



## OMF-Canada Frequently Asked Questions

### What is OMF's purpose and how do you fulfill it?

We exist to glorify God by urgently evangelizing East Asia's peoples together. In order to accomplish this, we serve in a variety of ministries. Some of us are church-planting evangelists, some work with students in universities, or use their training and education to serve in areas closed to traditional work. Others support the work through avenues such as TCK (Third Culture Kid) care or administration. We also partner with other organizations that share our vision for the people of East Asia.

### What are the qualifications to go to Asia with OMF?

- 18 years of age for short-term workers. Age 20 and over preferred for longer term members.
- Evidence of an active, maturing relationship with Christ.
- Good physical and emotional health.
- Ability to build relationships with people.
- Experience in ministry.
- Prayer and financial support.
- A supportive sending church.
- Sense of God's direction in ministry (a place, people group, and/or mission agency.)
- There may also be specific requirements surrounding theological and professional training and experience depending on the ministry role.

### What makes OMF distinctive?

OMF is both International and Interdenominational in membership. We are a diverse organization: 1,200 of us from 30 nationalities spanning three adult generations and we come from a variety of different denominations and backgrounds. We regard our diversity in ministry as a marvelous, God-given and essential means to fulfilling God's mandate through us.

### How does OMF fund its missionaries?

For over 140 years we have seen God provide for us during wars and recessions, as well as in times of abundance. Each person is required to raise financial support in dependence upon God. While we avoid direct soliciting for funds, we seek to be honest and clear communicators as we share the vision for East Asia with our churches, family and friends. As God brings those that are burdened for this ministry to us, we share openly with them about our financial needs upon their request. We recognize that this is not the only method of raising support and do not look down on other individuals or organizations that raise support by soliciting directly.

### What are some of the ways I can go with OMF?

**Serve Asia** - 3 weeks normal minimum to 11 months maximum. We do recommend, however for those going longer than 6 months to seriously consider going for a least a year as an Associate for the most benefit to you and the field ministry.

**Associates** - 1 to 3 years

**Members** - More than 3 years

**Partners** - Find their own employment and partner with OMF ministry on a voluntary basis.

### What is the difference between an Associate and a Member, besides length of service?

Associates have a slightly less extensive application process, raise less support yet still participate in OMF's International Finance System. Many associates are required to go to OMF headquarters in Singapore for Orientation Course as Members are. This varies from country to country. Both Associates and Members are considered field missionaries and are an important part of OMF's ministry in East Asia.

**Does OMF provide medical care, insurance, etc for their missionaries?**

The basic care is provided by the Canadian provincial medical insurance. Medical care and insurance on the field are provided through each missionary's total support figure which are the donations provided for that missionary to serve. Associates are provided for only while they are on the field. OMF also has a team of Medical Advisors both in Canada and in the field who give advice and input on medical issues.

**What kind of training does OMF offer?**

OMF requires that every candidate come to a 1 week Candidate Course prior to acceptance. OMF offers (required for Members) a 3 week Orientation Course in Singapore, which provides not only orientation to OMF as an organization but cross-cultural and leadership training as well. We also provide training/seminars for our field missionaries while they are on the field.

**How do I begin the application process with OMF?**

Please begin by talking with an OMF representative and filling out an Initial First Steps form which can be found on our website ([www.omf.ca](http://www.omf.ca)) or sent to you via e-mail upon request.

**If I apply to go with OMF, how long will it take me to get to Asia?**

Most people are able to leave for Asia 12 to 18 months after they have attended Candidate Course and been accepted to go. The application process followed by raising your prayer and financial team can be a lengthy and time-consuming process, so we suggest you start applying about six months before you expect to attend Candidate Course, although you may start as early as you like.

**I have school debt; can I still serve with OMF as a Member or Associate?**

To be good stewards, we usually encourage people to pay their debt prior to serving with OMF. This includes all credit card debt, car payments, lines of credit and mortgages. In some special situations you may be able to pay or defer your educational debt while serving.

**How much does it cost to go to East Asia with OMF as an Associate or Member?**

It is difficult to state what the financial needs will be as it varies so much depending on the location, ministry role and family situation. A Total Support Figure is developed during the application process for each individual or family that includes basic living expenses, housing, ministry expenses, as well as fees for services such as cheque receipting, paying taxes, paperwork, prayer letters, training, mobilization, etc.

**Does OMF have medical opportunities?**

Yes, we have medical opportunities in a number of different countries. Most of our OMF doctors are working in non-hospital settings, using their medical skills primarily to reach unreached people groups. Some work in clinics and orphanages while others teach in medical universities, influencing medical students. Most medical mission opportunities in East Asia today involve non-hospital settings such as these and at present we are not able to offer placements to those looking for a hospital type setting.

**Does OMF have opportunities to work with AIDS projects?**

Right now we have AIDS projects in certain countries which we can discuss with you during your application process. However, in most of the countries we work in, we do a lot of work in community and health development. If you are interested in joining one of those teams and want to work directly with AIDS patients, the teams would greatly welcome your ministry.

**Can I use my engineering skills as a missionary?**

Yes, we have various openings from time to time that require engineering skills. Some involve academic work, usually at a university level and sometimes in post-doctorate research. These are usually in Creative Access Nation's and require both professional experience and language skills to hold the position. Support ministry roles, such as building new facilities or providing computer technical support are also needed. In very unique situations, we can place engineers in development projects within their area of specialty study.

**Does OMF have a need for business entrepreneurs?**

Yes, we have a need for business entrepreneurs especially in countries which are closed to traditional missionary work.

**What kinds of degrees are more useful for getting into closed countries?**

For the worker who wishes to minister in a creative access nation, it is usually beneficial to have a secular degree (i.e., business, engineering, medical, educational, technical, administrative, musical, etc.), as opposed to a theological degree. This should be at the Master's or PhD level.

**Does OMF have a retirement plan?**

Yes, OMF has a retirement plan and is committed to facilitating retirement accounts for all its members. Each person, with the help of good counsel which OMF makes available, is responsible to put away a portion of their support money monthly into a retirement fund which can be withdrawn upon at retirement age.

**Can I go with OMF if I am not a citizen of the sending country (i.e. Canada)?**

A person only needs to be a Permanent Resident although we encourage them to try to get their citizenship. As a Serve Asia worker (short term) you can go without being a citizen of the sending country. As an Associate or Long Term Member you can go if you are a Permanent Resident or are a Citizen.

**Do I need TEFL/TESOL to teach English in East Asia?**

Many English teaching positions in East Asia only require a bachelor's degree in order to teach, while other positions may require more training and experience, such as a TEFL/TESOL certificate. It will depend on the specific teaching position you are applying for.

**What TEFL/TESOL programs do you recommend?**

There are many TEFL/TESOL programs available and we are willing to assist individuals in finding a suitable one.

**I am divorced; can I still serve with OMF as a Member or Associate?**

OMF affirms its adherence to the Biblical standards of the sanctity of marriage and the Biblical principles governing divorce. We also work with cultural sensitivity to the strong views on divorce in both Western and Asian churches. In some cases, applicants who are divorced are able to serve with OMF. All cases are considered individually. Clear evidence of a stable Christian life, in family and service, over a considerable period (at least 5 years from the finalization of divorce) would be required before an applicant would be considered for membership.

**What is OMF's approach to member care?**

From early in the application process we work to understand each person's personality, strengths and experiences, as well as issues that may need to be addressed to insure his or her long-term growth as a person in Christ and effectiveness in cross-cultural ministry. On the field we have member-care personnel that provide resources, training, and counseling as needed and we rely on each other as a fellowship for mutual support. Vacations are not only encouraged but required on the field. When we go on home assignment we have significant time for personal renewal and refreshment, and also attend a week-long conference designed to address personal and family issues as well as equipping us for home assignment ministry.

**Does OMF work in teams?**

Yes, we work in teams. We believe in working together to reach East Asia's people and we believe that we need each other in order to do so. While some of our teams are close-knit, others are more loosely-defined, depending on the ministry situation and political climate of the area. Most importantly, we would never think of sending a new worker into an area where there was not already an existing team.

**What is OMF's relationship to the sending church?**

Missions is the responsibility of the local church and OMF is committed to serving and equipping the local church to help it fulfill its God-given mission. Members are not sent without the support/endorsement of their local church.

**What is OMF's view on Women in Leadership?**

See the "Women in Leadership in OMF" document.

**What is OMF's view on the existence and practice of the Charismatic gifts?**

See the "Charismatic Statement" document.

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