

**DISCIPLINE (2016) PROVISIONS RELATED TO CONTINUING EDUCATION  
IN THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**Continuing Education, ¶ 350, *Continuing Education and Spiritual Growth***

1. Throughout their careers, clergy shall engage in continuing education for ministry, professional development, and spiritual formation and growth in order to lead the church in fulfilling the mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ. This shall include carefully developed personal programs of study augmented periodically by involvement in organized educational and spiritual growth activities. These practices embody the Wesleyan emphasis on life-long growth in faith, fostered by personal spiritual practices and participation in covenant communities. Each annual conference, through the chairs of the Clergy Orders and Fellowship or other leaders designated by the Bishop, shall provide spiritual enrichment opportunities and covenant groups for deacons, elders, and local pastors.
2. A clergy member's continuing education and spiritual growth program should include such leaves at least one week each year and at least one month during one year of every quadrenium. Such leaves shall not be considered as part of the minister's vacations and shall be planned in consultation with their charges or other agencies to which they are appointed as well as the bishop, district superintendent, and annual conference continuing education committee.
3. A clergy member may request a formational and spiritual growth leave up to six months while continuing to hold an appointment in the local church. Such leaves are available to clergy members who have held full-time appointments for at least six years. Such a leave shall be with the approval of the committee on pastor-parish relations, the church council, and the district superintendent. Annual conferences are encouraged to assist with pulpit supply and other temporary support for such leaves.
4. Financial arrangements for continuing education as part of one's professional development, formation, and spiritual growth shall be negotiated in the following manner: (a) for elders and local pastors it shall be done in consultation with the district superintendent and the committee on pastor-parish relations; (b) for deacons, with the appropriate supervisory body; (c) for district superintendents, with the district committee on superintendency; (d) for conference staff, with the appropriate supervisory body; (e) for others in extension ministries, with the appropriate person in their agency.
5. Clergy shall be asked by the district superintendent in the charge conference to report on their programs of continuing education, formation and spiritual growth for the past year and plans for the year to come. The district superintendent shall also ask the local church to describe its provision for time and financial support of continuing education for ministry, professional development, formation and spiritual growth for the pastors, diaconal ministers and deacons serving their primary appointment in that local church.
6. Clergy in extension ministries shall give evidence of their continuing formation and spiritual growth program and future plans in their annual reports. (¶ 344.2a)

## **Elders, ¶ 334.2d**

Growth in professional competence and effectiveness through continuing education and formation. The Board of Ordained Ministry may set the minimum standards and specific guidelines for continuing education and formation for conference members;

## **Report by clergy to district superintendents, ¶ 419.7**

The superintendent shall seek to be in regular contact with the clergy on the district for counsel and supervision, and shall receive written or electronic reports of the clergy's continuing education, spiritual practices, current ministry work, and goals for future ministry.

## **The Ministerial Education Fund, ¶ 816**

The council shall recommend to the General Conference the sum that the Church shall undertake for the Ministerial Education Fund and the method by which it shall be apportioned to the annual conferences, in accordance with the provisions adopted by the 1968 General Conference in establishing the Ministerial Education Fund. The purpose of the fund is to enable the Church to unify and expand its program of financial support for the recruitment and education of ordained and diaconal ministers and to equip the annual conferences to meet increased demands in this area. (20) The maximum amount possible from this fund shall go directly for programs and services in theological education, the enlistment and continuing education of ordained and diaconal ministers, and courses of study. When these funds are used to finance continuing education events sponsored by the Board of Ordained Ministry of an annual conference, such events may be open to laity for their attendance and participation at the option of the Board of Ordained Ministry of each annual conference.

1. Of the total money raised in each annual conference for the Ministerial Education Fund, 25 percent shall be retained by the annual conference that raised it, to be used in its program of ministerial education as approved by the annual conference and administered through its Board of Ordained Ministry. The Board of Ordained Ministry will confer concerning use of the Ministerial Education Fund. Administrative costs of the Board of Ordained Ministry shall be a claim on the conference's operating budget. No annual conference that participated in a 1 percent plan or other conference program of ministerial student scholarships and loan grants prior to the establishment of this fund shall receive less for this purpose than it received in the last year of the quadrennium preceding the establishment of the fund, provided the giving from that conference for ministerial education does not fall below the level achieved in the quadrennium preceding the establishment of the fund.
  - a) "Service Loans" from the conference portion of the Ministerial Education Fund may be considered repaid if the recipients served five years in the connection in appointments approved by their bishop.<sup>19</sup>
  - b) In case the recipients of these loans do not satisfy the terms of the "Service Loans" by service in the "connection," they would make arrangements to repay the loans with the conferences from which they received their loans.
2. Of the total money raised in each annual conference for the Ministerial Education Fund, 75 percent shall be remitted by the conference treasurer to the treasurer of the council for distribution to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry for support of ministerial education and shall be administered by that board. It shall be distributed as follows:

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<sup>19</sup> See Judicial Council Decision 1175.

a) At least 75 percent of the amount received by the divisions shall be distributed to the theological schools of The United Methodist Church on a formula established by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry after consultation with the theological schools. United Methodist Theological Schools where less than 40% of the regular rank faculty are United Methodist or another historic Wesleyan denomination will forfeit 1/3 of their Ministerial Education funding, which will go back to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to be distributed as scholarship aid for certified candidates for United Methodist ordained ministry enrolled in United Methodist institutions of theological education that have been approved by the Commission on Theological Education. All money allocated to the theological schools shall be used for current operations, not for physical expansion. Ministerial Education funds allocated to United Methodist theological schools for current operations shall only be used for:

- United Methodist student scholarships
- Faculty and staff salaries and benefits for those who prepare United Methodist students (implementing the curriculum required in ¶ 324.4) for ordained ministry or service as local pastors through the Course of Study program.

All United Methodist theological schools receiving Ministerial Education Fund allocations shall submit annual reports to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry detailing how the Ministerial Education Fund allocations were spent.

b) The remaining portion of the amount received shall be used for supplemental distributions to the theological schools and for board use in its program of ministerial enlistment and development. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry will recommend to the general secretary of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry appropriate funding for divisional programs of ministerial enlistment and development.

c) Beginning in the 2009-2012 quadrennium, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry shall facilitate the creation of United Methodist Ministerial Education Funds in the central conferences, including the development and provision of funds for this new initiative. The purpose of this initiative is to improve and strengthen the existing indigenous structures for theological education in order to create a sustainable system of education for central conference clergy.

3. Annual conferences shall regard this fund as a priority to be met before any additional benevolences, grants, or funds are allocated to a theological school or school of religion.<sup>20</sup>

4. The General Commission on Communication shall promote the Ministerial Education Fund.

#### **Ordained Ministry Division responsibility, ¶ 1421.3, *Theological Education***

The Division shall:

- a) Develop and maintain the educational programs and standards for those who are ordained as deacons and elders, licensed as local pastors, and certified for specialized ministries in The United Methodist Church and shall disseminate the approved courses and standards to appropriate oversight bodies and boards.
- b) Certify the course offerings in United Methodist history, doctrine, and polity as specified in ¶ 335.(3), and provide the University Senate and boards of ordained ministry with a list of the courses approved.

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<sup>20</sup> See Judicial Council Decision 545.

- c) Prescribe a theological studies program which will include basic graduate theological studies for those preparing for ordination as a Deacon, an advanced course of studies program for local pastors preparing for ordination as an Elder, and a curriculum of studies for those seeking certification in areas of specialized ministry.
- d) Prescribe a Course of Study for local pastors that include the studies for license for pastoral ministry and the five-year Course of Study curriculum. All work in the Course of Study shall be taken in programs approved by the Division of Ordained Ministry. Upon approval of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, a candidate may complete up to one-half of the work through online courses developed by the Division of Ordained Ministry.
- e) Identify the areas of need for specialized ministries; provide standards and educational programs that may lead to certification in those areas; and review the qualifications of persons recommended for certification by conference boards of ordained ministry.
- f) Consult with the schools of theology and programs of pastoral training in the central conferences concerning pastoral needs, the relationship between United Methodist seminaries in the central conferences and the United States, and other resources for training pastors to serve in the central conferences.
- g) Promote attending United Methodist seminaries for theological training in the Wesleyan tradition.
- h) Cooperate with the Office of Loans and Scholarships, the Higher Education Foundation, the World Communion Scholarship Program, and other funding agencies in regard to scholarship assistance for racial and ethnic students preparing for ordained ministry.

**Church Council Chairperson, ¶ 251.3g**

- g) participating in leadership training programs as offered by the annual conference and/or district.

**Church Secretaries, ¶ 807.18**

To provide guidance and consultation to individuals providing services to the Church in the following areas: local church business administration; administrative assistance; equitable compensation; information technology; and legal guidance to annual conferences. Such guidance and consultation may, as the council deems appropriate, include: establishing relevant professional standards, training programs, continuing education, and certifications; encouraging participation in associations related to these services (for example, the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries, the United Methodist Network of Practice, the National Association of Commissions on Equitable Compensation of The United Methodist Church, the United Methodist Information Technology Association, and the United Methodist Church Conference Chancellors Association, or similar organizations); and providing staff and/or in-kind services to such associations.