

## **Clergy Continuing Education**

(Commission on Ministry Effective Date June 1, 1972;  
Revised May 3, 2005; July 1, 1983; May 8, 1979)

### **General Guidelines**

1. The Canons of the Episcopal Church now require continuing education for all priests and deacons in the Church who are actively involved in ministry. This requirement applies to those who are technically retired but who continue to serve in any congregation. Each year a record of continuing education activity is to be sent to the diocesan office along with the number of hours spent attending each continuing education event.

2. Every ordained person and professional church worker should have or should develop a long term plan for continuing education for personal growth, formation, and professional development.

3. Local communities (e.g. parishes, campus ministries, diocesan staff, church institutions, etc.) have some responsibility for the continuing education of their leaders. They should provide time and financial support to help make this possible, so that ministry in the community may be enhanced.

4. Diocesan funds for continuing education are used to help clergy in the diocese realize their plans for continuing education and will be made available to supplement personal and local resources. Criteria to be considered for granting continuing education funds will include personal planning, local support, and needs for ministry in the diocese.

### **Part I. Definitions**

A. **Continuing education for ministry** consists of organized, systematic and evaluative educational experience beyond the basic preparation. These experiences are designed to promote the enrichment of knowledge, improvement of skills, and the development of attitudes for the enrichment of ministry. Continuing education includes in-service education, but excludes orientation and on-the-job training.

B. **Course of study** means a systematic learning experience designed for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and information related to the practice of ministry.

C. **Independent study** means continuing education offerings designed for an individual and monitored by a supervisor approved by the Commission on Ministry, Division of Continuing Education of All Ministers.

D. **In-service education** means formal instruction designed by a supervisor or mentor approved by the COM Division of Continuing Education of All Ministers, usually offered in the employment setting.

E. **On-the-job training** means informal instruction given by an employer or supervisor to improve the performance of an employee in a given task. (Not approved for continuing education.)

F. **Orientation** means formal or informal instruction designed to acquaint newly assigned employees with the philosophy of the institution and the duties and responsibilities of the position. (Not approved for continuing education.)

G. **Providers** are those persons, organizations or institutions approved by the Bishop and Commission on Ministry to supply continuing education offerings.

H. **Refresher Course** is a course of study which provides a review of basic preparation for individuals who have not been actively engaged in professional ministry for a period of time, and it introduces them to developments which have occurred during the recent years.

I. **Short-term** learning activities include conferences, institutes, lectures, seminars and workshops offered by approved providers.

J. **Hour** means at least fifty (50) minutes of participation in a learning experience organized by an approved provider.

## **Part II. Expectations**

A. The Bishop and Commission on Ministry of the Diocese of Kansas expect that all active clergy resident in the diocese will take a minimum of fifteen (15) contact hours of continuing education opportunities each year, and urge that parishes will respond by making time and funds available for that purpose.

B. Such continuing education may include any one or a combination of experiences or courses of study.

C. Independent study may not exceed three (3) of the expected fifteen (15) hours, and will use the following guidelines:

1. Self instructional or independent study is defined as organized study under the guidance of a supervisor, chosen by the student, qualified in the area of study, and approved by the Commission on Ministry.

2. The allocation of hours and method of evaluation shall be agreed upon before the study begins.

D. Parishes are urged to provide financial assistance to the best of their ability. Vestries, in planning parish budgets, are asked to establish a continuing education fund and build on it annually. Individual communicants are encouraged to consider special gifts or bequests to parish or diocesan continuing education funds.

E. The lay role in ministering to the daily needs of the parish during the clergy person's absence should be anticipated, and appropriate plans for such completed before the educational leave begins.

F. Individuals requesting continuing education funds in advance will submit requests to the Canon to the Ordinary.

G. Each person receiving a grant from diocesan funds is expected to submit a one-page summary of the educational experience with an assessment of its value. This is to be sent to the Canon to the Ordinary not later than one (1) month after the conclusion of the event.

## **Part III. Sabbatical Leaves of Absence for Continuing Education**

A. It is the policy of the Diocese of Kansas that all active parochial and non-parochial clergy residing in the diocese shall be entitled, after five (5) years' tenure in the current position, to request a leave of absence for education or vocational purposes. Such leave shall be subject to approval of the vestry and the Bishop, and shall be without any decrease in total stipend or other allowances and vacation rights. The right to request such leave shall recur after each additional five (5) years' tenure.

B. Clergy shall apprise the vestry of this desire for educational leave sufficiently in advance to enable them to arrange for supply clergy, that the sacraments be not neglected, and to arrange for the laity to care for the daily needs of the parish.