

**THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA  
MINISTRY AND CHURCH VOCATIONS**

**CONTINUING EDUCATION REGULATIONS**

**A The Principle of Study Leave**

That 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, be part of the structure of stipend and allowances for pastoral ministers, deaconesses [*sic*], catechists, women missionaries, and field workers. It is understood that by mutual arrangement this study leave may be accumulative but that all concerned be advised to take advantage of this policy at least every third year. (A&P 1969 p.391, 94)

That the principle of sabbatical leaves or study leaves be approved for all professional church workers according to existing regulations. (A&P 1978 p.340, 32)

**B Inclusion in the Call/Appointment**

That the rule of the 1969 General Assembly be implemented so that included in the call and/or appointment of a professional church worker will be provision of two weeks annually for continuing education, with Sunday pulpit supply for pastors, plus a minimum of \$100.00 annually toward expenses. (A&P 1971 p.464, 84)

**C The use of Continuing Education at the beginning of a person's ministry**

That the principle be 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)

**D Amount of Allowance**

... and that this figure [Continuing Education Allowance] be reviewed annually, (A&P 1982 p.390, 62)  
... increase from \$300 to \$400, effective Jan.1, 1987 (A&P 1986 p. 388, 28)  
... increase from \$400 to \$500, effective Jan.1, 1992 (A&P 1991 p. 343, 55)  
...increase in minimum continuing education allowance from \$500 to \$600, effective Jan. 1, 2002 (A&P 2001, p. 398, 41)

**E Use of Allowance to Buy Books**

That congregations be 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)

**F 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)

**G Accumulation of Study Leave**

1. In the case of pastoral ministries, the current minimum of two weeks' annual study leave may be accumulated for five years [and that this be non-transferable]. *A new regulation passed in 1990 replaces this clause. See Portability section I below.*
2. That congregations be advised to establish a separate continuing education reserve fund into which the cost of two weeks' supply plus a minimum of \$200.00 expenses be deposited annually.
3. That the principles outlined in the first two recommendations above shall apply to deaconesses [*sic*] employed by congregations. (A&P 1977 p.333, 41, 75)

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

**H Use of Continuing Education Allowance Before Leaving a Position**

1. That, 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 parish.
2. 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. (A&P 1990 p.433)

## **I Portability of Continuing Education**

3. That the professional church worker be 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 programme and approved at the time a call is accepted, or at resignation, termination, or retirement.

(a) During the Transition Period:

If the programme 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 programme 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 session to session, or the presbytery of the bounds if the professional church worker is in a non-congregational setting.

4. That the receiving congregation or employer will continue to set aside the annual continuing education allowance until the five-year maximum is reached. (*A policy statement introduces these procedures outlined in Sections G & H above.* A&P 1990 p.432, 433)

## **J Presbytery's Oversight**

That each presbytery must receive application for approval of study leaves for continuing education of eligible ministers within its jurisdiction, and containing within its application the type of study leave to be taken. (A&P 1973 p. 424, 31)

That presbyteries strengthen their role in continuing education and encourage cont. ed. 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 cont. ed. by (a) holding workshops to help individuals choose studies best suited to them; (b) choosing individual(s) to act as cont. ed. consultant(s) to professional church leaders within the presbytery.
2. Discuss the minister's or deaconess's continuing education with them 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)

See also the guidelines for continuing education (A&P 1980 p.349-52, 60)

## **K Aid Receiving Congregations**

That 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)

That 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)