

Study Leave During GP Specialty Training

Study leave is intended to support trainees with release from timetabled 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.

There is no budgetary limit, however study leave must be used to meet curriculum requirements. All study leave requests are to be discussed with your supervisors. Leave to meet core curriculum requirements will take priority over discretionary non-curriculum requirements.

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”

The school does not encourage the taking of private study leave for any reason. This includes exam preparation, as the best preparation for both AKT and CSA is consulting and reflecting on casework.

GP Trainees who are progressing satisfactorily may wish to develop an interest in a particular specialty and undertake a limited amount of training to that effect, but they should ensure that this does not hinder their progress or detract from their study of the core GP Curriculum.

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) and if the course spans two or more days. If accommodation or mileage is to be claimed, it MUST be estimated on the form before passing for authorisation.

Study leave payments are not intended for costs incurred in taking examinations, e-portfolio costs, affiliation to or membership of the RCGP or registration for certification so none of these will be reimbursed. However, travel costs incurred to attend examinations may be applied for. Approval for attending courses outside of the region will not normally be granted if there is a similar course in the region.

LTFT trainees are entitled to pro rata study leave.

Extension trainees should seek the opinion of their support Associate Dean regarding study leave approval.

TPD can decline funding requests if they feel that a more cost-effective alternative exists.

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 and complete the Educational Supervisor Review; (a maximum of five days of study leave per 6-month post).
- b) Appropriate life support training certified to meet MRCGP examination requirements.
- c) One Level 3 safeguarding during training and 14 Fish blended learning package for AKT and CSA.

Applications for these will be automatically approved.

Level II

These are courses which will supplement areas of the GP curriculum that may be difficult to access, examples would include Child Health Surveillance and Minor Surgery courses. Please see table below for further possibilities.

Level III

These are courses which are additional and aspirational courses that go beyond the GP curriculum e.g. to aid the development of particular interests.

Approved course list

Automatic approval for all trainees

| Course | Comments |
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| Structured Education Programme | Mandatory release, no funding implications |
| RCGP-provided or accredited CSA and AKT course | One course attendance per trainee |
| Fourteen fish AKT and CSA support | Funding for whole blended package per trainee. |
| BLS training | One attendance per trainee in ST3 |
| Child protection training | One course attendance per trainee. Trainees should ensure that they have completed a Level 3 course by the start of ST3. |
| GP Update Day e.g. NB Medical / Red Whale | For all in ST3 |

Courses NOT approved for funding, although time off might be authorised

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| CSA or AKT revision or study courses provided by any other provider. |
| Repeat courses already undertaken e.g. CSA or AKT preparation |
| Attendance at courses or conferences overseas |
| Events outside the region unless authorised by a TPD |

Courses provided by other organisations that address the difficult to reach parts of the GP curriculum should also be considered, especially if they cover:

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| RCGP provided or accredited courses or conferences Contraception/sexual health courses Minor surgery Joint injections Palliative care ATLS, BASICs. ENT Ophthalmology Dermatology Mental Health Learning Disability Medical Education Leadership Paediatrics Veterans' Health | Homelessness Prescribing Children and young people's health Dementia Female Genital Mutilation Equality and Diversity Safeguarding Information Governance Leadership and Business Management Courses related to adult learning, self-regulation and reflective learning |
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Study Leave Application Process

The application process is electronic and is described on the HE North West 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 educator notes on the e-portfolio.

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 junior doctor contract includes 12 hours 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 is deducted from each trainee's allowance.
- Trainers are expected to timetable the structured teaching programme as part of the 12 hours education time within the 2016 Junior Doctor Contract so trainees do not miss clinical time to attend.
- Other study leave granted is for the time a 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 12 hours of education and 28 clinical hours per working week throughout their attachment. 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 12 hours: 28 hours
- 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

Time in Lieu

Time in lieu will be allowed if the course is undertaken outside of the normal working week, for example a course undertaken on a Saturday would allow the GPST to take time in lieu from their educational time in the working week. For LTFT trainees, attending a course on a non-working day would result in time in lieu being taken from educational time in their normal working times.

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