

**Frequently Asked Questions:**

**Ordained Local Ministry**

**Church of Scotland Ministries Council**

**Frequently Asked Questions: Ordained Local Ministry (post-Ordination)**

NB: conditions also apply to Auxiliary Ministers.

*What is the time commitment for an OLM?*

The rule of thumb is 10 hours plus a Sunday, however in some weeks there may be more time involved and other weeks less. This does not include travel to and from the church. It is also not envisaged that you would be working every Sunday in the month. These hours would include time for preparation, but if, for example, you were taking a whole service one Sunday, preparation would not be seen as the sum of your commitment in that week. The hours you are expected to work should be clearly outlined in your agreement with Presbytery.

However, while you are studying (towards a Diploma), an allowance against your agreed hours is encouraged and should be agreed in consultation with the Presbytery, supervising minister and Kirk Session.

*What about Continuing Ministerial Development?*

Ministries Council provides presbyteries with a template and guidance notes to undertake the annual ministerial review of OLMs. Review provides a framework for the regular support and development of OLM ministry.

The review process assists the identification of ongoing learning needs. This may lead to an application to Ministries Council for payment of academic fees or for a resource grant.

In relation to academic study, the Ministries Council will pay for relevant study one level above that which the OLM achieved at Ordination, up until degree level. For example, if an OLM had achieved a Certificate at Ordination, then they could claim payment of academic fees towards achieving a Diploma. Each application is considered for approval by the Training Task Group within Ministries. This approval should be received prior to making any financial commitment to further study.

In relation to the resource grant, this can be used for a wide range of learning, e.g. conference attendance, spiritual accompaniment, and physical resources such as books and hardware. The resource grant is currently set at £275 per annum, and is non-accumulating.

Outwith the review process, it is possible for an OLM to apply for a grant. An application must be supported by presbytery, with evidence of its relevance to the OLM’s ministerial development. For further information and submission of applications, please contact Ministries Council at [olmsinservice@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:olmsinservice@churchofscotland.org.uk)

Presbytery may also be able to offer OLMs other resources and learning opportunities for ministerial development.

*Can I receive payment for what I do?*

The Act governing Ordained Local Ministry states that it is a non-stipendiary ministry; the offer to serve the Church is without any expectation of financial remuneration. As a number of OLMs have previously been Readers and paid as locums, the Council has agreed that the first 10 hours plus a Sunday of any contracted work done must be unpaid. Commitments beyond the 10 hours plus a Sunday can be remunerated. So, for example, you could receive a pulpit supply fee for taking a service (*not* normally at the church to which you are attached) on a Sunday when you are not contracted to be at your attachment, or, if you are providing locum cover over two days plus a Sunday, you could be paid for hours over and above the 10 plus a Sunday.

Please note, if you are currently employed as Ministries Development Staff (MDS), this is a separate role and cannot be included in your 10 hours plus a Sunday.

*How do I become Ordained?*

You can proceed to ordination after a successful final review, having completed all training and on receipt of a sustaining letter (which serves the purpose of the Exit Certificate). However, unlike being set apart as a Reader, you must be ordained *into* a post. As an OLM you are offering your services on a voluntary basis to the Presbytery and therefore the Presbytery decides where, when and to what you will be ordained. This can be a role in a specific charge, or within Presbytery, but is for Presbytery to decide. Before you are ordained, but after your final review, you have the status of “graduate candidate” and are free to, for example, offer your services for pulpit supply. Any post is, as already stated, non-stipendiary (10 hours plus some Sunday commitment).  You must complete these non-stipendiary hours before any paid hours are worked.  For example, if a Presbytery approves locum work, then the first 10 hours of this is non-stipendiary. The Agreement between the individual and the Presbytery is to provide special support as required by Presbytery e.g., in vacancies, illness etc. You cannot, however, be inducted to a part time post. An Ordained Local Minister cannot be a minister in a charge, whether full or part time.

You cannot be ordained into your appointment as MDS.

*Can I serve as a locum?*

Depending on how the Presbytery wishes to deploy you, you may be ordained into a presbytery-wide appointment – available across a region to offer special support as required (e.g. vacancies, illness). In such a post, you would be free to take up the offer from a Kirk Session to become a locum, subject to presbytery approval. The first 10 hours in such a post would not be paid (see above).

*What does it mean that I am supervised?*

As an OLM, your ministry is always exercised under supervision. This means that you are responsible to a single person for the conduct of your ministry. This can be either the minister in the charge, the Interim Moderator in a vacancy, or a nominated individual within Presbytery if your deployment is to a presbytery post.

*Do I have a contract?*

You are not an employee; therefore, the term contract is not appropriate. However, Presbytery should make a formal agreement with you. A standard template for an agreement is available on the website. This can be adapted to suit the local context. Presbytery, in consultation with the OLM, and Kirk Session, if applicable, will decide the terms and conditions of your agreement.

A new agreement should be constructed for every new role on which you embark.

*Can I remain an Elder in my own Kirk Session?*

A minister of Word and Sacrament is a teaching Elder; an Elder in a congregation is a ruling Elder. Once you are a minister of Word and Sacrament you are no longer a ruling Elder and therefore cannot remain as a member of a Kirk Session. However, you would be expected to associate with the Kirk Session of the charge in which you are deployed and you may, if necessary, act as Moderator. If you are currently acting as a Session Clerk you would not necessarily have to resign as there is no requirement for the Clerk to be an Elder, but you may wish to consider carefully the implications for your time commitment.

*What is my role in Presbytery?*

As a minister of Word and Sacrament, ordained to a role within Presbytery, you are a member of Presbytery with concomitant rights and responsibilities. At any point when you are not actually deployed as an OLM, or if you are moving from one Presbytery to another, you should request a Practising Certificate from your Presbytery. This entitles you to a seat in Presbytery when you are not actually in an appointment.

Presbytery will have to appoint equalising elders for each new OLM post within the bounds.

*Can I be deployed as part of the Presbytery plan?*

Yes. The Ministries Council encourages Presbyteries to think creatively about how to use OLMs within the terms of their plan.

*How do I claim travel expenses from Presbytery and what is covered? (NB. These regulations also apply to candidates, who may claim expenses from the Ministries Council)*

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| Reimbursement  Rates | The Ministries Council recommend that the travel reimbursement rate for Ordained Local Ministers should be paid at **45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles** and **25p per mile for any additional miles**.  Other travel costs (such as bus fares or ferry charges) incurred in the course of work as an OLM may also be reclaimed against receipts. |
| Inland Revenue  Rules | The mileage claimed has to be **wholly, exclusively and necessarily** in the pursuit of duties as an OLM and does not normally include travel to and from the place of work which is designated as the Church building (or the main church building in the case of a linkage).  When an OLM is deployed by Presbytery in a parish that is more than 15 miles from home, travel to the church building may be reimbursed as far as the parish bounds at the rate of 25p per mile.  Where an OLM is living in a tied property (e.g. where the spouse is a Parish Minister who is required to occupy the manse) and the designated place of work for the OLM is at a distance, the costs of travel to the place of work should be reimbursed at 25p per mile.  Travel from the designated place of work to places connected with the appointment should be reimbursed at 45p per mile.  However, please note that if travelling direct to a pastoral visit within the parish from home, before going to the church building, the total mileage can be charged at 45p. |
| Procedure | All travel reimbursements claims must be claimed through the appropriate travel claim form.  For travel expenses other than mileage there is a place on the form to reclaim these e.g. bus fares.  Receipts must be provided for all expenses other than mileage claims.  In relation to mileage claims, it is ***essential*** to keep and up-to-date Log Book, which will be inspected annually by Presbytery and may be required for inspection by HM Revenue and Customs.  DO NOT INCLUDE  EXPENSES OTHER THAN FOR TRAVEL ON THE FORM |

*What if I want to move to another Presbytery?*

Presbyteries are free to deploy OLMs or not, as they see fit, so if you are moving into another Presbytery you will need to ask if it is prepared to find a role for you.

While it is customary to be a member of the Presbytery in which you reside, this is not a requirement, and you can choose to request membership of a neighbouring Presbytery. As OLM is a local ministry, you should not offer your services outwith your own Presbytery, unless with the express permission of both your own Presbytery and the Presbytery in which you are seeking to work. In addition, it would be inappropriate for you to *seek* a position outwith your own Presbytery, although your assistance may be requested.

*What if I am encountering difficulties and need access to pastoral care?*

While in training, your first point of contact is the MSO responsible for organising your training. After ordination, the Presbytery assumes responsibility for your pastoral support.

*Where should I address any further queries?*

In training you should address your queries to the MSO responsible for your training within the Ministries Council. After deployment, any queries should be taken, in the first instance, to the Presbytery Clerk. At Ministries Council, the contact address is [olmsinservice@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:olmsinservice@churchofscotland.org.uk)