



Province of Canterbury

Non-Church of England Clergy who wish to Officiate

A brief guide to the process of obtaining the Archbishop of Canterbury's permission under the 1967 Measure

1) What is the law relating to non-Church of England clergy and the exercise of their ministry in the Church of England?

- A. **Canon C 8** provides that certain priests and deacons (listed below) ('non-Church of England clergy') may officiate in the Church of England only if they have obtained the authority of the bishop of the diocese **and** the permission of the Archbishop of the Province (the "Archbishop's Permission").¹ To do so without having obtained the Archbishop's Permission, even for one service, is an ecclesiastical offence for which proceedings may be taken under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003.²
- B. Applications by non-Church of England clergy for an Archbishop's Permission are made under the **Overseas and Other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967**. Clergy who are granted the Archbishop's Permission are then treated for all legal purposes as clergy of the Church of England (subject to any limitation of time contained in the permission).

2) Who needs to apply for the Archbishop's Permission?

The following non-Church of England clergy must apply for the Archbishop's Permission under the 1967 Measure if they wish to officiate as deacon, priest or bishop in the Church of England:

- ✚ Those ordained by a bishop in the Church of England or an Anglican bishop of a church which **is in communion** with the Church of England, whose diocese or office is elsewhere than in the province of Canterbury, York, Ireland, Wales or Scotland (known as "Overseas Bishops"). For example: clergy from other Provinces of the Anglican Communion or from Churches which have signed the Porvoo Declaration.³
- ✚ Those ordained by a bishop in a church **not** in communion with the Church of England **but** whose orders are recognised and accepted by the Church of England. For example: priests from the Roman Catholic Church or Orthodox Churches.⁴

¹ **Canon C8(5)** The Canons of the Church of England

² **Section 1(6)** Overseas and other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967

³ **Section 1** Overseas and other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967

⁴ **Section 3** Overseas and other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967

- ✚ Overseas bishops, or bishops consecrated in a church not in communion with the Church of England whose orders are recognised and accepted by the Church of England, who wish to exercise episcopal functions within the Church of England.⁵ For example: bishops from other Provinces of the Anglican Communion.
- ✚ Priests and deacons ordained by a bishop in the Church of England but at the request of an Overseas Bishop for ministry in that Overseas Bishop's diocese.⁶

Clergy who do not have an Archbishop's Permission may officiate only to the extent permitted by the Church of England (Ecumenical Relations) Measure 1988 and Canon B 43.

3) **What counts as officiating for this purpose?**

Officiating encompasses the exercise of the liturgical functions of a bishop, priest or deacon. It includes:

- presiding or assisting at a service of Holy Communion
- presiding or assisting at a service of the Word
- presiding or assisting at the occasional offices
- preaching.

4) **How should an applicant apply for the Archbishop's Permission?**

Applications for the Archbishop's Permission are made through the diocese in which the applicant wishes to officiate. The diocese is responsible for carrying out all the safeguarding checks required by House of Bishops safeguarding policy before the application is made and the bishop must certify that this has been done. The diocese must ensure that clergy have carried out the safeguarding training required by House of Bishops safeguarding policy. It is also the diocese's responsibility to ascertain whether the applicant has the legal right to remain in the UK. The completed application form must be signed by both the applicant and the bishop and sent to the Secretary to the Provincial Registrar in Church House, Westminster along with the documents listed below. It is then sent to Lambeth Palace for the Archbishop of Canterbury or his commissary to sign.

5) **Why is this permission necessary?**

It is important to ensure that those who present themselves as priests, bishops and deacons and wish to exercise their ministry within the Church of England are in holy orders that are recognised and accepted in the Church of England.

6) **What is the exception to this rule?**

Members of the clergy ordained by Bishops in the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Church in Wales or the Church of Ireland do not need the Archbishop's Permission. However, the Diocesan Bishop of the diocese in which the applicant wishes to officiate will need to grant a diocesan authority to officiate.

7) **Diocesan authority**

Authority from the bishop of the diocese where the overseas cleric wishes to officiate required in addition to the Archbishop's Permission. The Archbishop's Permission alone does not enable the cleric to officiate. Applications for the Archbishop's Permission under the 1967 Measure are to be distinguished from a Diocesan Bishop's permission to officiate (PTO). The effect of the Archbishop's Permission is to make a

⁵ Section 4 Overseas and other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967

⁶ Section 5 Overseas and other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967

non-Church of England priest or deacon to all intents and purposes a clerk in holy orders of the Church of England. But that does not of itself enable the priest or deacon to officiate in a diocese. Authority from the diocesan bishop – admission to a benefice, a licence or a diocesan PTO – is additionally required for that purpose. Therefore, the Archbishop’s Permission will be granted only if the diocesan bishop certifies that he is ready to grant diocesan authority to officiate.

8) Can a suffragan bishop sign the application form ?

If the relevant function (i.e. the grant of diocesan PTO, or making clergy appointments) has been delegated to a suffragan bishop (e.g. under an area scheme or an instrument of delegation), then the reference to the diocesan bishop can be read as a reference to that suffragan bishop and the suffragan bishop can sign the application form.

9) Can non-Church of England clergy simply exercise their ministry for a “one-off” occasion with the permission of the diocesan bishop without the Archbishop’s Permission?

No. All non-Church of England clergy are subject to the Overseas and Other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967 and Canon C8.5:

- They may **not officiate at all** without the written permission of the relevant Archbishop.
- If any non-Church of England deacon, priest or bishop is seeking to officiate in the Church of England he or she will need the permission of the relevant Archbishop.

10) Do overseas bishops need to apply for the Archbishop’s Permission?

Yes. If an Overseas Bishop wishes to undertake functions that may be undertaken by a priest (including preaching), an Archbishop’s Permission to officiate as a priest must be obtained (in addition to diocesan authority).

- If an overseas bishop wishes to exercise episcopal ministry (e.g. confirmation or ordination), they will need to apply for the consent and licence of the Archbishop of Canterbury and even then may do so only on the request and by the commission of the relevant Church of England diocesan bishop.
- It is therefore important in the application to clarify whether or not the bishop wishes to officiate as a bishop (e.g. confirmation or ordination) or if he or she wishes only to officiate as a priest. It is also important to specify how long the permission should last.

11) How should one apply for this permission?

The applicant member of the clergy must apply **through the diocese in which they wish to officiate**.

- If the Church of England diocesan Bishop, having carried out all the relevant checks (see above), has decided he/she is willing to give diocesan authority to the cleric, the diocese will contact the Secretary to the Provincial Registrar at Church House, Westminster, providing the documentation listed below.
- If the Archbishop’s Permission is granted, the Secretary to the Provincial Registrar will then send the Archbishop’s Permission back to the relevant diocese once it has been signed by the Archbishop (or the Bishop at Lambeth) and the Provincial Registrar.

12) What documents are required for an application for an Archbishop's Permission?

- i. A completed application form (attached) signed by the applicant and the Church of England bishop.
 - This must state the duration of the proposed permission (e.g. one month, three years, five years, without limit of time).
- ii. Letters of orders (Deacon & Priest; and where appropriate, Bishop)
- iii. A letter confirming that he/she is in good standing from the Bishop of his/her **home diocese**.⁷

13) What if the letters of orders are lost or cannot be easily obtained?

If a cleric has lost his or her letters of orders, he or she should produce:

- A letter from the ordaining bishop stating that they ordained this person as deacon/priest (giving details of the date and place of the ordinations) **or**
- A copy of the relevant entries in the bishop's register in the diocese in which they were ordained, certified by the diocesan registrar or chancellor (or equivalent official).

If this proves absolutely impossible (e.g. because letters of orders are lost and there is a state of war or social upheaval in the province where the cleric was ordained preventing the obtaining of the documents mentioned above), the cleric should obtain:

- A statutory declaration (statement sworn in front of a solicitor or other commissioner for oaths) from a person other than the applicant cleric who was present at the relevant ordinations as deacon/priest.

The statutory declaration must state the name of the bishop by whom the ordinations to the diaconate and to the priesthood were performed, the date of the ordinations and that the person making the declaration witnessed the applicant cleric being ordained to the diaconate and the priesthood on the occasions in question.

14) What if the cleric is simply vesting at a ceremony in the church or cathedral?

On the question of vesting, the relevant provisions of **Canon C 8** are very clear:

C8(6). "A minister who does not have authority to officiate in accordance with this Canon **may not vest** in a church or chapel during divine service."

C8(7) "The minister having the cure of souls of a church or or the dean or provost and the canons residentiary of any cathedral ... **may not allow a minister to officiate or vest in the church or chapel if they know that the minister does not have authority to officiate**"

Accordingly, an overseas cleric may vest during a service only if he/ she has the Archbishop's Permission and a diocesan authority to officiate.

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⁷ In the case of a Bishop, the letter should come from the Provincial Archbishop and in the case of an Archbishop, the letter should come from the Provincial Secretary.

For more information please contact:

Secretary to the Provincial Registrar

Legal Office of the National Institutions of the Church of England,
Church House, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3AZ

Direct dial telephone: 020 7898 1371