



Guidance Notes: blue card requirements for ministry agents

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Purpose

This guidance note provides basic information about blue card and exemption card requirements for people who are engaged as a ministry agent within the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod (the Church). Additional information may be obtained from bluecard.qld.gov.au. This is a general guide only and if you need specific advice please contact the Synod office.

Before any person can work with children and young people (aged under 18 years), an appropriate screening process must be undertaken. All ministry agents are required by law to comply with the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* ("the Act") and the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011* ("the Regulation"). All ministry agents are considered as 'religious representatives' engaged in 'regulated employment' for blue card purposes and are therefore required to hold a current, valid, appropriate blue card. Statutory obligations differ depending on how a ministry agent is appointed, either as stipend recipients or otherwise as outlined below.

The General Secretary may stand aside any ministry agent, with or without payment of stipend or wage, if the ministry agent is not in possession of a current positive notice.

Scope

This Guidance Note applies to active and retired Ministry agents within the bounds of the Synod of Queensland. This includes Ministers of the Word, deacons, pastors, lay pastors, lay preachers, youth workers and community ministers.

The Guidance Note for Lay Workers is the correct reference document that applies to people wishing to work with children and young people (aged under 18 years) in a congregational setting within the Church.

1. Ministry agents appointed as volunteers or employees

This section refers to ministry agents who are engaged as an employee (and paid a wage) or ministry agents who are engaged on a volunteer basis (such as lay preachers).

1.1. You must hold a paid or volunteer blue card which is linked to your Presbytery

- 1.1.1. See the quick reference guide to determine which form to use, and on the application form, you should list the details of your Presbytery chairperson as the organisation's contact person

1.2. If you work in more than one part of the church, you need to link your card to each part

- 1.2.1. Use the '[Link an applicant/card holder to this organisation](#)' form to link each
- 1.2.2. On the linking form, you should list the details of the person nominated in the organisation's contact person section

1.3. When should you submit my renewal application?

- 1.3.1. Blue Card Services must receive your application at least 30 days prior to expiry



1.4. When can you commence working?

- 1.4.1. Volunteers: Unless a particular exemption applies you must NOT commence volunteering until such time as the letter of positive notice from Blue Card Services is received.
- 1.4.2. A paid employee may commence employment whilst waiting for their blue card or exemption card, once their application has been submitted by the church council to Blue Card Services.

1.5. What happens if you don't receive a letter of positive notice from Blue Card Services before the expiry date of your existing blue card?

- 1.5.1. The General Secretary may stand aside any ministry agent, with or without payment of wage, if the ministry agent is not in possession of a current positive notice.
- 1.5.2. Volunteers: If your renewal application is received by Blue Card Services more than 30 days prior to expiry, you are deemed to still have a positive notice and may continue your volunteer conditions. If not, you no longer have a valid positive notice from the day after expiry. You must cease volunteering activities until you receive the letter of positive notice.
- 1.5.3. Employees: If your renewal application is received by Blue Card Services before expiry, you are deemed to still have a positive notice and may continue your employment conditions. If not, you no longer have a valid positive notice from the day after expiry. You must cease employment activities until you receive the letter of positive notice.

1.6. What if you have a change in your police information?

- 1.6.1. Immediately complete the [Change in police information notification](#) form and lodge it with your Organisations Contact Person. You cannot continue to work until this form has been lodged
- 1.6.2. You do not need to provide details of the change, only that a change has occurred
- 1.6.3. Failure to notify is an offence and you may be subject to a penalty

1.7. What if you already have a blue card?

- 1.7.1. Depending on what blue card type you already have, your application will differ. See the quick reference guide below

What blue card do you already have?	Link to correct form for unpaid ministry agents	Link to correct form for ministry agents paid by wages
I don't have a blue card	Blue Card Application	Blue Card Application
I don't have a blue card and I am a registered teacher or Police Officer	Exemption Application form	Exemption Application form
I have a blue card as a volunteer	Linking form	Volunteer to Paid form
I have a blue card as a paid employee	Linking form	Linking form
I have an Exemption blue card	Linking form	Linking form
I have a Business blue card, but it is not linked to the Synod Office	Linking form	Linking form



2. Ministry agents engaged in a covenantal relationship (remunerated or eligible to be remunerated by stipend)

Due to your covenantal relationship with the church you are determined under the Regulation as conducting your own regulated business as a religious representative. This section includes those available for supply or placement.

2.1. You must hold a business blue card which is linked to the Synod

- 2.1.1. See the quick reference guide to determine which form to use
- 2.1.2. On the application form, you should list the details of the General Secretary in the organisation's contact person section. There is a pre-populated version of this form on the Synod website

2.2. Additional forms to be completed

- 2.2.1. It is requested that you also complete a [consent to discuss information](#) form which allows Blue Card Services to liaise with the General Secretary on matters relating to suspension or cancellation of your blue card
- 2.2.2. If you work in more than one part of the church, use the '[Link an applicant/card holder to this organisation](#)' form to link each. On the linking form, you should list the details of the person nominated in the organisation's contact person section

2.3. When should you submit your renewal application?

- 2.3.1. Blue Card Services must receive your application at least 30 days prior to expiry

2.4. When can you commence working?

- 2.4.1. You must NOT commence your placement or supply until such time as either:
 - 2.4.1.1. the letter of positive notice from Blue Card Services is received by the General Secretary's office, or
 - 2.4.1.2. the email approval from Blue Card Services is received by the General Secretary's office, or
 - 2.4.1.3. in the event that you have an existing blue card, the General Secretary's office receives confirmation from Blue Card Services that the linking form has been submitted

2.5. What happens if you don't receive a letter of positive notice from Blue Card Services before the expiry date of your existing blue card?

- 2.5.1. The General Secretary may stand aside any ministry agent, with or without payment of wage, if the ministry agent is not in possession of a current positive notice.
- 2.5.2. If your renewal application is received by Blue Card Services more than 30 days prior to expiry, you are deemed to still have a positive notice and may continue your ministry. If not, you no longer have a valid positive notice from the day after expiry. You should cease all ministry duties and responsibilities until you receive the letter of positive notice. You are at risk of fines/penalties from Blue Card Services if you continue ministry after the expiry date.



What if you have a change in your police information?

- 2.5.3. Immediately complete the [Change in police information notification form](#) and lodge it with Blue Card Services
- 2.5.4. Failure to notify is an offence and you may be subject to a penalty

2.6. What if you already have a blue card?

- 2.6.1. Depending on what blue card type you already have, your application will differ. See the quick reference guide below

What blue card do you already have?	Link to correct form
I don't have a blue card	Blue Card Business Application
I don't have a blue card and I am a registered teacher or Police Officer	Exemption Card Business Application
I have a blue card as a volunteer	Volunteer to Business Application
I have a blue card as a paid employee	Notification of Change for Self Employed Persons Form
I have an Exemption blue card	Notification of Change for Self Employed Persons Form
I have a Business blue card, but it is not linked to the Synod Office	Linking form

Where to find out more:

To find out more, you can contact Human Resources via email at payroll@ucaqld.com.au

Related documents

- [Safe Ministry with Children policy](#)
- [Obligations for Ministry Agents](#)
- [Toolkit for Ministry Agents](#)

Definitions

Term	Meaning
All	Glossary of Terms

Revisions

Document number		SMC.MIN.BC			
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
1.2	03.07.2019	Manager, Risk and Compliance	01.07.2019	Executive Director Risk and Assurance	Safe Ministry, Legislative and Compliance Officer
Next scheduled review		01.04.2020			