



Covid 19 Restrictions and Application for Approval to teach within a Catholic School

February 2021

Since the closure of Curial offices in March 2020 due to the Covid pandemic each Dioceses has adapted their administration process for Approval, with most allowing on-line applications via email to the Approval officer. This has been effective and SCES has not been made aware of any challenges being faced by Dioceses, candidates or Local Authorities in the appointing of teachers for Catholic schools in the past year due to the changes in processing Approval applications.

However, from February to June each year there is an increase in the number of applications for Approval to teach within Catholic schools. This is due to the annual process for allocating Newly Qualified Teacher within Local Authorities and the employment cycle within schools, which often sees recruitment starting in early Spring for posts that will begin from the August session. We are anticipating this usual increase and any challenges that may occur due to the current health restrictions.

We are aware that, due to the months of Church buildings being closed over the past year, and the continuation of the dispensation from attending Sunday Mass, candidates may not have the same relationship with their parish as they would have in a 'normal' year. We would therefore suggest that the following information is shared with applicants and parishes, to assist them, in the approval process.

Candidates:

The same legal requirements are still in place in order to gain Approval and appointment to any post within a Catholic school. i.e. as the applicant you must provide (on Form A) a statement to demonstrate how your personal "religious belief and character" will enable you to undertake the duties of the particular post AND you must provide a reference (Form B) from a professional person who can also testify to your personal "religious belief and character" (if you are Catholic the reference should be completed by your parish priest.)

Applicants should refer to the SCES website and access the step-by-step guidance and download the relevant documents. <https://sces.org.uk/church-approval/>

Applicants should contact their referee/parish priest as early as possible within the job application process, and where necessary make an appointment to meet (virtually if required) to discuss the application.

Parishes:

Priests should refer to the "Advice to clergy on providing reference for approval" document, when approached and asked for a reference.

If the priest does not have sufficient knowledge of an applicant who resides within his parish to write a reference, they should feel confident in saying to an applicant they are unable to give a reference "at this time". It is advisable to then arrange one or more phone conversations/video calls, and use this time to ask any necessary, relevant questions that will allow them to write a reference.

Diocesan offices:

When processing Approval applications for posts that impact on the teaching of Religious Education, Diocesan offices should continue to refer to the 'Instrument for Approval' and follow the usual process for supporting applicants.

75 Craigpark, Glasgow G31 2HD t: 0141 556 4727 f: 0141 551 8467 e:mail@sces.uk.com w:www.sces.uk.com

SCES is an agency of the Bishops' of Scotland (also known as the Catholic Endowment Trust Charity No. SCO 16650)