

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently asked Questions regarding the Australian Catholic Ministry Register.

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1. What is the ACMR and how does it work?

The Australian Catholic Ministry Register (the ACMR or Register) exists to assist clergy, religious and Church Authorities in fulfilling their responsibility to provide and seek safeguarding statements before a cleric or religious is allowed to exercise ministry in another Church jurisdiction. This is necessary in order to comply with National Catholic Safeguarding Standard 5.7.1 (see below). The Register acts as a simple and convenient

alternative to meeting these requirements through the existing 'one-off' safeguarding statements.

The Register allows such safeguarding statements to be provided once, with successful applicants receiving a unique ACMR ID. An ACMR ID holder can then provide this ID to any Church Entity in order to demonstrate his or her good standing. The Church Entity must then simply check the ID by performing a search using it [here](#) in order to fulfil their responsibilities under these requirements.

ACMR ID holder's details are kept in secure servers. A limited amount of this information can be accessed through our secure checking process. Successful searches will display the person's name, title and status, along with a photo.

2. Why are these statements required?

National Catholic Safeguarding Standard 5.7.1 reads: *The entity implements a system to assess the safeguarding credentials and manage the movement of all seminarians, clergy and religious moving between different seminaries, formation programs and Church jurisdictions.* One element of this system, found in ACSL's guidance on this Standard, (available on [ACSL's website](#)), requires these statements. This is intended to ensure that receiving Church Authorities know that those seeking to minister in their jurisdiction are suitable to minister, and any information that might be relevant to their safeguarding responsibilities.

3. Who runs the Register?

The Register is administered by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL). For further information about the ACSL please visit www.ascltd.org.au.

The ACMR was developed by the former National Committee for Professional Standards and later operated by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference before the formation of ACSL.

4. Who is responsible for the information on the Register?

Church Authorities are entirely responsible for ensuring that the status and information of ACMR ID holders are accurate. The Register strives to assist Church Authorities to ensure that this data is correct and current, and to enter and check details and updates which have been supplied to us correctly.

Church entities which have members enrolled on the Register are obliged to provide timely updates should the details of these ACMR ID holders change or should it be necessary to

change their status. This is most pressingly the case where the Church Authority has become aware of any information which may affect a person's good standing. Notice of such must be provided immediately.

5. What happens if a Church Authority is not prepared to provide a Safeguarding Statement for someone?

Applications will not proceed without a Church Authority's statement of a person's good standing. Where a Church Authority has decided not to issue one for an individual, that person should be informed and may appeal the decision accordingly. Non-ACMR ID holders and their Church Authorities may still be able to use the alternative 'one-off' safeguarding statements. The Register will have no role in either coordinating 'one-off' approvals or any appeal process.

6. What is 'good standing'?

Good standing, for the purposes of the Register entails that the person has never been found to have behaved in a manner which suggests that they may "pose a risk to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children or adults" and is not now accused of having done so.

In order for an applicant to acquire an ACMR ID, they and their Church Authority must be able to affirm a series of statements related to safeguarding which establish good standing. These may be found on the respective forms, available on [ACSL's website](#). A Church Authority must make all necessary enquiries in order to satisfy themselves of the truth of each statement.

In addition, the Register requires that all applicants and ACMR ID holders have a Working With Children Check (WWCC) or equivalent clearance for any states or territories in which they regularly minister.

Should a Church Authority become aware of a lapse of these clearances or any information or allegation which may impact on an ACMR ID holder's good standing, they must notify the Register immediately.

7. What is a status?

All ACMR ID holders are assigned to a status which determines whether their ID can be verified. Only persons who hold the status 'Approved', the status assigned upon registration, can use their ACMR IDs in the manner described above. A status can be changed (see below) at the discretion of a Church Authority.

8. What is a Church Authority?

A Church Authority is the leader of a Church Entity, most commonly a Bishop in the case of a Diocese and a Provincial or similar for Religious Institutes. Church Authorities and their delegates are able to approve applicants for the ACMR and later change their status on the Register. ACSL has a more precise definition of a Church Authority in the glossary of [Draft Two, NCSS Edition Two](#).

9. What is a delegate?

A delegate is a person to whom a Church Authority has entrusted the task and authority to perform some of the Church Authority's responsibilities relating to the Register. A delegate acts on behalf of their Church Authority to aid in many of the functions of the Register. The delegation itself occurs via a form which must be signed by the Church Authority and may be temporary or indefinite.

10. What is a Church Entity?

A Church Entity is, for the purposes of the Register, any recognised Catholic organisation with canonical status and a headquarters in Australia. Dioceses and Religious Institutes (understood broadly to include Orders, Congregations and other bodies) are the two major types of Church Entity.

11. Which Church Authority should approve a person's application?

The suitable Church Authority to sign the Church Authority Safeguarding Statement is the leader of the Church Entity in which the applicant is a member or is incardinated except for where they have been formally 'loaned' to another Church Authority.

12. How does the Register relate to Working With Children Check or equivalent clearances?

The Register is intended to assist clergy, religious and Church entities in complying with the requirements of NCSS 5.7.1 discussed above. It does not, and cannot, satisfy legal measures intended to protect children and other vulnerable people. Even where a person holds an ACMR ID, that person, their Church Entity and the Church Entity they seek to minister within must all comply with the relevant WWCC legislation.

In order to gain and retain approval for the Register, applicants and ID holders must hold a Working With Children Check (WWCC) or equivalent clearance for any states or territories in

which they regularly minister. These must be kept up to date and the Register must be informed of any updates or changes.

13. Is registration on the ACMR mandatory?

No, the Register is a voluntary way of meeting the requirements surrounding movement and transfers for religious and clergy under NCSS 5.7.1. A Church Authority may adopt ACMR registration of members of their Church Entity as a matter of policy but may not compel registration.

However, the Register team strongly encourages all clergy and religious to consider whether the ACMR could be useful for them. This team receives frequent feedback from both ACMR ID holders and the staff of Church entities, representing a wide range of organisations and ministries, saying that the system makes this part of their work much easier.

14. Does an ACMR ID grant permission to minister everywhere in Australia?

No. While an ACMR ID should make receiving permission to minister easier for visitors, they must still apply through the normal channels in order to satisfy their legal, canonical and other responsibilities and to allow the diocese to do the same.

15. Who is eligible to apply for an ACMR ID?

Everyone who is subject to the requirements of NCSS 5.7.1 can apply for an ACMR ID. This includes all clergy and religious, as well as those in formation towards ordination or religious life such as seminarians or novices. Of course only those in good standing and who meet all other requirements for holding an ACMR ID will have their application accepted.

16. How can a person apply for an ACMR ID?

Those seeking an ACMR ID must apply through their Church Entity which will guide them through the simple application process. They will need to fill out an Individual Safeguarding Declaration and supply their Church Entity with a photograph of themselves. Their Church Entity will then arrange for a Church Authority Safeguarding Statement to be signed by their Church Authority or delegate, approving the application and declaring the applicant's good standing. They will also verify the photo provided and supply anything needed to verify WWCC or equivalent clearances.

These forms will be provided by email to the Register by the Church Entity. If all information needed is present and correct the applicant will be added to the Register, assigned an ACMR

ID and the status 'approved'. If further information or corrections are required, ACSL will contact the Church Entity. When a person is registered, and again when they are approved they will be sent an email notifying them of this, which they may wish to keep for their own records. This email will also be sent to the Church Entity.

17. How long does it take to get an ACMR ID?

Applications will be usually be processed within ten working days of their arrival if they are in good order. If an applicant hasn't heard from us, it is likely that either our emails have gone to their spam inbox or that their Church Entity has not sent the application on to us. It is also possible that an error on our end or in the paperwork is causing a longer delay. If an applicant is concerned, particularly if they urgently need an ACMR ID, they should either contact their Church Entity to ask whether they have any information or contact us directly. The ACMR Administrator, whose details are listed on the 'Contact us' page of this [website](#), will be happy to assist them.

18. When would an ACMR ID holder disclose their ID?

They would disclose it in any situation in which they would previously have provided the older 'one-off' safeguarding statements. In other words, whenever the individual needs to establish their suitability to minister to a Church Authority.

If the ACMR ID holder is a priest, he may for example disclose his ID when invited to celebrate a baptism or wedding in a diocese other than his own. If they are a religious, they would do so when exercising a ministry, whether regular or 'one-off', outside of the diocese in which they normally minister. In either case they should contact the Church Entity and follow their procedures for granting permission to minister. These procedures should allow for the ACMR ID holder to provide it in order to satisfy the requirements of NCSS 5.7.1 discussed above. Anyone who knows a person's ACMR ID number can check their status [here](#).

19. Can an individual's status on the Register be changed?

Yes. The Church Authority of the Church Entity with whom an ACMR ID holder is registered may request that their status be changed at any time. Most changes must be requested through our Change of Status form (available on [ACSL's website](#)) signed by the Church Authority or their delegate. Simple updates, such as when an ACMR ID holder has died, can be performed via email.

20. When must an ACMR ID holder's status be changed?

Should an ACMR ID holder die or leave their Church Entity the Church Authority must notify the Register within a reasonable time.

More seriously, should a Church Authority become aware of any information which would make them unable to affirm each of the statements contained in the Church Authority Safeguarding Statement (available on [ACSL's website](#)), the person's status must be changed immediately. This will prevent the ID from being used. In the case of safeguarding concerns or allegations, this must occur as soon as the Church Authority learns of them and must not be delayed until after an investigation. Should the Church Authority later become able to reaffirm these statements, they may restore the person's status as detailed in our procedures guide (also available from [ACSL's website](#)).

When a person's status is changed in these ways the ACMR ID holder involved will be emailed to notify them of the change. If an error has occurred, they are encouraged to contact their Church Entity.

21. What does the Register display?

When the unique ACMR ID of an individual approved on the Register is entered their name, title and status will be displayed along with a photo to confirm their identity. This result indicates that the Church Authority attests to the good standing of the individual.

All other searches, whether on a non-assigned ID or on a valid ID associated with a person who is no longer approved, will display the generic message "No current record available. Please contact the Church Authority". If this result is returned on an ACMR ID provided and the person performing the search has ensured that the ID is correct this result should be taken to indicate that the Church Authority has changed the person's status for some reason. It might be as simple as a person being sick and on limited activities; or it may indicate something more serious. In such instances the person checking the ID should not treat it as satisfying the requirements of NCSS 5.7.1 and should contact the Church Authority to seek further information. A person must not be permitted to minister without these requirements being satisfied.

22. What personal information is stored on the Register?

The original Individual Safeguarding Declaration, Church Authority Safeguarding Statement, photograph and copy of WWCC or equivalent, are retained at the ACMR after a person has been enrolled on the Register. Their status and any written advice concerning a change of this status is also retained.

Information is provided to the ACMR for the sole purpose of placing an approved person on the Register and for changing their status. Only the information discussed above (q. 21) is displayed when a search is performed.

23. Will records of non-approved persons be retained?

If a person's status is changed, their original records, any subsequent updates and the written notice of their change of status will be retained. This provides both for a historical record and for their status to be changed or restored should this become necessary or in case their status has been changed in error.

24. What is your Privacy Policy?

Our Privacy Policy is available [here](#).

25. Can searches be performed by name?

No, it is not possible to check an ACMR ID via our website by entering a name. To carry out a search the individual's unique ACMR ID number must be entered.