**Guidelines for sabbaticals and study leave**

Sabbaticals and Study Leave are an important part of a creative and disciplined approach to the ministerial life. Along with other aspects of ministerial support they aim to enrich and safeguard the spiritual, emotional, and physical health of the church’s ministers. Setting aside time for rest, relaxation and renewal is a vital part of the rhythm of Christian vocation.

**1 Definition and Purpose**

· Sabbaticals are for ‘rest, renewal and re-creation without the burden of continuing parish or work commitments, so as to return refreshed to one’s ministry’ (Mind the Gap: Integrated Continuing Ministerial Education for the Church’s Ministers, 2001, p72). They may include an element of study, but they are not intended solely as study leave (which is provided for in a different way, as described below). They are not given as a holiday. If time off for rest and a complete break is needed, without the need for extra funding, this can be discussed with one’s Bishop.

Study Leave is a period set aside for a particular piece of disciplined study.

**2 Eligibility**

· Sabbaticals and study leave can be taken by all licensed clergy and licensed lay workers whether or not a financial contribution is made by the diocese. These guidelines do not apply to LLMs for the moment. Sabbaticals and study leave may be recommended or encouraged by a member of the senior staff or individuals may approach the senior staff themselves. For those who serve as chaplains in the Diocese, applications for funding will be considered where funding is not available from one’s employer.

· For sabbaticals: normally the applicant should have completed at least seven years in licensed ministry and to have been in their current post in the Diocese for five years.

· For study leave: normally the applicant should have completed seven years in licensed ministry and to have been in post in their current post in the Diocese for five years.

· Sabbaticals and study leave are not normally granted within three years of an expected retirement.

· Where a sabbatical or study leave may most appropriately fall between posts in this diocese, applicants should discuss this with a member of the senior staff.

· Subsequent requests for sabbaticals and study leave will be considered after seven years has elapsed after the previous one, and in the light of each applicant’s context and the CMD budgetary provision.

**3 Length of time**

· Sabbaticals can be awarded up to 3 months in length – up to one or two weeks annual leave can be added to the beginning and end of the sabbatical depending on whether this is practical given local circumstances.

· Study leave can be taken up to one month in length. Annual leave may be added to this period.

**4. Funding for sabbaticals and study leave**

· The Diocese will consider awarding grants of up to £600 for sabbaticals and study leave. The budget for these grants is limited and therefore any discussion would need to take this into consideration.

· Money from the CMD allowance (currently £450 over 3 years) can be added to this sum.

· Sabbaticals and study leave can be authorised without funds being available.

· Where a stipend is paid, this will continue during this period.

· Consultation with the parish/benefice at an early opportunity should be a part of the planning for a sabbatical. In particular it will be important to discuss the parish/benefice ability to cover the cost of absence of the licensed minister. It is also important to consult with the Rural Dean so that the Deanery will not be adversely affected either.

· A comprehensive list of grant-making trusts is available from the CMD office.

· Applications can include the purchase or loan of essential resources for the period. Identification of these resources would be explored in the application process.

**5 Procedure for sabbaticals and study leave**

1. Normally at least a year in advance, applicants should seek an agreement in principle from their Area Bishop/Archdeacon, who will inform the CMD Officer of the likelihood of an application.

2. Applicants should then discuss their plans with their church wardens and appropriate ministerial colleagues.

3. Applicants download and complete an application form from the diocesan website

[Sabbaticals and Study Leave — Diocese of Norwich](https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/churches/clergy/sabbaticals-and-study-leave/)

Once completed, this should be sent to the CMD Officer who will arrange to discuss detailed plans with the applicant along the lines of the application form questions.

4. The Priest will then send the completed application form to Area Bishop/Archdeacon responsible for their information and so that they may offer any additional reflection.

5. The CMD Officer and Priest will agree when any grant is to be paid.

**6 Planning**

1. An important part of the planning is to look at the purpose of the sabbatical or study leave, how it relates to the educational, vocational and pastoral aspects of the applicant’s ministerial journey. Such planning and preparation should begin within the year preceding the period of planned time away.

2. Also important is the consideration of time for spiritual renewal and refreshment.

3. In addition, the question of a supervisor, mentor, soul friend being available during the period, needs to be considered.

4. An appropriate person or persons from within the parish/benefice, should be kept informed during the planning process. It is also important that the applicant’s Rural Dean is informed throughout.

5. Consideration of a place of worship needs to be given if the applicant is in part going to be living in their normal place of residence; similarly, the protection of the time apart.

6. Detailed consideration needs to be given to the provision of cover for the applicant’s absence in the place of ministry.

**7 Feedback**

1. At the end of the period the applicant produces a reflection which need not be more than one side of A4. This will be seen by the Bishop and CMD Officer.

2. To help re-entry into existing ministry and to integrate the fruits of the sabbatical/study leave, the applicant would be asked to reflect with the CMD Officer and/or a deanery chapter/cell group.

3. Every encouragement is given to share experiences with the PCC and the Deanery and as appropriate with others in the Diocese.

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