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for health and
healthcare*

Study Leave Guidance For Doctors in Training

*This guidance sets out study leave and curriculum
delivery arrangements for postgraduate medical trainees*

September 2019

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Introduction

This guidance sets out the study leave arrangements for postgraduate medical trainees who come under the remit of Health Education England, West Midlands (HEEWM). 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
- The Foundation Programme Reference Guide
<http://foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2018-07/Reference%20Guide.pdf>
- Enhancing Junior Doctors' Working Lives
<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/news-blogs-events/news/enhancing-junior-doctors-lives>
- HEE Specialty Training Study Budget
<https://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/studybudget>
- Education & Training Tariffs
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthcare-education-and-training-tariff-2019-to-2020>

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 HEEWM directs funding towards curriculum delivery as its first priority. In order to improve quality and access to study leave and curriculum support, HEEWM is committed to working in collaboration with 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 core 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 West Midlands, 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 £1000 should also be discussed in advance with the trainee's TPD and Head of School (HoS).

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.

Equality Act 2010

Health Education England, West Midlands (HEEWM) is committed to equality and diversity within the organisation and this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010. HEEWM will ensure that the application of any part of this policy does not discriminate against anyone, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of race, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership. 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 after April 2018:

Since April 2018, the study leave budget has been held centrally by HEE rather than being devolved to Trusts. The main uses of the study leave budget will be for educational development opportunities designed to gain competences defined in each curriculum. Please see link on page 3 for more detail and also examples below:

- Locally delivered teaching.
- Regional study days (including reasonable subsistence costs such as lunch and refreshments).
- 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.

Excluded Expenses

- Enrolment on to training programmes 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.

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 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 to agree their annual local and regional training budget.

Individual Study Leave Requests

These will be made to the trainee's employing Trust or to HEE directly depending on specialty, following the local application process. In line with national principles trainees may submit claims that have been mandated as requirements of the trainee's curriculum or CCT and these can be signed off at Trust level. Any claim exceeding £1000 will need to be signed off by the TPD. Each school will provide oversight of the process and the Head of School will reserve the right to overturn an approval of study leave if the relevant criteria have not been met.

Payments for individual study leave requests will be made to trainees by their employing Trust and Trusts will claim these monies back from HEE after payment has been to the trainee.

Study leave funding will be distributed as fairly and as effectively as possible within the framework of this guidance. 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 programme.

Study Leave for Special Circumstances

Aspirational Study Leave

The GMC has made clear within its Generic Professional Capabilities framework¹ that fitness to practise data shows that most concerns about doctors' performance fall into one or more of the nine GPC domains.

Traditional funding of study leave was mapped to domains 1 (professional values and behaviours) and 2 (professional skills). Given the GMC now require all curricula to be re-approved by 2020 meet the standards set out in Promoting Excellence², and contain the GPCs, this training can no longer be considered aspirational but additional core aspects of training.

HEE Deans have agreed:

- That any study leave mapping to the above is no longer called 'aspirational'. Going forward, aspirational study leave should be defined as: 'study leave that enhances the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the doctor in training, or enhances any aspect of patient care, but is not mapped to any direct curriculum requirements'.
- That study leave is granted dependent on the needs of the trainee to fulfil the curriculum. This is not dependent on the previous ARCP outcome.

International Study Leave

This should only occur when the learning outcomes from the course/conference are not available in the UK and the DHSC has made the requirements clear. See GMC Website [link](#)

The following principles should be followed:

- Attendance at courses/conferences should be taken as close to the base of the trainee as possible.
- As part of the approvals process, requests to attend overseas study courses/conferences will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances.
- The course/conference must provide a clearly stated curriculum outcome. Such circumstances include where the training course is not available in the UK, where the course or activity is part of the college curriculum or guidelines on required training, for the presentation of significant research findings from within an NIHR recognised academic clinical fellowship or clinical lectureship or where the course is set out as a mandatory requirement of college training to reach the required qualification to practice.
- There must be a documented discussion with the ES about the clear need of the course/conference to meet curriculum requirements.
- A full program should be provided. A report covering the entirety of the leave may be requested from the doctor in training after attendance.
- Any contribution to funding of such leave will need the prior written approval of the HEE local Post Graduate Dean.
- If further periods of international study leave are required this will be considered on a case by case basis by the Postgraduate Dean, and budget allowing.
- If a doctor in training wishes to fund a period of international study leave by other means, the ES should still ensure the activity aligns to the PDP
- One international conference/meeting, providing all other curriculum requirements are met will be supported for each doctor in training for any one programme, which can be defined as Foundation, Core or Higher or otherwise every 3 years (to avoid disadvantaging doctors on run-through programmes).
- If an external body such as a Medical Royal College suggests a doctor in training attends an international conference. In such circumstances, HEE expects that body to contribute at least 50% of the costs.
- For approved international study leave applications, HEE will consider funding either the full cost of the course/conference fees or the full cost of economy travel and accommodation whichever is the lower amount.
- An application form must be completed and submitted to the PG Dean once the TPD and HoS have approved the request. The form can be found on the website:

<https://www.westmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/support/study-leave>

Overnight Allowance

Historically an allowance of £55 per night was in place as per standard NHS Terms & Conditions but to fall in line with new limits agreed nationally for recruitment expenses, the following has been approved:

Allowance	Cost
Overnight allowance (commercial eg: B&B/Hotel)	This should not exceed £120 per night outside London and £150 per night within London

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 HEEWM will have capacity to facilitate study leave.

Each trainee will have a maximum annual approved entitlement of 30 days' study leave, with the exception of Foundation Year 1 trainees (further information can be found in the [Foundation Study Leave document](#)), 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 - the new system supports all trainees including LTFT and academic trainees to access study leave and funding in an equitable way. They are entitled to the same support full-time trainees receive for curriculum requirements.

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. Trainees also have access to SuppoRTT (Supported Return to Training) via the Professional Support Unit.

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

The entitlement to Study Leave ends once a trainee reaches CCT (ARCP Outcome 6) and trainees are not entitled to Study Leave during the Period of Grace or in post CCT programmes / placements.

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 entitled to study leave as they are occupying a training post. Where a trainee chooses to take study leave whilst on OOPT, they would not be eligible for funding for that same element again upon re-joining their training programme.

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).

Guidance for Specialty Trainees

More information and guidance including FAQ's can be found on our [website](#).

Specific Guidance for GP, Public Health and Foundation trainees

GP

Individual study leave funding is administered by HEEWM and reimbursed by the lead employer, further details can be found following this link:

<https://www.westmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/gp/trainees/study-leave>

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://www.westmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/specialty-schools/postgraduate-school-of-public-health/current-trainees/hr-policies-and-forms>

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://www.westmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/support/study-leave/trainee-information>

Military Trainees

As the military training programme is managed by the Defence Deanery all study leave applications should be submitted, agreed and paid for directly by the Defence Deanery.

Trainees appointed through the Medical Training Initiative (MTI)

This group of trainees has the same study leave entitlement as trainees on HEEWM 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.

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 at employer's discretion.

Access to development opportunities for SAS doctors is available through a separate funding stream. Please see the SAS pages on our [website](#).

Appeals process

If a trainee has reason to believe that their study leave application was processed unfairly or incorrectly, they are able to request a review of the process by which their application was considered by making a written submission to Health Education England, West Midlands. This should include the reason/s for his/her complaint and any evidence to support their appeal. All written submissions must be sent via email or as an attachment, with the original application form and outcome received. This should be emailed to studyleave.wm@hee.nhs.uk and must be made within 10 working days of being notified of their outcome. An independent panel at HEEWM will review the decision made, taking into account the evidence submitted and HEEWM's Study Leave Guidance. Once appeals mechanisms have been used, the decision of the local Postgraduate Dean remains final.

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.wm@hee.nhs.uk. More information can be found on our [website](#).

Funding allocations and development opportunities should be made available to all doctors in training, training on HEE training programmes regardless of the funding status of the training post they occupy.

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 to meet the requirements of the trainee's curriculum.

Requests for time to prepare for and take examinations should be managed in line with the employing LEP's policies and guidance from the appropriate postgraduate school. It is suggested that one should be allowed for each exam.

Where a trainee is rotating between one or more LEPs during their programme, any study leave time must be approved by the LEP which will be employing the trainee 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. If a trainee is unaware of where they will be at the time, they need to take the study leave, approval should be sought from their current employer and make their new employer aware as soon as possible.

Where a course is available locally, funding should not normally be approved for a trainee to undertake the course elsewhere.

Any travel and subsistence expenses that are claimed by a trainee are subject to prior approval by the employing LEP and must be in accordance with that LEP's terms and conditions of service.

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.

Reviewers:

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Next Scheduled Review: June 2020