

Overview of the Catholic Ministry Formation Register

Purpose

The primary intention of the Catholic Ministry Formation Register (CMFR) is to assist Church entities in identifying whether a person who is discerning or applying for formation towards clerical or religious life, has previously sought formation elsewhere. This is especially important where previous applications or time spent in formation may not have been disclosed. Awareness of this background will aid entities in allocating their time and resources and protect against potentially deliberate evasion.

The creation of this Register is partially intended to assist the Church in Australia in responding to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. ACSL believes that the Register will be of direct value in fulfilling recommendations 16.20 and 16.21 which address screening of candidates for formation.

Secondary benefits of this Register include the generation of data about formation. Data relating to safeguarding will be analysed by ACSL and used in planning and policy development. This will include consideration of Royal Commission recommendations 16.22 and 16.42 regarding the utilisation of expert advice and psychological assessment in formation decisions. Once thoroughly de-identified, data from the Register may be of interest to Church entities, bodies such as CRA or the ACBC, researchers, or others looking at trends within formation.

Overview

The core of the CMFR is a simple data set recording the names and minimal identifying information (legal names and other names, place and date of birth) of those who have applied for formation and a few details regarding their progress.

This information would be provided by a nominated CMFR Contact Person, while the Register will be managed by the administrator of the Australian Catholic Ministry Register. Entities, including Diocese and Religious Institutes, would opt in to participating in the Register.

All applicants for formation with participating entities will be asked to provide consent as part of applying for formation. This consent would provide for their details and information on the progress of their formation to be gathered and stored. Some of these will also be disclosed in response to a positive match on a subsequent application or an enquiry from a Contact Person.

When a CMFR Contact Person becomes aware of an application for formation, they would arrange and forward a simple form to ACSL including this consent and basic identifying details. This form will also identify the CMFR Contact Person and the Church entity to which they belong. Upon reception the Register administrator would enter these details into the dataset.

If a form were received belonging to an individual previously registered with us, the CMFR Contact Person involved would be notified and a disclosure would occur regarding this fact. The names of all previous Church entities and their current CMFR Contact Person would be disclosed, along with whether the formation was most recently recorded as ongoing, ceased or completed (using a set formula to preserve privacy). Dates for applications and cessation/completion would also be provided for context. The onus would then be on the Contact Person to arrange contact with any named Contact Person or entities for further information if needed. This would include enquires required under Canons 241 §3 and 645 §2.

The CMFR Contact Person within participating entities would also be able to enquire about a person by name at any stage via a simple form and the same disclosure would be made. This is called a name check. Provision would be made for ACSL to seek further identifying information to confirm a possible match.

The CMFR Contact Person would provide minimal updates after this point.

Where an applicant enters formation, yearly updates on their whereabouts, any screening events (such as psychological testing) undertaken, advancements in formation (for instance ordination or vows) and whether they have ceased (including through their initial application being unsuccessful or withdrawn) or completed formation will be required. Formation will be considered to have finished at various stages according to the nature of the Church entity. These updates will be requested each February via distribution of a list of those recorded as in formation to each entity.

Where a screening event is noted to have occurred, nothing beyond its occurrence will be recorded. ACSL will not request any information about the content or outcomes of screening events.

Privacy and Security

Information on the CMFR will be kept securely and only accessed by ACSL staff for the purposes of managing it. This storage and handling will occur in accordance with ACSL's [privacy policy](#) and all relevant laws, including the Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act). Disclosure, modification or additions to any record will occur as set out in the CMFR Policy.