



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

Extended Ministerial Leave

Permission for Study Leave

Normally study leave will not be taken before ten years in ministry or less than ten years since any previous study leave. Study leave is normally 6-12 weeks.

Permission for study leave may be granted by the Diocesan Bishop on a discretionary basis. The possibility of study leave will usually originate from the Clergy Development Scheme.

Therefore should clergy wish to undertake study leave outside of the Development Scheme process they should in the first instance contact the Bishop for permission to go ahead and develop a proposal following these guidelines. Without such permission a lot of work may be unnecessarily wasted.

What is Study Leave?

There are different models and definitions of sabbatical or study leave. The biblical idea of 'Sabbath' from Genesis 1, the Jubilee, and Ecclesiastes etc encompasses the following elements:

- To cease – from the need to produce within the daily task and role
- To embrace – ourselves and our calling to ministry within the world in a fresh way
- To feast 0 enjoying the freedom of space to anticipate the eschatological rest that is ours

In our Diocese the emphasis we make on embracing, while recognising the need to cease from the daily round and to incorporate some element of feasting. A brief definition of study leave for us is then:

“a period of paid leave of absence from work to study or research with the purpose of renewal of the person and their ministry”.

Therefore although the study leave does involve stopping the day to day tasks of ministry (ceasing), a sabbatical is not intended to be a holiday or time off work to recover from the rigours of the job. However neither does the emphasis on embracing preclude some element of 'feasting' within the period. What is 'feasting' is different for everyone, but it can usually be worked into the period in some way and clergy should not deny themselves this opportunity, thinking that in some way they are not worthy of it.

It follows therefore that study leave as embracing should have certain characteristics:

-Freedom from the everyday tasks of work.

In order to embrace renewal we first need to cease. This can be achieved by taking the study leave away from home or simply by avoiding contact with the work environment – the latter being more difficult for people who work from home and procedures may have to be put in place.

An Overall Purpose

Because Study Leave is part of work, even if not in an everyday sense, there needs to be a clear rationale behind it. Anyone proposing to take study leave must answer the questions of premise, outcome and content (in any order – but starting with a premise usually helps!):

Why is this general subject area important to me and my calling in ministry / work? What do I intend to learn as a result of doing this? i.e. how will I be different at the end of it? (on the assumption that all learning leads to change and growth).

What specific area do I intend to focus on in order to achieve the premise and the outcome?

The **outcomes** should fall into any or all of the following categories:

Relational – ministers are human beings created in the image of God to be in relationship with God, themselves, other human beings and creation.

Strategic – ministers are placed in a particular role and context and they have a strategic calling to leadership within that.

Missionary – the church and its ministers are defined by the *Missio Dei* in that the church ceases to be the church if it is not participating in the mission of God to the whole of creation.

The **content** of the study leave is likely to be in any one or all of these categories:

Interpretation of Christian Scripture and tradition for today – study leave may encourage dialogue with the Bible and later Christian tradition whilst relating that to today's circumstances.

Formation of Church life – here the emphasis will be inward on the community which is God's people.

Engaging with the world – here the focus will be outward to the world.

-A clear process to be followed

In order to achieve the overall purpose of the study leave there need to be a number of objectives, which in turn will provide a series of stages through which the person must work in order to complete the learning task they have set themselves. This is the process or methodology of the project. Help is given with this when discussing the proposal form with the Ministry Development Adviser.

-An understanding of the resources available

However good the overall purpose and however clear the process little can be achieved if there are no resources to be had. Resources may include people and places as well as written materials, but they need to be accessible and identifiable in advance. If resources are either too few, or too numerous or too scattered, or too far away they will be of little help. You will be expected to enlist a supervisor or consultant for the area you want to study.

-Some evaluation of what has been learned

Simply gathering information, though useful, is not an end in itself. The information must be assessed, and reflected upon in order to be fed back into the person's daily work.

-Some tangible material which can be shared with other people

Although the study leave may have been undertaken primarily with one person's needs in view it is important that something can be shared with other people in the same or similar line of work, thereby adding to the stock of professional knowledge or insight. The most common form of such material is a written report, though other forms and media can be used. Some element of 'feasting' may be present here – in the Bible Sabbath is always a community event. The outcomes could be shared also with the Parish / deanery or workplace in some appropriate way.

Thinking about study leave

- If you wish to take study leave, you need to start planning things well in advance – at least twelve months before the date on which you intend to begin is good. One of the most obvious considerations is to think about what will happen to the jobs you normally do. Which jobs might be done by other ministers in or outside of the parish? Which can be

handled by lay people or left to run themselves? Which will need to be suspended or left in abeyance? Responsibility for covering regular Sunday services and rites of passage like weddings and funerals will be a prime consideration and needs to be dealt with early on.

- Technically, you may not need to have your congregations' permission to go on study leave, but it would be wise to enlist their understanding and co-operation, particularly about why you are doing it and the arrangements being made in your absence. It may be helpful to mark your 'leaving' in some ritual way as well as your return, particularly if you are staying close by.

- You may not have a particular area which you wish to examine for your study leave, or there may be several possible areas. It is also possible to split the time into two blocks which may focus on different aspects, if this is more convenient and/or appropriate. It would be helpful to talk about this with me, not least because there may be concerns which the diocese would like to have someone working on which may be of interest to you. Please feel free to get in touch as early in the process as you wish.

- It is important to think about where you will spend your study leave, which in turn will be dependent upon what you plan to study. Working from home can be difficult and you may need to think how you will handle occasional callers or other unplanned interruptions. Because it is intended to be part of your work, it may equally not be advisable to try to combine study with a holiday; although extending your study leave with an annual holiday which is separate from it can sometimes be helpful at the beginning or end.

- As noted above, it is important to be clear well in advance not only where resources like people, institution, libraries and so on are located, but that you can have access to them. It is most inadvisable to assume that you can simply turn up at the front door and ask to be admitted, or that even in publicly accessible places like libraries it will be possible to locate material for you without prior notice.

- Always allow plenty of time for reflection (or, sometimes, pursuing unforeseen leads and ideas) and for writing up. The diocese asks that you produce a written report on your sabbatical project of up to 5,000 words (if this is not part of a study programme you are following for the leave), a copy of which can be retained for resource use. It is usually very difficult to find the time to write up a project after you return to work and by the time you find an opportunity to do so you may have lost the thread of your thinking and have to spend a lot of time picking it up again.

- Precisely because study leave is not a holiday, you need to think carefully about whether you intend to return to your everyday duties immediately after completing. It might be advisable to take at least a few days holiday afterwards, and probably to avoid starting back on a Sunday.

Diocesan Allowances

Study leave ought to be for a period of not less than six weeks and not more than twelve weeks away from normal duties. Stipend will continue as normal. Financial assistance of up to £500 can be offered, subject to a clear estimate of costs being submitted in advance, though applicants are encouraged to apply to other fund bodies as well. A list of these is attached at the end of this document.

There is a standard proposal form for study leave which is attached to this document. I would expect to discuss proposals with all applicants before the details are finalised. Please contact me at an early stage in your planning and I will be pleased to help in any way I can.

Linda Church, Director of Ministry



Diocese of Ely – Study Leave Application

Please arrange for this form to be signed by the Area Dean for approval before sending it with your proposal to the Ministry Director

Name of Applicant:.....

APPROVALS

(Please confirm the aspects below are satisfactory by ticking the box)

Area Dean

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Parish Cover Arrangement | |
| Timing | |

Comments:

Signature:

Ministry Director:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Content | |
| Supervision Arrangements | |
| Reading List | |
| Spiritual Refreshment | |
| Financial Arrangements | |
| Amount Approved | |

Comments:

Signature:

Archdeacon

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Diocesan Responsibilities Covered | |
| Appropriate Timing | |

Comments:

Signature:

Bishop:

Approval Date:

Signature:

Study Leave: Proposal and Request for Financial Assistance

If you are planning study leave, you are strongly advised to discuss your proposals with the Ministry Director before completing this form.

It would help planning if funding applications for study leave commencing between 1st April and 30th September could be received 31st December in the preceding year; and by the preceding 30th June for study leave commencing between 1st October and 31st March.

When completed please forward via the Area Dean for approval to the Ministry Director at Diocesan Offices, Bishop Woodford House, Ely, CB7 4DX.

1. Personal Information

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Present Post:

How long have you been in this post?

Have you undertaken study leave before, either in this diocese or elsewhere?

YES / NO

If yes, please indicate:

In which Year

Duration

Diocese

Briefly outline the project undertaken in your last study leave, your findings and its connection, if any, with your present application.

2. Study Leave Proposal – Purpose and objectives

In the space below, outline what you intend to study on your study leave.

Why is this general subject area important to you / your ministry?

What learning outcomes do you expect as a result of doing this study?

It may help to try and distil the subject area into one key question that you would like to try and answer.

The **outcomes** should fall into any or all of the following categories – state where your focus will be:

Relational – ministers are human beings created in the image of God to be in relationship with God, themselves, other human beings and creation.

Strategic – ministers are placed in a particular role and context and they have a strategic calling to leadership within that.

Missionary – the church and its ministers are defined by the *Missio Dei* in that the church ceases to be the church if it is not participating in the mission of God to the whole of creation.

The **Content** of the study leave is likely to be in any one or all of the following categories:

Again, state where the content of your study will be mainly

Interpretation of Christian Scripture and tradition for today – study leave may encourage dialogue with the Bible and later Christian tradition whilst relating that to today's circumstances.

Formation of Church Life – here the emphasis will be inward on the community which is God's people.

Engaging with the world – here the focus will be outward to the world.

Date you intend to begin your study leave:

Do you wish to split the study leave into two blocks? If so from when to when?

First:

Second:

Date you intend to finish (including writing-up?):

Where do you intend to be during this time?

If you are remaining at home how will you avoid interruptions?

3. The Learning Process

Briefly outline the stages through which you propose to work in order to fulfil the overall objectives you have set yourself in undertaking this study leave. It would help if there were a balance of both action and reflection and if possible some indication of the methodology you propose to use.

How will you 'leave' your work / congregation and will you mark this in some ritual way? How will you re-join on your return? How will you share what you have learnt both locally and in the Diocese?

4. Arrangements for everyday duties in your absence

What arrangements have you made for covering your regular work?

Sunday services:

Weekday Services and Rites of Passage:

Regular pastoral duties (including part-time chaplaincies):

Pastoral emergencies

Meetings:

Anything else?:

5. Resources

Briefly outline the resources (books, journals, archives, events, people and others) you intend to use.

Are you sure that you know where they are and that you can have access to them?

Have you asked someone to act as supervisor / consultant for this project? If so, please give their name, address and area of expertise.

6. Finance

List the principal financial commitments involved in undertaking this study leave project, including travel, accommodation, resource costs.

Total: £

What applications have you made to other grant-making bodies for funds, and with what results to date? (See list of trusts attached to this document and include pending claims):

Total: £

How much financial assistance are you asking the diocese to make towards this project?
How soon do you need it?

Total: £

7. Evaluation of your project

The diocese asks that you produce a written report on your study leave project of up to 5,000 words, a copy of which can be retained for resource use. Completion of this application is understood to signify acceptance of this condition.

Some kinds of project, particularly those which are connected to higher degrees or research for specific groups, may be intended to produce a written report of considerably more than this length.

Please indicate below the form which your evaluation / writing up is to take and when you expect to complete it.

I expect to have completed my writing up by:

8 Anything else?

Please note down below anything else about your study leave project which you think might be important to put on record.

Signature of applicant:

Date:

Some help:

Planning a project like this can be daunting, particularly if you haven't done anything like it before. Some of these books might be helpful and are available.....

Booth, Wayne C et al The Craft of Research London : Univ of Chicago Press 1995

Bullock, A Richard and Brueshoff, Richard J Clergy Renewal: The Alban Guide to Sabbatical planning. Alban Institute 2000

Northedge, Andrew The Good Study Guide Open University Press 1990