

Policy on Testimonials of Suitability for Clerics from Outside England and Wales

Purpose

To safeguard the faithful and ensure compliance with canonical, safeguarding, and civil obligations, no diocesan cleric from outside England and Wales, or a consecrated religious cleric, including seminarians, may exercise ministry within the Archdiocese of Liverpool without prior written authorisation and a satisfactory Testimonial of Suitability.

Scope

This policy applies to all priests, and deacons who are:

- Incardinated outside England and Wales; or
- Members of institutes of consecrated life or societies of apostolic life whose competent superior is within or outside England and Wales; and
- Seeking any appointment, residence, diaconal or priestly faculties, or public ministry, whether for an extended period, or temporary period, within the Archdiocese.

Bishops of other jurisdiction relate directly to the Archbishop in collaboration with the Chancellor.

Requirements

Before any ministry is authorised, the cleric shall provide a current Testimonial of Suitability from his Ordinary, Bishop, Eparch, Major Superior, Provincial Superior, or other competent ecclesiastical authority confirming that:

- He is in good canonical standing;
- He is not subject to any canonical penalty or restriction on ministry;
- No criminal, canonical, disciplinary, or safeguarding proceedings are pending or anticipated;
- He is suitable for ministry and recommended for service outside his own jurisdiction;



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- No concerns exist regarding his conduct, doctrine, safeguarding practice, or pastoral suitability;
- He has undertaken a form of safeguarding training;

These requirements are stated on the testimonial of suitability form as prescribed by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

The cleric must also satisfy all safeguarding, identity, immigration, and compliance requirements of the Archdiocese.

Validity

The testimonial must:

- Be dated within the previous twelve months;
- Bear the signature of the competent authority and, where appropriate, the official seal;
- Be submitted in English or accompanied by a certified translation.

Approval Process

1. The requesting diocese, eparchy, or religious authority shall submit all documentation to the Chancery.
2. The Chancellor and his staff shall review the application and obtain any necessary collaborative consultations with the Safeguarding Department of the Archdiocese.
3. Written approval must be issued before any public ministry may commence. This may take the form of email for other diocesan clergy, or a decree of faculties for religious sent via email and/or post.
4. The communication will include the Vicars General, the Safeguarding Department, and the Chancery administrator (for record keeping). The communication will be made either directly to the cleric concerned, or to the legitimate superior, the local dean and the parish priest where ministry is sought.
5. The permission for public ministry (for religious clergy, including ministerial faculties within the Archdiocese) will be communicated by email or letter. The record will include any letters from a submitting religious superior or Bishop, the testimonial of suitability form, any evidence of safeguarding training, and the permission for public ministry and or decree of faculties issued by Liverpool. This will be stored electronically by the Chancery.

No cleric may celebrate the sacraments publicly, preach, hear confessions, exercise pastoral ministry, or undertake any ecclesiastical office within the Archdiocese until authorisation has been granted following established protocols.



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Authority and Record Keeping

The grant, refusal, restriction, suspension, or withdrawal of permission remains solely at the discretion of the Archbishop of Liverpool or his delegate. The Chancery shall maintain records of all testimonials, safeguarding documentation, and permissions granted under this policy.

Exceptions

Exceptions may only be authorised in writing by the Archbishop, Vicars General, or Chancellor.

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