



Ministry Agent Leave

E/8.6.1

Purpose

This procedure provides detailed information regarding specific leave types and guidance to the application of leave conditions for ministry agents and the body in which the ministry agent is placed.

Scope

This policy applies to all ministry agents in placement within The Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod. This policy excludes ministry locations designated as appropriate for the exercise of the Ministry of Pastor as leave conditions are governed by the Fair Work Act 2009.

Procedure

1. Annual Leave

- 1.1. Annual leave shall be four weeks, including four Sundays, taken in consultation with the body in which the ministry agent is placed.
- 1.2. No more than eight weeks shall be accumulated at any one time without the authorisation of Presbytery.
- 1.3. Annual leave accrued within the placement shall be taken within the duration of the placement unless otherwise negotiated. No lump sum payment will be made at the conclusion of the placement.
- 1.4. The ministry agent must inform the church council or appointing body related to their placement of their intention to take annual leave preferably at least three months in advance.
- 1.5. The Presbytery should be advised of leave arrangements.
- 1.6. A ministry agent must complete an Application for Leave form.
- 1.7. Once endorsed by the relevant church council or appointing body, all annual leave applications must be recorded in the payroll self-service portal for record-keeping purposes.
- 1.8. Annual leave records are to be kept by the congregation or the appointing body.
- 1.9. All stipend benefits and allowances apply during periods of annual leave.
- 1.10. Annual leave for ministry agents does not attract a leave loading.
- 1.11. No lump sum payment in lieu of annual leave not taken will be made at the conclusion of a placement or at the time of retirement.

2. Long Service Leave

2.1. Ministry Agent Long Service Leave Scheme (LSL Scheme) income

- 2.1.1. A LSL contribution will be charged for each placement. The contribution represents a reliable estimate of a future obligation to pay long service leave to the ministry agents. The provision for a future payment of long service leave is a requirement of Australian Accounting Standard



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AASB137. The provision is reflected as a liability of the Queensland Synod, who administers the LSL Scheme.

- 2.1.2. Initially, the contribution will reflect the new long service leave liability arising from placements that are current or commence after the commencement of the LSL Scheme on 1 July 2020.
- 2.1.3. From 1 July 2021, the LSL contribution will increase to partially offset the provision of long service liability from placements that occurred prior to 1 July 2020.
- 2.1.4. Further changes to the LSL contribution will be determined by the Queensland Synod office based on actuarial advice which the Queensland Synod office will seek immediately prior to the first year of operation of the LSL Scheme and every three years thereafter.
- 2.1.5. The LSL contribution is represented as a dollar value which is equivalent to a nominated percentage of the following ministry agent payments as at 1st July each year:
 - 2.1.5.1. Minimum stipend
 - 2.1.5.2. House allowance
 - 2.1.5.3. Standing costs component of the travel allowance
 - 2.1.5.4. Continuing Education for Ministry (CEM)
 - 2.1.5.5. CEM – Travel Fund
 - 2.1.5.6. A dollar value equivalent to 14.4% of 2.1.5.1 to 2.1.5.5 above, which represents on-costs such as superannuation, sickness and accident assistance plan, workers compensation insurance and provision for a future stipend/payment increase
- 2.1.6. The percentage referred to in 2.1.5 will be published as part of the ministry agent payment notice. The following percentages will apply from the commencement of the LSL Scheme:
 - 2.1.6.1. At 1 July 2020 – 1.67%
 - 2.1.6.2. At 1 July 2021 – 1.92% minimum however the final percentage will be determined after an actuarial assessment prior to 1 July 2021.
- 2.1.7. A minister who is without placement or who is serving as a Chaplain to the Defence Forces, may be permitted by the Queensland Synod Office to contribute to the LSL Scheme at the LSL contribution rate determined by the Queensland Synod office being applicable for each minister.

2.2. Eligibility

- 2.2.1. A ministry agent intending to take long service leave must contact the payroll team of the Queensland Synod office payroll team to confirm their eligibility. Leave balances will be maintained by the payroll system of the Queensland Synod office.
- 2.2.2. The period of leave after completion of ten (10) years of service shall be two (2) calendar months provided that where a minister attains the age of fifty-five (55) years prior to the completion of the initial period of ten (10) years, the period of leave shall be one (1) month after five (5) years of service.
- 2.2.3. Subsequent to the initial period of service, the period of leave shall be one (1) calendar month after completion of each subsequent five (5) years of service. Where the service of a minister



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is terminated within five (5) years after completion of the initial or subsequent qualifying period, a proportional period of leave based on completed years of service shall apply.

- 2.2.4. The Ministerial Support Funds Committee (7 June 1990) provided principles in relation to 'years of service' in relation to eligibility (resolution 90:31): For the purposes of eligibility, a year (usually 12 months from 1st January unless otherwise specified) will count as service where a stipend has been paid to a ministry agent during the year.

2.3. Period of leave

- 2.3.1. The period of leave after completion of ten (10) years of service shall be two (2) calendar months provided that where a minister attains the age of fifty-five (55) years prior to the completion of the initial period of ten (10) years, the period of leave shall be one (1) month after five (5) years of service.
- 2.3.2. Subsequent to the initial period of service, the period of leave shall be one (1) calendar month after completion of each five (5) years of service. Where the service of a minister is terminated within five (5) years after completion of the initial or subsequent qualifying period, a proportional period of leave based on completed years of service shall apply.
- 2.3.3. Leave shall be taken in periods of one (1) or more whole calendar months. A proportional period can be taken where leave is taken immediately prior to termination of a placement or during a period where the ministry agent is not in placement.
- 2.3.4. Annual leave shall also be granted for the year in which long service leave is taken.

2.4. Notice of intention

- 2.4.1. The ministry agent must inform the church council or appointing body related to their placement and presbytery of their intention to take long service preferably at least three months in advance.
- 2.4.2. Where the ministry agent is not in a placement, their intention to take long service is made to the Presbytery.
- 2.4.3. A Ministry Agent must complete a Long Service Leave Application Form via the payroll employee self-service portal or completes a Long Service Leave Application Form (TOO-MAP-08a).

2.5. Permission to take long service leave

- 2.5.1. Permission shall be obtained by the Presbytery prior to the taking of leave provided that such permission shall not be unreasonably withheld.
- 2.5.2. In granting permission to a minister in a congregational placement, the presbytery shall first ensure that adequate provision has been made for the care and oversight of the congregation during the absence of a minister.
- 2.5.3. A Presbytery may limit the number of ministers who shall be absent on long service leave in any one year.

2.6. Supply minister

- 2.6.1. A supply minister will also participate in the LSL Scheme for any period of supply, including a period after permanent retirement of a ministry agent. The LSL contribution will apply to payments made to a supply minister as does conditions regarding eligibility and payments. For example, a person who has been a supply minister can inform the Presbytery of their



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intention to take long service leave in between periods of supply and then complete a Long Service Leave Application Form if eligibility requirements have been met.

- 2.6.2. It shall be the responsibility of the presbytery in conjunction with the minister and Church Council concerned to arrange for proper care and oversight of the congregation during the absence of the Minister. Such arrangements may include the assignment of special duties to other Ministers within the congregation or the appointment of a suitable supply (which may be at a different placement percentage compared to the ministry agent).
- 2.6.3. When the Minister proceeding on leave is in a non-congregational placement, the appropriate appointing body shall ensure that the function of the appointing body shall be adequately maintained during the Minister's absence and may make such supply arrangements as are appropriate and necessary.

2.7. Payment

- 2.7.1. The payroll system of the Queensland Synod office maintains balances as 'hours'. For the purposes of the LSL Scheme, a full-time ministry agent is equivalent to 42 hours per week. Two (2) calendar months is equivalent to 8.67 weeks or 364.14 hours.
- 2.7.2. The available balance which is used to calculate a payment during the period of long service leave (ie one or more whole months) will be based on the placements up to the commencement date of leave, adjusted for any long service leave already taken.
- 2.7.3. Subject to the available balance, the ministry agent can nominate to:
- 2.7.3.1. Pay long service leave at the placement percentage; or
 - 2.7.3.2. Pay long service leave at half the placement percentage; or
 - 2.7.3.3. If a part-time percentage, pay long service leave at a full time equivalent (ie 100%)
- 2.7.4. During a period of leave, the LSL Scheme will pay the following payments directly to the ministry agent:
- Minimum stipend;
 - House allowance (if applicable)
 - Standing costs component of the travel allowance
 - Continuing Education for Ministry (CEM)
- 2.7.5. The LSL Scheme will also pay the following in relation to the ministry agent during their period of leave:
- CEM – Travel Fund
 - Superannuation
 - Workers compensation
 - LSL contribution
- 2.7.6. During a period of leave, the congregation or Appointing Body will pay the following in relation to a supply minister:
- Minimum stipend;
 - House allowance (if applicable)
 - Basic travel allowance or travel reimbursement for kilometres
 - Continuing Education for Ministry (CEM)
 - CEM – Travel Fund
 - Superannuation
 - Workers compensation
 - LSL contribution



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2.7.6 The General Secretary or their delegate shall have power to authorise alternative arrangements for payment, provided that any such payment shall not exceed the amounts which would be payable under the above payment arrangements for a ministry agent.

2.8. Payment of balance as lump sum

2.8.1 The ministry agent's long service leave balance will be paid to the ministry agent on:

- Permanent retirement
- Resignation
- Termination or withdrawal of recognition
- Death (paid to the estate)

3. Sick leave

- 3.1 All ministry agents are entitled to sick leave and shall continue to receive their stipend and other benefits from the congregation or appointing body responsible for the placement.
- 3.2 For some ministry agents, superannuation fund provisions may be available for temporary and permanent disability payments including the provision for temporary retirement in the event of prolonged illness. This avenue should be utilised where it is anticipated that the period of incapacity will be prolonged.
- 3.3 Where a ministry agent is anticipated to have a lengthy period of sick leave, the presbytery should discuss options with the ministry agent and the congregation or other appointing body, taking into consideration the life and witness of the congregation or other placement activities.
- 3.4 Where a supply minister is required to cover sick leave for a ministry agent, the congregation or other body may submit an application for support from the Sickness and Accident Assistance Plan (SAAP) to meet up to 100 per cent of normal stipend and allowances for the period of supply. The SAAP excludes assistance for absences covered by WorkCover as these payments are made directly to the ministry agent by WorkCover.

4. Maternity Leave

4.1. Eligibility

4.1.1. A ministry agent who becomes pregnant shall be eligible to take maternity leave provided that:

- 4.1.1.1. the ministry agent has provided to the Church Council or other governing body in which the ministry agent is placed (the body) a certificate from a duly qualified medical practitioner confirming the ministry agent is pregnant and the expected date of birth; and
- 4.1.1.2. the ministry agent has completed at least 12 months equivalent full-time service with the Church as of the date on which the ministry agent wishes to take the leave.

4.2. For the purposes of this section:

- 4.2.1. A ministry agent shall include a part-time or interim ministry agent but shall not include a supply minister.
- 4.2.2. Maternity leave shall mean 40 weeks unpaid leave plus 12 weeks paid leave (an unbroken period of up to 52 weeks).
- 4.2.3. The congregation shall pay the ministry agent taking maternity leave, 12 weeks stipend and allowances at the rate applicable immediately before proceeding on that leave. In the event of supply, stipend and costs of the supply minister will be paid from the Ministry Agent Long Service Leave Scheme.



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4.3. Leave not to be Unreasonably Refused

- 4.3.1. The body shall not unreasonably refuse to grant Maternity Leave.
- 4.3.2. When maternity leave is refused, the body should provide in writing (and within seven days of the decision) to the ministry agent the reason(s) for such a refusal.
- 4.3.3. A ministry agent refused leave under these provisions may seek redress by appealing to the relevant Presbytery.

4.4. Period of Leave and Commencement of Leave

- 4.4.1. Maternity leave shall be for an unbroken period of six to 52 weeks and shall include a period of six weeks' compulsory leave to be taken immediately following the birth of the child. This is subject to 4.5 and 4.8 below and the following:
 - 4.4.1.1. Prior to the presumed date of birth of the child, the ministry agent must give the body at least 10 weeks' written notice of the intention to take the leave.
 - 4.4.1.2. Prior to the presumed date of birth of the child, the ministry agent must give at least four weeks' notice in writing to the body of the date upon which she proposes to commence maternity leave, and the period of leave to be taken.
 - 4.4.1.3. The body may require the ministry agent to commence maternity leave at any time within the six weeks immediately prior to the presumed date of birth of the child. If this is the case, the body will notify the ministry agent in writing at least 14 days prior to the date on which the Ministry agent must take the maternity leave.
 - 4.4.1.4. A ministry agent shall not be in breach of the required notification as outlined in this policy if the failure to notify was the result of the birth of the child occurring earlier than the presumed date of birth.

4.5. Transfers to a Safe Placement

- 4.5.1. Where, in the opinion of a duly qualified medical practitioner, and/or in the opinion of the body fulfilling its obligations under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, illness or risks arising out of the pregnancy or hazards connected with the work of a placement make it inadvisable for the ministry agent to continue in her present placement, the ministry agent shall, if the body deems it practicable, be transferred to a safe placement at the rate and on the conditions attached to that placement until the commencement of maternity leave.
- 4.5.2. If the transfer to a safe placement is not practicable, the ministry agent may, or the Church may require the ministry agent to take leave for such period as:
 - 4.5.2.1. is certified necessary by a duly qualified medical practitioner, and/or
 - 4.5.2.2. required by the body's obligations under the Work Health & Safety Act (2011),
 - 4.5.2.3. such leave shall be treated as maternity leave for the purposes of this policy.

4.6. Variation of Period of Maternity Leave

- 4.6.1. Provided the additional period does not extend the maternity leave beyond 52 weeks, and with the agreement of the body, the period of maternity leave may be extended. The leave may be extended only once.



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4.6.2. The ministry agent must give written notice to the body of the intention to extend the maternity leave. The notice should occur at least 14 days:

4.6.2.1. before the start of the maternity leave, or

4.6.2.2. if the leave has started, before the leave ends.

4.6.3. With the consent of the body, the period of leave may be shortened by the ministry agent.

4.6.4. The ministry agent must give written notice to the body of the intention to shorten the maternity leave. The notice should occur at least 14 days:

4.6.4.1. before the start of the maternity leave, or

4.6.4.2. if the leave has started, before the date the ministry agent wishes to return to the placement.

4.7. Cancellation of Maternity Leave

4.7.1. Maternity leave, applied for but not commenced, shall be cancelled when the pregnancy of a ministry agent terminates other than by the birth of a living child.

4.7.2. Where the pregnancy of a ministry agent (who is on maternity leave) terminates other than by the birth of a living child, it shall be the right of the ministry agent to resume placement at a time nominated by the body. Written notice will be provided to the ministry agent by the body regarding the resumption of placement. Written notice shall be provided at a minimum of two weeks (but four weeks is recommended) prior to the resumption of placement.

4.8. Special Maternity Leave and Sick Leave

4.8.1. Where the pregnancy of a ministry agent (not on maternity leave) terminates after 28 weeks other than by the birth of a living child, the ministry agent shall be eligible to:

4.8.1.1. unpaid leave to be known as Special Maternity Leave that a duly qualified medical practitioner certifies as necessary before her return to placement

4.8.1.2. for illness other than the normal consequences of the birth of the child, either in lieu of or in addition to Special Maternity Leave, paid sick leave which she is then eligible for and which a duly qualified medical practitioner certifies as necessary before the ministry agent returns to placement.

4.8.2. The period of paid sick leave will not exceed the amount of paid sick leave which the ministry agent is eligible for.

4.8.3. Where a ministry agent prior to the commencement of maternity leave, suffers illness related to her pregnancy, she may utilise all or part of the paid sick leave which she is eligible for. After the exhaustion of the paid sick leave, the ministry agent may take further unpaid leave known as Special Maternity Leave for the balance of the period as certified by a duly qualified medical practitioner.

4.9. Maternity Leave and Other Leave Eligibilities

4.9.1. A ministry agent may, in lieu of or in conjunction with maternity leave, take annual leave or long service leave due to her, provided that the aggregate of leave including leave taken as prescribed in this policy, does not exceed 52 weeks.

4.9.2. Paid sick leave shall not be available to a ministry agent during her absence on maternity leave.



4.10. Termination of Placement

- 4.10.1. A ministry agent on maternity leave may terminate her placement at any time during the period of maternity leave. Termination is made in writing to the Church Council (or body in which the ministry agent is placed) and Presbytery.
- 4.10.2. The Presbytery, the Church Council, Congregation or body responsible for the placement shall not terminate the placement of a ministry agent on the grounds of her pregnancy or of her absence on maternity leave. The rights of the Presbytery, Church Council, Congregation or body responsible for the placement in relation to termination of placement on other grounds are not affected.

4.11. Return to Service after Maternity Leave

- 4.11.1. A ministry agent shall confirm her intention to return to her placement by writing to the body and Presbytery. Prior to the end date of the maternity leave, the period of time for the notice of the intention to return to placement must be a minimum of two weeks but four weeks is recommended.
- 4.11.2. After the conclusion of the maternity leave, a ministry agent returning to a placement is entitled to the placement which:
- 4.11.2.1. the ministry agent held immediately before going on the leave, or
 - 4.11.2.2. in the case of a ministry agent who was transferred to a safe placement, to the placement she held immediately before such a transfer.
- 4.11.3. Where such placement no longer exists, but there are other available placements for which the ministry agent is qualified and duties she is capable of performing, the ministry agent shall be entitled to a placement as nearly comparable in status and stipend to that of the former placement.

5. Adoption Leave

5.1. Eligibility for Adoption Leave

- 5.1.1. All ministry agent shall be eligible to take Adoption Leave approved by the body provided that:
- 5.1.1.1. A statement from the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services – Adoption Services or other approved authority or agency of the presumed date of placement of the child with the ministry agent for adoption purposes is provided to the body, or
 - 5.1.1.2. A statement from the appropriate government authority confirming that the ministry agent is to have custody of the child pending application for an adoption order is provided to the body.
 - 5.1.1.3. The ministry agent has completed at least 12 months equivalent full-time service with the Church as of the date on which the ministry agent wishes to take the leave
- 5.1.2. For the purposes of this section:
- 5.1.2.1. A ministry agent shall include a part-time or interim ministry agent but shall not include a supply minister.
 - 5.1.2.2. Adoption leave shall mean 40 weeks unpaid adoption leave plus 12 weeks paid leave (an unbroken period of up to 52 weeks).



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- 5.1.2.3. The congregation shall pay the ministry agent taking adoption leave, 12 weeks stipend and allowances at the rate applicable immediately before proceeding on that leave. In the event of supply, stipend and costs of the supply minister will be paid from the Ministry Agent Long Service Leave Scheme.

5.2. Leave not to be Unreasonably Refused

- 5.2.1. The body shall not unreasonably refuse to grant adoption leave.
- 5.2.2. When adoption leave is refused, the body should provide in writing within seven days of the decision to the ministry agent the reason(s) for such a refusal.
- 5.2.3. A ministry agent refused leave under these provisions may seek redress by appealing to the relevant Presbytery.

5.3. Period of Leave and Commencement of Leave

- 5.3.1. The period of adoption leave shall be for an unbroken period of up to 52 weeks but ceasing in any event when the child attains the age of five years.
- 5.3.2. Upon receiving notice of approval for adoption purposes, a ministry agent will notify the body that the adoption has been so approved. Within 2 months of such approval, the ministry agent will further notify the body of the period of adoption leave which the ministry agent proposes to take. In the case of a relative adoption, the ministry agent shall notify the body upon deciding to take a child into the ministry agent's custody pending an application for an adoption order.
- 5.3.3. Upon becoming aware of the presumed date of placement of a child for adoption purposes, the ministry agent must give at least 14 days' notice in writing to the body of:
- 5.3.3.1. the date which the ministry agent proposes to commence adoption leave, and
- 5.3.3.2. the period of leave to be taken.
- 5.3.4. A ministry agent shall not be in breach of the required notification as outlined if it is the requirement of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services or other approved authority or agency to accept earlier placement of a child.

5.4. Variation of Period of Adoption Leave

- 5.4.1. Provided the additional period does not extend the adoption leave beyond 52 weeks, and with the agreement of the body the period of leave may be extended. The leave may be extended only once.
- 5.4.2. The ministry agent must give written notice to the body of the intention to extend the adoption leave. The written notice must be provided 14 days or more prior to the date on which the leave is to be extended.
- 5.4.3. With the consent of the body, the period of leave may be shortened by the ministry agent.
- 5.4.4. The ministry agent must give written notice to the body of the intention to shorten the adoption leave. The written notice must be provided 14 days or more prior to the date on which the ministry agent wishes to return to their placement.

5.5. Cancellation of Adoption Leave

- 5.5.1. Adoption leave, applied for but not commenced, shall be cancelled should the placement of the child not proceed.



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5.5.2. Where the placement of a child for adoption purposes does not proceed or continue and the ministry agent is on adoption leave, the ministry agent shall notify the body of the change of circumstances. From the receipt of notification, the body shall nominate a time for the ministry agent's resumption of placement. Written notice by the body should be provided at a minimum of two weeks but four weeks is recommended prior to the resumption of the placement.

5.6. Special Leave

5.6.1. Having been given reasonable notice as to the time or times, the body shall grant to any ministry agent who is seeking to adopt a child unpaid leave to attend any compulsory interviews or examinations as a necessary part of the adoption procedures.

5.6.2. The unpaid leave will not exceed the equivalent of two days.

5.6.3. Where paid leave is available to the ministry agent, the body shall have the option of paying the ministry agent out of such available leave. It is considered that this would not include sick leave.

5.7. Adoption Leave and Other Eligibilities

5.7.1. A ministry agent may, in lieu of or in conjunction with adoption leave, take annual leave or long service leave, provided that the aggregate of leave including leave taken as prescribed in this policy, does not exceed 52 weeks.

5.7.2. Paid sick leave shall not be available to a ministry agent during the absence on adoption leave or special leave.

5.8. Termination of Placement

5.8.1. A ministry agent on adoption leave may terminate their placement at any time during the period of adoption leave. Termination is made in writing to the Presbytery.

5.8.2. The Presbytery, Church Council, Congregation or body in which the ministry agent is placed shall not terminate the placement of a ministry agent on the ground of their application to adopt a child or of their absence on adoption leave. The rights of the Presbytery, Church Council, Congregation or body in which the ministry agent is placed in relation to termination of placement on other grounds are not hereby affected.

5.9. Return to Placement after Adoption Leave

5.9.1. A ministry agent shall advise the body of their likely intentions to resume the placement at the conclusion of the adoption leave. That advice should occur during the sixth month and the ninth month from commencement date of the adoption leave. The Ministry agent's advice is to be seen as advisory and does not negate the options and obligations of the following paragraph

5.9.2. A ministry agent shall confirm their intention of returning to the placement in writing to the body. The written confirmation of the intention to return to the placement should be provided to the body four weeks or more before the end date of the adoption leave.

5.9.3. After the conclusion of the leave, a ministry agent shall be entitled to the placement which was held immediately before proceeding on adoption leave. Where such a placement no longer exists, but there are other placements available for which the ministry agent is qualified and the duties of which she/he is capable of performing, the ministry agent shall be entitled to a placement as nearly comparable in status and stipend to that of the former placement.



6. Paternity Leave

6.1. Eligibility for Paternity Leave

- 6.1.1. A male ministry agent whose becomes the primary carer of their child, or child of their spouse, shall be eligible to take paternity leave provided that:
- 6.1.1.1. the ministry agent has provided to the body a certificate from a duly qualified medical practitioner confirming a pregnancy of a partner and the expected date of birth; and
 - 6.1.1.2. the ministry agent has completed at least 12 months equivalent full-time service with the Church as of the date on which the ministry agent wishes to take the leave.
- 6.1.2. For the purposes of this section:
- 6.1.2.1. A ministry agent shall include a part-time or interim ministry agent but shall not include a ministry agent engaged in supply.
 - 6.1.2.2. Paternity leave shall mean 52 weeks unpaid.

6.2. Leave not to be Unreasonably Refused

- 6.2.1. The body shall not unreasonably refuse to grant Paternity Leave.
- 6.2.2. When paternity leave is refused, the body should provide in writing (and within seven days of the decision) to the ministry agent the reason(s) for such a refusal.
- 6.2.3. A ministry agent refused leave under these provisions may seek redress by appealing to the relevant Presbytery.

6.3. Period of Leave and Commencement of Leave

- 6.3.1. Paternity leave shall be for an unbroken period of two to 52 weeks and cannot be taken concurrently with maternity leave of the spouse in relation to the child, subject to the following:
- 6.3.1.1. Prior to the presumed date of being the primary carer, the ministry agent must give the body at least ten weeks' written notice of the intention to take the leave.
 - 6.3.1.2. Prior to the presumed date of being the primary carer, the ministry agent must give at least four weeks' notice in writing to the body of the date upon which the ministry agent proposes to commence paternity leave, and the period of leave to be taken.
 - 6.3.1.3. A ministry agent shall not be in breach of the required notification as outlined in this policy if the failure to notify was the result of the birth of the child occurring earlier than the presumed date of birth resulting in an earlier requirement to be the primary carer.

6.4. Variation of Period of Paternity Leave

- 6.4.1. Provided the additional period does not extend the paternity leave beyond 52 weeks, and with the agreement of the body, the period of paternity leave may be extended. The leave may be extended only once.
- 6.4.2. The ministry agent must give written notice to the body of the intention to extend the paternity leave. The notice should occur at least 14 days:
- 6.4.2.1. before the start of the paternity leave, or
 - 6.4.2.2. if the leave has started, before the leave ends.



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6.4.3. With the consent of the body, the period of leave may be shortened by the ministry agent.

6.4.4. The ministry agent must give written notice to the body of the intention to shorten the paternity leave. The notice should occur at least 14 days:

6.4.4.1. before the start of the paternity leave, or

6.4.4.2. if the leave has started, before the date the ministry agent wishes to return to placement.

6.5. Cancellation of Paternity Leave

6.5.1. Paternity leave, applied for but not commenced, shall be cancelled if circumstances occur where ministry agent will no longer be the primary carer e.g. the spouse's pregnancy terminates other than by the birth of a living child.

6.6. Paternity Leave and Other Leave Eligibilities

6.6.1. A ministry agent may, in lieu of or in conjunction with paternity leave, take annual leave or long service leave due to the ministry agent, provided that the aggregate of leave including leave taken as prescribed in this policy, does not exceed 52 weeks.

6.7. Termination of Placement

6.7.1. A ministry agent on paternity leave may terminate his placement at any time during the period of paternity leave. Termination is made in writing to the body and Presbytery.

6.7.2. The Presbytery, the Church Council, Congregation or body in which the ministry agent is placed shall not terminate the placement of a ministry agent on the grounds of his absence on paternity leave. The rights of the Presbytery, Church Council, Congregation or body in which the ministry agent is placed in relation to termination of placement on other grounds are not affected.

6.8. Return to Service after Paternity Leave

6.8.1. A ministry agent shall confirm their intention to return to the placement by writing to the body and Presbytery. Prior to the end date of the paternity leave, the period of time for the notice of the intention to return to placement must be a minimum of two weeks but four weeks is recommended.

6.8.2. After the conclusion of the paternity leave, a ministry agent returning to a placement is entitled to the placement the ministry agent held immediately before going on the leave.

6.8.3. Where such placement no longer exists, but there are other available placements for which the ministry agent is qualified and duties he is capable of performing, the ministry agent shall be entitled to a placement as nearly comparable in status and stipend to that of the former placement.

7. Supply Minister during maternity and adoption leave

7.1. A supply minister is considered when the ministry agent

7.1.1. goes on maternity, adoption or paternity leave, or

7.1.2. is transferred to a safe placement.

7.2. The stipend and costs associated with supply to cover Maternity, Adoption and Paternity Leave and the transfer to a safe placement under 4.5 will be paid by the Ministry Agent Long Service Leave Scheme.



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- 7.3. Before the body places a supply minister, the person shall be informed in writing of:
- 7.3.1. the temporary nature of the placement, and
 - 7.3.2. the rights of the ministry agent who is being replaced.
- 7.4. The written notice should occur at least 14 days before the supply minister commences.
- 7.5. Nothing in this section shall be construed as requiring the body to place a supply minister at the conclusion of his or her supply period.
- 7.6. A supply minister shall not be entitled to maternity, adoption or paternity leave except where their ministry continues beyond the twelve-month qualifying period.

8. Study leave

- 8.1. Refer to the Continuing Education for Ministry Agents procedure.

Related documents

- [The Uniting Church in Australia Regulations](#)
- [The Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod By-Laws](#)
- [POL-0001 Privacy](#)
- [POL-MAP-01 Continuing Education for Ministry Agents](#)
- [PRO-MAP-01 Continuing Education for Ministry Agents](#)
- [E/8.6 Ministry Agent Leave](#)
- [E/8.6.1.1 Long Service Leave Application Form](#)

Definitions

Term	Meaning
The Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod (also called we or us or the Church)	Means the functions and activities of The Uniting Church in Australia: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• within and in relation to the bounds of the Queensland Synod; and• outside the bounds of the Queensland Synod (where managed by parts of the organisation located within the bounds of the Queensland Synod), under the <i>Uniting Church in Australia Act 1977 (Qld)</i> .
Queensland Synod office	Means the work and activities of the Uniting Church in Australia performed within the bounds of the Queensland Synod office including Trinity College Queensland, Raymont Residential College and Alexandra Park Conference Centre.
Appointing Body	Congregation, Presbytery, Synod or other body which calls the Minister.
Ministry Agent	In the Queensland Synod, ministry agent refers to ministers of the word, deacons and pastors in an approved placement.
Supply Minister	A ministry of short duration, usually extending from a few weeks to twelve months, most commonly when the placement is vacant or the Minister is on extended leave. Persons providing ministry in a supply capacity will not normally be considered for permanent call to that placement.
Adoption Leave	Leave that is provided to a ministry agent who will have responsibility for the care of a child under five (5) years of age who is placed with the ministry agent for adoption.



Ministry Agent Leave

Term	Meaning
Maternity Leave	Leave provided to a female ministry agent for the birth of their child to enable her to be the child's primary caregiver.
Paternity Leave	Leave provided to a male ministry agent at the birth or adoption of their child, where the ministry agent will be the child's primary caregiver.

Revisions

Document number		E/8.6.1			
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
2.2	28.06.2023	Executive Director People Culture Learning	01.07.2023	People Culture & Learning	Manager People & Culture
Next scheduled review		01.07.2024			