



Marriage Celebrants Programme

Conferences to count as ongoing professional development from 2020 and beyond

July 2019

The purpose of this paper is to provide conference organisers with information about the requirements for a celebrant association/network conference to count as Ongoing Professional Development (OPD) for marriage celebrants. The Attorney-General's Department will continue to consider opportunities to improve OPD to ensure its relevance into the future.

The Registrar of Marriage Celebrants (the Registrar) is responsible for administering the Marriage Celebrants Programme and in doing so, registers and regulates Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants.

The Registrar is required to publish a written statement setting out the OPD activities for each year, and specifying any compulsory activities. The list of approved activities for 2019 is published in the [Marriage \(Celebrant Professional Development\) Statement 2019](#) (the OPD statement).

Marriage celebrants are required to complete five hours of approved OPD activities each calendar year.

Attendance at celebrant association/network conferences can be an approved OPD activity provided that the conference organisers have applied to the department and received approval for the conference to count as OPD. This fact sheet provides guidance to associations/networks and conference organisers on the criteria the Registrar will look for when assessing whether a conference is to be characterised as an OPD activity for the year.

OPD objectives and principles

The department is committed to ensuring that OPD for Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants promotes a high level of professionalism while compliance costs for marriage celebrants are as efficient as possible.

Objectives

- to assist celebrants to keep up to date and informed of developments and/or about changes and issues relevant to their role as a marriage celebrant
- to assist celebrants to 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
- to assist celebrants to build and strengthen networks to support and mentor each other and share ideas/experiences as a marriage celebrant, and
- to demonstrate a commitment to being professional and reflecting the important role marriage celebrants have in the Australian community.

Principles

- to provide high quality, variety and relevant subject matter for activities providing flexibility for the diverse celebrant population
- choice for celebrants
- adult learning principles, and
- continuous improvement, including consultation with celebrants, and value for money.

Requirements for the conference to count as OPD for marriage celebrants from 2020

The conference must be a face to face activity where celebrants are physically present at one specific location.

For a conference to count as OPD for marriage celebrants, conference organisers will be required to include the proposed agenda for the conference and details about the topics to be covered by the presentations or guest speakers. Applications to the department will be required to demonstrate that the conference:

- meets the objectives and principles of OPD
- links to the particular role of a marriage celebrant – this does not mean that other celebrancy-related topics would not be accepted for the purpose of OPD for marriage celebrants but that there has to be a clear link to the role of a marriage celebrant
- is likely to have at least 15 marriage celebrants attending the conference – for example, this can be determined based on previous years' attendance or as a proportion of membership of the particular celebrant association or network holding the conference
- topics and workshops are delivered by appropriately qualified presenters – it is expected that there would be more than one presenter and that presenters or guest speakers will have either relevant vocational competencies to the level being delivered, current industry skills and/or current knowledge and skills in the relevant areas, and
- organisers have appropriate administrative processes established so that reporting of marriage celebrant attendance at the conference can be accurately reported to the department in the required format.

If approved to count as OPD, a conference will count for up to five hours OPD when there is no compulsory activity; and up to five hours minus the duration of the compulsory activity in years where there is a compulsory activity.

Once approved, the conference organisers can indicate in their advertising that the conference is an approved OPD activity for the particular OPD year. The Registrar will also list the conference as an approved OPD activity in the OPD statement for the year.

Only members of the approved OPD panel can deliver a compulsory activity.

Who can apply

From 2020, conference organisers such as celebrant associations/networks may apply to the department to have their conference count as OPD in a particular year.

How to apply

Applications must be made using the application form available on the department's [website](#).

The application form includes a declaration.

When to apply

Applications must be made by the end of the calendar year immediately preceding the year in which the conference is intended to count as OPD (for example, for conferences to be held in 2020 and count as OPD in 2020, the application must be received by AGD no later than 13 December 2019. The department will advise on the outcome of all applications by 31 January of the relevant OPD year.