Ministerial Provisions & Charges Handbook 2027

UCA Synod of VicTas



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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document is provided as a reference for ministers, congregations, presbyteries, and agencies of the UCA about matters pertaining to the placement and provisions and charges of ministers of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) within the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

The Terms of Placement Committee (TPC) is responsible for maintaining this resource and any feedback or suggestions should be sent to the Secretary, Terms of Placement Committee via email: tpc@victas.uca.org.au or by phone on 03 9116 1422.

1.2 TPC Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the TPC to make recommendations to the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania Standing Committee about matters pertaining to provisions and charges for ministers. Provisions and charges include:

- annual leave
- car allowance
- long service leave
- manse allowance
- sick leave/special/other leave
- stipend – minimum level
- study leave; and
- supply fees and allowances.

1.3 Other Provisions

Other provisions which apply to ministers are managed by Synod staff and some outsourced providers. Queries in relation to these matters should be directed as follows:

Issue	Contact	Phone	Email Address
WorkCover insurance Injury management WorkCover incidents or accidents – must be reported within 48 hours.	OHS Coordinator	9116 1949	SynodOH&S@victas.uca.org.au

Topic	Service provider	Phone	Email
OH&S general inquiries.	OH&S Coordinator	9116 1949	People&culture@victas.uca.org.au
Car loans & MBA inquiries	MBA services	9116 1933	mba@victas.uca.org.au
Special pastoral support	Pastoral Assistance Committee	9116 1422	pac@victas.uca.org.au
EAP Confidential Counselling Support	Psychology Melbourne	(03) 96229 1001	clientservices@psychologymelbourne.com.au
Ministers' Long Service Leave Application and processing	Central Accounting Payroll Services (CAPS)	9116 1933	payroll@victas.uca.org.au
General inquiries about ministerial provisions and charges	Secretariat	9116 1422	Justina.joseph@victas.uca.org.au
Beneficiary Fund	Mercer Super Trust – Uniting Church in Australia Beneficiary Fund. Helpline Services: Within Australia.	1800 682 525 (613) 8687 1823	Website: mercersuper.com.au
Removals	Property Services	9116 1956	property@victas.uca.org.au

1.4 Summary of Ministerial Provisions and Charges

Provisions and Charges for ministers are reviewed and approved by the Synod annually and compiled into a summary for ready use by ministers, congregations and presbyteries. This document, *Summary of Ministerial Provisions and Charges*, is distributed in December and June each year and is posted on the Synod website at Terms of Placement Committee

1.5 Handbook for Ministers – Distribution and Access

1.5.1 Hardcopy

A hard copy of the *Ministerial Provisions and Charges Handbook 2027* will be provided on request to congregations and ministers following any substantial revision. Email request to tpc@victas.uca.org.au

1.5.2 Electronic copy

The *Ministerial Provisions and Charges Handbook 2027* is available electronically on the Synod Website. If an email copy is preferred, please email the request to tpc@victas.uca.org.au with " Ministerial Provisions and Charges Handbook 2027" in the subject line.

2 Definitions and Abbreviations

Issue	Definition
Placements Committee	Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements
CAPS	Central Accounting Payroll System
Long term supply	Supply ministry of more than three months in the one location
LSL	Long Service Leave
MBA	Ministers' Benefit Account
TPC	Terms of Placement Committee
Minister	For the purposes of this handbook, the term minister shall include a Minister of the Word, a Deacon, a Deaconess, a Specified Ministry of Youth Worker, and a Pastor in an approved placement.
Occasional supply	Minister is required to provide worship service(s) and/or pastoral care days, over a continuous period of not more than one month.
PAC	Pastoral Assistance Committee (a committee of the Synod)
Placements	Throughout this handbook 'Placements' usually refers to Congregational Ministry Placements. There are a variety of other types of placements and ministry contexts within the Church that are informed by this handbook, but, for ease of language, reference is usually made to congregations as the responsible body. In different ministry contexts the appropriate responsible body may be substituted as appropriate.

PRC	Pastoral Relations Committee (a committee of the Presbytery)
SA	Supervision Allowance
ERA	Education and Resource Allowance
Responsible body	Church Council, Presbytery, Agency, School etc.
Short term supply	Normally defined as a continuous period of supply ministry which is more than one month but not more than three months in the one location e.g. a single congregation, a multi-congregation parish, a cluster of congregations operating as a single entity (mission area), or a presbytery.
Synod	Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

3 Background to the Stipend

In the church a stipend is a form of payment provided to ministers as a living allowance, so they are free to undertake the ministry the Church has called them to. The stipend is a 'monetary allowance' rather than a salary or fee for services rendered.

Ministry does require high levels of competence and conduct, high personal and 'professional' standards. However, the idea that this should mean a highly remunerated salary package stands in tension with the basic understanding of ministry as grounded in God's call to serve through the church by the proclamation of the gospel in word and deed.

The stipend should be adequate. The stipend paid should be sufficient to cover the living expenses of a minister and family living and sharing in the life of the community. While ministers are in active ministry their remuneration includes not only stipend but also travel, housing or residence benefit. It should be recognised that ministers do have to provide their own housing for retirement.

The stipend should be appropriate. The stipend is intended to cover the minister's needs and responsibilities common to all church families. When the work of a minister has particular expenses and obligations which are undertaken on behalf of the church, it is appropriate that consideration be given to meeting these in the shared fellowship of the church.

Judgments therefore have to be made by the appropriate council of the church, the Synod in the case of the Uniting Church, about a fair and reasonable minimum stipend and allowances for those in the area for which it has responsibility.

The Terms of Placements Committee's work is guided by the Minister Remuneration Strategy which helps ensure the stipend and allowances are adequate and appropriate and are keeping up with things like cost of living.

A paper on the Theology of Stipends and the Minister Remuneration Strategy can be found on minister hub on the Synod webpage under the TPC tab. https://victas.uca.org.au/minister-hub/

4 Stipend Levels and Loadings

4.1 Minimum Stipend

The minimum stipend is approved by the Synod Standing Committee for the following calendar year.

Minimum implies that the stipend cannot be negotiated downward. The Uniting Church Regulations [Reg 2.7.1 (b)] permit, however, in exceptional circumstances for a minister to be paid a stipend less than the minimum or proportionate rate. The circumstances may involve a minister with independent means (including superannuation from previous employment). It is crucial for ministers to be protected from pressure to accept less than a full or proportionate stipend, hence minister, presbytery and Placements Committee must approve any such arrangements.

4.2 Part-time Placements - Minimum Stipend

The minimum stipend for part-time ministers is pro rata of that for a full-time minister. This is consistent with accepted industrial practice. Please note that some allowances are more than pro rata.

4.3 Stipend Loadings

4.3.1 Role loadings or discretionary loadings

Role loadings apply to specific placements in the Synod e.g. Moderator, General Secretary and other senior Synod staff including theological teaching staff and some chaplains. Loadings may also apply to a number of congregational placements. Grounds for loadings may vary but are subject to a ceiling of 30%.

Regional Loadings do not apply in the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

4.3.2 Loadings approval

Loadings over the minimum stipend are a matter for justification to the Presbytery by the body seeking approval for new or altered terms of placement and should be recorded by the Presbytery and reported to the Placements Committee. Loadings for Presbytery and Synod placements will be authorised by the Synod Standing Committee.

The Placements Committee will present a summary to Synod meetings of congregational placements where above minimum stipend payments are being made.

5 Car and Travel Allowances

5.1 Car Allowances

The car allowance for ministers, whether full-time or part-time, in an approved placement should be related to kilometres travelled annually on church business. It is based, as far as practicable, on estimates of reasonable actual costs. The model used seeks to reflect any changes in cost components, including relevant purchase discounts. A number of assumptions are made including the following:

- In order to reasonably meet the spread of travel situations, a model is adopted based on a 100,000 km lifetime (i.e. from say 50,000 km x 2 years to 8,000 km x 12.5 years). The average annual depreciation and interest costs (based on diminishing vehicle value) are greater for the higher travel cases.
- As depreciation and interest are the major cost components, cyclic variations in these (typically drawn from used car prices and bond interest rates) have been evened out to limit fluctuations in the Synod car allowances.
- Figures are based on a typical ‘family’ vehicle.
- Purchase prices, interest and depreciation rates are those relevant to the typical private car owner.
- The use of Australian Tax Office and RACV figures, for reference where available.
- The minimum level of car allowance is 5,000 km a year. This ensures that the fixed cost of a vehicle is covered whether the minister is in a part-time or full-time placement.

5.2 Part-time Placements

The car allowance for part-time placements is calculated using the standard rates for full-time ministers. A car is as necessary for the effective functioning of a minister in a part-time placement as in a full-time one.

5.3 Cars Provided by the Church

The provision of car allowances or car loans to ministers assumes that vehicle provision is essentially the minister’s responsibility, and that the vehicle is used for both private and professional travel. However, in some situations it may be inappropriate or unreasonable for the minister to be responsible for providing their means of transport for placement travel. Such situations include:

a high level of annual travel (25,000 km and above) typical of many rural or Presbytery minister placements.

(a) a remote placement where distinct private and placement transport needs exist.

(b) any cases of abnormal vehicle requirements or travel conditions; and

(c) placement of an exit student who has limited resources for necessary equity in a car.

In such cases at least, the direct provision of a Church owned vehicle (whether Synod or local) warrants consideration in lieu of (and funded from) all or part of the normal car allowances.

5.4 Car Loans

The Car Loan Fund is an important source of capital for ministers to purchase vehicles. Ministers in recognised full-time and part-time placements may be eligible to receive consecutive car loans from the Car Loan Fund operated by Financial Services. Ministers are entitled to one First Car Loan, without an establishment fee, with subsequent car loans including an establishment fee. There is an administration fee charged fortnightly but no interest payable on the loan.

6 Supervision Allowance and Education and Resource Allowance

6.1 Purpose of Supervision Allowance

The purpose of the Supervision Allowance (SA) is to reduce financial barriers to seeking a high standard of supervision for supervisors appropriately trained and accredited.

The allowance is to be paid directly into the minister's MBA or through the minister's stipend payment.

If the placement pays for supervision directly then a SA is not paid. The limited discounting for part time placements reflects the fact that ministers in part time placements are required to attend supervision with a similar frequency to those in full time placements.

6.2 Purpose of Education and Resource Allowance

The allowance may be used as follows:

- for personal professional development, including continuing education courses or conferences, individual study program.
- Spiritual refreshment and such as retreats, quiet days or pilgrimage
- to acquire personal resource material related to ministry; and
- for the capital cost of personal operating equipment such as computer, printer, other personal office equipment.

The practice of providing ministers with a phone and internet allowance and consumables for church owned equipment and postage costs is not intended to be affected by the PRDA.

6.2.1 Determining use of ERA

While each minister may determine how the allowance is best used, planning for professional development should be in consultation with the Church Council or other responsible body, and Presbytery.

6.2.2 Discounting ERA

Discounting of the allowance may apply where a responsible body provides for the minister a dedicated computer, printer, or mobile phone. The Synod determines the maximum reduction which can be agreed by the minister and the responsible body.

6.2.3 Part-time placement and Personal Resource Development Allowance

For ministers in part-time placements, which are at least 0.4 of full-time ministry, the non-discounted allowance is set out in the annually adjusted Summary of Ministerial Provisions and Charges.

7 Other Allowances and Work-Related Expenses

7.1 General Expenses

It is not practicable to fix a Synod-wide level of general expenses, however general work-related expenses such as telephone, postage and stationery should be borne wholly by the responsible body for both full-time and part-time placements.

7.2 Internet and Phone

The responsible body is required to provide an internet and phone allowance as per the Ministerial Provisions and Charges. This allowance is intended to cover the cost of a phone and internet plan.

7.3 Hospitality

This is not an area where a specific Synod prescription is appropriate. For example, some responsible bodies provide an allowance or make reimbursements where a minister is able to show that excessive costs have been incurred. Any expenses need to be incurred in relation to the minister's pastoral duties or directly related religious activities.

The Terms of Placement Committee does not endorse any figure either as a norm or a limit. At the same time, in the interests of the responsible body and minister any provision would not normally be open ended.

Hospitality expenses may apply whether the minister is in a full-time or a part-time placement.

7.4 Welfare Payments

There is a view in the church that this is more a matter for those agencies which receive government funds for this purpose. The minister and congregation need to agree on what approach should be adopted. Where the congregation expects its minister(s) to respond to requests for assistance, it must be prepared to provide them with monies to do so. This may be up to a prescribed amount annually or an advance which is replaced as it runs out.

The need for welfare payments may apply whether the minister is in a full-time or a part-time placement.

8 Housing

The offer of appropriate accommodation, either UCA property or leased, is part of the remuneration provisions for all ministers in placement.

Payment of a manse allowance only applies where a minister chooses to provide their own accommodation rather than the accommodation offered as part of the terms of placement.

More detailed information about manses and housing can be found in Manse Information Handbook - https://victas.uca.org.au/minister-hub/

8.1 Manse provided by Placement

The congregation shall offer:

Either

(a) A Manse which meets Synod guidelines and has been inspected and approved by the Presbytery; or

(b) Other accommodation which is considered appropriate by the minister, placement and the Presbytery. This may be a leased property.

For ministers who, after agreement with the presbytery and the placement, provide their own housing when in placement, the Manse Allowance is offered to assist in the payment of costs usually borne by the placement when providing a house. This includes maintenance, insurance, rates and water charges.

The maximum manse allowance is not an entitlement, rather, the level is to be determined consultatively between the minister, congregation (or other responsible body) and presbytery. The congregation (or other responsible body) must not suffer financial disadvantage due to a ministry agent's decision to live in their own home. If the congregation do not have a manse to offer as accommodation and the minister has chosen to live in their own home, the manse allowance is to be paid at the full rate.

8.2 Rented Accommodation

When a property is leased by the congregation for this purpose the congregation must then pay the full rental payments for the lease of a house for the ministry agent. These payments should be made directly to the real estate agent or the Lessor/Rental Provider, and not to the ministry agent.

All leases must be signed by the Synod Property Trust Secretary on behalf of the Synod Property Trust, after approval by the presbytery and by Synod (usually at a PART meeting).

Any leased property must be available for a reasonable period, so that the minister and family are not disrupted with continual moves. Where a move is necessary, the placement will meet reasonable removal costs (Not including packing costs). See 8.10

8.3 Care and Maintenance of Manse or Rented Accommodation

The congregation (or, in the case of rented accommodation, the landlord) is responsible for capital maintenance and all repairs and replacements relating to improvements, fair wear and tear, and general depreciation. Church Councils should also make annual inspections of the manse. (The Presbytery should also undertake an inspection every five years or when a new placement is to occur, whichever is the earlier.) Ministers should encourage regular inspections of the accommodation provided.

A minister, in accepting a call, accepts responsibility to keep the property in a state of cleanliness and ongoing general maintenance, as would apply if it were a rental situation e.g. gardens tended and lawns mown, windows clean, spouting and down pipes cleared, and appliances kept clean and functional. The occupants are responsible for costs incurred for unreasonable wear and tear or damage, including wear caused by family pets and may be responsible for paying any shortfall in bond return in rental situations if the shortfall relates to their actions.

8.4 Manse/housing costs

8.4.1 House insurance and rates

Whether accommodation is Church owned or rented by the congregation the minister does not meet the cost of the insurance of the property or normal local government rates, both general and waste service charges. The minister is responsible for manse contents insurance excluding property belonging to the placement (e.g. floor coverings and drapes). However, where the minister has a study/office on the church site, it is appropriate for the congregation to accept responsibility for insurance of the minister's personal on-site office contents under the church's policy. Note that there is a standard excess under the Synod policy.

8.4.2 Electricity, gas and fuel

All electricity, gas and fuel usage and service charges are, as a general principle, part of normal living costs and the responsibility of the minister.

8.4.3 Water and sewerage

All manse water and sewerage usage and service charges are the responsibility of the placement.

8.4.4 Housing costs – variations

The minister and congregation may agree to vary the above standard arrangements provided Presbytery approval is obtained Any variation should be reflected in a new Terms placement document.

8.4.5 Manse provided – costs summary

Expense	Responsibility for payment
Council rates	Placement
Electricity, gas and fuel	Minister
Insurance – house	Placement
Insurance – contents	Minister
Water and sewerage	Placement

8.5 Summary of Manse Options

8.5.1 Option 1: Approved manse

An *Approved Manse*, where the minister is requested to live in the area of the placement. The congregation may offer an available manse (owned by the placement or leased by the placement) which has been approved by the Presbytery under the Synod manse guidelines. This would be rent free and include the standard provision of meeting manse maintenance, property insurance, normal local government rates – both general and waste, manse water and sewerage service and usage charges as required.

8.5.2 Option 2: Approved manse not accepted

For ministers who, after agreement with the presbytery and the placement, provide their own housing when in placement, the Manse Allowance is offered to assist in the payment of costs usually borne by the placement when providing a house. This includes maintenance, insurance, rates and water charges. The maximum manse allowance is not an entitlement, rather, the level is to be determined consultatively between the minister, placement and presbytery.

8.5.3 Part-time Placements and Housing

The need for appropriate accommodation for minister and family in a part-time placement can be no less than where the placement is full-time, and a manse is an entitlement. A similar view has already been accepted in relation to the car allowance.

The wide diversity of circumstances of ministers in part-time placements, however, underlines the need for some flexibility. No single approach appears to be fair and reasonable, just and equitable, across the range of situations. Rather, a series of alternatives has been developed which minister, congregation and Presbytery can explore during the placement conversations. It is crucial that a decision on the choice of option is made before the placement is finalised. Any changes to the terms of the placement must be approved by the Presbytery and reported to Placements Committee.

In principle, if an approved manse or other appropriate accommodation is offered, it is offered on the same terms as for a full-time placement.

In situations where a minister is not engaged in a full-time capacity and chooses to provide their own accommodation, or, where the placement does not have a manse available, the congregation may pay a pro rata manse allowance of no less than 2/3rds of the contribution normally given to a full-time placement, taking into consideration the local rental market. If a minister is undertaking multiple part-time placements, the maximum manse allowance shall not exceed 1.0 in total.

The allowance is paid into the Ministers' Benefit Account. The congregation is not responsible for maintenance, insurance, rates and water charges.

8.6 Quantum of Manse Allowance

Manse allowances are reviewed on an annual basis by the Terms of Placement Committee, with consideration given to the ABS CPI data for housing. This index factors movements in a range of prices including water, rates and insurance, maintenance and repair costs and new dwelling purchases.

This review is approved by the Synod Standing Committee and aims to produce an outcome which reduces the chance of ministry agents being adversely affected by market volatility.

8.7 Furnishing Provisions

Ministers are responsible for the furnishing of manses. This gives ministers and their families freedom of personal choice.

Assistance of up to $3,000 is available to exit students to furnish their home e.g. for white goods, dining and lounge furniture. This provision is considered, case by case, on a need's basis by the Pastoral Assistance Committee. This assistance applies equally to ministers in part-time placements. Please contact the PAC via email to arrange this assistance. pac@victas.uca.org.au

8.8 Clergy Couples

All ministers in placement are entitled to the value of a manse whether by the provision of an appropriate residence or a manse allowance. This entitlement applies, notwithstanding the minister's accommodation arrangements. It can happen that a clergy couple lives in the manse where one of the ministers is in placement. The minister's clergy spouse working in a different placement is entitled to receive a manse allowance from that other placement.

8.9 Moving Leave as a Placement commences

Moving leave is provided for in Reg 2.7.2 (c). This leave applies whether or not a minister is moving house. Two weeks is the normal provision. Three weeks is allowed for moves between Synods and between Victoria and Tasmania.

8.10 Removal Costs

You can find the link on the website at Removal Guidelines 2019

Reasonable removal costs (up to 70 cubic metres) are normally met by the Synod if a minister is required to move residence as part of a new placement. Ministers are responsible for packing their own goods.

The Synod arranges the removals process, including seeking and approving quotes.

Interstate Moves: the Synod that a minister is moving from organises and pays for the move; then invoices the receiving Synod for half the costs.

International moves: by negotiation with the Secretary of the Terms of Placement Committee.

The Synod will pay for a minister to move to the place of their choice on retirement, or for one earlier move into their own residence. If a minister elects to retire beyond the Synod boundaries, the Synod only pays for the cost to the state border (i.e. the travel component of the move is capped to reflect average 'normal' intrastate distances).

9 Finalising a Terms of Placement

The Terms of Placement, including any negotiated allowances, shall be agreed prior to a call being issued. The Terms of Placement form shall be signed by the placement and the Presbytery and included with the letter of Call. Upon accepting a Call the minister shall also sign the Terms of Placement form and return it to the placement along with the letter accepting the Call. A copy is to be sent to the Secretary of the Placements Committee.

Any change to the Terms of Placement (other than adjustments made by the Synod) requires the approval of the Presbytery. Any request to change the housing provisions in the Terms of Placement will be made to the Presbytery which shall negotiate amended arrangements and the timing thereof and report it to the Placements Committee. All adjusted Terms of Placement forms need to be lodged with the Secretary of the Placements Committee.

10 Employee Assistance Program

All ministry agents can access an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provided by an external service provider, Psychology Melbourne. Psychology Melbourne have over 35 experienced psychologists with a range of expertise to match individual needs.

The EAP is a confidential service that can offer support related to the workplace or personal issues such as:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Stress
- Grief and loss
- Eating disorders
- Suicide prevention
- Communication issues
- Time management
- Relationships
- Drug and alcohol issues
- And more

Appointments can be via video, telephone or in person at 14 locations in Melbourne. There are appointments available in both business hours and out of hours.

Ministry agents can access up to three appointments per year free of charge. If any ministry agent requires more than 3 appointments, please contact the PAC to see if they can provide financial support for further sessions.

To make an appointment
Call: (03) 9629 1001
Email: clientservices@psychologymelbourne.com.au
Live chat at: www.psychologymelbourne.com.au
Tell them you work for the Uniting Church VicTas Synod

Cancellation: Please avoid last minute cancellations. Cancellations for sessions within 48 hours will be deducted from the three-session allocation.

11 Leave

11.1 Annual Leave

11.1.1 Entitlement

The annual leave entitlement for ministers is four weeks per annum including four Sundays.

11.1.2 Taking of leave

Rest and recreation are essential for effective ministry. Ministers should take their annual leave entitlements within 12 months of the end of the year of service in which the leave was accrued.

Conversation must be had by Minister with regards to leave as it must be formally approved.

There should be discussion between the minister and the responsible body or its representatives at least once a year to ensure effective management of annual leave.

11.1.3 Public holidays during annual leave

Where a public holiday occurs during the period of a minister's annual leave then the day or days of public holiday do not form part of the annual leave.

11.1.4 Recording of leave

Responsible bodies must approve and keep records of leave taken by a minister to ensure that there is a clear understanding of accrued entitlements and leave taken and report these to the Synod's Centralised Stipends Payroll Service (CSPS) and Presbytery. Ministers must seek approval for leave prior to it being taken. The Ministers Annual Leave form for recording the dates and approval is available on the website at CAPS Ministers Annual Leave Form. The completed forms must be forwarded to both presbytery and Synod Payroll Services: payroll-uca@victas.uca.org.au

(Please note that for administrative purposes Payroll Services designates a week as 38 hours. This is not an indication of the exact hours that are worked).

11.1.5 Maximum annual leave accrual

Annual leave entitlements are cumulative and can be taken as they accrue with the permission of the responsible body. Ministers will not be permitted to accrue more than eight weeks of annual leave without the approval of the Presbytery. This approval will be granted only in special/exceptional circumstances. Applications, including reasons, are to be made to the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee not later than six months prior to further leave becoming due. Presbytery will consult the congregation (or other responsible body).

Where a Presbytery is unable to persuade a minister to take annual leave then the Presbytery, in conjunction with the responsible body, may declare that the minister is on annual leave for specific periods.

Unused leave cannot be carried from one placement to another. A minister may be paid in lieu of taking annual leave on resignation or retirement from active ministry.

11.1.6 Part-time placements - annual leave

Ministers in part-time placement are entitled to four weeks leave per year (including four Sundays or whatever is usual). During leave they continue to receive whatever their usual (pro rata) remuneration is.

11.1.7 Accrual of annual leave during sick leave

Normally after 13 weeks of continuous sick leave, or 13 weeks sick leave in one placement year, annual leave ceases to accrue until the person has returned to work.

11.2 Public Holidays

Public holidays are Government gazetted public holidays. Where the minister is required to work on a public holiday e.g. Good Friday, an alternative should be arranged, preferably in the same week. Where a government gazetted public holiday falls on a day when the minister would normally work then the minister will not be required to work on that day. This applies to both full-time and part-time placements.

11.3 Sundays free from Ministerial Responsibilities

Presbyteries and congregations are encouraged to make a provision for ministers in full-time or part-time placement to have one free Sunday per quarter. Ministers are encouraged to take advantage of one free Sunday per quarter to enable ministers to spend time with family or friends and participation in, rather than leading of worship. Planning to utilise free Sundays should be done in consultation with the responsible bodies.

The free Sunday is not seen as cumulative. Where such time is not taken in any quarter, it is automatically foregone.

11.4 Study Leave

11.4.1 Full-time placements

The Guidelines approved by the Synod Standing Committee include the following (synod entity names have been updated):

1. 14 days Study Leave shall be available each year to Ministers in a Placement with additional Study Leave available through negotiation with the oversight body. Terms of Placement approved by the Presbytery may specify a more precise figure.**14 days is the equivalent of two working weeks.**
2. Study Leave shall normally be taken each year for programmes (whether set courses or self-directed study) to equip for ministry within the life and ethos of the UCA. This shall be planned by the Minister in conjunction with the Church Council or other responsible body. The Presbytery, in the exercise of its pastoral and supervisory role, may also choose to be involved in this planning. Normally Study Leave not taken in the year in which it is due is forgone.
3. If a substantial period of study is planned, the Minister may negotiate with the Church Council or other responsible body for Study Leave to be accumulated up to five years' entitlement. This needs approval by the Presbytery and must be reported to equipping Leadership for Mission.

4. Ministers are expected on return from Study Leave to report to the Placement on the experience and its value to themselves and to the Placement.
5. Consideration shall be given to the needs of the Placement as well as the needs of the Minister, and the timing of Study Leave needs to be acceptable to both. Normally attention will be given to the following:
    a. Study Leave shall be taken during the current Placement unless for special reasons and with approval of a new Church Council or other responsible body such entitlement to leave is carried over into the next Placement.
    b. Taking accumulated Study Leave in the same year as Long Service Leave shall require the approval of both the Church Council or other responsible body and the Presbytery.
    c. Ministers and Church Councils or other responsible bodies will seek to minimise potential difficulties if Study Leave requests involve multiple absences from a Congregation on a Sunday.

There are good reasons for recording study leave in a similar way to annual leave, so the responsible body can encourage ministers to use their study leave and to minimise differences which can arise between the minister and responsible body around time taken.

11.4.2 Part-time placements

Minimum study leave is pro rata of the minimum entitlement of 14 days a year for ministers in full-time placement.

11.4.3 Financial Assistance

A number of responsible bodies provide some financial assistance to support study leave. There is no specific requirement on a placement; though some placements offer assistance towards the cost of course fees and travel costs. Continuing Education Grants available through eLM may also be available to assist with the costs of study leave. You will find more details here. The Personal Resources and Development Allowance is intended to strengthen existing assistance to make effective use of study leave.

11.5 Sick Leave

11.5.1 Provision

Ministers' sick leave entitlements are divided into two categories: Short Term Sick Leave and Long-Term Sick Leave.

11.5.2 Short Term Sick Leave

Two (2) standard working weeks (typically 10 days for a full-time placement) or pro rata for part-time placements per placement year.

Absences of more than three consecutive days require either a medical certificate or a statutory declaration. This leave is managed and recorded by the responsible body. Unused short term sick leave does not carry over into the next placement year and cannot be paid out.

11.5.3 Long Term Sick Leave

Long Term Sick Leave is provision where sick leave in excess of 10 days per year is required. Sick Leave provision for ministers in placement is not dependent on length of service. It is provided so that Ministers can recover, manage, diagnose and /or seek the care required to support ill health. Leave taken as Long-Term Sick Leave is funded via the Ministers Special Assurance Fund (MSA), part of the Ministers Insurance Levy paid for by placements. These funds are managed by the Pastoral Assistance Committee (PAC).

11.5.3.1 Oversight and management.

The presbytery must oversee effective management of Long-Term Sick Leave. Regular (at least monthly) communication between the minister, the presbytery and the PAC must be maintained. This will ensure appropriate support is being offered and the minister is given the best opportunity to recover and plan for return to ministry.

All Long-Term Sick Leave requires medical certificates, which are to be provided to the responsible body, and the presbytery (PRC). The presbytery will forward a copy to the Pastoral Assistance Committee.

11.5.3.2 Financial Arrangements and supply.

When sick leave continues for more than two weeks (cumulatively in the placement year), or where it is known from the outset that leave will be needed for more than two weeks, supply (up to 50% of the placement time fraction) will be covered by the Minsters Special Assurance Fund (MSA) from the third week.

When Long Term Sick Leave continues beyond three months, the MSA fund will take responsibility for the minister's entitlements, with the responsible body covering the cost of supply. The minister's travel allowance normally reduces to base level.

Financial assistance from the fund will either cease or reduce to 80% if the period of leave reaches 12 months.

11.5.3.3 Return to Ministry planning

- It is expected that there will be regular (at least monthly) meetings between the minister and the presbytery during a period of long-term sick leave. An important part of each conversation should be exploring readiness and a plan to return to normal duties or to explore other options.

- 'Return to ministry responsibilities plan.' A small group including the minister, support person, presbytery and responsible body representatives should together prepare and document how a minister re-engages after a significant period of absence due to sick leave. Please contact the Associate General Secretary for further information, advice and guidance about the return to ministry process.

11.5.3.4 If a return to ministry is unlikely:

- At nine months, or at an earlier time if appropriate, discussion should take place with the minister regarding the next steps if there is not a possibility of a return to work by the 12-month anniversary. Outcomes would be appropriate to the circumstances in each case and could range from a return to ministry plan (with timeframe), temporary or permanent retirement on medical grounds, retirement or conclusion of placement.

NOTE: It may be appropriate for discussions about retirement on medical grounds or age grounds to be explored at a much earlier stage.

For further information on the long-term sick leave process and the guidelines to ensure the best outcome for both the minister and the placement, contact the Pastoral Assistance Committee at **pac@victas.uca.org.au**

For advice on return to ministry planning or other pathways, please contact the **Associate General Secretary.**

11.5.4 For accrual of Annual Leave during Sick Leave see 10.1.7

11.6 Carer's leave

11.6.1 From time to time, ministers in placement may seek to take leave to care for a sick dependant. This information is provided as guidelines for such circumstances**.**

Guidelines

Personal leave taken to care for a sick dependant will normally be according to the following guidelines:

(a) The minister is seeking leave to care for a member of their immediate family or household (see definitions of "household" and "family" below) where the following definitions apply:

(b) Having regard for the accepted cultural and religious norms of a minister's community/cultural context a family member is:

- a partner
- a child or adult child (including an adopted child, foster, step-child or the child of an ex-spouse);
- a parent (including a foster parent or an adoptive parent or a legal guardian);
- a grandparent;

- a grandchild; or
- a sibling of the minister or of the minister's partner.

(c) A household member is a relative of the minister who lives in the same house, where relative means a person related by blood, marriage or affinity (ie the relationship that a spouse has to blood relatives of the other spouse due to marriage). Same sex partners are included in the definition of household;

(d) The minister is responsible for the care of the person concerned;

(e) The minister will not normally take Carer's Leave where another person has taken leave to care for the same person

(f) Where the absence of the minister will be or is expected to be more than two days, or precludes the minister from attending pre-arranged commitments then the minister will advise the Church Council Chairperson and the relevant Presbytery Minister of their intention to take leave including:

- the name of the person requiring care;
- their relationship to the minister;
- reasons for taking such leave; and
- the estimated length of absence.

If it is not practicable for the minister to give prior notice of absence, then the minister should provide notification at the first opportunity; and

(g) The minister may be required to establish, by production of a medical certificate or statutory declaration, the illness of the person concerned and that the illness is such as to require care by another.

11.6.2 From time-to-time ministers may be faced with the unfortunate situation of the long-term illness (a month or more) of a household or family member.

In such situations the Presbytery PRC should be advised so that appropriate pastoral care can be provided for the minister and suitable arrangements can be put in place for the congregation. As part of the pastoral care the PRC may approve carer's leave for the minister and notify the PAC of its decision. Once notified of approval of leave the PAC will provide reimbursement for supply ministry costs for the congregation.

11.7 Workers Compensation

Ministers in full-time and part-time placement are covered by WorkCover under a Synod-wide policy and uniform premium rate. Where a minister has an approved WorkCover claim, the minister will receive compensation as set out in the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 (WIRC Act). For information on medical expense reimbursement as part of the approved WorkCover claim, minister can seek advice from the Return To Work Coordinator.

11.8 Bereavement Leave

Bereavement Leave is taken following the death of a close family member. Compassionate Leave is taken specifically in the lead up to the death of a close family member.

Close family members are considered to be a partner, child, parent, parent-in-law, sibling or sibling-in-law.

It is provided to both full-time and part-time placements.

The usual length for each type of leave is up to five days. If however a longer period of leave is required, the Church Council (or responsible body) and the Presbytery should be notified to extend the time required.

The Pastoral Assistance Committee will assist with the cost of supply ministry during these periods of leave.

11.9 Parental Leave (includes maternity, adoption and partner leave)

(a) Maternity Leave

Ministers in full-time or part-time placements are entitled to three months paid leave in respect of maternity. Paid leave normally commences not earlier than six weeks before the expected due date of the baby, with the provision of six weeks paid leave after the birth being compulsory irrespective of the date of commencement of the leave.

The Synod meets the cost of supply during the period of leave. This is funded through the Synod Special Insurance Fund to which responsible bodies are required to contribute in respect of each minister. The paid leave duration is not normally intended to be discretionary or subject to partial work arrangements. This is seen to be in the interests of the minister, supply minister, responsible body and the Church.

During the three months paid leave the responsible body continues to pay stipend and provide other ministerial entitlements (other than, as with Long Service Leave, the distance component of the car allowance). That includes ongoing occupancy of the church provided rent free accommodation or, where no manse is provided, continuation of the manse allowance. The period is recognised as service with the Church. Where the supply ministry requires provision of accommodation and that cannot be provided locally, this is part of the cost of the supply arrangement which the Synod covers.

It is neither appropriate nor practicable to require all ministers eligible for three months paid maternity leave to return to work as soon as that leave concludes. Ministers are encouraged to access the Government's paid parental leave scheme. Any extension of leave beyond the three months is a matter for consultation between the minister, responsible body and Presbytery, subject to the leave not extending beyond the child's first birthday.

During any accepted period of extended leave, the minister shall be entitled to the continued provision of the rent-free manse or payment of manse allowance, as prior to the confinement. Any accrued annual leave or Long Service Leave may be taken during the unpaid extended maternity leave.

The responsible body is not required to make any payments to the minister or to pay any levies and the like in respect of the minister during any unpaid maternity leave (though voluntary payments may be made to the Beneficiary Fund/superannuation).

Where a responsible body considers that it is financially disadvantaged during the period of unpaid maternity leave because it is required to provide accommodation for supply ministry, it may apply to the Synod to cover the shortfall.

The minister's continuity of service with the Church is not interrupted by any period of maternity leave but unpaid leave does not count as service for Church purposes.

The pastoral care of the minister during maternity leave is seen as important. We ask Presbyteries to pay attention to this.

(b) Adoption Leave

Ministers in full-time and part-time placement are entitled to up to three months paid leave where the minister is the primary care giver of an adopted child, or 10 days if not the primary caregiver. The general conditions are those that apply as with maternity leave, including the Synod meeting the cost of supply during the period of paid leave.

Leave may be extended beyond the paid period up to 52 weeks in total, on an unpaid basis. Again, the provisions applicable are those which apply in respect of extension of maternity leave but apply to either partner who is a minister.

(c) Partner Leave

A minister whose partner gives birth is able to take 10 days paid leave (pro rata for part time placements) within the first three months of birth. This leave is paid by the responsible body.

Non birth parents in full-time or part-time placement, who become the primary carer of their child, or a child of their spouse, are entitled to up to 52 weeks unpaid leave, provided such leave does not extend beyond the child's first birthday. They are also encouraged to access the government's paid parental leave scheme. This leave cannot be taken concurrently with their partner's maternity leave. During the leave the minister shall be entitled to the continued provision of the rent-free manse or payment of the manse allowance. Other provisions are akin to those applying to unpaid maternity leave.

11.10 Long Service Leave

11.10.1 Eligibility

Long Service Leave for Ministers of the Word, Deacons, those in the Specified Ministry of Youth Worker and pastors in placement, is provided under the Synod Ministers Long Service Leave Scheme.

11.10.2 Main provisions

The leave is not simply a period of paid absence which accrues following a specified period of approved service. Its objective is to provide refreshment for future ministry.

With the changing location of ministry, Long Service Leave accrues on an 'industry wide' basis. Service with the Church may be in a placement with a congregation, agency, Presbytery, Synod or the Assembly in Australia, with UnitingWorld (or its successors) or recommended by it outside Australia, or while released with Presbytery approval, to a form of ministry in Australia but outside the UCA. Service may be full-time or part-time, (see Section 12.8) and in recognised private arrangements.

The scheme ensures that the cost of Long Service Leave does not fall directly on the responsible body at the time the minister takes leave. It is shared through 'responsible bodies' paying a levy on the minimum stipend of ministers to the Long Service Leave Fund. In addition to the minister continuing to be paid normal entitlements during leave (other than a distance travel component based on 5,000 kms a year in lieu of normal travel allowance), the fund pays the minister a personal allowance to assist in the taking of leave.

On completion of fifteen years' service with the Church, ministers are entitled to thirteen weeks Long Service Leave. However, ministers may opt to take an initial six weeks Long Service Leave after the first seven years' service. After the initial fifteen years' service, ministers are entitled to eight weeks Long Service Leave for each subsequent period of eight years' service.

Periods of Long Service Leave shall normally not be less than twoweeks. There is no minimum period between successive periods of Long Service Leave but where the gap between periods of Long Service leave is less than three years, and the minister is in the same placement the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee shall consult with the congregation. Annual leave can be taken in conjunction with Long Service Leave.

Leave entitlements may be paid out on death or retirement, including the personal grant.

11.10.3 Responsibilities

The Associate General Secretary together with Accounting Services is responsible for the administration of ministers Long Service Leave.

The Terms of Placement Committee has authority to deal at its discretion with exceptional issues arising out of the Long Service Leave policy, including guidelines for doing so. If you wish to apply for an alteration to the Long Service Leave provisions, please contact the **Associate General Secretary**.

11.10.4 Procedure

Where a minister is considering taking Long Service Leave, they should first discuss the matter with the responsible body. The minister will then complete a Long Service Leave application and seek the approval of the Presbytery. The Presbytery will consult with the responsible body if it is less than three years since the last period of Long Service Leave or if the responsible body has not supported the taking of leave.

The Presbytery is responsible for supply arrangements, including ensuring that they are in place an adequate time prior to the commencement of leave.

The Long Service leave application form is available on the minister hub on the Synod website. https://victas.uca.org.au/minister-hub/ and appendix A in this handbook

11.10.5 Payment of Ministers' Long Service Leave costs (Standing Committee ref 07.50.1)

The following costs associated with ministers on Long Service Leave will be paid from the Ministers' Long Service Leave Fund:

(a) Minimum stipend;

(b) Long Service Leave Grant;

(c) Personal Resource Development allowance; and

(d) Travel allowance (excepting distance component).

11.10.6 Costs of Long Service Leave supply

All costs of Long Service Leave supply are the responsibility of the relevant congregation /responsible body, including funding of accommodation for supply ministry where required.

11.10.7 Continuity of service

Service is regarded as continuous despite the taking of approved paid and unpaid leave. Approved paid leave includes any annual leave or Long Service Leave, any absence on account of illness or injury and any other paid leave which has been approved by the relevant Presbytery, or for Synod placements, the General Secretary.

Approved unpaid leave does not constitute a break in service; however Long Service Leave will not accrue during any period of unpaid leave.

11.10.8 Retirement and outstanding Long Service Leave

Where a minister retires or resigns in good standing, the total remaining balance of the minister's Long Service Leave will be paid out.

11.10.9 Ministers Long Service Leave entitlements

Long Service Leave entitlements for ministers comprise the following:

(a) Stipend

Payment of the minimum stipend from the Long Service Leave Fund.

(b) Long Service Leave Grant

Payment of a Long Service Leave Grant, currently 65% of Stipend, from the Long Service Leave Fund.

The purpose of this grant is to encourage ministers to take refreshment away from their usual place of ministry.

(c) Travel Allowance/Provision of a Motor Vehicle

Travel allowance

Where a minister on Long Service Leave normally receives a travel allowance then a travel allowance which is calculated at the rate of the current 5,000 km per annum travel allowance will be paid to that minister from the Long Service Leave Fund;

Provision of Motor Vehicle

Where a minister in a placement is provided with a motor vehicle then that arrangement will continue during the period of Long Service Leave;

Personal Resource Development Allowance:

Whilst on Long Service Leave, all ministers will receive the Personal Resource Development Allowance from the Long Service Leave Fund.

(d) Manse provision

Provision of a manse or the current manse allowance during the time that a minister is on Long Service Leave will continue to be the responsibility of the congregation or responsible body.

11.10.10 Recognition withdrawn

Where the recognition of ordained ministers is withdrawn under Regulation 2.10.3.a (iii) or (b), they forfeit their Long Service Leave entitlement, but the Standing Committee may approve a payment where there is any period of accrued leave not taken, including pro rata payment for an incomplete period of accrual, except where the minister is accruing a first entitlement of leave.

11.10.11 Youth Workers

The Long Service Leave provisions regarding withdrawal of recognition of ordained ministers also apply to withdrawal of accreditation of youth workers.

11.10.12 Access to pro rata Long Service Leave on termination

Effective from December 2006 the requirement for payment of Long Service Leave entitlement for a minister at the time of termination is 7 years continuous service.

11.10.13 Double Long Service Leave period for half pay rate

Long Service Leave may be taken for a double period on half pay, where, following discussions between the minister, the congregation (or other responsible body) and the presbytery, there is agreement to grant the application. In the absence of agreement, the application is deemed not to be granted.

In such circumstances where Long Service Leave is taken for a double period on half pay, the Manse Allowance (if applicable) should be paid at half (0.5) of the current allowance.

11.11 Long Service Leave for Non-ordained Ministries

For those who have moved from one role to another under the Pastor regulations, service will be considered continuous, provided the gap between roles is no more than three months.

Those that have accrued a minimum of seven years continuous service, where the person is retiring from active ministry, will receive Long Service Leave.

Where Long Service Leave entitlement has been accrued, payment in respect of the leave will be made from the Ministers' Long Service Leave Fund. The placement (e.g. the congregation) pays for Supply and continues to provide housing to the minister.

The Fund pays the minister's stipend, a personal allowance (65% of stipend), and travel allowance for 5,000 km per annum pro rata.

11.12 Long Service Leave - Summary of Eligibility and Conditions

11.12.1 Long Service Leave for ministers– Full-time

Long Service Leave accrues 1 week per year after 15 years of service:

Service	Accrued Long Service Leave
7 years	6.09 weeks
10 years	8.66 weeks
11 years	9.53 weeks
12 years	10.4 weeks

13 years	11.27 weeks
14 years	12.13 weeks
15 years	13.00 weeks

Where the gap between successive periods of Long Service Leave is less than three years, the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee shall consult with the congregation.

11.12.2 Long Service Leave for ministers – Part-time

Long Service Leave is accrued pro rata for ministers who are in part-time placements. For example, where a placement is half time then the Long Service Leave entitlement is for the same period of time as the table above but paid at the half time rate.

11.12.3 LSL - Payment of costs

Cost	Paid by
Stipend	Long Service Leave Fund
Base travel allowance	Long Service Leave Fund
Long Service Leave Grant	Long Service Leave Fund
Manse allowance	Congregation
Supply Ministry	Congregation

11.13 Portability of Leave Entitlements

Long Service Leave is portable and can be carried over into a new placement. Study leave can only be carried over into a new placement for special reasons and with the prior approval of both the Presbytery and the new responsible body. The portability of sick leave (the only other major area where portability may be recognised) is not relevant because of the ‘as needed’ nature of the benefit for ministers.

12 Retirement Benefits

12.1 Beneficiary Fund

The Mercer Super Trust – The UCA Beneficiary Fund was once the chosen provider for superannuation for ordained ministry agents because it provided a defined benefit section. However, this provision has now closed to new members. It continues to offer an accumulation Fund. Ministers who are in the Beneficiary Fund are able to contact Mercer on the below details.

Contact details are as follows:

By Phone:

In the first instance:
Helpline: 1800 682 525 (or 61 3 86871823 if calling from overseas)

In Writing:

Mercer Superannuation (Australia) Limited
GPO Box 4303
Melbourne Vic 3001

12.2 NGS Super

All workers fall under Choice of Fund legislation and have the option of nominating a superannuation fund. If workers do not nominate a fund the default fund applies: “NGS Super”.

NGS Administration
GPO Box 4303
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Phone	1300 133 177
Fax	(03) 8640 0813
Website	http://www.ngssuper.com.au/

13 Part-Time Placements

13.1 Context

Part-time situations can vary widely. The placement may range from a single part-time placement in one congregation, to a placement shared with other ministers, to multiple part-time placements in two or more congregations. The minister may be in a part-time placement by choice e.g. while undertaking study, writing, semi-retired, or for personal reasons. The minister may have secured part-time secular employment or be seeking additional part-time employment.

13.2 Consultation

Placement arrangements require consultation between the prospective minister, congregation(s) or other responsible bodies, and presbytery, from the early stages of the placement process. This is no less true of part-time placements as full-time; indeed, some aspects can require more attention (see e.g. Housing below). It can be unhelpful for issues to be raised after placement occurs when they could have reasonably been foreseen. Presbytery, through its Pastoral Relations Committee, has the responsibility to oversee these arrangements.

Where part-time placements aggregate, particularly in two or more congregations, it is important that there is a clear and documented understanding of the respective obligations of each of the parties e.g. a written agreement. Entitlements should not be treated separately. Rather they are considered on an aggregated basis and ordinarily the cost split pro rata between the individual placements.

13.3 Part-time Minimum for Total Range of Entitlements

To attract the total range of entitlements, part-time placements (whether as a single placement or aggregated) must be **at least 0.4 of full-time**. In exceptional circumstances a placement may be less than 0.4 in which case the presbytery determines the terms of placement (consulting, if necessary, with the TPC).

13.4 Quantification of Part-time

From time-to-time debate arises as to how part-time should be quantified in terms of hours or how particular elements of ministry should be recognised in terms of time fractions of full-time service. Consistent with the theological considerations on ministerial entitlements, the hours of work of ordained ministry, whether full or part-time, are not seen as an area where precision is appropriate, any more than it is, for example, with other professional work or what committed members give in voluntary roles to the Church. Nonetheless, in the absence of some guide, there is considerable scope for misunderstanding and resentments.

A common view is that with a 0.5 placement, the responsible body can expect the minister to be engaged in the work of that ministry for about 20 hours a week, including preparation time for worship. As to the recognition of particular elements of work, the time fraction for which service is credited for part-time (and supply) ministry for Long Service Leave provides a guide:

Service	Accrued Long Service Leave
Each day of pastoral care	0.2 week
One worship service	0.1 week
More than one service	0.2 week

14 Supply Ministry

14.1 Introduction

Supply Ministry is a specific ministry normally provided by ordained ministers and approved lay people. It can range from a single Sunday service to a longer-term ongoing ministry, full-time or part-time, of a year or more. It may be provided by a minister in active ministry, including awaiting a placement, or undertaking supply ministry by choice, or by a retired minister, whether temporarily or permanently, including a minister whose health precludes a placement but not supply ministry. Supply ministry does not include Intentional Interim Ministry; this is recognised as a placement. Supply ministry is normally paid through Centralised Stipend and Payroll Systems.

14.2 Supply ministry situations

With the variety of circumstances and arrangements, the development of provisions which may be appropriate to each individual situation is well-nigh impossible. Three broad situations have been identified which are sufficiently different from each other to warrant different entitlements.

14.3 Entitlements appropriate to the different supply situations

The entitlements for the different supply situations do not vary with the classification of the minister providing that ministry, e.g. whether the minister is in active ministry or retired, or a ministerial candidate not on field placement. Supply ministry fees do not apply to lay preachers. See **https://victas.uca.org.au/ministry-mission/lay-preachers-association/** for further information on lay preachers.

The provisions for occasional and short-term supply ministry apply to ministerial candidates not in field placements, who are undertaking supply work.

14.3.1 Occasional supply

Worship service(s) and/or pastoral care days over a continuous period of not more than one month.

The arrangements are ordinarily between the responsible body and the supply minister. The present approach of occasional supply fees is seen as appropriate. They relate to services, pastoral care days and reimbursement of travel costs, normally at the ad hoc rate. On the other hand, supervisory and oversight responsibilities, let alone developmental ministry, regarding the congregation would not ordinarily be part of the role.

The ad hoc travel rate recognises two different situations. The higher rate is “normal (average total) cost reimbursement”. This applies to ministers not in an approved placement, theological students and retired ministers. The lower, “marginal cost reimbursement”, applies to ministers in placement or other employment.

Besides paying the fees for services or pastoral days, the responsible body is also required to make a Superannuation Guarantee contribution on behalf of the minister for all supply payments and applicable allowances.

14.3.2 Short term supply

Involving a continuous period of more than one month but up to three months in the one location.

The arrangements are to be determined between the congregation and the minister, subject to the oversight of the Presbytery.

A fee structure similar to occasional supply fees, and similarly reviewed, applies. However, additional preparation time for services can normally be expected with the greater involvement of a minister in the congregation. Some limited participation in the life of the congregation, can also be required. Pastoral ministry time may need to increase to provide for this. Alternatively, pastoral visitation will correspondingly be reduced. The responsible body is required to make a Superannuation Guarantee contribution on behalf of the minister for all supply payments and applicable allowances.

The ad hoc car allowance applies up to a level of approximately 1,250 kilometres per month, after which the standard car allowance rate applies.

14.3.3 Short term supply - extension

Where supply ministry is for a specific period, and its continuation is proposed, it is necessary for the presbytery, in consultation with the responsible body and minister, to determine its future basis. For example, a supply ministry of two months may be extended a further two months. The entitlements would be those of short-term supply, and they would apply for the further two months after the initial period. (It would be contrary to the spirit of the provisions if there were simply continued extensions for further periods of up to three months rather than proper consideration of extension of supply ministry of more than three months). On the other hand, if after the initial two months the decision was to extend the supply ministry for a further four months, the long-term supply ministry entitlements would apply for the second period. Where a long-term supply ministry is extended, those entitlements would continue, whatever the period of extension. Note too that retrospective change is not envisaged.

14.3.4 Long term supply

Long term supply involves a continuous period of more than three months with one responsible body.

This ministry is not permanent in the sense that a placement is. On the other hand, there can be similarities with a placement, with specific objectives or ministry goals being set, and a substantial level of participation in the congregation with supervisory and oversight and developmental responsibilities. It may not necessarily be full-time but it is certainly expected that it would be not less than 0.4, ”To attract the total range of entitlements, part-time supply must be at least 0.4 of full-time.” Moreover, while there may be no specific duration, as with a placement, there is nonetheless an element of commitment on the part of the minister. It may involve a year or more at a time. In brief, this form of supply is closer to a placement than where occasional supply fees are appropriate.

Because of the variety of possible circumstances, the detailed arrangements in each situation need to be mutually agreed between the congregation, minister and presbytery.

14.3.4.1 Stipend

The minimum stipend, full-time or pro rata, should apply.

Loadings on Minimum Stipend

It is not anticipated that a minister in a supply situation would receive a loading on the minimum stipend. Any loading requires approval of the Presbytery.

Car allowance– Long term supply ministry

The car allowance, as with ministers in placements, should be related to the kilometres travelled on church business. The minister is to be paid a car allowance as though it were a placement. This to be paid monthly for each full month of completed service. The provision of a church car would be an acceptable alternative.

14.3.4.2 Personal Resources and Development Allowance

This allowance applies to ministers undertaking long term supply ministry. It would be paid monthly for each full month of completed service. For part-time ministry, see page 11.

14.3.4.3 Other allowances and work-related expenses

(a) **General expenses**

Insofar as telephone, postage, stationery etc. are work related expenses, they should be borne wholly or effectively by the responsible body. In the case of telephones, a common approach is payment of rental, all local calls and work-related calls.

(b) **Hospitality**

Some responsible bodies provide an allowance or make reimbursements where a minister is able to show excessive costs have been incurred.

Any such expenses would need to be incurred in relation to the minister's pastoral or related religious activities. In the interests of the responsible body and the minister, any provision would not be open ended.

(c) **Welfare payments**

Where a congregation expects its supply minister to respond to requests for welfare assistance, it must be prepared to provide the minister with monies to do so. This may be up to a prescribed amount for a specific period or an advance which is replaced as it runs out.

14.4 Housing

Housing arrangements will need to be determined consultatively between the minister, responsible body and presbytery. Consistent with the general approach to supply ministry, provisions in a long-term supply situation should not be more favourable than those applying in an approved placement of the same proportion of time.

Where the minister is requested to live in the locality of the congregation, consideration can be given to the provision of an "Approved manse" or "Appropriate Accommodation". See *Part-time placements and housing*: (8.4.4); and *Options 1 and 2* for details.

Where the minister is not required to live within the locality of the congregation but continues to live in their own home, whether any allowance is appropriate, and its level need to be determined consultatively.

14.5 Furnishing provisions

Where a manse is being provided, the question of furnishing may need to be addressed where member(s) of the supply minister's family continue to occupy the family home in another area. Again, this will need to be dealt with consultatively.

14.6 Removal expenses

While long term supply ministry may extend to a year or more in the one location, it may be as short as three months and one day. It has not the permanency of a placement and therefore the payment of removal expenses by the Synod does not normally arise. Whether a long-term supply minister needs to move any "goods and chattels" to the supply location is related to the issue of furnishing provisions for the supply minister. In the first instance, it has to be pursued consultatively between responsible body, minister and presbytery. The interim nature of the arrangement has to be recognised by all concerned but it is equally not in anyone's interests if the accommodation arrangements are not conducive to effective ministry.

14.7 Annual Leave and Public Holidays

Ministers in long term supply ministry are entitled to four weeks annual leave per year (full-time or pro rata), accumulated at one week per each three months of supply and to be taken during the time in supply.

Public holidays are Government gazetted public holidays. Where the supply minister is required to work on a public holiday e.g. Good Friday, an alternative should be arranged, preferably in the same week. Where a government gazetted public holiday falls on a day when the supply minister would normally work then the minister will not be required to work on that day. This applies to both short term and long-term supply.

As with ministers in placement, presbyteries and congregations are encouraged to provide a free Sunday a quarter to long term supply ministers in full time supply. This enables the minister to participate in, rather than lead, worship as well as providing family time together. The free Sunday is not seen as cumulative. Where such time is not taken in any quarter, it is automatically foregone.

14.8 Study Leave

Where the duration of the long-term supply ministry is at least 12 months, the minister is entitled to the minimum study leave of 2 weeks in the case of a full-time minister and pro rata thereof in the case of part-time long term supply ministry.

14.9 Sick Leave

A congregation is expected to cover the long-term supply minister on short term sick leave. However, unlike a placement, a long-term supply minister is not required to be paid during a continued illness. The Synod does not pick up the cost of alternative ministry, and the responsible body pays no Special Insurance contribution.

Ministers in full-time supply are entitled to five days sick leave in the first year accrued pro rata in respect of each complete month of service and eight days sick leave in subsequent years. Sick leave would be cumulative from year to year with the same responsible body, but it is not portable. Ministers in part-time supply would be entitled to sick leave on a pro rata basis.

14.10 Compassionate Leave or Bereavement Leave

This is for action at the local level, always in consultation with the Presbytery.

14.11 Parental Leave

Long term supply ministry is not identical with a placement. It does not involve the same element of permanency in the particular location. In these circumstances, parental leave is not seen as appropriate.

14.12 Employment Injury Leave

Where a supply minister is still in active ministry and has an approved WorkCover claim, the minister will receive compensation as set out in the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 (WIRC Act). For information on medical expense reimbursement as part of the approved WorkCover claim, minister can seek advice from the Return To Work Coordinator.

Where the minister is retired, the total benefits are limited to medical expenses, for up to 12 months.

14.13 Retirement Benefits

The responsible body is required to make a Superannuation Guarantee contribution on behalf of the minister for all supply payments and applicable allowances.

14.14 Fringe Benefits Tax Arrangements

Ministers Benefit Accounts and the related arrangements are applicable to ministers in long term supply arrangements.

14.15 Other Considerations

One of the outcomes which it is hoped to achieve in supply arrangements is a framework in which flexible provisions may be negotiated but within accepted parameters and with the active involvement of the Presbytery.

(a) **'Private arrangements'**

Application of the supply arrangements now in place removes the need for 'private arrangements'. The Presbytery must approve all ministry arrangements.

(b) **Supply service under 0.4 of full-time**

Supply service less than 0.4 needs to be addressed only in respect of long-term supply ministry. The entitlements envisaged for occasional supply and for short term supply are not specifically related to the level of ministry; they are "fee for service".

With long term supply ministry, it may not be full-time, but it is certainly expected that it would be not less than 0.4. It is only on this basis that a number of the provisions are seen to be appropriate.

If a minister were undertaking two or more long term supply ministries which aggregated at least 0.4, they would not be treated separately. Rather they would be aggregated and the cost of entitlements split between the responsible bodies of the ministries.

If, notwithstanding all of the above, a long-term supply ministry of less than 0.4 is approved, the view is that the fees for short term supply should be applied. If, however, this is considered inappropriate, the Terms of Placement Committee should be consulted.

Long Service Leave Application Version: LSLA v003

15 Long Service Leave Application Form

When / How to Use This Form

This form is to be completed by a minister when applying for long service leave. On completion of this form please forward to your Presbytery PRC for approval. Presbytery on approval please forward to: payroll@victas.uca.org.au

SECTION 1: General information – must be completed by minister

1.1 Minister's Name			
1.2 Address			
1.2 Contact Numbers	BH:	Mobile:	
LSL Details: Ministers who will take LSL should complete 2.1 below. Ministers who are retiring and seek payment in lieu of LSL should complete 2.2			
2.1 LSL Dates			
	1st Day of Leave	**Last Day of Leave**	**No. of Weeks**
2.2 Retirement date			
3 GRANT Payment Please advise how you would like to receive payment of your Grant. You can transfer up to 100% into your MBA account. Please circle and complete where applicable:			
☐ MBA Transfer. Please write the percentage _____ %		☐ All paid as wages	
Ministers Signature		**Dated**	

SECTION 2: Presbytery approval

Presbytery of:		
		Date of Approval
Approved by PRC		
	PRC - Please Sign your name above	PRC - Please Print your name above
Secretary Contact Details		
Secretary Contact Numbers	BH:	Mobile:

Office use only	

16 Long Service Leave Information and Processes

16.1 Entitlements whilst on Long Service Leave

1.1 Ministers who are on Long Service Leave (LSL) will receive the following entitlements which will be paid from the Long Service Leave Fund, pro rata for part time:

(a) Minimum stipend
(b) Long Service Leave Grant of 65% of current stipend, paid per week of LSL
(c) Travel allowance calculated at the rate of the current 5,000 km per annum rate **OR**
Where a minister in a placement is provided with a motor vehicle that arrangement will continue during Long Service Leave
(d) Personal Resource Development Grant

1.2 Where a minister in a placement is provided with a manse allowance by the congregation / sponsoring body, that arrangement will continue during the period of Long Service Leave

1.3 As Minister not in placement may apply for Long Service Leave

16.2 Payment in lieu of Long Service Leave

Where a minister retires or resigns in good standing then the total remaining balance of accrued LSL entitlements will be paid out from the LSL Fund as per 1.1 above.

16.3 Supply Arrangements and Costs of Supply

Arrangements for and costs of supply ministry during the period of the minister's Long Service Leave are the responsibility of the congregation / sponsoring body, including costs of accommodation, travel and any other supply ministry costs.

16.4 Long Service Leave application process

The minimum period of LSL is 2weeks. For additional information please refer to the Ministerial Provisions and Charges Handbook

(a) **Minister**
In order to apply for Long Service Leave, the minister completes page one of this form and submits it to the relevant presbytery for approval.

(b) **Presbytery PRC**
The Presbytery PRC authorises the minister's Long Service Leave by signing where indicated on page one of this form and then forwards the completed form to: **payroll@victas.uca.org.au**

Payroll Services arranges payment of Long Service Leave in accordance with dates which are provided on page one of this form.

16.5 Accrual of Long Service Leave entitlements

Long Service Leave accrues 1 week per year after 15 years of service

Cost	Paid by
7 years	6.09 weeks
10 years	8.66 weeks
11 years	9.53 weeks
12 years	10.4 weeks
13 years	11.27 weeks
14 years	12.13 weeks
15 years	13.00 weeks

Version: 08/06/2023

17 Ministers Retirement Notice

When / How to Use This Form

This form is to be completed by a minister when giving notice of retirement. On completion of this form please forward to your Presbytery PRC for noting. Presbytery on approval please forward to:

The Secretary of the Placements Committee
eLM, 29 College Crescent
PARKVILLE VIC 3052

SECTION 1: General information – must be completed by minister

Minister's Name			
Address			
Contact Numbers	BH:	Mobile:	
Current Placement			
Treasurer's Name			
Contact Details			
Accrued leave entitlements	Taking annual leave before retiring ☐ Yes ☐ No	Taking long service leave (submit LSL application form) ☐ Yes ☐ No	Being paid out long service leave (submit LSL application form) ☐ Yes ☐ No
Retirement date (usually end of month of final stipend payment)		Please indicate below the Retirement Regulation relating to this minister _____	**2.6.1(d)(i)(1) – over 55** **2.6.1(d)(i)(2) – medically unfit** **2.6.1(d)(i)(3) – other reason** **2.6.1(d)(ii) – temporary retirement**
Removal Information	Address:		Preferred Date:
Retirement Presbytery (ask for transfer if changing presbyteries)			
Ministers Signature			Dated:

SECTION 2: Presbytery record

Presbytery of:		Date of Recording:
Approved by PRC		
	PRC - Please Sign your name above	PRC - Please Print your name above

SECTION 3: Placements committee record

Meeting date	**Signed by Placements Committee Secretary**

18 Planning for Retirement

Regulations re Retirement

2.6.1 (d) A Minister may retire

(i) permanently

(1) after reaching the age of 55,

(2) on the issue of a medical certificate by the Synod's Medical Advisers that the Minister is unfit for active service and the Beneficiary Fund has determined a pension will be paid, or

(3) for any other reason which the Placements Committee after consultation with the Presbytery considers sufficient;

(ii) temporarily for a defined period with the approval of the Placements Committee of the Synod on the recommendation of or with the concurrence of the Presbytery on the issue of a medical certificate by the Synod's Medical Advisers that the Minister is temporarily unfit for active service and the Beneficiary Fund has determined a pension will be paid. Such temporary retirement may be extended or varied by the Placements Committee and at the end of the period of temporary retirement the Minister shall be available for active service or seek permanent retirement.

Please give at least 3 months' notice to your PRC and Church Council or equivalent body of your intended retirement date. **The date of retirement is the end of the month when the last stipend is paid**, not the day of the farewell or when the final period of leave starts.

This form will initiate contact with:

- The Minister's Presbytery –through the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC);
- The Placements Committee – PRC is responsible for passing this form to the Committee;
- Payroll and MBA – Placements Committee will pass the form to Payroll Services;
- Removals – Placements Committee will make initial contact with Property Services; and
- Mercer: Beneficiary Fund – Placements Committee will make an initial contact. The minister will also need to contact the Fund directly.

Notes about:

- MBA – any credit that is paid out after retirement is taxable
- Removal costs – the Synod meets reasonable removal costs. Property Services administers removals (03 9116 1956)
- Supply - If you wish to be available for supply, please contact your PRC and the Placements Committee Secretary.