

## THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA CONTINUING EDUCATION REGULATIONS

### **A. The Principle of Study Leave**

The principle of study leave is approved for all professional church workers (A&P 1978, p.340, 32; A&P 1980, p.349-52, 60).

Fees and leave for study at a recognized college or other approved institution of learning, for a period of not less than two weeks per year, are part of the structure of stipend and allowances for pastoral ministers, members of the Order of Diaconal Ministers, and lay missionaries (A&P 1969, p.391, 94; A&P 1977, p.333, 41, 75).

### **B. Amount of Allowance**

The current minimum continuing education allowance is \$600 per year (A&P 2001, p. 398, 41).

The continuing education allowance may be accumulated for up to five years (BF A-29, terms 1 & 2).

Study leave funding should not be reported as part of stipend (A&P 2007, p. 253).

### **C. Accumulation of Study Leave**

The time allotted for continuing education is two weeks annually. This may be accumulated for up to five years (BF A-29, terms 1 & 2).

Professional church leaders are urged to use accumulated study leave at least every five years (A&P 1979, p.366, 39).

### **D. Use of Allowance To Buy Books**

Congregations are permitted to pay up to half of the cost of books or other similar resources for self-directed study up to a limit of 50% of the annual continuing education allowance (A&P 1987, p.361).

### **E. Self-Directed Study**

If an individual wishes to take a study leave for self-directed study, the presbytery should set its own standards, including such things as: (a) a written proposal outlining the purpose of the study, the resources to be used and the plan of action; (b) a qualified supervisor who endorses the written proposal; (c) a written report summarizing what was learned (A&P 1980, p. 352).

### **F. Continuing Education in the First Year of Ministry**

The principle is established that professional church workers are eligible for study leave during their first year of ministry after ordination, induction, or designation (A&P 1999, p. 339, 22).

### **G. Content of Continuing Education (A&P 1980, p. 349-352)**

There are six components for a rounded approach to continuing education for professional church leaders in the Presbyterian Church in Canada

1. *Biblical/Doctrinal/Historical Theology*: growth in the knowledge and communication of the Christian faith and our Presbyterian heritage  
Example: updating and supplementing biblical and theological studies.
2. *Pastoral Theology*: growth in dealing with issues that confront a professional church leader in working with people  
Examples: human relationships, sexuality, marriage, communication, dealing with children, handling conflict, role identity, middle age, retirement, sickness, dying and bereavement
3. *Skills for Ministry*: growth in leadership and functioning in ministry  
Examples: preaching, teaching, counseling, visiting, studying, leading worship, leadership, administration, time management, dealing with change, planning, working in team ministry

4. *Issues in Church and Society*: growth in awareness about the context of ministry and the concerns for ministry in today's world, and growth in ability to reflect theologically on these issues  
Examples: A multi-cultural society with differences in language, religion, way of life and values, and located in urban, suburban, rural, inner-city, and frontier areas, faces issues of abortion, prison reform, human rights, racism, world hunger, over-population, peace, nuclear power, energy, employment, inflation and conservation.
5. *Personal and Spiritual Growth*: growth in personal and spiritual maturity  
Examples: prayer, spiritual discipline, devotional exercises and literature, interpersonal relationships
6. *Career Assessment and Development*: growth in planning for and dealing with the changes within life and career  
Examples: programs designed for different ages and stages of ministry such as *Take Care, Starting Well: First Years of Ministry* and *Making the Most of Retirement*; Intentional Interim Ministry; ministry assessment and development workshops.

A learning opportunity that fits into any of these six categories may qualify for study leave provided it has the potential to enhance an individual's ministry as seen both by the individual and the presbytery.

Individuals should use this list to evaluate the scope of their plans for continuing education. Presbyteries should use it to ensure that over a period of time individuals are not giving undue emphasis to one component to the detriment of their growth in other areas.

#### **H. Format of Continuing Education (A&P 1980, p. 349-352)**

Continuing education takes a variety of forms ranging from self-directed study carried out with or without supervision or a course for one day a week spread over an extended period, to studying full-time for one or two weeks of a year.

#### **I. Professional Church Leader's Responsibilities (A&P 1980, p. 349-352)**

1. Identify priority areas of growth
2. Search out courses and choose the one(s) that have the potential for producing growth in a priority area
3. Test out plans with trusted colleagues and/or lay people
4. Seek session's approval of the time allotment for continuing education. (As a matter of courtesy the session should be informed about the continuing education that is being planned).
5. Seek presbytery's approval of the proposed continuing education

#### **J. Presbytery's Responsibilities (A&P 1973, p. 424, 31).**

Each presbytery must receive application for approval of study leaves for continuing education of eligible ministers within its jurisdiction, such applications to include the type of study leave to be taken

Presbyteries should strengthen their role in continuing education and encourage continuing education among the professional church leaders within their bounds in the following suggested ways:

1. Ensure that each professional church leader plans carefully for his/her continuing education by (a) holding workshops to help individuals choose studies best suited to them; (b) choosing individuals to act as continuing education consultants to professional church leaders within the presbytery.
2. Discuss with each professional church leader's continuing education with him or her and the congregation's support with the session during presbytery visitations.
3. Consider the quality of the course and the appropriateness of the study for an individual's growth before giving approval for study leave.
4. Request annual reports on self-directed study and on courses taken and provide opportunity for these reports to be shared with others.
5. Require professional church leaders to be accountable to the presbytery for their continuing education. Reasons should be given to the presbytery if no courses are taken.
6. Devote a stated hour annually to continuing education.
7. Develop a library of shared resources of magazines, tapes, books.

8. Organize retreats or day events which have a continuing education focus (A&P 1979, p.366, 39).

**K. Congregational Responsibilities**

Congregations are responsible for the cost of pulpit supply (if needed) while the professional church worker is on study leave plus the continuing education allowance. The current annual minimums are two weeks leave and \$600 for expenses.

Congregations are advised to establish a separate continuing education reserve fund into which these amounts are deposited annually and allowed to accumulate until the five-year maximum is reached.

**L. Use of Continuing Education Allowance Before Leaving a Position** (A&P 1990, p.432-33, 57)

Under normal circumstances, it is not advisable for a professional church worker to use accumulated entitlement of time and cash allowance for study leave purposes when he/she knows that there are firm plans to leave the pastoral charge.

Nevertheless, in particular circumstances, there may be a negotiated understanding between the professional church worker, the congregation, and presbytery whereby the full accumulated entitlement might be used for continuing education before the official termination with the sending congregation.

**M. Portability of Continuing Education** (A&P 1990, p.432-33, 57)

The professional church worker is allowed to retain entitlement for up to 50% of any accumulated, unused continuing education money allowance when he/she leaves a congregation or place of employment, if requested for a specific program and approved at the time a call is accepted, or at resignation, termination, or retirement.

(a) During the Transition Period:

If the program of study occurs before the person is inducted or installed in the new position, the money will be transferred from the session to the presbytery where the individual will be residing at that time, allowing the person to draw on those funds.

(b) After Entering a New Position:

If the program occurs after the professional church worker begins a new position, time leave will have to be negotiated with the new congregation or employer. The continuing education money will be transferred directly from the session to the session, or to the presbytery of the bounds if the professional church worker is in a non-congregational setting.

The receiving congregation or employer will continue to set aside the annual continuing education allowance until the five-year maximum is reached.

**N. Aid-Receiving Congregations**

Aid-receiving congregations should indicate this reserve fund clearly in their budgets so that it does not affect their grants (A&P 1977, p.333, 41, 75).

A pastoral charge may make a study leave grant (and pay the supply costs involved) up to the minimum required by the General Assembly, without prejudice to the deficit grant in effect (A&P 1977, p.366, 54).

**O. Inter-Mission**

This is an opportunity to take what would commonly be referred to as a sabbatical. Some of the terms are as follows: Inter-mission is a full-time experience and is for ten weeks. There is to be a five-year period of employment in the denomination before an inter-mission may be granted. A proposal must be submitted to session and presbytery that outlines the ten-week time period and accounts for the care of the individual's current ministry context. Full stipend and benefits will be maintained during the inter-mission. Additional information can be found (A&P 1992, p.383-384).