

POLICY 3.6.6 Formation, Care and Remuneration of Seminarians

<p><u>SUMMARY</u></p> <p>The Vocations Director of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan guides and assists youth and men as they discern a call to priestly life.</p> <p>A written agreement between the Archdiocese and a seminarian defines the responsibilities and duties of the parties during the period of seminary formation.</p>
<p><u>FORMS</u></p> <p>N/A</p>
<p><u>RELATED POLICIES</u></p> <p>N/A</p>

The Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan takes seriously its responsibility to foster vocations to the priesthood and religious and consecrated life. It is equally interested in the formation of men to the order of presbyters to serve the people of God and needs of the local Church. This policy describes the responsibilities and roles of the Archdiocese and seminary candidates in the discernment and the formation processes. It also takes into account the financial aspects of a post-secondary education and seminary formation and describes the responsibilities of the parties.

A. Discernment/pre-application

1. Role of the Vocations Director

The Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan appoints a Vocations Director for the Archdiocese. The Vocations Director is supported by the Archdiocesan Vocations Committee, using a variety of methods to promote and foster vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

The Vocations Director directs, guides and counsels youth and men who are discerning a call to priestly life.

2. Role of a prospective applicant for seminary formation

Men who are discerning a call to the priesthood should contact the Vocations Director as early in the process as possible, by email (archgm vocations@gmail.com), letter (c/o the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan) or phone (780-532-9766).

The Vocations Director and the potential applicant will work together to determine what steps need to be taken before any application can be made.

B. Application

1. Vocations Director

The Vocations Director reviews applications from prospective candidates, to ensure completeness and that there is a reasonable possibility that the application will be accepted. The

Vocations Director also provides a letter of recommendation for the applicant to the Archbishop.

2. Requirements

The Vocations Director will assist the applicant in putting together an application to be accepted as a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan. The basic application documents include:

- i. a Letter of Request (handwritten) from the applicant, describing his vocational discernment, his family background, and his religious background.
- ii. the Curriculum Vitae or other summary of applicant's educational and employment background;
- iii. Letters of Recommendation from a parish priest and the Vocations Director of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan;
- iv. at least three other letters of reference that speak to the applicant's suitability for eventual ordination as a priest.

The Vocations Director may request additional documents and information to complete the application.

3. Decision

The Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan makes the decision to accept or decline an application to be accepted as a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan.

C. Formation and education

1. Seminary formation

Seminary formation is not the end of the discernment process. Seminary formation will intensify and guide further vocational discernment by the seminarian.

Seminary formation involves the entire person, with a focus on four areas: spiritual, human, pastoral, and intellectual.

The formation process is governed by canon law (can. 232-264) and the program for formation established by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops for seminaries in Canada.

St. Joseph Seminary in Edmonton, Alberta is the inter-diocesan seminary of the Assembly of Western Catholic Bishops. While accepted seminary applicants can expect to be sent to St. Joseph Seminary, there may be circumstances that will make another seminary more suitable for a given applicant.

2. Education

The intellectual formation of seminarians includes studies in philosophy and theology. Can. 250 states that, "The philosophical and theological studies...are to encompass at least six full years in such a way that the time dedicated to philosophical disciplines equals two full years and to theological studies four full years." [NOTE: In *The Gift of Priestly Vocation*, circulated by the Congregation for the Clergy in 2016, it says that "...the duration of [the stage of philosophical studies] must not be less than two years..." (p. 32).]

In most cases, accepted applicants will have already completed a bachelor-level degree before entering seminary formation. It is necessary that applicants have already completed a two-year philosophy program. This may be in addition to their bachelor degree if that degree is not in philosophy. In consultation with the Vocations Director and the Rector of St. Joseph Seminary, applicants will determine the program of studies to be completed during seminary formation.

Seminarians in formation at St. Joseph Seminary in Edmonton will study at Newman Theological College, unless the Rector determines that another educational institution will better meet the needs of the seminarian, either for some or for all studies.

After the seminarian completes the philosophy program, he will enter a propaedeutic year. This is a foundational year focusing on deep human and spiritual growth, prayer and self-awareness. This year also serves to discern the seminarian's vocation before theological studies.

Before the final year of theological study, the seminarian will participate in an internship year. The seminarian will be assigned to a pastor and parish in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan before entering the Master or final year of theology.

3. Agreement

The formation of each seminarian of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan is a responsibility shared by the Archbishop, the seminarian and his family, and the clergy and laity of the Archdiocese. The costs related to living in seminary and studying at college are shared by the seminarian, the Archdiocese and the Robert Lavoie Foundation. The Robert Lavoie Foundation provides support through the Archdiocese but not directly to a seminarian. For more information see the Robert Lavoie Foundation [policy](#).

The Archdiocese and each seminarian enter into a written agreement that describes their respective responsibilities as the seminarian progresses through seminary formation towards priestly ordination.

4. Summer Break

St. Joseph Seminary operates in accordance with the standard Canadian academic "year", i.e. between early September and late April. Seminarians will not reside at the seminary between late April through late August/early September. However, they are expected and receive guidance from the seminary formation team to remain in the spirit of formation during this period. To further assist with this spirit, seminarians taking theology are expected to work for the Archdiocese during the summer break in studies, unless an application to work elsewhere has been approved by the Archbishop before April 1.

Seminarians are also encouraged to take two weeks of vacation during the summer break from studies. This vacation period is unpaid unless another agreement is made by the seminarian and the Archbishop.

5. Annual Retreat for Seminarians

At the beginning of the academic year, St. Joseph's Seminary in Edmonton provides a week-long retreat for its residents, as stipulated in can. 246 §5. In the event that a diocesan candidate misses this in-house retreat or is enrolled at another institution of formation where an annual retreat would not be available, the Archdiocese will arrange for a candidate to do a week-long retreat at some time during the summer.

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