



The United Reformed Church Northern Synod

Guidelines on Grants & Loans 2013 MINISTRIES & TRAINING

Five categories of grant or loan are available:

1. Church Property
2. Manse Property
3. Mission
4. Ministries & Training
5. Youth & Children's Work

Each category has its own guidelines and application form. These guidelines relate only to grants and loans for **Ministries & Training**.

4: Ministries & Training

4.1: Lay Training Grants

Lay training grants were introduced in 2010, initially for 3 years, but have been continued on a year-by-year basis since then. Each year, a budget of £1,000 is available for each mission partnership to allocate for lay training.

The money is available to individuals or groups of people, and it is for the mission partnership to decide how it wants to use money. To draw down the funding, when needed, simply contact the Finance Officer, Helen Hogg, at Synod Office. No forms are needed, simply a decision to spend money on a particular purpose, and the provision of copy invoices where possible.

The following section explains the original rationale for this scheme.

The purpose of education and training in Northern Synod is to share with people in the continuous discovery of what it means to be the People of God, in the world and the church – by liberating each other to use our different gifts in response to the love of God in Christ and the call of the Spirit.

The United Reformed Church (Northern Province) Trust Limited

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The above is a statement of intent, originally taken from January 2004 Northern Synod document *Towards a Training Policy*. The statement spells out the Synod's commitment to education and training of local churches and their members, both lay and ordained.

The United Reformed Church provides substantial education and learning grants for Ministers of Word and Sacraments and CRCWs and Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers. The purpose of this section is to consider the funding of lay education. If the Church is to grow and thrive it needs to take seriously the theological education of the whole people of God.

For a number of years now, Synod has offered payment of Training for Learning and Serving course fees for students from the Synod and has also provided personal learning grants for lay people. The Ministries and Training Committee is not proposing to the Synod any change to the provision of TLS fees. This new scheme represents a change to the way funding for other lay training is provided.

The most significant reason for this change is that decisions for lay education need to be taken by the local churches and groups who will most benefit from their members engaging in education and learning. Ministries and Training Committee suggests that these decisions should be made by mission partnerships, either by the leadership meeting or Elders' gathering as agreed by each mission partnership.

In place of the previous personal learning grants, Synod now sets aside £13,000 to be shared equally between the mission partnerships for lay education and learning. We suggest that each mission partnership should decide how its allocated fund should be used by identifying the training needs the churches have.

The original proposal was as follows:

During the years 2010, 2011 and 2012, Synod should set aside £12,000 so that each mission partnership will have available £1,000 to spend on lay education and learning, and that alone. The mission partnership would decide what the education and learning will be and who takes part. For example, it may be spent on individuals undertaking some learning which will benefit the partnership or it may be used for some education and learning course that is aimed at a number of people. The Synod Office will manage the funds and will release monies as requested for specific pieces of learning up to £1,000 per annum. The decision should be made by the mission partnership, but an annual written report is to be made to Ministries and Training Committee about what the money was spent on and how it would fit in with the identified learning needs of the mission partnership.

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It is also proposed that this Education and Learning Funding will be reviewed in 2011 to see if it should continue beyond 2012.

This scheme is not intended for Ministers of Word and Sacraments, CRCWs, Accredited Lay Preachers or people seeking to study on a TLS course, as there is alternative funding provision for all. There may, however, be occasions when the whole people of God can learn together, such as when a learning event or a trainer is funded from this budget in which case Ministers and CRCWs may also benefit. We would not wish to discourage collaborative learning.

The Ministries and Training Committee is grateful to Janet Turner and David Peel for producing a discussion paper in June 2009, upon which the general principle of this section is based.

By way of clarification, it is intended that the money should be available for the benefit of any member of the partnership irrespective of the denomination that person comes from.

There has been some concern about the disappearance of the individual lay training grants. So the question which arises is whether individuals can benefit from the funds as well the funds being used for group study. The short answer is yes, should that study be considered beneficial for the individual and the partnership.

The committee does not want to be prescriptive about how the mission partnership should administer its pot of money. That would go against the principle that underlay the dispersion of funds, which is that the mission partnership is in the best place to decide upon the education and learning needs of its people. We suggest that the decisions about how the money is to be used could be made by the leadership team of the partnership. Or else a contact person could be appointed to administer the use of the fund in consultation with others in the partnership. In this latter case there would need to be some discussion within the partnership about the criteria for dispersing the money. Helen Hogg, the Synod Finance Officer will release the money as it is spent. The amount required can be claimed directly from her as needed and she will keep records of how much each Mission Partnership has spent in any one year.

Finally, some concrete examples of how the fund may be used. One Mission Partnership made use of the fund to invite Lawrence Moore from the Windermere Centre to lead a study day, and used the fund to cover costs. Another partnership intends to use some of the funds to run a TLS LITE programme. The fund might also be used to support individuals; maybe to go to on courses at the Windermere Centre or St Cuthbert's Centre, or to join the spring retreat.

4.2: Education & Learning Grants for Retired Ministers and CRCWs

The Synod has benefited from the work of a number of active retired ministers. At present unless that person is in a formally designated post, there is no education and learning funding available except an agreement that retired ministers should be funded half the cost of summer school or spring retreat. We would like to increase the flexibility of the available funding and therefore propose that retired ministers and CRCWs should have a Synod grant of up to £300 a year for funding education and learning. The criteria are the same as those criteria that are used for provision of Education for Ministry Stage 3 (EM3) grants.

4.3: Ministerial Training Grants

For Educating for Ministry Stage 3 (EM3) grants, form G1 should be used. The form and guidelines may be downloaded from the members' area of the Synod website: www.urc-northersynod.org/members/ministers.htm (user name: synod; password: calvin).

4.4: Grants for Accredited Local Preachers

Grants of up to £200 are available from the United Reformed Church for attendance at national or synod training events and the purchase of resources (such as Roots). A form is obtainable from the Lay Preaching Commissioner.

4.5: Other Training Grants

Grants are also available for:

- (a) Fees for students on the Training for Learning and Serving courses. Fees will normally be paid for the two years of the Foundation Course and a third year of an appropriate course such as Gateways to Worship. Additional courses will not normally be subsidised (more information is available from the Synod's TLS Coordinator).
- (b) Books for ministerial and church-related community work students, up to £300 each year.
- (c) Books for non-stipendiary ministers in post, up to £100 per year each.

Book grants for students and non-stipendiary ministers are paid on application by letter (enclosing copies of receipts) to the Synod Office for authorisation by Synod officer.

These guidelines and the standard application form are available from the Synod Office, or downloaded from the website (user name: synod; password: calvin): www.urc-northersynod.org/members/members_downloads/grants-training.pdf.