



Ongoing professional development for Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants

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OPD in 2018 – 2020

How will OPD be delivered from 2018?

As outlined in the department's [Position Paper on ongoing professional development](#) (OPD) released in August 2017, OPD for marriage celebrants from 2018 will be: delivered by approved registered training organisations; made up of five hours of elective and compulsory activity or five hours of elective activity (in years where there is no compulsory activity); and, comprised of at least two activities. The department is seeking applications from potential eligible providers to develop and deliver the compulsory and elective activities in 2018-2020. The application form and other information for potential providers is available on the 'Applications-Ongoing Professional Development for 2018-2020' page of the Attorney-General's Department website.

Which registered training organisations will deliver OPD from 2018?

Registered training organisations that have been approved by the department to be OPD providers can provide OPD to Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants. To be approved, eligible training organisations must submit an application form to the department by 5 October 2017.

Who can apply to be an approved OPD provider?

To be eligible to submit an application to become an approved OPD provider, you must be a registered training organisation (registered in Australia by the [Australian Skills Quality Authority](#)). To be an approved provider of the compulsory activity, you must also have the Certificate IV in Celebrancy in your registration scope or be in the process of adding the Certificate IV in Celebrancy to your registration scope.

Becoming an approved OPD provider

How can I apply to become an approved OPD provider from 2018?

An application form to become an approved OPD provider in 2018-2020 is available on the 'Applications-Ongoing Professional Development for 2018-2020' page on the Attorney-General's Department website.

When will applications to deliver OPD close?

Applications will close on 5 October 2017. The department will not accept applications after this time.

Can I submit an application after 5 October 2017?

No. In order to ensure that arrangements for delivery of OPD are in place for Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants in 2018, applications must be received by the nominated deadline. A specified deadline also ensures that all eligible potential providers have the same opportunity to submit their application.

How many approved OPD providers will deliver OPD from 2018?

The number of approved providers from 2018 is not predetermined. The number will be based on the strength of the applications received. Potential providers will need to demonstrate in their application that they will be able to develop and deliver OPD for Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants in accordance with the criteria specified in the 'Application to become an approved provider for 2018-2020' and the 'Ongoing Professional Development (OPD) Approved Provider Standard Conditions'.

When will I know if I have been approved as an OPD Provider?

The department anticipates it will aim to advise all applicants of the outcome of their application by 3 November 2017. Approved OPD providers will be listed on the department's website shortly after.

How will the department evaluate my application to become an approved provider?

Applications should address the criteria and questions in the 'Application to become an approved provider for 2018-2020'. In doing so, potential providers should consider the information contained in the 'Ongoing Professional Development (OPD) Approved Provider Standard Conditions' and the 'Sample elective activity outline'. Applications will be evaluated on the basis of their ability to clearly demonstrate that they meet the specified criteria.

If my application to become an approved provider is unsuccessful, can I reapply?

Your training organisation will be able to submit an application the next time an application process is undertaken by the department.

Will I receive feedback on my application?

All respondents will be provided with the opportunity to receive feedback on their application, where requested, following the announcement by the department of the outcome of the application process.

If I am approved as a provider can I deliver any activity without seeking approval from the department?

No. All approved providers must submit proposed elective activities to the department for approval in accordance with the 'Ongoing Professional Development (OPD) Approved Provider Standard Conditions'. This is irrespective of whether the approved OPD provider has been on an earlier OPD panel with the department.

I want to develop and deliver only the compulsory activity. Can I submit an application to become an approved provider?

Yes. You can submit an application to deliver only the compulsory activity. However, if you are approved, you will not be able to also deliver elective activities because the approval will be based on the information you submitted in your application. If you think you might wish to provide elective activities you should include that information in your application.

From 2018, a compulsory activity will only be required where there are significant changes to relevant legislation, guidelines or to the Programme. In years where there is no compulsory activity, you will not be able to deliver elective activities unless you had applied to also deliver the elective activities.

I want to develop and deliver only the elective activity/s. Can I submit an application to become an approved OPD provider?

Yes. You can submit an application to deliver only elective activities. However, if you are approved, you will not be able to also deliver the compulsory activity because the approval will be based on the information you submitted in your application. If you think you might wish to provide the compulsory activity, you should include that information in your application. From 2018, a compulsory activity will only be required where there are significant changes to relevant legislation, guidelines or to the Programme.

OPD Activities

Compulsory Activity

How will the topic for the compulsory activity be determined?

A compulsory activity topic may form part of an OPD year where there are significant changes to the relevant legislation, guidelines or to the Programme. The Registrar of Marriage Celebrants will determine the compulsory activity topic and will consult with relevant stakeholders – state and territory registries of births, deaths and marriages, celebrant associations, and the panel of OPD providers, as required, in determining the compulsory activity topic.

Who will write the compulsory activity?

The text for the compulsory activity will be issued by the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants.

How will the compulsory activity be developed?

The text of the compulsory activity will be developed into a deliverable form, including face-to-face, online and other distance means by the registered training organisations approved to deliver the compulsory activity.

Who will deliver the compulsory activity?

The compulsory activity will be developed by registered training organisations approved to deliver the compulsory activity.

Elective Activity/s

Who can submit elective activities for approval?

Only approved OPD elective providers will be able to submit their proposed activities to the department for approval.

How will elective activities be assessed for approval?

In the first instance, all approved providers will be required to complete an 'Application for approval of elective activities' for each elective activity they wish to deliver in a given year and submit it to the department for approval. Approved providers must submit each elective activity for approval irrespective of whether they have been on a previous OPD panel with the department. The activity approval form will seek details about the activity including information about the skills and experience of the trainer delivering the activity.

The elective activity approval form will request similar information to the sample elective activity outline, available on the 'Applications-Ongoing Professional Development for 2018-20' page on the Attorney-General's website.

Assessment by the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants of an elective activity will be made against the following OPD principles, as to how the proposed elective:

- will assist celebrants keep up-to-date and informed about changes and issues relevant to their role as a marriage celebrant
- will assist celebrants broaden their skills, improve their practices, enhance and refine their work as a practitioner and improve their confidence and personal fulfilment as a marriage celebrant
- will build and strengthen networks to support the sharing of ideas/experiences as marriage celebrants
- will be delivered to celebrants, and
- addresses key adult learning principles.

To be approved for delivery, the application for approval of elective activities form for the proposed elective activity will also need to address these principles.

How long will it take for proposed elective activities to be approved?

The time it takes to assess a proposed elective activity will depend on a number of factors including whether all of the required information about the activity as required in the activity outline has been provided to the department. The department may need to seek additional information about the proposed activity which means that more time will be needed to assess the proposed activity.

How will the elective activity topics be determined?

In addition to the feedback mechanisms established by the approved providers for developing elective activities, the department will also seek views from celebrants and associations and use their feedback to determine possible elective activity topics. Approved and developed compulsory topics from recent years will also be available as elective activities.

Association Conferences

When can my association apply to have its conference count for the elective component of OPD?

As with current arrangements, association conference organisers can apply for their conference to count as elective OPD throughout the year. The application form continues to be available on [ongoing professional development](#) page of the Attorney-General's Department.

Can my association apply to have only part of its conference count for the elective component of OPD?

Yes. Associations are required to provide details on the entire conference, including how many hours of their conference should count towards a celebrant fulfilling their OPD obligation for the year. As with current arrangements, the maximum number of hours an association conference can count as elective OPD is three.

How many OPD hours will the conference count towards?

Association conference organisers will be able to nominate how many hours their conference should be counted towards a celebrant fulfilling their OPD obligation for the year. The department will make the final determination on how many hours will be counted after considering the application by the conference organisers. As with current arrangements, the maximum number of hours an association conference can count as elective OPD is three.

If my association conference is not approved to count for the elective component of OPD, how can my association's members complete their OPD?

All Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants will be able to choose the activities they are interested in completing from the list of approved activities for 2018. Once approved, the list will be made available on the [ongoing professional development](#) page on the Attorney-General's website.

Will the association be responsible for reporting to the department the names of the celebrants who attend the conference?

Yes. Associations that have their conference approved to count as the elective component of OPD will be required to report to the department the names of the celebrants who attended the conference.

Can my association deliver the compulsory activity

No. Only registered training organisations approved to deliver the compulsory activity can provide that activity.

Can my association use different providers to deliver the compulsory and elective activities?

Yes. As is currently the case, there is no requirement to undertake the compulsory and elective components of OPD with the same approved provider. Your association will need to make arrangements for OPD delivery to its members directly with the approved OPD providers.

Will my association be required to evaluate its conference?

Yes. It is expected that the conference will be evaluated and feedback from participants will be obtained by the conference organisers. The department may seek information about the evaluation from the association conference organisers.

Units from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy

Which registered training organisations can deliver the units from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy to count as OPD?

Any training organisation registered by the [Australian Skills Quality Authority](#) (ASQA) as a registered training organisation (RTO) and which has the Certificate IV in Celebrancy in their registration scope (or is in the process of obtaining it in their scope) can deliver units from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy to marriage celebrants so that it counts as OPD from 2018. The RTO does not need to be on the approved panel of OPD providers in order to deliver the Certificate IV in Celebrancy units so that the units count as OPD.

Does an RTO need to be on the approved panel of OPD providers to deliver units from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy to marriage celebrants so that it counts as OPD?

No. The RTO does not need to be on the approved panel of OPD providers in order to deliver the Certificate IV in Celebrancy units as OPD. The RTO must however, sign a declaration that they will report information relating to the celebrants who completed units from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy in order for the unit to count as OPD. The [declaration](#) is on the Ongoing professional development page on the Attorney-General's Department website.

Which units from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy will count as OPD?

All 37 units of competency listed in the Certificate IV in Celebrancy qualification on the www.training.gov.au website will count as OPD. This *does not* include the units from an endorsed training package or accredited course where they are relevant to the work outcome.

The department's [position paper on OPD](#) states that celebrants who choose to complete units of competency from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy to count as OPD must meet the following conditions:

- the unit must be from the list of all units available as part of the Certificate IV in Celebrancy on the www.training.gov.au website
- the entire unit must be undertaken and completed in the calendar year which it is intended to count as OPD, and
- the units must be at least equivalent to undertaking a five hour elective activity (in years when there is no compulsory activity) or equivalent to undertaking a five hour elective activity minus the duration of the compulsory activity (in years where there is a compulsory activity). If the units add up to more than five hours duration they will still only count as five hours or five hours minus the compulsory.

Will each unit from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy be required to be submitted to the department before it can be offered to celebrants (so that it counts as OPD)?

No. Content and delivery requirements for the 37 Certificate IV in Celebrancy units are specified in the training package for that qualification and are available on the www.training.gov.au website. Any questions about the delivery of the Certificate IV in Celebrancy or units should be directed to the [Australian Skills Quality Authority](#).

Can RTOs delivering units from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy as OPD also deliver elective activities?

No. Only RTOs on the approved panel of providers can deliver elective activities. However, RTOs that are on the panel of approved providers and have the Certificate IV in Celebrancy can deliver units from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy to count as OPD.

Will a celebrant be required to undertake and complete a unit from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy, including assessment for the unit, in a particular OPD year, for the unit to count as OPD in that year?

Celebrants who choose to complete units of competency from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy must undertake and complete those units (including any assessment for the unit) in the calendar year which it is intended to count as OPD.

Example

If there was no compulsory activity in one year, celebrants would still be required to complete five hours of OPD. Celebrants would choose activities with an approved OPD provider, or attend an association conference approved to count as OPD as well as an elective activity with an approved OPD provider, or complete a unit of competency from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy delivered by any RTO approved to deliver that qualification. This is irrespective of whether the RTO is on the approved list of OPD panel providers.

The Marriage Regulations currently require that at least two activities be undertaken each year to make up the required five hours of OPD. More than five hours of OPD can be completed in an OPD year but will still only count as five hours for the purpose of satisfying the OPD requirements.

How many hours of OPD will one unit from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy count towards?

A unit from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy must be at least equivalent to undertaking a five hour elective activity (in years when there is no compulsory activity) or equivalent to undertaking a five hour elective activity minus the duration of the compulsory activity (in years where there is a compulsory activity). If the unit/s add up to more than five hours duration they will still only count as five hours or five hours minus the compulsory.

At this time it is not possible for the completion of only one unit from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy to count as the entire elective component of OPD for an OPD (calendar) year if there is no compulsory activity for that year. This is because the Marriage Regulations require that at least two activities be undertaken each year. In years where there is a compulsory activity, one unit from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy would count as the entire elective component of OPD if the unit is equivalent to undertaking a five hour elective activity minus the duration of the compulsory activity. The department is currently undertaking a review of the Marriage Regulations.

Will one unit from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy count as the entire elective component of OPD?

No. In order to be able to complete only one unit from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy so that it counts as the entire elective component of OPD in the particular OPD (calendar) year, amendments to the Marriage Regulations would be required. This is because the Marriage Regulations currently require that at least two activities be undertaken each year to make up the required five hours.

Will the RTO delivering units from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy as OPD be responsible for reporting to the department the names of the celebrants who completed the units?

Yes. RTOs delivering units from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy as OPD will be required to report to the department the names of the celebrants who completed the units in the template specified by the department.

Questions about the EOI* and Answers

* Raised by RTOs following the release of the EOI

Q1: Does the department recognise prior learning (RPL) of a unit of competency or prior training as meeting an OPD obligation?

A: No. Recognition of prior learning of a unit of competency would not be recognised by the department as satisfying OPD requirements. Celebrants who choose to complete units from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy must meet the conditions outlined in this document.

Q2: Do guest speakers such as officers from the state and territory registries of birth, deaths and marriages need to hold training requirements as set out in Part 4 of the Approved Provider Standard Conditions?

A: No. RTOs approved by the department to deliver elective OPD activities are responsible for ensuring the trainers have the necessary skills, training and experience to deliver the particular activity and must comply with the OPD Approved Provider Standard Conditions 2018-2020. It is a matter for the RTO to determine whether they wish to include guest speakers (who are not trainers), such as officers from the state and territory registries of birth, deaths and marriages (BDMs), to contribute to the delivery the particular elective activity (in these cases it is expected that a trainer would be present).

Q3: Does the deadline of 5 October apply to RTOs that do not apply through the EOI process?

A: No. RTOs who do not apply through the EOI process, or who are unsuccessful in the process, can complete and submit the Declaration to the department at any time.

Q4: Can an approved OPD provider deliver an elective of loss and grief support or working effectively in the funeral services industry so that it counts as OPD electives?

A: Yes. The expansion of elective activities means that an RTO who is an approved OPD provider will be able to submit a broader range of elective activities for approval including using all, or part, of the subject matter recognised under the Certificate IV in Celebrancy such as loss and grief support.