



Personnel Policy Manual

September 17, 2004

Amended by Council – October 27, 2005

Amended by Council – May 18, 2006

Amended by Synod Assembly – October 4, 2006

Amended by Synod Assembly – October 18, 2008

Amended by Synod Assembly – August 13, 2009

Editorial Revisions November 8, 2009

Amended by Synod Assembly August 10, 2011

Amended by Synod Assembly November 3, 2012

Amended by Synod Assembly October 26, 2013

Amended by Synod Assembly December 4, 2020

Proposed by HR Committee to Governance Committee March 23, 2023

I. General

- A. The Synod of the Covenant is a part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- B. Official Policy
- C. Basis for These Policies
- D. Equal Employment Opportunity
- E. Terms of Employment
- F. Anti-Harassment Policy
- G. Categories of Employment and Affiliation
- H. Personnel Records

II. Employment Process

- A. The Position Description
- B. The Search Process
- C. Interim Executive Staff
- D. Executive Staff
- E. Non-Exempt Staff

III. Compensation

- A. Salary
- B. Benefits
- C. Travel

IV. Performance Evaluation

- A. Frequency
- B. Non-Exempt Staff
- C. Exempt Staff
- D. Comprehensive Review

V. Grievance and/or Misconduct

- A. When Problems Arise
- B. Sexual Harassment or Misconduct
- C. Harassment in Violation of Equal employment Opportunity

VI. Ending Employment

- A. Exempt Staff
- B. Non-exempt Staff
- C. Probation or Suspension

VII. Reduction of Staff

- A. Special Provisions
 - B. Least Disruption
 - C. Severance Allowance
-

I. General

- A. The Synod of the Covenant is a part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Its mission and relationship are defined in the Constitution of that Church, its Book of Confessions and the Book of Order.

B. Official Policy

These policies are established to be the official policy of the Synod of the Covenant and to be consistent with all applicable provisions of the Book of Order. They supersede any other policies previously adopted.

The synod, as an employer, is free to amend, modify, and change these policies at any time without prior notification to the employees of the Synod of the Covenant, with such changes being posted on a bulletin board accessible to all staff persons. Moreover, the policies set forth here are not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather to serve as a framework and a guide to employment.

C. Basis for These Policies

These personnel policies are based on commitments made by the synod and its employees:

1. The synod will recognize and affirm the potential of each employee and develop, support, and use their potential whenever possible.
2. Employees will devote their interests and energy to their work and the goals of the Synod of the Covenant.
3. These commitments reflect an open partnership in which objectives are shared and both synod and employee acknowledge their responsibilities to each other.

D. Equal Employment Opportunity.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will recruit, hire, call, train, and promote all persons in all job classifications without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, or when physical, mental, or medical disability (including non-sighted) is unrelated to the ability to engage in job-related activities. Religious affiliation will be considered only when the Synod of the Covenant determines it to be a bona fide occupational qualification.

E. Terms of Employment

1. Employees of the Synod of the Covenant, exempt and non-exempt, are employed for an indefinite period of time as at-will employees. Employees are expected to give notice to their supervising executive of any intention to terminate their service. Resignation without notice will affect entitlement to accrued vacation pay. Likewise, the synod may terminate an employee with due notice given (see paragraph VI).
2. An employee of the Synod of the Covenant, exempt or non-exempt, may be offered term employment. In those cases, there must be a specific written and signed contract that sets forth the conditions of employment, the length of employment and a statement that will set forth that the relationship is not that of an at-will employee. The term contract, in those rare instances where there is one, must make clear that it will automatically expire at the end of the term set forth in writing on the face of the contract unless terminated earlier by resignation, retirement, or because of breach of the contract by either party. Preparation and processing of all signed agreements related to term employment are the responsibilities of the synod executive after receiving approval of the Human Resources Committee. No written contracts of term employment can be made without the approval of the Human Resources Committee.
3. There are no oral contracts for employment. No synod employee or committee has authority to extend or enter into any oral employment contract for any definite period of time or for any term.

F. Anti-Harassment Policy

1. In accordance with the stated policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), it is the policy of the Synod of the Covenant to provide a positive, discrimination-free work environment and to prohibit workplace harassment of any employee on the basis of sex, race, age, religion, national origin, or disability, including the status of living with AIDS or being HIV positive. "Harassment" includes any conduct, explicit or otherwise, or comments that involve offensive implications or create a hostile or offensive working environment when the subject of the conduct or comment is an employee's sex, race, age, religion, national origin, citizenship, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.
2. Any form of sexual misconduct is unacceptable behavior within the workplace and is subject to appropriate disciplinary action.
3. The scope of this policy is not limited to the physical locations of the synod office and relationships with other staff at that location. It includes contacts anywhere in

connection with carrying out synod responsibilities, including relationships with employees, volunteers, and members of any church body or entity. A workplace, for purposes of this policy, is any setting where work of the synod is being carried out, including the synod offices and any location where synod staff, elected officials, and/or volunteers are conducting business or a program of the synod.

4. Any reports of harassment or sexual misconduct should be dealt with according to the Policy Regarding Sexual Misconduct of the Synod of the Covenant, adopted November 3-4, 2011, or its successor policy. The beginning steps found in that policy are stated in Sections V.A. and V.B.

G. Categories of Employment and Affiliation

1. Exempt Employees — Full Time

a. Full-time exempt employees are those to whom the minimum wage and overtime pay requirements of the Federal Fair Labor Standard Act and related state laws do not apply. Full-time exempt employees do not receive any form of overtime pay.

b. Full-time exempt employees are expected to manage their schedules in order to have a minimum of one full day off each week.

c. The benefits package for full-time exempt employees is defined in the terms of call.

2. Exempt Employees — Part Time

a. Part-time exempt employees are those to whom the minimum wage and overtime pay requirements of the Federal Fair Labor Standard Act and related state laws do not apply.

b. The benefits package for part-time exempt employees is defined in the terms of call.

3. Full-Time Non-Exempt Employees

a. A full-time non-exempt employee is one to whom the minimum wage and overtime pay requirements of the Federal Fair Labor Standard Act and related state laws apply. The normal workweek for non-exempt employees is 35 hours a week, seven hours a day, Monday through Friday.

b. Persons employed in non-exempt positions shall be paid overtime wages at one and one-half times their regular rate for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week. A supervising executive must approve all overtime work in advance.

c. Required attendance at meetings for non-exempt staff outside of normal working hours will be considered work time and will be compensated according to the policies in this manual.

d. When non-exempt employees work more than the normal 35 hours a week, but less than 40 hours per week, they have the option of receiving the regular hourly rate or compensatory time off at the rate of one hour of compensatory time for each one hour worked.

e. Time taken as compensatory time will be scheduled with the employee's supervising executive.

4. Part-Time Non-Exempt Employees

Part-time non-exempt employees are those employees who routinely work less than 35 hours per week and are hired as part-time. Part-time non-exempt employees are

eligible for benefit programs as negotiated in the terms of employment, but are not eligible for pension and/or health insurance.

5. Temporary Personnel

Temporary personnel are hired to work for a specified period, not to exceed six months. Temporary personnel are not eligible for benefit programs, paid vacation, or other employee benefits.

6. Contract Personnel

a. The Synod of the Covenant may contract for services. Contracts will be written in consultation with the synod executive and upon approval of the Human Resources Committee.

b. A contract for services is issued for a specific period of no more than one year, and either party for any reason, with 30 days notice, may terminate it. The contract will state the services to be rendered and the fee.

7. Consultants

Consultants are not employees of the Synod of the Covenant and are not entitled to the employee benefits set forth under this policy.

8. Volunteers

The synod seeks and encourages volunteers to work with the staff to enhance the mission of the synod and provide leadership for new and creative projects. Volunteers are unpaid and are not employees.

9. Interns

There may be instances when there is available within the Synod of the Covenant an internship that provides an opportunity for work experience in a governing body.

H. Personnel Records

1. Accurate personnel records are important. A confidential personnel record is kept for each employee, starting with the employee's job application and continuing throughout the period of the person's employment by the Synod of the Covenant. The records include wage and salary changes, promotions and transfers, attendance and punctuality, education and training, performance reviews, and all other information reflecting the individual's status as an employee. Access to these records is limited to the synod executive, the immediate supervising executive of a given employee, the chairperson of Human Resources Committee, the synod attorney, and the employee. An employee may give written permission for his or her own records to be given to persons outside the synod office.
2. Any education or training completed during employment should be reported so that personnel records will reflect accurately employee qualifications and chances for advancement.
3. Employees may review their personnel file upon request to the Human Resources Committee.

II. Employment Process

A. The Position Description

1. A position description that accurately reflects the job purpose, responsibilities, qualifications, and benefits is written by the Human Resources Committee.
2. Position Descriptions for Synod officers and the Synod Executive must be approved by the Synod Assembly.
3. All position descriptions include a title, statement of purpose, a description of accountability, responsibilities, minimum requirements, employee benefits, whether the position is exempt or non-exempt, whether it is a full-time, part-time, temporary, volunteer, or intern position.

4. An appropriate contract will be developed for persons who are contractors or consultants.

B. The Search Process

1. If the position is advertised, it shall state that the Synod of the Covenant is an Equal Employment Opportunity employer.
2. The Equal Employment Opportunity policy of the Synod shall be followed in consideration of applicants for interviews and employment.

C. Interim Executive Staff

When there is a vacancy in an Executive Staff position the Leadership Committee is authorized by the Synod Bylaws to hire interim staff as needed during the time before a new Executive Staff person is called.

D. Executive Staff

1. The Synod Assembly shall elect persons to serve as Executive Staff.
2. When there is a vacancy in the Synod Executive Staff position the Synod Nominating Committee shall nominate a diverse group of seven teaching or ruling elders from throughout the Synod, including one member of the Human Resources committee, to serve as the Synod Executive Search Committee. This committee shall be elected by the Synod Assembly.
3. When the Synod Executive Search Committee has chosen a candidate for the Executive Staff Position it shall nominate its candidate to the Synod Assembly.

E. Non-Exempt Staff

1. Non-Exempt Staff will be hired by the Synod Executive in consultation with and with the assistance of the Human Resources Committee.
2. Non- Exempt Staff may be full-time, part-time, temporary personnel, or contract personnel.

III. Compensation

A. Salary

1. Salary Policies
 - a. Salaries for exempt positions will be determined by Synod Assembly action within ranges recommended by the Human Resources Committee.
 - b. Salaries for non-exempt positions will be within ranges approved by the synod executive in consultation with the Human Resources Committee. Consideration will be given to qualifications, position responsibilities, and experience, within constraints the synod budget.
2. Individual Salary Review and Increments
 - a. Within the limits of its budget, the synod shall attempt to adjust salaries and/or benefits annually in recognition of changes in the cost of living. Such adjustments, if any, will become effective for all employees at the same time.
 - b. All salaries will be reviewed at least annually. With exempt persons, such review shall include a personal interview with each person.

- c. Salary adjustments, if any, for staff will be made by the Synod Assembly on recommendation by the Human Resources Committee, in consultation with the Finance Committee/Board of Trustees, based upon such factors as cost of living, adjustment of schedules, the financial constraints and obligations of the synod, changes in duties and responsibilities, and the annual performance review.
 - d. An interim evaluation and accompanying salary may be made on the basis of any changes in duties or responsibilities.
 - 3. Availability of Salary Information
Each year, the Synod of the Covenant shall report to the General Assembly the salaries of all exempt positions in the synod; this information becomes part of the annual published statistics of the General Assembly.
 - 6. Housing Allowance
Teaching elders who serve on Synod staff may designate a housing allowance by requesting it to the Human Resources Committee. This committee will recommend a housing allowance for the following to year to the Assembly for approval, before December 31 of each year.
- B. Benefits
 - 1. Social Security
 - a. The Federal Old Age and Survivors Benefits Act (Social Security) covers all employees. For non-clergy employees, the employee's share of the tax is withheld from wages.
 - b. For clergy employees the synod makes a contribution of 1/2 of the employees' share of Social Security to the employee.
 - 2. Insurance
The synod currently makes available to each employee working half-time or more, exempt or non- exempt, the following insurance coverage:
 - a. Travel/accident insurance for employees who are traveling on approved synod business.
 - b. Medical insurance through the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for all exempt and non exempt employees working at least half time. The Synod will pay qualified medical expenses as defined in IRS Publication 502 according to the following schedule:
 - i. Full Time Employees - \$1200.00 per calendar year
 - ii. Part Time Employees - \$ 600.00 per calendar year.
 - c. For post-retirement full-time employees, reimbursement will be made to the employee for the cost of monthly Medicare insurance premiums and Board of Pensions retirement medical insurance premiums.
 - 3. Pension
A pension plan is provided through the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for all qualified exempt employees and non-exempt employees working at least half time. The Pension Plan, through the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian

Church (U.S.A.), governs all eligibility and benefits rights, and nothing contained in these policies changes any terms or conditions of the Pension Plan.

4. Sick Leave

- a. Non-exempt employees are allowed two working weeks of sick leave in each calendar year; unused days may be accumulated up to 24 work weeks. Sick leave entitlement during the first year of employment will be prorated according to length of employment. Exempt employees will follow the same formula, except that they are granted 24 work weeks of sick leave at the beginning of employment. The maximum accumulation of 24 work weeks of sick leave applies to all employees.
- b. Sick days may be used for personal illness or injury or for illness or injury in the immediate family. At the time of termination of employment, either voluntary or involuntary, an employee shall have no claim for pay in lieu of unused sick leave.
- c. When medical leave in excess of three days is anticipated, advance approval from the executive for staff members, or from the Human Resources Committee for the Executive, should be secured.
- d. When an employee requests sick leave, accumulated sick days shall be used during the absence, with the individual receiving compensation accordingly. If sick leave exceeds accumulated sick days, an individual may request use of any accumulated vacation days.

5. Vacation

- a. The number of vacation days for any employee depends upon the length of continuous service, beginning on the Anniversary Date of hiring.
- b. Non-exempt employees are eligible for annual paid vacation according to the following schedule:

<u>Length of Service</u>	<u>Vacation</u>
First 12 months	2 work weeks
1 year to 4 years	3 work weeks
5 years or more	4 work weeks

- c. Vacation days are not cumulative and must be used within the calendar year, except when special provision has been made in writing by the synod Human Resources Committee chairperson or the synod executive.
- d. Persons leaving the synod's employ during any calendar year shall be entitled to vacation days or terminal vacation pay prorated according to the fraction of the year served if, and only if, adequate notice is given in the event of a voluntary resignation as set forth in section III.3. of these policies. Any vacation taken but not yet earned by the termination date shall be deducted from the final check.
- e. Vacation days available to exempt staff shall be set forth as a part of his or her Terms of Call and shall normally be twenty days with full pay.

6. Holidays Observed
 - a. All federal holidays shall ordinarily be observed unless established otherwise in advance of the year in question.
 - b. The office will be closed from noon on Christmas Eve when Christmas falls on Tuesday through Friday.
 - c. If a holiday falls during an employee's vacation, he or she will receive another day of vacation.

7. Personal Days
 - a. After one year of employment, a non-exempt employee is allowed two personal days with pay each year. These days are to be taken at the employee's discretion during the calendar year in which they are earned, with notice for adjustment of office responsibilities. This leave does not accrue from year to year, and unused personal leave shall be forfeited upon termination of employment.
 - b. Personal family emergencies will be approved on a case-by-case basis; non-exempt staff in consultation with executive staff, and executive staff in consultation with the Human Resources Committee.

8. Leave of Absence

Each employee is eligible to request a personal leave of absence without pay after having completed one year of continuous service. Personal leaves of absence shall be applied for and granted only in writing by the synod executive with the concurrence of the Human Resources Committee and are not to exceed 90 days. Without compliance with this provision, no one will be determined to be on leave of absence.

9. Sabbatical

A sabbatical leave of three consecutive months with pay is available to exempt staff during every seventh year of service to the synod. Sabbatical leave is offered in addition to vacation and annual study leave. Unused sabbatical leave is forfeited upon termination of employment.

10. Maternity/Paternity Leave
 - a. All employees are eligible for a twelve-week leave of absence with pay for the birth or adoption of a child.
 - b. Should additional time off be necessary, the number of weeks will be negotiated with the supervisor and/or the Human Resources Committee, with a maximum of an additional six week leave, which would be with half the regular salary/income for that period.

11. Study Leave, Training, Career Development and Continuing Education
 - a. Training is the development of particular skills through classes, seminars, conferences, and other experiences directly related to a person's position description. Training is ordinarily taken during work time.
 - b. Career development is an educational program that leads to a degree or certification that is normally pursued on personal time.
 - c. Continuing education is a program of study that helps to develop a staff member's knowledge or skills.
 - d. Exempt staff members are entitled to take up to two weeks, or 10 working days, of annual study leave with pay and reimbursement of expenses for training, career development, or continuing education, except that this

study leave may be specified by the Terms of Call. Specific information relating to study leave may be obtained from the synod executive or the chairperson of the Human Resources Committee.

- e. Unused funds and time defined in the Terms of Call will be carried over to the next year for a maximum of three years. Accrued study leave time and funds shall be forfeited upon termination of employment.
- f. All staff members are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities for training and education each year. Study leave for exempt employees should be approved by the Human Resources Committee.

12. Bereavement Leave

In the event of death in the immediate family (wife, husband, child, brother, sister, parents, in-laws, or grandparents), three consecutive days will be given with pay. If extended travel is required, an additional two days of paid leave are available.

13. Workers' Compensation Insurance

The Synod of the Covenant pays for workers' compensation insurance under the provisions of the workers' compensation laws of the State of Ohio.

C. Travel

All employees are to be reimbursed for budgeted travel under the accountable reimbursement plan as defined by the IRS.

IV. Performance Evaluations

- A. The performance of all employees will be evaluated before the end of their first six months of employment, and afterwards an annual performance review and evaluation will be conducted for exempt and non-exempt staff. Evaluations are to be conducted honestly and fairly, documented, and placed in the employee's file.
- B. Non-exempt staff members will be evaluated by the synod executive and reported to the Human Resources Committee.
- C. Exempt staff members will be evaluated by the Human Resources Committee with the participation of the executive, where appropriate.
- D. A comprehensive review and evaluation of exempt staff will be conducted by the Human Resources Committee at least every five years, or before a position is renewed.

V. Grievance and/or Misconduct

A. When Problems Arise

1. When differences occur, it is in the best interest of all concerned that they be resolved as quickly as possible. If an employee has a problem or complaint, he or she should follow the procedure below.
 - a. The employee shall discuss the problem or complaint with his or her supervising executive.
 - b. If the problem is not resolved to the employee's satisfaction, he or she, in consultation with the executive(s), will address the issue with the moderator of the Human Resources Committee.
2. If the above steps are followed, employees will not be criticized or penalized in any way.

B. Sexual Harassment or Misconduct.

1. Any person who alleges to have been a victim of sexual misconduct or believes in good faith that there has been a violation of this policy (See Addendum, Policy

- Regarding Sexual Misconduct) will report the violation to Synod Stated Clerk or the Synod Executive. The accuser may be a person other than the alleged victim.
2. The person who first receives the allegation from the accuser, whether verbally or in writing, shall report it in writing by the second working day to the Stated Clerk or the Synod Executive. The clerk or the executive shall refer the report immediately to the Human Resources Committee moderator. Should the accused be a person in any of the positions listed above, other steps, as appropriate, may be taken.
 3. A signed written statement by the alleged victim (or surrogate, if appropriate) shall be obtained as soon as possible. Provision shall be made for support and guidance, without pressure, to enable an accuser/victim to pursue charges.
 4. In a case of alleged child sexual abuse, the person receiving the initial report is considered a mandated reporter and shall report the incident to civil or criminal authorities if required by local or state law.
 5. The synod shall take no adverse action against any employee who in good faith lodges an allegation of sexual misconduct, and the synod shall firmly discourage any reprisal by the executive or other employees. Should the charges be proven to be frivolous or malicious, the person bringing the charges will be disciplined.
 6. Should it be necessary, the appropriate ecclesiastical and civil authorities will be notified.
 7. Should formal ecclesiastical charges be filed against the offender, the procedures in the Rules of Discipline take over.

C. Harassment in Violation of Equal Employment Opportunity

1. Any person who alleges to have been a victim of discrimination or harassment in violation of the synod's commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity or who believes in good faith that there has been a violation of this policy will report the violation to one of the following within the Synod of the Covenant: the Stated Clerk, the Synod Executive, the Human Resources Committee moderator, or the Committee on Representation moderator. The accuser may be a person other than the alleged victim.
2. The person who first receives an allegation whether verbally or in writing from the accuser shall report it in writing by the second working day to the Stated Clerk or the Synod Executive. The clerk or the Synod Executive shall refer the report immediately to the Human Resources Committee Moderator.
3. A signed written statement by the alleged victim shall be obtained as soon as possible. Provision shall be made for support and guidance, without pressure, to enable an accuser/victim to pursue charges.
4. The synod shall take no adverse action against any employee who in good faith lodges an allegation of violation of its EEO commitment, and the synod shall firmly discourage any reprisal by the executive or other employees. Should the charges be proven to be frivolous or malicious, the person bringing the charges will be disciplined.
5. The steps to be followed when investigating and responding to an allegation of a violation of the synod's commitment to Equal Employment Opportunities will be defined by the Human Resources Committee.
6. Should formal ecclesiastical charges be filed against the offender, the procedures in the Rules of Discipline take over.

VI. Ending Employment –

- A. Exempt Staff
 1. Voluntary Resignation

- a. Exempt members may always resign voluntarily. If there is a voluntary resignation the Human Resources Committee shall recommend to the Synod Assembly whether there should be “terms of dissolution of the relationship” and if so, what those terms should be.
 - b. Staff members choosing to resign are asked to give the Synod of the Covenant as much notice as possible so their succession may be arranged. Accrued, unused vacation pay is forfeited by an exempt employee unless he or she gives at least one month’s written notice of resignation.
2. Involuntary Resignation
- a. Except for voluntary resignation, employment of Exempt Staff is ended only by a majority vote of the Synod Assembly on recommendation of the Human Resources Committee, or a special committee or commission of the synod. When the committee or commission has decided to prepare a recommendation to terminate, it shall notify the person in writing, stating the reasons for proposing to terminate, and offering the staff member an opportunity to resign or to request a hearing before the committee or commission before the recommendations are adopted and reported to the Synod Assembly for action. The hearing shall be one in which the staff person may appear personally with counsel (D-7.0301, D-11.0301) to respond to the findings of the committee or commission and present reasons and evidence why the relationship should not be terminated. The hearing shall afford safeguards as in (D-14.0000). A record shall be made of the hearing, which shall become a part of the record filed under D-6.0304 in the event of a judicial complaint following the final action of the council.
- B. Non-Exempt Staff
1. Voluntary Resignation: A Staff members choosing to resign are asked to give the Synod of the Covenant as much notice as possible so their succession may be arranged. Accrued, unused vacation pay is forfeited by a non-exempt employee unless two weeks written notice of resignation is given.
 2. Involuntary Resignation: Except for voluntary resignation, employment of non-exempt Staff is ended by a decision of the Executive in consultation with the Human Resources Committee. The departure of the employee, but not the reason for the departure, shall ordinarily be communicated to the Synod assembly.
- C. Probation or Suspension
- Situations may arise in which probation or suspension of an employee is more appropriate than immediate discharge. Such a decision may be recommended by the employee’s supervising executive or the Human Resources Committee.
1. Exempt Staff
 - a. If the synod executive feels that an exempt employee should be put on probation or suspension, the synod executive must first discuss the situation with the moderator of the Human Resources Committee. Thereafter, the Human Resources Committee, with the participation of the Executive, shall prepare an evaluation form or memorandum in which the reasons for the action are set forth. The probation or suspension becomes effective when the employee receives an evaluation memorandum from the Human Resources Committee, with the participation of the Executive, stating the reasons for the probation or suspension.
 - b. At the end of the designated period, the Human Resources Committee, with the participation of the Executive, shall undertake another review of the employee's performance. If the evaluation is satisfactory, the employee will be released from probation or suspension. If the evaluation is unsatisfactory, the

employee will be asked to resign or will be dismissed. In exceptional circumstances, an extension of the probation or suspension may occur but under no circumstances may the extension of probation exceed more than six months or the extension of suspension exceed more than two weeks.

2. Non-Exempt Staff

- a. If the synod executive(s) believes that there is reason to place a non-exempt employee on probation or suspension, a written evaluation form or memorandum shall be prepared in which the reason for the action is defined. The probation or suspension becomes effective when the employee receives the evaluation memorandum from the Synod Executive stating the reasons for the probation or suspension. The memorandum shall inform the employee of the reasons for the probation or suspension, the duration of the probation or suspension and the effective date.
- b. At the end of the designated period, another review shall be made of the employee's performance. If the evaluation is satisfactory, the employee will be released from probation or suspension. If the evaluation is unsatisfactory, the employee will be asked to resign or will be involuntarily terminated. In exceptional circumstances, an extension of the probation or suspension may occur but under no circumstances may the extension of probation exceed more than six months or the extension of suspension exceed more than two weeks.

VII. Reduction of Staff

- A. There are special provisions for employees involved with a reduction of staff. Since the Synod of the Covenant is exempt from the state unemployment compensation system, synod employees are not eligible for unemployment compensation benefits.
- B. When a reduction in force or the termination of staff for reasons unrelated to the performance or conduct of the employee occurs, the synod executive and the Human Resources Committee will attempt to make that reduction in a way least disruptive to the work of the synod and to the lives of its employees. Where possible, reduction in staff will be done through attrition, retirements, restructuring, and through volunteers for separation.
- C. Severance Allowance
 - 1. In addition to the period of notice, if applicable, a severance allowance will be given to exempt or non-exempt employees who are terminated for reasons unrelated to the performance or conduct of the employee as follows:

Years of Service	Severance Allowance
Less than 6 months	2 weeks
More than 6 months but less than 1 year	3 weeks
1-4 years	3 weeks plus 1 week for each year
5 years and more	16 weeks plus 1 week for each year over 5 years with maximum of 30 weeks

- 2. Absolutely no severance allowance shall exceed the limits listed above.
- 3. Payment of severance allowance may be done in either of two ways as determined solely by the synod Human Resources Committee:
 - a. Lump sum payment — the total amount of the salary due as severance will be paid in not more than two payments. The payment or payments shall be completed within six months of the employee's last day of work. Pension and

other benefit payments will not continue if the severance allowance is made in one or two lump sum payments.

- b. Continued salary — the employee's salary will be continued on the regular schedule through the severance period. The synod will continue to pay its share of the employee's pension and other benefits during the severance period if payment of severance is on the basis of continued salary.
- c. No additional vacation entitlement will accrue during the severance period.