

Recruitment, Screening and Selection



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

This information gives general guidance about best practices for recruiting, screening and selecting employees and volunteers. Consult with the Synod's People and Culture unit about employment requirements for paid staff:

www.victas.uca.org.au/UCA%20Resources/PeopleAndCulture/Pages/Congregational-Resources.aspx

Keeping
Children
Safe



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We are committed to child safe recruitment, selection and screening practices. These practices aim to assist with recruiting the most suitable people to work in our programs. Child safe recruitment practices are outlined below.

Advertising

In recruitment of employees, volunteers and placement of people in specified ministries¹, our child safe message will be promoted in the advertisement or profile. For example: We are committed to providing an environment which maximises the safety and well-being of children and young people. All successful applicants are required to sign and work within our Code of Conduct and undergo the relevant pre-employment checks.

One aim is to promote the self-selection of applicants. A copy of our Statement of Commitment and our Code of Conduct will be included in the information package sent to potential staff and volunteers or people in specified ministries.

Where appropriate, job descriptions are required for positions (staff, volunteers, consultants, lay leaders and people in specified ministries) which describe key selection criteria and outline tasks and accountabilities. Position descriptions are another opportunity to reinforce our commitment. They may include statements such as:

We are a child safe organisation. All who work or volunteer here are required to:

- Undertake to observe our Keeping Children Safe Policies and procedures.
- Undertake to cooperate with strategies to actively ensure the safety, protection and well-being of children who come into association with us.

The following resources have been specifically developed for congregations by the Synod and are available at:

<https://www.victas.uca.org.au/UCA%20Resources/PeopleAndCulture/Pages/Congregational-Resources.aspx>

Selection

This applies to the discernment processes in making a placement decision, employment processes for staff and selection processes for volunteer roles. Applications and resumes should be carefully reviewed in advance. Any inconsistencies, patterns or gaps in dates should be explored in detail in the interview/conversation. Interviews/conversations should be conducted for all positions working with children. Face-to-face discussions allow the panel/Joint Nominating Committee to review the person's ability to relate to others, and assess body language during the interaction.

A mixed-gender panel provides a good balance of views. Consideration will be given to include a young person on the panel when recruiting for a youth service. Behavioural-based questions will ask for examples of the applicant's past behaviour and experiences. Past behaviour is the best predictor of future actions. When talking with applicants working directly with children or young people, the panel will explore the applicant's motivations for wanting to work with children and young people, their values, attitudes and understanding of professional boundaries and accountability. Some example questions are:

- Tell me about a time you had to work with a child who was difficult to relate to?
- Give an example of a situation where you had to speak up about an issue or action of a colleague. What was the outcome?
- Please describe the essential ingredients in the relationship between adults and young people/children in the context of our environment?
- What do you think of our Statement of Commitment or our Code of Conduct?
- Please describe your experiences of being managed?

- What are your strengths?
- What areas do you feel could be improved?

In Victoria, interviews/conversations will also be used to ensure that applicants to the position know about the three new Victorian criminal offences to protect children on:

- Grooming – the use of techniques by abusers to develop a relationship over time, calculated to lead to the abuse of a child.
- Failure by persons in authority to protect children from sexual abuse.
- Failing to report to police sexual offences committed against children under 16 years of age.

The criminal offences are described in plain English in Facts Sheets available at:

<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/betrayal+of+trust+implementation>

Reference Checks

A minimum of two reference checks are to be completed for all paid and voluntary applicants. The applicant’s most recent supervisor/employer should be included. The identity of the referee will be verified and they will be contacted by phone. Written references can be accepted but will be followed up with the referee.

- When carrying out a reference check the following should be covered:
- Establish the nature of the relationship between the applicant and the referee.
- Clarify dates and the role the candidate performed in their previous job/role.
- Ask the referee questions that are relevant to working with children and young people. Some example questions are:
 - How does the person respond to supervision/oversight?
 - Would they engage him/her again?
 - Did they have any reason to be concerned about the person’s behaviour with children?
 - Would you feel comfortable allowing the person to be alone with your child?

Employee/volunteer checks

Under the Working With Children Policy (WWC1) of the Uniting Church Vic/Tas, and to comply with legislation in Victoria, Tasmania and NSW, any staff member, volunteer, person in specified ministries or appointed leader must hold a valid and current Working with Children Check/Registration (WWCC/R). The WWCC/R helps to protect children from sexual or physical harm by checking a person’s criminal history for serious sexual, violence or drug offences and findings from professional disciplinary bodies.

An appointed leader in the Uniting Church is defined in the Keeping Children Safe Policy (KCS1) as follows:

Appointed leaders are people who are in a position of trust, influence or authority because of their leadership role within the Church. This would include, but not be limited to, lay preachers, elders, church councillors, worship leaders, anyone involved in children and youth events/programs/activities, anyone commissioned by the Church Council to perform a leadership role, music leaders, organists, Bible study leaders, and ‘home group’ or ‘cell group’ leaders.

It should be noted that screening is an ongoing process and should continue throughout the orientation process, probationary period, employment, appraisals and supervision/oversight.

*This template is to assist with the implementation of the **Keeping Children Safe Policy** of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, adopted by the Synod Standing Committee on 24 June 2015 and revised in May 2017. Templates will be updated from time to time. If you are using a printed or saved copy please check the website for the latest update – <http://ucavictas.org.au/keepingchildrensafe/>*

Document Review History				
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