



The Overseas and Other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967 stipulates that clergy of churches in communion with the Church of England, or of churches whose ordination the Church of England accepts, require permission from the relevant Archbishop before they are able to officiate at a Church of England service of any kind. The legal effect of an Overseas Permission to Officiate (or "OPTO") is to put that cleric in the same position as a Clerk in Holy Orders of the Church of England. An OPTO is required no matter whether the cleric wishes to officiate once off for a single occasion or for a longer period of several years. An OPTO may also be granted without limitation on time

### ***Applying for the Archbishop's Permission to Officiate (OPTO)***

Initial enquiries should be made to the office of the diocesan bishop of the diocese in which the applicant wishes to officiate. The diocesan bishop's office will request that the applicant complete a form which is then signed by the diocesan bishop confirming that they are content to grant diocesan permission to officiate to that person ("PTO"). Note that there is a different form for the Province of York and the Province of Canterbury. The following documents are required for an OPTO application to be successful:

- Proof of ordination as a bishop (if applicable), priest, (and/or) deacon. This proof usually takes the form of copies of the applicant's "letters of orders". If these are lost, the applicant should contact the bishop who ordained the applicant and request that they send an email with a photograph of the entry in the bishop's register to the office of the diocesan bishop (in the Church of England) or a screenshot of the electronic spreadsheet of the ordaining bishop's register: evidencing the date, and place of ordination. If this cannot be found, advice from the Provincial Registrar should be sought;
- Proof of legal right to remain in the country;
- Proof of having complied with the Church of England's safeguarding training requirements;
- Proof of a positive recommendation from a Candidates' Panel in the case of an applicant from another Church;
- Proof that the diocesan bishop is content to allow the applicant to officiate in his / her diocese and grant PTO (diocesan permission to officiate); and
- A completed application form signed by both the diocesan bishop and the applicant.

A member of staff in the diocesan bishop's office will then contact the relevant Provincial Registry who must review the application before sending it to the relevant Archbishop for approval.

- Canterbury OPTO requests should be sent by the Church of England diocesan bishop's staff, to [OPTO@churchofengland.org](mailto:OPTO@churchofengland.org) with all the applicant's supporting documentation attached (preferably in PDF format).

York OPTO requests should be sent to the York Provincial Registry.

**Source URL:** <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-resources/archbishops-opto>