

Overseas students visiting the Sydney Diocese to work with children or youth

Summary

More of our churches are being asked, or are inviting students or other people from overseas to work in the Diocese, either short term or for a longer period (eg: 12 months).

These positions may present as MTS-style ministry apprenticeships or internships, or something less formalised. They may be paid or voluntary, or somewhere in between (eg: accommodation provided in return for work).

These work arrangements present some particular challenges that we need to be aware of to ensure that they comply with Diocesan and State requirements for effective screening and training in Safe Ministry.

This paper is a guide to assist parishes in being well prepared for such situations and identifies what information should be sought before any such worker begins work/ministry here.

Planning for using overseas students/workers in your church

The key here is planning well ahead.

If at all possible, begin gathering the information required 4-6 months before the person leaves their country of origin. Often it is easier for the worker from overseas to gather this information.

Principles

The guiding principle in this situation is:

We need to be confident in the **appropriateness** and **preparation/training** of any person coming from overseas to work with children and other vulnerable people in our churches.

For Australian residents, we have local records, church affiliations, personal references etc that are usually easy to check. With people living overseas, obtaining this information is more difficult.

The Process

Key steps for workers from overseas to take before arriving in Australia:

- Obtain a police clearance certificate (or equivalent) from the police in their country of residence. Any such documents older than six months should be renewed/replaced with a current certificate/document.
- Obtain a personal written reference from the Senior Minister/pastor of their church - assuming they have been active at that church for at least one year. If they have been at their current church for less than twelve months, an additional reference from their previous Senior Minister is desirable.

- Have them forward the following information to the Safe Ministry Rep at the parish they will be working in:
 - Their full name, date of birth and contact details (email, mailing address, phone number)
 - Copies of the documents mentioned above (Police check and Minister's reference)
 - Full contact details of their current Senior Minister/Pastor.
 - Full contact details of the equivalent of the Director of the Professional Standards Unit in their denomination/church organisation.
 - Written evidence of the currency of their equivalent to our Safe Ministry Training.
- After they arrive in Australia, but before they begin work at your church, they will need to apply for a WWCC and your Safe Ministry Rep should process that as normal. It is acceptable that they can begin work with just the APP number while they wait for full clearance.
- As soon as practical after arriving the person should complete Safe Ministry training and this must be completed within 3 months of them starting in a position working with children. This is important because they need to be aware of the requirements of the Diocese and the laws in NSW in working with children which will differ from country to country just as they do from state to state.

When the Safe Ministry Rep at the Australian church has received the documents and contact details, they should keep a copy for their records and forward a copy of them to the PSU Safe Ministry Representative Liaison Officer at: smrlo@sydney.anglican.asn.au

If you have any questions about any of these guidelines, or if they do not fit the circumstances that your church finds itself in, please contact the Safe Ministry Representative Liaison Officer on the above email address or the PSU office on 02 9265 1604

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Checklist

- Full name, address, email, phone number and date of birth of each worker.
- Current (ie: < 6 months old) Police check/certificate from current country.
- Minister's reference from their current church or previous one if at current one less than 12 months
- Full contact details of current Senior Minister or equivalent.
- Full contact details of the equivalent of the Director of the PSU in their Diocese or denominational body.
- Written evidence of currency of Safe Ministry Training or equivalent.
- NSW WWCC undertaken when they arrive but before they start work
- Completion of Safe Ministry Training within 3 months of commencing work
- Forward copies of documents and contact information to:
smrlo@sydney.anglican.asn.au before they begin work.