

# Chaplaincy and student welfare worker services

## Training and qualifications

All chaplains and student welfare workers (paid or volunteer) must meet minimum standards to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to undertake chaplaincy or student welfare worker services in a state school.

### Blue card requirements

- Chaplains and student welfare workers working or volunteering in Queensland schools are required to hold a valid Queensland blue card.
- Blue card applications are lodged with [Blue Card Services](#).
- The principal, deputy principal, business manager or manager maintains a register of blue card information for all chaplains and student welfare workers engaged at the school.
- Further information regarding blue card requirements can be found in the department's [Working with children authority](#) procedure.

### School-based induction

All chaplains and student welfare workers must complete school-based induction (before services commence, except in exceptional circumstances), including the completion of:

- the Department of Education's (the department) [Mandatory All-Staff Training program: Key Messages Guide for Contractors, Volunteers and Visitors](#) (the Guide) which includes [Student Protection](#) and [Code of Conduct](#) training

The Guide includes a record of completion section to be signed by the worker and the principal (or principal's delegate). The record of completion is kept as evidence of completion for a twelve month period and can be shown to principals of other schools. Refresher training is required on an annual basis

**Note:** Principals have the discretion to request chaplains and student welfare workers to complete additional Code of Conduct and/or Student Protection training specific to the context of their individual school

- relevant training on matters pertaining to the school's operations
- other matters at the principal's discretion.

### Accredited Employing Authority (AEA) training

- The AEA is responsible for providing organisation-based induction and training as well as ensuring the chaplain or student welfare worker understands the relevant legislation and departmental policies and procedures that have a direct or indirect impact on their duties in schools.

### Minimum Qualification Requirements

Chaplain	Student Welfare Worker
<p><b>A chaplain:</b></p> <p>a) is recognised by the school community and the school's chosen AEA as having the skills, qualifications and experience to deliver school chaplaincy to the school community; and</p> <p>b) is recognised by the faith-based community through formal ordination, commissioning, recognised religious qualifications, or endorsement by a recognised religious institution; and</p> <p>c) holds a Certificate IV in Pastoral Care, Youth Work, or Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care, or an equivalent or higher qualification; and</p> <p>d) the certificate or equivalent/higher qualification must include competencies in 'making appropriate referrals' and 'mental health'.</p>	<p><b>A student welfare worker:</b></p> <p>a) is a person who is recognised by the school community and the school's chosen AEA as having the skills, experience and qualifications to deliver the approved work plan activities to the school community; and</p> <p>b) holds, or is working towards, competency in the Certificate IV in Pastoral Care or Youth Work, or an equivalent or higher qualification; and</p> <p>c) the certificate or equivalent/higher qualification contains one unit of competency in two of the key topic areas of 'making appropriate referrals', 'mental health', 'working with young people' or 'cultural awareness and support'.</p>



From July 2019, chaplains funded by the Australian Government's National School Chaplaincy Program are required to undertake professional learning in responding to and preventing bullying and cyberbullying as provided by the Office of the eSafety Commissioner. Information on this professional learning is available on the Australian Government Department of Education [webpage](#).

### Qualification equivalency

- Workers may hold other qualifications or aggregated experience that may be deemed by the AEA as being equivalent to, or higher than, the minimum requirements, provided they are related to and aligned with the requirements of the role, and include the two units of competency or equivalent.
- The AEA is responsible for undertaking a self-assessment of the person's qualification as part of the recruitment process, i.e. through course content mapping, in order to come to a decision about the suitability of a person's existing qualifications. All decision making must be defensible and maintained on file by the AEA.

### Examples of accepted equivalent qualifications

A worker's qualification may be considered equivalent to or higher than a Certificate IV in Pastoral Care, Youth Work, or Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care, if the qualification is relevant to the role of a chaplain or student welfare worker, includes units in the relevant areas of competency, and:

- i. is a Certificate IV or higher from the Community Services Training Package under the Australian Qualifications Framework; or
- ii. is a qualification listed as an accredited course by the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council and contains an accredited sequence of psychology units (for example, a Bachelor of Arts may be acceptable if there is a psychology major); or
- iii. is a qualification consistent with the requirements for membership with the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW); or
- iv. is a qualification which enables registration as a teacher in Queensland; or
- v. enables full membership with the [Australian Community Workers Association](#) (ACWA) and has been advised by ACWA in their membership approval that they hold qualifications congruent with the minimum qualification requirements.

### Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

A worker who does not meet the minimum qualification requirements or equivalent must gain the requisite through training or through an RPL assessment to be fully compliant.

- An RPL process:
  - o formally acknowledges a person's knowledge, skills and experience no matter how, when or where they were gained
  - o will determine if equivalency to the minimum qualification requirements has been met by the worker
  - o can be completed through a **Registered Training Organisation (RTO)**.
- The worker may consider undertaking a RPL process if their qualifications and/or aggregated experience:
  - o contain capabilities similar to those for a Certificate IV qualification in Pastoral Care, Youth Work, or Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care, and includes the required units of competency; or
  - o is in a field relevant to the role and purpose of a chaplain or student welfare worker and contains content related to the required units of competency; or
  - o includes partial completion of a higher qualification (e.g. Diploma, Degree) where completed studies are at least equivalent to a Certificate IV in Pastoral Care, Youth Work, or Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care in terms of content and hours of study and the required units of competency have been completed.

#### a) **Worker responsibility**

A worker can approach a RTO to discuss RPL options, requirements and costs, if appropriate. The worker is responsible for informing the AEA of the RPL outcome and for meeting all costs associated with training to meet the minimum qualification requirement, unless otherwise negotiated with the AEA.

#### b) **AEA responsibility**

The AEA determines if a RPL outcome meets the minimum qualification requirement. The AEA should retain a copy of the decision making process and outcome on file.



## Waiver options – Chaplains only

### a) *When a waiver may be considered*

A waiver may be considered by the department if provided with evidence that reasonable attempts have been made by the AEA to locate an appropriately qualified worker and if:

- the remoteness of the school's location acts as a barrier to finding suitable applicants or is a barrier to accessing suitable training;
- the particular cultural requirements of the school student population require specific suitably trained applicants that cannot be found despite reasonable effort;
- the particular circumstances of the school community reflect disadvantage; or
- other exceptional circumstances exist.

The request for a waiver must include:

- a statement of need demonstrating the unique circumstances applying to the school; and
- evidence that the proposed waiver is supported by the school community; and
- evidence that the AEA will take appropriate steps to provide increased supervision (and/or an identified 'mentor') to the individual until they obtain the minimum qualifications.

### b) **How to qualify for a waiver to the minimum qualification requirement**

To qualify for a waiver, the AEA (or other funding recipient if non-state school) must submit a [Minimum Qualification Waiver Request Form](#) to the department, demonstrating all of the following:

- genuine difficulty in recruiting a worker that meets the minimum qualification requirements;
- the person being appointed has agreed to obtain within four months of appointment by the AEA, the two mandatory units of competency (as a minimum);
- the person has agreed to obtain in full the minimum qualification or equivalent within twelve months of appointment by the AEA; and
- the AEA will put in place sufficient strategies to ensure the person employed under a waiver arrangement will be provided with ongoing support and supervision until they obtain the minimum Certificate IV qualification or equivalent.

### c) **Waivers can be revoked**

- Waivers may be granted for up to twelve months and are intended for exceptional circumstances only.
- A waiver can be revoked if the department decides it necessary, for example, if circumstances change or the AEA is unable to demonstrate that the worker is working according to the conditions outlined in the waiver approval letter.
- If a waiver was granted for a particular school and the appointed person relocates or ceases employment at the school, the waiver ceases.
- Where a waiver has been approved and the appointed person has not commenced study within six months, the waiver will cease.
- The department retains the discretion to approve a request for a waiver.

### d) **Reporting**

As part of the waiver requirements AEAs are required to confirm on a quarterly basis, or more often if requested by the department, that the requirements of the waiver (as outlined in the departmental waiver approval letter) are being met by both the AEA and the appointed person. For state school chaplains, quarterly reporting will complement the current quarterly reporting process that is completed by all AEAs at the end of each school term.

