



Instructions for completing the application for registration as a marriage celebrant

IMPORTANT: You must not book or agree to perform a marriage until you have been notified by the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants (the Registrar) that you have been registered as a marriage celebrant.

General comments

These instructions are for persons wishing to apply to the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants for registration as a marriage celebrant under Part IV, Division 1, Subdivision C and Subdivision D of the *Marriage Act 1961*.

An application will not be accepted if you do not have the required qualification or skills.

See the 'Qualifications, skills and knowledge of the law' section below for more details.

The application for Registration as a Marriage Celebrant form (application form) is designed to determine whether you meet the requirements to be registered as a marriage celebrant (paragraph 39C of the Marriage Act 1961). Completing the qualification and paying for your application does not automatically entitle you to registration as a marriage celebrant.

Please write clearly on the application form and associated documents and ensure you accurately complete each section.

If you provide your application form in hard copy, pages should be loose leaf, not stapled or bound.

Fees and charges

An application fee of \$600 must be paid when lodging an application, unless an exemption has been granted. An application is recorded as being submitted on the date the application fee has been cleared by the department.

If your application is successful, you will need to pay the annual \$240 registration charge (or part thereof, depending on the timing of your registration).

In limited circumstances, an exemption from these fees and charges may be granted. Guidelines on eligibility are available on the ['Becoming a marriage celebrant'](#) page of our website.

All fees and charges are non-refundable.

Original documents or certified copies

Throughout the application form you will be asked to attach various documents as evidence of your claims. You will need to provide an original or certified copy of your documents where indicated.

How to make certified copies of original documents

- A full list of people who can certify your documents are available at www.ag.gov.au/statdec or on the back of the Commonwealth statutory declaration form.
- You will need to show the person the original document and the copy at the same time.
- The person certifying the copy of an original document may do so by attesting to the following words on the copied document: 'I have sighted the original of this document and certify it to be a true copy.' The person should sign under that statement and print their full name, qualification (i.e. Justice of the Peace), and the date.

Supplementing material in the application Form

There are a number of sections within the hard copy application form that have limited space. For those sections, you may wish to add extra pages to the application form to provide full responses to the material requested.

Assessing your application

IMPORTANT: If your application is missing any necessary materials or information, it may result in your application being returned to you.

A decision on your application by the Registrar will generally be made within three months of it being received by the Attorney-General's Department. The time taken to assess an application depends on factors such as the thoroughness of the application and the total number of applications on hand. If the Registrar requests further information to assess an application it may take longer than three months to be notified of the result.

The Registrar must deal with applications in the order they are received (subsection 39D(2) of the Marriage Act).

Outcome of Assessment of Your Application

You will be notified of the Registrar's decision by email. If the Register decides not to register you as a marriage celebrant you will be informed of the reasons for this decision (subsection 39D(7) of the Marriage Act). If your application is unsuccessful you are entitled to seek a review of the Registrar's decision from the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (subsection 39J(1) of the Marriage Act).

Information about the AAT and its processes is available at www.aat.gov.au.

Application for Registration as a Marriage Celebrant

Personal details

IMPORTANT: You should be contactable at all times while your application is being assessed. This will ensure your application is processed as quickly as possible. If you will be unavailable after your application is lodged you should provide these dates to the MLCS.

Evidence of date of birth

One of the criteria required for registration as a marriage celebrant is that the applicant is 18 years or over (paragraph 39C(1)(a) of the Marriage Act). Evidence confirming date of birth is not required to be submitted with the application form. The MLCS will use the evidence provided in the national police history check informed consent form to confirm the date of birth.

Previous authorisation as a marriage celebrant

If you have been previously authorised to conduct marriage ceremonies in Australia you must provide your previous registration number and the reason as to why the registration was discontinued.

This question applies if at any time in the past you have been:

- an officer employed by a state or territory in a position that authorised you to solemnise marriages (referred to as a 'state officer')
- a minister of religion for a recognised denomination, or
- a Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrant performing civil or religious ceremonies.

You cannot be registered as a Commonwealth marriage celebrant if you are already authorised to solemnise marriages on behalf of a recognised denomination or as a state or territory officer.

Contact details

Email address

Please ensure your application includes a **current email address** on which you can be contacted. All further requests for information will be sent to your nominated email address and it is your responsibility to monitor that email address.

Evidence of principal residential address

The evidence you provide should show both your name, principal address and be dated within six months of the date you submit your application.

Please provide a copy of one of the following documents:

- electoral enrolment
- rates notice
- lease

- utility bill (phone, electricity, gas, etc), or
- bank statement.

A driver's licence is not evidence of your principal residential address as it does not include a date of issue.

Register of Marriage Celebrants

The Register lists name and contact details and addresses of each commonwealth registered marriage celebrant. It is published on the department's website and is available to the public.

Under section 43 of the *Marriage Regulations 2017* you are required to provide the following information for publication on the Register:

- Title and full name
- Suburb, town or locality
- Postcode
- State or Territory, and
- Any contact details you wish to be entered in the Register.

You may wish to provide your phone number(s) and email address, however this is not a requirement.

Type of Ceremony

You will need to indicate whether you will be solemnising marriages as a minister of religion (which is defined as a person recognised by a religious body or a religious organisation as having authority to solemnise marriages in accordance with the rites or customs of the body or organisation), or if you will be solemnising civil marriages.

[Evidence that you are authorised by a religious body or organisation to solemnise marriages for that body or organisation](#)

If you propose to conduct marriage ceremonies for an independent religious organisation, you will need to provide the following:

- the organisation's written confirmation that you are permitted to conduct religious ceremonies on behalf of the organisation
- a copy of the religious organisation's marriage ceremony to enable us to verify that it meets the legal requirements under *the Marriage Act 1961*, and
- your written undertaking that you will use the organisation's marriage ceremony.

Qualifications, skills and knowledge of the law

You cannot be registered as a marriage celebrant unless you have at least one of the qualifications mentioned in section 39 of the *Marriage Regulations 2017*.

Qualifications – Certificate IV in Celebrancy or an equivalent university qualification

You will need to provide **an original PDF or correctly certified copy** of your qualification. The certificate issued by the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) for completion of the Certificate IV in Celebrancy must contain the following requirements:

- confirm that all units of competency mandatory for registration as a marriage celebrant have been successfully completed
- confirm that all required training materials were included in the delivery of the mandatory marriage celebrancy units
- include the following statement: 'Units completed for this qualification meet the requirements of the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants, as set out in section 39 of the *Marriage Regulations 2017*', and
- include a transcript of units completed as part of the qualification (including titles and national codes for each unit).

If your certificate does not include the statements listed above, you should request an amended certificate from your RTO provider.

Skills

This section should only be completed by those who are submitting their application on the basis of skills in an Australian Indigenous language and who wish to be appointed as a marriage celebrant to serve Indigenous communities.

For more information on the skills required to satisfy the 'Skills' criteria, please email the department at marriagecelebrantssection@ag.gov.au.

If your application relies upon the '**Skills**' in an Australian Indigenous language, you do not need to complete the '**Qualifications**' section.

Convictions for offences – Criminal History

In determining whether you are a fit and proper person to become a marriage celebrant, the Registrar must take into account whether you have a conviction for an offence, punishable by imprisonment for one year or longer, against a law of the Commonwealth, a State or a Territory (see paragraph 39C(2)(d) of the Act).

Unless the spent convictions process mentioned in the following note applies, this means that if you were ever convicted of an offence carrying a **possible** prison sentence of one year or longer, you must answer yes to this question, even if you were not imprisoned.

The [Disclosable Outcomes Guidelines](#) aim to assist in providing transparency to potential applicants to make an informed decision in respect of their own criminal history record and the possible impact it may have on their application.

Complete

You must complete the consent form for a national police history check. You can download the consent form [here](#).

The MLCS uses the Document Verification Service (DVS) to verify identifying information presented by individuals as evidence of identity. The following documents are assessed via the DVS and certification of copies of these documents is **not required** when submitting to MLCS:

- Australian Birth Certificate
- Australian Passport
- Australian Citizenship Certificate
- Australian Drivers Licence
- Centrelink Pensioner Card or Health Care Card (Medicare)

All other documents used to prove identification must be a certified copy of the original document.

Business interests and other interests

In determining whether you are a fit and proper person to become a marriage celebrant, the Registrar must take into account whether you have an actual or potential conflict of interest between your proposed practice as a marriage celebrant and your business or other interests (paragraph 39C(2)(e) of the Marriage Act). The Registrar must also take into account whether your registration as a marriage celebrant would be likely to result in you gaining a benefit in respect of another business that you own, control or carry out (paragraph 39C(2)(f) of the Marriage Act).

The *Conflict of interest and benefit to business guidelines* will assist you in considering these issues. The guidelines can be found [here](#).

Questions in this section are designed to assist the applicant identify these possible issues. If you tick 'yes' to any of these questions, you will need to provide thorough details (i.e. a description of your employment or business) and explain how you would manage them if you were registered as a marriage celebrant.

Conflict of interest or benefit to a business

Actual or potential conflict of interest issues may arise in relation to your:

- business interests
- community work
- hobbies, or
- recreation activities.

The Registrar will consider each situation on a case by case basis. However, the most important factor to consider is the effect your business or other interests would have on your capacity to fulfil your duties and functions as a marriage celebrant. These include:

- conducting your practice as a marriage celebrant professionally and providing a high standard of service
- advising couples of the availability of relationship support services and informing couples of the range of information and services available to them
- recognising the social, cultural and legal significance of marriage and family relationships in the Australian community, and

- providing couples with information and guidance to choose a marriage ceremony that will meet their needs and expectations.

Examples of situations that may give rise to a possible conflict of interest or benefit to a business may result from an applicant who:

- is a migration agent; or
- who is employed/contracted by a business that offers wedding ceremonies (i.e. an in-house celebrant for a hotel or other venue).

Relationship support services – knowledge and commitment

Your responses in this section should demonstrate that you conducted research into relationship support services in your region and developed an understanding and knowledge of the range and nature of those services.

Identifying organisations that provide relationship support services

You will need to list the name, address and other contact details of a number of relationship support services in your region. We recommend that you provide information on at least three different services, including private, not-for-profit and community organisations.

You should include relationship support services that:

- meet the needs of couples in your area. For example, if you live in a remote location you could provide information about telephone or distance providers
- are for couples from a diverse range of backgrounds and income levels
- include major not-for-profit family relationship support services
- are not simply a number of different locations for one organisation. For example, Relationships Australia in three different states, and
- are organisations that specifically provide services to enhance and sustain couples throughout their relationship (i.e. not only marriage preparation and education).

The services you list should not be those that have a limited or targeted purpose (i.e. Alcoholics Anonymous, Men's Helpline or financial assistance programs funded by government).

Describing the services offered by each organisation

For each of the relationship support services you list, you should include:

- **contact details** for each relationship support organisation listed
- a description of the **different** services each organisation offers
- the **availability** of services (i.e. times and days courses/sessions are run), and
- any **costs** associated with the use of those services.

Community standing

You should provide detailed information about your involvement in community activities, whether they are related to your occupation, interests or volunteer activities. You should only include the **current** community activities you are involved with.

This could involve listing the community organisations you are involved with and describing your role in each organisation.

- If you are not involved in the community then you should explain the reasons for that (i.e. you are currently a full-time carer for a family member).

Referee reports

You need to provide three independent referee reports to support the claims you have made in the Application Form.

Your referee reports should comply with the following requirements:

- they are originally signed and dated
- contain contact details for your referees, including a day time phone number
- are not simply a generic or character reference, and
- are not simply copies of each other signed by different people

Choosing your referees

In choosing your referees, please consider the following important factors:

- each referee must have known you for at least two years
- your referees should not be members of your family (including those who are related to you by marriage)
- you should not ask a couple to make a joint referee report, and
- your referees should be willing to be contacted by phone to discuss the report they have provided

Guidance for your referees in completing their reports

It is your responsibility to ensure that each of your referees is able to address the topics set out below. It may be necessary for you to discuss one or more of these topics with your proposed referees to ensure they are sufficiently aware of your knowledge or commitment in each area.

Your referees will need to address the following criteria:

1. The length and nature of the referee's relationship with you
2. Your commitment to the central importance of the institution of marriage in society
3. Your knowledge of the availability of relationship support services in your region

4. Your commitment to advising all prospective couples about these relationship support services in your region
5. Your standing in the community (including your involvement in the community through professional or volunteer activities)
6. Your personal integrity and ethical standards
7. Your referee's knowledge of any other qualities or attributes that would support your application for registration as a marriage celebrant

A Referee Report Template is available [here](#). You should complete all of your referee reports using this template.

Assessing Your Knowledge of the law

As part of your application, you are required to complete a set of written questions, a fictional Notice of Intended Marriage (NOIM) and a fictional sample marriage ceremony to determine your knowledge of the law relating to the solemnisation of marriages by marriage celebrants.

Knowledge of the law is one of the factors the Registrar will consider in determining whether you are a fit and proper person to be a marriage celebrant (paragraph 39C(2)(a) of the Marriage Act).

Applicants applying through the online form will receive the questions on the knowledge of the law and the NOIM/Sample ceremony scenario in 'Part 2' of the online application.

Applicants who are applying with a hard copy application will need to contact MLCS via email at marriagecelebrantssection@ag.gov.au to receive the questions on the knowledge of the law and the scenario for the NOIM and sample ceremony.

You should provide your answers when submitting your hardcopy application.