

**Diocese of Phoenix
Catholic Schools Office
Catechist Certification Requirements
for Catholic School Educators (rev. 7/2025)**

This document provides essential information regarding the requirements for Catechist Certification for Catholic school educators within the Diocese of Phoenix.

The Catechist Certification program, mandated by the Diocese of Phoenix Catholic Schools Office, is designed to equip educators with a comprehensive and authentic understanding of Catholic doctrine. This formation enables educators to effectively transmit the faith and foster a strong Catholic identity within their classrooms and the broader school community.

All educators—whether full-time or part-time—employed in a Catholic school must obtain Catechist Certification within three years of their initial date of employment in a Diocesan school. However, it is strongly recommended that certification be completed within the first year. Additionally, educators who hold the Catechist Certification are required to continue their faith formation and renew their certification every three years. Each educator is responsible for tracking their own certification timeline and ensuring all requirements are completed within the established deadlines.

Definition of Educator:

- Principal, Assistant Principal, and Dean
- Preschool Director
- Classroom Teacher (including all grade levels - PS through 12th, subjects, and specials)
- Counselor and Social Worker
- Librarian
- Other (those educators who work directly with students and/or faculty in a teaching capacity such as instructional content specialists, e.g., reading or math specialist, instructional coaches, interventionists, etc.)

Initial Catechist Certification:

All educators working in a Catholic School in the Diocese of Phoenix must obtain the Catechist Certification within three years of initial hire. If an educator moves from one school within the diocese to another, the three-year requirement remains based on the initial employment to the diocese and not to each individual school. If an employed educator does not obtain initial Catechist Certification within the required timeframe, that employee may face non-renewal.

Timeframe:

Generally, a new educator at a school begins at the start of a new school year. The three-year period for obtaining initial Catechist Certification begins on July 1 of the fiscal year in which the educator was hired and concludes on June 30 three years later. For example, if an educator is

hired for the 2010–2011 school year, the certification period begins on July 1, 2010, and ends on June 30, 2013. Educators hired after the start of the school year but before Christmas break will have their certification clock retroactively begin on July 1 of that same fiscal year. Those hired after Christmas break will begin their certification period on January 1 of the following calendar year.

Although educators are given up to three years to complete certification, it is strongly recommended that they do so within their first year of employment. Early completion not only ensures compliance but also equips educators to teach the faith effectively from the outset. It is unwise to delay this essential formation, as unforeseen circumstances may prevent timely completion. Beginning the certification process promptly helps educators build a firm foundation in the Catholic faith, which is critical for confidently and effectively sharing it with their students.

Initial Catechist Certification Courses:

There are specific Kino Catechetical Institute (“Kino”) courses required for the initial Catechist Certification and only these courses will be accepted. Classes are offered in sequential order throughout a one-year cycle and a condensed two-week intensive program is held each summer with all required courses. Carefully follow the Kino schedule for all course offerings.

Course Sequence:

- CAT101 Catechetical Methods and Practice
- CAT102 Catechetical Specialization
- ESS101 Divine Revelation
- ESS102 Foundations of Salvation History
- ESS103 Life of Christ
- ESS104 Christ and His Mission
- ESS105 Celebration of the Christian Mystery
- ESS106 Foundation of the Life in Christ
- ESS107 Love Your Neighbor
- ESS108 Prayer

Extension to Initial Certification Deadline:

It is diocesan policy that all educators obtain Catechist Certification within the three year timeframe. If extraordinary circumstances arise, the educator must meet with his/her principal to review the situation before the deadline date. Lack of planning does not create an extraordinary situation nor does waiting until the end of the three-year period and other circumstances arise. The school principal will review the situation and will consult with the Superintendent before a final decision is made regarding a possible extension of time.

Exemptions:

Collegiate Coursework: There may be times when an individual possesses advanced knowledge and completed collegiate coursework from an accredited Catholic college or university in theology, catechetics and/or the Catechism of the Catholic Church. In these situations, an

individual should meet with his/her principal right away to review the options available for an exemption to the initial Catechist Certification. Note: Anyone issued an exemption from the initial certification requirements is still required to maintain Catechist Certification by adhering to the parameters for recertification.

Clergy and Consecrated Religious: All Roman Catholic ordained clergy and consecrated religious serving in Diocese of Phoenix Catholic preschool, elementary, or high schools, who are in good standing with the Church and actively engaged in ministry or their religious community, are exempt from completing the initial Catechist certification. However, they must fulfill the established requirements for recertification to maintain their certification.

Certification from another Roman Catholic (Arch)Diocese: To qualify for an exemption based on valid catechetical certifications from another Diocese, the certification must have been valid within the last 10 years. Additionally, the certification must include a minimum of 60 total instructional hours across approved catechetical areas, which encompass Scripture, Catholic doctrine, Liturgy & Sacraments, Church History, Catechetical Methods, Catholic Anthropology/TOB, Spirituality & Prayer, and the Vocation and Mission of the Laity. For documentation, you need to provide at least two (2) of the following: an original certificate of completion from the originating diocese, a transcript or list of courses completed (including published descriptions of each course and total clock hours), or a Statement of Validity from the originating diocesan director of catechesis/faith formation or the Catholic Schools Office verifying that your certification did not lapse prior to your departure.

Ongoing Formation – Recertification:

Educators continuing to work in a Catholic school within the Diocese of Phoenix, after obtaining their initial Catechist Certification, must participate in ongoing catechetical formation. It is required that certificate holders participate in at least 24 clock hours of ongoing formation within three years of initial certification and every three years thereafter. Any hours earned above the required 24 hours prior to the date of recertification may not be used again or rolled over to the next recertification period. Also, any hours earned prior to the official recertification date provided by Kino may not be used for future recertification. It is essential to submit your recertification prior to the expiration date.

There are various options available to educators to fulfill this requirement including Kino courses (beyond initial certification courses), local parish missions, diocesan events, online formation through Franciscan University and others, retreats, conference sessions (focused on catechetical formation), and your school's own formation program.

Kino Catechetical Institute is the reviewing entity that will evaluate all earned hours. It is best to receive preapproval from Kino on any event you consider attending to meet part of the 24 hour requirement. Refer to the Kino Catechetical Institute for specific parameters regarding recertification options.

If an employed educator in a school does not renew his/her Catechist Certification within the required timeframe, that employee may face non-renewal.

Extension to Recertification Deadline:

It is diocesan policy that all educators maintain Catechist Certification once the initial certification has been received. If extraordinary circumstances arise, the educator must meet with his/her principal to review the situation before the deadline date. Lack of planning does not create an extraordinary situation nor does waiting until the end of the three-year period and other circumstances arise. The school principal will review the situation and will consult with the Superintendent before a final decision is made regarding a possible extension of time. If an extension of time is granted, the educator will have a maximum of one year from the recertification expiration date to complete all recertification requirements including an additional eight hours of formation classes on top of the original 24 hours. If an individual granted an extension does not meet the extension deadline, the principal will determine if an appeal to the superintendent for extraordinary circumstances is warranted.