time will be consistent with school priorities and selected from the following areas:
  - (i) planning;
  - (ii) preparation;
  - (iii) assessment of student learning;
  - (iv) collaboration;
  - (v) curriculum development;
  - (vi) relevant professional development.
- (c) The timing and focus of the time release will be nominated by the Teacher and be agreed in consultation with the Principal.
- (d) Where the timing and/or focus are not agreed, the timing will be determined by the Principal and the focus will be determined by the Teacher consistent with the focus areas set out above.
- (e) For the 2021 school year, a full-time Teacher will be entitled to 10 hours of release in Term 1 and Term 2 (pro-rata for part-time Teachers).
- (f) This clause will cease to operate or have any effect from 28 June 2021.

## 3. Consultation

The key to arranging Professional Practice Time is holding discussions with staff about how the time release can be provided.

Professional Practice Time is nominated by the teacher. Almost any arrangement of the release time is possible if there is agreement.

Appropriate consultation must take place at the school level in relation to the use and timing of Professional Practice Time.

Where there is no agreement reached then:

- The teacher can determine the focus of the work within the time release; and
- The principal can determine when the time release occurs (clause 60.9(d)).

## 4. Implementation

4.1 Many Catholic schools across Victoria have arrangements in place to provide teachers with additional time to support them with their workload and focus on professional practice.

These arrangements may continue to operate and could form part of the Professional Practice Time providing that each teacher is able to determine how the Professional Practice Time will be used to address workload issues within the following areas consistent with school priorities:

- planning
- preparation
- assessment of student learning
- collaboration
- curriculum development
- relevant professional development.

4.2 Schools will already have in place arrangements for what they will do and these arrangements may include one or more of the following:

- Use of specific pupil-free days
- Releasing one or more teachers from their teaching duties during the school day
- Teacher-nominated professional development during school day
- Increase in FTE for part-time teachers
- Additional release time over the school year (primary teachers)
- Reduction in scheduled class time (primary teachers)
- Reduction in teaching across the school year (secondary teachers)
- Reduction in allocation of extras (secondary teachers).

4.3 When making Professional Practice Time arrangements, principals should take account of the following:

- A full-time teacher is entitled to 20 hours of release during the school year during the school day to focus on professional practice. This time may be allocated in a variety of ways such as whole days, part days or across the school year.
- Schools should seek to reach agreement on the timing and the use of Professional Practice Time at the school level.
- Where agreement cannot be reached in relation to the timing of the teacher's release time then the principal will make the determination.
- Teachers can be released from the classroom on an individual or group basis.
- Where schools have arrangements in place to provide teachers with additional time to support them with their workload and focus on professional practice, the introduction of Professional Practice Time does not require these arrangements to cease. These arrangements may continue and could form part of the Professional Practice Time provided that the teacher can determine the focus of the work to be undertaken consistent with clause 60.9(d).

## 5. Further queries and information

Any queries in relation to the implementation of these interim arrangements should be directed to the Employee Relations Unit on 03 9267 0431 or [ceoir@cem.edu.au](mailto:ceoir@cem.edu.au).

A full copy of the *Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2018* can be found on the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria limited website at [www.cecv.catholic.edu.au](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au).

## 6. Frequently Asked Questions

1	<b>Can Teachers undertake the professional practice time at home?</b>	Professional Practice release time is working time, not time off. However, teachers can work from non-school locations
2	<b>Can the Principal determine what a teacher does and the timing of this release time?</b>	The timing and focus of the time release will be nominated by the teacher and be agreed in consultation with the Principal. Where the timing and/or focus are not agreed, the focus will be determined by the teacher consistent with the school priorities and focus areas set out in clause 60.9(d) and the principal will determine the timing
3	<b>What does 20 hours convert to in days?</b>	The clause notes that the 20 hours is equivalent to the 4 days operating in the Victorian Government sector for 2018. Where a school uses a pupil free day for Professional Practice Time, this will normally be the equivalent of 5 hours.
4	<b>Can all of professional practice time take place after the students leave at the end of term 4?</b>	Unless there is agreement it is not envisaged that all of the 20 hours of Professional Practice Time will be allocated at the end of term 4. The timing needs to facilitate the purpose of the release time – additional time to do the work listed at clause 60.9.
5	<b>How do existing arrangements support the introduction of Professional Practice Time?</b>	<p>Many Catholic schools across Victoria have arrangements in place to provide teachers with additional time to support them with their workload and focus on professional practice.</p> <p>The introduction of Professional Practice Time does not stop these arrangements in schools from continuing.</p> <p>However for the arrangements to be considered professional practice time the Principal must have a discussion with the staff about the arrangements, focus and timing. If there is no agreement around existing arrangements, clause 60.9(d) requires that the staff can select the focus from the list in clause 60.9(b) but the Principal can determine the timing of the Professional Practice Time.</p>
6	<b>Do principals have to organise all of the allocation of professional practice before the end of the school year?</b>	Most schools will have had discussions with staff regarding planning for the next school year including class allocations, professional learning, school priorities and, professional practice time – towards the end of a school year. Schools are not required to organise all of the professional practice time for the following year, prior to the end of a school year, but scheduling the time as soon as possible will avoid difficulties accommodating it in the following year.