

A new partnership between Catholic Education-Diocese of Rockhampton (Queensland) and CQ University aimed at building the capability and confidence of pre-service teachers has attracted great interest in 2023 following a highly successful pilot in 2022. From two successful applicants in 2022, the Career Assistance Program (CAP) has expanded in 2023, with 11 pre-service teachers being appointed to Catholic primary schools across the Diocese of Rockhampton.

The Career Assistance Program (CAP) is designed to support pre-service teachers in the third and fourth year of their teaching degree, through on-the-job mentoring and coaching. CAP pre-service teachers have the opportunity to practise and refine the routines and strategies that support well-organised, highly functional learning environments and experiences. These might include managing transitions from lunch break to the classroom so that students are ready for learning; arranging students into purposeful groups; asking questions that elicit higher order thinking; helping students regulate their own behaviours in positive ways; assessing student learning 'on the go' and responding 'in the teachable moment'; and providing feedback that supports ongoing learning.

CQUniversity student and 2022 CAP participant Hayley Wornum said she would highly recommend the program to fellow students. "The CAP provides a flexibility for learning, through a hands-on approach in a realistic setting," Hayley said. For Hayley, the CAP has resulted in a permanent teaching position with Catholic Education at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Clermont. The second 2022 CAP participant is continuing her placement at St Benedict's Yeppoon while she engages in the final year of her Bachelor of Education Degree with CQ University.

CEDR Assistant Director: Teaching and Learning, Carmel Kriz, said "The Career Assistance Program enables Catholic Education to nurture and support pre-service teachers more effectively than a short-term practicum placement, leading to beneficial outcomes for students and families. All the research shows us that it is the quality of teaching that makes the greatest difference for learning outcomes of young people. So, we want the very best teachers for our students."

Mrs Kriz further advised that, "Our CAP allows us to foster high-quality teachers and immerse them in the practices and routines that we need in our teachers and that cannot always be explored fully in an undergraduate education course."

CAP participants can access up to two years of working in a school community, being coached by mentor teachers, building skills and confidence and gaining a deeper understanding of the knowledge required by a contemporary teacher.

"Our CAP participants have the opportunity to grow in their professionalism on a daily basis. Over time, they build confidence and competence, 'the mindset, toolset and skillset' that make for a great teacher." Mrs Kriz said the program helps pre-service teachers learn in collaboration with a mentor teacher who supports them in targeted and responsive ways. This is complemented by support from school leadership teams, and professional collegiality and collaboration from the whole school staff.

"We are in a position where we have great belief and faith in our teachers. With that comes the recognition that we need to provide support, over time, in a very safe and nurturing environment. That's our work, to support teachers to be the very best that they can be. I think our Career Assistance Program gets pre-service teachers off to an amazing start: it is one of the key ways in which we invest in our people," Mrs Kriz said.

Interviews relating to the Career Assistance Program can be accessed from:

<https://youtu.be/Hlo8c9xe5SE> and <https://youtu.be/nd2gVVDjUCg>

For further information about the program please contact:

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