

URC Procedure for the Extension to Stipendiary Ministerial Service beyond the Normal Retirement Age

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General Assembly approves the adoption of the following procedure for the extension (formerly duty to consider) for both full-time and part-time stipendiary service by a Minister of Word and Sacraments or a Church Related Community Worker beyond the retirement age set by the United Reformed Church.

1. The criteria for seeking an extension are set out below and will be considered against the legitimate strategic and social policy objectives and denominational reasons within the denominational retirement policy:
 - a Minister drawing near to the end of a particular project or piece of service who might need to spend a year or two to bring it to a conclusion;
 - plans for a new grouping of churches in a particular area where it is felt desirable for the Minister to remain for a short while to see plans through to fruition;
 - a Minister, coming into ministry later in life, who might have just a short time to go before qualifying for retired ministers' housing;
 - a Minister whose spouse has a short period to go before retirement;
 - a Minister wishing to continue part-time in a pastorate in which they currently serve full-time;
 - a Minister who, on retiring from full-time stipendiary service at age 68 wishes to take up a new part-time post;
 - a Minister already serving part-time who wishes to continue part-time in the same pastorate beyond the age of 68;

These criteria apply to both full-time and part-time extensions.

Part-time is considered up to 75%.

2. In reaching a decision over whether to grant an extension, the Accreditation (CRCW&SCM) Sub-Committee (thereafter known as the Accreditation Sub-Committee) shall also consider the individual circumstances against the denominational retirement policy together with the overall responsibility of the United Reformed Church to monitor Minister numbers so that:
 - (a) the financial responsibility to support the ministerial work force is not threatened; and
 - (b) the introduction of newly ordained and commissioned ministers is not curtailed.
3. The process for extensions is as follows:
 - 3.1. In the month of a Minister's 67th birthday the payroll office shall confirm the expected date of retirement as the end of the month in which they are 68.

- 3.2. If a Minister does not wish to retire on that date, they must apply to the Accreditations Sub-Committee for an extension of service for a maximum of three years.
- 3.3. The Minister shall speak to the Synod Moderator and thereafter submit an application for an extension to the Synod Moderator stating whether the extension is a continuation of full-time or part-time service.
- 3.4. On receipt of the application, the appropriate Synod Committee shall consult with the Minister, Moderator, Elders of the Church/es/post and the Church Meeting(s), where the Minister is in a pastorate, to see whether or not the individual circumstances warrant an extension of stipendiary service.
- 3.5. The Minister should not be present when the Church Meeting discusses the extension.
- 3.6. The Synod (through its appropriate committee) should send
 - a) the Minister's application;
 - b) an account of the particular circumstances under 1 above which necessitates an extension;
 - c) a written record of whether the pastorate or post supports an extension;
 - d) a written record of whether Synod supports an extension.

to the Secretary for Ministries for a decision by the Accreditation Sub-Committee.
- 3.7. If an extension is granted the Secretary for Ministries shall inform the Synod and the Minister of the decision of the Accreditation Sub-Committee. If the decision is to accept the extension, then a new date of retirement shall be agreed.
- 3.8. The extension shall be for up to three years until the age of 71 with a review one year before the extension finishes followed by an annual review thereafter.
- 3.9. A year before the revised date of retirement, the payroll office shall once again write to the Minister and, if a further extension of stipendiary service is requested, the United Reformed Church must consider the request. The procedure set out above will therefore be repeated.
- 3.10. Ministers wishing to appeal against the decision of the Accreditation Sub-Committee should do so in line with the United Reformed Church's appeals procedure.