

Virginia Conference Board of Ordained Ministry

Education and Continuing Formation for Clergy

“Throughout their careers, clergy shall engage in continuing education for ministry, professional development and spiritual formation and growth in order to lead the church in fulfilling the mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ.” (§350.1 of the *2016 Book of Discipline*)

Connectional Accountability

Clergy will make an annual report to the district superintendent on continuing education completed during the year. The district superintendent shall review the clergyperson’s continuing education in light of the annual evaluation by the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee or supervisor if in an extension appointment. In their annual meeting, the district superintendent and clergyperson shall discuss improvements made toward effectiveness in ministry and future needs for continuing education. See ¶419.7 of the *2016 Book of Discipline*

The following persons are required to receive a minimum of 1 CEU per year and at least 8 CEU’s per quadrennium.

- Associate Members under appointment
- Diaconal Ministers under appointment
- Full Members (Deacons and Elders) under appointment
- Local pastors who have completed the Course of Study or an M.Div. degree
- Certified Lay Professionals.

Persons in the above relationships involved in ongoing education (including enrollment in college, seminary, Course of Study, D.Min. and Ph.D. programs), those who are appointed in retirement, provisional members, and clergy on Leave of Absence are not required to gather or report CEUs.

Standards for Continuing Education

The measuring unit shall be a Continuing Education Unit (CEU).

A Continuing Education Unit is defined by ten contact hours of instructional session, or its equivalent, under qualified leadership. It is assumed that programs sponsored by an agency of the general church, jurisdiction, conference, district, ecumenical, or community service institution or covenant study groups will have qualified leadership.

- If the event does not offer a CEU, equivalency can be made based on the number of contact hours under qualified leadership in units of 5 contact hours. For example, 5 contact hours equals 0.5 CEU, 10 contact hours equals 1.0 CEU, 15 contact hours equals 1.5 CEU’s, etc.
- For on line continuing education, the sponsoring agency shall offer an official CEU. No more than three (3) CEU’s a quadrennium may be completed on line.
- Twenty hours of reading and reflection in areas related to the *Characteristics of Effective Clergy in the Virginia Conference* is equivalent to 1.0 CEU. No more than 1.0 CEU defined as reading and reflection may be credited toward the eight for the quadrennium.

- For professional study-travel, only trips that provide the required contact hours (lectures, discussions under qualified leadership) are acceptable. Repeat trips to the same place will not qualify. An additional “Professional Study-Travel” form is required.
- For United Methodist Volunteers in Mission Trips, only one VIM trip per quadrennium is allowed. An additional “Professional Study-Travel” form is required.
- CPE beyond the minimum requirement for ordination may be used for continuing education.

Approved Program Areas for Continuing Education

Areas approved for continuing education shall be related to *Characteristics of Effective Clergy in the Virginia Conference* approved by the Virginia Conference Cabinet and Board of Ordained Ministry. Additionally, specific areas for continuing education will be identified as a result of the annual evaluation by the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee and district superintendent as outlined in ¶419.7 of the *2016 Book of Discipline*.

Continuing Education Funding

The Clergy Effectiveness Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry administers the following policies for continuing education funding. Applications are considered regularly throughout the year. More information is available from the Center for Clergy Excellence at www.vaumc.org/ClergyContinuingEducation.

1. Continuing Education funding is available to persons required to receive CEU’s. Refer to “Connectional Accountability” above for details on conference relationships which meet this requirement. Persons not required to receive CEU’s may request funding and awards will be determined on a per case basis.
2. Funds are available for events that meet the “Standards for Continuing Education” and “Approved Program Areas for Continuing Education” as listed above.
3. Funding will be awarded for the calendar year in which the event is held, as follows:
 - For qualified persons with a base salary of \$50,000 or less, funding of up to **\$400** during any one calendar year and depending upon availability of funds.
 - For qualified persons with a base salary above \$50,000, funding of up to **\$200** during any one calendar year and depending upon availability of funds.
 - Base Salary includes Accountable Reimbursement but does not include housing or utility allowances.
 - Funding requested for an event which may run into another calendar year will be awarded for either the year applied or for the year in which it is completed, but not both years.
4. Persons receiving continuing education funds must send a verification of the Continuing Education Unit awarded to the Center for Clergy Excellence. A copy of the CEU report or a letter from the sponsoring agency is acceptable. If no CEU is received, due to a cancellation of the event or lack of participation, the recipient must return the grant in full.

The Clergy Development Program, also administered by the Clergy Effectiveness Committee, offers larger grants for more in-depth professional development and education opportunities. These applications are reviewed and awarded quarterly. More information is available from the Center for Clergy Excellence at www.vaumc.org/ClergyContinuingEducation.