



Marriage Celebrants Programme

Updated May 2019

Maintaining your registration as a Commonwealth marriage celebrant

Marriage celebrants perform an important role in the community that carries significant legal responsibilities under the *Marriage Act 1961* (Marriage Act) and the Marriage Regulations 2017 (Marriage Regulations).

This information sheet deals with key obligations to assist Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants to maintain their registration (see sections 39FA and 39G, Marriage Act).

As a Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrant, your key obligations under the marriage legislation are to:

- Conduct yourself in accordance with the Code of Practice for marriage celebrants.
- Undertake all ongoing professional development (OPD) activities required by the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants each calendar year, unless you have been granted an exemption. Applications for exemption must be made in the calendar year to which the OPD obligation relates.
- Notify the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants in writing, within 30 days, of:
 - a change in your details (for example, address or telephone number), or
 - the occurrence of an event that might have caused the Registrar to not register you as a marriage celebrant if the event had occurred before you were registered.
- Disclose if you are a marriage celebrant, and whether or not you are a religious marriage celebrant, in any document relating to the performance of services by you as a marriage celebrant (including advertisements).
- Pay the annual celebrant registration charge by the charge payment day, unless you have been granted an exemption. Applications for exemption from the charge must be made no later than 21 days after the charge notice is sent. There are also two exemptions for which you do not need to apply. These are discussed further below.

Code of Practice

The [Code of Practice](#) for marriage celebrants (Schedule 2, Marriage Regulations) requires you to maintain a high standard of service in your professional conduct and practice and sets out general requirements for the preparation for, and the conduct of, marriage ceremonies. It also requires you to recognise the significance of marriage and be up to date with your knowledge about family relationship services. You must also comply with the Marriage Act and other laws.

Ongoing Professional Development (OPD)

Each calendar year (1 January – 31 December), you must complete five hours of OPD, including any compulsory activity set by the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants as part of this five hours, unless you have been granted an exemption. Applications for exemption must be made in the calendar year to which the OPD obligation applies.

In addition, the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants may exempt you, in your first year of registration, from undertaking OPD for a calendar year if the Registrar is satisfied that it may be onerous to comply with the OPD requirement because you became registered as a marriage celebrant late in that year. You do not need to apply in order to receive this exemption, and you will be informed in writing if you have received this exemption.

From 1 January 2019, a celebrant is exempt from undertaking professional development activities for their first calendar year of registration, if they are registered from 1 January 2019 onwards and if they were awarded a Certificate IV in Celebrancy in the 12 month period before the date of their registration. It will not be necessary to apply to the Registrar to receive this exemption.

Further information about your OPD obligations, including how to apply for an exemption, is on the Attorney-General's Department [website](#). This includes information about the compulsory activity (if any) and elective units that count towards meeting your OPD obligation. Disciplinary measures may be imposed if you do not comply with these obligations each year.

Inform of changes to personal circumstances

You must inform the Registrar, in writing, of any changes to your contact details, including phone numbers, postal and email addresses, within 30 days.

You must also notify the Registrar in writing if something occurs that might affect your entitlement to registration. This may include:

- being convicted of a criminal offence
- a change in employment that might create a potential conflict of interest with the performance of your duties as a Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrant (see the [Guidelines on conflict of interest and benefit to business for Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants](#) on the department's website).

The quickest and easiest way to update personal details is through the online [self-service portal](#), or alternatively you can email your updated details to marriagecelebrantssection@ag.gov.au. Meeting this obligation requires ongoing action on the part of all Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants.

Annual registration charge

The annual celebrant registration charge is payable each financial year. This includes celebrants registered during a financial year. Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants who have an email address recorded in the department's database will receive their invoice via email. If an email address is not recorded, a hard copy will be sent to the postal address recorded. Invoices will also be available on the [self-service portal](#).

It is very important that you make sure your email address is up to date and that you pay your registration charge by the charge payment day. If payment is not made by the charge payment day, you will be deregistered. There is no discretion in the Marriage Act to consider late payments for any reason.

An exemption may be sought from payment of the registration charge. Applications for exemption must be made no later than 21 days after the charge notice is sent. Exemptions from payment are only granted in specified circumstances as provided in legislation. These are: remoteness; where you will not live in Australia during the financial year to which your application relates; or you are unable to perform as a marriage celebrant for at least six months of the financial year because of serious illness or caring responsibilities.

In addition to the above, two exemptions exist which are granted automatically and for which you do not need to apply. You will be exempt from paying the celebrant registration charge for your first year of registration if you were granted an exemption from the registration application fee. You will also be exempt from paying the celebrant registration charge if you resign as a marriage celebrant before the due date of the charge. You do not need to apply in order to receive these exemptions, and you will be informed in writing if you have received either of these exemptions.

Further information about exemptions and paying the charge is on the page, [Managing your registration](#).