

Study Leave for Clergy

(January 2014)



The Diocesan Scheme for Study Leave recognises that for those who have been in ministry for some time a serious block of time spent away from their post, and its immediate demands, can be a source of enrichment, new experiences and energy and offer a chance for different perspectives and fresh vision.

Study leave is part of the church's care for its ministers. A minister refreshed with new perspectives will also serve more effectively. Properly planned and reflected on, study leave can be of enormous benefit to ministers, their families and those they serve, as well as to the wider church.

Parishes can be helped to 'own' a minister's study leave when there is a readiness to share aims and plans and subsequent reflections on the experience.

The number of places for study leave each year is usually limited to 12, so it is vital that clergy wanting to enjoy the benefits of leave should start the application process at least 24 months in advance of the proposed study leave date.

WHO QUALIFIES?

Applicants for study leave should have

- ◆ served for seven or more years in licensed ministry since the completion of their curacy;
- ◆ been in their current post for at least 2 years;
- ◆ no plans to retire within 2 years of taking study leave;
- ◆ at least seven years since their previous study leave;
- ◆ gained the agreement of their Area Dean (Archdeacon if applicant is an Area Dean);
- ◆ identified how study leave will help meet objectives identified at their last MDR;
- ◆ parish share payments that are up to date or have a parish share repayment plan in operation at the time of Study Leave;
- ◆ agreed to disseminate the results of the study leave in an appropriate manner. This could be via contribution to a study day, a presentation to their Deanery chapter, writing a brief paper for publication, or other methods agreed prior to the final application.

Training incumbents will not normally be granted study leave unless their assistant has served at least 2 years of their curacy and that the midterm report on their curate is positive. In addition, you must provide evidence of appropriate alternative supervision for the assistant clergy during study leave. This should be discussed and agreed with the Learning Manager for PIME within Lifelong Learning.

HOW LONG IS STUDY LEAVE?

The usual (and maximum) period of leave is three months. It is also possible to add a period of holiday to the end of study leave, up to a maximum of one month. While shorter periods of leave are useful, the length of time away from day to day pressures is part of the particular value of study leave and it should not normally be less than eight weeks.

WHAT WILL I DO?

The proposed ideas may be vague at first, and it is worth giving them time to evolve. Some people have a clear task in mind from the start, but good study leave always allows space – for reflection and discovery. Initial thoughts and conversations may arise from various connections: a meeting with the Bishop, an MDR discussion, personal conviction or in response to a Lifelong Learning mailing.

The scope is wide and every study leave is different. Here are some ideas from those recently on or planning study leave:

- ◆ Placement within the chaplaincy department of University Hospital Aintree
- ◆ Celtic Spirituality
- ◆ A period of guided reading of the Gospels
- ◆ Researching the local history of a parish church to publish a historic guide for the church.

WHO DO I NEED TO INVOLVE WHEN PREPARING TO APPLY FOR STUDY LEAVE?

Clergy should talk to their Area Dean (or Archdeacon if application is from an Area Dean) as soon as possible when starting to think about study leave. It is not normally possible for more than one member of the clergy from each Deanery to be on study leave at the same time.

Parochial Clergy must discuss their plans for study leave their PCC's as early as possible. It is important to discuss both the timing and possible topic of your study with the PCC so that others can help you shape your thinking and be encouraged to see how your study will enrich ministry within the parish.

In your final application you will need to demonstrate that P.C.C. and Churchwardens have been fully informed about the final dates of leave and provided with comprehensive details of arrangements for cover.

With prayerful preparation the study leave may also be recognised as an opportunity for growth in the parish itself as others are given responsibility during the minister's absence.

WHO MAKES THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PASTORAL COVER?

The initiative and responsibility for the provision of pastoral cover rests firmly with the person taking the study leave who must consult with the Area Dean at an early stage. To address issues of cover, in a normal sized deanery, the usual pattern would see only one person on study leave at a time. Exceptions to this should be discussed with the Archdeacon and Area Dean. If there are particular difficulties the Officer for CPD should be consulted.

A written scheme of cover for worship and referral points for funerals, and other commitments should be produced and circulated to the Area Dean, the Churchwardens, and anyone else who needs to know. Where necessary appropriate redirection arrangements should be included for telephone, post, and email. A copy of the arrangements you have made should be attached to your application.

HOW WILL I FUND MY STUDY LEAVE?

Whilst on study leave stipend payments remain unchanged and in addition a Diocesan study leave grant of £600 is available to assist towards the cost of the proposed study. Applicants will also have access to any remaining Diocesan training grant. This is usually released approximately 6-8 weeks before leave is to begin, though it can be drawn down earlier to meet invoices if needed.

The applicant will usually need to find additional funds. A list of other possible sources is available from the Lifelong Learning section of the diocesan website. Applications to these often take some time and this will need to be allowed for.

WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE FOR APPLYING FOR STUDY LEAVE?

It is never too early to begin planning for study leave, but it can be too late. Given the complexity of ministry today and the time taken to properly prepare for an extended time away from the parish it is vital that planning starts early.

Applications for Study Leave are all approved in September of each year. Therefore all applications must be with Lifelong Learning by the 31st August in the year *prior* to the proposed study leave. Your planning will need to have started by the January of the year preceding your proposed study leave.

In the first instance please contact Bob Banton within the lifelong Learning Team on 0151 705 2101 or bob.banton@liverpool.anglican.org