



Australian Government

Department of Immigration and Citizenship

Visa Pathways for Religious Workers

The following table is designed to assist religious workers to determine which visa is most appropriate for them to travel to Australia in order to undertake religious based activities.

If none of the activities listed in this table identify with your situation, more information and advice can be obtained by contacting your nearest departmental office.

See: [Visa Enquiries](#)

Personal Status	Activity	Appropriate Visas
Any adherent of a religious group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attend religious event (for example, World Youth Day) attend meetings participate in retreats or short training courses (less than 3 months). 	Visitor visas
Novice or intending novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> live in a religious institution participate in religious practise / worship / ceremonies prayer and contemplation religious study preaching the faith of their community community work or pastoral care formal study (for example, English classes) for less than 20% of total time spent in Australia administration / non-religious duties (minor component of total program). <p>Note: Special Program visa holders have a condition on their visa which prevents them from undertaking any work or other activity outside the approved Special Program.</p>	Special Programs visa (Subclass 416)
Novice or intending novice	<p>Must be enrolled in a Commonwealth Register or Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) course for formal study towards the relevant qualification (for example, Bachelor or Theology, Diploma of Education, or social work / psychology degree for those intending to work in pastoral care). To find out if the course is CRICOS registered, See: http://cricos.deewr.gov.au/</p> <p>Some student visas give holders limited work rights that allow up to 20 hours work per week while the course is in session, and unlimited hours during course breaks (time spent performing paid or unpaid community work or pastoral care would count towards this limit).</p>	Student visas

Personal Status	Activity	Appropriate Visas
Novice, postulant (or other term used by religious group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formal religious training program (other than full-time study at a university) • supervised practical experience for the purpose of gaining professional registration • supervised, workplace-based training program • workplace-based training program, observation or research, that is a requirement for the award of an overseas tertiary qualification • prayer and contemplation • participate in religious practise / worship / ceremonies • religious study • preaching the faith of their community. 	Occupational Trainee visa (subclass 442)
Ordained religious worker	<p>These relate to positions such as minister, priests, monks, nuns, deacons, rabbis and imams (this list is by no means exhaustive).</p> <p>Work must directly serve the religious objectives of the sponsoring organisation and duties would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ministering and providing spiritual leadership • conducting worship / ceremonies • teaching of or guidance in religion • religious pastoral care • high-level administration or other work in a full-time capacity directly relating to the above (for example, full-time choral director or religious conservator). <p>Note: Religious Worker visa (subclass 428) holders have a condition on their visa which prevents them from undertaking any work or other activity outside the purpose for which the visa was granted.</p>	Religious Worker visa (subclass 428) Employer Nomination Scheme (subclass 121/856) Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (subclass 119/857)
Any adherent of a religious group	<p>Visa applicants who are not considered to be a Minister of Religion (or the equivalent) may work in skilled occupations within a religious environment. These occupations could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaching in accredited schools • nursing • social work or counselling • choral director • religious conservator • high-level administration or other work (for example, managing facilities). 	Subclass 457 – Business (Long Stay) visa Employer Nomination Scheme (subclass 121/856) Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (subclass 119/857)