

EoE Public Health Training Programme

Study Leave Policy – v.4 (January 2025)

1. Overview

This policy outlines the responsibilities and study leave entitlement specifically for Public Health (PH) registrars in accordance with the 2021 “HEE EoE Study Leave policy”ⁱ and the “NHS England (NHSE) Study Leave paper: An overview of the England-wide approach”ⁱⁱ, and should be read in conjunction with these policies.

2. Key principles

- a. **Study leave should meet curricular and educational requirements:** Study leave is granted in accordance with both overall training programme requirements and individual educational objectives. As such, individuals should prioritise any educational requirements and personal development when requesting study leave. It is expected that individuals will use discretion, in accordance with their obligation to demonstrate professional integrity, when applying for a course or conference, after having a discussion with, and gaining agreement from, their Educational Supervisor (and in the case of aspirational study leave, Training Programme Director) who are responsible for approving study leaveⁱⁱⁱ.
- b. **Specialty trainee allowance:** Specialty registrars are allowed up to 30 days study leave per year as outlined in the “NHS Doctors and Dentists in training Terms and Conditions (2016)”^{iv}. In Public Health ST1 and ST2, extra days are allowed in order to attend all mandatory training programme events and PHREE days (see below).
- c. **LTFT/Academic trainee allowance:** Less than full time (LTFT) and academic trainees have equitable access to study leave funding. Study leave entitlement (days) for those LTFT or who commence post part-way through the academic year will have a pro-rata entitlement. However, if the number of days taken in any one year exceeds their entitlement, some discretion can be used during the approval process. Where a trainee takes parental leave, their entitlement to study leave continues. This may be taken during ‘keeping in touch’ days. Less than full time (LTFT) and academic trainees have equitable access to study leave funding.
- d. **Annual allowance:** The study leave year runs from 1 August to 31 July (i.e. from the usual commencement date of the programme for a 12-month period), and unused study leave time cannot be carried forward into the next year.

3. Funded training courses/activities for Public Health registrars

The PH training programme offers and funds a variety of educational opportunities to enhance training and enable registrars to meet their curricular needs. Individuals should prioritise the locally structured teaching programme over any other courses^v. This is reflected in them being fully funded for all EoE PH trainees.

- a. **MPhil:** The Training Programme funds attendance at the MPhil in Population Health Sciences course at the University of Cambridge at significant cost and which comprises approx. 8 months of training, in order to deliver the core knowledge base for Public health practice.
- b. **Regional Core Training:** A suite of teaching and training courses, referred to as the “Regional Core Training” are commissioned annually by the PH TPDs and Registrar representatives (‘Core training managers’), with oversight by the Specialty Training Committee (STC), to meet curricular objectives and educational needs. The aim is to source courses, within the East of England (EoE) where possible, which have been reviewed or evaluated to provide high quality teaching opportunities aligned to the curriculum and required skills. Commissioning these as a group enables such activities to remain affordable and available for all registrars. The quality of the training courses delivered is evaluated and monitored to ensure it meets registrars’ needs, receives positive feedback and offers value for money. A prospectus is produced by the Core Training managers each April outlining the courses on offer for the subsequent 12 months. Registrars are expected to discuss with their ES to identify the ‘Core’ courses suitable for their stage of training, and book and attend all relevant core teaching sessions throughout their training period.
- c. **Exam preparation:** The Training Programme also offers support for exam preparation, supporting the registrar reps in facilitating: a substantial weekly course of peer-led Diplomate revision; funding and organising an annual mock OSPHE exam; and arranging Consultant feedback for mock Diplomate exam questions.
- d. **Medical Education bursaries:** Regional trainee bursaries can be applied for to fund course fees for postgraduate courses in medical education (see <https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/faculty/bursary-funding>). Registrars can use their study leave days to attend face:face or virtual contact days on these courses.
- e. **Public Health Registrars in the East of England (PHREE) group:** All public health registrars are part of the registrar-run ‘PHREE’, which promotes the training and professional needs of its members, ensures representation of all PH registrars in various fora, and provides professional and social support. PHREE meets for a study day once every 2 months. The Training Programme recognises that attendance at PHREE days is important for links across cohorts as well as shared learning, and this is expected throughout training. Six study leave days are allocated for PHREE attendance in each calendar year; these are non-transferable and may not be used for other purposes. Registrars are expected to attend PHEE days during the MPhil and where possible, during OOP. During parental leave KIT days may be used to attend PHREE.

4. Study leave entitlement (days) for Public Health registrars

- a. **ST1:** In ST1, study leave is allocated entirely to attending the MPhil course at Cambridge University and PHREE days. Time taken for study outside the MPhil during ST1 must be taken from annual leave or leave without pay. Absence from the MPhil other than for statutory leave requires TPD approval.
- b. **ST2:** In ST2, study leave is almost entirely accounted for by group preparation for the first sitting of the Diplomate exam, the exam and PHREE days. Private study time for Diplomate exam revision in addition to the MPhil course and revision study groups should not exceed a maximum of 5 days (2.5 days per paper) and should be agreed with the Educational Supervisor with a study plan agreed. Registrars are expected to spend some of their own time in private study for both examinations. Where the Training programme offer is not available, one private preparation

course per exam may be funded. Additional courses or activities (such as access to digital material) would be considered for funding in exceptional circumstances.^{vi}

- c. ST3 and above:** In ST3, some study leave days are allocated to the Membership exam. Private study time will not be granted for the OSPHE, which is an exam best prepared for in the workplace. However, up to 6 half days are anticipated for travel for OSPHE practice with supervisors or colleagues within region.

In ST3, ST4 and ST5, study leave is allocated to the regionally organised Core training and educational activities. Remaining leave can be used to attend specialist additional training according to individual educational need (see section 5). Please note that study leave will not be granted to attend courses which replicate the core funded training activities.

Registrars in ST3, 4 & 5 can also apply for 'private study leave', for up to a maximum of 5 days, out of their allowance of 30 days. For example, registrars may request study leave for the preparation of a paper to be submitted for publication. In these circumstances, the Educational Supervisor and registrar must agree milestones for the completion and submission of work in advance.

Table1: Study leave events allocated by the programme for ST1-3

Year	Expected events	No. of days	Travel £ claimed via School Administrator (*PTR = Public transport rate)
ST1 >30 days	Regional induction	2	Travel @ PTR*
	Faculty of Public Health (FPH) free induction event	1	Travel @ PTR
	ePortfolio & reflective practice workshop	1	Travel @ PTR
	PHREE days	6	Travel @ PTR
	MPhil course or agreed modules	243	StRs may claim the cost of accommodation and travel in line with the <u>Relocation and Travel Expenses Policy</u>
ST2 30 days	Diplomate exam revision study groups	11	Travel @ PTR
	Diplomate exam revision group mocks	2	Travel @ PTR
	Diplomate exam	3	Travel @ PTR
	Diplomate exam private study leave	5	*no travel
	Core training course (e.g. financial management, media training)	3	Travel @ PTR
	PHREE days	6	Travel @ PTR
ST3 11 days (+ regional training activities)	OSPHE familiarisation course	1	Travel @ PTR
	1:1 OSPHE practice	3 (6x0.5)	Travel @ PTR
	Membership exam	1	Travel @ PTR
	PHREE days	6	Travel @ PTR

5. Study leave allowance for ‘aspirational’ training (budget)

- a. **Pooled regional study leave budget:** A study leave budget for all trainees is held centrally for all trainees in the East of England. This can be used to meet the costs of additional individual training needs required to meet the curriculum, or ‘aspirational’ training needs which are “not required by the curriculum but will significantly enhance the trainee’s progression to the next stage of their training” (HEE Study Leave policy, 2021). This should be very rarely required by Public Health registrars because of the comprehensive regional offer of courses commissioned by the programme. It must be remembered that the overall study budget held is finite. As such, trainees are reminded to act sensibly and professionally when requesting funding and use the cheapest local option available, wherever possible^{vii}, including travel and subsistence. Partial funding of courses may also be considered, depending on the overall cost of the course. For example, if a course is available locally but a registrar chooses to travel outside the East of England to attend the course in a different location, the TPDs may feel it is reasonable for the course fees to be reimbursed, but travel and subsistence declined.
- b. **‘Aspirational’ or additional funding:** Registrars may apply for ‘aspirational’ study leave time and funds, including a supporting statement explaining why competences gained from such an activity cannot be achieved from local and/or regional training or experience and what they will gain from the activity. Registrars should only apply for funding to attend courses if the relevant curriculum requirements cannot be achieved through experiential learning and/or the commissioned core training activities.
‘Aspirational’ activities will generally only be approved if the trainee has achieved the curriculum competencies for their stage of training and attended the regional courses commissioned by the programme. Study leave funding will be distributed as fairly and as effectively as possible within the guidance provided in the NHSE policy.
- c. **Costs covered:** Study leave funding covers only the cost of courses (not including membership fees even if this reduces the cost of attendance), travel at public transport rates and associated accommodation. Exam fees cannot be claimed from the study leave budget but from August 2024, overnight accommodation, travel and subsistence for attending exams can usually be claimed. Attendance at courses/conferences should be taken as close to the base of the individual as possible. Specific caps on allowances are described in section 8 below.
- d. **Additional funding for academic trainees:** As a national agreement with NIHR, Academic Clinical Fellows and Clinical Lecturers (academic trainees) are additionally entitled to £1,000 per financial year per trainee to attend meetings and conferences that are relevant to academic training. For NIHR funded academic trainees, a £1,000 pa bursary is held by the local University. To maintain equivalence with NIHR funded trainees, locally funded academic trainees can claim up to £1000 pa to attend academic meetings and conferences via their employer’s usual study leave route (which is then recharged to the public health study leave budget).

6. Special circumstances and notable exclusions

- a. **OOP:** Individuals on OOP are not eligible for study leave time and funding, except for OOPT (Out of Programme Training). PH registrars OOP may however attend courses in the Core training commissioned prospectus. (In exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Postgraduate Dean, study leave funding during other OOP types may be considered for

curriculum-based activity). Where an individual chooses to take study leave while OOP, that individual would then not be eligible to apply for, and have funded, that same element again upon re-joining their training programme^{viii}.

- b. **Grace period:** Individuals within a Period of Grace are not eligible for funding from the study budget as these funds are to be used for meeting Certificate of Completion of (Specialty) Training requirements^{ix}. Registrars who reach CCT partway through a year will be entitled to study leave days and funding pro-rata.
- c. **Requests for overseas courses or conferences:** Trainees may apply for overseas activities, and these are classed as 'aspirational' - eligibility criteria can be found in the 2021 study leave policy. The approval of such activities will be made by the Postgraduate Dean or his/her designated deputy and must be submitted using the 'additional aspirational application form' and selecting 'Overseas Activity' for the type of activity or course field. The application must first be discussed and approved by the ES and TPD. If the application is approved, NHSE will consider funding either the cost of the course/conference fees or the cost of economy travel and accommodation whichever is the lower amount.
- d. **Statutory and mandatory training:** Funding and time for this is an LEP/employer responsibility and does not come from the study budget.
- e. **PG Cert fees:** PG certs are not funded through the study leave budget, as separate bursaries are offered for these. *Study days can be used to attend the in-person or online teaching days.
- f. **Publication fees^x:** whilst up to 5 days can be applied for as part of aspirational leave to write up a paper, any publication fees cannot be claimed.
- g. **Interview practice:** Interview practice (including for consultant interviews) is usually provided locally within the Core training programme regional training prospectus. Where appropriate in-house courses are available, funding for private interview courses will not be approved, (although there is Dean's discretion for exceptional circumstances).
- h. **Coaching:** A 1:1 coaching or support session may be provided within the Core training programme prospectus and is also sometimes included in an offer of support from the regional Professional Support and Wellbeing service^{xi} (funded separately from study leave). In addition, ESs and the TPDs provide 1:1 advice and coaching where needed for registrars. Where appropriate in-house courses are available, funding for additional coaching sessions will therefore not be approved, (although there is Dean's discretion for exceptional circumstances).
- i. **Childcare:** Study leave funding cannot be used to cover the costs of childcare.
- j. **Membership fees:** Study leave funding should not be used for 'joining'/membership costs for a conference or course, even if this is advertised to provide a reduced attendance fee.

7. Process for managing and applying for study leave

- a. **Professional development discussion with ES:** The Educational Supervisor plays a critical role in supporting registrars to plan their professional development and use of appropriate study leave. Registrars in ST3 onwards should review the annual prospectus of regional core training and agree with their ES which activities are appropriate for their stage in training. (Please note that it is unwise to delay attending activities relevant for that stage of training in case there is insufficient interest to commission the course the following year. The prospectus indicates which courses are likely to be commissioned annually and which on a bi-annual basis.) This should be noted in the learning agreement.
- b. **Submitting SL forms:** Study leave for exam revision and preparation, core training activities and PHREE days should be submitted as a block annually where possible, using one study leave form. Any additional study leave should be formally applied for at least four weeks in advance, so that the employer can accurately record study leave taken. Any study leave which

is not for core training activities, will be reviewed for approval by a TPD. Retrospective requests (i.e. for leave already taken) will not be considered in any circumstances.

- c. **Completing the form:** Complete the Public Health study leave application form available on the School website (http://heeoe.hee.nhs.uk/public_health/specialty-training-programme/hr-information-policies-processes-guidance.) and send it to the Educational supervisor for discussion and agreement - to 'approve', the Educational supervisor must type in their name and the ES should email the form to the Public Health EoE School via england.phschool.eoe@nhs.net. For activities which are not part of core training, the form should be flagged as 'For the attention of the TPD'.
- d. **Appeals:** If a registrar disagrees with a decision about study leave funding, they should in the first instance contact the TPD that refused the application to request an explanation / review by the TPDs and Head of School. If the registrar remains of the opinion that the wrong decision has been made, they can appeal against the decision using the HEE East of England appeal process outlined in the 2021 study leave policy^{xii}.

8. Study leave allowance claims

- a. **Claim forms:** Payments for study leave claims will be made to registrars by the Lead Employer following attendance at the course. Claims for expenses incurred for study leave events should be submitted no later than eight weeks after the course date to england.phschool.eoe@nhs.net on the Public Health study leave form which can be found at the bottom of the following page: [HR information & Policies, processes & guidance | East of England \(hee.nhs.uk\)](#). Every claim form must be submitted with proof of expenditure. Any claims received after the eight-week deadline will not be paid.
- b. **Travel expenses criteria:**
 - i. Travel must be taken using the most cost-effective means possible.
 - ii. Mileage is paid at public transport rate in line with [NHS Terms & conditions handbook^{xiii}](#).
 - iii. Subsistence expenses are subject to the following (detailed in Appendix 1 of the HEE policy^{xiv}):
 - A meal allowance of one day's subsistence of £5 (>5 hours away, including the lunchtime between 1200-1400 hours) when lunch is not included as part of the event;
 - A maximum meal allowance of £20 during a 24-hour period;
 - Maximum overnight subsistence of £120 for accommodation outside of Central London and £150 per night inside Central London;
 - Alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed.

9. Responsibilities for attending agreed study leave activities:

- a. **Challenges in taking time off for study leave:** Educational and clinical supervisors are expected to be familiar with this study leave policy. Host placements are expected to facilitate attendance for study leave, and registrars should contact their Educational Supervisor or TPD if there are any problems with taking study leave.
- b. **Non-attendance for pre-paid study leave activities:** Registrars unable to attend an event that they have registered for should notify the provider, the regional training reps, their educational supervisor and the TPD (irrespective of whether a fee was charged). Failing to attend a pre-booked regionally funded event without prior notice may have a bearing on whether future study leave is agreed. If a registrar is unable to attend an individual study leave event due to ill health

and is unable to recover some or all of the advance costs, they should contact the TPD within 10 working days and provide evidence of receipts and correspondence illustrating they have attempted to recover costs and evidence of illness (e.g. sick note). Please see the HEE Study Leave Policy 2021 for further details.

- c. **Reflection on study leave learning:** Registrars are required to keep a record of their study leave, including reflections on their learning, agreed by their Educational Supervisor and submit this annually to ARCP (<https://www.fph.org.uk/media/1165/8-study-leave-form.doc>).
- d. **Dissemination and sharing study leave learning:** Registrars are expected to share their learning and provide feedback if requested from any courses, conferences or other events that they have attended. Registrars should aim to disseminate their learning through e-mail to colleagues or presentation at PHREE events or similar.
- e. **Feedback and evaluation:** Registrars are also expected to provide feedback in a timely manner on core training courses that they have attended, in order to support the evaluation and quality monitoring of commissioned courses.

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ⁱ HEE EoE 'Study Leave Policy'. Jan 2021. Available at: <https://heeo.ee.hee.nhs.uk/faculty-educators/study-leave/study-leave-policy>

ⁱⁱ 'NHS England (NHSE) Study Leave: An overview of the England-wide approach'. Aug 2024. Available at: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/NHSE%20SL%20Overarching%20Document%20Updated%202024.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid

^{iv} Ibid

^v Ibid

^{vi} Ibid

^{vii} <https://heeo.ee.hee.nhs.uk/faculty-educators/study-leave/study-leave-faqs>

^{viii} Ibid

^{ix} 'NHS England (NHSE) Study Leave: An overview of the England-wide approach'. Aug 2024. Available at: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/NHSE%20SL%20Overarching%20Document%20Updated%202024.pdf>

^x <https://heeo.ee.hee.nhs.uk/faculty-educators/study-leave/study-leave-faqs>

^{xi} <https://heeo.ee.hee.nhs.uk/psw/psw-eoe>

^{xii} <https://heeo.ee.hee.nhs.uk/faculty-educators/study-leave/study-leave-policy>

^{xiii} <https://www.nhsemployers.org/publications/tchandbook>

^{xiv} HEE EoE 'Study Leave Policy'. Jan 2021. Available at: <https://heeo.ee.hee.nhs.uk/faculty-educators/study-leave/study-leave-policy>