



## STUDY LEAVE

To provide Ministers with the opportunity for a period of focused study and/or training for the sake of continuing growth in knowledge/skills for the benefit of ministry and for the greater benefit of the Church.

From 1 January 1998 ministers with 5 years' service in the Church are entitled to Study Leave in accordance with the terms of the Scheme. Entitlement begins with two weeks at five years' service, four weeks at six years, and so on, increasing to a maximum entitlement of 14 weeks for those with twelve years of service in the Church.

For ministers with the full period of qualifying service who have not drawn down any entitlement, the entitlement in 2022 is capped at 7 years roll over, which is £1,925 and 14 weeks.

### **PLEASE NOTE THAT THE STUDY LEAVE ALLOWANCE IS CHANGING**

From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023, the entitlement cap will change to 5 years roll over accumulation of 10 weeks (70 days) and £1375. Ministers who are currently at the maximum amount will have their allowance re-set to the 70 day and £1375 cap on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 unless this is used in 2022 (\*Expenses must be submitted before 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022)

From January 2023 – Study Leave cannot be used in the 12 months prior to retirement.

Ministers should note that by contacting the Education and Learning team, they will at all times be given access to the best advice and guidance on what courses would be most appropriate to meet their needs.

### **1. ELIGIBILITY**

Parish Ministers, holding full-time or part-time parish appointments, having 5 years' continuous qualifying service and having completed any compulsory courses as required by the Church.

### **2. LENGTH OF LEAVE**

- (a) After meeting the requirement as set out in 1 above, a minister will be eligible for two weeks' study leave per year.
- (b) Study leave may be taken annually or saved up to a maximum of 7 years and taken in blocks up to a maximum of 14 weeks.
- (c) Ministers do not need to take the maximum period of leave to be entitled to the maximum financial allowance.

### **3. CONDITIONS**

- (a) Application for expenses for accommodation and travel will be considered to enable someone to attend a conference or to visit a ministry, specialist library, person or area from which they can learn.
- (b) Submission of a course of study or an activity to provide for the needs and circumstances of the minister concerned, to be approved by the Training Task Group, or its successor.
- (c) In cases of leave being granted for more than six weeks, an appropriate element of time for recreation should be included along with a substantial opportunity for further education.
- (d) Satisfactory supervisory provision to be arranged with the appropriate General Assembly Committee for any Probationer or Student in cases of leave being granted for more than four weeks.
- (e) Final arrangements to be agreed with an appropriate Presbytery Committee at as early a date as possible prior to and at least three months in advance of the period of leave. Where a period of leave lasts for longer than four weeks, applications should be submitted at least six months in advance, or approval cannot be guaranteed.

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- (f) After approval, an Agreement setting out the terms for leave, prepared by the relevant Presbytery Committee, to be signed by the Minister, Session Clerk, Congregational Treasurer and Presbytery Clerk.
- (g) Submission of a written report to the Ascend Education and Learning team and to the Presbytery within 3 months of return from leave. Failure to submit a report will endanger any future applications for study leave.
- (h) Study Leave is not Sabbatical Leave and is not to be used as a means of rehabilitating ministers who require time off for other reasons.

## **4. PASTORAL COVER**

To be agreed with Kirk Session and Presbytery.

## **5. INTERIM MODERATOR**

Normally where study leave lasts for four weeks or more, an Interim Moderator shall be appointed by the Presbytery.

## **6. ADMINISTRATION OF SCHEME**

Each Presbytery will be responsible for appointing an appropriate committee to administer the Scheme and to liaise with the Ascend – Education and Learning team.

## **7. REMIT OF PRESBYTERY COMMITTEE**

- (a) To administer the Scheme within the financial limits of the Scheme.
- (b) To ensure that study leave entitlements are taken in accordance with a reasonable rota within Presbytery.
- (c) To advise on the suitability of the proposed course of study or activity.
- (d) To consult with the Kirk Session where the proposed period of leave is to extend beyond 2 weeks.
- (e) To report on the proposed arrangements for pastoral cover and pulpit supply during the minister's absence.
- (f) To approve the appointment of a locum if Presbytery deems such an appointment necessary, and to issue an extract minute naming the locum.
- (g) To ensure that the agreement is signed by the appropriate parties and forwarded as required.
- (h) To ensure that the minister's report on leave is submitted timeously to the Presbytery and the Ascend – Education and Learning team..

## **8. FINANCING OF LEAVE**

- (a) The minister shall receive stipend in full during the period of leave.
- (b) Faith Nurture Forum will meet the expenses of Pulpit Supply during the period of leave.

## **9. OTHER INFORMATION**

- (a) Entitlement to Study Leave commences on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the year of the fifth anniversary of a minister's ordination.
- (b) A risk assessment is required for overseas study or study with an increased risk E.G. walking pilgrimages.
- (c) Study Leave cannot be taken in the six months prior to Retirement.
- (d) Study Leave mirrors the General Assembly Expenses Terms and Conditions.