



## Office of the Diaconate

# MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Deacons, as professionals in ministry, need to update themselves constantly with practical education and spiritual development to ensure adequacy in their ministry. Not only does continuing education have a further, collateral benefit of fostering self-confidence in the deacon, it moreover demonstrates to the Church the deacon serves that he is professionally accountable. This is a program based on self-motivation and self-direction.

Therefore, all deacons given faculties to function within the Archdiocese of Chicago must successfully complete a minimum number of hours of ministerial development every three years, as is hereafter specified.

This policy provides deacons of the archdiocese a standardized method of evaluating their efforts. Described here are the basic requirements, how to record credit hours and when to submit reports for inclusion in personnel files.

1. The instruction is to further the deacon's ministry to the Church in liturgy, word and charity. This would include acquisition of a foreign language for use in ministry or study, providing background or fundamentals for or updating of his current ministry, or preparation for a future ministry. Also, other courses that help him generally in ministry or prepare him to better serve the people of God should be included.
2. Credit may be recorded in whole or in part using the following guidelines, based on actual "clock hours" of input:
  - a. Certificate courses: Many national, regional and local courses issue a certificate at the end of an instructional seminar or conference stating hours.
  - b. College courses: Because of the wide variety of methods used in college credit systems, it is not possible to convert college credits to credit hours. Instead, count one hour for each classroom hour attended.
  - c. Adult enrichment courses at parishes or local school programs: Count one credit hour for each classroom or lecture hour attended.
  - d. Other courses, conferences, seminars, workshops, intensive weekends. However, in any of the foregoing activities, credit is not given for non-academic activities, such as social periods, lunch and coffee breaks.
  - e. Distance learning courses will receive credit for their class hour equivalents upon presentation of certificate of completion.
  - f. Teaching courses or offering presentations on faith-related topics, as are specified in paragraph one immediately above. However, continuing education credit is not given for teaching or presentations as part of or attendant to RCIA, RCIC or sacramental preparation where such teaching or presentations are performed in a deacon's parish assignment.

3. The following activities are not normally considered as giving rise to creditable hours:
  - a. Travel to and from the place where instruction is given.
  - b. Informal meetings and conferences.
  - c. Prayer services and liturgies.
  - d. Spiritual direction sessions.
  - e. Parish council or committee meetings.
  - f. Social gatherings.
  - g. Archdiocesan, deanery, parish, executive board, council and committee meetings.
  - h. Support group functions.
  - i. Courses not related to ministerial service.
  - j. Directing or service on retreat or spiritual formation teams.
  - k. Tapes and books for individual study and reflection.
  - l. Attendance at retreats.
  - m. Offering sacramental preparation or RCIA or RCIC instruction in one's own parish assignment.
4. Each deacon and wife have available an allowance for continuing education and development. This allowance must be utilized within the fiscal year without carry over. See the Ministerial Development Reimbursement Form.

### **MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT HOURS**

1. For the entire first three years after ordination: 100 hours of ministerial development are required collectively; i.e., 33–34 hours per year. Sixty of the hours must be completed in the mandatory Emmaus Program.
2. After the first three years are complete, 20 hours are required each year (60 hours per 3-year cycle).
3. After age 65 **and** 10 years of ordination are completed, 10 hours are required each year (30 hours per 3-year cycle).
4. After age 70 **and** 10 years of ordination are completed, five hours are required each year (15 hours per 3-year cycle).
5. Senior deacons are required to complete five hours per year as a condition to retain faculties.

### **WAIVERS AND EXTENSIONS**

Waivers of minimum credit or extensions of time to complete the ministerial development requirements may be granted by the Vicar in exceptional cases. A waiver or extension may be considered upon receipt of a written request from the deacon taking into account age, health, employment, family or ministerial demands or other pertinent information. Determination by the Vicar will be provided in writing to the deacon and placed in his file.

## **NON-COMPLIANCE**

1. Deacons who have not met the required number of hours of ministerial development during their three-year cycle, and who do not have reason for an extension or a waiver, will be placed on administrative leave without faculties by the Vicar until such time as the necessary hours are completed. Upon completion of the required hours, the deacon will be returned to active status by the Vicar.
2. Ordinarily, deacons who have completed a significant number of the required hours but not the total amount may be granted a six-month extension in order to fulfill the required hours. This must be approved by the Vicar.
3. In both instances mentioned above, the next three-year cycle will have begun on July 1.

## **NOTIFICATION AND REPORTING PROCEDURES**

1. While it is not necessary to submit more than the required credit hours, deacons should submit all their ministerial development activities so that their personnel files are complete and up to date.
2. Prior to ordination, each candidate in his final year will receive this policy statement and a ministerial development record.
3. By July 31 of **each year**, deacons including senior deacons shall submit their ministerial development record for the previous year on the appropriate form. See Appendix X of the *Policies and Handbook*. Information submitted will be recorded as part of the deacon's personnel file. Normally this submission will be done electronically by the deacon.
4. Each deacon is responsible for reporting ministerial development information and should retain a copy of his records before submission.
5. The deacon will have access to his ministerial development file upon written request to the Vicar.