



## Sabbatical and Study Leave

The opportunity for a sabbatical is offered to all licensed ministers (lay and ordained, stipendiary and self-supporting) who are office-holders, every ten years as a sustained period away from normal duties for professional development and personal enrichment. Shorter periods of study leave may be granted more often at the discretion of the area bishop. A **sabbatical** has three elements:

### Renewal

This is the element of personal and/or professional development, which will normally take the greatest part of your three months. 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. It is also worth thinking carefully about the way this period of study may not only contribute to your own ministry but also the wider mission of God in the church and society now and in the future. For this reason, it should be carefully planned beforehand.

### Retreat

The sabbatical should include some time set aside for you and your relationship with God. For many this will mean going on an organised retreat. This means retreating from church, work, family and responsibility to refresh your own personal spiritual life in a way which is best for you. It is wise to discuss this element with your spiritual director.

### Rest

A sabbatical is not intended as a holiday, but 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 rest and refreshment. It is particularly wise to include a few days at the beginning of your time to adjust to a change of pace and prepare yourself to get the best from your sabbatical. You do not lose your entitlement to periods of annual leave if you take a sabbatical. However, if you plan to add part of your annual holiday on to the sabbatical period, this should be carefully planned in consultation with colleagues.

It is often tempting to see the sabbatical as a time to 'put right' life's stresses and strains. However, we do not believe that this gift of time away from regular ministry should be used for dealing with issues such as serious family or personal problems or when you have been diagnosed with stress or other significant illness. If this is the case, then there are other possible responses, which you should explore with your Archdeacon or Area Bishop.

**Study Leave** covers shorter periods of leave granted to enable you to undertake or complete a focussed project with a specific outcome. This might include a period of study for a research degree or when a thesis or book/publication is being written up. It is possible that it could also be used for the completion of course work on a taught degree that would involve setting aside regular short times of study.

Permission for study leave is granted by the Area Bishop rather than by the sabbatical committee, although the archdeaconry advisers are available to provide advice about whether a particular project is better suited to sabbatical or study leave, and the bishops may wish the committee to advise them, especially if study leave is to be combined with a sabbatical. If you are thinking of study leave rather than a sabbatical, you should apply to your Area Bishop in the first instance.

## Eligibility

You may apply for a sabbatical if:

- you are a licensed minister (lay or ordained, stipendiary or self-supporting) and also an office holder;
- you have fulfilled at least 10 years of service (not necessarily in the Diocese of Oxford);
- you have served at least 2 years in your current post;
- and it has been at least 10 years since your last sabbatical.

Clergy and lay ministers employed by agencies other than the diocese should agree sabbatical leave with their employer. Any funding for the sabbatical should be sought from the employer in the first instance, but the diocese may offer a grant providing the appropriate adviser has been fully consulted. The same applies to clergy and licensed lay ministers employed by churches.

You must follow the application process even if you do not intend to request diocesan funding towards the sabbatical, as you still require the Bishop's permission to be absent from your office.

You **may not** take a Sabbatical

- within the first 2 years of a new appointment;
- during the 1st year of the training of a curate serving a title for whom you have responsibility and only in year 2 if appropriate local oversight and supervision has been negotiated and agreed with the Diocesan IME Officer;
- during the 1st year after the licensing of a Licensed Lay Minister for whom you have responsibility unless appropriate local oversight and supervision has been negotiated and agreed with the Diocesan LLM Adviser;

and you may not take a sabbatical in order to look for a new post.

**Please note:** *Requests for sabbaticals in the last year before retirement are to be made in writing to the Bishop of Oxford and will only be approved in exceptional circumstances where there is a clear rationale. Please discuss this with your sabbatical adviser.*

## Planning Your Sabbatical

Given that this gift of time away from parish ministry is only available every 10 years, we do not wish to be too prescriptive and so offer a flexibility of approach to this process, which is fundamentally one of discernment. Each archdeaconry has appointed an adviser to work with applicants in this discernment process and it is essential that you consult your adviser at an early stage (*see Appendix B for fuller details of their role*).

You will also need to plan your sabbatical in good time, both to ensure that the study or professional development project is appropriate and realisable; and that there is sufficient pastoral cover for absence.

**Sabbatical Aims** - It is important to establish a realistic aim. This should be modest and achievable, to leave time for rest, renewal, recreation and refreshment. If you plan something too ambitious, you may not be able to achieve all you wish, leaving you feeling frustrated on your return to regular ministry.

**Cost** - When planning the outline of the sabbatical, it is important for all costs to be considered and sources of funding identified. The diocese has limited funds that it offers in the form of small grants. You need to allow enough time for the submission of applications, given that many trusts are small and only meet occasionally. You will need to include an accurate breakdown of costs in your application.

**Cover** - The timing of the sabbatical should be discussed with your incumbent or the area dean. You may also discuss the best timing with the sabbatical adviser, but it is important to obtain local consent for the dates you eventually decide upon. This is to ensure continuity of pastoral care and avoid putting colleagues in the deanery under unreasonable pressure if a number of ministers are away at the same time. This will be particularly important in those deaneries where resources available to take services and provide pastoral care may be stretched. Shortage of adequate cover may mean that you will need to re-negotiate the timing of the sabbatical.

Team vicars, associate and house for duty priests and LLMs will all need to have the agreement of their incumbent. It is also vital that churchwardens are informed as soon as possible of the intention to take a sabbatical.

Arrangements for sabbatical cover need to be clearly communicated to the following:

- Churchwardens and PCC/DCC
- Team Rector / Incumbent (as appropriate)
- Area Dean
- Archdeacon

This way, all can be assured that provision is in place for pastoral care, occasional offices and Sunday worship. Please inform the Area Dean and Archdeacon of these arrangements and who should be contacted in an emergency prior to your sabbatical.

Where the spouse of the person planning a sabbatical is an ordained or a licensed lay minister working in the same parish, it is usually advisable for the spouse to step back from day-to-day involvement with ministry. In these cases, we recommend that wherever possible, sabbatical leave is taken together as a couple. Where the spouse has not been licensed or ordained long enough to qualify for a sabbatical, it may be possible to relax the guidelines.

**Re-entering Ministry** – How one returns to ministry after a lengthy time away is as important as planning the time away. Careful thought needs to be given to the first 2 weeks of your return to avoid immediately over-working and negating all the positive benefits of the sabbatical / study. You may wish to consider a phased return to full time working.

On your return, it is often valuable to engage a work consultant or coach to enable any desired changes to your ministry or work pattern to be explored and implemented successfully. Details can be found on the CMD pages of the diocesan website.

## Applying for a Sabbatical

**All applications considered in the current calendar year are to start the following calendar year.**

The deadlines for applications to the sabbatical committee are published on the Sabbaticals page in the CMD section of the diocesan website.

This gives the committee time to consider them and provide feedback and further advice if necessary. We appreciate that it may not always be possible to plan so far in advance and some degree of leeway is often allowed, although if your application is late you may need to wait longer than you originally hoped for the sabbatical. (*See Appendix D for the Application Form*).

The flowchart in *Appendix A* details the procedure when applying for a sabbatical as well as those involved in the process.

The process may begin as a result of a ministry development review (MDR), a conversation with an area bishop or on the initiative of the minister. However, before proceeding further, local approval to explore the possibility of a sabbatical must be sought from your incumbent (if applicable) and from the area dean.

A limited number of grants are available from the diocese. Those eligible for consideration are:

- stipendiary ministers;
- associate ministers who are giving at least 50% of their time (i.e. 3 days) to parish / benefice ministry.
- house for duty ministers

Please note that 'eligible for consideration' is not to be construed as 'entitled'. The maximum available grant will not exceed £500, **and you will not be entitled to apply for a separate CMD grant in the year that the sabbatical is taken.** When considering the level of

grant to be awarded, the Committee will not take into consideration any costs relating to a holiday.

In many cases, additional sources of funding will be needed to support proposals, which is another reason for early planning. Patrons (in some cases), charitable trusts and occasionally the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group can provide funds. *Please see Appendix C for suggestions on possible sources of funding.*

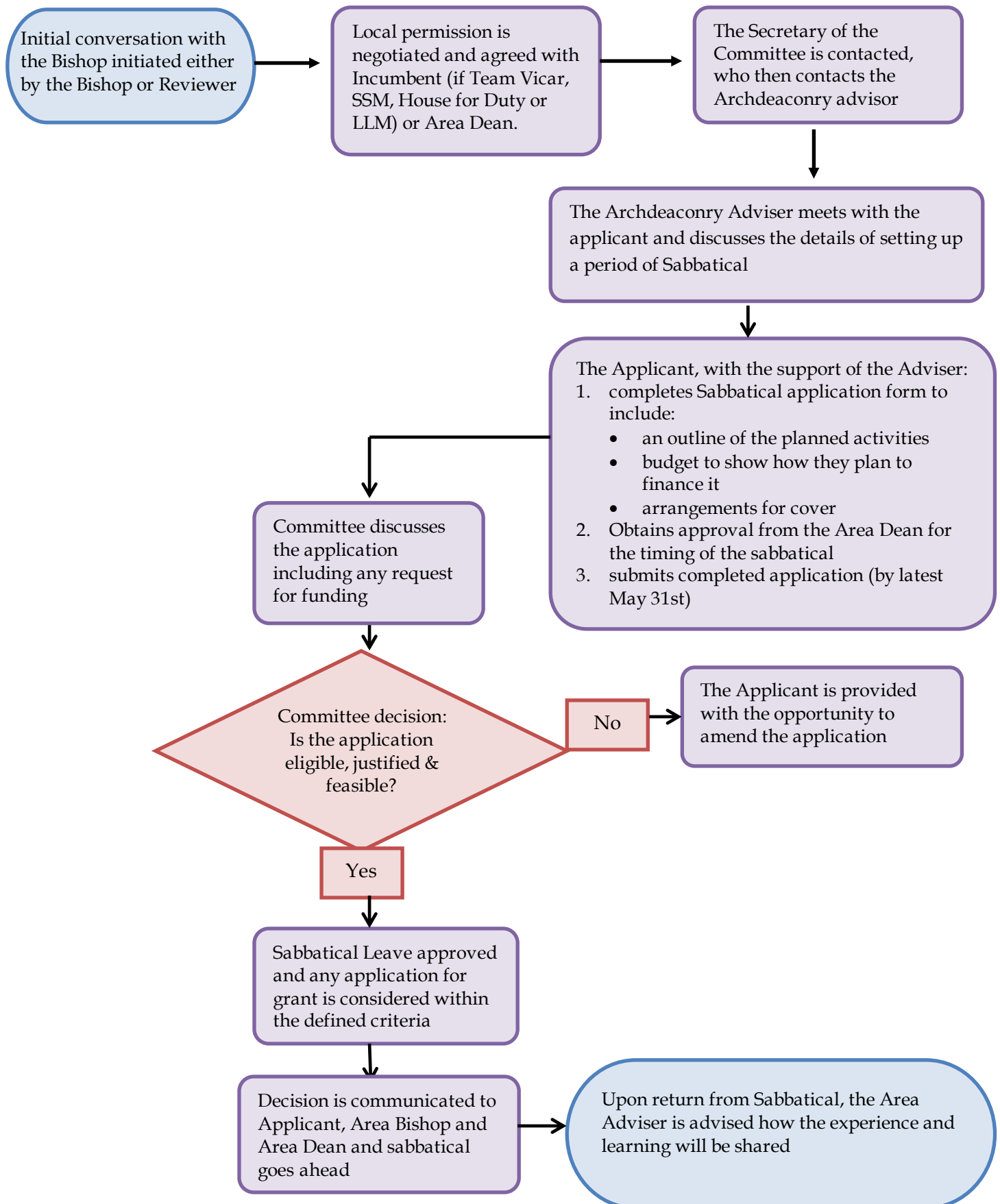
## **After your Sabbatical**

As well as sharing your experience with people in your benefice / parish, we hope the key learning and experience of your sabbatical will be something which you will also want to share with the wider church. We therefore encourage you to think how this might happen and some possibilities are:

- Sharing with your Deanery Chapter and /or Deanery Synod
- Meeting with your archdeaconry adviser for a 'debrief'
- Requesting a meeting with your Area Bishop or Archdeacon

You are asked to complete a feedback form approximately 6 months after you return to parish ministry. This will be shared with the sabbatical committee, including your area adviser, your Area Bishop and Archdeacon (see Appendix E).

## APPENDIX A Process of Applying for a Sabbatical Flowchart



## Appendix B Archdeaconry Advisers

The role of the Archdeaconry Adviser is to support the individual in discerning how best to use the period available by:

- Meeting with the individual as early as possible in the planning process
- Being a critical friend offering feedback on proposals
- Representing the applicant on the Diocesan Committee
- Be available, if appropriate, for a debrief meeting after the sabbatical

### The Archdeaconry Advisers are:

**Oxford & Dorchester Archdeaconries:** The Revd Andrew Gregory  
Tel: 01865 276663  
Email: [andrew.gregory@theology.ox.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.gregory@theology.ox.ac.uk)

**Berkshire Archdeaconry:** The Revd Dr Adam Carlill  
Tel: 01189402202  
Email: [adamcarlill@me.com](mailto:adamcarlill@me.com)

**Buckingham Archdeaconry:** The Revd Deiniol Heywood  
Tel: 01494 866530  
Email: [rector@htprestwood.org.uk](mailto:rector@htprestwood.org.uk)

**Chair of the Committee:** The Revd Dr Andy Angel  
Director of Formation for Ministry  
Church House Oxford  
Tel: 01865 208739  
Email: [andy.angel@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:andy.angel@oxford.anglican.org)



## APPENDIX C

### Details of Grant Making Trusts for Sabbatical Applications

Depending on your income, you may be eligible for a grant from the **Clergy Support Trust** (previously the Sons and Friends of the Clergy Corporation). Further details can be found at <https://www.clergysupport.org.uk/financial-support-grants>.

**The Ecclesiastical Ministry Bursary Awards** have helped hundreds of ministers to finance their extended study leave. Since being established in 1987, over 1,000 members of the clergy have received awards for a wide range of extended leave projects and plans supporting their ministerial development. EIG write that "Due to the nature of their work and the demands of busy ministries, most members of the clergy rarely manage to make sufficient time to carry out imaginative projects to improve their ministries or to simply take time to refresh themselves through a spiritual journey. The Ministry Bursary Awards are here to help them achieve just that." Successful applicants have used their awards to help fund projects such as travel, study courses and pilgrimages, as well as periods of reflection and retreat. The closing date for applications for awards for each year is generally the end of September of the previous year. Further details can be found at [www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters/news-and-faqs/newsletters/mba-awards/index.aspx](http://www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters/news-and-faqs/newsletters/mba-awards/index.aspx).

**The Bayne Benefaction**, administered through Christ Church, exists to help clergy within the Diocese of Oxford with the costs of study. It is more appropriate for study leave, but if your sabbatical includes a recognised course of study, you may be eligible. No more than 50% of the costs can be covered. The application guidance is included as a further appendix.

**The American Memorial Chapel Travel Grant (AMCTG)** offers a member of the clergy the opportunity to tour the USA with the aim of fostering understanding and the exchange of ideas. Proposals fulfilling the requirement of developing mutual understanding between British and American clergy are welcome. The amount available each year is £2,000, which may go to one applicant or be split between several. The grant is administered through the Queen's Foundation in Birmingham. Further details: [www.queens.ac.uk/what/global/the-american-memorial-chapel-travel-grant](http://www.queens.ac.uk/what/global/the-american-memorial-chapel-travel-grant).

**Culham St Gabriel's** makes grants for excellence in Religious Education. Further details are available at: [www.cstg.org.uk/how-we-help/grants/](http://www.cstg.org.uk/how-we-help/grants/).

**St George's Trust** give grants of up to £350 for clergy sabbaticals. Go to [www.fsje.org.uk/sgeorges.php](http://www.fsje.org.uk/sgeorges.php) to check whether you are eligible.

**St Boniface Trust** makes small grants to enable clergy study. Details can be found here: [www.stbonifacetrust.org.uk/grants.html](http://www.stbonifacetrust.org.uk/grants.html).

**The Women's Continuing Ministerial Education Trust (WCMET)** exists to further the continuing ministerial education of women in the Church of England and the Scottish Episcopal Church by means of grants to assist their work and professional ministry. It focuses its attention on supporting applications for courses/projects that clearly relate to assisting the minister in their work and professional development. Grants are not *normally* made towards retreats and sabbaticals. To find out how to apply visit [www.churchofengland.org/more/diocesan-resources/ministry/wcmet](http://www.churchofengland.org/more/diocesan-resources/ministry/wcmet)

## APPENDIX D Sabbatical Application Form

All applications considered in the current calendar year are to start the following calendar year.

### 1. Personal Details

Full Name:	
Address:	
Tel:	e-mail:

### 2. Office Details

Role Title:	
Benefice & Deanery:	
Date of Licencing :	Date of Ordination:

### 3. Process of Approval

Is your application supported by your bishop?	Yes / No
Does this application arise out of a recent Ministerial Development Review?	Yes / No
Have you consulted your Area Dean / Lay Chair concerning the timing of your sabbatical?	Yes / No
If a Team Vicar, SSM, House for Duty priest or LLM, have you the approval of your Incumbent?	Yes / No
Have you had any period of Study Leave in the past 5 years?	Yes / No
Are you responsible for a curate in training, or a newly licensed LLM	Yes / No
If so have you spoken with the respective IME or LLM Officer?	Yes / No
Please use the space below to give any further information	

**Details of the proposed sabbatical**

When would you like to take a sabbatical? From ..... To ..... Year .....

Anticipated Total Cost £ .....

On a separate sheet of paper please give an outline of:

- ❖ how you plan to spend your sabbatical
- ❖ budget/ cost involved and proposed sources of funding
- ❖ arrangements for cover of office while away

**APPLICATION FOR GRANT**

The diocese has a limited number of grants to support sabbatical available for stipendiary clergy, self supporting and house for duty minister,

Do you wish to be considered for a diocesan grant? Yes / No

What level of grant are you requesting? (maximum of £500) £.....

What other funding have you been able to source to support your sabbatical?  
(Please tick all that apply)

➤ Grant making bodies and trusts  Amount £.....  
Name of grant making body or trust  
.....

➤ Your parish.  Amount £.....

➤ A mission agency.  Amount £.....  
Name of mission agency.....

➤ Other sources of funding  Amount £.....  
Name of source.....

Signature.....

Date.....

**Please complete and return together with attachments to:**

CMD Team Administrator, Church House Oxford, Langford Locks, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 1GF  
Email: Sabbatical@oxford.anglican.org Tel: 01865 208277

## Appendix E

### Sabbatical Feedback

Name .....

Could you please give a brief description of the content / programme of your sabbatical?

What are the memories which are still with you from your sabbatical?

What did you hope to receive / achieve / experience from this programme and how have these hopes been realized, challenged or changed?

What are the most important areas of learning for you from your sabbatical?  
How has this learning impacted on you and your ministry?

Are there any aspects of your ministry you hope to change as a result of this sabbatical?

**Please return this form to:**

CMD Administrator, Church House Oxford, Langford Locks, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 1GF  
or email to: [sabbatical@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:sabbatical@oxford.anglican.org)