

# Human Resources Policy Manual

(For the use of the General Council and Conference offices  
of The United Church of Canada)



**The United Church of Canada  
L'Église Unie du Canada**

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## Introduction

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These policies have been developed with consideration for the United Church and the people who work in it. They attempt to balance the needs of the organization with the needs of individuals, but are also influenced by government legislation, policies that exist in other organizations and in other parts of the church, our ability to pay (as in salary and benefit programs), and the theology and priorities of the church. They should be consistently applied, widely communicated, and open to review.

The Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services, reporting to the Executive of the General Council, has oversight for the development of human resources policies. The Executive of the General Council adopts these policies.

Policies in the Human Resources Policy Manual apply to all staff, both Order of Ministry and lay, in the General Council and Conference offices of The United Church of Canada, regardless of the source of funding for their salaries.

The Ministry and Employment Unit, together with the appropriate managers, is responsible for interpreting, implementing, monitoring, and ensuring compliance with these policies. Related operating procedures and policy exceptions are the responsibility of the Ministry and Employment Unit.

When government legislation changes or new legislation is adopted, and the resulting legislation provides benefits or conditions of employment that are broader or more generous than that provided for under existing policy, the Ministry and Employment Unit will expeditiously draft and propose revised policy and in the interim will ensure that, in the applicable jurisdiction, operational practices are amended to be in compliance with the revised/new legislation.

Policies are reviewed every three years. Any employee or employing unit is encouraged to provide input regarding existing policies or new policies for consideration. Policy questions should be directed either to your immediate supervisor or to the Ministry and Employment Unit.

# **SECTION 1: EMPLOYMENT**

## **Position Approval**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to ensuring fair and equitable staffing and a consistency of job descriptions across all occupational categories and at all levels of employment. This policy outlines the process for approval of a new position.

### **Policy**

The senior staff person of the employing unit is responsible for recruitment of current vacancies and realignment of existing staff positions within approved budgets.

Approval for new permanent staff positions, that are additions to employing units in the General Council Office, must be approved by the General Secretary. This will be reported at the next Executive or Sub-Executive for information.

In the Conference offices, new positions must be authorized by the Conference Executive.

## **Job Descriptions**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to ensuring that the description of jobs is accurate, complies with legislation, and provides coverage for the tasks required to carry out the work of each unit.

### **Policy**

Employing units and Conferences are responsible for writing job descriptions in a format consistent with the template established by the Ministry and Employment Unit, and assigning appropriate job titles, so that the strategic goals of the unit can be met. Final authority for job descriptions rests with the General Council Officer, in consultation with the Ministry and Employment Unit.

### **Procedures**

1. Job descriptions should include the tasks and responsibilities of the position, the position's relationship to other positions, the conditions under which the work is performed, and the qualifications required.
2. Job titles should be brief and descriptive of the position, and, where possible, be consistent with other similar positions in the General Council and Conference offices.
3. Changes to job descriptions must be submitted to the Ministry and Employment Unit to ensure compliance with category benchmarks, human rights legislation, and employment equity objectives, and to determine whether the changes are significant enough to warrant a job category review.

## Job Evaluation

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### Purpose

The United Church of Canada is committed to providing a fair and equitable job evaluation system for all positions in the General Council system. Job evaluation determines the category of a position using a structured method to measure the size of jobs, in relation to the demands and outputs of the role. The process takes into account internal equity, established benchmarks, and external market comparisons.

### Policy

A Job Evaluation Committee will be maintained to review requests for job evaluations. A position must be evaluated on current duties and responsibilities. The Job Evaluation Committee assumes that every job is being performed competently.

### Procedures

1. The Job Evaluation Committee will be made up of the following members (minimum number):
  - chair, Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit, or designate
  - 1 General Council Officer
  - 1 Senior Management Group member
  - 1 program coordinator staff member from the General Council Office
  - 1 administrative staff member from the General Council Office
  - 1 Conference Executive Secretary or Speaker
  - 1 administrative staff member from a Conference office
2. The Job Evaluation Committee will review job descriptions brought forward to the Ministry and Employment Unit approved by the senior staff person of the employing unit. The committee may, from time to time, ask for certain groupings of jobs to be updated and submitted for categorization review.
3. A quorum will be comprised of half of the members of the committee, including the chair.
4. All communication regarding outcomes will be made by the Ministry and Employment Unit to the senior staff person of the employing unit.
5. The effective date for evaluations will be the first of the month following the date the finalized job description is received by the Ministry and Employment Unit.
6. Should an employee request that the categorization be reconsidered, there is an appeal process as follows:
  - Step 1:  
Employees may appeal the categorization of their position to the Ministry and Employment Unit within one month of the date of notification, if after discussing the job description with the supervisor, it is subsequently found that all relevant position information was not included in the job description. Upon presentation of

a more accurate job description, the Job Evaluation Committee will consider the appeal.

- Step 2:  
If the incumbent is not satisfied with the response from step 1, s/he may appeal the decision to the General Secretary, who, along with advice from the Executive Officer of the Ministry and Employment Unit and the General Council Officer of the employing unit, or Conference Executive Secretary will reconsider the relevant information received. A final and binding decision will then be made.

## Employment Equity

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to maintaining a fair and just workplace and to following a policy of employment equity in the calling, appointment, development, and advancement of staff. As much as it is in its power to do so, the church will eliminate discriminatory employment barriers and practices and work to increase the participation of Aboriginal people, disabled people, members of visible minorities, and women in all occupational categories and at all levels of employment.

### **Policy**

Aboriginal people, disabled people, members of visible minorities, and women are entitled to be considered for employment, hired, treated, trained, and promoted in a way that is free of barriers, including systemic and deliberate practices and policies that discriminate against them.

### **Procedures**

1. Recruitment, employment, development, and promotion practices and policies shall be as free as possible from both systemic and deliberate barriers.
2. Positive measures for recruiting, employing, training, and promoting members of defined groups shall be implemented.
3. The General Secretary will report on its progress in employment equity regularly to the Executive of the General Council.
4. Job descriptions will list the requirements needed to perform the job satisfactorily. Employing units will ensure that the competencies and qualifications are bona fide requirements and do not preclude specific groups.
5. Some staff positions require membership in The United Church of Canada. The Ministry and Employment Unit shall ensure that extreme care is taken to justify this requirement before recruiting begins and will liaise with the regional Human Rights Commission as required.

## Employment of Relatives

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to ensuring fair employment practices as related to the employment of relatives. Employment of relatives that has the potential of creating difficulties in supervision, hindering conflict resolution, or creating a conflict of interest is not permitted. Extreme care and judgment must be exercised by employing units to ensure that neither employees nor the church are placed in such potentially difficult situations.

### **Policy**

No employee shall be directly or indirectly supervised by a relative. Relatives of staff with hiring authority in an employing unit shall not be employed in the same employing unit, unless approved by the General Council Officer on the advice of the Ministry and Employment Unit.

Employment of relatives by the same employing unit or in other employing units is prohibited in cases where one party has access to information that may be prejudicial to the other, thereby creating a conflict of interest.

### **Procedures**

1. In order to help protect the employee(s) and the General Council and Conference offices from adverse criticism, open disclosure of situations as stated above is required prior to hiring. During the recruitment process, reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that there is no conflict of interest. Employing units must consult with the Ministry and Employment Unit before proceeding with a hiring in such situations.
2. For purposes of this policy, a "relative" means a member of the employee's immediate family, usually considered to be the partner or spouse, child, stepchild, birth or adoptive parent, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister, brother, grandparents, or stepparents.

## Recruitment and Selection of Staff

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### Purpose

The United Church of Canada is committed to ensuring a fair and consistent recruitment and hiring process in all units and at all occupational levels in the General Council and Conference offices.

### Policy

When a vacancy occurs, the job description will be reviewed by the employing unit/Conference. If required, a new/revised job description will be prepared by the employing unit/Conference, and a signed, dated copy will be sent to the Ministry and Employment Unit. Approval levels are indicated on the job description form. Proposals for new staff positions must be approved as indicated on the appropriate form, prior to submission for categorization. See Position Approval Policy 1.1.

The Ministry and Employment Unit is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate procedures are followed in all recruitment and selection processes.

### Procedures

1. Appropriate approval must be obtained and communicated, in writing, to the Ministry and Employment Unit in order to begin the process for all positions in the General Council and Conference offices.
2. Recruitment for all positions will include postings, advertisements, and the use of agencies, as deemed suitable. For internal candidates, please refer to the Transfers section in this policy, below.
3. The approval/appointment level to hire is listed on Tables 1a and 1b.
4. Candidates will be interviewed by a Selection Committee, the members of which are listed on the Committee Representation Tables 2a and 2b. The Ministry and Employment Unit will assist the Hiring Committee as requested or required.
5. Hiring approval/appointment for all positions is as follows:

<b>Approval or Appointment Levels – General Council Office</b>	<b>Table 1a</b>
<b>General Secretary and Moderator</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The General Council</li> </ul>	
<b>Positions Reporting to the General Secretary</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Executive of the General Council and General Secretary for General Council Officers, Executive Ministers/Officers</li> <li>• General Secretary for other positions</li> </ul>	
<b>All Other Positions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Council Officer or Executive Minister/Officer</li> </ul>	

<b>Approval or Appointment Levels – Conference Offices</b>	<b>Table 1b</b>
<b>Conference Executive Secretary/Speaker</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Council Officer, Conciliar Relations, and the Executive of the General Council</li> </ul>	
<b>All Other Positions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conference Executive Secretary/Speaker, and/or Search and Selection Committee, and/or Staff Committee depending upon the Conference structure</li> </ul>	

6. Search and Selection Committee representation (minimum requirements) for committees with elected member participants: It is desirable that members reflect regional representation, lay/ordered, ethnic diversity, and gender balance, and every effort will be made to accomplish this. Depending upon the nature of the position, members with appropriate technical skills may also be represented.

Composition of the Search and Selection Committee will be reviewed in advance by the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit, to ensure consistency throughout the organization as it relates to the hiring process.

<b>Committee Composition – General Council Office</b>	<b>Table 2a</b>
<b>Administrative/Technical/Program/Specialist/Manager</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediate supervisor</li> <li>• 1 Ministry and Employment Unit facilitator (acts as staff resource)</li> <li>• Consideration should be given to including other members of the organization, depending upon the nature of the position</li> <li>• There may be positions with high visibility within the United Church where it is recommended that an elected member also be included</li> </ul>	
<b>Executive Minister/Officer</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Secretary</li> <li>• Chair of related Permanent Committee or designate</li> <li>• 1–2 Executive of the General Council members as designated by the General Secretary or his/her designate</li> <li>• 1 Ministry and Employment Unit facilitator (acts as staff resource)</li> </ul>	
<b>General Council Officers</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Secretary</li> <li>• Chair of the related General Council committee, or designate</li> <li>• 2 Executive members appointed by the General Secretary or his/her designate</li> <li>• 1 Ministry and Employment Unit facilitator (acts as staff resource) or an executive search professional</li> </ul>	

<b>Committee Composition – Conference Office</b>	<b>Table 2b</b>
<p><b>Administrative/Technical/Program/Specialist/Manager</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conference Executive Secretary/Speaker or designate</li> <li>• 1 human resources representative acting as staff resource (Staff Committee member or designate, or staff member from Ministry and Employment Unit, General Council Office, depending upon the Conference structure)</li> <li>• Consideration should be given to including other members of the Conference, depending upon the nature of the position</li> <li>• There may be positions with high visibility within the United Church where it is recommended that a Conference Executive member also be included</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Conference Executive Secretary/Speaker</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Council Officer, Conciliar Relations</li> <li>• 2–3 representatives selected by the Conference Executive, or designate</li> <li>• 1 human resources representative acting as staff resource (Staff Committee member or designate, or staff member from Ministry and Employment Unit, General Council Office, depending upon the Conference structure)</li> </ul>	

7. Reference checks are required for all hirings (internal transfers/promotions and external candidates).
8. Transfers:
  - An eligible internal candidate must advise his/her supervisor of his/her intent to apply prior to submitting an application.
  - All internal candidates in all employing units or Conferences will be given consideration for any vacancies for which they are qualified.
  - For transfers of categories 1–7 that occur within the immediate employing unit or Conference, staff may be moved directly into a vacant position without posting the position.
  - An employing unit, in consultation with the Ministry and Employment Unit, may move a term employee into the permanent position during the term without posting the position, provided that the term staff has previously gone through the full cycle of the search and selection process.
  - Any position changes between Conferences, and between a Conference and the General Council Office, are considered transfers or promotions, and not a new employment relationship.
  - Reference checks or consultation with past/current supervisors will be conducted for all internal transfers and promotions. The hiring employing unit has the option of doing this directly with the current supervisor or having the Ministry and Employment Unit act on its behalf.
  - Start dates will be negotiated between the supervisors, in consultation with the Ministry and Employment Unit.

## Recruitment and Selection of the General Secretary

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### Purpose

This policy is intended to ensure a fair and consistent recruitment and hiring process for the General Secretary of the General Council of The United Church of Canada.

### Policy

The hiring authority for the Office of the General Secretary is the General Council. When the Executive of the General Council declares a vacancy in the office of the General Secretary, there shall be a review and update of the job description by the General Secretary's Supervision Committee.

### Procedures

#### 1. Search and Selection Committee:

When notice of a vacancy occurs in the Office of the General Secretary, the General Council Nominations Committee will submit a slate of three members of the Executive of the General Council and one member-at-large from the United Church to serve on a Search and Selection Committee. These four people will be appointed by the Executive of the General Council to the Search and Selection Committee for the General Secretary, joining the Moderator of the United Church and the chair of the General Secretary's Supervision Committee, who are standing members of the committee. The Search and Selection Committee will be made up of at least six, but not more than eight, members.

The Search and Selection Committee for the General Secretary will be:

- the Moderator (who will act as chair)
- the chair of the General Secretary's Supervision Committee
- three members of the Executive of the General Council, nominated from its membership
- one member-at-large from the United Church
- if required, two additional appointments from within The United Church of Canada to provide a balance of gender, regions, lay/ordered, and experience

The Search and Selection Committee will also include an executive search professional provided by the Ministry and Employment Unit, who will participate as a non-voting consultant in the process.

In the appointment of the General Secretary of the General Council, the Search and Selection Committee will place one name before the General Council for approval. The name of the candidate will be kept confidential pending the General Council's approval.

#### 2. Role of The Ministry and Employment Unit:

The Ministry and Employment Unit is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate procedures are followed in all recruitment and selection processes. The Executive Officer of the Ministry and Employment Unit will be available to provide support and advice as requested by the Search and Selection Committee at their discretion.

3. Additional Procedures:

*Advertising:* Every effort will be made to advertise and post the notice of a vacancy in the Office of the General Secretary as widely as possible throughout the church. This includes advertising and posting notice of the vacancy in the General Council Office, Conference and presbytery offices, the National Vacancy listings, and on the General Council website. The Ministry and Employment Unit will advertise the vacancy in *The Observer* and *Aujourd'hui Credo* for a minimum of one month.

The Ministry and Employment Unit will also advertise the search for a General Secretary nationally through job websites, newspapers, journals, trade magazines, and other means as considered appropriate.

The Search and Selection Committee is expected to be proactive in taking steps to ensure that vacancies are advertised throughout the constituencies and networks where possible candidates may be found.

*Screening:* The Search and Selection Committee will undertake the short-listing of candidates and have final interviews with a minimum of two candidates.

*Independent professional assessment:* Before hiring is done for the General Secretary, an independent professional assessment will be done with the leading candidates or candidate to ensure compatibility with the leadership expectations and culture of the United Church. The assessment will be facilitated by the executive search consultant and the findings will be made available to the Search and Selection Committee in its discernment process.

*References:* In-depth reference checks are required for the position of General Secretary. The executive search consultant will recommend a third-party reference validation firm to undertake these reference checks, with input from the Search and Selection Committee. The timing and number of references required for either short-listed or final candidate(s) will be determined by the Search and Selection Committee.

*Appointment:* Following the appointment of the General Secretary by the General Council, the Ministry and Employment Unit will draw up the terms of appointment for this position, consistent with the policies of The United Church of Canada.

*Re-appointment of the Search and Selection Committee:* If an incumbent leaves a position within six months of being hired, the original Search and Selection Committee will be reconvened to determine the future strategy and timelines for a new appointment.

## **Moving Costs**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada reimburses eligible permanent, full-time employees in categories 8 and higher for their actual housing search, moving, storage, and travel expenses to the extent that they are reasonable and/or properly authorized. This policy applies when staff positions are filled by people who are required to move to accept employment.

### **Policy**

Eligible employees who are required to move to accept employment will be reimbursed for reasonable and/or properly authorized moving and related costs. The new staff member must remain in her/his position for a minimum of one year. If the staff person terminates employment within three years, s/he will reimburse the United Church on a pro-rated basis.

### **Procedures**

1. When the Ministry and Employment Unit becomes aware of an upcoming move, the "Moving Guidelines Information" package will be provided. The guidelines include all relevant details on moving expenses any other related information.

## Working Hours

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### **Purpose**

This policy relates to hours of work and alternative work arrangements to ensure that employees keep a regular working schedule that helps maintain a consistent and predictable workflow.

It makes provisions for the opportunity for alternative work schedules, when possible, through job sharing, flexible working hours, and under exceptional circumstances, a compressed work week.

### **Policy**

The standard working hours for full-time staff are seven hours per day, 35 hours per week. However, it is expected that staff in categories 8 and above may work more than a standard work week from time to time due to the nature of work being undertaken.

A compressed work week is normally defined as a four day work week of 35 hours. Under exceptional circumstances, the employing unit, in consultation with the Ministry and Employment Unit, may permit employees to work a compressed work week. The needs of the employing unit are foremost and must be taken into account. All requests for a compressed work week must be approved by the Executive Minister/Officer of the employing unit in consultation with the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit.

Job sharing is normally defined as a situation where two employees share the same full time position, and each employee is classified as permanent part-time. Requests to set up job sharing arrangements will be considered, in consultation with the Ministry and Employment Unit, recognizing that this may involve added costs (e.g., benefits, office facilities) to the employing unit.

Flexible working hours are defined as an arrangement whereby an employee can vary the scheduling of her/his working hours within specified guidelines, to determine (or be involved in determining) the start and end times of her/his working day. Flexible working hours ("flextime") may be arranged between employees and their units, as long as the proposed working hours are convenient for the unit and staffing coverage is provided. Flexible working hours must take into account that the core office hours are 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Should working hours be less than 35 hours per week, vacation will be pro-rated based on the work week.

Lunch hours and rest periods must be consistent with each province's Employment Standards Act.

**Procedures**

1. Normal working hours of the General Council Office are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., including lunch and breaks, Monday through Friday. The Conference offices may have different start and end times.
2. Employees cannot skip their lunch break in order to have more time off.
3. The Ministry and Employment Unit must be consulted prior to approving any changes to an employee's work hours. This includes changes to regular hours, compressed work week, job sharing, and flexible hours.

## Term Employment

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada provides opportunities for term employees to be employed for a defined period of time. Term employment includes employees who are employed on an "as-needed" basis, including those seconded from other courts of the church. Term employees are paid through the General Council payroll. This policy does not include fee-for-service arrangements, as these individuals are not employees of The United Church of Canada.

### **Policy**

1. To ensure a fair and transparent process, approval must be received by the Ministry and Employment Unit who will initiate the recruitment process, similar to that for all positions in the General Council and Conference offices. Term employment vacancies will be filled according to the regular recruiting procedures.
2. Under normal circumstances, term employment will not be for longer than three years. However, in exceptional circumstances, an extension for specific projects will be considered, in consultation with the Ministry and Employment Unit.
3. For term positions of one year or more, applicable benefits will be offered unless the employee is already a member of the plan.
4. The terms and conditions of the term position, including salary placement within the category, will be determined by the hiring unit, in consultation with the Ministry and Employment Unit.
5. Employment situations that are considered "fee for service" and that may require a specific contract for work in the General Council and Conference offices, and that are not term employment as defined above, must be reviewed with the Ministry and Employment Unit before arrangements are made.

## Probation

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to providing new employees with enough time at the beginning of the employment relationship to learn the scope of the position. This is referred to as the probationary period; it allows opportunities for both the unit or Conference and employee to assess the fit for the position.

### **Policy**

The probationary period for all categories is six months. Supervisors are responsible for providing continuous feedback to the employee during this time, setting out clear expectations and identifying areas for improvement, if necessary. The employee also has a responsibility to identify potential problem areas as they arise. On completion of the probationary period, the supervisor will meet with the employee to discuss past performance and future goals.

### **Procedures**

1. The probationary period may be extended for an additional period not to exceed six months, if the supervisor considers that the employee has potential and that additional support is required. If there is an extension, the employee must be notified in writing at the beginning of the extension period.
2. If an employee's performance is not satisfactory, regardless of the training and support given, termination may come at any time during or at the end of the probationary period.
3. The Ministry and Employment Unit must be consulted in all cases where an extension is being considered, or where termination may result.

## **Resignation**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada has expectations related to the resignation of an employee.

### **Policy**

Employees planning to end their employment with The United Church of Canada must formally notify their employing unit/Conference in writing. It is expected that two weeks of written notice will be provided, with consideration being given to a longer notice period if possible.

### **Procedures**

1. Formal notification shall be made in writing to the employing unit/Conference, with a copy to the Ministry and Employment Unit. The resignation date is the last day an employee is physically at work.
2. An exit interview will be conducted by the Ministry and Employment Unit or its designate.

## Termination

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### **Purpose**

This outlines the policy and procedures related to the termination of an employee.

### **Policy**

In all cases of termination, payment in lieu of notice and amount of severance shall follow government regulations, employment standards, and case law where appropriate, with consideration given to such factors as length of service, career relocation prospects, reason for termination, and other circumstances prevailing at the time.

In the event that the termination is "for cause" the preceding may not apply.

### **Procedures**

1. The Ministry and Employment Unit will make reasonable efforts to ensure that the supervisor has taken all the appropriate supervisory steps leading to a decision to terminate an employee.
2. Terminations can be moved forward only after consultation with the Ministry and Employment Unit.
3. All termination decisions must be first approved by the General Council Officer of the employing unit, or the Conference Executive Secretary/Speaker in consultation with the General Council Officer, Conciliar Relations.
4. The Executive Officer of the Ministry and Employment Unit then will meet with the General Secretary to review and seek approval for the pending action in advance of the termination date.
5. The Ministry and Employment Unit will advise and work with the supervisor to ensure appropriate support is in place for the termination meeting.

## **SECTION 2: COMPENSATION & LEAVES**

## Salary and Benefits

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada seeks to embody the values of justice and fairness for all its employees, and establishes salary and benefits with those values as guiding principles.

### **Policy**

The United Church of Canada's salary and benefits policy attempts to:

- attract and retain committed, competent, and qualified employees;
- provide fair and equitable compensation to all employees by ensuring that salaries are internally equitable and externally competitive with medium-sized business (except in the case of senior management in categories 10 and higher, whose salaries will not lag by more than 10 percent with those of non-profit organizations);
- reward years of experience and performance in a given job in accordance with established salary schedules.

Salary will be paid in recognition of the responsibilities and requirements of the position.

Salary objectives, practices, and procedures are accessible to all staff.

All positions shall receive a salary category designation. Some categories have different rates for members of the Order of Ministry and for lay staff. The "lay equivalent" rate compensates for the housing tax exemption granted by Canada Revenue Agency to members of the Order of Ministry. This adjustment is based on the belief that members of the Order of Ministry and lay people in the same category should receive equivalent "take home" salaries.

Economic adjustments are calculated by using relevant information, with a formula which has been determined by the Executive of the General Council.

The United Church of Canada holds the obligation to ensure that benefits information is provided to employees upon hiring. Any changes made thereafter to the benefits programs shall be made known to all employees.

### **Procedures**

1. Salary increases which result from an economic adjustment to salary ranges generally take effect on January 1st. Salary increases which reflect progression within salary ranges occur on the anniversary date of employment in the position, and are based on satisfactory work performance.
2. A move to a higher category job or an upward recategorization of an existing job is considered a promotion. The employee's anniversary date changes to the date of employment in the new position.

3. Employees who choose to move to a lower category will normally be paid at an appropriate level in the lower range.
4. Fluctuations in the marketplace can sometimes result in a particular group moving ahead in a range at a faster pace than others. Human Resources identifies these fluctuations through the ongoing analysis of salary data for all positions, which may include commissioning a salary survey, and will report these fluctuations to the Permanent Committee on MEPS (PC-MEPS).
5. If a group has fallen significantly behind prevailing rates of pay, such that it appears that recruiting and retaining appropriately qualified staff is being affected, then a range adjustment may be recommended.

## Overtime/Compensating Time

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to providing a workplace where employees are fairly compensated for extra hours worked during a work week.

### **Policy**

At times, excessive workload will make it necessary for employees to work beyond their normal working hours. However, the need for overtime should be a temporary situation. Excessive overtime can be stressful, contribute to an unequal distribution of work, and lead to an unhealthy working style. Because of this, it is important that overtime be monitored, approved, and recorded.

A work week is defined as Monday to Sunday, except in British Columbia and Saskatchewan where, according to the Provincial Employment Standards Act, the work week is defined as Sunday to Saturday.

All overtime hours must be approved, in writing, in advance by the supervisor. The approval must specify the number of hours being approved. Overtime that is not approved in advance will not be compensated.

Staff in categories 1–7 will be paid for overtime, as per government legislation, or be given compensating time for overtime hours worked, if requested by the employee in writing.

Staff in categories 8 and higher are not eligible for overtime pay. For intensive overtime, at the initiation of the employing unit (e.g., excessive workload such as back-to-back meetings or assignments that makes it necessary for an employee to work long hours for an extended period of time, possibly including evenings or weekends) employees will get compensating time off as agreed to with the employing unit. The expectation is that compensating time will be taken as soon as possible after the fact.

### **Procedures**

1. Compensating time for all categories must be taken as soon as possible, but within three months of the week in which the overtime was earned.
2. For categories 1–7 the number of overtime hours and compensating time must be recorded, approved in advance by the employing unit, and reported to the Ministry and Employment Unit.
3. For categories 8 and higher, compensating time must be taken as soon as possible. Unless there are extenuating circumstances and consultation has occurred with Human Resources, compensating time beyond the three-month period will be lost. For employees in categories 8 and higher, there is no provision for compensating time to be paid out.

## **Acting Pay**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada will provide for acting pay when an employee has been formally asked to take on an acting role related to a position in a higher category.

### **Policy**

When a staff person is formally requested by the employing unit to take on an acting role for 25 consecutive days or more, additional remuneration will be paid if the acting position is remunerated at a higher level than that which the person assuming the acting position currently receives. No other additional benefits shall be received or accrued.

### **Procedures**

1. Employing units must consult with the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit, prior to discussing acting pay with employees.

## **Sick Leave**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to responding to its employees' needs when faced with sickness and/or injury.

### **Policy**

All permanent full-time and permanent part-time employees are provided with The United Church of Canada's "self-insured" short-term sick leave benefit. Employees are entitled to full salary continuance for up to six months, if they qualify.

### **Procedures**

1. An employee must advise her/his immediate supervisor when s/he will be absent from work due to sickness and ensure that the immediate supervisor is apprised of the length of time s/he is expected to be absent.
2. The "self-insured" short-term benefit plan provides coverage for a total of six months.
3. Absence from work for five consecutive working days or longer requires a doctor's certificate to permit qualification for sick leave and must be submitted to the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit.
4. Additional medical assessment may be requested if the absence is an extended one or if frequency of absenteeism is a concern to the employing unit.
5. A return to work following an extended medical leave of absence must be supported by a medical clearance from the attending physician indicating any accommodation requirements.
6. Vacation continues to accrue during the time for which the employee is on paid sick leave.
7. If it is anticipated that the employee will be applying for long-term disability, application should be made as far in advance as possible by notifying the United Church Pension and Benefits Centre with a copy to the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit.

## Holidays

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### **Purpose**

To give employees time for rest and recreation, and in keeping with legislation, The United Church of Canada provides time off with pay for holidays.

### **Policy**

Employees in every province are entitled to holidays as determined by provincial legislation. In addition, the General Council and Conference offices will be closed between Christmas and New Year's. Holidays, including the week between Christmas and New Year's, are granted with pay to all permanent and term full-time employees. The policy recognizes provincially legislated holidays.

When National Aboriginal Day falls on a work day, staff in the General Council and Conference offices will receive that day off.

For provinces where Remembrance Day is not a provincially legislated holiday, staff in the General Council and Conference offices in Ontario and Quebec will receive that day off, if November 11 falls on a weekday.

The General Secretary has the discretion to determine an early closing prior to a General Council and Conference offices holiday.

### *Other Religious or Ethnic Holidays:*

Employees who wish to take time off to celebrate religious or ethnic holidays not included on the list above may use other leave provisions.

### *Extra Holidays:*

Three days between Christmas and New Year's  
One day at the discretion of the General Secretary

*Holiday Schedule—For Information*

Holiday	BC, Yukon & Nunavut	ALTA, SK, MB & PEI	QC	ON	NB, NS & NFLD
New Year's Day	1	1	1	1	1
Family Day (Louis Riel Day, Manitoba)	—	1	—	1	—
Good Friday	1	1	1	1	1
Easter Monday	1	1	1	1	1
Victoria Day/Patriot's Day	1	1	1	1	1
Fête Nationale (Quebec)	—	—	1	—	—
National Aboriginal Day	*	*	*	*	*
Canada Day (Memorial Day, Newfoundland)	1	1	1	1	1
Civic Holiday or August Holiday (name varies from province to province)	1	1	—	1	1
Labour Day	1	1	1	1	1
Thanksgiving Day	1	1	1	1	1
Remembrance Day	1	1	**	**	1
Christmas Day	1	1	1	1	1
Boxing Day	1	1	1	1	1
Total days ->	11	12	11*	12*	11

\* When National Aboriginal Day falls on a weekday, staff in the General Council and Conference offices will receive that day off.

\*\*When Remembrance Day falls on a weekday, staff in the General Council and Conference offices in Ontario and Quebec will receive that day off.

## Vacation

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada provides each employee with a vacation entitlement to give employees time for rest and recreation, and in keeping with legislation.

### **Policies**

The United Church calculates vacation entitlement based on the original date of hire.

The original date of hire for Order of Ministry staff, for the purposes of vacation calculation, is the date of ordination or commissioning to diaconal ministry into The United Church of Canada or admission from another denomination, as long as there has been continuous employment within a recognized United Church ministry.

Employees will be given credit for the entire month of hire, regardless of the commencement date. Full credit for the month of leaving will be given if the termination date is the 15th or thereafter. Full vacation entitlement will be given on January 1 of each year, or pro-rated for the first year of service when less than one full year. Vacation is accrued on the following basis:

#### *Categories 1–7:*

15 working days – 1–4 years of service  
20 working days – 5–19 years of service  
25 working days – 20+ years of service

#### *Categories 8 and Up:*

23 working days – 1–19 years of service  
25 working days – 20+ years of service

Permanent staff in category 7, who were employed prior to December 2008, will continue to be eligible for vacation accrual as outlined above for Categories 8 and up.

Where the accrual rate is affected by a change in category, the new anniversary date shall be used for calculating vacation entitlement.

Full credit for vacation will be based on continuous years of service, while the employee is receiving regular salary.

### **Procedures**

1. Vacation may be taken at any time during the year as agreed to by the immediate supervisor. The unit reserves the right to designate times of the year when vacations may or may not be taken.
2. All vacation granted will be reported by the immediate supervisor to the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit.
3. Employees may carry-over up to five days in any given year. Approval must be obtained from the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment, for carry-over of more than five days. All employees are encouraged to take their full vacation entitlement each year.

## **Maternity Leave**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to supporting its employees in their work and family life. The church recognizes the unique situation brought about by pregnancy and provides leave for expectant mothers.

### **Policy**

Expectant mothers will be granted maternity leave commencing before, on or after the date of childbirth.

### **Procedures**

1. An employee shall inform the United Church in writing of her request for maternity leave at least four weeks in advance of the date of her leave, unless there is a valid reason why notice cannot be given. Upon receipt of a written request, maternity leave without pay before, on, or after the birth of her child will be granted. The period of the maternity leave will be subject to the maximums set out by government insurance plans (i.e. Canadian Employment Insurance Plan/Quebec Parental Insurance Plan).
2. The United Church may require an employee to provide a medical certificate certifying the employee's pregnancy.
3. If an employee has not yet begun maternity leave and her newborn child is hospitalized, or the employee has begun maternity leave and then returns to work while the newborn child is hospitalized, then the maternity leave can be extended for every week the child is in the hospital, for up to 52 weeks following the week of the child's birth.
4. Maternity leave granted under this policy shall be counted as "service" for purposes of salary and benefit calculations.
5. The employee may elect to continue pension contributions and group insurance plans during the maternity leave. If she elects to continue, she and the organization will each pay their share of the benefit costs during the period of the leave.
6. For term employees (whose employment has a fixed end date), the maternity leave will end on the date the employee's term employment is completed, if the end date is prior to the conclusion of the period set out by a government insurance plan.
7. Expectant mothers are entitled to time off with pay to attend prenatal checkups.

*Maternity Top-Up Payment:*

Permanent employees granted maternity leave will receive “top-up” payments, provided that the organization is presented with proof that she is in receipt of maternity benefits under a government insurance plan.

The top-up payment will consist of the following:

- a) 95% of her weekly rate of pay, if she is subject to a qualifying period of two weeks before receiving government insurance plan benefits; and
- b) a payment equal to the difference between government insurance plan benefits and her weekly salary for a total of 95% of the weekly rate for a period of 15 weeks.

*Partner's Leave:*

Five days of special leave at full salary and benefits will be granted to the partner of a person on maternity leave for needs directly related to the birth of a child. This leave is normally taken within the first week of the child's birth, but may be taken within four weeks of the birth of the child. This does not apply to blended families where the child is the natural offspring of one of the partners.

*Government Links:*

Service Canada website: Employment Insurance (EI) and maternity, parental and sickness benefits: [www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/ei/types/special.shtml](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/ei/types/special.shtml)

Quebec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP): [www.rqap.gouv.qc.ca/prestations/index\\_en.asp](http://www.rqap.gouv.qc.ca/prestations/index_en.asp)

## Parental Leave

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to supporting its employees in their work and family life. The church recognizes the unique situation brought about by new parenthood and provides leave for new parents.

### **Policy**

Parental benefits are payable either to the biological or adoptive parents while they are caring for a newborn or an adopted child. Parental benefits for biological parents are payable from the child's birth date, and for adoptive parents from the date of the child's placement in the home.

### **Procedures**

1. An employee will inform the United Church in writing of their request for parental leave at least four weeks in advance of the date of the leave, unless there is a valid reason why notice cannot be given.
2. The employee will be granted parental leave without pay for a single period according to government insurance plan limits. The parental leave will be in the 52-week period beginning on the day the child is born or the day on which the child comes into the employee's care.
3. At the request of the employee, parental leave can be taken in two periods of consecutive weeks. Also, at the request of the employee, the commencement of the parental leave may be deferred.
4. The employee may be required to submit a birth certificate or proof of adoption of the child. The definition of child for the purposes of this policy is a person who has not yet reached the age of majority in the province/territory in which the employee resides.
5. If the employee's child is hospitalized within the period defined above and the employee has either returned to work or has not yet proceeded on parental leave, the period of parental leave specified in the original leave request may be extended. This extension will be equal to that portion of the period of the child's hospitalization during which the employee was not on parental leave and will end not later than 104 weeks after the day on which the child comes into the employee's care.
6. Parental leave granted under this policy is counted as "service" for purposes of salary and benefit calculations.
7. The employee may elect to continue pension contributions and group insurance plans during the parental leave. If the employee elects to continue, the employee and the organization will each pay their share of the benefit costs during the period of the leave.

8. For term employees (whose employment has a fixed end date), the parental leave will end on the date the employee's term employment is completed, if the end date is prior to the conclusion of the parental leave set out by a government insurance plan.
9. If both parents are employees of The United Church of Canada, both parents may take a period of parental leave provided that the total period of the leave taken by both parents does not exceed the maximum leave period as per government insurance plan.

*Parental Top-Up Payment\*:*

Permanent employees granted parental leave will receive a parental top-up payment, provided that the organization has been presented with proof that the employee is in receipt of parental benefits under a government insurance plan.

Parental top-up will consist of the following:

- a) 95% of the employee's weekly rate of pay, if the employee is subject to a qualifying period of two weeks before receiving government insurance plan benefits; and
- b) a payment equal to the difference between government insurance plan benefits and the employee's weekly salary for a total of 95% of the weekly rate for a period of 8 weeks (for a total of 10 weeks including a 2-week qualifying period).

*\*This policy does not apply to newly blended families where the child is the natural offspring of one of the partners.*

*Partner's Leave:*

Five days of special leave at full salary and benefits will be granted to the partner of a person on parental leave for needs directly related to the adoption of a child. This leave is normally taken within the first week of a child's placement in the home. This does not apply to blended families where the child is the natural offspring of one of the partners.

*Government Links*

Service Canada website:

Employment Insurance (EI) and maternity, parental, and sickness benefits:  
[www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/ei/types/special.shtml](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/ei/types/special.shtml)

Quebec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP):

[www.rqap.gouv.qc.ca/prestations/index\\_en.asp](http://www.rqap.gouv.qc.ca/prestations/index_en.asp)

## **Bereavement Leave**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to supporting its employees during times of loss and provides bereavement leave to those who require it.

### **Policy**

Up to four days of bereavement leave with pay is provided to all employees upon the death of a member of their immediate family or significant person.

The immediate family is usually considered to be the partner or spouse, child, stepchild, birth or adoptive parent, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister, brother, grandparents, or stepparents.

A significant person is usually a relative not included in the above, or a close friend.

### **Procedures**

1. All leaves granted will be reported by the employing unit to the Ministry and Employment Unit.
2. Depending on the circumstances, this policy may be combined with other leave policies if the employing unit and the Ministry and Employment Unit consider it appropriate.
3. Allowances may also be made by the supervisor for travel, in consultation with the Ministry and Employment Unit, in extenuating circumstances.

## **Compassionate Leave**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to supporting its employees by providing reasonable time away with full pay for exceptional situations not covered under other leave policies. This is not an entitlement, and is granted on an “as needed” basis for unusual, unexpected circumstances.

### **Policy**

Compassionate leave with pay may be provided to all staff for personal emergencies at the discretion of the employing unit, in consultation with the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit. Factors for determining an emergency include:

- the need for the employee to respond;
- a situation over which the employee has no control;
- a reflection of appropriate compassion as called for by the theology and traditions of The United Church of Canada.

Situations that require urgent and immediate attention, and where the employee is the only person able to respond, are covered in this policy.

### **Procedures**

1. An unexpected and immediate short-term crisis qualifies for this leave. Employees facing situations that go beyond the short term should refer to the Extended Compassionate Leave policy or consult with the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit.
2. Compassionate leave may be up to five days per year and is not cumulative. Any compassionate leave of up to five days may be approved by the immediate supervisor. For very exceptional circumstances, compassionate leave may be granted for up to 10 days. The Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit, will have final approval for any leave granted over five days.

## Extended Compassionate Leave

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### **Purpose**

All employers have been legislated to ensure that employees are legally permitted compassionate or family medical leave time. This policy is in accordance with legislated family leave policies.

### **Policy**

All employees are eligible to take a leave of absence without pay for compassionate care leave. Employees may be entitled to government Employment Insurance Benefits and should contact Human Resources and Skills Development Canada directly.

Employees may be entitled to eight weeks of government employee benefits for compassionate or family medical leave where there is significant risk of death within 26 weeks of a family member.

Family members are defined as:

- partner, spouse;
- a parent, step-parent, or a foster parent of the employee;
- a child, step-child, or foster child of the employee or the employee's spouse.

### **Procedures**

1. An employee must give written notice that s/he will be taking extended compassionate care leave. If the employee must begin the leave before advising her/his supervisor, the employee will advise the supervisor as soon as possible after beginning the leave.
2. The extended compassionate leave procedures are outlined on government websites.
3. An employee returning from an approved leave will be reinstated to her/his former position or be provided with comparable alternative work.
4. Upon returning to work, an employee will be paid for the two week employment insurance waiting time at her/his regular salary, upon submission of employment insurance payment notifications to the Ministry and Employment Unit.
5. Vacation will continue to accrue during the period of leave if the employee returns to work after the leave. If the employee does not return to work, vacation will not accrue. Vacation accrued during the period of leave can be added on to the end of the extended compassionate care leave if approved in advance.

## **Court Duty**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to supporting the civic responsibilities of its employees and provides leave for jury and witness duty to those who are called to serve.

### **Policy**

Employees who miss work for court duty will receive full salary and benefits as usual. Absence for subpoenaed witness duty is treated the same as jury duty. Employees are expected to return to work as soon as court duty has been completed.

### **Procedures**

1. Any fees an employee may receive for being on court duty may be retained by the employee.
2. Court duty must be reported to the Ministry and Employment Unit.

## Unpaid Leave of Absence

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to supporting its employees and provides for a leave of absence for those who require it.

### **Policy**

All employees may be granted a leave of absence without pay with the approval of the corresponding General Council Officer, with advice and consultation from the Ministry and Employment Unit.

Vacation and sick leave credits do not accrue during a leave of absence without pay.

The policy regarding benefit and pension coverage during a leave of absence is as follows:

- A leave of absence of more than 30 calendar days will be considered a break in continuous service for the purpose of benefit entitlement. The employee will keep benefits and service earned up to that date.
- In order to maintain provincial health care coverage, the employee will pay the full premium (employee and employer portions) directly to the payroll office. This applies only in provinces where health care premiums are paid by individuals.
- In order to maintain benefit coverage and membership in the pension plan, the employee will pay the full premium(s) (employee and employer portions) directly to The United Church of Canada's Pension and Benefits Centre, our third-party pension and benefits administrator.

### **Procedures**

1. If an economic adjustment is due during the leave of absence, it will take effect on the date the employee returns to work.
2. Any anniversary review and salary range increase due during the leave period will be postponed until after the employee returns to work. If the leave of absence is more than 30 days, the anniversary date is moved forward by the length of the leave, after which time the increase becomes effective. Subsequent anniversary dates will occur every 12 months (providing employment is continuous) from the new anniversary date.
3. All benefits will be reinstated and the usual payroll deductions made upon the employee's return to work.

## Continuing Education

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to supporting the ongoing professional development of its employees and provides the opportunity for continuing education for permanent employees. This policy outlines the continuing education opportunities for employees in the General Council and Conference offices.

### **Policy**

Continuing education opportunities such as training, skills development, education, or professional development may be available for employees if the continuing education is directly related to an employee's current work, known future work, or anticipated areas of expansion at the United Church.

Permanent employees in categories 8 and higher may be provided with up to three weeks (15 working days) per year of continuing education leave, also known as annual study leave, upon the approval of the immediate supervisor.

Permanent staff in category 7 who were employed prior to December 2008 will continue to be eligible for this benefit.

Continuing education programs are subject to the approval of the immediate supervisor, who will determine whether the continuing education opportunity will facilitate the work of the church and will be of mutual advantage to the employee and the employing unit.

Final approval of the continuing education program rests with the General Council Officer, Conference Executive Secretary or Speaker, Executive Ministers/Officers, and supervisors, in consultation with the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit. Approval of the continuing education leave is subject to the requirements (skill level, time, etc.) of the workplace, as well as budgetary considerations.

### **Procedures**

1. A formal request will be made by the employee to the supervisor. Approval must be obtained in advance of the continuing education event.
2. For Continuing Education Leave (Study Leave), the Ministry and Employment Unit will be consulted prior to having annual study leave granted to ensure consistency with such policy issues as whether the employee is entitled to study leave, and whether there has been study leave taken that year.
3. Employees have access to specified amounts each year, and these amounts will be subject to yearly budgetary considerations. This information is available through the Ministry and Employment Unit.
4. For continuing education events that are graded courses, half the amount will be paid upon registration, and the second half upon successful completion of the course and presentation of the grade obtained.

5. There is no provision for carrying over used continuing education amounts from year to year. There is also no provision for carrying forward continuing education leave from year to year.
6. Requests for time off during normal working hours to participate in continuing education and professional development opportunities that are not categorized as continuing education leave may be granted by the immediate supervisor in consultation with the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit.

## **Sabbatical Leave**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to supporting the ongoing professional and vocational development of its employees and provides the opportunity for a Sabbatical Leave for permanent staff in categories 8 and higher. The purpose of Sabbatical Leave is to provide time for an employee to enrich skill levels, further professional abilities, and become better equipped to serve on the cutting edge of her or his area of ministry. The result may be an individual who is revitalized to continue her or his work.

### **Policy**

Permanent staff in categories 8 and higher may apply for Sabbatical Leave after five full years of employment, and again at successive five-year intervals. The Sabbatical Leave may be for a period of up to 12 weeks with full salary and benefits, not including travel costs, in a reasonably intense and disciplined program that is approved by the immediate supervisor, Conference Executive Secretary/Speaker, and/or the corresponding General Council Officer of the employing unit, in consultation with the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit, at least six months prior to the leave.

Permanent staff in category 7 who were employed prior to December 2008 will continue to be eligible for this benefit.

Sabbatical Leave may be combined with Continuing Education Leave (also known as Annual Study Leave), vacation, and/or unpaid leave of absence to extend the term. The appropriate length of a Sabbatical Leave depends on many factors and will be determined by the immediate supervisor and the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit. A Sabbatical Leave must be completed within a one-year period.

### **Procedures**

1. The program for study undertaken must be clearly job related, either to one's current position, or to a known change in position in The United Church of Canada. It may also be related to an area of expansion in the church, which includes training to enable growth into other areas or helping to equip staff for transformational change. The intent is to enable staff to grow personally and professionally and to assist the church in reaching out.
2. The timing of the Sabbatical Leave, as well as the general area of focus, will be approved by the supervisor. The employee may then start to make plans regarding the Sabbatical Leave activities, before the final proposal has been formally approved.
3. Sabbatical Leave must be approved by the supervisor, Conference Executive Secretary/Speaker and/or General Council Officer, after consultation with the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit. The approval process is meant to be consultative in nature in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the leave being proposed. Once consensus has been achieved, the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit, will confirm compliance with policy. The supervisor will then formally approve the leave.

4. The employing unit and General Council Officer and/or Conference Executive Secretary/Speaker of the employing unit are responsible for determining the number of leaves to be requested per year for the unit, based on the needs of the unit, taking into consideration the unit's budgetary limitations and work requirements. Because of this, it may not be possible for a unit to grant a Sabbatical Leave at the time requested.
5. A Sabbatical Leave proposal will be discussed in the early stages of development with the applicant and the supervisor in the employing unit/Conference, with the Conference Executive Secretary/Speaker and/or General Council Officer of the employing unit/Conference, and with the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit.
6. Consultation and review of the Sabbatical Leave proposal must be reviewed at least six months before the proposed start date. Specific details are to be provided in writing no later than two months before the start of the leave.
7. Upon completion of the Sabbatical Leave, the employee will provide written and/or oral reports as determined when the leave was approved.

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## **Election to Public Office**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to supporting employees who campaign for and/or are elected to public office.

### **Policy**

The United Church of Canada requires that employees who are seeking election to either the Parliament of Canada or to a provincial legislature take an unpaid leave of absence. Provisions may also be made for employees who are subsequently elected to any public office; this may include either an extended unpaid leave of absence, or a change in employment status to permanent part-time.

### **Procedures**

1. An employee seeking election to either the Parliament of Canada or to a provincial legislature must take an unpaid leave of absence or vacation for the duration of the campaign.
2. If elected to a full-time position in a provincial or federal election, the employee must resign her/his position in the United Church.
3. An employee elected as mayor, where such position is a part-time position, may remain on staff with an appropriate reduction in pay in proportion to the amount of time that must be devoted to the mayoralty duties involved. The percentage of the reduction will be decided by the employing unit or Conference in consultation with the Ministry and Employment Unit.
4. An employee who is elected as councillor or school trustee may be granted unpaid time off to attend council or board meetings.
5. Any periods of leave of absence without pay to attend to the duties of elected office will not be used when determining length of service.
6. The service before and after such leaves of absence will be deemed to be continuous for all purposes.

## **SECTION 3: EMPLOYEE RELATIONS**

## Code of Conduct

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to providing a satisfactory, fulfilling, and mutually rewarding working experience for all employees. The United Church strives to act, and be seen to act, in the best interests of the church and those it serves, and with the highest ethical standards. The Code of Conduct includes standards for professional behaviour, confidentiality, confidentiality agreements, conflicts of interest, privacy, technology, gifts, and media relations.

### **Policy**

The United Church of Canada believes that all people are, children of God, created in the image of God and therefore worthy of respect and love. Living out that belief requires a deep sense of mutuality, trust, and accountability. As an employer, this is lived out by striving to create and sustain a workplace where these values are practiced every day.

#### *Professional Behaviour:*

The United Church of Canada strives to provide a positive work environment where employees can contribute to a productive, respectful, and professional atmosphere, with equal opportunity for all. The General Council and Conference offices work to foster an open, trusting, and collegial work environment. This type of work environment can be achieved where individuals feel they are treated with dignity and respect without being subjected to discrimination or harassment. Any form of discrimination or harassment will not be tolerated at The United Church of Canada.

All employees are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner. Employees are expected to respect and comply with all organizational policies and guidelines, and to demonstrate respect and accountability to their colleagues. Employees are also expected to respect the ethos of The United Church of Canada, and deal with all individuals during the course of their work, both internally and externally, in a manner that demonstrates the values of a caring, diverse, and respectful community.

#### *Confidentiality:*

Employees of the General Council and Conferences offices may, in the course of their work, come to know, be made aware of, or obtain confidential information concerning The United Church of Canada, its employees, and/or its constituents. This information must not be used for personal gain or disclosed to persons not authorized to be in receipt of the information, and must be held in strict confidence. This duty of confidentiality continues to apply after employees have left The United Church of Canada with no time limitations.

Communication of confidential information within and outside of The United Church of Canada will only be permitted when the recipient of the information has a legitimate need to know and the information is limited to that which is required to perform his or her duties. If an individual is in doubt about whether or not information can be shared, the individual should contact his/her supervisor.

This requirement of confidentiality applies to any asset of The United Church of Canada, including computer software, organizational records and other proprietary information, and to personal information of all kinds.

*Confidentiality Agreements:*

When entering into a working relationship with a third party, the General Council staff and Conference Office staff must advise the third party that they are not to divulge the information to anyone without written authorization from the General Council or Conference office staff who are empowered to do so, and written confirmation from a third party must be received upon acceptance of these conditions.

*Conflict of Interest:*

Situations must be avoided where personal interests are, or may potentially be, in conflict with an employee's duty to The United Church of Canada. When faced with an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest, the employee is required to exercise the judgment of a responsible person, uninfluenced by considerations other than the best interests of The United Church of Canada. If an employee knows that an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest exists, the employee must immediately provide all details of the conflict to the Executive Officer, Human Resources. If there is uncertainty as to whether a conflict may exist, the employee should discuss the matter with the Executive Officer, Human Resources.

*Privacy Statement:*

The United Church of Canada is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. Personal information is collected, used, maintained, and disclosed in compliance with applicable federal and provincial privacy legislation including, but not limited to, the federal Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) (2000, c.5). For more detailed information, please refer to the following:  
[www.privcom.gc.ca/legislation/02\\_06\\_01\\_01\\_e.asp](http://www.privcom.gc.ca/legislation/02_06_01_01_e.asp)

Privacy legislation, including the federal Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) and provincial and territorial legislation establishes rules for the collection, use and disclosure of "personal information." It addresses two issues:

- the way The United Church of Canada collects, uses, discloses, and protects personal information; and
- the right of individuals to access personal information about themselves.

*Overview:*

- Personal information can only be used for the purposes for which it is collected. Specific permission must be sought if personal information is to be used for any other purpose than that for which it was initially collected;
- Personal information is to be stored under lock and key and only certain authorized individuals should have access to it;
- Once the personal information is no longer required, it should be destroyed except in cases where federal and/or provincial retention rules apply.

General Council has a centralized records and archives management process for the collection, management, retention and disposition of personal information. Categories of individuals for which personal information is being collected and maintained include: ministry personnel, employees, elected and appointed members, volunteers, donors, retail customers, and various United Church databases. Personal employee information is contained in paper and electronic records at The United Church of Canada and is the property of The United Church of Canada. All personal information obtained, compiled,

maintained, and disclosed for The United Church of Canada by third-party agents and contractors must comply with applicable federal/provincial privacy legislation. Contractual provisions requiring such compliance must be incorporated into all third-party agent and contractor agreements. All individuals have controlled access to their personal information.

The United Church of Canada is responsible for personal information in its control, which means information, whether factual or subjective in nature, about an identifiable individual. It includes, but is not limited to, health and financial information, such as:

- name and age;
- address, telephone number, and e-mail address;
- medical records;
- identification numbers (such as Social Insurance Numbers);
- income, assets, and transaction information;
- opinions, evaluations, and comments;
- credit records and loan records.

The name, title, and business address or telephone number of an employee in any organization/business is not considered personal information requiring consent prior to sharing with others as this information is available for the general public.

The United Church of Canada will follow the 10 principles for handling personal information as set out in Schedule 1 of the Personal Information Protection and Electronics Document Act of Canada (PIPEDA). These principles are:

- accountability
- consent
- limiting use, disclosure, and retention
- safeguards
- individual access
- identifying purposes
- limiting collection
- accuracy
- openness
- provision of recourse

The intent of the Privacy Policy is to provide The United Church of Canada employees with requirements concerning compliance with Privacy Legislation and guidance as to what is required in order to comply with its provisions as it relates to The United Church of Canada. The goal is to raise awareness of the nature of the requirements and their effect on the day-to-day business and to educate individuals as to what the various obligations entail.

*Technology:*

The United Church of Canada provides access to Internet resources and e-mail systems in order to provide its employees with the ability to conduct business efficiently and effectively on behalf of The United Church of Canada.

Incidental personal use of technology, such as Internet resources and e-mail systems, is acceptable, as long as it does not consume resources unnecessarily, interfere with productivity, pre-empt any business activity, or otherwise breach this policy. The Internet and e-mail usage policies are designed to maintain security and confidentiality and to ensure that users do not engage in inappropriate conduct which could result in legal liability for themselves and/or The United Church of Canada.

The United Church of Canada has the right and the ability to access, monitor, and record Internet and e-mail usage, including files stored in private areas of its networks, to ensure compliance with these policies. All technology systems are owned by The United Church of Canada, which has the right to grant, deny, or terminate a user's access. All data transmitted or stored on The United Church of Canada's systems is The United Church of Canada's property.

Technology resources and systems which are owned by The United Church of Canada include, but are not limited to:

- all desktop and laptop personal computers and mobile devices;
- software (including Internet browsers) installed on computers and mobile devices;
- all networks and third-party services provided or arranged by The United Church of Canada;
- all mail systems supplied or arranged by The United Church of Canada.

Employees are expected to:

- ensure internal e-mail distribution lists are not given to anyone outside of The United Church of Canada and that passwords are not made available to others;
- use e-mail appropriately and take responsibility for contents of e-mails that are created, keeping in mind the importance of considering the wider audience receiving the message;
- take care not to leave e-mail addresses on a website, give out or post e-mail addresses, if not required to do so for business purposes;
- ensure to the extent possible that attachments and downloaded programs are related to business, and are legal and inoffensive;
- ensure messages and attachments belonging to another user are not altered in any way without the originator's permission;
- maintain confidentiality about The United Church of Canada and/or its members in public Internet forums.

When an e-mail is sent to someone within The United Church of Canada, it is sent on The United Church of Canada's internal e-mail network, which is protected and secure. E-mails sent to anyone outside will be transmitted over the Internet, which is a public network, and there is no guarantee that the message will be confidential or secure. When confidential or sensitive e-mail messages or attachments are being sent, clearly specify that such messages and attachments should not be forwarded or copied. Keep in mind that information being sent via the Internet in an e-mail is not secure.

*Gifts Received from Third Parties:*

An employee may accept gifts from persons or companies unrelated to The United Church of Canada which represent promotional items of minimal value. Reasonable business promotion benefits (normally not to exceed \$200.00 in value) may also be accepted, but may not be sold or converted into cash. Normally, a gift which exceeds \$200.00 is to be considered as one given to the organization and not to the person. If a gift is offered which exceeds \$200.00, the employee should discuss this with her or his supervisor.

*Other Related Policies:*

Units, Conference Offices, and other internal bodies may establish related policies, but such policies must not be in conflict with this Code of Conduct.

*Media Inquiries:*

Any media questions or requests for interviews must be referred to the Communications Officer of The United Church of Canada. Authorized staff spokespersons for The United Church of Canada are:

For the General Council Office

- the Moderator or designate
- the General Secretary
- the Communications Officer

For the Conference Office

- President of Conference/Leading Elder or designate
- Conference Executive Secretary/Speaker

**Procedures**

Regular Review of the Code of Conduct by staff:

1. Any changes to the Code of Conduct that will be distributed to all staff. Employees will be asked to re-confirm their awareness of the Code, compliance with its provisions, and commitment to abide by its terms on a regular basis.

**Employee Code of Conduct  
Acknowledgement Form**

I hereby acknowledge that I have received and read The United Church of Canada Employee Code of Conduct (referred to as "Code") and that I am fully aware of its terms. I also agree to read and comply with all policies adopted by The United Church of Canada, and which may be adopted in the future. I understand that compliance with this Code is a condition of employment.

I understand that if I fail to comply with this Code or other published policies of The United Church of Canada or applicable laws, it will be addressed and I may be subject to disciplinary action, including a warning, revision of responsibilities, suspension, or dismissal.

I understand that these policies are not intended to replace other policies that have been issued or will be issued from time to time which also govern employee conduct. All of these other policies are incorporated by reference into this Code.

I confirm that I have complied with all provisions of the Code during the prior period and that I will comply with those provisions in the future, or, if this is my initial acknowledgement, that I will comply with the Code.

I confirm that I will comply with all provisions of the Code in the future.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit/Conference: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Orientation**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada will provide orientation for new employees in order to introduce new staff to the purpose and work of the General Council, units, and Conferences; to highlight key areas in employment policies, practices, and benefits; and to provide an opportunity for new staff to establish initial contact with existing employees and each other.

### **Policy**

All General Council and Conference Offices will provide orientation for new employees. This may be informal, but will include an overview of the unit or Conference, information on human resources policies and benefits, an introduction to other staff, and hands-on assistance in technology, if required. The intent is to ensure new employees feel welcomed, and to ensure that they have all necessary information to become familiar with the work as soon as possible.

### **Procedures**

1. It may not always be feasible to conduct a formal orientation session. However, each unit and Conference will ensure that it provides support and information to familiarize new employees with the work of the unit or Conference, and specific information related to their position within the first week. Orientation of new employees is a requirement of all supervisors.

## **Performance Reviews**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to providing each employee with an annual performance review to allow the supervisor and employee to discuss accomplishments from the prior year, and to set goals for the upcoming year. This is intended to be an opportunity for ongoing feedback.

### **Policy**

All employees will have an annual performance review with their supervisor. The review process is a participatory one in which the employee and supervisor provide input and assessment of the work carried out. There may be positions for which input from other colleagues, units, or Conferences will be requested.

### **Procedures**

1. Performance review forms are available from the Ministry and Employment Unit. Once completed, the employee and supervisor will sign the completed appraisal, acknowledging that the review has taken place. The appraisal is then forwarded to the Ministry and Employment Unit, and a copy provided to the employee.
2. The chair of the General Secretary's Supervision Committee is required to sign the final copy of a performance review for the General Secretary.
3. Movement throughout the salary scale will be based on a satisfactory performance review.

## **Harassment and Workplace Violence**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to providing a safe workplace and will not tolerate any behaviour by its members, lay and Order of Ministry staff, or elected members that constitutes harassment or violence of any kind. Harassment and violence are prohibited by federal and provincial law.

### **Policy**

The United Church of Canada is committed to providing a safe, harassment- and violence-free environment for worship, work, and study. Complaints of harassment or violence will be taken seriously and dealt with in a spirit of compassion and justice.

Violence is defined broadly as:

- The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker in a workplace that causes, or could cause, injury;
- An attempt to exercise physical force by a person against a worker in a workplace that could cause physical injury;
- A statement or behaviour that is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury.

Harassment is defined as any unwanted physical, sexual, or verbal conduct that is known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwanted and is a form of discrimination.

Harassment may involve a wide range of behaviours, from verbal innuendo and subtle suggestions to overt demands and physical abuse.

Sexual harassment is defined as any attempt to coerce an unwilling person into a sexual relationship, or to subject a person to unwanted sexual attention, or to punish a refusal to comply.

It is the responsibility of all staff to raise concerns about harassment, violence, and discrimination. It is also the responsibility of all staff to respond to harassment, violence, and discrimination.

### **Procedures**

1. Harassment and violence are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
2. All complaints of harassment or violence will be taken seriously and will be investigated.
3. Investigations will be conducted and/or facilitated by the Ministry and Employment Unit, and complaints of harassment or violence will be investigated under the provisions outlined in the Problem Resolution Policy. Other appropriate harassment or violence policies developed by The United Church of Canada in any of its courts (for example, the Sexual Abuse Policy) may be used if required.

4. Each stage in dealing with a case of harassment or violence needs to minimize further distress for the complainant and involve as few people as possible. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality to the extent possible.
5. Upon the conclusion of the investigation, the Ministry and Employment Unit and/or other appropriate investigative bodies will review the information gathered, take appropriate actions, and respond to the complaint.

## **Problem Resolution**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada is committed to ensuring that there are appropriate procedures in place related to problem resolution and formal complaints between employees in the General Council and Conference offices. It is recognized that employees may become involved in circumstances where conflict will arise between/among employees in non-supervisory relationships, and where complaints will arise over the application of policies that relate to terms and conditions of employment. It is further recognized that it is in the interest of all involved to have means in place that will assist in the resolution of these conflicts and complaints.

### **Policy**

It is The United Church of Canada's desire that employee disagreements be resolved as quickly as possible. When disagreements arise, it is understood that those involved in the dispute will attempt to resolve the situation together before others become involved. If no resolution is found, the affected parties are then expected to contact their respective supervisors, who will be given an opportunity to resolve the issue.

This policy is intended to encourage dialogue and positive confrontation of issues so that resolution can occur as quickly as possible. If there is no resolution, the Ministry and Employment Unit will be advised and other methods of problem resolution will occur.

This policy is intended to assist in the resolution of:

- conflicts between/among employees who are not in a supervisory relationship; and
- complaints over the application of policy and procedures that impact on the terms and conditions of employment of an employee(s).

It is in the best interest of everyone involved with a conflict or a complaint to have the matter resolved as quickly as possible. An employee(s) who is in a conflict situation or has a complaint is encouraged to bring the matter to the attention of the other party or parties involved so that both may make reasonable efforts to resolve the matter.

## **Procedures**

### *Problem Resolution for Non-supervisory Relationship Conflicts*

1. An employee seeking to resolve a conflict with an employee with whom s/he is not in a supervisory relationship, should first raise the matter with the individual involved and seek to resolve the conflict.
2. If the employee seeking to resolve the conflict is unable to do so, the employee should contact his/her supervisor to seek assistance in resolving the conflict.
3. When a conflict situation among employees who are not in a supervisory relationship is brought to the attention of a supervisor:
  - The supervisor should gather information related to the conflict situation.
  - The supervisor should bring the parties together and attempt to find a solution to the conflict.
  - If one of the parties is under the supervision of another individual, the supervisor should discuss the matter with the other supervisor prior to bringing the parties together.
  - If the conflict is not resolved when the parties meet, the supervisor should discuss the matter with the Ministry and Employment Unit.
  - Upon consultation, the Ministry and Employment Unit may allocate additional internal or external resources specializing in conflict resolution to assist the parties in resolving the conflict. This may include a directive to the employee(s) affirming behavioural expectations of the employer.
  - When a supervisor becomes aware of a conflict among employees in a non-supervisory relationship who are under his/her supervision, the supervisor should intervene to resolve the conflict through the above procedures.
  - Employees who refuse or fail to make reasonable efforts to resolve such conflicts, or refuse or fail to follow directives of a supervisor, will be disciplined by the employer.
4. If a group of employees raises a complaint against the Executive Officer or employees of the Ministry and Employment Unit, interviews will be conducted by an independent consultant and a member of the Executive of the General Council, appointed by the General Secretary, in consultation with legal counsel. Conclusions and recommendations will be reported to the General Secretary, who may take further action.
5. If a written complaint is made in regard to the General Secretary, the employee should raise the matter with the Executive Officer, Ministry and Employment Unit, who will ensure it is brought to the attention of the General Secretary's Supervision Committee. The Committee will make the determination regarding further action. Matters related to the performance of the General Secretary are report to the Executive of the General Council who has final authority.

*Problem Resolution for "Terms and Conditions of Employment" Complaints*

1. If an employee has a complaint over the application of policy and procedures that impact on the terms and conditions of employment, the employee must first raise the complaint, verbally or in writing, with her/his supervisor. If the "terms and conditions of employment" complaint is with respect to supervision, the employee must first raise the concern with the supervisor. If the employee feels that the complaint is still outstanding, s/he shall raise the complaint, verbally or in writing, with the next level of supervision.
2. If the employee is not satisfied with the response received, the employee may raise the complaint, verbally or in writing, with the Ministry and Employment Unit.
3. The Ministry and Employment Unit shall gather relevant information on the complaint and make reasonable efforts to resolve the complaint with the employee and the supervisor involved.
4. If the complaint is over an action taken by or approved by the Ministry and Employment Unit and discussion with the Executive Officer of the Ministry and Employment Unit does not resolve the issue, the employee should bring the matter to the attention of the General Secretary for consideration and decision.
5. If the employee does not consider the decision of the General Secretary to be a correct and just response to the complaint, the employee may request, in writing, to have an external investigator appointed. The external investigator will conduct an impartial investigation and provide a written report to the General Secretary. If it is concluded that a policy is unclear, the Permanent Committee on Ministry and Employment Policies and Services will be asked to review the policy and if necessary, make changes to the policy so that there is more clarity. For all other matters, after reviewing the external investigator's report, the decision of the General Secretary will be final.

## Occupational Health and Safety

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### **Purpose**

This outlines the policy and procedures related to occupational health and safety in the workplace.

### **Policy**

*The Safety Statement:*

*It is the policy of The United Church of Canada that all its work shall be carried on with the fullest regard for the safety and health of its employees.*

All employees of the United Church will be provided with an appropriate space in which to work and proper machines and tools to do the job.

It is the desire and intention of the United Church to provide a safe workplace, safe equipment, and proper materials, and to establish and insist on safe methods and practices at all times.

It is a basic duty of all those carrying executive responsibility to make the safety of human beings a part of their daily, even hourly, concern. This responsibility must also be accepted by every individual who conducts the affairs of the organization, in whatever capacity she or he may function.

The key to success lies in the willingness of every individual in this organization to recognize his or her responsibility and actively support accident and injury prevention activity.

### **Procedures**

1. All levels of management shall actively support the safety program.
2. Every unit and department will be directly responsible for the design, implementation, and training of the safety program in their own area.
3. Safety instruction and office ergonomic training will begin with the new employee orientation program and shall be a continuing process throughout employment.
4. All supervisors are responsible for ensuring adherence to health and safety procedures.
5. Personal protective equipment will be used in accordance with safety procedures as directed by the supervisor or other authorized people. Safety shoes will be replaced every two years with a maximum cost of \$100.00 being borne by the employing unit.
6. Inspections of all General Council and Conference facilities in the province of Ontario will be made on a routine basis and an annual Occupational Health and Safety audit shall be conducted by the Occupational Health and Safety Committee and forwarded to the Ministry and Employment Unit for reporting purposes. (This is required under the Ontario legislation but may not be required of other provinces.)

7. The correction of hazards shall be given priority.
8. Each supervisor shall immediately investigate every accident within his or her area and submit a detailed report in writing to his or her immediate supervisor for transmission to interested persons in accordance with incident reporting procedures (see #13 below).
9. Health and safety education and training will be undertaken by the organization.
10. Employees are required to observe safety regulations, report unsafe conditions, and wear appropriate safety equipment.
11. Employing units are encouraged to audit workstation designs, making ergonomic adjustments as budgets permit.
12. Staff training and positive reinforcement of proper posture, exercises, and the reduction of repetitive motion are encouraged. Resources on this are available through the Ministry and Employment Unit.
13. Incident reports are available from the Ministry and Employment Unit. Once completed, they should be copied to Office Services, Insurance and Property, and the Ministry and Employment Unit.

## **Membership in Professional Organizations**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada recognizes that certain positions require membership in a professional body or association, or that membership in a professional body or association may be beneficial to the work of the church.

### **Policy**

1. The United Church of Canada will pay membership in professional organizations when it is determined that such membership is a requirement for the position. The senior staff person of the unit, in consultation with the Ministry and Employment Unit, will determine whether or not such membership is a requirement.
2. Opportunities may also arise where employees may wish to join a professional body or association that directly impacts their work. The senior staff person of the employing unit will determine whether the affiliation in a professional organization will facilitate the work of the church and will be of mutual advantage to the employee and the employing unit.
3. Funding for all approved professional membership fees will come from the employing unit.

## **Gifts to Staff**

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### **Purpose**

The United Church of Canada supports providing appropriate gifts to staff for special work-related or other occasions.

### **Policy**

1. Gifts may be presented to staff for work-related or special occasions in the form of gift certificates or purchased gifts. To ensure equity and transparency, the Ministry and Employment Unit will provide guidelines when determining the value of the gift. These gifts are paid for by the employing unit.
2. Each employing unit may, with the consent of the employee, choose to have a social gathering for an employee who has resigned or retired. Employing units may, at their own discretion, expand farewell gatherings to include staff from other employing units. Expenses for these gatherings will be borne by the employing unit.
3. On behalf of the General Council system, the Ministry and Employment Unit will send flowers, or donations in lieu of, to hospitalized employees and baby baskets to new parents. Flowers, or a donation in lieu of, will be sent in the event of an employee's death or a death in an employee's immediate family.