

Study Leave during GP Specialty Training

Study leave is intended to support trainees with release from clinical work and financial support for courses to meet career aims and objectives. It should integrate with the individual education plan for each module of training and with the total training package.

Whilst the budget is annual, it is possible for trainees to use funds across the total time of training. To maintain integrity of the programme budgets overall, such plans should be discussed with the locality training programme director in advance.

Trainees should be free to attend educational events appropriate for their career destination of general practice regardless of which specialty post they are pursuing at the time, provided essential service commitments are covered.

Trainees are advised to plan their study leave at the regular review meetings with their educational supervisor. Ideally an outline plan should be produced for the whole 3 year programme with each course planned at least 6 months in advance. This will facilitate release from service commitment and ensure best use of the allowance. The educational supervisor should record this in the e-portfolio either in the review documentation or as an "educators note"

Travel and subsistence (if appropriate) MAY also be reimbursed within the relevant overall limit in accordance with the current regulations. It should however be noted that subsistence will not be paid unless there is an overnight stay involved in the course (not before or after), which is not within the overall course fees. Overnight accommodation will only be reimbursed if the course is a significant distance from the home address (usually more than 50 miles) If accommodation or mileage is to be claimed, it MUST be estimated on the form before passing for authorisation.

The Deanery educational budget is not intended for costs incurred in taking examinations, affiliation to or membership of the RCGP, or registration for certification so none of these will be reimbursed from the study leave budget. However, mileage to examinations may be applied for.

During GP Specialty training study leave should be used at 3 levels, in order of importance:-

Level I

- a) Attendance at the GP specialty training programme structured teaching. Whilst in ST1 and ST2 posts, release to stay in close touch with the training practice; (advisory level two days of study leave per 6 month post).
- b) Appropriate life support training certified to meet MRCGP examination requirements.

Level II

Attendance at courses related to the provision of comprehensive general medical services, including minor surgery, family planning and child health surveillance.

Level III

- a) Additional courses deemed to be very useful for general practice, eg Clinical courses for Primary Care run by the North West Faculty of the RCGP
- b) Attendance at outpatients in specialties not within the programme to acquire core skills in examination and diagnosis, e.g. ENT, ophthalmology and dermatology.

Other educational events may be attended but these are not usually classed as essential for training for general practice and therefore any costs should be met from other sources.

Study Leave Application Process

The application process is electronic and is described on the Deanery website at <http://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/general-practice/gpst-study-leave>

Study leave application forms should be used for any course a trainee needs or may wish to attend (N.B. not required for the in house structured teaching programme). The forms are for the authorisation of financial reimbursement – the time off must be negotiated with the relevant people before submitting the form for approval.

Application forms should be downloaded from the website.

All applications for study leave must be approved by:-

1. The educational supervisor to indicate it is appropriate to meet the educational needs of the trainee. This should normally be discussed at the 6 monthly reviews and indicated in the review documentation. For applications that take place in the interim the approval should be indicated in the educators notes.
2. The clinical supervisor(s) or rota master(s) in the current post to indicate release from service commitment. NB. in GP+ or integrated posts this will require approval from each element of the post. This should be indicated on the form.
3. The programme director as budget holder to indicate compatibility with the overall programme. Completed forms should be sent to the programme director who will forward the form to the Deanery with final approval

Study leave **will not** be approved without the necessary authorisations.

It is essential that study leave forms are submitted for approval BEFORE the date of the commencement of the course. Trainees are advised that it will normally be necessary to pay for the course in advance and in most cases fees will not be reimbursed until after completion of the course/event.

Retrospective applications will only be considered by the Training Programme Director up to one month after the course has taken place, and approval is not guaranteed. If submitting a retrospective application, please state the reason why you are doing so.

Principles of study leave and contracted educational sessions in GP posts for GP specialty training

There have been differing interpretations of study leave guidance and its application for trainees working in practice. This has partly arisen because the standard BMA contract includes 3 sessions of education time but does not specify how this links with study leave. The principles below are intended to clarify the situation.

These principles should also be applied to hospital and other posts with the difference that trainees in hospital posts have 4 hours educational time within their contract.

- Attendance at the local structured teaching programme is part of contractual arrangements and therefore mandatory. Failure to attend without notifying the programme director and without good reason is therefore a disciplinary matter.
- The local GP structured teaching programme is part of study leave and therefore time and cost are deducted from each trainee's allowance.
- Trainers are expected to timetable the structured teaching programme as part of the 3 education sessions within the GP contract so trainees do not miss clinical time to attend.
- Other study leave granted is for the time a particular course takes place. Trainees are therefore released from whatever activity was programmed for that time, whether it is clinical or educational.
- Trainees should therefore not normally be expected to swap timetabled sessions to allow release for approved study leave within the 30 days annual allowance.
- Once the 30 days annual allowance has been taken, further study leave is at the discretion of the trainer and so trainees may be asked to do the course in their own time or to forgo personal study time.
- Trainees are expected to do 3 education and 7 clinical sessions per working week throughout their attachment (not including out of hours sessions). It is acceptable for this to be varied by mutual agreement between the trainer and trainee on condition that
 - Study leave processes are followed and the above principles applied
 - The overall balance of educational and clinical time remains 3:7
- The activities that normally take place within the contracted educational sessions include formal tutorials and assessments, recording learning on the e-portfolio, personal study, practice or other education meetings, peer group learning and educationally useful projects such as audit, protocols or other management tasks. In some circumstances there may be some clinical activity with significant educational input e.g. observed surgeries with feedback from the trainer

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