

## Study Leave – Extended Ministerial Development Leave

A period of three months' Study Leave with a substantial diocesan grant is available to all licensed clergy, stipendiary and self-supporting, whose leave is approved by the Bishop. Study Leave may be taken on more than one occasion during ministry, but only after an intervening period of at least ten years.

If you are considering Study Leave, please contact your suffragan Bishop as soon as possible to discuss your ideas. Once you have done this, or if the idea has come from a discussion with the relevant suffragan, then please contact Amy Roche, Head of Mission and Ministry, to take things further. Please note that neither the Study Leave nor the diocesan grant is agreed until the final authorisation has been obtained from the diocesan Bishop. The procedure for obtaining this is set out in an appendix to this document.

*It is also possible to have a one-month period of leave. This provision is flexible and is sometimes taken between posts. A grant may be available. If you are interested in this possibility, do please contact the Head of Mission and Ministry for an initial discussion, before approaching the relevant suffragan Bishop.*

### Introduction

Study Leave (formerly known as a Sabbatical, and now often called Extended Ministerial Development Leave) has now become an accepted part of the Church's provision for the ongoing learning and theological reflection of those in ordained ministry.

The important task of leading God's people in their discipleship means that those who are ordained need to ensure that they avail themselves of the means to be refreshed in vision and understanding of the gospel beyond the immediate demands of local ministry. Study Leave provides an extended time away from the day-to-day context of ministry and is normally for a three-month period.

Key factors to take into consideration are that a Study Leave should be time away from the demands of day-to-day work and should be focussed on a Study Leave project: something of your own choosing. While the application form will ask how this project will enhance your ministry where you are, this does not mean that it must necessarily be obviously practical – it should rather be something that will build you up in your understanding of faith, life and ministry, and will thereby enhance your work and calling wherever that takes you. This allows for a wide range of subjects to be studied in a variety of ways.

Other ingredients which should be taken into consideration are: some time for spiritual recuperation and, if appropriate, some reintegration with the family (especially if there can be a holiday during the time of Study Leave). Re-creation is a key principle, and Study Leave should not therefore simply be a time of different – but equally hard and taxing – labour.

The key to a successful Study Leave lies in achieving the right balance of rest, travel, study and reflection. It is not normally a time to pursue another degree or to escape from the difficulties in the parish, but rather an opportunity to get away from the usual demands of ministry and find a renewal of vision and hope.

Study Leave is also a kind of pilgrimage, with a change of pace and place. Jesus was always moving towards his Father – in prayer, in teaching and in his travel. Those who travelled with him were also renewed in the journey, day by day. So you too, walking with him during an extended time of reflection and spiritual encounter can be refreshed and renewed.

It is therefore important to develop a plan, but it is also important to be open ended, allowing for surprises and the possibility of new directions. You need to be flexible and to keep a sense of expectancy.

It can be a struggle to make a Study Leave happen. It requires letting go and quite a large amount of organisation to cover your usual duties and responsibilities. It is important to bring Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councils into your thinking and planning at an early stage so as to gain their help and support. Your parish too will need to hear of your plans and your hopes for your Study Leave and when you return it is important to share with them something of the experience.

Study leave is endorsed by your suffragan Bishop, and authorised by the diocesan Bishop. Both will consider your application in the light of your present ministry and your chosen area of study.

## Criteria

The basic criteria for eligibility for Study Leave in the Diocese of Winchester are as follows:

- you have been ordained at least eleven years
- you have held an appointment in this Diocese for five years
- you are not within three years of retirement
- you have not had a period of Study Leave in the previous ten years
- you have participated regularly in the Diocesan CMD programme
- you have followed the proper diocesan application procedure

Study Leave entitles you to:

- three months leave on full stipend (this leave is *in addition* to the standard holiday allocation and the time taken for your annual retreat)
- time for an initial period of relaxation, readjustment and refreshment, and then an opportunity to explore some area of life or faith which is of real interest to you and will enrich your ministry in the future – that is the 'Study Leave project'
- a grant of up to £1,250 depending on the nature of your Study Leave project, the expected expenditure, and expected income from other grants for which you have applied

The Study Leave fund allows for up to six grants per year. You will need to make your application for a grant no less than one year ahead and sometimes as long as three years in advance, depending upon the number of people already planning their Study Leave and the grants awarded. Before beginning detailed planning, you should contact the Head of Ministry to check when the next grants are available.

## Planning

### Outline timetable

When you have read through these notes and thought about when you would like to take your leave, and what you might like to do during the three months allocated, the next steps are:

- talk over your proposal with your Suffragan Bishop (if you have not already done so) in order to inform and gain initial approval – at least 12-18 months before the proposed Study Leave.
- begin planning with the Head of Ministry to agree the next steps, to clarify the Study Leave project and to check the availability of a diocesan grant
- discuss your plans with your church officers and then share them with your PCC (you will need a formal letter of agreement from your PCC). If you have more than one PCC then please discuss this step with the Head of Ministry.
- Fill out the application form in consultation with the Head of Ministry and send it to your suffragan Bishop for endorsement. S/he will then send the form on to the diocesan Bishop, who must give final authorisation. The authorised form will then be sent to the Head of Ministry, and your place on the Study Leave list will be confirmed.
- Take your Study Leave
- Make a brief report on the Study Leave – its content and learning outcomes – to the Head of Ministry, copied to your Suffragan Bishop.

### Guidelines and suggestions for planning

#### 1. Consulting the Bishop and your Area Dean

A period of Study Leave requires the endorsement of the appropriate suffragan Bishop (as well as the approval of the diocesan Bishop). This is because the Bishops are in a position to draw together all relevant considerations. Often Study Leave arises from Ministerial Development Review (Pastoral Consultation) with your suffragan Bishop. If that is the case, then please contact the Head of Ministry directly to proceed matters. If not, then the first step is to have an informal consultation with your suffragan Bishop, who (if supportive) will then ask you to contact the Head of Ministry.

This should be done at least 12-18 months before the period of Study Leave is due to begin, in order to help you to clarify your Study Leave project and proposal, and work through the matters contained in the formal application form (available separately from the Head of Ministry). You will need to consider the various continuing education and development options that are available, either in the area or elsewhere. It is not necessary to have only one thing you want to do – a Study Leave can contain a number of different ingredients lasting different lengths of time.

Talk with others who have been on Study Leave to find out what they have done and how they have benefited. This might give you some ideas. It is not always easy to come up with the right subject - and for most of us this is the hardest part. The more specific the subject, the better. You will need to identify a subject which is concerned with the faith or the life of the Church, and is of real interest to you. This is the opportunity to explore things you have not had a chance to consider before. ('Catching up on my reading' is not normally an acceptable project!)

You will be encouraged to express your aims for the Study Leave as a series of learning outcomes, which can be a guide through the Study Leave itself and be the criteria against which you evaluate and reflect on it afterwards.

## **2. Planning with the Parish**

It is important to develop a plan in which you, your Churchwardens, the Parochial Church Council(s) and perhaps other members of the congregation mutually agree upon the goals for your Study Leave. (Formal PCC approval is required – see above.) Not everyone will be excited at the prospect that you are going away on what may seem to them like an expensive holiday! The concept of Study Leave has not been taken on board by everyone. This is why you must plan well in advance and keep others informed of the ‘whys’ and ‘how’s’.

It is important to plan to leave the parish for a substantial period which is not simply for your sake but for the parish. You should keep your Area Dean and other clergy in your Deanery fully in the picture and discuss with the Area Dean what help will be necessary from outside the parish to maintain a satisfactory level of worship and pastoral care. Again, this cover needs to be detailed on the application form. Many PCCs ask about financial implications. In general terms, the parish should normally pay visiting Registry (PTO) clergy for the taking of services while you are away, as their contribution to the Study Leave. (The extra expenses they will have to pay will be balanced by the fact that you will not be making any working expense claims during the Study Leave period.)

The parish’s experience of Study Leave will be very different from a vacancy – after all, you are going to come back. Efforts will have to be made to maintain the ministry in the parish without you. This means that you will have to trust others with certain tasks in your absence and perhaps spend time and energy in training some of them. You will be seen to be dispensable for a while (not always a comfortable feeling), though it may also be an opportunity to delegate some responsibilities and enable some lay ministries. Some parishes also fear that their clergy will return from Study Leave so enthusiastic and ready for change that they will not be able to cope.

During your Study Leave the church’s day-to-day administrative responsibilities will fall on the shoulders of others, so be sure you have prepared them well and briefed them. The Wardens and the parish secretary/administrator, LLMs and assistant clergy need to be clear about where their responsibilities lie. Much heartache can be avoided if each has received a complete list of who does what and when. Work out with the Wardens the agenda for any meetings and brief any others involved as to what action can be taken as a result of any decisions being made in a meeting. You cannot cover every problem beforehand, but you can develop adequate methods and assign people to handle such problems.

This can be a growing time both for you and your congregation(s) and present opportunities for others to use their gifts and experience. Careful planning will help you all make the most of it. It is possible for both clergy and laity to plan for *their* Study Leave. To help with this you might invite the PCC(s) to look at these questions with you.

- According to the Biblical understanding of the Sabbath, how might our parish enjoy a Sabbatical?
- What are the risks for the parish(es) during the period of Study Leave?
- What are the opportunities for growth in leadership and ministry?
- How can we (the parish(es)) best prepare for Study Leave?

You might also invite the PCC(s) to consider what they expect from you during your Study Leave by asking:

- If you were going on a Study Leave what would you expect or desire for yourself in terms of spiritual growth or a deepening of faith?
- What kinds of experience give you a sense of refreshment and renewal?
- In terms of the incumbent's present pastoral style and responsibilities what suggestions would you have to make with regard to studies during the Study Leave?

You will also need to think about how you will all share your experiences of the Study Leave on your return.

### **3. Planning with the family**

Whilst it is not normally possible to fund family participation, this participation is a very important consideration. It should be possible for the family to be involved in some way, at least with a holiday during or at the end of the period. Part of Study Leave is a break in routine, a relief from the chores. However, routine domestic things will still need to be done, and how this happens will need to be considered. For some part of your Study Leave your spouse may end up being a 'lone parent', which may not be easy. Others will resent your absence if you have not made proper provision for things to be taken care of when you are not around.

If your spouse is able to accompany you, be sure to take into account what both of you need for Study Leave, to facilitate re-creation. If you plan to spend some of the time at home, ensure that you are at home for the family and yourself and not available once again to the parish at large. In some circumstances it may be possible for grants to be made for a spouse to accompany you for part of the Study Leave. The Head of Ministry should be consulted about this.

### **4. Getting the timing right**

Timing plays a crucial role in developing a good Study Leave plan. You, your family and PCC(s) will need about a year or more to make a plan. It is a time to involve others in your thinking and on building a consensus. Decide well beforehand with all involved:

- when you will be gone
- how long you will be gone
- how you plan to use the time.

Those who are taking responsibilities in the parish during your absence will need to be clear about timing. Your family and friends will also need to prepare for times away from them. In addition you should plan to take some holiday time before and after your Study Leave, so that you can shift gear. Give yourself enough time to unwind beforehand, and don't arrive back home ready to jump onto the treadmill the next morning. Give yourself a few days to get yourself back into things.

### **5. Searching out Resources**

There is a whole range of local and national resources that can be called upon in planning your Study Leave. Some theological colleges offer periods of residence. S<sup>t</sup> Deiniol's Library, Hawarden has excellent facilities. Winchester University is willing to make its library and IT resources available for research. Some universities offer programmes which may well be of interest to you, and religious communities can often provide a supported environment. There are numerous workshops and courses taking place all the time, and one or more of these may be of real value to

you. As you prepare for your Study Leave you may find it useful to be sent a whole range of prospectuses from different institutions, as well as doing your own online research.

## **6. Organising funding**

The funding is a hurdle to be jumped rather than an obstacle which you could use as a reason for not taking your Study Leave. Your stipend will continue to be paid as usual; however, you will need some additional funding. The Diocese will make a grant of up to £1,250, against a clear and itemised budget you prepare.

Additional funding can be sought from other grant-making bodies. Possibilities can be found in different places. One essential place to look is the **Grantfinder** online database, for which the Diocese has a subscription. Please contact [grantfinder@winchester.anglican.org](mailto:grantfinder@winchester.anglican.org), or [jayne.tarry@winchester.anglican.org](mailto:jayne.tarry@winchester.anglican.org). Some colleges and universities will make grants to former students to aid their continuing studies. Otherwise, some possible sources of funding can be found in an additional document which the Head of Ministry can send to you. Please let the Head of Ministry know about any which are out of date, and which have given you a grant. Most grant-making bodies will require a clear outline of the intended study and some indication of expected outcomes and application.

## **7. Making travel plans**

An important aspect of Study Leave is going away from the immediate context of your ministry. You will need to make firm travel plans that will literally remove you from your normal routine.

Travel is really a part of making pilgrimages – and a pilgrim person is enriched by meeting new people in different places. We begin to see the World and ourselves quite differently in the context of other cultures. Travel to exotic parts is not, in itself, an integral feature of Study Leave. We do not learn through travel alone – but rather through disciplined reflection on the journey. This is an element that should be built in. The Church at work in other countries has much to offer us in terms of education, mission and ecumenism; therefore careful planning in advance can maximise this kind of experience. You will need to ensure that you have adequate insurance for the whole period of your Study Leave and for each element of travel. Annual travel insurance policies are now widely available (online, with your bank account etc.) and will make the coverage of a number of trips at home or abroad much easier, though you should check if there is a limit on the number of days away, or the geographical area or activities covered.

## **8. Planning for emergencies**

Contingency plans in case of emergency are very important. These will vary according to the particular plan you have developed for your Study Leave. But you will need to decide how you can be contacted and who can contact you. You will also need to decide the level of ‘emergency’ which would initiate contact.

## **9. Finding a community to be part of**

It is a good idea to find a community where you can participate as an individual and at a group level. A retreat/conference centre, college or several conferences in different places can provide the kind of supportive community you need on a journey. Because you are already involved in community life (i.e. in the parish or the family) you may need similar settings for Study Leave. This

may also help to prevent an element of depression setting in when you are separated from familiar supportive groups.

## **10. Using a supervisor**

The Diocese does ask you to arrange a supervisor to help you reflect theologically on the external and internal pilgrimage you are making, and to guide you in your course of study. It is better if this is a person with some expertise in the area you are intending to explore. It is more important that they have the skills to help you reflect critically on your experience and learning, and enable you to apply the insights you are gaining to your life and ministry. Your supervisor will oversee your study project and where possible you should arrange this before completing the application form.

The frequency of meeting between you and your supervisor is a matter of mutual agreement but three times is probably the minimum: at the planning stage, during the project, and upon its completion. One issue you will need to address with your supervisor, the Head of Ministry or your spiritual Head, is how the experience of Study Leave will be integrated into your continuing ministry.

## **11. Planning the benefits that you hope to receive**

Study Leave is another way of enabling us to respond to the wonder and excitement of God moving in our lives. Some real benefits may be the blessings derived from a new sense of ministry, a stronger marriage, or a greater personal devotion to God.

So ask yourself: 'What do I want to happen to me personally? How would I like the parish to benefit? What can be special for my family?' You will be encouraged to clarify your aims by establishing some Learning Outcomes which can guide you through the three months. Finally, make sure your Study Leave is tailor made for you – and that you do not devise ideal plans that in the end will bore you to death – or drive you to being a workaholic!

## **12. Reporting back**

At the end of the Study Leave you should send a short account of it and your reflections (no more than a couple of sides of A4) to the Head of Ministry with a copy to your Suffragan Bishop and your supervisor.

(You will also need to consider what kind of reporting back is appropriate to the parish and your colleagues in the deanery. In some cases Study Leave means that a new resource is available to others through you. If you feel you would like to be used in this way then you should contact your Area Dean.)

## **13. The application form**

Part of working with the Head of Ministry towards your Study Leave is to fill in the formal application form which will need to be submitted in first instance to your suffragan Bishop.

You will need to include sufficient detail in the application form in order that the Bishops can make a decision about your Study Leave. However, you should not wait until all your plans are ready before filling in the form as that may mean you will have missed the grant allocations for the time during which you are hoping to take the Study Leave.

The completed application form should be sent to your suffragan Bishop for endorsement (and copied to the Head of Ministry). It is then passed on to the diocesan Bishop for authorisation, and then comes back to the Head of Ministry for grant allocation.

#### **14. Further advice**

Advice on planning your Study Leave, completing the application form, and availability of grants can be obtained from the Head of Ministry, Amy Roche:

Email: [Amy.Roche@winchester.anglican.org](mailto:Amy.Roche@winchester.anglican.org)

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## Appendix: The Application Process

This chart outlines the process by which an application is made for Study Leave (EMDL) in the Diocese. Please refer to the full Study Leave leaflet for more detail.

