



# **Diocese of York: Lifelong Learning**

Supporting mission and ministry across the Diocese of York

## **Extended Study Leave for Clergy Office Holders (Sabbaticals)**

All clergy office holders in the diocese are eligible to apply for Extended Study Leave of 3 months every 10 years in ministry.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of Extended Study Leave (ESL) is to offer clergy office holders a sustained period away from normal duties for ministerial development, spiritual renewal and rest.

### **Eligibility**

ESL is offered every ten years and is to be of benefit to the individual, the Diocese and the wider church. ESL is aimed at those in active and healthy ministries and is not the right option for those who are recuperating from illness or recovering from a crisis. ESL will normally be for a period of three months. Prior service in a similar ministry in another diocese will normally be recognised. ESL will not usually be granted during the first two years of a new appointment or when within two years of expected retirement. It may, on occasion, be possible to grant a shorter period of study leave in order to work on a particular project. Such study leave needs to be discussed first with the Bishop and is not normally eligible for an ESL grant.

### **Procedure**

The possibility of undertaking a Sabbatical/ESL may arise from a conversation with the Bishop or Archdeacon during an MDR or begin with a conversation with the Director of Lifelong Learning.

After the initial conversation, the Director of Lifelong Learning (or other designated person) will be available to discuss the ESL with the applicant. A proposal should then be drawn up by the person seeking to take the ESL, setting out the details of their plans together with a draft budget. It is advisable to allow a period of at least 12- 18 months preparation and consultation before the proposed ESL. This will allow time to ensure adequate pastoral cover and also the identification of a supervisor or mentor if appropriate.

The applicant then needs to complete the *Stage One: Application for Extended Study Leave Form*, and submit it to the CMD Grants Panel who will oversee the whole process. The Panel will consider the application, in the light of the ESL criteria and the panel administrator will then forward the form to the Bishop for initial formal approval. Before giving approval, the Bishop will check that consultation has taken place in the Parish/Benefice, workplace (where appropriate), and Deanery and that proper

Revised August 2022

ministerial cover can be provided. Clergy are expected to ensure that their Rural Dean and PCCs are aware of the nature, purpose and intended results of ESL.

Once permission has been given by the Bishop for ESL the Panel administrator will inform the applicant who can then begin more detailed planning, including over Finance (see below).

## **Cover**

Those taking ESL are asked to consult with their Rural/Area Dean before completing Application Form 1, to ensure that the deanery is aware of the ESL proposal. It is the responsibility of the person asking for the ESL to ensure that proper cover is in place for pastoral duties and services during the time of ESL. The individual's grant may not be used for providing ministerial cover. The parish is expected to cover the expenses and any fees of visiting ministers.

## **Finance**

Clergy office holders are entitled to apply for a grant of up to £900. This is done by completing and submitting the *Stage Two: Application for Extended Study Leave Grant* Form to the CMD Grants Panel.

The proposed expenditure must relate to the purpose of the ESL and there is no guarantee that a full grant will be available. CMD grants may not normally be used to top up the ESL grant, as they serve two different purposes. All grants are subject to the prior agreement of the CMD Grants Panel and Bishop and to budget availability, which is held centrally. There are additional sources of sabbatical and study leave funding, such as the schemes offered by EIG and some of the Mission Agencies. Parishes may also be willing to offer financial support.

## **Getting the most from Extended Study Leave**

The plans for the ESL should include three elements: ministerial development, retreat and rest. Every ESL will be unique and will be shaped to the particular needs and circumstances of the minister but it is expected that these elements will be addressed in preparing the proposal. Some people find it helpful to have a mentor or supervisor to assist them in the implementation of their ESL. The Director of Lifelong Learning may be able to help with finding a suitable person.

## **Ministerial Development**

This is the element which will normally take the greatest part of the three months. It is the key element in the ESL. It will involve some element of learning probably through study and theological reflection. It should be designed to widen horizons or deepen thinking in a particular area, rather than simply revisiting familiar territory. Most people have some idea of what they want to do with this time, but it is good to ensure that it is something which benefits a variety of needs including present and future ministry and the Church more widely.

## **Retreat**

The ESL should include some time which is by nature of retreat. For many this will mean going on an organised retreat. The principle is that some period of the ESL should be set aside for the minister's own relationship with God. This means retreating from church, work, family and responsibility to refresh one's personal spiritual life in a way which is best for the individual. It is wise for them to discuss this element with their spiritual director.

## **Rest**

ESL is not designed to be a holiday. Nonetheless the biblical pattern of Sabbath does include rest as a vital part of life. It is, therefore, appropriate and necessary that the three months includes some time of physical rest and refreshment. As a guideline, it is generally appropriate to include two weeks holiday in the 13 weeks of a full length ESL. It is particularly wise to include a few days at the beginning of the time to adjust to a change of pace and prepare oneself to get the best from the ESL. Nine days (including two Sundays) of your annual leave entitlement under Common Tenure will be deemed to have been used as part of the rest period.

## **Report**

Every participant will be expected to report to their Bishop and Director of Lifelong Learning on the ESL within a month of completion. A ESL Evaluation Form is available to help with this. The report should demonstrate what has been gained through the different elements, and theological reflection and personal learning arising from the time. In addition to this brief report, some people will need to prepare a longer more detailed report of their work for the benefit of others. Consideration needs to be given to ways in which what has been learned from the time away from normal duties may be of benefit to the wider church in the Deanery or the Diocese. These reports may make use of different media if appropriate to the ESL and should be prepared in the last stages of the ESL and before return to normal duties.

## **Some top tips (added from London Diocese policy)**

- Do one or two things well, rather than trying to cram in lots of bits
- Leave space rather than trying to fill every day (three months seems a long time, but goes very quickly!)
- Plan a full week in your diary without appointments leading up to your study leave in order to clear your desk
- Set your email out-of-office assistant to say that all emails will be deleted unread – and do just that! Set up a separate email account for family and friends
- Consider having a supervisor or mentor to accompany you on the study leave