

LIFELONG LEARNING

Ministerial Development for District-Licensed and Ordained Ministers of the Church of the Nazarene

Lifelong Learning is an essential element of credentialed ministry in the Church of the Nazarene [*Manual*, 514.12, 527.6]. Establishing a pattern of lifelong learning is necessary to understanding changes in the wider church and in society, and is foundational to furthering the spiritual, mental, and skill development of the minister. For this reason, each minister is accountable for pursuing a well-rounded lifelong learning plan aimed at increasing effectiveness in ministry and furthers personal growth.¹

What is the Lifelong Learning requirement?

Every Nazarene minister, assigned or unassigned, is to complete annually a minimum of twenty (20) Lifelong Learning Hours [*Manual* 527.6]. The goal of this requirement is to establish and perpetuate a culture of learning fueled by a passion for effectiveness and excellence in making Christlike disciples in the nations.

Who is exempt from the Lifelong Learning requirement?

- 1) District-licensed ministers who have not yet been graduated from the Course of Study by action of their District Board of Ministry (or District Board of Ministerial Studies) are exempt from the requirement.
- 2) If a minister is currently enrolled in a degree program, his or her successful completion of at least 10 credit hours of coursework over the course of the year shall be considered a sufficient basis for exemption from the Lifelong Learning requirement for that year. A minister enrolled in a degree program is to provide annually to the District Coordinator a transcript indicating his or her progress in the degree program. In reporting to the District Board of Ministry on the status of the lifelong learning endeavors of a minister enrolled in a degree program, the Coordinator may simply report "Currently enrolled in a degree program."

What constitutes a Lifelong Learning Hour?

Generally, a Lifelong Learning Hour is one (1) 60-minute hour of engagement in a qualifying learning experience. For example, by participating in a qualifying 2-hour workshop a minister completes two hours of Lifelong Learning. *For those learning activities where this rule does not apply, see Exceptions and Special Provisions.*

What kind of event or opportunity qualifies for Lifelong Learning Hours?

Nazarene colleges and universities, regional and district offices, and the Global Ministry Center endeavor to provide quality Lifelong Learning opportunities to our ministers. However, there are a multitude of other opportunities that qualify for Lifelong Learning Hours, including online events (such as classes, webinars, live-streamed or archived conference sessions, etc.), classes or presentations available for participation through video-conferencing, and face-to-face classes or special educational events (such as a preaching conference, or a session on pre-marital counseling presented by a community organization, etc.).

¹ See *Manual* (2013-2017) para. 129.9, 231.4, 514.12, 527.6, 536.15.

A Lifelong Learning event does not have to be religious in nature; however, each learning opportunity in which a minister participates should contribute meaningfully to his or her overall development plan. In accordance with guidelines established by the International Course of Study Advisory Committee, a well-conceived lifelong learning plan will incorporate a balance of the following four elements:

- **Content** – the biblical, theological, and historical knowledge necessary for ministry;
- **Competency** – the development of skills for ministry;
- **Character** – the strengthening and enriching of the minister as a person; and
- **Context** – the deepening of the understanding of the ministry environment.

While there is a sense in which any pastoral activity (such as sermon preparation, counseling, preaching, visitation, etc.), serves as a learning opportunity, those activities and preparations that are part of the routine responsibilities of ministry do not qualify as Lifelong Learning Hours just as an accountant's preparation of tax returns does not qualify as continuing education for the accountant.

How are the hours invested in a qualifying learning activity added to a minister's Lifelong Learning record?

If the Lifelong Learning event is sponsored by the District, Nazarene educational institution or entity of the Global Ministry Center, rosters of those ministers attending the event are normally provided to Global Clergy Development by the sponsoring entity. Currently, for ministers on the USA/Canada Region, information provided by these event sponsors is added to a database kept at the Global Ministry Center and personalized certificates along with updated individual reports are generated and distributed to ministers through each District Lifelong Learning Coordinator. For ministers from other world mission regions, certificates for inter-regional events are prepared by Global Clergy Development and distributed through the Regional Education Coordinators. This process is very likely to change in the near future.

Similarly, at present those ministers on the USA/Canada Region wishing to receive Lifelong Learning Hours for their participation in a learning event not sponsored by a District, Nazarene educational institution, or by an entity of the Church of the Nazarene Global Ministry Center, are encouraged to provide details of the event to their District Lifelong Learning Coordinator.

Details to be submitted

One of the three items listed below is to be given to the District Lifelong Learning Coordinator who will confirm that the event qualifies for lifelong learning hours and the number of hours completed.

- Description showing name, topic, sponsor, schedule, and intended outcomes.
- Course syllabus providing intended learning outcomes, instructor name(s), and topic covered.
- Certificate showing number of lifelong learning hours awarded by the sponsoring agency, if available.

Based on the details provided, the District Lifelong Learning Coordinator sends a Lifelong Learning report to Global Clergy Development where the minister's participation is recorded and the minister's Lifelong Learning record is updated. A certificate and the minister's Lifelong Learning record is provided to the District Lifelong Learning Coordinator by Global Clergy Development for distribution to the minister. Again, this procedure is specific to the USA/Canada Region and will likely change in the near future as the administration of denomination-wide lifelong learning initiatives becomes more globally focused.

How are Lifelong Learning Hours completed to be reported?

Ministers are to report annually to their District Assembly the total number of Lifelong Learning Hours completed (this item appears on the appropriate report form). In addition, each District Lifelong Learning Coordinator is to provide a report to the District Board of Ministry a report on the status of Lifelong Learning Hours completed by its credentialed ministers.

In the case of any ministers failing to complete the minimum number of Lifelong Learning Hours for more than two consecutive years, the District Board of Ministry is to initiate a conversation with the aim of giving guidance in developing and implementing a sustainable lifelong learning program.

Exceptions and Special Provisions

Teaching as a Lifelong Learning Event. Ministers teaching in the modular course of study or teaching a district approved Lifelong Learning event may receive ten (10) Lifelong Learning Hours for every 30 hours of preparation time. Subsequent occasions of teaching the same course do not qualify for additional Lifelong Learning Hours unless there is a significant overhaul to the course, in which case additional Lifelong Learning Hours may be earned based on the additional research undertaken in completing the revision.

Reading as a Lifelong Learning Event. For USA/Canada ministers, reading a full issue of *Grace and Peace* qualifies as one (1) Lifelong Learning Hour. See <http://www.graceandpeacemagazine.org/lifelong-learning-hours> for details.

In addition, ministers unable to attend lifelong learning events may also read books to fulfill a portion of the Lifelong Learning requirement provided that the reading program is one established by the minister's district.² It is preferred that such books be read in the context of a learning community of peers, such as a small group where there can be discussion and reflection with others also serving in the ministry. Thirty (30) hours of reading plus a 250 to 500-word reflection paper on each book shall equate to ten hours of lifelong learning. A fewer number of reading hours shall result in the rewarding of proportionately fewer Lifelong Learning Hours. Reflection papers should be submitted to the District Lifelong Learning Coordinator.

Need Assistance?

We are here to assist you in every way possible. If you are evaluating an event for lifelong learning hours and have questions, please email Darlene Friend (dfriend@nazarene.org) or call the Global Clergy Development office (1-800-306-7651).

² The USA *Sourcebook on Ordination*, 2005.