

Study Leave Policy

This policy sets out study leave and curriculum delivery arrangements for postgraduate medical and dental trainees in Foundation, Specialty and Dental programmes.

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Introduction

This policy sets out the study leave arrangements for postgraduate medical and dental trainees who come under the remit of Health Education England, East of England (HEE, EoE). It applies to the financial year 2019/20 onwards.

National Guidance and Policies

There are a number of national documents relating to study leave arrangements for trainees, which have been taken into consideration during the writing of this policy. These include:

- The Junior Doctors' Terms and Conditions of Service, March 2017
<http://www.nhsemployers.org/case-studies-and-resources/2017/03/junior-doctors-terms-and-conditions-of-service-march-2017>
- The Gold Guide
https://www.copmed.org.uk/images/docs/gold_guide_7th_edition/The_Gold_Guide_7th_Edition_January_2018.pdf
- A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Dental Specialty Training in the UK
<http://www.copdend.org/data/files/Dental%20Gold%20Guide/3rd%20Edition%20June%202013.pdf>
- The Foundation Programme Reference Guide
<http://www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/pages/curriculum-eportfolio/e-portfolio/reference-guide>
- Enhancing Junior Doctors' Working Lives
https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Enhancing%20junior%20doctors%E2%80%99%20working%20lives%20-%20a%20progress%20report_0.pdf

Principles

HEE's document, "[Enhancing Junior Doctors' Working Lives](#)", includes a commitment from HEE to ensure that every trainee has the opportunity to gain all competences relevant to their level of training as defined in each curriculum. This means it is important that HEE EoE directs funding towards curriculum delivery as our first priority. In order to improve quality and access to study leave and curriculum support, HEE EoE is committed to working in collaboration with our trusts, trainees and educators to comply with the following curriculum delivery principles:

- Providing clarity about the total amount of funding available to support study leave and how this is being used, recognising that there is a finite amount
- Ensuring equity of access to relevant education and development opportunities required by curricula, regardless of specialty, grade or employing Trust.
- Improving trainee access to local teaching and development.
- Improving trainee access to regional teaching and development.

- Prioritising delivery of courses and other learning opportunities which are explicitly required by the relevant curriculum
- Prioritising support for additional education and development opportunities relevant to the curriculum, which have been agreed as part of trainees' personal development plans (PDPs). Trainees, together with their educational supervisors, have a responsibility to ensure that additional training opportunities are accessed at a time in their training when the maximum benefit will be gained.
- Allocating funding to individuals flexibly, recognising that there is wide variation in the cost of the delivery of different curricula depending on the level of training and the specialty programme
- Commissioning training from NHS providers in the EoE, wherever possible.
- Monitoring of attendance at all locally delivered training events.
- Monitoring the quality of the training delivered to ensure it is of an appropriate standard and meets trainees' needs.

Trainees should discuss their personal and curricular study leave requirements with their Educational Supervisor and/or Training Programme Director (TPD) at the beginning of each placement and at each educational review in order to ensure that these are reflected in their PDP. Proposals for prolonged periods of study leave or activities which will cost in excess of £600 should also be discussed in advance with all those involved, including the trainee's TPD, Director of Medical Education (DME) and service lead.

Trainees are reminded of their responsibility to attend all relevant local teaching sessions and to prepare carefully for examinations. Failure to do so may call into question their commitment to training and jeopardise any future study leave applications. Trainees are expected to share their learning and provide feedback if requested from any courses, conferences or other events that they have attended.

Public Sector Equality Duty

On 5 April 2011, the Public Sector Equality Duty (the equality duty) came into force. The equality duty was created under the Equality Act 2010. The equality duty was developed in order to harmonise a number of pre-existing pieces of equality legislation and to extend protection across what the Act described as "protected characteristics". Protected characteristics is the term used to describe groups that may be discriminated against because they possess one or more of these characteristics and the Act identified nine protected characteristics and these are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) will be carried out on an annual basis and/or following any amendments to ensure that this policy will not have a positive or adverse impact on any trainee groups with protected characteristics.

Funding arrangements from 1st September 2019

Since April 2018, the study leave budget will be held centrally.

The main uses of the study leave budget will be for educational development opportunities designed to gain competences defined in each curriculum.

Examples of funding arrangements include:

- Locally delivered teaching
- Regional study days (including reasonable subsistence costs such as lunch and refreshments, please refer to [Appendix 1](#))
- Simulation training programmes
- Other regionally-commissioned internal courses which meet curriculum requirements, including leadership & management courses, train the trainer courses and advanced communication skills courses
- External courses which are explicitly required by the relevant curriculum
- External courses which are a cost-effective way of delivering parts of the relevant curriculum
- Life support courses (e.g. ALS, ATLS, APLS) when these are curriculum requirements.
(Any mandatory/statutory training courses, including life support courses that are employment requirements and not curriculum requirements should be funded locally by the employing Trust)
- Other individual training needs required to meet the curriculum, as agreed in individual trainee's PDPs
- Other individual training needs which are not required by the curriculum but will significantly enhance the trainee's progression to the next stage of their training, as agreed in the trainee's PDP

Excluded Expenses

- Enrolment on to training programme and payment for portfolio access
- ALS and other life support courses which are not curriculum requirements
- Statutory and mandatory training required by employers
- Other employer-related leave
- Bursaries for medical education courses unless they are curriculum requirements
- Fellowships (e.g. simulation fellows)
- Professional examination fees at any point of training. Courses for specialty examinations during Foundation Programme
- Interview Leave

- Travel, accommodation and subsistence relating to all of the above
- Retrospective applications, please refer to application [flowchart](#) to ensure timeframes are adhered to
- Fees for courses that are booked and not attended

Funding of Regional and Local Teaching (including simulation activity)

Each School will identify the provisional costs of delivering local and regional teaching (including simulation) to all of its trainees in all specialties and grades in the relevant section of its Annual Development Plan. Trainees should work in collaboration with their TPD and Head of School to assist with identifying their programmes' local and regional training plans. The Heads of School should then meet with their allocated account managers and Deputy Dean to agree their annual local and regional training budget.

Individual Study Leave Requests

These will be made to the trainee's employing Trust following the local application process. In line with national principles, trainees may submit claims that have been explicitly identified as requirements of the trainee's specialty's curriculum and/or ARCP decision aid. Trainees should only apply for funding to attend courses if the relevant curriculum requirements cannot be achieved through experiential learning and/or their local and regional training programmes. Such activities can be signed off at Trust level provided the total cost (including the costs of the activity, travel and subsistence) is £600 or less. For activities that cost more than £600, additional sign off from the TPD (or Head of School if TPD is unavailable) will be required.

Trainees may also submit claims for "aspirational" activities. Whilst not explicitly recognised as requirements for the trainee's curriculum, such activities may help the trainee complete parts of the curriculum. It is essential that any aspirational activity is included in the trainee's PDP and it will also require an additional level of sign off from the TPD (or Head of School if TPD is unavailable). This sign off must be obtained prior to attendance at a course; retrospective applications will not be considered. The trainee will be expected to provide a supporting statement explaining why competencies gained from such an activity cannot be achieved from local and/or regional programmes and what will be their personal gain.

Aspirational activities will generally only be approved if the trainee has achieved their core curriculum competencies for their stage of training.

Examination preparation courses should be regarded as aspirational activities. Many specialties provide preparation for examinations as part of their local and regional training programmes. Where this is the case, it should not be necessary for trainees to attend external examination preparation courses. These will therefore only be funded when there is a clearly defined exceptional need, such as a recommendation from the PSW to attend an external examination preparation course. Because of the high cost of some courses, funding will be limited to a maximum of £1000 per part of the examination.

Payments for individual study leave requests will be made to trainees by the employing Trust following attendance at the course. Reimbursement cannot be made for courses that are booked but not attended, under any circumstances.

Study leave funding will be distributed as fairly and as effectively as possible within the guidance provided in this policy. A flexible approach to how much funding is allocated to individuals will be adopted, recognising that there is wide variation in the cost of the delivery of different curricula depending on the level of training and the specialty programme.

Overseas Study Leave

Funding for overseas study leave will only be considered if one or more of the following criteria are met:

1. For conferences, when the applicant is the first author and sole presenter of a paper which has been accepted for a poster or presentation. This poster or presentation must be based on the trainee's own research undertaken as part of a clinical training programme or an NIHR recognized academic clinical fellowship or clinical lectureship.
2. For other courses or activities when there is no equivalent course or activity in the UK. (for example, an international conference for a very small specialty which does not have a UK conference)
3. When the funding claimed to attend an overseas activity is less than that of attending the cheapest equivalent activity in the UK. It is the trainee's responsibility to provide evidence of this when applying for funding

With the exception of criterion 3, funding will be limited to one overseas activity per training programme or one overseas activity every three years, whichever is the shorter interval; applications to attend overseas activities more frequently than this will be considered on a case by case basis and will only be approved in truly exceptional circumstances.

Joint UK and Irish Society meetings will not be counted as an overseas conference when they are held in Ireland

Study leave applications for overseas activity must be approved by the East of England PGD or the nominated deputy. It is the trainees responsibility to ensure the application is submitted to studyleave.eoe@hee.nhs.uk for review a minimum of 6 weeks prior to the intended date of attendance.

If a trainee meets the above criteria and their application receives prior approval, HEE will consider funding either the cost of the course/conference fees or the cost of economy travel and accommodation whichever is the lower amount.

If an external body such as a Medical Royal College suggests a doctor in training attends an international conference where not already required by their curriculum, HEE expects that body to contribute at least 50% of the costs.

Further information on the guidelines for claiming travel, accommodation and subsistence as part of approved study leave can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

Time for Study Leave

Study leave is not an automatic entitlement for any trainee. Providers of medical education are reminded of the basic principle that every trainee's educational needs should, where possible, take precedence over purely service needs, as long as patient safety is not compromised. Study leave should therefore be well planned and spread throughout the trainee's training programme. There is an expectation that training placements approved by HEE, EoE will have capacity to facilitate study leave.

Each trainee will have an annual entitlement of 30 days' study leave, with the exception of Foundation Year 1 trainees, who have an annual entitlement of 15 days. Mandatory regional teaching/training days are included in the 30 day allowance, and the time off will need to be applied for prior to attendance.

For the purposes of allocating time for study leave, each trainee's study leave year runs from the changeover date of their programme to the changeover date in the following year (e.g. for programmes with nationally agreed start dates in August, the leave year is from the first Wednesday in August until the last Tuesday in August the following year).

Trainees who start or complete their training part way through the study leave year will have a pro-rata entitlement until the end of their programme's leave year.

Less Than Full-time (LTFT) trainees will have a pro-rata entitlement; however, if the number of days taken in any one year exceeds their entitlement, some discretion should 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; alternatively, it will accrue and should be taken at a later date.

Unused study leave entitlement cannot be carried forward to the next leave year.

The entitlement to Study Leave ends once a trainee reaches CCT and trainees are not entitled to Study Leave during the Period of Grace.

Trainees on Out of Programme Experience (OOPE), Out of Programme Research (OOPR) or Out of Programme Career Break (OOPC) are not entitled to study leave for the period they are out of programme. Trainees on Out of Programme Training (OOPT) are normally only entitled to study leave for this period if they are occupying a training post on a training programme in our region.

Applications for trainees on OOPT will only be approved and funded where there is clear evidence linking the application to the specific curriculum requirement for the trainee's individual specialty.

For study leave taken over weekends, bank holidays and days when the trainee would not otherwise be working, trainees can either take the time off in lieu or not count it as a study leave day (so that they don't use up any days from their study leave allowance).

Non-attendance

If a trainee is unable to attend an event because of ill health and is unable to recover some or all of any advance costs, the trainee should contact studyleave.eoe@hee.nhs.uk within 10 working days from the date the course was due to take place and provide the following:

1. Relevant receipts from the event provider and/or travel provider and/or accommodation provider
2. Evidence that the event provider and/or travel provider and/or accommodation provider are not prepared to refund the costs
3. Written confirmation from their GP or treating doctor confirming that they have developed an acute illness or an exacerbation of a chronic illness between the time of applying for the event and the date of the event and, as a consequence, were too unwell to attend the event.

HEE EoE will then consider this evidence and, provided it is satisfactory, will approve reimbursement of the costs either fully or in part.

If a trainee is unable to attend an event or part of an event because they have been required to work by their employer, HEE will not reimburse the costs. If study leave time was granted by their employer, the trainee should ask their employer to reimburse the costs.

If a trainee is unable to attend an event for any other reason, HEE will only reimburse the costs in truly exceptional circumstances, which will be considered on a case by case basis. Please submit full details of such circumstances with supporting evidence to studyleave.eoe@hee.nhs.uk within 10 working days from the date the course was due to take place

Specific Guidance for GP, Public Health and Foundation trainees

GP

Individual study leave funding is administered by HEE EoE and reimbursed by the lead employer, further details can be found following this link: https://heeo.ee.nhs.uk/gp_lead_employer

Public Health

Due to the nature and requirements of their training programmes, a separate application process and policy apply to Public Health trainees; these can be found here:

<https://heeo.ee.nhs.uk/node/1869>

Foundation

The legal requirements for study leave in the Foundation Programme (FP) are complex, as the arrangements for F1 and F2 trainees differ. The principle of study leave within the FP is that professional leave or study leave should normally only be granted for the purposes of supporting the FP curriculum. For full guidance please refer to the Foundation webpage here: https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/foundation_main

Trainees appointed through the Medical Training Initiative (MTI)

This group of trainees has the same study leave entitlement as trainees on HEE EoE training programmes. This should be funded by the employing Trust. However, we continue to support the invitation of trainees appointed through the MTI to appropriate local and regional teaching events on a 'marginal cost' basis.

SAS and Trust Grade Doctors

Postgraduate medical trainees' study leave funding should not be used to fund courses that are not directly related to supporting the training of postgraduate medical trainees. However, we continue to support the invitation of SAS and Trust Grade doctors to appropriate local and regional teaching events on a 'marginal cost' basis.

Access to development opportunities for SAS doctors is available through a separate funding stream. Please see the SAS pages of the HEE EoE website: https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/sas_home

Appeals process

If a doctor or dentist in training disagrees with a decision about study leave funding, they should in the first instance contact the relevant authoriser that refused the application to request an explanation / review.

If a doctor or dentist in training remains of the opinion that the wrong decision has been made, they can appeal against the decision using the HEE East of England appeal form which can be found at <https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/faculty-educators/study-leave-homepage>.

The completed appeal form should be sent via email to the HEE local office, study leave inbox: studyleave.eoe@hee.nhs.uk The appeal form must clearly state the reason(s) for the appeal, including any evidence that may support the appeal process. The HEE East of England office will only review appeals in relation to study leave *funding*, disputes regarding study leave *time* must be resolved locally with the employer.

Appeals should be submitted within four weeks of the date that the original decision to refuse study leave was communicated to the trainee. Failure to do so will mean the appeal will not be processed.

Appeals will then be considered by a panel convened within the local office that will include a senior member of the PGMDE team, a trainee representative and the Postgraduate Dean or nominated Deputy.

Appeal panels will consider the information submitted on the form and the appellant is not required to attend. The appellant can however request to attend the panel (with or without

support, e.g. trade union representative) but must make that clear at the point of submitting their appeal form.

The doctor or dentist in training will receive a response to their appeal via email within 20 working days of submission with the result of the appeal outlining the reasons for the decision reached.

HEE reserve the right to refer appeals back to the Trust or Employing Authority where it is deemed within their remit to resolve. HEE reserve the right not to enter into further appeals thereafter where the supervising clinician/Trust/Employing Authority have applied the guidance for study leave in the correct way.

The decision resulting from this appeals process is final and there will be no further right of appeal.

As part of the ongoing development of the Trainee Information System (TIS) for Study Leave, HEE will work to create the ability to capture data on appeals to enable anonymised reports to be analysed.

Guidance for Employers/Local Education Providers (LEPs)

Each LEP's Education Centre will be expected to keep a clear and concise record of all study leave time taken by individual trainees. This must be submitted monthly to the HEE local office at studyleave.eoe@hee.nhs.uk

All staff involved in the approval of study leave must ensure that they are familiar with and follow HEE EoE's study leave policy. This is essential if we are to ensure that study leave funding is allocated in a fair and consistent way.

All funding allocations and development opportunities should be made available to all trainees, not just those who are in tariff-funded posts.

Study leave funding is not provided for courses that are required to fulfil the service commitment of the post (e.g. to meet the Trust's clinical governance and CNST responsibilities) i.e. study leave funding is provided specifically to meet the requirements of the trainee's curriculum.

HEE EoE supports the use of time for private study leave before exams but only where this fits in with the policies and service requirements of the department in which they will be employed at the time of the study leave. Trainees need to be mindful of any impact of their taking private study leave on colleagues sitting the same exams.

Where a trainee is rotating between one or more LEPs or departments during their programme, any study leave time must be approved by the LEP or department in which the trainee will be at the time the study leave is taken. Furthermore, if the trainee were to rotate to a different region the trainee will follow the study leave policy of that region.

Where a course is available locally or regionally, funding should only be approved in truly exceptional circumstances for a trainee to undertake the course elsewhere.

Where study leave with pay is granted, the trainee must not undertake any remunerative work during the study leave period without the written permission of the leave granting LEP. Written permission must be obtained before the study leave commences.

Appendix 1

Travel	Cost
Mileage <i>In line with NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook</i>	Refer to NHS T&Cs Handbook
Accommodation	Cost
Overnight accommodation <i>Limited to the duration of the event plus one night, either before or after the event date</i>	
Outside Central London -	£120 per night
Inside Central London -	£150 per night
Subsistence	Cost
Meal allowance (24-hour period)	£20
Meal allowance (lunch only) <i>Limited only to when refreshments and lunch are not included as part of the event</i>	£5

Additional guidance

- Every claim form must be submitted with proof of expenditure and submitted no later than eight weeks after the course date. Any claims received after the deadline will not be paid.
- Travel must be taken using the most cost-effective means possible
- Reimbursement for alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed under any circumstances

Document History

Version	Date	Remarks
1.0	11.11.2009	First draft – SG
1.1	19.11.2009	CD and AH edit
1.2	25.11.2009	SG revision post Abu, A Ba and MD
1.3	26.02.2010	KR and SS revision
1.4	06.04.2010	KR and SS revision
1.5	30.06.2010	KR revision following comments from med staffing
1.6	12.07.2010	KR and SS revision
1.7	15.07.2010	KR and SS revision following comments from the BMA
1.8	02.02.2012	Inclusion of Equality and Diversity Act 2010 statement
1.9	10.02.2012	Amendment regarding ALS training
1.10	April 2013	Revised by AB, KR
1.11	September 2013	Updated by KR, AB, SB
1.12	July 2015	Updated KR, KF
1.13	April 2018	Revised by IB, HP, KR, SC
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1.15	September 2019	Revised by IB & SC to align with National Guidelines and NHS T&Cs
1.16	January 2021	Revised by SC & KP to align with national appeals process